

Part 5

The Big Day

Today, October 23d, was a very big day. First, the Conference proper started. The Tibetan Children's Village – TCV – was celebrating its founding, and the Dalai Lama made a big appearance before the 3000 or more Tibetans who attended the outdoor ceremonies. And I made my hour long presentation which was a home run

I have to apologize for the repeated efforts to send scads of pictures accompanying the Tour Day journal. A whole series of technical problems, occasioned by the 200+ attendees, all with their wireless laptops descended on the Auditorium, wanting, after days out of contact getting here from round the world to get online at once. Even though the organizers had 25 tables set up they could – 240v wall power - use and everyone with a wireless laptop (90% of the two hundred) all getting online at once, dragged down the bandwidth so much that there were drops in service that made it unclear what I had sent was getting there. And then there were technical, McAfee caused rejections of my emails as our Old Colo server spit back the three sets of pictures repeatedly from the alien systems here, and until David who fortunately was up late altered our office server to accept what it was rejecting, I had to retry until they all worked, late in the day. Technology. Bah Humbug!



India and the Dalai Lama (4) The Silk Scarf

Category: India and the Dalai Lama - 2006

Published: Monday, 12 December 2011 13:48

Written by dave

Hits: 4626



Tall Stack of Linksys Access Points to handle the 200 Conferees Wi-Fi equipped personal computers

Top of Mesh Wi-Fi Antennas used around the Monestary

Now the big surprise that awaited all of us, as we passed by to the conference center, was the huge crowds gathering who then watch the Founding Day ceremonies, with hundreds of kids set out across the huge open field, bedlam, when the Dalai Lama himself appeared high up on the third deck of one structure, looking like he was in the clouds like Moses saw God in the Sermon of the Mount. The crowd went wild. He was surrounded by dignitaries, at least 5 of which gave interminable and long speeches over the flakey public address system, in Tibetan!

I was far from that building, the sun was blinding with the tall building in the shade, so could only take very long range still photos of him from my little Sony Cam – only one of which I think you will be able to make out him, while I was taping everything as a video, and will have outtakes from it.



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The gathering Tibetan Crowd

The Tibetan Students - in
India - Listening

The Dalai
Lama
Speaking

So I had to stand for almost an hour, next to a young Tibetan who kept me informed what was going on, who was speaking, and **WHEN** the Lama himself spoke – what he was saying. I taped a good 20 minutes of his speaking about and to what was nearest and dearest to his heart – his Tibetan Children who were stuck in a far corner of India, without a Country of their own.

His voice was wonderful. The speaker settings got right before he spoke, and I think I captured it, even over the babble of thousands a third of whom couldn't understand a word he was saying.

In essence he was talking to the children – after telling them about their own history, and that of their school , he gave them moral guidance for this awful world they live in. Almost like a teacher – which he is – or a minister – which he is, instructing the children in the qualities they should have, how to behave, what to learn, and how to treat other, and how important their Buddhist identity was – for they above all will be the inheritors of that legacy, and has to hold fast to its teachings as Tibetan Children who have no home country they can go back to.

More later.

Then the Conference got started inside the Hall but only after all 200 were invited to go up the stairs at noon, to the second deck, sit on the floor and then were given a lunch in absolutely Tibetan ceremonial fashion! With attendants first giving everyone a four large living leaves that becomes the 'plate' to eat off of. Then ladling out a whole series of hot foods, starting with a pile of white rice, the 10 or so servers served.

Tibetan men going down the line, not only putting the first portion of everything on the rice on the leaves that were on the floor, while you ate it with a silver spoon, but going

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back at least 8 times filling you up until you said no more. All good, all hot, all a wonderful taste of how Tibetans have honored their guests with food, ceremonially dished out for thousands of years. You could just visualize a setting when the family in a humble rock home on the windswept plains of high Tibet, would give their few guests the leaves to eat off of, sitting on the ground or a mat, and dish out the food the wife prepared, while drinking a hot tea from wooden cups, while repeatedly pressing the palms together to emphasize some quietly spoken point, nodding their heads toward their guests. Done in such a way to honor and please their guests, regardless of the settings, as well as any White House Presidential Dinner could.

