

[Q&A-type transcript – time codes]

Life Positive

Interview with the Dalai Lama

[01:00:31 – 01:16:29]

You seem to exist on numerous planes – as a world figure, the temporal and spiritual head of Tibet, a world-renowned spiritual master. Yet you often refer to yourself as a simple monk. Who is the real you?

01:00:57

I see myself as a monk first, then as a practitioner of the Nalanda [*the world-renowned Buddhist education center of India, established around 200 B.C.*] tradition of wisdom. Masters of Nalanda such as Nagarjuna, Aryadeva, Aryasangha, Dharmakirti, Chandrakirti and Shantideva have written the scriptures that we, as Tibetan Buddhists, study and practice. They are all my gurus. I feel that I might have interacted with them in previous lifetimes. When I read their books and meditate upon their names, I feel a connection.

You are called the “Living Buddha”?

01:01:41

The term “living Buddha” is a translation of the Chinese word *ho fu*. In Tibetan, the operative word is *lama*, which means “guru.” A guru is someone who is not necessarily a Buddha but is heavy with knowledge. I believe that previous Dalai Lamas were manifestations of *Avolokiteshwara*, the Buddha of compassion, and the fifth Dalai Lama is believed to be an incarnation of *Manjushreei*. I am fortunate to be the reincarnation of all these great lamas! [*Laughs.*]

Can anyone become a Buddha?

01:02:29

Oh, yes! All sentient beings have the seed of the Buddha within them.

It is also said that eventually all sentient beings will attain Buddhahood?

01:02:39

Yes, this is so, because all negative emotions of the mind can be eliminated. Once the mind is purified, you are a Buddha.