

HIS HOLINESS THE 14TH DALAI LAMA paid an historic three-day visit to the University at Buffalo September 19–21, 2006, during which time he participated in a series of events on campus.

The following is a report on a lecture he delivered in UB's stadium to a sellout crowd that included many students, faculty and staff from the School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences.

To learn more about the Dalai Lama's visit, go to http://www.buffalo.edu/dalai_lama/. To view a video of the lecture described in the following article, go to http://www.buffalo.edu/dalai_lama/video.html.

UNBIASED Compassion

Wearing his red-and-yellow robes, which flapped in the stiff wind, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama came to the University at Buffalo on September 19, 2006, with a message of profound compassion and personal humility.

"I'm extremely happy to share some of my thoughts and experiences with this large audience," the Dalai Lama said, greeting a crowd of 31,000 gathered in UB Stadium as part of the university's Distinguished Speakers Series.



Medicine Buddha Thangka: See page 2 for story

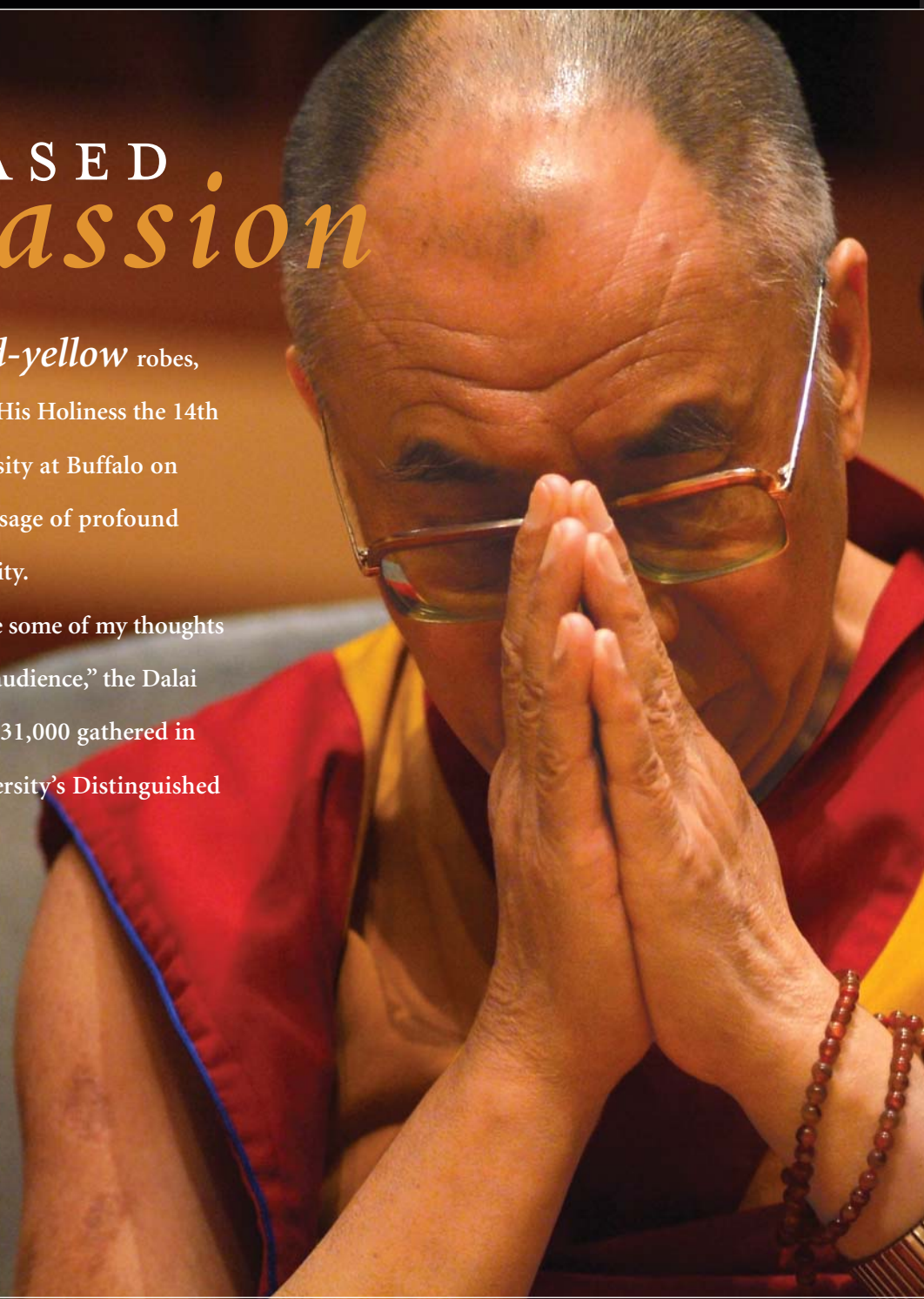


PHOTO BY DOUG LEVERE



By ANN WHITCHER-GENTZKE

IN HIS FORMAL REMARKS, the Dalai Lama spoke in English with his interpreter, Thupten Jinpa, occasionally offering more exact phrasing for some of His Holiness's more complex viewpoints as expressed in Tibetan.

Throughout the afternoon, the Dalai Lama advocated a compassion "that is not based on the positive attitude of others toward you," but rather on the conviction that others are human beings and thus have every right to compassionate treatment, even if they are strangers.

