Chapter-II
“Universal responsibility is the key to the human survival. It is the best guarantee for human rights and for world peace.” [His Holiness The Dalai Lama, Universal Responsibility: Key to Human Survival,” www.ahrck.net/solidarity/199903/4/93-16.htm].

“The principle of mutual love admonishes men constantly to come nearer to each other, that of the respect, which they owe each other, to keep themselves at a distance from one another. And should one of these moral forces fail, ‘then nothingness (immorality), with gaping throat, would drink the whole kingdom of (moral) beings like a drop of water....’” [Immanuel Kant. ‘The Doctrine of Virtue’ in The Metaphysics of Morals, 1797 (M.J. Gregor, trans 1964), at 116, as cited in Henry J. Steiner and Philip Alston (Text and Materials), International Human Rights in Context: Law, Politics, Morals, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996 second reprint, p.275].

“The broken myth is the situation... in the world at large ... there is at present no endogenous theory capable of unifying contemporary societies and no imposed or imported ideology can be simply substituted for it. A mutual fecundation of cultures is a human imperative of our times.” [Henry J. Steiner and Philip Alston (Text and Materials). International Human Rights in Context: Law, Politics, Morals, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996 second reprint: p. 208].

“If we seriously desire to eliminate wars and conflicts as also the deadly suffocating pollution of the atmosphere, first we will have to de-pollute over minds by making efforts to eliminate mental impurities and negativities and will have to discard misleading notions, theories and ideologies. One will have to question the foundational values of the present day civilization and think of saner alternatives. This may also require a search for the roots and origins of the sacred and the eternal.” [Ramesh Chandra Tewari and Krishna Nath, (eds), Universal Responsibility: A Felicitation Volume in Honour of His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, on His Sixtieth Birthday, New Delhi: A ‘N’ B Publications for Foundation for Universal Responsibility of His Holiness The Dalai Lama, 1996, p.XIV].
TOWARDS A SHARED INTERCIVILIZATIONAL COMMITMENT, A DISCOURSE GROUNDED IN COMPASSION: THE DALAI LAMA ON UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHTS AND UNIVERSAL RESPONSIBILITY

To merely say that there is widespread acceptance of the principle of human rights on the domestic and international plane is not to say that there is complete agreement about the nature of such rights or their substantive scope - in other words, their definition. Basic questions, which are still to receive conclusive answers in this context, are the following: Are human rights to be viewed as divine, moral, or legal entitlements? Are they to be validated by intuition, custom, social contract theory, principles of distributive justice, or as prerequisites for happiness? Whether they are to be broad or limited in number or content? Whether they are to be understood as irrevocable or partially revocable? Therefore the suggestion is given, that these issues amongst others are matters of ongoing debate and will likely remain so, so long as there exist contending approaches to public order and scarcities among resources.¹

Also, the very meaning of human rights has become contested. Definitions and interpretations of human rights, which are radically different as firstly, forwarded by those, who are seen advocating 'cultural relativism' on one hand, and secondly, forwarded by those who are seen as contending for universal human rights on the other. Each of these positions, claims its stands to be the correct articulation of the concept of human rights.² Even though the debates about them are fascinating, they are seen as interminable.³

Considered one of the foremost arbiters of human rights in the 'modern' world, is the Dalai Lama. He bases his argument for human rights on the Buddhist notions of human dignity and compassion and conceptualizes them in a Kantian manner, by postulating the reciprocity of 'human rights' and 'universal responsibilities.' Even though his human rights thesis may not be considered rigorous in terms of the arguments it has to offer, still, it cannot be denied, that it attempts to offer a normative understanding of the issue.

² ibid., p. 170.
A short comparative study of the Kantian and the Buddhist interpretations of 'human rights' as also of the Dalai Lama’s interpretation of the Buddhist view on the same, would help in delineating the normative underpinnings of the Dalai Lama’s thought on the issue of human rights. According to Kant:

It is every man's duty to be beneficent—that is, to promote, according to his means, the happiness of others who are in need, and this without hope of gaining anything by it. For every man who finds himself in need wishes to be helped by other men. But if he lets his maxim of not willing to help others in turn when they are in need become public, i.e. makes this a universal permissive law, then everyone would likewise deny him assistance when he needs it, or at least would be entitled to: Hence the maxim of self-interest contradicts itself when it is made universal law— that is, it is contrary to duty. Consequently the maxim of common interest— of beneficence toward the needy— is a universal duty of man [italics added], and indeed for this reason: that men are to be considered fellow-men— that is, rational beings with needs, united by nature in one dwelling place for the purpose of helping one another.

Kant says further:

Every man has a rightful claim to respect from his fellow men and is reciprocally obligated to show respect to every other man. Humanity itself is a dignity; for man cannot be used merely as a means by any man (either by others or by himself) but must always be treated at the same time as an end...

This idea of 'reciprocity' as found in the Buddhist theory reflects the idea of human rights. Arguing from the Buddhist point of view, scholars who accept the concept of 'rights' as implicit in classical Buddhism, contend that the modern concept of rights is implicit in the normative understanding of what is 'due' among and between individuals. They assert that:

Under Dharma, husbands and wives, kings and subjects, teachers and students, all have reciprocal obligations [italics added] which can be analyzed into rights and duties. We must qualify this conclusion, however, by noting that the requirements of Dharma are almost always expressed in the form of duties rather than rights. In other words, Dharma states what is due in the form ‘A husband...
should support his wife' as opposed to 'Wives have a right to be maintained by their husbands.' Until rights as personal entitlements are recognized as discrete but integral part of what is due under Dharma, the modern concept of rights cannot be said to be present.\textsuperscript{6}

Such an understanding is also present in the Dalai Lama's conceptualizing of human rights, which he sums up as 'human rights and universal responsibility.' It may be suggested in the light of the Dalai Lama's thought, that 'universal rights,' as are stipulated by the UN Declaration of Human Rights, are to be understood in effect as 'universal duties,' "incumbent on any person not to treat other humans in certain negative ways."\textsuperscript{7}

Therefore, seen from the point of view of etymology, even though it has been accepted that Buddhism does not usually talk in terms of 'rights' — a term that incidentally has a long intellectual history in the Western philosophical tradition;\textsuperscript{8} this does not imply that Buddhists cannot agree with the substance of what is expressed in 'human rights' language. As Harvey says:

Buddhists are sometimes unhappy using the language of 'rights' as they may associate it with people 'demanding their rights' in an aggressive, self-centred way, and may question whether talk of 'inalienable rights' implies some unchanging, essential self that 'has' these, which is out of accord with Buddhism's teaching on the nature of selfhood. Nevertheless, as duties imply duties, Buddhists are happier talking directly about duties themselves: about 'universal duties', or to use a phrase much used by the Dalai Lama, 'universal responsibilities' rather than 'universal rights'.\textsuperscript{9}

As a corroborative exercise, an analysis dealing with the following issues: responsibility, universal responsibility and the relation of universal responsibility and human rights, as they emerge in the Dalai Lama's worldview and as analyzed by others, is being carried out below.

