

**THE WAY OF AWAKENING: A
COMMENTARY ON SHANTIDEVA'S
BODHICHARYAVATARA BY GESHE YESHE
TOBDEN**

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of Awakening

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Foreword by HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA



GESHE YESHE TOBDEN

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Review

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One of the great classics of Buddhist literature, the Bodhicharyavatara, or Way of the Bodhisattva, is required reading for understanding Tibetan Buddhism. Shantideva was a seventh-century Buddhist master who taught at the great monastic university of Nalanda. Presented in the form of a personal meditation in verse, the Bodhicharyavatara outlines the path of the bodhisattvas--those who renounce the peace of their own salvation, vowing instead to attain enlightenment for the sake of all others. The Dalai Lama once remarked that his own understanding of the bodhisattva path is based entirely upon Shantideva's text.

As long as space endures,
As long as sentient beings remain,
May I likewise remain
To dispel the sorrows of the world.
--Shantideva

The Way of Awakening is without question the most comprehensive single commentary on this text available. Expounded by an accomplished scholar and deeply realized meditator, it is a resource for a lifetime of study. Chapter by chapter and verse by verse, it maps the Bodhicharyavatara, helping us to deepen our understanding of its teachings and apply them to our lives.

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Lengthy but interesting

By Dan

Shantideva spoke his Bodhicharyavatara close to two millenia ago, instructing practitioners how to practice and how to live their lives. It became a major text in the Mahayana tradition.

I read the actual prose edition of it, and was very impressed with Shantideva's skillful use of logic and his conclusions of how one should live and practice. The wisdom chapter is notable in particular, for its explications of some core doctrines that can be confusing (such as anatman or no-self). I decided to read a commentary on it in order to clarify some questions I had and to gain new insight into what it was he was saying.

I picked up a copy of this book, and was fairly impressed by it. Some parts of it struck me as redundant and repetitive, but it could be argued that such repetition is important to planting wholesome seeds in the reader's head. Still, I think it would have benefited from omitting such parts.

There are also some sections which make some fairly remarkable assertions (notably a discussion of reincarnation) and which attempt unsuccessfully (IMO) to support them with logic.

There are a few other commentaries out there, such as the Dalai Lama's and Pema Chodron's. I have read neither, but the Dalai Lama's book would be worth checking out, as he is skilled at writing for the modern Western mind, and it is also maybe half the length of this book.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Extraordinary Commentary

By adam milan

The text this commentary is based on is a true masterpiece of enlightened literature. The scope and depth of Shantideva's Bodhicharyavatara while being immediately accessible also merits a lifetime of study and repeated reading and application. It is true guidance coming from and guiding one to the perspective of ultimate reality.

This commentary by Geshe Yeshe Tobden is rich and replete with explanations, examples and wise anecdotes that drive home the importance and relevance of Shantideva's text. Geshe Yeshe Tobden lived in a one room shack high in the mountains for 30 years meditating and practicing. Is there a way to be more highly qualified than that when it comes to writing a commentary like this?

This text is profoundly helpful and insightful for one on the Buddhist path. Most importantly, it takes one from the constricted suffering of self cherishing to the enlightened expanse of selfless benefit.

Highly recommended.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

The Way of Awakening - A Commentary by Geshe Tobden

By Zen Elder

This is a commentary on Shantideva's Way of the Bodhisattva by a Tibetan teacher who fled Tibet in 1961. While living as a hermit outside Dharamsala, he eventually became a teacher to some Italian Tibetans and visited Italy regularly for a number of years. Because of this, I think, his commentary is clearer and more understandable for lay people. His talks were made into a book and then translated into good, modern English. He also used a different translation of Shantideva by a Tibetan monk. Shantideva has some difficult sections, including Ch. 9, on wisdom, which Geshe Tobden has commented on, with extra material in the appendixes. If you wish to study Shantideva, I recommend getting this book as one of your texts.

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