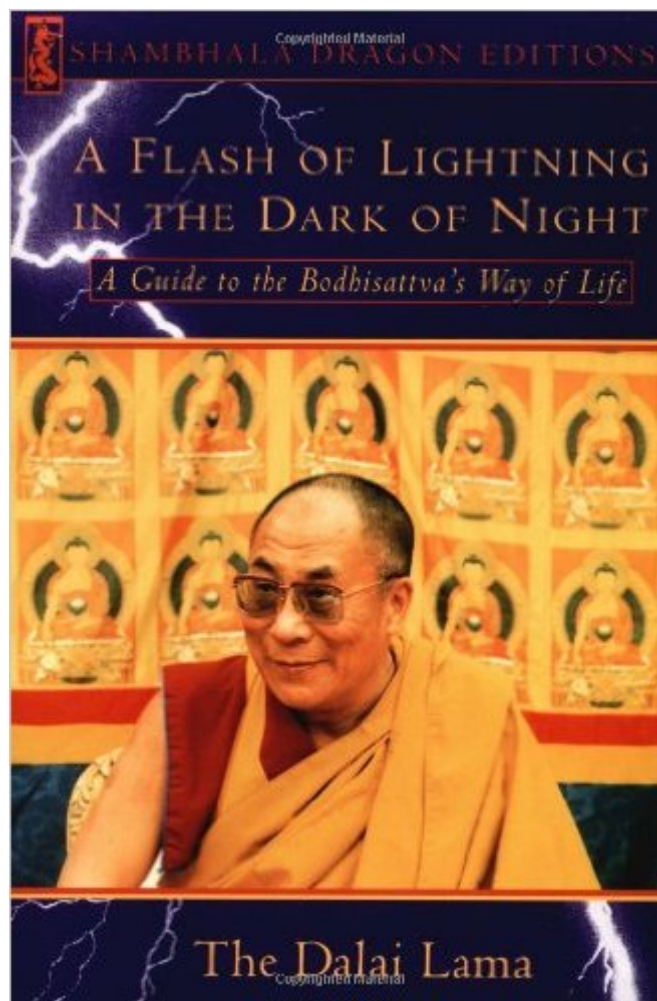


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# A Flash Of Lightning In The Dark Of Night: A Guide To The Bodhisattva's Way Of Life (Shambhala Dragon Editions)



## 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

In this book the Dalai Lama presents an extended commentary on the *The Way of the Bodhisattva*, a well-known text of Mahayana Buddhism written by Shantideva, an 8th Century Indian Master. The premise of the Bodhisattva Path or Life is to attain enlightenment in order to serve and ultimately "save" others. As applied to everyday life, it means living in as conscious and compassionate a way as possible - a life that concentrates on service to and awareness of other's needs. While perhaps

only a few can attain such an ideal state, one of the Dalai Lama's main points is that all of us can at least aspire to it. And regardless of one's feelings about this particular path, there is plenty of value in this book for those curious enough to look into it. It's hard to pick up any book by the Dalai Lama and not take away something of great value from it, and this book is no different. However, in my opinion this book may be slightly less accessible to the non-Buddhist than some of his more recent books. This book sticks pretty close to doctrinaire Buddhism, and does not go to the lengths that some of the other books do in broadening the message for those of other faiths/practices. The concentration on reincarnation may strike most Western minds as exotic or peculiar, and might perhaps disguise the underlying message. I would recommend *Ethics for the Next Century* or perhaps *The Good Heart* for those not very familiar with Buddhism. For those with a reasonable grounding and comfort with Buddhist thought, this is an excellent book.

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.

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If interested in the teachings of Buddha this is a very detailed book to read about them. People with low-self esteem and anything close to that would benefit from this great book and the great religion it talks of. It lifts hope and really teaches the power of cooperation and love for one's self.

A powerful, life-changing book. Beautiful, useful teachings to effectively eliminate negative behavior and thinking. Not just for Buddhists.

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