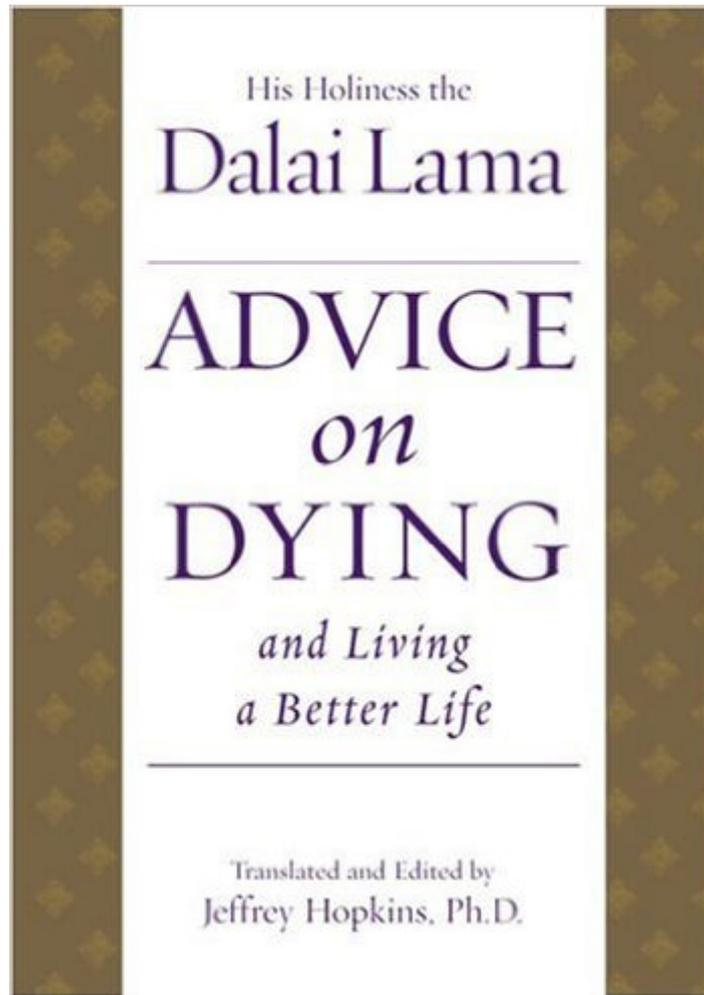


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Advice On Dying: And Living A Better Life



Synopsis

"Everyone dies, but no one is dead," goes the Tibetan saying. It is with these words that "Advice on Dying" takes flight. Using a seventeenth-century poem written by a prominent scholar-practitioner, His Holiness the Dalai Lama draws from a wide range of traditions and beliefs to explore the stages we all go through when we die, which are the very same stages we experience in life when we go to sleep, faint, or reach orgasm (Shakespeare's "little death"). The stages are described so vividly that we can imagine the process of traveling deeper into the mind, on the ultimate journey of transformation. In this way, His Holiness shows us how to prepare for that time and, in doing so, how to enrich our time on earth, die without fear or upset, and influence the stage between this life and the next so that we may gain the best possible incarnation. As always, the ultimate goal is to advance along the path to enlightenment. "Advice on Dying" is an essential tool for attaining that eternal bliss.

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Customer Reviews

Did you know that Tibetan Buddhism is tantric? That is just one of the revelations of this book. It is obvious that, through the ages, the meditation masters have been observing the physical symptoms of death and dying. This book explains the physical symptoms one experiences at each stage of the process of dying, described in a thick context of a metaphor of energies and levels of mind. (If you are a spiritual mystic, you'll love this! I must admit, I have had to read it a couple of times to get my Western mind to surrender -- but the journey is worth the concentration.) When I get to my death

bead, instead of allowing the people around me to mourn, I have written instructions for my family to have someone read this book to me (over and over if I last that long) -- whether I'm apparently conscious or not (and I will invite the others to read Hesse's Siddhartha and go home and forgive someone they hate). Along with physical symptoms of dying, this book details the journey of the mind and consciousness as the traveler experiences the only event we are all born to experience. Many thanks to the Dalai Lama and his teachers.

I would recommend this book to everyone. The title is spot on, as it is rooted in the experience and wisdom of generations of human beings before us who have cultivated mindfulness and patience at the highest level. Through understanding the processes and phenomenon involved in dying, we are thereby more equipped to face our own departure with equanimity, and grace, rather than clinging to "this life" or "this body." Be assured that this body that you have lovingly cared for with food, clothing, shelter and other amenities of this life, will pass away, and abandon you at the time of death. It would be wise therefore to cultivate a sense of impermanence so that one might pass gracefully, without suffering or lamenting. Through embracing death as an inevitable part of life, we cultivate compassion, empathy, and equanimity and thereby enable ourselves to live a better life.

This particular text contains very hard to find information on the inner structure, presented in a clear, straightforward, concise and comprehensive manner: included are descriptions of the symbols for, and the actions of, the various levels of consciousness, chakras, channels and winds and the results of prana movement through the body. This information is just not easily findable or accessible elsewhere in any one place. You could even use this information to accurately decipher ancient teaching thanks. His Holiness has written many books and there is, of necessity I think, a great deal of similar information overlap amongst them, however he always manages to insert into each work some truly unique gem of information not readily found elsewhere. It's rather like the old children's visual game of Find The Precious Objects Hidden Somewhere In This Picture. These unique additions in the midst of familiar territory are tiny hints at the profound depth of wisdom inherent in this great teacher. Don't fret over this book's details. Read it once through whether or not you like it, then just be patient and go back, and read it again, and yet again, and eventually, you will find it easy.

Not an easy read. It's a course that should be studied, many times very very carefully! I'm trying to memorize it so that I'll remember during the major crisis that death is, for everyone. Truly a manual;

a detailed description of each of the steps we must all go thru. Cannot recommend it more; but don't expect to breeze thru. Definitely not a novel

Accepting death and meditating on impermanence are among the cornerstones of Buddhist teachings. The Tibetan Buddhist tradition especially has for centuries almost made a science of contemplating, observing, and describing the subtleties involved in the process of dying and the afterlife. Of equal importance to living well for Tibetan Buddhists is dying well. Although this is a brief text, it is helpful to have some prior knowledge or experience of Buddhism or meditative disciplines due to the very technical nature of the teachings and states of consciousness described. One does not need to be a Buddhist to benefit from learning about the process of dying here but the material covering the afterlife requires a greater measure of faith to accept. The heart of the teachings are actually quite concrete and practical. The 8 stages of dying are mirrored in daily activities such as falling asleep, sneezing, and orgasm. In fact some of the 8 stages may be not unfamiliar to you prior to reading this book. Realizing this, cultivating higher awareness during these activities can be of great value to a practitioner in understanding death and consciousness. The latter part of this book explains the movement of energy within the body during death, described as a system of winds (energy) and drops (energy centers). This is extremely technical information that may be difficult to grasp without experience in some form of energy work such as deep meditation, tantric, kundalini yoga, chi kung, or reiki. Some rather fantastic feats are described such as monks flying through the air, but the Dalai Lama does not quote them as truth and even discusses an example involving in-vitro birth of how the truths of sacred texts are not always infallible. For those wishing to deepen their meditative, spiritual practice, and understanding of death this is a powerful and invaluable book from a living master.

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