

# TEACHERS' RESOURCE KIT

*Longacre Press Junior Non-fiction/Biography*

## The Dalai Lama Story

THE MAKING OF A WORLD LEADER

Andrew Crowe

WITH A FOREWORD BY  
HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA

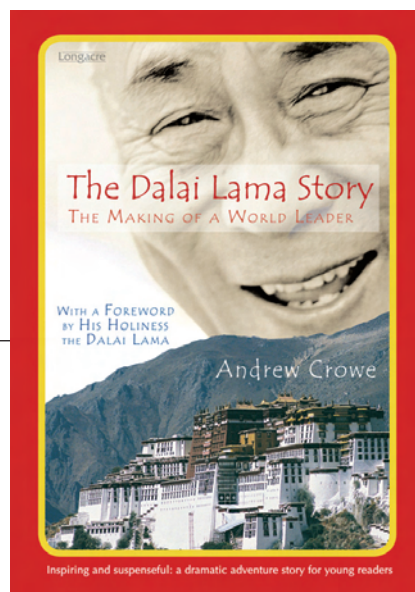
*'The Dalai Lama's smile and his ability to forgive mean so much more when you know the circumstances of his life.'*

At just two and a half years old, the Dalai Lama was chosen to become the spiritual leader of Tibet. At age fifteen, during a time of great upheaval, he took political control of his country: China was invading Tibet.

Peaceful resolutions failed and in 1959, the 14th Dalai Lama found himself trapped in his own palace with the Chinese army poised to attack. Disguised, he fled with his family and many of his officials over some of the world's toughest mountain terrain. They finally crossed the border into India with the Chinese army less than a day's ride behind.

Here is an inspiring and heroic story written especially for young readers. Andrew Crowe's vivid narration of the Dalai Lama's early life beautifully captures the spirit and personality of this 'world leader', as well as the mystique of the Tibetan ancient culture.

*The Dalai Lama Story* is illustrated throughout with maps, photographs and drawings.



### SPECIFICATIONS:

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### RESOURCE KIT CONTAINS:

*Information about the author;  
questions for character study and deeper thinking; topics for discussion or essay; topics for visual response*

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## About the Author:

Brought up in London, ANDREW CROWE lives in New Zealand where he has written 40 books, most of them about the natural world.

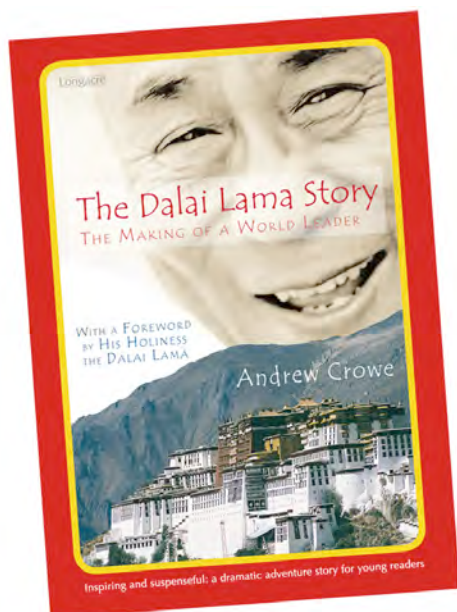
‘This book began with the simple question,’ he explains. How does a young person nowadays explore spiritual values in an open-minded way?

‘Core spiritual values, I felt, must go beyond cultural differences and beliefs. They must be universal. Also, for spiritual teachings to have real meaning, it seemed to me they must be shown through someone’s life, not just through their words.

‘It was this open-ended search for universal values that led me to the Dalai Lama.

‘When I finally met him, I knew I’d found a man of religion who was open to the truth wherever he found it – a man who lived his message. Given the tough circumstances of his life, this seemed extraordinary. If this man could really forgive the Chinese authorities, I wanted to know how!’

In 2002-03, Andrew Crowe travelled to North India and Tibet, interviewing the Dalai Lama for this book, photographing and researching the Tibetan archives, getting to know the people, scenery, architecture, customs and religion of Tibet.



## Before Reading:

- The name ‘Dalai Lama’ is one of the most famous, most recognised names in the world – as iconic as Nelson Mandela or Gandhi. What do you think of when you hear the name? What words come to mind? What kind of person do you imagine him to be?
- What kind of icon (symbol) is he?
- What do you know about his life?
- The subtitle of the book is The Making of a World Leader – why do you think he is considered an international leader?
- Read the **Foreword**
  - What impression of the man do his words give you?
  - What issue is he most concerned about?
  - What do you know about Tibet’s recent history?

