

A GUIDE TO THE BODHISATTVA WAY OF LIFE



by
Śāntideva

Translated from the Sanskrit and Tibetan by

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and

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A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life, ཇོ་སྐྱོབ་ལོ་ལུ་འགྲུབ་ཀྱི་ལཱ་ལྷན་ཁང་།, Snow Lion Publications, 1997, 1559398027, 9781559398022, 151 pages. In the whole of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, there is no single treatise more deeply revered or widely practiced than A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life. Composed in the eighth century by the Indian Bodhisattva Santideva, it became an instant classic in the curricula of the Buddhist monastic universities of India, and its renown has grown ever since. Santideva presents methods to harmonize one's life with the Bodhisattva ideal and inspires the reader to cultivate the perfections of the Bodhisattva: generosity, ethics, patience, zeal, meditative concentration, and wisdom..

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Healing Anger The Power of Patience from a Buddhist Perspective, Dalai Lama XIV ཇོ་སྐྱོབ་ལོ་ལུ་འགྲུབ་ཀྱི་ལཱ་ལྷན་ཁང་།, Jan 1, 1997, Philosophy, 149 pages. All the world's major religions emphasize the importance of the practice of love, compassion, and tolerance. This is particularly true in the Buddhist traditions, which

Transcending Time An Explanation of the Kalachakra Six-Session Guru Yoga, Gen Lamrimpa, Aug 19, 2012, Religion, . Inspired by years of scholarly training and decades of solitary retreat, Tibetan monk Gen Lamrimpa offers a concise overview of all phases of the Kalachakra practice: the

Bodhisattva a Gandharan face, Robert Adams, 2001, Art, 12 pages. Robert Adams presents 13 portraits of a Gandharan sculpture in this inspiring introduction to the photographer, his subject and the wisdom that can be found in the simplest of

The Way of Awakening A Commentary on Shantideva's Bodhicharyavatara, Tobden (Geshe Yeshe), Geshe Yeshe Tobden, Jan 1, 2005, Religion, 387 pages. This classic is required reading for understanding Tibetan Buddhism. its revered verses have been a seminal influence on the Dalai Lama..

Five Great Catholic Ideas , Edward Wm. Clark, Aug 1, 1998, , 160 pages. This book is an exploration of several foundational principles of Catholic doctrine presented on a level accessible to a broad range of readers. It is rooted in the conviction

Healing from the Source The Science and Lore of Tibetan Medicine, Yeshe ཇོ་སྐྱོབ་ལོ་ལུ་འགྲུབ་ཀྱི་ལཱ་ལྷན་ཁང་།, 2000, Health & Fitness, 214 pages. Dr. Yeshe Donden, the long-time personal physician of HH the Dalai Lama, draws from over fifty years of practicing and teaching this ancient tradition of healing..

The Places That Scare You A Guide to Fearlessness in Difficult Times, Pema Chödrön ཇོ་སྐྱོབ་ལོ་ལུ་འགྲུབ་ཀྱི་ལཱ་ལྷན་ཁང་།, 2007, Religion, 186 pages. The author of the best-selling When Things Fall Apart offers insightful and compassionate advice on uncovering inner wisdom and opening one's heart while refusing to allow

The bridge of quiescence experiencing Tibetan Buddhist meditation, B. Alan Wallace, ཇོ་སྐྱོབ་ལོ་ལུ་འགྲུབ་ཀྱི་ལཱ་ལྷན་ཁང་།, 1998, Religion, 336 pages. This challenging new work examines practical techniques for training the attention. It will be of interest to seasoned contemplatives, to general readers concerned with

The Way of the Bodhisattva A Translation of the Bodhicharyavatara ཇོ་སྐྱོབ་ལོ་ལུ་འགྲུབ་ཀྱི་ལཱ་ལྷན་ཁང་།, Dalai Lama XIV ཇོ་སྐྱོབ་ལོ་ལུ་འགྲུབ་ཀྱི་ལཱ་ལྷན་ཁང་།, 2006, Religion, 222 pages. The Bodhicharyavatara (literally, "An Entry into the Activities of Enlightenment") is one of the masterworks of Buddhist thought. Written in 8th century India, it outlines the

Meaningful to Behold The Bodhisattva's Way of Life, Kelsang Gyatso, Jan 1, 2000, Bodhisattvas, 414 pages. A Bodhisattva is someone who has resolved to liberate all living beings from suffering by fulfilling his or her full spiritual potential. Many people have the compassionate

People of the Lie , M. Scott Peck, 1983, Medical, 276 pages. "So compelling in its exploration of the

human psyche, it's as hard to put down as a thriller...such a force of energy, intensity, and straightforwardness..