\textsuperscript{7} Peter Harvey, \textit{An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics}, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 119.
PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION OF ‘RESPONSIBILITY’

Etymologically, the word ‘Responsibility’ comes from the verb ‘respond,’ which means to answer or reply. Responsibility should therefore mean answerability. It has been argued that a reference to the term responsibility, is expressive of and concerned with every individual in the society, as also the society itself. Thus, it is in accordance with the Dharmapada which points out that the ‘concept of one world’ is theoretically realized when we accept the relationship between one individual and another. The Dharmapada states:

न हि वेरेण वेराणि समस्तीय कुठाचन ।
अवेरेण हि समस्ती एस धम्मो सततनो ॥

This concept of non-enmity can be explained in the following way:

So although the world may become large or small ultimately it is the relation between two individuals only. As soon as the second man is visualized, the concept of the world also arises. The second man, therefore, includes in him all the rest of individuals in the world.

It is due to this ontological assumption that postulates the existence of all beings in one, i.e., in the other, that even if one does not come into contact with every individual in the society, yet, it is this relation, which is suggested to be the formative principle of society.

As a concept, ‘universal responsibility’ is one that is said to resonate in many of the great ethical traditions, ancient as well as modern: The Indian formulation of vasudhaiva kutumbakam, which literally means, ‘to regard the whole world as one’s family,’ the Kantian insistence on the universalization of the maxims of moral will, as well as the concern of many utilitarian philosophers with

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11 ibid., pp. 122, 123.
12 ibid., p. 121.
the conception of the “common good,” all go to reveal that as a concept, universal responsibility has been accorded wide range of earlier ethical reflection which accounts in a way for its broad contemporary appeal. For the fact that it is such a broad concept, an affirmative formal definition stating the net content of it, signals some difficulties. Thus, it has been suggested that one way of understanding universal responsibility specifies a prohibition as in *ahimsa*, or to avoid all avoidable harm. This explanation of universal responsibility is seen to represent either an impossible or a quixotic moral path thus raising the question of whether this conception is consistent with the actuality of a world in which, owing to conflicts, absence of resources or the limits of our knowledge and skill, the ‘end’ “universal responsibility” seems to suggest cannot in fact be fulfilled? Or, is the idea of universal responsibility a moral platitude? Both questions can find cues to their answers in the argument in this chapter, which is specifically that, as an ontological virtue being generated because of the deep religious commitment of the Dalai Lama, a genuine sense of universal responsibility as advocated by him can never rise from the individualism bred by an economic world-view or by overarching ideologies. By emphasizing universal responsibility, the Dalai Lama attempts to articulate a ‘moral vision’ in which ‘universal connectedness’ is emphasized. This unity implies according to the Dalai Lama, a universal feeling of responsibility for all people. First employed by the Dalai Lama, this term has been put to more than just linguistic uses and has today become a rallying point for movements as also has become, the foundational principle for institutions. Thus, it has been emphasized that:

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14 ibid., p. 209.
15 ibid., p.211.
17 Kapstein, n.13, p.213.
18 Tewari and Nath, n.16, p.XII.
19 a) ibid., p.XXXIII.
b) An example can be given of ‘The Foundation for Universal Responsibility of His Holiness The Dalai Lama’ at New Delhi: “The Foundation is not there to promote any one individual, political ideology or cause. It is rather to build bridges of cooperation and understanding.” Geeti Sen and Rajiv Mehrotra, “Laughter and Compassion: His Holiness Tenzin Gyatso The XIVth Dalai Lama of Tibet in Conversation with Geeti Sen and Rajiv Mehrotra,” *India International Centre Quarterly* (New Delhi), vol. 18, no.4, p. 127.
from the point of view of awareness, universal responsibility is not even a principle; it is an inherent aspect of everyone's deepest sense of being. Humans are as much a part of nature as rivers... And brilliant, effective actions to help others can arise, not alone from thoughts, plans and conceptual networks, but with fearless interdependence with the greater whole.\textsuperscript{20} Therefore, it is stated that “the principle of universal responsibility is what every person fundamentally is; we, by birth embody it.\textsuperscript{21}

Exploring the psychological roots of universal responsibility, the Dalai Lama postulates empathy to be the foundation of the altruistic impulse, which according to him, leads one to take responsibility of those in distress or need. This has been corroborated by psychologists who agree that the “tap roots of universal responsibility as seen in ... psychology, in the development of children’s sense of connectedness with others, of empathy, and of compassion... [lie in the] intimate contact of mother and baby.\textsuperscript{22} Adherents to such a viewpoint argue that, this connectedness manifests in adulthood as empathetic and compassionate responses, and that it is only a mind that is empathetic and compassionate, which strengthens the roots of ethical judgement and gives rise to a genuine sense of universal responsibility.\textsuperscript{23}

ARGUMENT FOR THE RIGHTS OF HUMANS, BASED ON HUMAN NATURE

For the Dalai Lama, the logic for ‘human rights’ lies in human nature itself. Even though he argues that human rights are founded in human nature, he also suggests that it is in the interrelatedness of person and of persons with nature that human rights are found. For the Dalai Lama, human beings like everything else, are in a relational process described in the ‘doctrine of dependent origination.’\textsuperscript{24} It

\textsuperscript{20} Eleanor Rosch, “Portraits of the Mind in Cognitive Science and Meditation,” In Tewari and Nath (eds.), n.16, p. 162.
\textsuperscript{21} ibid., p. 163.
\textsuperscript{22} Daniel Goleman, “Universal Responsibility and the Roots of Empathy and Compassion,” In Tewari and Nath (eds.), n.16, p. 143.
\textsuperscript{23} Tewari and Nath, n. 16, pp. XX-XXI.
\textsuperscript{24} The Theory of causal efficiency (artha-kriya-karitva) which is based on the doctrine of pratiyamapada shows how each preceding link is causally efficient to produce the succeeding link and thus the capacity to produce an effect becomes the criterion of existence. See Chandradhar Sharma, A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1987, pp.72-75.
is his postulation that since no one exists independently, we should all respect each other's rights. Human rights in the Dalai Lama's thought is closely bound to the Buddhist foundation of human dignity which derives from the capacity of human nature to reach perfection. Buddha is the living embodiment of human perfection, and it is in the profound wisdom and compassion, that he exemplifies, and which are qualities all human beings can cultivate, that human dignity is to be found. The Dalai Lama draws from this source when he suggests that Buddhahood is within the reach of all human beings. This is conceded to by others who comment from the pan-Buddhist point of view and suggest that Buddhist thought is in accord with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to the extent to which, they, facilitate the advancement of human beings towards the Buddhist goal. Thus, it may be said that according to the Dalai Lama, human dignity in Buddhism lies in the infinite potential or capacity of human nature for participating in goodness. The writings of the Dalai Lama attempt to show that tautologically human rights and human dignity are in accord with human goodness, and he sees basic rights and freedom as integrally related to human flourishing and self-realization. He also recognizes the fundamental sameness of all human beings in the Buddhist worldview. Linking up the idea of the potential and the right to explore this potential, the Dalai Lama asserts that since the 'potential' (of human beings) for awakening and perfection is present in every human being, it becomes both a matter of right as well as a matter of personal effort to realize that potential.