"That kind of compassion can extend toward your enemy," the Dalai Lama said. It also is markedly different from the "usual kind of compassion one feels toward a loved one—a loving kindness that is very much mixed with attachment."

Moreover, compassion, as conventionally understood, can turn to hatred when some slight disturbance occurs in the relationship. Anger, he said, can destroy friendships—even a close friendship usually can't withstand the raised voice or shouts of anger on a continuous basis. A perhaps unexpected effect is that "your bad mood serves your enemy," he said.

On the other hand, with "warm-heartedness"—a term the Dalai Lama used repeatedly during his address and throughout his three-day visit to UB—"there is no room to exploit or to bully others." He spoke of warm-heartedness as synonymous with the favored "unbiased compassion" and also likened it to the immune system, the health of which can withstand even the most pernicious of influences. The Dalai Lama also contrasted "genuine satisfaction" with a "false satisfaction"; that is, being overly reliant on material possessions or comforts.

Reinforcing the theme of compassion, he described how a monk of his acquaintance—who had spent more than 18 years in the Chinese gulag—spoke of the dangers experienced there. What were these dangers, the Dalai Lama asked his colleague?

The monk replied that he perceived the danger not to be one of personal vulnerability, but rather in not being able to feel sufficient compassion for his captors. With compassion, the Dalai Lama argued, the mind acquires perspective, even if the problems one faces are serious. "The mental outlook is very, very crucial to sustaining peace of mind," he said. "I believe the most important element for peace of mind is human compassion."

Giving additional examples from his own life, the Dalai Lama recounted how he had seen poor children in India with no shoes and running barefoot, and also an elderly individual, apparently ill, but left alone and utterly uncared for. That very day, His Holiness developed a serious intestinal infection, and while enduring pain during the night, he was able to divert his attention from the pain by thinking of the people he had seen earlier in so much distress.

Further developing his themes, His Holiness noted that small children never care about their playmates' religious background, nor are they aware of each other's economic status. Furthermore, an unbiased compassion has nothing to do with pity, or the lack of respect for others that can accompany this particular emotion.

The Dalai Lama described how the basis for this kind of compassionate understanding is biological, although the world's religious traditions reinforce such fundamental human values. He traced his mother's innate nurturing role beginning at birth and how the memory or experience of such nurturing can be cultivated through all the stages of one's life.

The Dalai Lama noted, too, how physical comfort can't subdue mental stress, as when reclining on a comfortable bed won't bring true

repose if one is wracked with worry or concern. He described how he approaches the people he meets "one on one," "as brothers and sisters," and always with a ready smile. He maintains this smile even in more reserved cultures, say in Western Europe, joking that some have appeared "stunned" at his easy affability.

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UNBIASED COMPASSION

TURNING TO MORE SPECIFIC comments, the Dalai Lama talked about the importance of ecological protection (“This blue planet is our only home”) and also urged parents to extend compassion to their own children if divorce is looming or under discussion.

And to audience applause, he said the solution to violence can never be more violence. “Peaceful resolution is the only alternative.”

In modern education, we are not paying sufficient attention to inculcating values of the heart, he maintained.

Citing declining church influences and even family values that are “suffering little disturbances,” the Dalai Lama said it falls upon the educational institutions to develop warm-heartedness among the young, “from kindergarten to the university level.” And while the world has emerged from what he

called “the century of bloodshed,” the 21st century can be a “century of dialogue,” a statement that brought audience applause and cheers as the Dalai Lama concluded his formal remarks.

He then responded to several student questions read by Stephen C. Dunnett, vice provost for international education.

“THE MENTAL OUTLOOK IS VERY, VERY CRUCIAL TO SUSTAINING PEACE OF MIND. I BELIEVE THE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENT FOR PEACE OF MIND IS HUMAN COMPASSION.”

Asked about his most admired figures, the Dalai Lama cited Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr. and Mother Teresa, and said that he has so far received “negative signals” from the Chinese government to his requests to visit Tibet. But he said whether he ever visits his homeland has more to do with the welfare of the Tibetan people than his personal yearning. “When China starts addressing the basic issues of Tibet and there is a reasonable approach, I’m ready to go.” **BP**

“gSoba Rig-pa”

Tibetan Medicine: A HEALING SCIENCE

In honor of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, the Health Sciences Library, on UB’s South Campus, is featuring an exhibit this fall titled “gSoba Rig-pa” Tibetan Medicine: A Healing Science.

GREATER COMPASSION not only was the central message of the Dalai Lama’s address at UB, but it also is a critical component of patient care. Compassion and wisdom are two Buddhist ideals that are an essential part of



Tibetan physician training, allowing doctors to attend to the emotional and spiritual needs

of patients, as well as physical. The oaths taken by doctors in many cultures recognize compassion as a healing force.

The exhibit offers an introduction to the rich tradition of Tibetan medicine. Displayed in three locations on the first and second floors of the library, it highlights the history, training and iconography of the Medicine Buddha, as well as the spiritual dimensions of healing and traditional herbal medicine.

Stop by and see the beautiful Medicine Buddha thangka on loan from the Amitabha Foundation in Rochester (see inset photo on inside front cover). Also on display are traditional Tibetan pills, including “precious pills,” and a “poison cup” for dispensing medications (on loan from Dr. Richard Lee).

Or visit the exhibit online at <http://ublib.buffalo.edu/hsl/exhibits/tibetanmedicine/> **BP**
—Pamela M. Rose, MLS

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