

To Our Readers

Tackling Tibet.

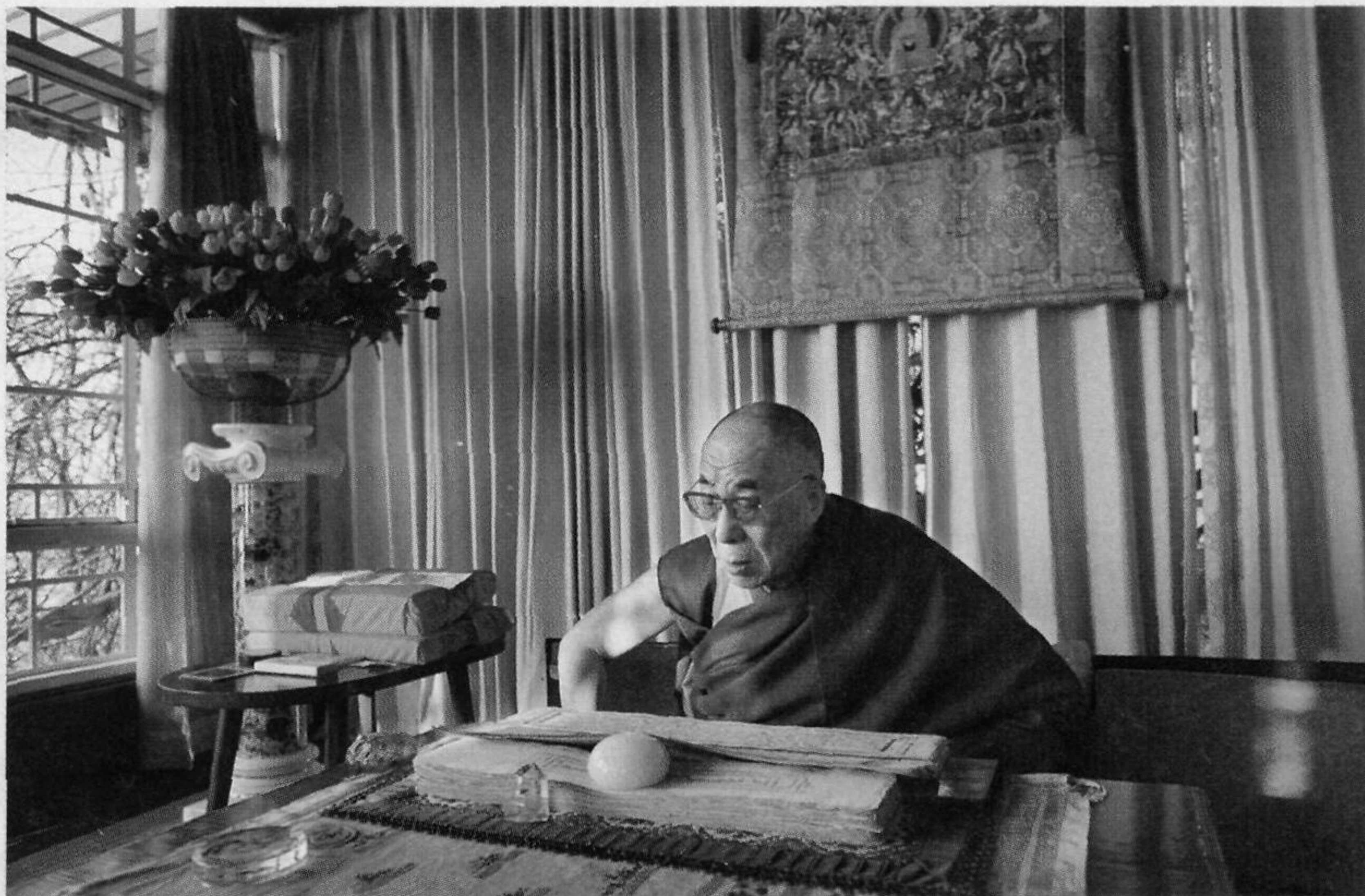
As violent protests spread in China, two TIME veterans offer unparalleled insight into the life and mind of Tibet's holiest leader, the Dalai Lama

PICO IYER, ONE OF THE WORLD'S PREMIER prose stylists, has been following the journey of the Dalai Lama since he was a tiny child. In 1960, when Pico was 3 years old, his father visited in India with the newly exiled Dalai Lama and brought back a picture of the shy 24-year-old for his son. That picture sat on Pico's desk for 30 years, until 1990, when a fire roared through his family's house, wiping out everything including the photo and bringing home to him the Buddhist idea of the impermanence of life.

