

Buddhist Philosophy

Todd's Suggested Reading, Listening, and Viewing List

Revised April 2007

(* denotes previous group discussion at SLUU)

1. Introductory Essentials:

Siddhartha, by Hermann Hesse.

A Nobel Prize-winning story about a man on a spiritual quest who finds that the “middle way” is his path to happiness and awakening.

**The Art of Happiness: A Handbook for Living*,

by The Dalai Lama & Howard C. Cutler (Riverhead Hardcover).

A Jewish psychiatrist from Arizona interviews the Dalai Lama several times in an attempt to understand how/why he always seems happy and compassionate, even though he lost his country (Tibet) in a hostile takeover and at least 400,000 Tibetans (mostly Buddhist monks and nuns) have been executed. Has sold more copies in North America than any other book about Buddhism.

The Power of Now, by Eckhart Tolle (New World Library).

Buddhist philosophy about present moment awareness, written in contemporary, non-Buddhist language. A bestseller, although some find it a difficult read. Try the audio version instead.

Stillness Speaks, by Eckhart Tolle (New World Library).

Buddhist philosophy about present moment awareness that is specifically found within stillness. Concise and written in contemporary, non-Buddhist language. Also in audio version. This is a much easier read than *The Power of Now*.

Awakening the Buddha Within: Tibetan Wisdom for the Western World, by Lama Surya Das (Broadway).

Bestselling survey of Western Buddhism philosophy/religion, written in understandable, contemporary language. Author is an American monk and teacher who studied under Tibetan monks.

**Buddhism Plain and Simple*, by Steve Hagen (Broadway reprint).

A Zen priest and teacher, Hagen offers a direct and clear explanation of the teachings of the Buddha -- practical and down-to-earth, dealing exclusively with awareness in the here and now. Fundamental teachings, stripped of the cultural trappings that have accumulated around Buddhism over the past twenty-five centuries. The newcomer will be inspired by the clear, simple principles, and those familiar with Buddhism will welcome this long-needed overview.

The Pocket Idiot's Guide to Buddhism, by Bradley K. Hawkins and Nancy D. Lewis (Alpha).

Also see *Buddhism for Dummies*. These books provide basic (and sometimes detailed) overviews of the history, religious practices, and philosophies of the different branches of Buddhism. Note: these types of books may oversimplify complex concepts or make blanket, concrete statements about gray areas.

The Buddhism pages at Beliefnet.com: Lots of FREE information/articles.
http://www.beliefnet.com/index/index_10001.html

Video: *Life of Buddha* (2001).

A documentary. The producers note: "Breaks new ground in revealing the fascinating story of Prince Siddhartha and his spiritual transformation into the Buddha, the great teacher who changed the entire world. This beautifully produced DVD, featuring nearly an hour of additional materials from the world's leading Buddhist scholars and spiritual leaders, is a must-see for anyone seeking answers to life's mysteries."

Video: *Little Buddha* (1994).

A major motion picture about a Tibetan lama who may have been reborn as a boy in Seattle. Includes the story of Prince Siddhartha who became the Buddha. An excellent introduction to the Tibetan roots of Western Buddhism.

Video: *Kundun* (1997).

A superb major motion picture release by Martin Scorsese about the 14th Dalai Lama, from his birth through the time of his exile to India. Tibetans refer to the Dalai Lama as Kundun, which means "The Presence."

*Video: *Bill Moyers Faith & Reason, Pema Chodron* (2006).

PBS interview of Pema Chodron. Pema is a Buddhist nun who was raised Roman Catholic in New Jersey. She founded and runs the first Tibetan Buddhist monastery for Westerners, which is in Nova Scotia, Canada. Moyers' interview with Pema touches on why she became involved in Buddhism, while discussing some of the basics of Western Buddhist philosophy.

2. Still Curious:

Comfortable With Uncertainty: 108 Teachings on Cultivating Fearlessness and Compassion, by Pema Chodron (Shambhala).

Author is an American ordained as a Tibetan Buddhist nun. She founded and runs North America's first Tibetan Buddhist monastery for Westerners in Nova Scotia, Canada. A "best of" compilation of her teachings and a good introduction to her wise words.

Awake at Work: 35 Practical Buddhist Principles for Discovering Clarity and Balance in the Midst of Work's Chaos, by Michael Carroll (Shambhala).

The title describes the book perfectly. Written by a layperson who studied under Tibetan teacher, Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche (Pema Chodron's teacher).

Peace is Every Step, by Thich Nhat Hanh (Bantam).

Author is a Zen monk, nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize by Martin Luther King, Jr. Considered a good sampler of his many books and an excellent introduction to his words of wisdom.

Loving-Kindness: The Revolutionary Art of Happiness, by Sharon Salzberg (Shambhala Classics).

A meditation teacher and the founder of the Insight Meditation Society in Massachusetts, focuses on a kind of Buddhist practice that emphasizes feelings of love, happiness, and compassion -- *Metta*, or "lovingkindness," meditation.

Live in a Better Way: Reflections on Truth, Love, and Happiness, by The Dalai Lama (Viking Adult).

Awakening the Sacred, by Lama Surya Das (Broadway 2000).

The Art of Happiness at Work,
by The Dalai Lama & Howard C. Cutler (Riverhead Hardcover).

Living Buddha, Living Christ, by Thich Nhat Hanh (Riverhead Trade).
A great read for those with a Christ-based background. The author compares Jesus Christ and Buddha, and argues that Jesus actually was a Buddha.

When Things Fall Apart, by Pema Chodron (Shambhala 2000).

The Wisdom of No Escape, by Pema Chodron (Shambhala 2001).

Video: *Tibet: Cry of the Snow Lion* (2003).

A documentary. From the producers: “Ten years in the making, this award-winning documentary was filmed during a remarkable nine journeys throughout Tibet, India and Nepal. CRY OF THE SNOW LION brings audiences to the long-forbidden "rooftop of the world" with an unprecedented richness of imagery. . . . The dark secrets of Tibet’s recent past are powerfully chronicled through riveting personal stories and interviews, and a collection of undercover and archival images never before assembled in one film. A definitive exploration of a legendary subject, TIBET: CRY OF THE SNOW LION is an epic story of courage and compassion.”

3. Continue Learning on the Path:

Consider subscribing to the magazine *Shambhala Sun*. Check it out at:
<http://www.shambhalasun.com> “*Buddhism, Culture, Meditation, Life*”

The Zen of OZ: Ten Spiritual Lessons from Over the Rainbow,
by Joey Green (Renaissance Books).

Inner Revolution, by Robert A. F. Thurman (Riverhead Trade).

Practicing Peace in Times of War, by Pema Chodron (Shambhala 2006)

The Places That Scare You, by Pema Chodron (Shambhala 2002).

Start Where You Are, by Pema Chodron (Shambhala 2001).

Awakening the Buddhist Heart, by Lama Surya Das (Broadway 2001).

The Heart of Buddha's Teaching, by Thich Nhat Hanh (Broadway).

Audio Only: *From Fear to Fearlessness: Teachings on the Four Great Catalysts of Awakening*, by Pema Chodron (Sounds True).

Audio Only: *Getting Unstuck: Breaking Your Habitual Patterns & Encountering Naked Reality*, by Pema Chodron (Sounds True).

May all sentient beings enjoy happiness and the root of happiness.

May we be free from suffering and its causes.

May we not be separated from the great happiness, devoid of suffering.

May we dwell in the great equanimity, free from craving, aggression, and prejudice.