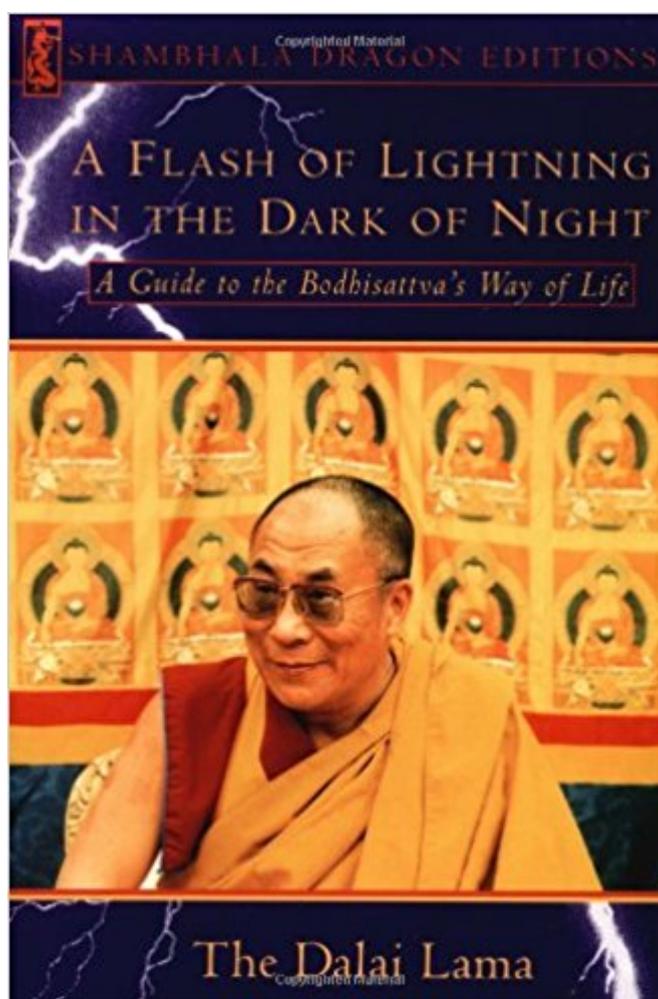


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# A Flash Of Lightning In The Dark Of Night: A Guide To The Bodhisattva's Way Of Life (Shambhala Dragon Editions)



## Synopsis

Compassion is the guiding principle of the bodhisattvas, those who vow to attain enlightenment in order to liberate all sentient beings from the suffering and confusion of imperfect existence. To this end, they must renounce all self-centered goals and consider only the well-being of others. The bodhisattvas' enemies are the ego, passion, and hatred; their weapons are generosity, patience, perseverance, and wisdom. In Tibetan Buddhism, the Dalai Lama is considered to be a living embodiment of this spiritual ideal. His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama presents here a detailed manual of practical philosophy, based on *The Way of the Bodhisattva* (Bodhicharyavatara), a well-known text of Mahayana Buddhism written by Shantideva. The Dalai Lama explains and amplifies the text, alluding throughout to the experience of daily life and showing how anyone can develop bodhichitta, the wish for perfect enlightenment for the sake of others. This book will surely become a standard manual for all those who wish to make the bodhisattva ideal a living experience.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The Dalai Lama, the leader of Tibetan Buddhism, delivered this teaching and commentary on Shantideva's *The Way of the Bodhisattva* (Bodhicharyavatara Sutra) for Westerners in a week-long instruction in Dordogne, France. Those who take the bodhisattva path promise to work toward attaining enlightenment and Buddhahood for the liberation of all sentient beings. The path thus involves the renunciation of self-centered goals and demands generosity, purification, attentiveness,

patience, and wisdom. On many levels, the book is splendid as both an introduction to Buddhist spirituality and an explication of Shantideva for contemporary Westerners. Recommended for all libraries. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.