Seen in the light of human nature and its fulfillment, the Dalai Lama's contention that freedom of religion is important in the Buddhist vision for both, individual and social good, makes it obvious that where there is no right to life, liberty and security of a person, (the example he cites, is of Tibet), the opportunity for the realization of human good are greatly reduced. The Dalai Lama therefore contends, that human rights give definite space to religious choice.

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For the Dalai Lama, the connection between human rights and responsibility, is a clear example of his engaged Buddhist ethic wherein, individualism does not debunk its social responsibility. This is the ‘ideal’ that emerges in his thought, and it can be said that the ideals of human rights and universal responsibility hold the key to his social thought. From his point of view, every individual is important, as is the society in which this individual lives. Elaborated below are the chief tenets emergent in his thought, that aim to establish the link between Human Rights and Universal Responsibility.

EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO BE HAPPY AND TO OVERCOME SUFFERING

The Dalai Lama argues that all human beings are desirous to be happy and wish to avoid suffering. He therefore considers the rights of every human being as very precious and important. He cites the Buddhist belief that considers every sentient being to have a mind whose fundamental nature is essentially pure and unpolluted by mental distortions and therefore capable of eventually achieving perfection and asserts that because every sentient being has such potential, all beings are equal. It is from such a vantage point that he suggests that everyone has the right to be happy and to overcome suffering.

In his analysis, the principal vows observed by fully ordained monks are explicitly concerned with a deep respect for the rights of others. In his words: “I often describe the essence of Buddhism as being something like this: if you can, help other sentient beings, if you cannot, at least refrain from harming them. This reveals a deep respect for others, for life itself, and concern for others welfare.”

He gives reasons, the former being utilitarian, for respecting the rights of others as can be seen below:

a) Practicing Compassion and Love when we are Strong and Capable:

Utilitarian Standpoint: Giving the example of infancy and old age, he draws

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30 ibid.
attention to the age-old truth that both at the beginning of our life and also in old age, we appreciate the help of others. Thence he draws the conclusion that it would be better to practice compassion and love towards others when we are strong and capable:

b) **Respect for Others and Concern for their Rights**: Drawing attention to reciprocity of feelings, the Dalai Lama explains that we gather genuine friends only when we express sincere human feelings, when we express respect for others as also a concern for their rights. He understands that this is not a philosophical issue and that we all are witness to the truism of this in our daily lives. He suggests that the practice of compassion is conducive to one’s own happiness and satisfaction. Once the altruistic attitude is developed, it automatically generates concern for the other’s suffering. Thus he says, "We will simultaneously develop a determination to do something to protect the rights of others and to be concerned with their fate."31

III

**THE DALAI LAMA ON THE CONTENTIOUS ISSUE OF THE ‘UNIVERSALITY’ OF ‘HUMAN RIGHTS’**

The Dalai Lama asserts that human rights are of universal interest because it is the inherent nature of all human beings to yearn for freedom, equality and dignity and that they have a right to achieve these. Having been born into this world as part of one great human family, ultimately, all humans are the same, regardless of being rich or poor, educated or uneducated, belonging to one nation or another, to one religion or another, adhering to one ideology or another — this is what the Dalai Lama believes.32

The argument forwarded by cultural relativists against contenders of universal human rights is that this concept is the product of western individualism and that it attempts to impose international human rights on the other cultures as a form of imperialism. The chief contenders of this view, advocate the ‘Asian’ view

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31 ibid.
32 ibid.
of human rights. Some western commentators also agree to this. Samuel Huntington offers the argument that the Western ideas of individualism, liberalism, constitutionalism, human rights, equality, liberty, the rule of law, democracy, free markets, the separation of church and state, often have little resonance in Islamic, Confucian, Japanese, Hindu, Buddhist or Orthodox cultures. Western efforts to propagate such ideas produce instead a reaction against “human rights imperialism” and “a reaffirmation of indigenous values . . .” It has been argued by some that such a relativist thesis is unconvincing for a number of reasons. “It assumes that there is a single set of Western, Islamic or Asian cultural values respectively. This is patently untrue . . . Huntington’s list — Confucian, Japanese, Hindu, Buddhist — is itself a refutation of the popular catchall of ‘Asian’ values. There are many traditions and beliefs, some of them hostile to each other, even within each of these.”

If an attempt is made to focus on the ‘Asian’ view of human rights subscribed to by some, chiefly China, it can be seen to be suggesting that the standards laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, are basically advocated by the West. Hence the further suggestion would be that these ‘Universal’ Human Rights cannot be applied to either Asia and other parts of the Third World, because of differences in culture and differences in social and economic development. Opposing such a view, the Dalai Lama holds that the

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Advocates of ‘Asian Values’ sometimes say that the Asians place the “common good” before the individual, whereas the West accords priority to the individual. Mahathir Mohamad has listed the six most important societal values of the East Asians on the basis of a survey by David Hitchcock. They are enumerated as the following: (1) an orderly society; (2) societal harmony; (3) the accountability of public officials; (4) openness to new ideas; (5) freedom of expression; and (6) respect for authority. Mahathir Mohamad, “Let’s Have Mutual Cultural Enrichment”, New Straits Times, March 16, 1995, pp. 10-11. Also see:
fundamental human rights are as important to the people of Asia as they are to those in Europe or the Americas. This is because all human beings, whatever their race, religion, sex or political status, are basically the same, by virtue of the fact that they share common human needs and concerns. For this reason, he stresses not only upon the logical need to respect human rights worldwide, but more importantly, on the definition of these rights. The Dalai Lama emphasizes that all human beings yearn for freedom, equality and dignity. Since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights upholds all these three, for the Dalai Lama, it, best defines human rights.

Another major difference that the Asian view of human rights draws out, is that, the universal human rights do not take into due consideration, the equitable, economic development of the third world. The Dalai Lama has a different perspective on this. He holds that although trade and economy are related to human rights, yet ‘respecting’ human rights does not lead to lack of economic development. However, he does not clearly instantiate this in any of his writings, neither does he give any clarification for holding this view. In the same vein, he


Michael Freeman suggests that the Comparable values held by the Americans are: (1) Freedom of expression; (2) personal freedom; (3) the right of the individual; (4) open debate; (5) thinking for oneself; (6) the accountability of public officials. Mahathir conclusively says that this makes it apparent that East Asians give priority to ordersupporting values whereas Americans privilege rights-related values. Michael Freeman, “Human Rights, Democracy and Asian Values”, The Pacific Review 9, no. 3, 1996: 352-66. Also see—


ibid., p. 90.

