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# Trans Himalayan Aid Society

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Summer Newsletter

May 2004

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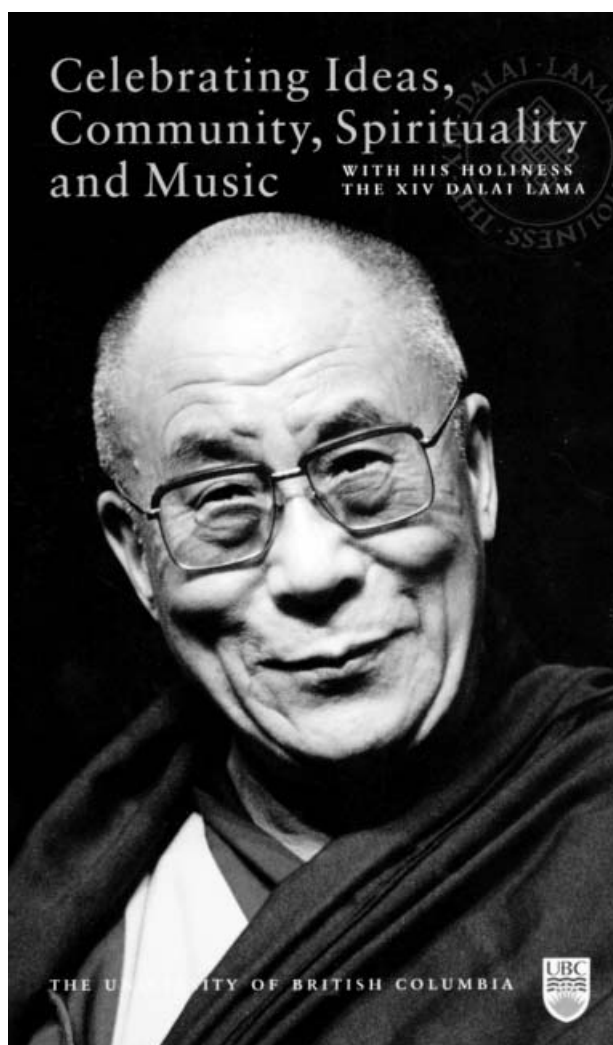
## THE DALAI LAMA'S MESSAGE COMPASSION, RESPONSIBILITY AND PEACE. WHAT WILL OUR RESPONSE BE?

Well, he has come and gone, that 'simple Buddhist monk' who drew record crowds and made such an impression on thousands of people. In Vancouver, his religious talk at the Pacific Coliseum to a sold-out crowd of over 12,000 could have been a recipe for restlessness and chatter, because he spoke first - and at length - in Tibetan, which his excellent translator then turned into polished English. But not a sound was heard in that vast arena except His Holiness' voice, the audience was so spellbound to be with him while waiting to hear his message.

That same afternoon, he gave a public talk to a further 13,000 people, this time in his 'broken English', as he calls it. His message was powerful, and his simplified English, pared down to the basic necessary words, made it even more powerful.

Universal responsibility starts within each of us. We must have compassion, peace and responsibility in ourselves, before being able to extend it to our families, our communities and finally into the world.

TRAS Directors, along with the directors of the Canada Tibet Committee and Students for a Free



UBC Program cover

Tibet, were invited to a private audience with His Holiness, just 15 minutes tucked into an already packed day. He thanked us warmly for the work which our societies do - and we pass on his thanks to all our members, who support the work of TRAS. He spoke of justice - he believes we who work for the Tibetan cause are at heart people who want justice, and he reminded us that there are many places in the world where people are crying out for help, and we mustn't forget them. How like him to think of others in need rather than asking for more for the Tibetans!

At the Roundtable Dialogue on "Balancing Educating the Mind with Educating the Heart", the Dalai Lama surprised his fellow speakers by stressing those same three attributes of compassion, peace and responsibility rather than religion. When they queried how he all of people could say this, he replied that he wished for a way of life full of tolerance and

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### Inside This Issue

And now what?	2
How TRAS helps children	2
Dalai Lama spoke	3
Hats Off	3

happiness for everyone, regardless of his or her personal belief or non-belief. How else, he asked, could he hope for this for his brothers and sisters in Beijing?

Two thousand high school students wrote essays in the hopes of getting tickets to the Roundtable Dialogue, as did 1600 Vancouverites hoping for a coveted seat in the Chan Centre. Vancouver hosted nearly 70 art exhibits, poetry readings, and musical events all with the theme of peace, in his honour. The interest was unprecedented!

In Ottawa the Prime Minister of Canada finally had the courage (or was he shamed, by the groundswell of feeling from the populace?) to pay his respects to the Dalai Lama. In Toronto 29,000 people filled the stadium despite a torrential downpour, and then it was time for the most solemn part of his visit to Canada, the important Kalachakra teaching for Buddhists.

### **AND NOW WHAT?**

Do we all sit back and say wasn't it wonderful! Or do we keep the momentum going and take action to help his people?

In the stories the world renowned speakers at the Roundtable Dialogue told about the atrocities which educated minds have committed, often in the name of a religion, there was horror and abhorrence - and the message was that a lack of 'heart' leads to man's inhumanity to man.

