

Inner Peace—Global Impact Tibetan Buddhism, Leadership, and Work

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Book Review

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Increasingly, one's inner life in the context of leadership and work matters. Self-knowing and self-awareness are more frequently seen as core leadership capacities in organizations and in management. This is a trend exemplified by the growing research and number of workshops on mindfulness and leadership in recent years. In this volume, *Inner Peace—Global Impact: Tibetan Buddhism, Leadership and Work*, contributors explore Tibetan Buddhism's relevance in bridging the inner and outer dimensions of leadership. Tibetan Buddhism is positioned, not just as a set of intellectual concepts, but more significantly, as a way of cultivating authentic leadership for the workplace through awareness practices. The book offers perspectives, as well as practical ways, in which to develop these critical capacities within a time of amplified global complexity and uncertainty.

Over the years as a sociologist, executive coach, organization consultant, and Feldenkrais practitioner, editor and contributor Kathryn Goldman Schuyler, began to notice the growing presence of Tibetan Buddhism across her fields of work in global change, leadership and the role of organizations in creating healthy societies. This growing awareness led her to begin practicing in these traditions and inspired the genesis of this book. Goldman Schuyler invites together a wide range of scholars, Buddhist teachers, psychologists, business leaders, coaches, philosophers,

and artists to articulate the underlying principles of the Tibetan wisdom traditions and to explore their relevance for skillful and compassionate leadership in the workplace today. Each contributor has both a deeply personal experience of Tibetan Buddhism as well as supporting professional qualifications to ensure breadth and depth of inquiry, discussion, and reflection.

This volume will be useful for individuals working in the spheres of organizational development and management as well as business studies scholars and religious studies scholars. It is an engaging collection of essays ranging from scholarly research to first person narratives, providing various gateways into the dialogue for a variety of audiences across scholarly and practitioner contexts. *Inner Peace—Global Impact* addresses those who are intrigued by Tibet and its teachings as well as the needs of leaders, scholars, and consultants who are in search of new ideas for how leadership can be understood and cultivated.

The book begins with a selection of essays on “Leadership: Tibetan Buddhism as a Source for New Perspectives.” Renowned philosopher Huston Smith and Thupten Jina trace the journey of His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama from being largely unknown to becoming a globally influential thought leader. Religious studies scholar and contemplative educator Judith Simmer-Brown outlines the Tibetan Buddhist Feminine Principle teachings and argues that they support the invisible dimensions of leadership and nourish the compassion and ethics of leaders. Kathryn Goldman Schuyler extends the discussion through exploring how we can increase leadership integrity through a combination of mind training and embodied learning. Throughout these introductory chapters, Tibetan Buddhism as a foundation for integrity and ethics is highlighted alongside how these aspects can be strengthened through various forms of mind-

training within daily experiences and actions, with examples ranging from the mountains of Tibet to U.S. boardrooms.

In a section on “Individuals: How Tibetan Buddhist Practice Impacts People at Work,” an anthropologist of dance (Lin Lerner), a sociology professor (John Eric Baugher), an artist (Scott Snibbe), a flight attendant (Dana Browning, pseudonym), a clinical social worker (Carl Mangum) and a scientist (Paul Ritvo) share their personal stories of transformation through Tibetan practices and describe how it has influenced their lives and work. These personal stories offer insights into the emotional afflictions and related social dynamics that can obscure the potential and impact of good work, whether one is dealing with an intoxicated passenger on a plane or personally navigating the psychological and relational pressures and challenges of attaining academic tenure.

In “Organizations: Organizing for the Future,” case studies illustrate how Tibetan Buddhist organizations around the world have evolved over time, dealt with challenges and mishaps, and the many adaptations that they have made along the way to address the specific needs and mindsets of Westerners. Each contributor has been deeply immersed in the organizational story they share. Nicholas Ribush reflects on the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition, Susan Skjei speaks to the legacy of Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, Philip Philippou explores developing Rigpa as a spiritual organization and Sogyal Rinpoche provides general reflections on Tibetan Buddhism in modern Western culture. Tracing the evolution of these organizations sheds light on some crucial questions facing many contemporary organizations and corporations dealing with circumstances of succession planning, changing leadership (and

corresponding internal dynamics and tensions), as well as the need to honor legacies while innovating to meet new circumstances, new generations, and new audiences.

Recent research studies are the centerpiece of the section “Research: Tibetan Buddhism in Western Situations.” John Eric Baugher investigates the “quiet revolution” in care for the dying, Bronwen Rees explores the potential contributions of Tibetan Buddhism to evolving research methods, and Goldman Schuyler presents perspectives on the influence of the Buddhist practices of the *bodhisattva* in entrepreneurial organizations.

The volume is capped off with reflections from influential individuals who have been deeply involved in contemplative practices while simultaneously engaged in teaching, consulting, or the business sector. In “Reflections: Thoughts from East and West” Goldman Schuyler interviews Lama Tharchin Rinpoche, a tenth generation Tibetan yogi; Bill George, a Harvard professor and former CEO of Medtronic; Margaret Wheatley, an organizational consultant whose work on leadership and the “new sciences” has been highly influential; and Peter Senge, a thought leader who has galvanized interest in learning organizations. Senge sums up many of the themes in the book, a perspective shared by many of the contributors: “If you look at the people that we historically admire in positions of authority, they’re people who exhibit wisdom...I think that’s the missing piece [today], and I think that we need to rediscover that piece. If Buddhism and other cultivation traditions can really take root, then I think the idea could develop that to be a CEO, to be in any kind of senior position, you should be a cultivator. And what do you cultivate? You become more clear about yourself, your own inner psychology, and your needs and drives, so that you’re not driven by them. You’re also able to see more of what’s happening around you”

(p.236).

In this volume, Tibetan Buddhism is not presented naively as a universal cure or secret formula. It is not romanticized, “othered,” or commercialized. Instead, the perspectives and practices of this living tradition are explored as a practical way of glimpsing possibilities for humanity’s future that may not be visible, or at least harder to access, through the dominant, Western social science mindset.

And, increasingly, these distinctions between “East” and “West” are blurring, shifting, and reorganizing. Tibetan Buddhism is no longer just a Tibetan tradition. It is also a global tradition as the Diaspora continues to ripple out and these traditions continue to resonate and influence—and subsequently be influenced and shaped by—people, organizations, businesses, and even societies. Given the amount of attention paid to awareness practices in more secular forms that are currently in style, such as *mindfulness*, where the historical context is removed—it is refreshing to read a book that continues to link the lineage and history of meditation traditions and contemplative practices while providing an encouraging and inspiring vision of their contemporary contribution to the spheres of leadership and work.