His Holiness The Dalai Lama, Speeches Statements Articles Interviews: 1987 to June 1995, Dharamsala: The Department of Information and International Relations, Central Tibetan Administration, Gangchen Kyishong, 1995, p. 205.
also suggests that in the case of human rights violations, economic pressure is the best strategy that can be adopted. In his own words:

I believe economics and human rights are interlinked... when China did not heed to world appeals on human rights, there was no alternative but to apply economic pressure. The US should have put economic pressure on China.\(^\text{40}\)

This kind of angle to the Dalai Lama’s thought is revelatory as it shows his astute vision about political economy; the Dalai Lama recognizes what others have, that the current trend world-over is to stress on economic gains rather than on national glory\(^\text{41}\) — therefore his urging that China ought to be pressurized on the economic front, can be seen as an offshoot of one such vision. It can be seen that contrary to the Asian view of human rights that economic development can suffer due to human rights protection, the Dalai Lama turns the argument around, and suggests that with economic coercion, sometimes human rights may be protected.

Taking a stand against discrimination of persons from different races, women or the weaker sections of the society, the Dalai Lama contends that the existent diversity and tradition are no justification for the violation of rights. He says: “the universal principles of equality of all human beings must take precedence.”\(^\text{42}\) In his view it is the authoritarian and totalitarian regimes that are opposed to the universality of human rights. Such regimes, he emphasizes, consider the fundamental human rights of their citizens, an internal matter of the state — which the Dalai Lama does not consider right. In this context he says: “No government can claim discretionary authority to take away the inalienable rights of individuals and peoples.”\(^\text{43}\) This kind of stance raises a question, as to whether the

\(^{40}\) “Interview to The Economic Times,” The Political Philosophy of His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama: Selected Speeches and Writings, edited by A.A. Shiromany, New Delhi: Tibetan Parliamentary and Policy Research Centre and Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung, p. 195.

\(^{41}\) Dawa Norbu, “Tibetan Buffer Good for Both India and China,” Demilitarization of the Tibetan Plateau, Dharamsala: The Department of Information and International Relations, 2000, p. 23.

\(^{42}\) His Holiness The Dalai Lama, Speeches Statements Articles Interviews: 1987 to June 1995, Dharamsala: The Department of Information and International Relations, Central Tibetan Administration, Gangchen Kyishong, 1995, p. 206.

Dalai Lama’s agenda on human rights is anarchist. This is especially obvious when one takes note of his exhortations, demanding protest against such ‘atrocities’ as state repression. In fact, he posits that it is one’s right as well as one’s duty to do so: “It is not only our right as members of the global human family to protest when our brothers and sisters are being treated brutally, but it is our duty to do whatever we can to help them.” For the Dalai Lama, demand for one’s rights, makes it imperative to also have serious consideration for one’s responsibilities. He says, “When we demand the rights and freedom we so cherish, we should also be aware of our responsibilities.” The recognition of the fact that others have an equal right to peace and happiness like oneself, entails the responsibility of helping them, or in the least, of not harming them. Keeping this in view, the Dalai Lama says: “We need to develop a concern for the problems of others, whether they be individuals or entire people.”

It is important to note, especially in the context of a discourse on human rights in the Dalai Lama’s thought (and especially where he refers to issues like ‘concern’ etc.), that the concept of globalization becomes important. Cognizing this, he insists that individuals and nations can no longer resolve many of their problems by themselves. Keeping in view this interdependence, the Dalai Lama introduces the concept of universal responsibility. This concept basically entails a ‘growing’ awareness in people and literally means the responsibility that individuals share vis-à-vis one another and the responsibility they have, to the planet they share. Such a thought process is especially influenced by the Buddhist doctrine of Pratityasamutpada. The doctrine of Pratityasamutpada or Dependent Origination is considered the foundation of all teachings of the Buddha. Nagarjuna and Shantarakshita, both well-known commentators on Buddhism,

45 His Holiness The Dalai Lama, n. 42, p. 205.
46 “Speech on Human Rights and Responsibilities,” n. 43, p.38.
47 His Holiness The Dalai Lama, n.42, p. 204.
48 Chandradhar Sharma, A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1987, p.72-75 (For clarification of the concept of Pratityasamutpada see Chapter III, footnote no.5).
suggest that Pratityasamutpada lead to the ‘cessation of plurality.’

The Dalai Lama couches the concept of dependent origination in simple language and postulates that since no one exists independently, a mutual respect for rights is essential. It would do well to remember that the Dalai Lama’s considerations of human beings living in relationships with one another, as also the responsibility this ‘interdependence’ entails, is an argument with normative underpinnings, although it can be considered an appeal of sorts also. It is here that he makes an interesting link between interdependence and the Tibetan question. His remark, that the democratic popular movements throughout the world have ‘forced’ totalitarian regimes and dictators out of power, is specifically worth taking note of. At points, he sees parallels in the ouster of totalitarian governments, with the “Chinese people’s yearning for democracy.” Thereafter he brings in the phenomenon of the increasing interdependence, which comes forth as a veiled message for China, drawing its attention to Tibet’s tenacity in spite of its misery. In his own words: “the world is increasingly interdependent and the question of Tibet must be viewed in the context of world events.” He further exhorts the international community to take up the responsibility to encourage such change. He thus concludes decisively that “Dramatic and successful people’s movements in Asia, Latin America and particularly in the East European countries are a clear indication that society cannot continue to be governed by dictatorial and totalitarian regimes. Sooner or later, humanity’s innate desire for freedom and democracy asserts itself and ultimately triumph.”

IV HUMAN NEED FOR LIBERTY AND DEMOCRACY

Although the Dalai Lama acknowledges that no system of government is perfect, he holds that it is democracy that comes closest to the essential human nature. He suggests that Democracy is not merely a formal institution with a representative government with an independent judiciary, the rule of law and

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49 ibid., p. 72.
51 ibid., p. 9.
52 ibid., p. 8.
53 ibid., p. 9.
accountability, as well as freedom of speech and freedom of press. Then what is democracy? The Dalai Lama holds that democracy is all about freedom and empowerment of the individual. Clearly this ambivalence (that sometimes emerges in the Dalai Lama’s thought) looks like one of the problematics in his writings and to escape it one can try to see beneath the lose terms and thence realize that he is basically seeking the freedom of the individual, vis-à-vis, as also, in harmony with society.

Bringing to rest all doubts regarding the question of whether there is anachronism of the western notion of human rights in trying to establish Buddhist foundations for human rights, he argues that Buddhism and democracy are compatible. Democracy for the Dalai Lama is a prerequisite for human rights. His argument is based on the logic that they are both rooted in the same understanding of the equality and potential of the individual. This establishes three things for him: one, speaking about human rights based on Buddhist principles is not anachronism; two, both Buddhism and democracy have their roots in human dignity and three, that their approach recognizes the individual, yet does not sacrifice the sense of universal responsibility.

Democracy itself has been viewed from two perspectives: on the one hand, many nations define the most important aspect of democracy to be the respect for individual, civil and political rights; on the other hand, many underdeveloped countries see the rights of society as overriding those of the individual, particularly, the right to economic development. The Dalai Lama argues to bridge the gap between these two perspectives. In his words:

In reality I believe that economic advancement and respect for individual rights are closely linked. A society cannot fully maximize its economic advantage without granting its people individual civil and political rights. At the same time, these freedoms are diminished if the basic necessities of life are not met.

