

H.H. the Dalai Lama

Message on the Buddha Consecration in October 1993 at Buddha Jayanti Park in New Delhi, India

The Buddha's message of non-violence, his advice that we should help others as much as we can and at least avoid harming them, remains essentially relevant today. As the twentieth century ends, we find that the world has grown smaller. The world's people have become almost one community. We are coming to recognize that such problems as poverty, overpopulation and damage to the environment are not merely global in nature, but are actually interconnected. Consequently, no single community or nation can solve these problems on his own. Amidst a growing consensus about what the problems are and even how many of them can be solved, we need a spirit of cooperation and the will to take decisive action to bring about such solutions.

To meet the challenge of our times, I believe that human beings must develop a greater sense of responsibility. Each of us must learn to work not just for his or her own self, family or nation, but also for the benefit of all humanity. Universal responsibility is the real key to human survival. It is the best foundation for world peace, the equitable use of natural resources and, through concern for future generations, the proper care of the environment.

We have all been born on this earth as part of one great family. Each of us is just a human being like everyone else, whatever our background. We all desire happiness and do not want suffering and we each have the same right to pursue these goals. When you recognize that all beings are equal in this respect, you automatically feel close to them. In addition, out of this empathy comes the wish to actively help others overcome their difficulties.

Compassion like this is, by nature, peaceful and gentle, but it is also very powerful. It is a sign of true inner strength. To achieve it we do not need to become religious, nor do we need any ideology. All that is necessary is for us to develop our basic human qualities.

The need for a sense of universal responsibility is present in every aspect of modern life. Nowadays, when significant events in one part of the world can eventually affect the entire planet, we have to regard every major local

problem as of global concern. We can no longer invoke our national, racial, ideological or religious identities as barriers that separate us without destructive repercussions. Because we are interdependent, considering the interests of others is clearly the best form of self-interest. Interdependence is a fundamental law of nature and ignorance of it has been harmful not only to the natural environment, but to our human society as well. In our pursuit of happiness we have directed our efforts more towards personal material comfort than to simply caring for one another. However, since we are not solely material creatures, it is a mistake to seek fulfilment in external development alone.

The rapid changes in our attitude towards the earth are a source of hope. As recently as a decade ago, we carelessly squandered the world's resources as if there were no end to them. We failed to realize that unchecked consumption is environmentally disastrous and socially divisive. Yet, now there is a widespread interest in constructing a new economic order based on a fresh ecological awareness.

Responsibility for guiding our global family in the right direction lies not only with governments, but also in the hands of individuals. However, good wishes alone are not enough; we have to assume active responsibility. Great human movements spring from individual human initiatives. We have a simple reminder of this in Buddha Jayanti Park, which is symbolic of the respect in which the teachings and activities of the Buddha over two and a half thousand years ago are still held.

I hope and pray that in the days and years ahead, all those who visit the Park will be inspired to do everything they can to bring about a happier, more harmonious and healthier world.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'H. J. S.', written in a cursive style.