



THE DALAI LAMA

## MESSAGE

Civilization is founded on such human qualities as honesty, morality, compassion and wisdom, but these qualities must be cultivated and sustained. One of the major challenges we continue to face is the achievement of peace and prosperity for all. Everyone wishes to live comfortably and in peace, but such a goal demands that we do more than merely talk or think about it. We cannot simply wait for someone else to do something about it. We each have to take responsibility to help one another as best as we can within our own sphere of activity.

In our present state of affairs, the very survival of humankind depends on people developing concern for the whole of humanity, not just their own community or nation. The reality of our situation impels us to act and think more clearly. Narrow-mindedness and self-centered thinking may have served us well in the past, but today will only lead to disaster. We can overcome such attitudes through a combination of education and training. On the basis of love and kindness towards our human brothers and sisters, we need to develop a sense of universal responsibility.

Therefore, international gatherings of young people such as those organized by the International Students Festival in Trondheim, which encourage the fostering of such positive attitudes and their practical implementation, are of great importance. I have personally participated in some of their past meetings and I have been a firm supporter of their activities for many years. What they doing is wonderful and of much benefit. Such efforts need to be supported wherever they take place.

November 26, 2004

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# HOW STUDENTS FROM TRONDHEIM CONVINCED THE DALAI LAMA TO COME TO ISFiT

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One of the biggest names ever to visit ISFiT was His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who attended the festival in 1994. The current Dalai Lama, originally named Tenzin Gyatso, was enthroned in 1950 as Tibet's Head of State and was the most important political ruler of the period in which Tibet faced occupation by the forces of the People's Republic of China. After the collapse of the Tibetan resistance movement in 1959, His Holiness the Dalai Lama fled to India. There, he was active in establishing the government of Tibet in exile and in preserving Tibetan culture and education among the thousands of refugees who accompanied him. A charismatic figure and noted public speaker, Tenzin Gyatso is the first Dalai Lama to travel to the west, where he has helped spread Buddhism and publicise the cause of a Free Tibet. In 1989, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

The President of ISFiT 1994, Rina Sunder, was a huge admirer of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and decided to have a go at inviting him to ISFiT. However, she recognised that simply writing an invitation letter would probably be useless; hence, they decided to apply more unconventional methods. Believing so strongly in the importance of ISFiT, they were convinced that if they only got to meet with His Holiness and explain the concept of ISFiT, he would want to come.

Rina and Lars Bjorgan Schroder travelled all the way to India and went to His Holiness' office. They entered, explained their errand and were obviously refused an audience. But the persistent ISFiTers didn't give up! They set up a tent in the garden of His Holiness, determined to stay until they got to meet him. Every day, they went to his secretaries and demanded a meeting, but the secretaries did not think it was important enough to grant them a meeting with His Holiness.

They ended up staying there for 2 weeks before the office staff got bored with them and decided to let them meet His Holiness to get rid of them. Rina and Lars carefully prepared themselves and were eager and ready on the day they were supposed to meet him. Right before the meeting was supposed to start, something unexpected came up and His Holiness was about to leave. But His Holiness stopped and said to his staff something like, "But wait. These are students from Norway. This is much more important!" Rina and Lars got to talk to His Holiness, they told him about ISFiT and he was so impressed that he decided to pay a visit to Trondheim during the festival!

During the festival he gave a speech on the importance of human rights and met with Norwegian Prime Minister and later director-general of the WHO, Gro Harlem Brundtland. He also met with many participating students and visited several workshops. His visit was a great success and has been of great value to ISFiT ever since.