*The Dalai Lama is a shining example of the compassion which comes from balancing mind and heart. Tibetans have a great deal to teach us about non-violence, compassion and peaceful co-existence. Their ancient culture and their religion have helped them survive the vicissitudes of occupation and exile, and the Dalai Lama, as their spokesman, is held in great affection and respect by millions of people worldwide. Now Tibet's future existence depends on passing on to their children these great traditions. If the 70,000 Canadians who heard him speak in person and*

*were moved by his message and teaching each gave a dollar, how much we could do for the children!*

**TRAS members number a mere 300, but at least we have the possibility of giving real help to Tibetan children. If each of our members could spare \$10, that would pay for the daycare centres for a year. If each member gave the enclosed brochure to a friend and elicited a donation, we could keep the Kindergarten going for another year, too! These are small projects, but each child helped is another step towards saving the Tibetan people.**



### **HERE'S HOW TRAS HELPS THE CHILDREN**

**TRAS supports daycare centres for Tibetan children in Dharamsala and Deyiling, India.** It is well known that good daycare gives children a good start in life, and it enables their mothers to earn a little towards the family's upkeep. Tibetan language and customs are kept alive, while the children and their families are given information about nutrition and health. Caring Tibetan staff teaching compassion and tolerance more than make up for the lack of toys or colourful posters.

**TRAS supports a Kindergarten for Tibetan children in the poor area of Lhasa** where many Tibetans live. Their teacher returned from exile deliberately to help the children with their education. In the daytime, his school teaches English and Tibetan to kindergarten children

and in the evenings, he runs a language school for young adults, teaching them the English and Chinese they need for obtaining work. If TRAS can help keep this school running, a few Tibetan young people will become tour guides or get office jobs, instead of having no alternative but to take to the streets as prostitutes, bar girls and drifters. No longer will they feel quite such second class citizens in their own country.

TRAS supports an elementary school in the isolated north Indian Spiti Valley. This arid, mountainous region borders Tibet and the people are Tibetan. This remote region is too far from bureaucratic India for government schools to function and be staffed, so the children, whose farmer parents eke only a meagre living from the poor soil, were left with no opportunities. A Tibetan monastery in the valley saw the need for education and, with TRAS' help, has started a school for the children of the villages and has trained local teachers. The children come from near and far, many boarding under the kind care of Tibetan housemothers trained by TRAS. The children are eager to learn and TRAS is keen to continue helping the school.

Then there is the **Buddha Memorial Children's Home in Kathmandu**, where the Principal, himself sponsored by TRAS as a child, is turning life around for many needy Tibetan and Nepali children.

And finally there is the **sponsorship project**, through which individual Canadians are matched with a Tibetan child (or Indian or Nepali) to make a difference in their young lives.

**PLEASE HELP TRAS HELP THE CHILDREN!**

1st top photo: Little Flowers Creche;  
2nd photo: Lhasa Yuthok Kindergarten;  
3rd photo: Spiti School;  
4th photo: Buddha Memorial Children's Home;  
two right photos: Sponsorship hopefuls



**THE DALAI LAMA SPOKE:**

He is lighthearted, funny, wise. He lives very simply. Here are some of the things we heard him say in Vancouver.

"War is obsolete - we are so interconnected today that every time we hurt our 'enemy', we hurt ourselves as well."

When asked if he worries, "Every time you have a problem, turn it around and look from other side. I have the problem of 45 years of exile, but look what I have from other side - so much new knowledge and friends all over the world. If I had not had the problem of leaving my country, I would have been a conservative, autocratic old man, sitting up there in my palace in Lhasa!"

On pouring himself a cup of tea at the private audience: "Lunch with the Premier was very good but there was not time for tea. (He took a sip and grinned) It is not very good tea, but it will do!"

After two days of being wined and dined western-style: "How I would like some Tibetan noodle soup for lunch!" (Local Tibetans who heard this rushed home and made him some.)

On entering the Cathedral for a degree ceremony, wearing the floppy doctoral hat, and noticing some Tibetan reporters: "How does my hat look?!"

**AND HATS OFF TO:**

The Tibetan Cultural Society of BC and the Canada Tibet Committee, who helped create the public events and private audience for the Dalai Lama's BC visit. Also the many galleries for superb exhibitions on Tibet and peace.

Kits Graphics, who did a rush job, working overtime and Saturday, to print us an extra 10,000 brochures! (Quality and service are what they offer - TRAS agrees!) If members want more brochures, just let the TRAS office know.

Westpoint Graphics, who turn the editor's efforts into a polished newsletter every time.

**SEND US YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS!** It will save postage costs! Please send it to [tras@portal.ca](mailto:tras@portal.ca) Please indicate if you would be willing to receive the newsletter via email. Thank you!

**READ MORE** about the value of education in Marion Tipple's report in the December 2003 Newsletter - visit [www.tras.ca](http://www.tras.ca)

# TRANS HIMALAYAN AID SOCIETY

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## Trans Himalayan Aid Society (TRAS)

Yearly Membership donation (\$20) ..... \$20

Possible Additional Donations:

Annual Donation of \$360 for the "Child Development and Education Project"  
 at a residential school or in a settlement ..... \_\_\_\_\_

Donation to the Old People's Fund, which supports a "Self-Help Project"  
 for the elderly and infirm ..... \_\_\_\_\_

Donation to the general fund or other specific area of your choice ..... \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Please write address and postal code on your cheque and mail to:  
**TRAS Office - 5885 University Blvd.**  
**Vancouver, BC, Canada V6T 1K7**