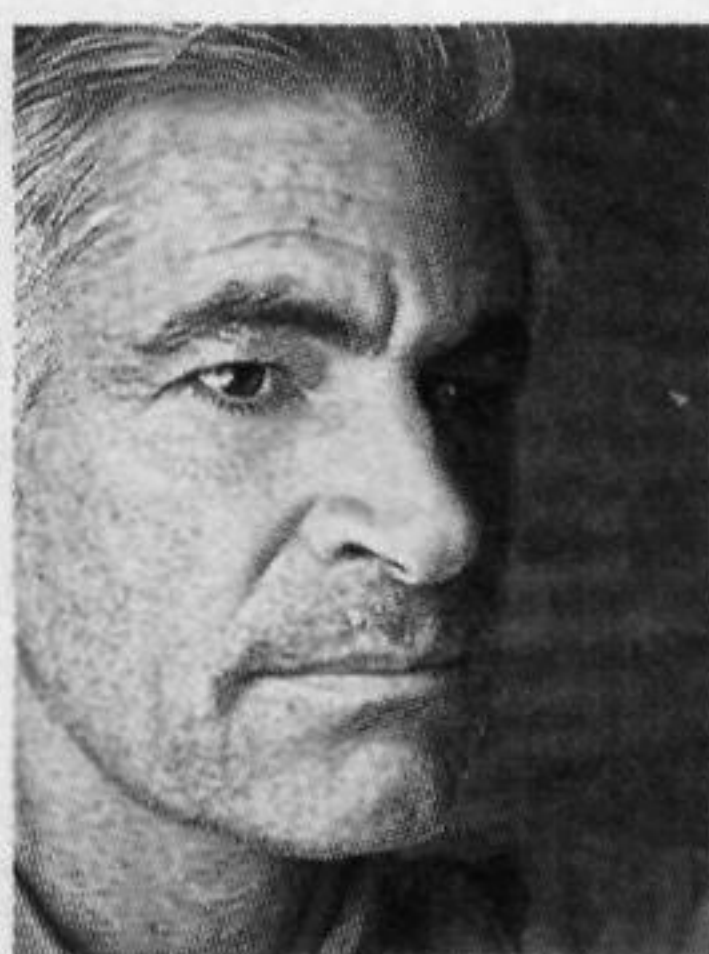
Pico first visited with the Dalai Lama when he was 17, in the sheltered settlement of Dharamsala, in the foothills of the Himalayas. After Tibet opened up to the world, Pico made three additional trips there. In April 1988, Pico wrote a major profile of the Dalai Lama for TIME and later went to Tibet to report for us on what that peaceful society was going through under martial law. As fans of his travel writings know, Pico's curiosity has led him to nearly every corner of the globe, but he has always found himself returning to the monk in Dharamsala. He wrote another long piece on the Dalai Lama for us in 1997, so in a sense, Pico has been updating TIME readers on this figure of global fascination every 10 years.

Now Pico offers the definitive portrait of His Holiness in this week's cover story, which is adapted from his new book, *The Open Road: The Global Journey of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama*. "Over the years," Pico says, "I've been struck by how practically he's adapted his message to the times and the worldwide audience. He's thought about his positions more deeply and more rigorously than anyone I've ever met."

Our article comes at a time when the events in Tibet are making that land at the roof of the world one of the most important stories of the year. Chinese enterprise has transformed Tibet in recent years, bringing material benefits to Tibetans but also feeding anxieties about the erosion of their cultural freedoms. Those resentments exploded in the streets of Lhasa and other cities this month, prompting a clampdown by Chinese authorities. That has provoked talk of a partial boycott of



Inner sanctum In his isolated home near the Himalayas, His Holiness reads from Buddhist text



Nachtwey

The renowned photographer was moved by the Dalai Lama's welcome of gentle nods and warm smiles



Iyer

The author drew from decades of travel in and research on Tibet for his new book, *The Open Road*



the opening ceremonies of the Olympics in Beijing. But by seeking dialogue with the Dalai Lama, as called for by U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, China's rulers can show the world their commitment to promoting freedom and safeguarding human rights.

The cover portrait of the Dalai Lama is courtesy of another name familiar to TIME readers: James Nachtwey. Pairing Pico with Nachtwey, the planet's pre-eminent news photographer, seemed like journalistic Nirvana. The two first worked together in South Korea, 20 years ago. Jim, who has devoted his life to documenting wars and tragedy and famine everywhere from El Salvador to the West Bank to the Sudan, had always told us that if he ever had the chance to photograph the Dalai Lama, he would drop everything and do it. He got the

chance and spent five days in March with the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala. He was permitted into His Holiness's private residence to photograph the Dalai Lama praying and reading from Buddhist texts. In his quiet intensity, his down-to-earth centeredness and his relentless focus, he resembles the unique man he photographed.

Pick

Richard Stengel, MANAGING EDITOR