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55 ibid., p. 19.
56 ibid., p. 19.
57 ibid., p. 19.
Another perspective, which is subscribed to by some Asian leaders, is that democracy and the freedom that is supposed to come with it, are exclusive products of the Western civilization. It is their argument that while Asian cultures emphasize ‘order,’ ‘duty’ and ‘stability,’ the western democracies emphasize individual rights and liberties, which basically undermine the value of the former. They also suggest that Asians have fundamentally different needs as far as personal and social fulfillments are concerned. The Dalai Lama does not share the Asian viewpoint. Arguing from his established argument of all human beings sharing the same basic aspirations — of wanting happiness and eschewing suffering — the Dalai Lama rejects the Asian view of Human Rights.

The Buddhist perspective adopted by the Dalai Lama compares the modern democracy with the fundamental Buddhist concepts. In Buddhism, human dignity flows from the capacity of human nature to reach perfection, as demonstrated by the historical figure of the Buddha. Therefore it is suggested that the Buddha is the living embodiment of human perfection, and it is in the profound wisdom and compassion, which he exemplifies and which are qualities, that all human beings can cultivate, that human dignity is to be found. Reiterating this idea, the Dalai Lama blends his perceptions on human rights with democracy. According to him:

at the heart of Buddhism lies the idea that the potential for awakening and perfection is present in every human being and it is a matter of personal effort to realize that potential. The Buddha proclaimed that each individual is the master of his or her own destiny, highlighting the ability that each person has for achieving enlightenment. In this sense, there is the recognition of a fundamental sameness of all human beings in the Buddhist worldview. The Buddhist perspective adopted by the Dalai Lama compares the modern democracy with the fundamental Buddhist concepts. In Buddhism, human dignity flows from the capacity of human nature to reach perfection, as demonstrated by the historical figure of the Buddha. Therefore it is suggested that the Buddha is the living embodiment of human perfection, and it is in the profound wisdom and compassion, which he exemplifies and which are qualities, that all human beings can cultivate, that human dignity is to be found. Reiterating this idea, the Dalai Lama blends his perceptions on human rights with democracy. According to him:

Modern democracy which is based on the principle of all human beings as essentially equal and of each having an equal right to life, liberty and happiness, regardless of economic condition, education or religion; the Dalai Lama suggests, is basically arguing that each human being is equal to every other human being, by virtue of being a human being.

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59 His Holiness The Dalai Lama, n.54, p. 19.
60 ibid., p. 19.
Comparing the decision-making procedure between them, the Dalai Lama highlights the recognition of the role of consensus, both in the Buddhist tradition as well as in Democracy. He cites the example of the monastic establishment where any major decisions affecting the lives of individual monks, are based on a collective discourse. Corroborating this, the Dalai Lama posits that the Vinaya rules of discipline that govern the behaviour and life of the monastic community are in keeping with democratic traditions. He says further: “In theory, at least, even the teachings of Buddha can be altered under certain circumstances by a congregation of a certain number of ordained monks.”

It is with keeping such flexibility in mind, that the Dalai Lama, compares all the important stipulations found in the Universal Declaration with the pan-Asian tradition of Buddhism. (By doing so he also registers his plea against the human rights violations of the Tibetans in Tibet. In this context, he postulates that it is not enough, as the communist systems have assumed, that the human desire for freedom and dignity ends with good, shelter and clothing, because in the ultimate analysis, human nature needs liberty).

V (i)

The Dalai Lama concedes all through his writings that each human being can seek to live in a society where everyone is allowed free expression and each can strive to be the best he/she can be. However, he adds a very important point, which in fact is the crux of his human rights world-view:

...To pursue one’s own fulfillment at the expense of others would lead to chaos and anarchy. So what is required is a system whereby the pursuits of the individual are balanced with the wider well-being of the community at large. He postulates that this balancing feature is of ‘responsibility.’ This responsibility when it refers to a compassionate concern for mankind at large is named ‘universal responsibility’ in the Dalai Lama’s thought. He defines it as the

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61 ibid., p. 19.
63 His Holiness The Dalai Lama, n.54, p. 19.
64 ibid., p. 19.
developing of the 'sense,' to work, not merely for one's individual selves, family or nation, but for the benefit of all mankind.  

Perhaps unique to the Dalai Lama thought, is the vision that democracy should have a human approach which 'recognizes the importance of the individual' without sacrificing 'the Universal Sense of Responsibility'. He states that this sort of approach is the typical Buddhist approach, where the focus is on the individual, without losing sight of the necessary corollary, which is the purpose of a meaningful individual life and which can only be gotten by serving others. The Buddhist stand may be reiterated here for its suggestion, that it is in the profound 'compassion' that the Buddha teaches that 'human dignity' is found. The Dalai Lama's in an argument tautological to this, states that it is important to reassess the rights and responsibilities of individuals, peoples and nations, in globalization and interdependence. Emphasizing the common human needs and concerns of all individuals, the Dalai Lama states that it is only due to a lack of understanding, (especially of the interconnectedness of all phenomenon) that people inflict suffering on others. Violations of human rights is one such inflicted suffering according to him which also includes the economic angle to human rights violations, which he defines as the inequitable distribution of the world's resources.

Therefore, the Dalai Lama finds a logical and cohesive interconnection in rights and responsibilities in order to come to grips with the interdependence that is an emerging concern due to rapid globalization. It is his suggestion that belief in interdependence, ensures that the rights of others are recognized above one's own. He contends that the more we become interdependent, the more it is in our own

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66 His Holiness The Dalai Lama, n.54, p. 19.
69 ibid., p. 89.
interest to ensure the well being of others.\textsuperscript{71} One of the principal factors that creates a hindrance in a complete appreciation of the phenomenon of interdependence according to him, is an undue emphasis on material development,\textsuperscript{72} and thus he suggests, that the parameters of human progress and development are indicated by the concern that is shown for the violations of human rights in any part of the world.\textsuperscript{73} In a subtle way, the Dalai Lama again brings in the concept of universal responsibility by suggesting that this concept is symbolic of the deeper concern for not just the present generation, but also for the future generations.\textsuperscript{74} Therefore, he would suggest that as nations and individuals are becoming 'increasingly interdependent' due to globalization, there is no choice but to have a sense of universal responsibility.\textsuperscript{75} It is the Dalai Lama’s suggestion that a keen awareness of the interdependence phenomenon, is only possible with the help of compassion. How therefore, the question can be posed, has the Dalai Lama viewed the concept of compassion? For the Dalai Lama, “the practice of compassion is not idealistic, but the most effective way to pursue the best interest of others as well as our own.”\textsuperscript{76} He further says that to experience genuine compassion is to develop a feeling of closeness to others, combined with a sense of responsibility for their welfare.\textsuperscript{77} Enumerating the Buddhist belief of freedom, equality and compassion for all, as being fundamental to human rights,\textsuperscript{78} the Dalai Lama recognizes the notion of developing unconditional compassion to be daunting although he stresses that it can be accomplished by recognizing oneself

\textsuperscript{71} His Holiness The Dalai Lama, n.42, p. 208.
\textsuperscript{72} ibid., p. 208.
\textsuperscript{73} The Dalai Lama, “I Believe,”\textsuperscript{74}\textsuperscript{75} Tibetan Bulletin, (Dharamsala: The Department of Information and International Relations, Central Tibetan Administration, Gangchen Kyishong), vol. 3, no. 1, January-February, 1999, p. 29.
\textsuperscript{76} ibid., p. 29
\textsuperscript{78} “Human Rights and Universal Responsibility,” n.38, p. 93.

