



Doctor of Humane Letters, honoris causa

Citation

Tenzin Gyatso, Your Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama of Tibet, you have lived a life where the world and the spirit intersect, and from that place you have brought back wisdom for us all.

In early childhood, in your family's farming village, you were singled out as spiritual leader of Tibet, and then rigorously educated for that role. When only 15, you were called to assume the Dalai Lama's temporal authority as well. A few years later, you led thousands of your countrymen into exile in India.

For these Tibetans, you have created a community where education is prized and Tibetan culture flourishes. You have been a symbol of hope, an advocate on the world stage, a tireless diplomat, and always the strong voice of non-violence. Your books, your public teachings, and the force of your presence have inspired millions far beyond the Snowland of Tibet.

Yet you remain, in your own words, "a simple Buddhist monk." From a complex life—of leadership and study, of courage and contemplation, of Buddhist teachings and Western travels, of exile and worldwide friendships and the Nobel Peace Prize—from all this you have distilled a radical simplicity.

Humanity, you tell us, is one. Suffering is our common lot, happiness our common goal, and love our most fundamental need. Compassion, therefore, is our universal duty—the bedrock of all the world's religions and indeed of secular ethics as well.

From this simplicity flow difficult demands. Compassion, you teach, is not just fellow-feeling but the will to ease pain wherever we see it. Science and humane values must seek each other out, for they speak different parts of the same unifying truth. We must all, together and interdependent, heal this globe, the only home we have. And all this begins in the love and teaching of our youngest children.

For the clarity, breadth, and humanity of your vision and your life, for giving yourself unstintingly to those in need of help and wisdom, and for showing us, always with the smile of an old friend, how profound simplicity can be, the University of Washington is proud to confer upon you the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, honoris causa.

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