## Character Study:

- What were the signs that Lhamo was special as a child? (p.22)
- Describe Lhamo’s personality as a very young child: Chapter 7
- Chapter 8: What effect might this special treatment and attention have on a 4 year old?
- Describe Kündün’s personality as he grew up. Give examples of his strong will and ego-centric behaviour. (pp 49-52, 57, 58)

- Describe life for a child in the world's largest castle. (Chapter 10). Why was it 'a golden prison'?
- What was it like for Lobsang, being brother to the Dalai Lama?
- How does Kündün change as a teenager? (Chapter 13). What values does he develop? What are his interests? (pp 74-76).
- What do Kündün's questions on page 81 reveal about himself and Tibet?
- To what does Kündün attribute his change of character?
- Who is the Dalai Lama according to Kündün? What does the name mean? (pp 83, 84)
- What incredible challenges and threats did Kündün face at age 15 and how does the immense responsibility he is given affect him? (Chapter 16)
- What could Kündün have done to prevent a massacre? (Chapter 22)
- What was he feeling at this turning point in his life? (Chapter 25)
- What do the Dalai Lama's childhood stories tell you about him as a person? (p.163)
- How does his attitude towards the Chinese help him? (p.164)

### Inspiring Leaders:

- What other world leader suffered years of exile (in a South African prison) but still forgave his enemies?
- Can you think of other world leaders who actively promote the ideal of 'loving your enemy'?
- Research the non-violence ideals of Gandhi and Martin Luther King.
- 'Compassion wins me friends; force does not' Why is this an important lesson for a leader to learn?
- Why do Tibetans 'cross half of Tibet on foot to see the Dalai Lama? 'Many prostrating full length on the ground between each step'. Try walking like this. See also p.170
- Who are the people (famous or not) that inspire you or encourage you in life? Write a short description of the person.

### Spiritual Beliefs:

- Describe what belief in reincarnation means for a person. (pp 15,17)
- What process did they follow in seeking the new Dalai Lama? (Chapter 2/3).
- What does this tell you about the Tibetan's spiritual beliefs?
- Describe the Tibetan people's belief system (pp 19, 20) relating to nature, farming, curses, fortune and children.
- How significant was religion in the lives of Tibetan children? (p.33)
- Tibetans had 'State Astrologers' (p.45). What does this tell you about Tibetan religion and politics? How were important decisions influenced by the 'State Oracle'? (see chapter 16).
- Who are some other great 'spiritual leaders' in the world? Were they special as children? Were they chosen in this manner? Has NZ a spiritual leader? What is your impression of Buddhist ideas (p.73) about happiness, misery and emotions such as anger? What is the 'science of happiness'? In your own life?
- What is the Buddhist attitude to enemies?
- Why was religion 'repugnant' to the Communists? (Chapter 29). Is it possible to stamp out belief by destroying material things; and terrorizing people? What effect does persecution have on believers? Do you find parallels in current international conflicts?
- Signs in nature, omens and prophecy played an important part in Tibet. (p.86) Why? Were they accurate? Do people in New Zealand have similar beliefs in signs, and if so would you consider them superstitions?

### Deeper Thinking:

- What does the dedication on page 11 mean to you?
- Do you agree with Kündün's non-violence response to the terror? (p.115). Debate the issue.
- Why is Buddha's 'love your enemy' statement so difficult? (pp 116 & 164). Jesus had a similar teaching. Debate the pros and cons of this ideal.

- ‘Violence ultimately leads to the betrayal of even the noblest cause’. Explain why this is so. Is violence ever justified?
- ‘I ask only that you not use violence, except in defence.’ (p.143). How is this ‘defence’ argument used to justify wars, such as WW2? Do you think that fighting can be acceptable sometimes? Imagine your response to an attack on New Zealand.
- What would be the reaction if this massacre happened today? (Chapter 26) What happened in Rwanda recently? Is the news we receive truly unbiased or is it also a form of propaganda?
- ‘No matter what governments do, the human spirit will always prevail.’ Considering the current wars in the world – do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?
- How much of the writing in this book is reporting of facts, and how much seems to be fictionalised. Is it possible to tell if details are accurate? For example, the thoughts of Diki on page 47? Or the ‘supernatural’ events? What sources did Crowe use?
- How would you frame the same story or events told sympathetically from a more Chinese point of view?
- ‘Big mind; big heart’. What does his philosophy mean to you (p.165).

## Exploring Language:

### Sayings:

- ‘A wolf who’s accustomed to eating horses will never be satisfied eating sheep.’ What exactly does this saying mean, relating to people? (p. 34)
- ‘You will become like water being poured into water’. What could this mean?
- ‘Our thoughts are the colour, and only seem like the mind.’ This idea was strange to Heinrich. What does it mean to you? (p.83).
- ‘A web had been spun around Tibet; now the spider was closing in.’ Explain how this saying describes the Chinese strategy.
- What does the Dalai Lama mean by the ‘distinction between the actor and the action’?

### Propaganda:

- Define propaganda.
- ‘We shall liberate Tibet...The peaceful liberation of Tibet has begun.’ (p.87). What did these words really mean?
- How was the truth twisted in the Chinese statement on page 100? Is this propaganda? Why or why not?
- Would you trust Mao’s statement on page 101?
- Read the Chinese officials’ statement on page 158 (beginning with the words ‘The Tibetan people ardently love...’). Does this fit your definition of propaganda?
- ‘Our flag’ boasted Beijing Radio, ‘symbol of light and happiness’. What was the reality for Tibetans? (p.146)
- In the way in which it has been implemented, is the 17-point agreement comparable to the treaty of Waitangi?