\textsuperscript{73} “Importance of Compassion in Human Life,”\textsuperscript{74} The Spirit of Tibet: Universal Heritage,\textsuperscript{75} Selected Speeches and Writings of His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama, edited by A.A. Shiromany, New Delhi: Tibetan Parliamentary and Policy Research Centre and Allied Publishers Ltd., 1995, p. 252.

\textsuperscript{74} “Address to the U.S. Congress, US Capitol Rotunda, April 18, 1999,”\textsuperscript{75} The Political Philosophy of His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama: Selected Speeches and Writings, edited by A.A. Shiromany, New Delhi: Tibetan Parliamentary and Policy Research Centre and Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung, 1998, p. 64.
clearly in others.\textsuperscript{79} In fact, the Dalai Lama has consistently argued that the most important 'moral quality' that individuals need to cultivate is compassion.\textsuperscript{80}

\section*{V (ii)
LINKING HUMAN RIGHTS AND COMPASSION}

Making a link between human rights and compassion, the Dalai Lama interprets from the Buddhist angle. Interpreted thus, the Dalai Lama contends that genuine compassion is based on a clear acceptance or recognition that others, like oneself, desire happiness and have the right to overcome suffering.\textsuperscript{81} In his thought, it is on the basis of such a worldview that one develops some kind of concern about the welfare of others irrespective of one's attitude to them. He calls this concern — compassion. Making a distinction between compassion and attachment, he states that whereas attachment is narrow-minded and biased, genuine compassion is healthier and unbiased.\textsuperscript{82} He makes another distinction between compassion and religion and says that compassion is all about good human qualities and in this sense, is de-linked from the religious attitude which he broadly calls religion.\textsuperscript{83} Referring to it as an aspect of human nature again, he says: "I argue that if you study the structure of human body, you will see that it is akin to those species of mammals whose way of life is more gentle or peaceful. Sometime I half joke that our hands are arranged in such a manner that they are good for hugging rather than hitting... that means that our basic physical structure creates a compassionate or gentle kind of nature."\textsuperscript{84} However, he does suggest, that religion

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{79} Tenzin Gyatso His Holiness The Dalai Lama, n.28, pp. 134 - 5.
\item \textsuperscript{81} "No Substitute for Love," n. 65, p. 81.
\item \textsuperscript{84} The Dalai Lama, n. 82, p.58-59.
\end{itemize}

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can play an important role in the cultivation of a compassionate society based on mutual respect, tolerance and human well-being. It is in such a context that he makes the suggestion that religious practitioners, especially religious leaders have the responsibility of working in harmony with the common aim of “converting the hearts” of people to become good hearts. He asserts that to develop a feeling of closeness to others combined with a sense of responsibility for their welfare, is, to experience genuine compassion.

Comparing the Dalai Lama’s worldview, for example, with Western philosophers like Locke and Kant, it is seen that there is a clear attempt in their thought to demarcate and defend the rights of the individual (only) against hegemonic powers that could transgress individual liberty. For instance, Kant attempted to protect the domain of thought, postulating right to freedom of thought and expression as a fundamental right. “What is enlightenment?” says Kant, propelling a question. To him: “Enlightenment is man’s release from his self-incurred tutelage. Tutelage is man’s inability to make use of his understanding without direction from another . . . ‘Have courage to use your reason!’ That is the motto of enlightenment.” Similarly, for Locke non-interference with one’s use of one’s property and conduct in one’s home, symbolize fundamental rights.

What is of importance to the current discussion is that both Kant and Locke show that they restrict duties to the public sphere, while establishing the sanctity of the private. The most important thing about a discourse on human rights grounded in compassion is that such a discourse has the capacity to address moral


88 ibid., p. 179.
life in what the liberal regards as the private domain. The Dalai Lama’s discourse on Human Rights is grounded in compassion. According to the Dalai Lama, true happiness does not come from a limited concern for one’s own well-being, or that of those one feels close to, but from developing love and compassion for all sentient beings. Here love for him means, wishing that all sentient beings should find happiness, and compassion means wishing that they should all be free of suffering. Developing this attitude gives rise to a sense of openness and trust that provides the basis for peace. Linking human rights and peace, the Dalai Lama says: “Human rights and true peace — which is more than the absence of war — are closely linked. So long as human rights are violated, there can be no foundation for peace.” Therefore, it has been said by Tsong Khapa that “... The character of the great ones is limited to the benefit and happiness of others.” Schopenhauer explains this as a situation in which ‘distinction’ between individuals ceases. For the Dalai Lama, to begin with compassion is to have the good of others in one’s heart, or, as one’s motive for action. For him, the compassionate action is motivated by not merely one’s family or friends, in other words, people for whom one has an attachment, but, even for those one does not know or even for enemies. This especially, is very contrary to Hume’s position. According to Hume:

’tis rare to meet with one, in whom all kind affections, taken together, do not over-balance all the selfish . . . there are few that do not bestow the largest part of their fortunes on the pleasure of their

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wives, and the education of their children, reserving the smallest portion for their own proper use and entertainment. (*Treatise*, 487)\(^{95}\)

Such a thought gets countered in the Dalai Lama’s when he stresses that love and compassion are the foundations of human existence.\(^{96}\) He conceptualizes the marked differences between compassion and attachment and for him the Humean idea of “selfish” interaction as mentioned above would be a case of action motivated by attachment rather than falling into the category of compassionate action. The Dalai Lama’s explanation follows:

...parents’ attitude towards their children contains a mixture of desire and attachment with compassion. The love and compassion between husband and wife . . . are on a superficial level. As soon as the attitude of one-partner changes, the attitude of the other becomes opposite to what it was. That kind of love and compassion is more of the nature of attachment. Attachment means some kind of feeling of closeness projected by one . . . . As soon as the mental attitude changes, that picture completely changes.\(^{97}\)

Hume’s argument is that the farther in relation to us a person or a sentient being, the less natural compassion we feel for his or her suffering, and the easier it is to be indifferent or even hostile. Evolving in a different way, the Dalai Lama’s thought would dismiss the Humean logic by arguing that if such a phenomenon were to be, it would lead to a very unsatisfactory state of affairs. To look at another argument that Hume gives:

But tho’ this generally must be acknowledg’d to do the honour of human nature, we may at the same time remark that so noble an affection, instead of fitting men for large societies, is almost as contrary to them, as the most narrow selfishness. For while each person loves himself better than any other single person, and in his love to others bears the greatest affection to his relation and acquaintance, this must necessarily produce an opposition of passions, and a consequent opposition of actions.\(^{98}\)

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\(^{97}\) ibid., p. 143.