In the whole of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, there is no single treatise more deeply revered or widely practiced than A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life. Composed in the eighth century by the Indian Bodhisattva Santideva, it became an instant classic in the curricula of the Buddhist monastic universities of India, and its renown has grown ever since. Santideva presents methods to harmonize one's life with the Bodhisattva ideal and inspires the reader to cultivate the perfections of the Bodhisattva: generosity, ethics, patience, zeal, meditative concentration, and wisdom.

This translation of the Bodhicaryavatara certainly constitutes the highest quality English translation. The coupling of the Sanskrit and the Tibetan versions provides a definitive accuracy in the meaning of the text. The Sanskrit version alone is cryptic from time to time so that relying on the Tibetan version is very helpful, through its closeness to the western way of expressing things.

Although I feel this translation is the best English one, this version should not be used as a first version of the Bodhicaryavatara by newcomers. The translation from Crosby and Skilton is better suited for people not used to the context and the meaning of this text...thanks to its many excellent comments.

I have no understanding of the Tibetan or Sanskrit languages, so it is good to have Buddhist ideas put into English which is easy to comprehend. The translators have translated the Sanskrit as the main verse, but they have also included translations of the Tibetan verse, in the footnotes when the two read differently. They have also explained various names and terms so that new or non-Buddhist will have a better understanding of this SPIRITUAL CLASSIC. I hope that you find this book to be as spiritually uplifting as I have found it to be. May this book encourage all who read it, or hear teachings from it to strive to have the Awakening Mind.

Compassion is a path that takes constant work in order to walk steadily upon it. Even then, it's a pretty rough road to travel in the beginning. It is my hope that books such as these will open some minds to that path, and also to the plight of the Tibetan people. Wiping this culture from the face of the earth would be a great detriment to all of humanity.

This book is essential for the Buddhist philosophy, however, I would recommend this guide to someone who is already familiar with the basic teachings. As the title implies, it is a guide for how to live life, and it is written as a list of guiding principles. For someone new to Buddhism and wanting to learn more, I would first recommend an introduction. But I definitely recommend reading this guide to anyone interested in eastern religion or philosophy.

This is appropriate reading for readers with a very strong comprehension of English as well as some relationship with Buddhist terminology. While any student should attempt to get teachings on this text directly from a living teacher who has had the text "transmitted" to her or him, some students will nonetheless have a much easier time relating to the text immediately, while others may find it to be dense and difficult to understand.

Speaking from over a millennium back, Santideva accomplishes what few other Buddhist teachers do: in so few words he will describe with shocking prose and precision, both how and why to become a Buddhist. While other classic texts such as the Seven-Point Mind Training may be found more immediately practical in their application, Santideva takes the cake for the breadth of material covered, and the profound clarity of his arguments.

Having already read a number of modern books on Buddhism, by the time I reached Santideva I think I still had not grasped the incredible importance of basing one's aspiration in the actual experience and appreciation of the suffering of others as well as the suffering brought to one by the world of confused beings. He manages to get this across with stunning beauty, clarity and cogency.

The book reads a teensy bit like a bible, what with its frequent talk of arriving in hell realms as a consequence of misconduct. But you can get past that. It's not a doctrine, and there's no Pope (and he has no minions) who will force you to take it literally. You can interpret it how you like without losing what he's saying there, which is that our actions all have broader effects than we foresee.

Shantidevas Bodhisattvacharyavatara holds a unique place in Mahayana Buddhism akin to that of the Dhammapada in Hinayana Buddhism and the Bhagavadgita in Hinduism. In combining those rare qualities of scholastic precision, spiritual depth and poetical beauty, its appeal extends to a wide audience of Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike. Composed in India during the 8th century of the Christian era, it has since been an inspiration to millions of people throughout the world.

