



Practicing Wisdom: The Perfection of Shantideva's Bodhisattva Way

By His Holiness the Dalai Lama

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Practicing Wisdom: The Perfection of Shantideva's Bodhisattva Way By His Holiness the Dalai Lama

Like the bestselling *A Flash of Lightning in the Dark of the Night*, *Practicing Wisdom* focuses on Shantideva's *Way of the Bodhisattva*. While the former includes only a brief introduction to Shantideva's complex and crucial ninth chapter on insight, *Practicing Wisdom* is a full and detailed follow-up commentary, making it an invaluable statement on the fundamental concept behind Buddhist thought and practice.

Shantideva says at the beginning of the final chapter of his *Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life*: "All branches of the Buddha's teachings are taught for the sake of wisdom. If you wish to bring an end to suffering, you must develop wisdom." Shantideva's ninth chapter is revered in Tibetan Buddhist circles as one of the most authoritative expositions of the Buddha's core insight, and all other Buddhist practices are means to support the generation of this wisdom within the practitioner. In *Practicing Wisdom*, the Dalai Lama reaffirms his reputation as a great scholar, communicator, and embodiment of the Buddha's Way by illuminating Shantideva's verses, drawing on contrasting commentaries from the Nyingma and Gelug lineages, and leading the reader through the stages of insight up to the highest view of emptiness. These teachings, delivered in southern France in 1993, have been masterfully translated, edited, and annotated by Geshe Thupten Jinpa, the Dalai Lama's primary translator and founder of the Institute of Tibetan Classics.

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Review

A Shambhala Sun Best Buddhist Writing selection. (*Shambhala Sun*)

About the Author

Tenzin Gyatso, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, is the spiritual leader of the Tibetan people. He frequently describes himself as a simple Buddhist monk. Born in northeastern Tibet in 1935, he was as a toddler recognized as the incarnation of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama and brought to Tibet's capital, Lhasa. In 1950, Mao Zedong's Communist forces made their first incursions into eastern Tibet, shortly after which the young Dalai Lama assumed the political leadership of his country. He passed his scholastic examinations with honors at the Great Prayer Festival in Lhasa in 1959, the same year Chinese forces occupied the city, forcing His Holiness to escape to India. There he set up the Tibetan government-in-exile in Dharamsala, working to secure the welfare of the more than 100,000 Tibetan exiles and prevent the destruction of Tibetan culture. In his capacity as a spiritual and political leader, he has traveled to more than sixty-two countries on six continents and met with presidents, popes, and leading scientists to foster dialogue and create a better world. In recognition of his tireless work for the nonviolent liberation of Tibet, the Dalai Lama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989. In 2012, he relinquished political authority in his exile government and turned it over to democratically elected representatives.

His Holiness frequently states that his life is guided by three major commitments: the promotion of basic human values or secular ethics in the interest of human happiness, the fostering of interreligious harmony, and securing the welfare of the Tibetan people, focusing on the survival of their identity, culture, and religion. As a superior scholar trained in the classical texts of the Nalanda tradition of Indian Buddhism, he is able to distill the central tenets of Buddhist philosophy in clear and inspiring language, his gift for pedagogy imbued with his infectious joy. Connecting scientists with Buddhist scholars, he helps unite contemplative and modern modes of investigation, bringing ancient tools and insights to bear on the acute problems facing the contemporary world. His efforts to foster dialogue among leaders of the world's faiths envision a future where people of different beliefs can share the planet in harmony. Wisdom Publications is proud to be the premier publisher of the Dalai Lama's more serious and in-depth works.

Thupten Jinpa Langri was educated in the classical Tibetan monastic academia and received the highest academic degree of Geshe Lharam (equivalent to a doctorate in divinity). Jinpa also holds a BA in philosophy and a PhD in religious studies, both from the University of Cambridge, England. Since 1985, he has been the principal translator to the Dalai Lama, accompanying him to the United States, Canada, and Europe. He has translated and edited many books by the Dalai Lama, including *The World of Tibetan Buddhism*, *Essence of the Heart Sutra*, and the *New York Times* bestseller *Ethics for the New Millennium*.

Jinpa has published scholarly articles on various aspects of Tibetan culture, Buddhism, and philosophy, and books such as *Songs of Spiritual Experience: Tibetan Poems of Awakening and Insight* (co-authored) and *Self, Reality and Reason in Tibetan Thought*. He serves on the advisory board of numerous educational and cultural organizations in North America, Europe, and India. He is currently the president and the editor-in-chief of the Institute of Tibetan Classics, a nonprofit educational organization dedicated to translating key Tibetan classics into contemporary languages. He also currently chairs the Mind and Life Institute.

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