## Written Responses:

- Report writing: Yaks (p.38): write a report on these animals – their uses, biology, habitat, adaptations.
- A Day in the Life (p.176): List your own typical day using the same time line. What do you think of the Dalai Lama’s day?
- Chapter 24; Escape by night- write a first person account of the night.
- Read pages 79-81. Then read Heinrich Harrer’s version of his first meeting with Kündün, in chapter 15 of his book *Seven Years in Tibet*. Which version do you prefer? Why? Comment on Crowe’s use of dialogue to bring the scene to life.
- Watch the movie *Seven Years in Tibet*. Compare the Hollywood version with the facts as presented by Crowe’s book.
- Watch the movie *Kündün* (1997). How accurate is it? Review the movie.
- Write a critical review of the book.

## Visual Responses:

- Illustrate the dream on page 19.
- Why does the swastika symbol have such powerful associations? (p.51)
- Why is the Bodhi tree important in Buddhism? (p.113). Paint a picture of the tree.
- Create a picture of a windhorse. (p.114)

## Tibetan Culture:

- Describe the initiation (p.48). What other cultures have initiations?
- Outline the Tibetan education methods. (p.72) Do we still use any of these teaching techniques today?
- Explain Kündün's education and exam system. (pp 117, 119)
- Tibet was once the ruler and aggressor. (p.119) What role did the monks play in the past?
- Research: Read the list on page 182 and choose a resource to research one aspect of Tibetan life.
- Find out what life is like in Tibet today.

## Comprehension Questions:

### Chapter 1

- What does the 8th century prophecy predict? (p.12) What could these words mean: 'the iron bird', 'horses gallop on wheels', 'Dharma will leave', and 'the Red Man.'
- How has the prediction come 'true' for Tibet in recent history?
- Why can't Andrew speak freely? (p.13)
- What did the Chinese government think of the Dalai Lama? (pp 3,14)
- Did the 13th Dalai Lama's predictions come 'true'? (p.15) Why do you think his head turned north-east? (see map page 9)

### Chapter 3

- How did people survive/live in this environment? (p.21)

### Chapter 4

- How did they search for the child?

### Chapter 5

- What were the signs this was *the* child? (pp 28-30)
- How were the Chinese seen as a problem by the Tibetans, even back in the 1930s?

### Chapter 6

- How did Kewtsang try and protect the boy? (p.32)
- What was the General's plan with the hostage and ransom? Was it working?

### Chapter 7

- What were the hazards in travelling in Tibet in 1939? (pp 35, 36) Has it changed much since then?
- Why did people come for a blessing? (p.38)
- Why had they kept the child's status a secret? (p.40)

### Chapter 8

- It seemed he 'had known this man all his life' when he met the fortune-teller. (p.46) How does this relate to reincarnation beliefs?

### Chapter 9

- Why were there mice everywhere? (p.49) See also page 70 – the worms.

### Chapter 11

- Why was Tibet called a 'Forbidden Land'?
- How did Harrer and Aufschnaiter survive the trek across Western Tibet?

### Chapter 12

- What do the market stalls reveal about Tibet's contact with the world? (p.69)

### Chapter 14

- Why was ice skating unknown in Lhasa?
- Why did Harrer and Kündün get on so well?
- What important details are revealed about the long relationship between China and Tibet? (pp 82, 83)

### Chapter 16

- Who did Kündün turn to for an opinion? (p.89) Why?
- Why did he free the convicts? (p.91)

- What countries did he seek help from. Why those countries?

#### Chapter 17

- What options did Kündün have now? List the pros and cons.
- What economic changes did Kündün have in mind? (p.94)
- Why did no other country want to help Tibet? (p.98)
- What appealed to Kündün about Communism? (p.99)

#### Chapter 18

- What was the Chinese strategy to take over Tibet? (pp 102-103)
- What was Kündün's response? (p.104)

#### Chapter 19

- What was Mao like? (p.106, 107)
- Was there freedom in China under Mao's reforms? (p.107)
- Why did the Chinese use terror tactics? How should the people respond? Why did the Chinese leave Kündün alive?

#### Chapter 20

- Why did Kündün return to Tibet, knowing the dangers? (p.114)

#### Chapter 23

- Why did Kündün visualise reaching India? (p.128)

#### Chapter 25

- What support did Kündün have from the people?

#### Chapter 26

- Why were the Americans involved here? (p.144)

#### Chapter 28

- Why was the world media so interested in the Dalai Lama? (p.157)
- Why was he welcomed so warmly in India?

#### Chapter 29

- What is Hong's reaction to the genocide in Tibet?

- Can you explain Hong's attitude to death?

#### Chapter 30

- What does anger do to you according to the Dalai Lama?
- Why did he laugh about being a target? (p.165)

#### Chapter 31

- What is the Great Firewall of China?

### Afterword:

- Why does the Chinese government suppress free speech? (p.170) What do they fear?
- What is revealed here about 'life in old Tibet? Does this justify the Chinese invasion? What were the most likely motives for the invasion? (p.172)
- What limits are still on Tibet freedoms today? (p.172)