With the ironic twist, that the first thing they gave you after the leaves was a quart sized plastic bottle of Aquafina 'mineral' water bottled by Pepsi – which every westerner must drink instead of even tap water. 200 served inside 30 minutes – graciously and unhurried.



The Very Large Stage in the Auditorium. Note the picture above. Who says the Dalai Lama's facilities are primitive?




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Audience gathering	Greeting by Tibetan Monk	The Tibetan
		to create the expatriate ch

Then the conference itself started, a series of back to back 30 to 45 minute, first welcoming and introductory speeches, then 4 substantive presentations, including mine, all supported by excellent sound, huge display screen with perfectly managed graphical material, and our Power Point supported presentations. You can see how greatly decorated the setting was, with Tibetan themes throuout. And above all two stories high near the roof, at least, a painting of the benevolent Dalai Lama, not George Orwell's feared Big Brother of 1984, looking down on all.

A warm greeting and welcome from a high official from the Indian government, which nation hosts the Tibetan enclave and people.

Then wonderful remarks by the Tibetan man who was charged, over 45 years ago by His Holiness the Dalia Lama, to build up an education-of-the-children program, on the ground that only the children can, in a foreign country, and dispossessed of their land, can preserve and perpetuate the culture and values of Tibet after all the grown men and women who were born there are gone.

Giving startling numbers being supported by the Tibetan Children's Villages. They actually support 50,000 Tibetan children, 20,000 in this region around Dharamsala alone. And in about 10 countries, including in the US. Even now extending to educating the Mothers of these children, and youth over 17, beyond the origins of just grade school ages. And why they see that communications technology, including wireless, can help them greatly educate their far flung people. And thus why they are giving the non-profit organization such as the Tibetan Technology Center that the Israeli Yahel Ben-David started so much tangible support.

Dr. Downing, an Irishman from Limerick University in Dublin, giving a great keynote speech about what it will take for mankind with the growth of 250,000 more souls

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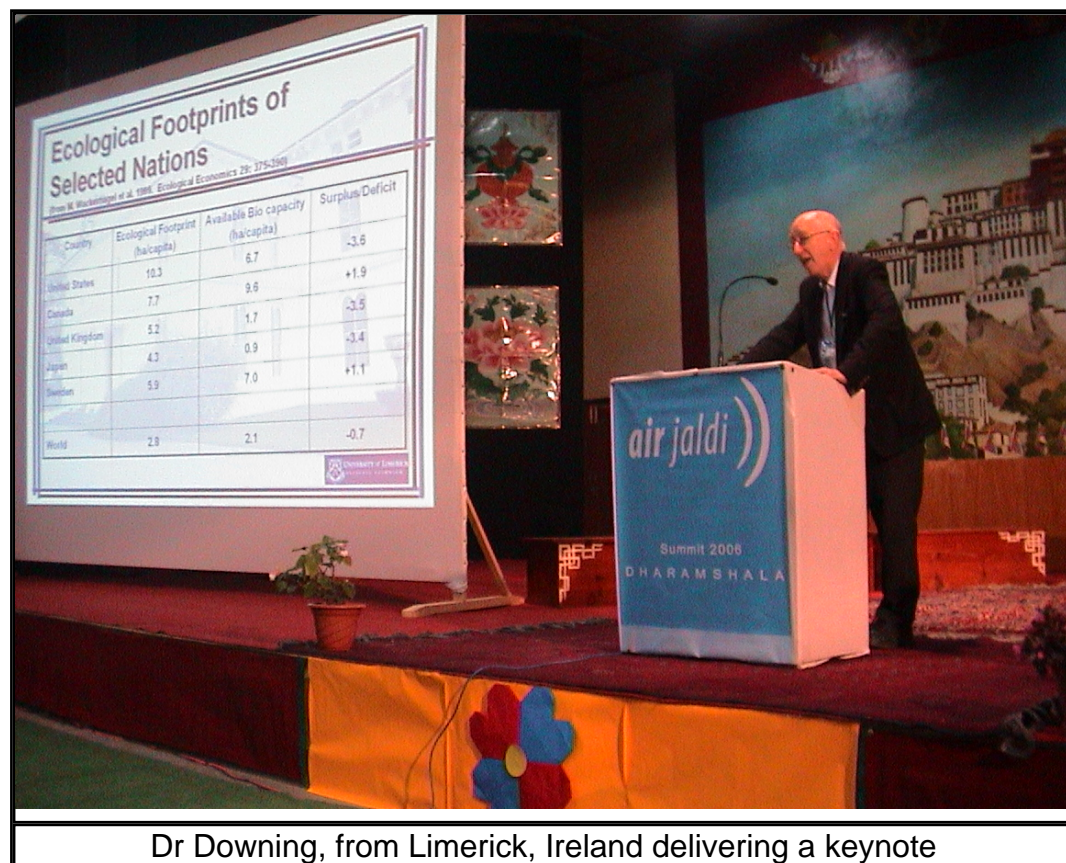
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a day, to manage this planet, And how communications, such as the wireless that was the main purpose of people gathering here, could help people talk to each other and form their purposes in a community way. No tech talk from here. Just Humankind Philosophy for the future and where technology needs to fit.