\(^{98}\) Hume, n.95, Treatise 487.
Ironically, this thought would run against the self-interest of those concerned. The Dalai Lama would suggest that such an interaction would keep us in a state of perpetual hostility. Since the Dalai Lama considers compassion to be a natural quality of human nature, the Humean definition is too narrow for his stance. In fact, he tries to give a social face to compassion and extends it from the individual to the society at large, and much in consonance with Schopenhauer, holds that differences between individuals are not real. Schopenhauer postulates the apparent difference between persons by saying:

According to experience, the difference between my own person and another's appear to be absolute. The difference and time that separates me from him separates me also from his weal and woe.

Again he says:

...My true inner being exists in every living thing as distinctly as it makes itself known in my self-consciousness only to me... It is this that bursts through as compassion on which all genuine...virtue therefore depends.

According to the Dalai Lama:

Different philosophies and traditions have different interpretations of the meaning of love and compassion....The Buddhist interpretation is that genuine compassion is based on a clear acceptance or recognition that others, like oneself, want happiness and have the right to overcome suffering. On that basis one develops some kind of concern about the welfare of others, irrespective of one's attitude to oneself. That is compassion.

The Dalai Lama postulates that it is possible to have compassion without any physical proximity to the situation or person one is feeling compassionate towards. He gives the example of Somalia and says that when we see people starving even on television, we automatically feel sad, regardless of whether that sadness can lead to some kind of active help or not. Cognizing this sense of solidarity with other human beings, who have obvious similarities, helps in building one's ability to feel a sense of solidarity at the universal level also.

100 Schopenhauer, n.94, p. 205.
102 The Dalai Lama, n. 82, pp.62-63.
103 ibid., p. 67.
Although this insight is originally attributed to Hume, recent moral theorists have also developed and defended it with great force. This insight is encountered in the Tibetan Buddhist philosophy, where visualizing each sentient being as one's mother becomes a 'means,' to extend natural sympathy into universal compassion. It is said that "...cultivation of sentient beings as kinsfolk is for generating gratitude. Now, the ultimate kin is the mother. Therefore, the three, mother-contemplative repetition, mindfulness of kindness, and show of return of gratitude...generate compassion."

The Dalai Lama interprets it in a slightly different way. For him to generate genuine compassion, first of all, one must go through the training of equanimity. This provides one with an unbiased approach to others, be they people one likes, dislikes or is indifferent to. This kind of approach has an obvious cue to the Dalai Lama's worldview on Human Rights and extending the debate further, it would be relevant to understand the root viz., the element of compassion, emergent from Tibetan Buddhism, based on which, the Dalai Lama has elaborated his own view. In this context, it can be queried that why should one make all persons one...

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105 Wayman, n. 93, p. 43.
106 "The line of the Dalai Lamas is essentially rooted in Lama Drom Tonpa,* the 11th century disciple of Jowo Je Atiśa. The order of Tibetan Buddhism formed by Atiśa and Lama Drom, which became known as the Kadam Tradition, is now extinct; but historically it remains as one of the most important schools to have appeared in Tibet, for it became a major foundation-stone for three of Tibet's four major orders of today, and has greatly influenced even the fourth.

Foremost of all Kadam doctrines was the transmission known as Lo-jong (Tib. bLo-sByong), or "mental transformation". Atiśa imparted this to Drom Tonpa, and eventually it came to the line of the Dalai Lamas. This doctrine, with its emphasis on compassion and the altruistic mind, was greatly treasured by each of the Dalai Lamas, and was also widely taught by them. The third Dalai Lama used it to civilise the fierce Timut Mongols after he introduced them to Buddhism in 1578, and the Fifth used it to tame the border peoples of Western China in 1653.**

The Lo-jong tradition was particularly well-suited to the office of the Dalai Lamas. The first Tibetan to receive the lineage was Lama Drom Tonpa, the most important predecessor of the Dalai Lama line. Secondly, because the tradition places compassion and the altruistic mind as its spearhead (the Dalai Lamas are incarnations of Avalokiteśvara, the Bodhisattva of Compassion), it was ideal. Thirdly, after the Dalai Lamas became Tibet's spiritual and temporal head it became significant that the Kadam Lo-jong tradition was one element of Tibetan Buddhism most widely accepted and practised by all sects in the country.

A characteristic of the Lo-jong method conducive to its wide acceptance (and is) its essentially humanistic rather than religious approach to the problems of Being. The practice involved primarily the transformation of afflicted emotions common to all men. There was very little in it even to mark it specifically as Buddhist, other than the occasional reference to the objects
is neutral to, as also enemies, equal to one’s mother? The Dalai Lama, has
instructed thus, so as to enable one to “reflect on the fundamental equality
between… [oneself] and all other sentient being.”107

of Refuge. In both the European and American tours His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama
dedicated many of his talks to giving commentaries to The Eight Verses far Training the Mind (Tib.
bLo-sByong tshigs-brGyad-ma), a poem embodying the Lo-jong teachings in eight four-line
verses. When his subject was not formally Lo-jong, it was recognisably a Lo-jong topic as
applied to the American situation. Because Lo-jong is applicable to men of almost any religion
and does not convey its message in exclusively Buddhist terms, the approach was extremely well
received.

The directness in his communication with the American people was much commented
upon in the press. This same directness is a quality visible not only in the written works of the
previous Dalai Lama, but also in the life of Lama Drom Tonpa. Once when Lama Drom was out
walking he met a man who was circumambulating a stupa. “Whatever are you doing?” Drom asked
him. “Walking around a stupa is a positive action,” was the retort. “Better to practise religion”,
Drom told him. Later Drom saw the man reading a scripture. “Reading a holy book is good, but the
practice of religion is better”, he told him. The man decided to meditate, thinking that this must be
what Drom meant. “Meditation is good, but the practice of religion is better”, Drom advised. “Then
was is practice?” asked the man. Drom replied, “Make all practices one with your mind.”

The First Dalai Lama… was actually a Kadampa Lama by ordination. He gave much of his
life to studying and teaching the Lo-jong tradition. When the time of his passing arrived, he sat
leaning against a pillar in the main chapel of Tashilhunpo Monastery and told his disciples,
“Remember the spiritual advice I have given you and use it to develop your minds for the sake of
all living beings. Especially, live, meditate and speak in accordance with the intent of the
Enlightened Ones. This alone will fulfill my aspirations.” Having given this last Lo-jong precept, he
entered into meditation and ceased breathing.

During the U.S. tour His Holiness repeatedly stressed the value and social importance of
developing a viable system of humanitarian ethics that would solve many of the social problems
confronting America today. His message was always fresh and alive, for it came in response to a
particular people and for the unique conditions of late twentieth century America. Yet the ethics
themselves were not new. They were the same Lo-jong precepts that Lama Dron Tonpa and the
early Dalai Lama cultivated in the Tibetan, Mongolian and Chinese peoples over the centuries
[italics added].

