



THE DALAI LAMA

MESSAGE

For many centuries the arts have played a major role in the spiritual development of the Tibetan people. Art is an important and fundamental language that has the ability to dissolve borders and transcend the seeming differences between cultures, awakening within us all a sense of our oneness.

Over the years, it has been a pleasure to meet artists, like Philip Sugden and Carole Elchert, who express this understanding in their work. I have known Philip since he and Carole visited Dharamsala in 1988 during the creation of their book and video, *White Lotus: An Introduction to Tibetan Culture*. Since then, I was able to visit their home and Philip's studio in Findlay, Ohio, where I was introduced to his work.

As for the paintings created by the artists of Tibet, they serve as vehicles of spiritual development. In a similar sense, Philip's artwork has been, for him, part of an ongoing pilgrimage, particularly since first meeting Tibetan refugees in Kathmandu in 1978. Based on his journeys to the Himalayas and Tibet, he has created a body of work that testifies to his dedication, not just for the cause of the Tibetan people, but also to the transformation of people through the process of art.

March 31, 1999