Dr Downing, from Limerick, Ireland delivering a keynote

Then, already an hour behind in a 4 hour program, Ben-David laid out the technical, and managerial scope, and the rock bottom costs (\$8 for their outdoor radio enclosures rather than the \$50 commercial ones) home brew Linux servers, flash-coded dirt cheap Linksys wireless mesh radios, which are a model for people connectivity for any 3d world country anywhere. And where they want to go and develop, using their philosophy of 'Integrate rather than Innovate' technically.

But he ALSO put that marvelous written welcome to this World Wireless Summit by the Dalai Lama himself on the big screen. And highlighted as I did that incredibly powerful and wise statement of what he sees the Internet can and cannot do.

“By itself the Internet cannot feed the poor, or defend the oppressed, or protect those subject to natural disasters, but by keeping us informed, it can allow those of us who have the opportunity to give whatever help we can.”

The REAL unspoken theme of the conference, given its circumstances and setting.

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Followed by a humorous presentation by that radical, disheveled long haired, 'Free Software Foundation' guru Richard Stallman whom I have known for 30 years, chanting his mantra that ALL software should be FREE, because Corporate Proprietary software, by companies in bed with each other and the Federal Government requiring back doors that permit the FBI and CIA to 'spy' on its citizens, carrying out the worst of the controls of 1984, and is the new way to Enslave people in the name of profit.



Speaker Hays



Crazy Richard Stallman



Panel Discussion

(But one of the speakers had pointed out that government is subject to public/popular pressure, and with everyone connected and with their personal computers and their own Blogs, rather than government being able to control people, that people are now holding government accountable better than any time in our history)

Then finally my homerun speech which went way beyond the mere 'technical' wireless origins, and even the stories they wanted to see and hear about my exploits supporting Tsering Sherpa on Everest, to showing them how they can, in every country, get governments which control Spectrum and listen to the Armies, the Telephone Companies, the Television and try to suppress 'free wireless' from their deep pockets and politically lobbying. In other words how to get to the goal of global even handed, affordable, Internet connectivity, with wireless reaching the furthest person on earth.

Now since it was such a hit, and its 23 slides are so self explaining, I am going to upload as a separate email file and attachment, so you can see it yourself. Its big, more than a megabyte. But it will tell you lots.

[My Powerpoint Presentation](#) to the 200+ Conferees. (it is in web format)

My Gift to the Dalai Lama

As I suspected, for all the differences people and organizations from nations around the globe, who were gathering here, and under the broad influence of the very supportive Tibetan community and the incredibly wise and gentle Dalai Lama, the conferees are all about 'How' to better mankind with the help of wireless that can reach everyone on the planet, rather than 'Whether' it should.

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In other words there is here a great sense of 'community' in an otherwise harsh and violent world, working out how to make it work better.

