



# Becoming Enlightened

By His Holiness the Dalai Lama

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In *Becoming Enlightened*, His Holiness the Dalai Lama draws from traditional Buddhist meditative practices to present step-by-step contemplative exercises designed to expand the reader's capacity for spiritual growth, along with clear milestones to mark progress. By following the spiritual practices outlined in *Becoming Enlightened*, readers can learn how to replace negative feelings with positive attitudes and embark on the path to achieving an exalted state within ourselves and within the larger world.

Complete with personal anecdotes and intimate accounts of the Dalai Lama's experiences as a life-long student, meditator, political leader, Nobel Laureate, bestselling author, and revered international figure, *Becoming Enlightened* gives readers all the wisdom, support, guidance, and inspiration they need to become successful in their spiritual lives. This remarkable and empowering guide can be read and enjoyed by spiritual seekers of all faiths, as readers are captivated by His Holiness the Dalai Lama's loving and direct teaching style.

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## Becoming Enlightened By His Holiness the Dalai Lama Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #332404 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Atria Books
- Published on: 2009-12-22
- Released on: 2009-12-22
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 7.13" h x .80" w x 5.00" l, .48 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 320 pages



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## **Editorial Review**

### **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.

**Jeffrey Hopkins, Ph.D.**, served for a decade as the interpreter for the Dalai Lama. A Buddhist scholar and the author of more than thirty-five books and translations, he is emeritus professor of Tibetan and Buddhist studies at the University of Virginia, where he founded the largest academic program of Tibetan Buddhist studies in the West.

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was beset by a huge amount of violence, more than ever before, and at the start of the twenty-first century, murderous violence seems to be taking new forms, of ever-increasing power. This mess has been caused not by insufficient technical knowledge, nor by insufficient materials, but by an unruly mind.

While many in this world are enjoying increasing prosperity, many also remain in extreme poverty. In most countries there is a great disparity between social classes. Lacking wealth, the poor are terribly vulnerable. Consider, too, how many animals are being grown for slaughter, a number so great that the environment is being damaged.

These sad facts are due to insufficient loving care. If humanity's sense of caring for others increased, not only would people in the world be happier but the countless animals whose lives we directly affect would also have a better life. To increase our altruism we must motivate ourselves to take into consideration the effects of our actions on both the present and the future.

If unwanted suffering can be removed and happiness achieved merely through material advancement and wealth, then rich people should be free from suffering, but obviously this is not the case. In fact, once people obtain a good bit of money, comfort, and power, they tend to become excessively proud and jealous, particularly covetous, more focused on harm, and increasingly apprehensive. Those living in a moderate way are by no means impervious to the three poisons of lust, hatred, and ignorance, but for the most part they are bothered considerably less by additional problems.

What makes us unhappy? Our minds have fallen so far under the influence of self-destructive emotions that these attitudes, far from being viewed as harmful, are welcomed and promoted. That is what makes us squirm in discomfort.

If people could enjoy both external prosperity and inner qualities of goodness, outer and inner wealth, that indeed would provide a comfortable human life. Happiness does not come just from external circumstances; it mainly derives from inner attitudes. Nowadays those countries that have achieved great material progress are beginning to see that physical health and sickness, as well as the condition of society, are closely related to our mental processes.

Analytical investigation of the ways we think and feel are very important. Over the last three thousand years the most penetrating analysis of internal mental processes has occurred in India, so it is those insights that I draw on in this book to present in an easily accessible way the full range of practices leading to the enlightenment of Buddhahood.

### Identifying Buddhism

Some 2,550 years ago, Buddha set forth a new religion in India. Some aspects of his ideas had already appeared there earlier, but no one had delineated these perspectives and techniques as conclusively as he would. What is at their core? Selflessness. Long before him, many had sought to analyze the status of the self, but not only did they teach that the self exists, they held that it exists independent of the mind and the body. However, Buddha concluded that when we assert that the self exists independently, our innate sense of self-centeredness increases and solidifies. As a result, the lust, anger, pride, jealousy, and doubt that stem from being selfcentered grow stronger and more ingrained.

Seeing that defective states of mind such as lust and hatred are rooted in egotism, Buddha taught something that had not been explained before him, the view of selflessness. This was exceptional, and indeed for the more than 2,500 years that have passed since his time, no one outside of his tradition has taught this view.

As the Tibetan scholar Jamyang Shepa wrote near the end of the seventeenth century, "Non-Buddhist and Buddhist views derive from proving or refuting what is conceived by a view of self." In setting forth the view of selflessness, Buddha taught that a permanent unchangeable self, separate from mind and body, does not exist. Non-Buddhist schools not only accept such a self but seek to prove its independent existence through various approaches, whereas Buddhist systems seek to refute it.

It is not that the self is totally nonexistent; it is obvious that a self that desires happiness and does not want suffering does indeed exist. But Buddha taught that the self is set up in dependence upon the mind and body. In this way Buddha established the view known as dependent-arising, which emphasizes the interrelatedness of all things. Despite appearances to the contrary, nothing exists autonomously, or truly in isolation. All things have interconnections. The view of dependent-arising is Buddha's focal teaching.

Dependent-arising means that all phenomena -- whether physical, mental, or otherwise -- come into being based on certain causes and conditions. The happiness that the self seeks out and the suffering that the self seeks to remove do not arise independently but are produced by their own specific, temporary, appropriate causes. According to Buddhism they do not arise from permanent causes such as a permanent self-arisen Creator, or a permanent Nature, as was a popular belief in India. Buddha taught that phenomena arise *only* in dependence upon their respective causes and conditions. Everything is always in flux.

I am frequently asked what the Buddhist outlook is, and I respond by saying its view is dependent-arising, and its prescribed behavior is nonviolence. Nonviolence means to be motivated by compassion, which calls for helping others and, if that is not possible, then at least doing no harm. Dependent-arising and compassion are the essence of the Buddhist religion and the keys to its highest state: enlightenment.

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From [AudioFile](#)

His Holiness The Dalai Lama delineates the foundations of Buddhism in this comprehensive text. Although the subject matter is broad, BECOMING ENLIGHTENED includes practical instructions and numbered techniques. Narrator Jeffrey Hopkins is a renowned Buddhist scholar and former translator for the Dalai Lama. Hopkins is intimate with the Dalai Lama's own speech patterns, as evidenced in his measured pace and calm, kind vocal tones. Like the Dalai Lama himself, Hopkins manages to sound matter-of-fact and accessible even while elucidating the complexities of Buddhist philosophy. Hopkins thoroughly conveys the Dalai Lama's patience and wisdom. BECOMING ENLIGHTENED is as practical as it is profound, and is not to be missed by anyone interested in the fundamentals of Buddhism. J.T. © AudioFile 2009, Portland, Maine

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