If everyone considered only the well-being of others as the bodhisattva's way of life directs, the world would be a much better place. As it is, those who dream of such a society need both mystical and practical advice regarding what they can do to further the effort. They'll find it here. The Dalai Lama's teaching and reflection on the text of Shantideva provide a gentle guide to compassion and enlightenment. Throughout his explanations, the Dalai Lama refers to the experience of daily living. For most readers his examples will ring true, particularly when he is talking about the very human emotions of anger and frustration. The call to serve others and think of others first may seem idealistic, but it is the goal of enlightenment something to work toward whatever one's path. One does not have to be a Buddhist to appreciate the beauty of the teachings and the simplicity of the life presented here. Indeed, non-Buddhists may discover a refreshing new approach to the doctrines of love your neighbor and do unto others. Mary Deeley

The book brilliantly summarized the main points of the text. It provides both the elegance of Shantideva's original writing, and the brilliance of His Holiness's thoughts on the text. Presented in a concise and clear manner, it is a great book for both long-time meditators and people who just want to understand Buddhist thoughts.

This is a kind book. It is possibly the kindest book I have ever read. The Dalai Lama's good wishes for your well-being literally (pun intended) seeps through his words sentences and you feel in strong, safe hands reading it. I'd call it a blessing. The book is a very helpful commentary on Santideva's Bodhicaryavatara (A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life), one of the most revered Buddhist Scriptures. HH Dalai Lama examines most relevant points and passages (to examine and comment on each and every one would take a much longer book than this) and explains them from a very commonsensical standpoint clearly communicated. At times, Santideva can be quite terse and it can be hard to ascertain with certainty precisely what he means. It is clear that the Dalai Lama indeed knows what Santideva means and so he renders the meanings quite understandably for us mere mortals. Yes, I'd call this book a blessing.

The Way of the Bodhisattva by Shantideva, This set of CD teachings was a unique opportunity to listen, go back and consider and move to next point. His Holiness never fails to be highly careful of words he chooses to put a point across. As usual it is a joy to listen to, to put into practice the many suggestions that can only benefit myself and others. I have listened to this set many times over and will continue to do so as I love them.

There are a number of good commentaries on this foundational Mahayana Buddhist text. His Holiness's ranks among the very best. There is a subtle emphasis on the place of ethics in our response to life, and of the need for discipline in the spiritual life. His Holiness says that we need structure rather than ad hoc approaches: "Our spiritual development should follow the stages of the six paramitas, perfecting each one in turn". This is a solidly Buddhist commentary, unashamedly so. It thus differs in tone from some of His Holiness's collaborative writings that are more ecumenical and generic in nature and content. Really worth having, reading, reflecting on and applying.

Merely reading The way of the Bodhisattva is of immense value, as it shows great depth and simplicity in nearly each verse. The density of insights is visible at first sight. However, as one starts reading the commentary, written by H.H., it's true depth is revealed. And it is deep... Great clarity helps the reader get through the complex structure of Buddhism, and it's good if one tries to find the right emphasis in each thought. And each will find his or her own, which at first glance might present a problem, but I'd say - it's exactly how it should be.

Very pleased

A practical guide to finding peace and freedom from suffering, this commentary on, and translation of verses from, an eighth century text contains explanations and simple exercises and visualizations to help develop the six practices of generosity, discipline, patience, diligence, concentration, and wisdom in order to overcome ignorance, attachment, and aversion and to benefit all beings. The closer you look at the boundary between self and non self, the fuzzier it gets. Is your hair or sweat self? Is the meal you've just eaten non self? Are you not affected by the ideas and actions of those with whom you are in contact, whether they are friends, strangers, or enemies? Unless your motivation is to help everyone, you are working against yourself. The keys to the practice are patience and concentration, the ways to avoid the pain of anger and to stay on the right path. "Animate causes that make us unhappy ... are themselves influenced by other conditions .... they

are in fact powerless. So there is no need to get angry." Being distracted by the impermanent and unreal will bring no lasting happiness, only suffering. Changing your basic patterns of behavior by an act of will does not work, but moving slowly and consistently, step by step, using the well tested methods introduced here, it is possible to reprogram your brain. His Holiness has selected the more practical and less dogmatic verses and has omitted the detailed philosophical arguments in the section on wisdom. Buddhist concepts and explanations from other texts are used. With a little previous exposure, this book will give a good overview of Tibetan Buddhism and foundation for further study.

good!

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