So in my closing remarks, already known in the crowd as 'The Colonel' and an old warrior of 78 years, I told them a story. That I had a kinship with the struggle the Tibetans and the Dalai Lama had gone through. For I landed on the shores of Korea to fight the North Koreans and Chinese dictatorships. Who had pushed the gentle people of Tibet out. The VERY same month – October - that I, having chosen the West Point way to fight evil with armed force, rather than with prayers – the Buddhist way - I felt a kinship with the then 15 year old Dalai Lama who with his people were being forced from their home. I was 22 at the time.

And that I intended to give this pure white silk scarf that cost 3,000 rupees to him either directly if he would see me, or happily through his close supporters. But that I was so impressed with those wise lines Ben-David showed in his presentation the Lama personally penned and signed welcoming the Airjaldi World Wireless Summit that I thought it would be very appropriate for this conference to give him thanks for his wisdom and support.

That I propose that this body, by vote of hands, tell me that I might deliver this pure white silk scarf to his Holiness on BEHALF all the attendees present, not from just me. Together with a short note, signed by Phunsok Dorjee – the prime mover of the School and this Conference, saying so.

Every person in the conference hall held up their hand in affirmation. No debate.

So I am drafting the simple remarks, and will deliver the token of our love and respect for this remarkable man, and his vision of what technology can and cannot do for people of the world.

Part 6

Changing Weather and Message for the Dalai Lama

Cold. Colder than normal for October in Dharamsala in anyone's memory. Skies cleared, stars visible, and nice bright sun all day after days of overcast. But for all of those – including me – who were told before coming that the weather would be good. Just wear a light sweater with long sleeves. The place, inside and out, has been downright chilly cold. As usual, all the talk was about the abnormal effects of 'global warming.'

Since it is quite a chore daily to decide what to carry along from one's hotel since you won't see it until late that day or, if you are a party animal as many here are,

into the night, go minimum load – small backpack with one's laptop, or a bigger case, with lots of tech display stuff. Fail to take warm enough jacket, or no jacket, and many were shivering during the hour long sessions inside the cavernous lecture hall. Some female attendees had blankets over their shoulders all yesterday.

I got caught in that riddle twice. Everyday I wear one of the nice white sweaters with the Welsh monogram on it. Thankfully Patsy made me pack four of them. And in the sunlight and indoors that is not particularly cold, that was fine. But the first Tour Day, I didn't bring my red, waterproof-lined outdoor, costly Marmot mountain jacket – one I took with me when I trekked on Mount Everest. A jacket to wear when it rains. Instead I carried a very light good looking yellow jacket the first day. It is not waterproof. Over my sweater. Warm enough. Several times during that 5 hour walking Tour, it showered. I really didn't get wet, but I thought that if we are going to have rain everyday – also unusual – I better carry that red Marmot.

The second day, first one in the conference hall, I carried the red Marmot with me in the 'taxi' to Dal-Lake, where it is just a 15 minute more walk through the sprawling School grounds. No rain, but pretty chilly, especially when we were inside. I shivered at times. And others began looking cold.

That was my Presentation Day, so I didn't want to wear that 'rain jacket' so I just toughed it through. Too busy and concentrated on how I was going to make the most impact on the other attendees, for me to notice much. Not bad until 6:30 that evening – an hour and a half after all the sessions were over, a series of younger, dark skinned, shy attendees from other parts of India, whose English was hard for me to understand, cornered me one at a time to pick my brains about their wireless project. I have come to expect being approached after my barn-burning speeches where I appear to know what I am talking about. Exchanging cards, listening to them tell me what they are trying to do, and asking my advice or leads.

So I left the Hall that late and I had to walk at least a mile back to the Dal Lake intersection of roads where the taxi's hung out. It was really dark going over rough stone pathways, down stone staircases, across their large central field, between buildings with lights in them, but not too helpful to light the path. Plenty of kid students passing me who were familiar with their byways, but without a flashlight – which I also didn't bring from the Hotel – and no Walking Stick that I really miss, I was stumbling around a lot. Conscious of my age, worse night vision eyesight, and sense of balance in the dark I didn't want to fall and break something. The red jacket helped, but by the time I got to the taxi place, where the only thing left was a motorized, open and breezy rickshaw, I was really chilled.