There are a few translations of Shantideva's discourse out there. I got this one because my teacher suggested it as an alternative to another which she was working from. Her purpose was to show how different scholars can offer alternative readings of the text. And that hearing or reading those alternatives can be useful in getting the essence of the teachings. As to the content of the discourse, it seems to make the most sense to me if I take it a little at a time, just two pages a day and let the meaning of those two pages sink in. If you take "Guide..." as a long poem admonishing a group of monks to stick with the precepts of their order, it really doesn't make a lot of a sense to a layperson with no background in Buddhism. On the other hand, if you have been doing a bit of meditation and have been attempting to apply that practice to your daily encounters with people and to your own habits, Shantideva's "Guide.." is a very useful book.

Shantideva was one of the 84 Mahasiddhas. The story is that he was considered too lazy to meditate in any position but lying down. During his graduation recitation, his teacher was worried that he did not have his words memorized. But when he went to the podium, Mansjushri channeled a poem of many stanzas through him that summarizes the Buddhist teachings on emptiness, karma, and no self. He ended up finishing the channeling by levitating in the air. The Dalai Lama has often used this Guide as a basis for his giving talks on various Buddhist subjects. There are various translations of this Guide, all of them seem worth reading. This one is by the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives. Some samples:

Originally composed in India during the 8th century, Shantideva's A Guide To The Bodhisattva's Way Of Life is a classical spiritual text. This published translation by Stephen Batchelor, this superb Snow Lion Publications edition is based upon a 12 century Tibetan commentary, with an expansion to the ninth chapter on wisdom devoted to appropriate passages of commentary. A Guide To The Bodhisattva's Way Of Life extolls the virtues of patience, enthusiasm, meditation, and dedication, while showing the benefits of the awakening mind. Written in stanzas expressing transcendental and enlightening thought, A Guide To The Bodhisattva's Way Of Life is a "must-read" for anyone interested in studying or practicing Buddhism.

Reading these verses slowly, while contemplating their meaning, has a profoundly liberating effect on the mind. The poem invokes special positive states of mind, moves us from suffering and conflict to happiness and peace, and gradually introduces us to the entire Mahayana Buddhist path to enlightenment.

This is a terrific translation of Shantideva's classic poem, but, as a relative newcomer to Buddhist thought, I found it to be quite challenging. It is a text to be studied and savored. Despite its relatively short length, it still took me a couple of weeks to finish since I was constantly taking breaks to digest and interpret what was being said.

Guide To The Bodhisattva's Way Of Life: A Buddhist Poem For Today presents the classic 8th century poem by Shantideva in a thoroughly reader accessible and elegantly translated English text which was transcribed under the guidance of Geshe Kelsang Gyatso. The poem itself offers wisdom in the art of balancing altruism with personal happiness and self-satisfaction. Shantideva's Guide To The Bodhisattva's Way Of Life is a core recommendation for dedicated Buddhist Studies collections and reading lists.

It is a beautiful, lyrical poem that contains all the essential elements to complete the path to enlightenment: instructions on the benefits of bodhicitta, how to purify negative states of mind and cultivate positive states of mind, how to be conscientious when engaging in any type of mental, physical, or verbal action, how to reduce disturbing thoughts and distractions that can cause the mind to become unpeaceful and uncontrolled, how to practice patience effectively, how to train in effort while exercising our spiritual path, how to develop and improve our concentration so we can meditate powerfully on profound subjects such as emptiness, the ultimate nature of reality, and finally this precious poem contains a beautiful dedication for all those who are suffering from fear, frustration, illness, poverty, war, and famine, that they may swiftly be freed from their unfortunate conditions, and maintain a happy and peaceful mind.

I recommend this beautiful poem to those interested in pursuing a happy, peaceful life filled with meaning. I recommend reading the verses slowly whilst contemplating their profound meaning. The words are precious and blessed and you can actually experience improvement in the mind just by reading it! There is a lot contained in the verses so I recommend taking time to enjoy them!

It has ten chapters dedicated to the development of bodhicitta (the mind of enlightenment) through the practice of the six perfections (Skt. Pāramitās). The text begins with a chapter describing the benefits of the wish to reach enlightenment. The sixth chapter on the Pāramitā of patience (Skt. Kāśhānti, kshanti) is considered by many Buddhists to be the pinnacle of writing on this subject and is the source of numerous quotations attributed to Āśhāntideva. Tibetan scholars consider the ninth "Wisdom" chapter to be one of the most succinct expositions of the Madhyamaka view. The tenth chapter is used as one of the most popular Mahāyāna prayers.