The collected works of Gyalwa Gendun Drub, the First Dalai Lama, contains a work
etitled “A Brief Commentary to Atiśa’s Spiritual Transformation in the Mahayana
Tradition.”++ This work was not written by the First Dala Lama; it is the edited notes of an oral
talk on Atiśa’s Spiritual Transformation in the Mahayana Tradition given by him in the mid-
fifteenth century to a mixed audience of Tibetans. The seventh chapter of this work contains his
elucidation of the ethical advice for spiritual practitioners of Lo-jong. The precepts themselves were
collected by Atiśa and orally given to Lama Drom, not to be written down for three further
generations when Geshe Chekawa (Tib. dGe-bShed Chad kha-ba) listed them in his Mind
Transformation in Seven Points. ^

* That Lama Drom Tonpa was an early incarnation is clearly stated by the Seventh Dalai Lama
himself in his Radiating the Light of Goodness (Tib.dGe-legs-nyin-mor-byed-pai-sNang-ba), Fol.
10b.

** Sir Charles Bell, The Religion of Tibet, pp. 95-110, (Oxford Press, 1931).


^ See Rabten and Dargye, Advice From A Spiritual Friend, pp.79-86, (New Delhi: Publications For
Wisdom Culture, 1977).

Glenn H. Mullin, “The U.S. Tour: A Traditional Perspective,” The Tibet Journal, (Dharamsala,

107 The Dalai Lama, n.82, pp. 64-66.
It can conclusively be said that the imaginative cognition of the others suffering has a precursor — compassion. The Dalai Lama uses the assertion of rights as a part of a rhetorical demonstration, of the humanity of those, on whose behalf those rights are asserted and his thought also suggests that to fight against those, who show a paucity of compassionate regard for the oppressed, ‘right’ can be used as a tool.

Thus, it can be interpreted that the *raison d'être* for the Dalai Lama’s critique of the “Asian” view of human rights, and his advocacy, for a consensus seeking approach, towards a ‘universal’ and ‘globally applicable’ definition of human rights, is based on an argument, that stresses the essential equality among all human beings. Linking human nature with its natural quality ‘compassion’, the Dalai Lama grounds his discourse of human rights in ‘compassion.’ Attempting to give a social face to it, the Dalai Lama extends ‘compassion’ from the individual to the society, by giving clear examples of the interdependence and interrelatedness between the society and the individual. Thence, his thought suggests a mutual reciprocity of rights as well as responsibilities. This, in effect, can be said to be the keystone to understanding the Dalai Lama’s thought on human rights.

**ASSESSMENT**

*A MUTUAL FECUNDATION OF CULTURES*: A HUMAN IMPERATIVE OF OUR TIMES

The Dalai Lama has argued for the need for universal human rights. Even though this idea has many advocates, it is also a much-contended issue. Scholars agree with the Dalai Lama that human rights are not merely rights but are also duties and that both, rights as well as duties are interdependent. They, however, also suggest that at present there is no endogenous theory capable of unifying contemporary societies and no imposed or imported ideology, which can be simply substituted for it. Therefore, some scholars have suggested the need for ‘a mutual fecundation of cultures.’ On the other hand, they also suggest that for a concept to become universally valid, it is imperative for it to fulfill at least the condition that it should be the universal point of reference for any problematic regarding

108 Steiner and Alston, n.1, p.208.
109 ibid., p. 208.
human dignity. Thus, in what emerges as their critique, they assert that "the culture which has given birth to the concept of Human Rights should also be called upon to become a universal culture." \(^{110}\)

Even where scholars discount that the concept of human rights is a peculiarly Western notion, they still assert that the world should not renounce declaring or enforcing human rights. It is suggested by them that human rights are imperative and that a ‘technological’ civilization without human rights amounts to the most inhuman situation imaginable. But they suggest further, that room should be made for other traditions to develop and formulate their own ‘homoeomorphic’ views corresponding to or opposing Western rights. They argue that this is an urgent task and that otherwise it will be impossible for non-Western cultures to survive, let alone to offer viable alternatives. It is here that the role of cross-cultural philosophical approach becomes important, in which the Dalai Lama’s thought can be seen as an emergent key approach. Further, it is the view of these scholars that ‘human pluralism’ should be recognized in principle as also practiced. They also hold the view that an intermediary space should be found for mutual criticism that strives for “mutual fecundation” and enrichment. And thus, Pannikar observe “Perhaps such an interchange may help bring forth a new myth and eventually a more humane civilization. The dialogical dialogue appears as an unavoidable method.” \(^{111}\) It may be said here, that the Dalai Lama has been constantly emphasizing the need for ‘dialogue’ as paramount, as can be seen in the preceding chapter.

Therefore, it has been suggested that it would be wrong to say, that a cross-cultural critique invalidates the declaration of human rights. In fact, it is seen as offering, new perspectives for an internal criticism and sets the limits of validity of Human Rights, offering at the same time both possibilities, of enlarging its realm and of a mutual fecundation with other conceptions of man and reality. \(^{112}\) Arguments also go that, claiming universal validity for Human Rights in the

\(^{110}\) ibid., p. 208.


\(^{112}\) ibid., p. 207.
formulated sense, as of the Declaration of Human Rights "implies the belief that most peoples of the world today are engaged in much the same way as the Western nations in a process of transition from more or less mythical *gemeinschaften*\(^{113}\) (feudal principalities, self governing cities, guilds, local communities, tribal institutions . . .) to a 'rationally' and 'contractually' organized 'modernity,' as known to the Western industrialized world. It is their contention that no one can predict the evolution (or eventual disintegration) of those traditional societies, which have started from different material and cultural bases and whose reactions to modern Western civilization may therefore follow hitherto unknown lives."\(^{114}\) Even though the Dalai Lama's argument for the legitimacy of human rights is significant for the Tibetan problem and is a legitimate protest against the 'violation of human rights' considerations in the Dalai Lama's thought; this sort of argument can still behold, what Pannikar terms as the dangers of the 'Trojan Horse.'\(^{115}\)

However, accepted simply as a plea for the dignity of human kind, the Dalai Lama's thought on human rights is obviously an ideal, which he intends to make into a necessary foundation for every human society.\(^{116}\) In fact, in a large way, the Dalai Lama's is a realistic response to the emergent situation of globalization and to the "mutual fecundation" thesis to which Pannikar refers. This gets corroborated in the Dalai Lama's words:

> The world is becoming increasingly interdependent, and that is why I firmly believe in the need to develop a sense of universal responsibility. We need to think in global terms because the effect of one nation's actions are felt far beyond its borders . . . Respect for fundamental human rights should not remain an ideal to be achieved but a requisite foundation for every human society.\(^{117}\)

\(^{113}\) *Gemeinsam* in German means together, mutual, joint, common. Therefore, *Gemeinschaft* means community. *Gemeinschaften* is the plural of community. See "The Langenscheidt (Editorial Staff), *Langenscheidt's, German-English, English-German Dictionary*, New York: Pocket Books, (1952) 1970, p.120.

\(^{114}\) Pannikar, n. 111, p. 205.

\(^{115}\) The Oxford Dictionary meaning of Trojan Horse in this context is the following: "Person or device insinuated to bring about enemy’s downfall."


\(^{117}\) *ibid.*