Bounced through the dark in the rickshaw over the mountain roadway that the drivers have memorized – including bumps and holes in the roadway - to the Asia Resort, my hotel. 40 rupees.

I recovered in my room, which has no heat, and then went to dinner. Where I warmed up.

And when I went to bed, I went and pulled out a thick bedcover from a room bin, not a blanked really, and slept comfortably with that.

The red jacket was too cold. Two bad what-to-wear-or-carry days. Now that my main involvement in the conference proceedings were over, I could concentrate a little more on creature comforts.

So this morning I decided to wear the new light, but with a quilted inside liner, blue zippered jacket I bought just before leaving for this trip, which had my leather gloves which I didn't think I would need, in their pocket.

Wore it all day, at breakfast, and lunch, as others did their solution. Some toughed it out with only sweaters, but I notice those from India wore the most sensible things of all. Some of the ladies really were cold, and had to get light blankets.

Once again, late in the afternoon, a whole parade of attendees quietly approached me to ask my technical and management advice. Invariably they were ultra-polite, low voices, and acted as if they were imposing on me. Even two 'journalists' – one radio, one television – asked to interview me on camera or tape. I seemed to have made quite an impression, especially what I had already, practicing what they preached, done on Mount Everest, doing what they were trying to do in very rural areas of India, Africa, and Asia.

(Pretty impressive panelists today, tossing off anecdotes about rural wireless projects they had been involved in, in places like Uganda, Bangladesh, Nepal, Indonesia, Denmark. I have sort of a reputation that I already had 'been there, done that' years before any of them had. And had trekked – at 75 – up the Everest trail, and helped a local – Tsering Sherpa – get wirelessly connected. So get questioned a lot.)

In the middle of the afternoon, during a break, I tried a Skype-out (voice over IP from my computer to any dial up phone) home. I had glanced at my watch, saw it was 2:30, and incorrectly, being on the other side of the world, that meant 2:30 in the AFTERNOON in Colorado. Wrong! Patsy answered the cordless phone next to her bed at 2:30 in the morning! The Skype connection – quality of voice in my earphones and out my small elcheapo lapel mike was crystal clear – better that Quest could give me locally in Colorado Springs. Mind you that was from my laptop, only wirelessly linked, through I don't know how many routers and connections out of the Himalayas where Dharamsala is, over the Internet from India to the US, then to her dial up phone that was cordless-connected from the kitchen at home!

Such superb quality I turned to two younger geeks also sitting next to me working on their computers to ask if they had ever heard Skype-out calls. They knew about Skype, and used it, computer to computer, but never to a dialup phone. They tried it, talking to sleepy Patsy, and were suitably impressed. I think the call cost me two cents a minute, from remote India.

Of course one of them was one of these 'All software should be free and open' – while Skype is free to use, but proprietary. And sniffed at it because it was not open-source SIP

protocol. We got into a ding-dong argument, as I pointed out that SIP Voip (even Vonage uses it) requires 64kbps minimum bandwidth, while Skype, with superior performance, only requires 32kbps. Consequently people in remote areas can actually make Skype calls outward over dial-up PPP connections! I had to use Skype to talk to Tsering in Namche, Nepal, when he had to economize on his satellite bandwidth off season - \$1,200 a month for 128kbps, but \$750 for 64kbps. Skype connections worked, while SIP based, even on costly Cisco VOIP phones, failed.

So the usual 'Internet and Software Philosophy Wars' rage on. I ended the argument by saying I use what 'works' and if corporate Skype starts to screw me, I will switch to another protocol – they are always changing. And I won't be an ideologue about it just to make a point.

One ugly experience happened then which shows just how still-primitive India is.

I had used the urinals in the mens room, as others had, from the beginning. But some of that change of diet to Indian food got to my system and gave me light diarrhea. I needed to go. So I stepped into the room with nothing more than a floor opening with a ceramic bowl one has to squat over. No running water, and no toilet paper, or even receptacles for it! I had to go, I was getting some cramps and didn't want to try and wait – a mile walk and then a rickshaw ride. Walk around and scarf up plain white printer paper, take off my coat and white sweater, leaving them on a chair in the computer room for there was not even a hook in that 'bathroom' and go into the toilet room again. Then drop my pants and squatting, working hard to prevent my suspenders or nice cream colored pants from getting into the recessed muck opening, and use hard white paper to do the essentials. No soft Chamie paper!

