



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

Dalai Lama on Nightline: 'more suffering, more determination'

Read online: <https://savetibet.org/dalai-lama-on-nightline-more-suffering-more-determination>

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As the spiritual leader of Tibet, the Dalai Lama is uniquely aware of how to persevere in the face of hardship.

So last night, he appeared on ABC's "Nightline" to share with the world his wisdom on getting through the coronavirus pandemic.

"Like our own [Tibetan] cause, we never thought to give up," the Dalai Lama said in the interview. "We try, try ... One fail. Again effort. Fail. Again Effort. That's the proper way."

The Tibetan Buddhist leader was speaking virtually from his home in Dharamsala, India, where he has lived in exile since China annexed his homeland of Tibet in 1959.

Transforming sadness into determination

During the COVID-19 lockdown, the Dalai Lama has been sheltering in place to avoid catching or spreading the disease.

Although the soon-to-be 85 year old has thankfully stayed healthy, even he has felt the sadness of watching people suffer from the outbreak.

"When I saw in television some starving people or poor people, sometimes I [am] crying," he said.

But, he added, "sadness should transform [into] determination. More suffering, more determination. Should not feel helplessness. That's a failure."

Tibet and China

During the "Nightline" segment, the interviewer, Dan Harris, pointed out the struggles the Dalai Lama has faced throughout his life.

As Harris noted, the Dalai Lama was just a teenager when China invaded his Buddhist homeland and only 23 when he was forced to flee into exile.

Under Chinese rule, Tibet has become the second-least-free place on Earth, behind only Syria and worse than even North Korea, according to US watchdog group Freedom House.

Tibetans lack basic human rights, face systemic racism from the Chinese and serve years in prison simply for owning a photo of the Dalai Lama, their spiritual leader.

Despite all this—and despite the growing backlash China faces for its mishandling of the coronavirus outbreak—the Dalai Lama told Harris he still feels great compassion for the people of China, who are themselves victims of their repressive government.

“China, no democracy. Politically, quite tight control,” the Dalai Lama said. “So, totalitarian regime. But this will change. I think China will change.”

“Altruism is ultimate source of happiness”

When Harris asked him how to reduce anxiety during this unsettling time, the Dalai Lama’s answer was simple: compassion.

“Altruism is [the] ultimate source of happiness ... ” he said. “As soon as I wake up, I always think altruism. That really brings inner peace, inner strength.”

The Dalai Lama received support for that assertion from American neuroscientist Richard Davidson.

Unusual for a religious figure, the Dalai Lama has become “a major scientific figure,” Harris noted. The Dalai Lama encouraged Davidson to use modern scientific techniques to understand meditation’s impact on the human brain.

Through that research, Davidson learned that developing compassion can even decrease inflammation in the body.

Meditation (and animal videos)

For anyone who wants to use meditation to improve their health or help themselves during this crisis, the Dalai Lama recommended starting small.

“At the beginning, few seconds, 20 seconds or 30,” he said. “Then gradually, one minute, five minute, 10 minutes you can sit in that pureness of mind.”

What else does the Dalai Lama do to relax and have fun? “I look at animals,” he told Harris.

“Really, nature. Sometimes, you see, those animals, tigers or leopards, sometimes a little bit uncomfortable. But deer and these, very peaceful.”



International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) | 1825 Jefferson Place NW | Washington, DC 20036 | United States of America
Phone: (202) 785-1515 | Fax: (202) 785-4343 | info@savetibet.org

ICT Europe
Funenpark 1D | 1018 AK
Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Phone: +31 (0)20 3308265
Fax: +31 (0)20 3308266
icteurope@savetibet.nl

ICT Deutschland e.V.
Schönhauser Allee 163 | 10435
Berlin, Germany
Phone: +49 (0)30 27879086
Fax: +49 (0)30 27879087
info@savetibet.de

ICT Brussels
11, rue de la linière | 1060
Brussels, Belgium
Phone: +32 (0)2 609 44 10
Fax: +32 (0)2 609 44 32
info@save-tibet.eu