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**Book Review: *Inner Peace—Global Impact: Tibetan Buddhism, Leadership, and Work*,
by Kathryn Goldman Schuyler**

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Book Review

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Inner Peace—Global Impact: Tibetan Buddhism, Leadership, and Work, by Kathryn Goldman Schuyler, Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing. 2012. 380 pages., \$24.99, ISBN- 978-1-61735-918-7

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Reading and writing about *Inner Peace—Global Impact: Tibetan Buddhism, Leadership, and Work* offered me an introduction to new ways of thinking about spirituality and its application within organizational settings. In this volume, Dr. Kathryn Goldman Schuyler compiles a text that addresses the impact of the epistemology and practice of Tibetan Buddhism on individual agency, organizations, and contemporary society.

In this text, which includes the work of authors from many different disciplines and occupations, Goldman Schuyler seeks to integrate theory, research, and application for use among a diverse audience. The text is divided into five sections dealing with leadership, the impact of Tibetan Buddhist practice at work, the development of global Tibetan Buddhist organizations, research on Tibetan Buddhism in the west, and final reflections on the interaction between East and West. I will focus here on two primary themes or takeaway points that I believe are the most relevant for those of us who are concerned with conducting applied social science in a way that will facilitate positive social change—the ways in which the epistemological approach of Tibetan Buddhism impacts our understanding of self and society (or agency and structure) and the ways in which these conclusions can affect contemporary organizations and leadership.

The epistemological approach, or idea about knowledge and ways of knowing, found in Tibetan Buddhism results in a deconstruction of the binary between structure and agency, or between the society and the self. This is a theme that is central in the discussions of many, if not all, of the authors with chapters in this text. Unlike other forms of Buddhism, Tibetan Buddhism directs practitioners toward meditative enlightenment that involves directing one's self outward with compassion (the desire to decrease or eliminate suffering) for all beings in one's environment. This process involves an understanding that reality is developed through our contemplation of our environment and that real knowing cannot rely solely on internal contemplation or academic study but must also be developed through practice or "tacit knowledge" (p. 284). This process of learning requires that the student overcome the binary between "objective" knowledge and "subjective" knowledge that is still a central dominating force in contemporary scientific communities. While this text details the ways in which this epistemological approach is specifically related to Tibetan Buddhist principles, the epistemological approach is also reflective of critiques of knowledge made by Western social theorists such as Michel Foucault, Dorothy Smith, and Patricia Hill Collins.

This approach questions not only the binary way of thinking about forms of knowledge but also the binary way of thinking about structure and agency. According to Tibetan Buddhist practice, we not only learn about our social world through contemplation and action but through this contemplation and action we also create our social world—they are constantly interacting elements, rather two opposing forces, of reality. This further deconstructs the distinction between the self as an internalizing concept and society as an externalizing force. We understand society

through the self, which, according to Tibetan Buddhist principles, only exists through contemplation and compassionate interaction with society.

An important aspect of this relationship, that Tibetan Buddhism stresses, is integrating compassion into social processes, which means orienting the process toward the goal of reducing the suffering of all living beings. This discussion has important implications for practitioners within many fields, including social science. If we oriented the development of knowledge toward compassion for all living beings, this might change how social science is produced as well as the outcomes of social science. This might move us as a community beyond thinking about how our research might be applied in specific settings and direct us to think about how our research and the knowledge produced through our research might contribute specifically to less suffering within the organizations, communities, and societies in which we conduct research. These conclusions about the relationship between knowledge, agency, and structure also have important implications for organizations within contemporary society.

Organizations within contemporary society are also impacted by binary ways of thinking that are challenged by Tibetan Buddhism's principles and practice. Just as Tibetan Buddhism directs individuals to orient their learning and action toward compassion, it also directs organizations to orient their action toward compassion by decreasing or eliminating the suffering of those involved with the organization either internally or externally. Several of the chapters in the text deal with the development of the global organizations that are both the forces behind and reflections of the spread of Tibetan Buddhism. Within these organizations, there is a tension between the desire to maintain an "organic" and participatory organizational form, with quasi-equally distributed power, and growth, which often necessarily results in centralized organizational forms that involve a hierarchical distribution of power. In Chapters 12, 13, and 14, one can read rich and detailed discussions dealing with the development of these organizations such as the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition.

The global organizations that developed raised questions about leadership within organizations as well. A leader within a Buddhist organization should be especially concerned about externalizing the wisdom and compassion developed through internal contemplation and tacit knowledge (Chapters 3, 4, and 5). This form of leadership challenges dominant Western notions of leadership that focus leaders on efficiency, external technology, and material gains for the organization. *Inner Peace—Global Compact* includes academic research as well as first-person accounts about how this alternative way of thinking about organizations and leadership impacts the lives of entrepreneurs, hospice workers, flight attendants, and professors—as well as many others. It can also perhaps inform leaders within other settings, such as professional organizations and social movement organizations, about how they might lead in a different way—oriented toward compassion rather than efficiency and material gain.

Inner Peace—Global Impact has much more to say than what I have summarized here. I encourage you, the reader, to read the text and realize the other important contributions to our knowledge made by this book. The book should be interesting and engaging for multiple audiences both practical and academic. Academics might be a bit disappointed by the minimalist analytical voice—Dr. Goldman Schuyler has decided to let much of the data speak for itself—with interviews and transcripts in unaltered forms—but should be impressed by the wide range of perspectives and conclusions presented. I would have liked to see a more developed analytical conclusion to the text, but this might have worked against Dr. Goldman Schuyler's decision to create a modular text that could be read in parts rather than as a whole. Academics interested in applied research practices, religion, organizations, knowledge production, and social change should find this text interesting and engaging. The text should also be interesting and engaging for practitioners in multiple fields, such as health care, business, and education. The text language should also be easily accessible to an audience from various educational levels, and thus, it might be a good book to use in classes dealing with religion, organizations, and applied social

science. However, the decision to create a modular text has also resulted in a lot of necessary repetition of information within the text, which can be cumbersome if one decides to read the entire text from start to finish. Academics, practitioners, and students may also be interested in the addition of a discussion dealing with the impact of Tibetan Buddhism on the social movement organizations that have developed to work toward ending the Chinese occupation of Tibet (such as Free Tibet). This would have been an interesting and timely addition to this text that would further increase the audience base for this text.

After entering this text with very little awareness or knowledge about Tibetan Buddhism or the development of Tibetan Buddhist organizations around the world, I am leaving it a much more informed person. I am also leaving it motivated to perhaps learn more and perhaps apply some of the lessons learned in the text to my own research dealing with social movement organizations and my own practice as a professor. Approaching the world with wisdom and compassion seems like a good idea to me, and is a lesson that one can further consider by reading *Inner Peace—Global Impact: Tibetan Buddhism, Leadership, and Work* by Kathryn Goldman Schuyler.