And THAT was the toilet across the hall from the 1,000 seat auditorium.

Now when I was way up in Namche, Nepal in Sherpa country I had to do that, in an outside outhouse. But this was in modern India in a substantial town.

When the day was over, I was really tired. Because I woke up at 3AM the night before, and worked on that Letter to the Dalai Lama, and never went back to bed.

So it was catching up with me by 5:30 today. I declined staying around for a 'music' performance that would fill the 1,000 seat auditorium by kids and adults close by, as well as our attendees. So started back at dusk the mile walk, weather completely clear, in my blue jacket wearing gloves. While tons of kids and young adults streamed past me to get the performance. Sorry I missed it, but I was crosseyed by this time.

Then Voila!, I looked up through an opening in the trees to see two snow covered mountains off maybe 5 miles to the north. The 15,000 foot range that I spotted on Google Earth just north of Dharamsala before I traveled. Higher than Pikes Peak. Because of the overcast I had not seen them before, even though I knew they were there. The light was fading, but the peaks stood out with their snow, but I pictured them – they were beautiful – and I have at least one of those pictures in today's set.

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I completed my hike to Dal Lake just as I was having to use the little round flashlight that I took this time. Got in a rickshaw, and got home the dark 2 miles over the mountain road, here to my hotel. 40 rupees. \$.95

When I got to my room, I noticed they had taken that big bedcover off my bed, put it back, there was a light blanket on the bed, which was electric!

They finally got the idea that it was cold.

I lay down on top, boots on, to rest before going out to the dining room for dinner.

But I fell fast asleep, television on, and didn't wake up until 11:50PM. Slept 4 hours! I WAS tired. And of course missed dinner, which was only served until 10PM.

So here I am again, after 1 AM, having composed this. And will go back to bed.

But not before uploading here the important thing I worked on the night before – the Letter to the Dalai Lama. Before I left the Conference Hall I met Phuntsok Dorjee, co-signer of the letter (they persuaded me to put my name on there also – as a 'Participant' not just 'Staff') He said he would print it out (I had to send it to him email) on letterhead, get it back today, the 25th, so I could sign it too. And he suggested that I carry it to the Dalai Lama's Residence, and give it at least to his secretary, along with the Scarf.

Everybody agreed to the text of the letter I drafted – thought it was excellent, so its on the way.

I'll end here with its text XIV Dalai Lama will be reading it soon.

October 25d, 2006

**Your Holiness, the XIV Dalai
Lama**

**On May 24th you issued a
wonderful welcome to those of us
attending the forthcoming
AirJaldi World Wireless Summit at
the site of your beloved Tibetan
Children's Village.**

In that written greeting you said:

**"By itself the Internet cannot
feed the poor, or defend the**

oppressed, or protect those subject to natural disasters, but by keeping us informed, it can allow those of us who have the opportunity to give whatever help we can.”

That is as wise and thoughtful an understanding of what the powerful new communications technologies of the world can do, and not do, for mankind, as any of us have ever heard or read. But we may all be surprised about the benefits to mankind of this technology, openly deployed.

We, the attendees here present, wish to thank you devoutly for your generous act of welcome and your wise counsel about the importance of our undertakings. You have indeed set the theme for our conference and we are in the position to disseminate your wise words by means of our wireless links and the Internet, all over the world.

All in attendance have had the opportunity to read your message and have unanimously agreed to this request.

We humbly ask that you accept this simple white silk scarf as a pure gift from all attendees at this World Wireless Summit, as a token of our heartfelt esteem and thanks to your Holiness, for helping make this gathering and its lessons, one which will be remembered by all in attendance forever.

