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A Letter in Support of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama

I am deeply saddened and concerned by the recent turn of events regarding the misinterpretation of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's innocent interaction with a child during a public event where he was seen as displaying warmth, affection and humor in accordance with Tibetan culture.

At the time of the event there was no moral outrage or misunderstanding among the participants, including the child and his mother. However, almost two months after the actual event, a highly edited video clip lasting about twenty seconds made the rounds of social media. This clip – decontextualized from the rest of the events and that of the Tibetan culture -- was fed into mainstream media outlets who believed that the innocent interaction was of malicious nature.

I urge our global community to treat this incident with patience and care, to understand the Tibetan cultural context, to study the overall context of the event and also to ask the question: To what extent is subjective conditioning and projection involved in reading into this incident?

Disparaging the pristine legacy of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, a realized yogi of the highest level, will not impact him personally. However, if not properly addressed, it will adversely impact the world at large, the Tibetan community, and the Himalayan Buddhist communities.

Ever since he arrived on this land of the Buddha, he has been tirelessly, constantly and compassionately working for the benefit of all sentient beings and the world by selflessly promoting human values, peace and religious harmony throughout his life. He has made four commitments that have far-reaching implications for establishing peace and justice in the world: (1) promotion of secular ethics, (2) establishing inter-religious harmony, (3) preservation of Tibetan language, culture and Buddhist heritage, and (4) reviving awareness of ancient Indian knowledge. The assault on His Holiness the Dalai Lama is therefore not an assault on His Holiness but as an assault on these commitments with dire consequences for the world.

My own institution, the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, as a bastion of non-sectarian Indo-Tibetan Buddhist thought and practice, taught to Tibetans and Himalayans alike, owes its very existence to the far-sighted vision of His Holiness many years ago. His

very presence, inspiration and guidance have revolutionized the study of Buddhist tradition in the Tibetan and Himalayan communities.

In recognition of these legacies of His Holiness, the Tibetan and Himalayan communities have undertaken public protests in various parts of India and around the world so that their hurt sentiments be realized and experienced by the rest of the world.

On behalf of myself as the Vice-Chancellor In-charge of the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, on behalf of my staff members and students, I join them in their appeal to the media and the global community to understand and contextualize this issue in proper perspective

Finally, I pray that His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama live long and continue to guide the world in general and the Buddhists in particular.



Wangchuk Dorjee Negi