The Chan Ssu Lun of the Chinese Madhyamika school identifies two different individuals given the name "Shantideva": the founder of the Avaivartika Sangha in the 6th century, and a later Shantideva who studied at Nalanda in the 8th century who appears to be the source of the Tibetan biographies. Archaeological discoveries support this thesis.[1][2] Two Tibetan sources of the life of Shantideva are the historians Butön and Jetsün Tārānātha. Recent scholarship has brought to light a short Sanskrit life of Shantideva in a 14th-century Nepalese manuscript.[3] An accessible account that follows the Butön closely can be found in Kunzang Pelden, The Nectar of Manjushri's speech.[4]

The Āśhāśamuccaya (œTraining Anthologyœ) is a prose work in nineteen chapters. It is organized as a commentary on twenty-seven short mnemonic verses known as the Āśhāśamuccaya Kārikā. It consists primarily of quotations (of varying length) from sūtras, authoritative texts considered to be the word of the Buddha œ generally those sūtras associated with Mahāyāna tradition, including the Samadhiraja Sutra.[6]

Shantideva is particularly renowned as the author of the Bodhicaryavatara (sometimes also called the Bodhisattvacaryavatara). An English translation of the Sanskrit version of the Bodhicaryavatara is available online, as well as in print in a variety of translations, sometimes glossed as A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way Of Life or Entering the Path of Enlightenment. It is a long poem describing the process of enlightenment from the first thought to full buddhahood and is still studied by Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhists today. An introduction to and commentary on the Bodhicaryavatara by the 14th Dalai Lama called "A Flash of Lightning in the Dark of Night" was printed in 1994. A commentary on the Patience chapter was provided by the Dalai Lama in "Healing Anger" 1997, and his commentaries on the Wisdom chapter can be found in "Practicing Wisdom" 2004. Also Geshe Kelsang Gyatso published a translation titled "Guide to the Bodhisattvas Way of Life" in 2002.[7] His line by line commentary to the entire root text is entitled "Meaningful to Behold œ The Bodhisattva's Way of Life " 1980.[8] His extensive commentary to the patience chapter is called "How to Solve our Human Problems", 2005.[9] Kunzang Pelden has written a commentary based on that given by Patrul Rinpoche, translated by the Padmakara Translation Group. Patrul Rinpoche was a wandering monk of great scholarship, who dedicated his life to the propagation of the Bodhicaryavatara.[10]

[In copying this ancient manuscript we discovered various translations from different traditions. The

reader can be comforted to know that they all agreed with one another in substance, however, some were easier to understand in places than others. In making this text available we worked hard to ensure that it would be comprehensible. In every case we selected the verse that we felt was easiest to understand. BIONA ED.]

47. Mental afflictions do not exist in sense objects, or in sense faculties, or in the space between, and not anywhere else. Then where do they exist and agitate the whole world? This is an illusion only. Liberate your fearing heart and cultivate perseverance for the sake of wisdom. Why would you torture yourself in hells for no reason?

44. On account of their virtues, the Children of the Sugata, who dwell in the hearts of spacious, fragrant, and cool lotuses, whose splendor is enhanced with the nourishment of the sweet voice of the Jina, and whose handsome bodies emerge from the Lotuses Blossomed by the rays of the Sage, are born in the presence of the Sugata.

45. On account of non virtues, one cries out in distress, one's entire skin is ripped away by the agents of Yama, one's body is immersed into copper melted by the heat of fire, pieces of one's flesh are cut off by hundreds of strokes of blazing spears and swords, and one repeatedly falls on intensely heated iron grounds.

134. If its gross state is not different from happiness, then the impermanence of happiness is obvious. If you think that something non-existent does not arise, because it has no existence whatsoever, then you have accepted, even against your will, the origination of something manifest that was non-existent.

11. May the horrifying agents of Yama, crows, and vultures suddenly watch here in fear. Those looking upward behold blazing Vajrapani in the sky wonder: "Whose is this brilliant light that dispels darkness all around and generates the joy of contentment?" May they depart together with him, freed of vice through the power of their joy.

14. Behold him whose Lotus-Feet are worshipped with tiaras of hundreds of gods, whose eyes are moist with compassion, on whose head a stream of diverse flowers rains down, with his delightful summer palaces celebrated by thousands of goddesses singing hymns of praise. Upon seeing Manjughosa before them, may the beings of the hells immediately cheer.

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