Signed on Behalf of the Participants and Organizers, your

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servants

Phuntsok Dorjee

**Member of the Organizing
Team**

David R Hughes

**Participant – Key Note
Speaker**

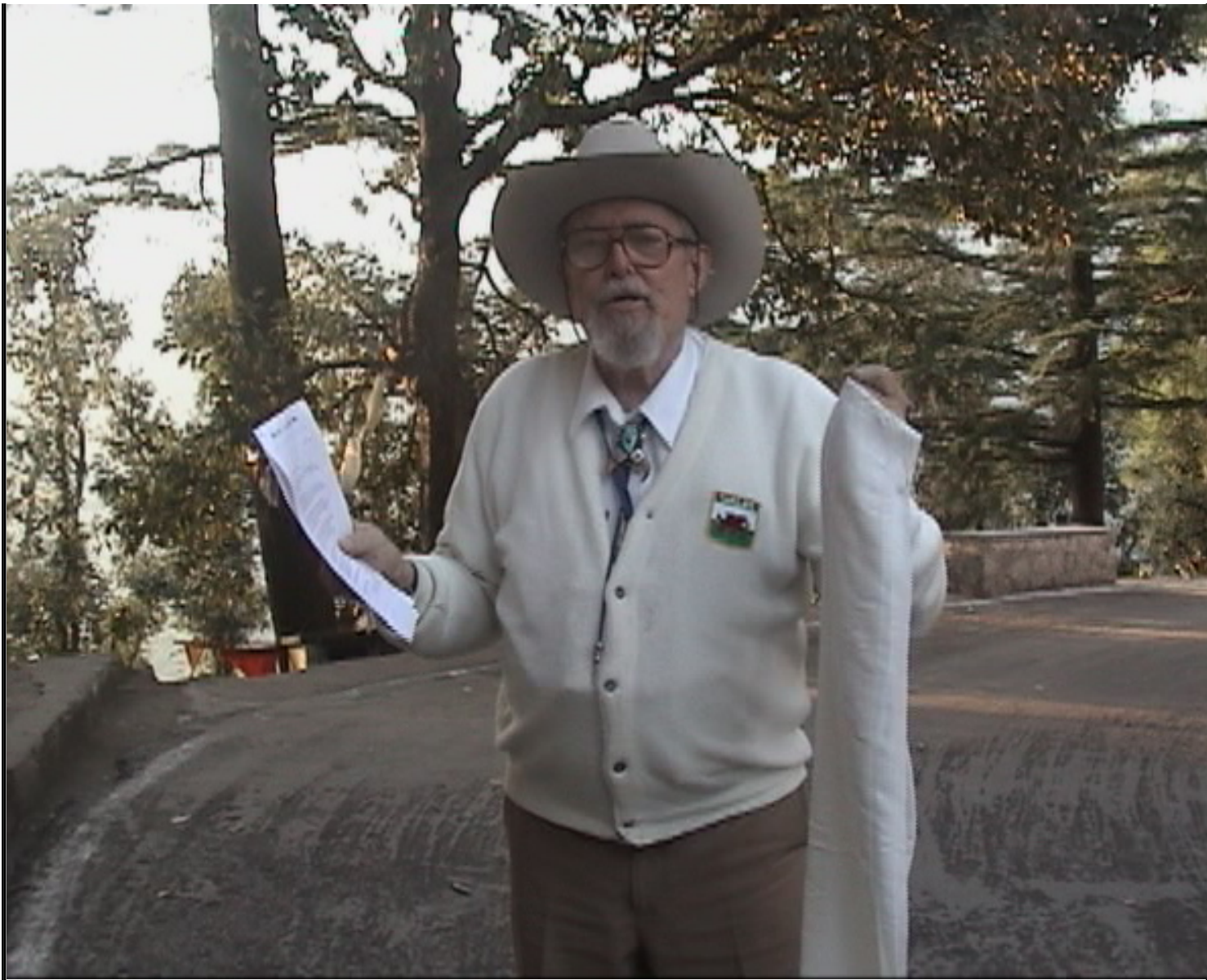
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Me, with the Silk Shawl and the Letter, signed by all, as I was delivering it to the Dalai's Residence. He was not there at the time, but a Monk accepted it for him.

I left for the rest of my trip satisfied.