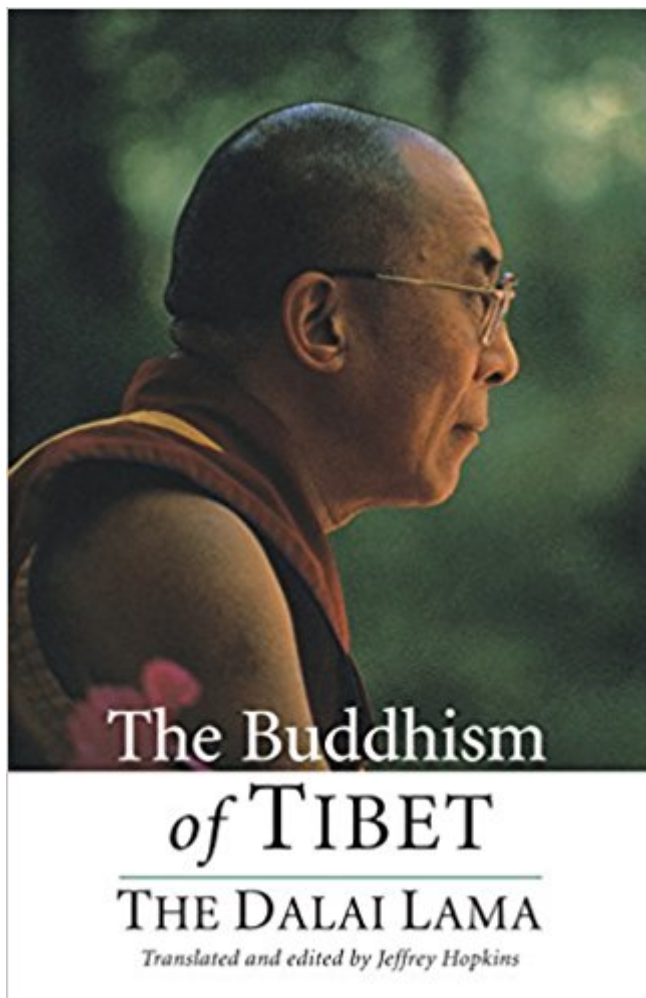


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The Buddhism Of Tibet



Synopsis

Unlike most books by the Dalai Lama which are edited compilations of talks that he has given, this book consists of two texts that he himself wrote and two that he chose—all especially aimed at helping Western readers become better grounded in Buddhism. He wrote "The Buddhism of Tibet" and "The Key to the Middle Way" sections to explain the principal topics and central practices of Buddhism. There are four sections to this compilation:

- "The Buddhism of Tibet" by the Dalai Lama: In this excellent introduction, the Dalai Lama explains the principal topics and central practices of Buddhism.
- "The Key to the Middle Way" by the Dalai Lama: The Dalai Lama leads the student to the discovery of the true meaning of emptiness. With acute precision, he presents many insights into the nature of emptiness.
- "The Precious Garland" by Nagarjuna: Originally written for a king, this text is famous for its descriptions of the bodhisattva path of compassion and for its clear, concise analysis of the Buddha's teachings on emptiness. It describes how to find happiness by cultivating virtues of body speech and mind and how to amass the stores of merit and wisdom required for enlightenment.
- "The Song of the Four Mindfulnesses" by the Seventh Dalai Lama Kaysang Gyatso: This short poem contains all the essentials of sutra and tantra. It is to be used as a basis for meditations on mindfulness of the guru altruism deity yoga and emptiness.

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Customer Reviews

As Tibetan Buddhism matures in the West, the release of more substantive and esoteric literature becomes timely. With this intermediate audience in mind, and with the hope that "even a few people for a short period could have some internal peace," the Dalai Lama here offers two of his original writings alongside two ancient texts. His works "The Buddhism of Tibet" and "The Key to the Middle Way" comprise roughly half of the book. They reveal some of the secondary and more cerebral layers of Tibetan Buddhist study, going well beyond the primary embrace of the Four Noble Truths. Emptiness, "the final mode of being of all phenomena," is a recurring motif throughout the volume. The second half includes "Precious Garland of Advice for the King," 500 quatrains written by Nagarjuna, who lived 400 years after the Buddha. Written to advise the Indian king Satavahana, it has specific counsel on ruling, plus more general material on emptiness and compassion. Although theoretically softened by a caveat of application to both sexes, the prohibition against desiring women, who are partially described as "a source of excrement, urine and vomit," among other similar vitriolic phrases, will be hard to stomach for many. The book concludes with an exposition of a relatively short poem, "Song of the Four Mindfulnesses" by Kaysang Gyatso, the Seventh Dalai Lama. No doubt a book of merit, this volume is most appropriate for serious students who are ready to wade through fairly heavy intellectual currents. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.

"The perfect book for someone seeking a first book on Tibetan Buddhism." —Quest Magazine

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