



Essential Tibetan Buddhism

By Robert A. F. Thurman

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WINNER OF THE TRICYCLE PRIZE FOR EXCELLENCE

Expertly and lucidly surveying the basic varieties and teachings of Tibetan Buddhism, renowned scholar Robert Thurman makes this authentic spiritual tradition available to contemporary Western audiences

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

In this highly readable collection, Robert Thurman brings together the jewels of Tibetan literature that have made their own distinctive contribution to "the great river of Buddhism." He introduces the selection with an overview of essential Buddhist thought, orienting the reader with a history of Buddhism's development, from its origins in India, expansion across Asia, and flowering on Tibetan soil. Explaining the distinctive attainment of Tibetan Buddhist civilization as "the vivid sense of Buddhas in ordinary, daily reality," Thurman guides readers through selections that speak to the possibility of liberation for all beings. Stressing also the importance of the teacher or mentor figure in Tibetan Buddhist practice, he presents key texts from teachers whose words serve as inspiration to those seeking the path toward enlightenment. Excerpts culled from the vastness of the Tibetan canon include the hymns to the liberator goddess Tara, pieces from *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, writings on mentor worship from the first Panchen Lama, and selections from esoteric tantric practice texts. The volume ends with the 1989 Nobel Peace Prize lecture by Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso, illustrating the enduring relevance of this ancient wisdom for modern life. --*Uma Kukathas*

From Library Journal

Thurman, who holds the first endowed chair in Indo-Tibetan Buddhist studies in America (at Columbia Univ.) and cofounded Tibet House in New York City, presents an introductory text of sorts, with a useful selection from representative texts. (LJ 3/1/96)

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From [Booklist](#)

Ever since the Dalai Lama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989, Westerners have been fascinated by Tibetan Buddhism, and many have found their way to the Dalai Lama's lucid books. The next step in understanding this immensely complex tradition is to become familiar with its key texts. The literature of Tibetan Buddhism is vast and confounding, but Thurman, a highly respected Tibetan Buddhist scholar and an American Tibetan Buddhist monk, paves the way with this accessible, "essential" collection. He explains that the "essence" that sets Tibetan Buddhism apart from other Buddhist traditions is the belief in the existence of living Buddhas, and the possibility of becoming one oneself. The path to enlightenment is found with the help of a teacher, and mentor worship is as intrinsic to Tibetan Buddhism as monasticism, asceticism, tantric disciplines, the dharma, and reincarnation. Thurman, a mentor in print as well as in spirit, has wisely organized the carefully selected texts (many in verse form) according to the "essence" they elucidate. *Donna Seaman*

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