



# The Six Perfections: Buddhism and the Cultivation of Character

By Dale Wright

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**The Six Perfections: Buddhism and the Cultivation of Character** By Dale Wright

Here is a lucid, accessible, and inspiring guide to the six perfections--Buddhist teachings about six dimensions of human character that require "perfecting": generosity, morality, tolerance, energy, meditation, and wisdom. Drawing on the *Diamond Sutra*, the *Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom*, and other essential Mahayana texts, Dale Wright shows how these teachings were understood and practiced in classical Mahayana Buddhism and how they can be adapted to contemporary life in a global society. What would the perfection of generosity look like today, for example? What would it mean to give with neither ulterior motives nor naiveté? Devoting a separate chapter to each of the six perfections, Wright combines sophisticated analysis with real-life applications. Buddhists have always stressed self-cultivation, the uniquely human freedom that opens the possibility of shaping the kind of life we will live and the kind of person we will become. For those interested in ideals of human character and practices of self-cultivation, *The Six Perfections* offers invaluable guidance.

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### Review

"Dale S. Wright has written a compelling account of one of the world's most ancient - and still-vibrant - models of moral development. *The Six Perfections* broadens psychology's vision of human excellence."

--Daniel Goleman, author of *Emotional Intelligence*

"'Awakening' (enlightenment) is not enough: whatever we realize needs to be integrated into how we actually live. The most important Buddhist guidelines for self-transformation are the "six perfections." Dale Wright explains how they have been understood in the Buddhist tradition and reflects on what they can mean for us today. The best book on an essential topic."

--David R. Loy, author of *A Buddhist History of the West and Awareness Bound and Unbound*

"I cannot remember having enjoyed an exposition of the six transcendent perfections of the bodhisattva as much as this one from Dale Wright. He is careful, precise, lucid, and yet light and humorous. You can actually understand what he is talking about - and it is about the most profound and useful of philosophical and spiritual journeys. I strongly recommend this book."

--Robert A. F. Thurman, Jey Tsong Khapa Professor of Buddhism, Columbia University Author of *Infinite Life*, and *Why The Dalai Lama Matters*

"[An] accessible, scholarly study of Buddhism's six perfections ...[C]learly and convincingly displays the social relevance of Buddhism for contemporary life. Finally, this text is written in an easy-going, very readable, yet scholarly style...Recommended."

--*Choice*

### About the Author

**Dale Wright** is David B. and Mary H. Gamble Distinguished Professor of Religious Studies and Asian Studies at Occidental College and the author of *Philosophical Meditations on Zen Buddhism* and, co-edited with Steven Heine, a series of five OUP books on Zen Buddhism.

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