



Chenrezig Tibetan Buddhist Center of Philadelphia

954 N. Marshall Street Philadelphia, PA 19123

CTBC Book List 2024

This book list was compiled by teachers and senior students at the Chenrezig Tibetan Buddhist Center. It is a list of books we have found to be helpful in introducing and clarifying the fundamental teachings of Buddhism. We believe these books can be helpful for practitioners at all levels. These books both accessible for new students and are deep enough to reveal the profundity and beauty of the Buddha Dharma.

Please pick a book that speaks to you. You may want to read a few pages of several books and pick the one that you find to be clearer and helpful. We are all different and have different life experiences so the book that is most helpful to you is not necessarily the same book that will be most helpful for someone else .

We hope you enjoy exploring these Dharma teachings.

Radical Acceptance: Embracing Your Life With the Heart of a Buddha, by Tara Brach

Insight meditation teacher and psychotherapist Tara Brach invites us to ask ourselves: *What would happen if we could stop fighting against reality, and accept ourselves and our lives as they really are?* This simple yet powerful question, which Tara skillfully weaves together with personal anecdotes and examples from her clinical practice, resonates long after you close the book.

The Wisdom of No Escape: And the Path of Loving Kindness, Pema Chödrön

This classic guide to the spiritual path opens with the line: "There is a common misunderstanding among all the human beings who have ever been born on earth that the best way to live is to try to avoid pain and just try to get comfortable." Pema Chodron, an American Buddhist nun, shines a light on the dharma with her characteristic blend of down-to-earth wisdom, provocation, and humor.

How to Meditate: A Practical Guide to Making Friends with Your Mind, by Pema Chödrön

This book is a compilation of meditation instructions. In her words, "I feel that the ultimate reason why we practice is so that we can become completely loving people. And this is what the world needs."

The Places That Scare You: A Guide to Fearlessness in Difficult Times, by Pema Chödrön

Pema Chödrön goes deeper into Buddhist concepts. "Pema Chödrön provides essential tools for dealing with the many difficulties that life throws our way, teaching us how to awaken our basic human goodness and connect deeply with others—to accept ourselves and everything around us complete with faults and imperfections."

Start Where You Are: A Guide to Compassionate Living, by Pema Chödrön

A wonderful basic book which we read and discussed during Sunday Sangha many years ago.



[When Things Fall Apart: Heart Advice for Difficult Times](#), by Pema Chödrön

Perhaps her best-known book. Using foundational teachings from Tibetan Buddhism, Pema Chödrön offers ways we can learn from the difficult experiences of life. She writes about moving toward the adversity, familiarizing ourselves and gaining insight and compassion as we meet our difficulties with kindness and awareness.

[Buddhism for Beginners](#), by Thubten Chodron

A handy user guide to help understand Tibetan Buddhism. Thubten Chodron reviews basic Buddhist teachings, how to practice, and deep questions. Offered in a question-and-answer format, she addresses many questions a practitioner may have about Buddhism and meditation practice. This special format makes the book easy to read and interesting. Highly recommended for anyone new to meditation practice.

[The Four Noble Truths](#), by His Holiness the Dalai Lama

Essential guide to the foundations of Buddhist teachings!

[Good Life, Good Death: Tibetan Wisdom on Reincarnation](#), by Gehlek Rimpoche

Gehlek Rimpoche shares the wisdom of the great Tibetan Buddhist masters through stories from the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, as well as contemporary America.

[Treasury of Dharma: A Tibetan Buddhist Meditation Course](#), by Geshe Rabten

Geshe Rabten shares the Buddha's teachings and shows the value of the teachings for fulfilling ones' needs and achieving personal happiness.

[Venerable Thích Nhất Hạnh](#)

This author is an excellent Buddhist teacher and is also a poet. His books are especially clear and well written. Thich Nhat Hahn is universally respected by Buddhists of all schools and traditions. See below for some suggestions:

[The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching--Transforming Suffering Into Peace, Joy and Liberation](#), by Thich Nhat Hanh

(Note: please look for the first publication with the red cover with a statue of the seated Buddha on the cover!)

"With poetry and clarity, Thich Nhat Hanh imparts comforting wisdom about the nature of suffering and its role in creating compassion, love, and joy - all qualities of enlightenment."

This should be a once-a-year read!

[Old Path White Clouds: Walking in the Footsteps of the Buddha](#), by Thich Nhat Hanh

A beautiful exploration of the life of the Buddha, presented as a series of stories that feel as compelling and timeless as any mythology. Reading this book, with its exquisite line drawings,



is like taking a long, slow, meandering walk through the forests and villages of the Buddha's time - savoring the many delights encountered along the way.

[Present Moment, Wonderful Moment](#), by Thich Nhat Hanh

Thich Nhat Hanh reminds us of the many ways we can learn how to develop a sense and appreciation of the ordinary activities of our life.

[Mindfulness in Plain English](#), by Venerable Henepola Gunaratana

This book is a classic. It is by many everyone who wanted to learn the practice of *mindfulness*.

[A Life of the Buddha](#), by Sherab Chodzin Kohn

This pithy volume presents the full narrative arc of Shakyamuni Buddha's remarkable life, along with a distillation of his core teachings. While the broad outlines are familiar, the details of this story are surprising, touching, and inspiring. It brings us a bit closer to the historical figure whose struggles were in many ways not so different from our own.

**[A Path with Heart: A Guide Through the Perils and Promises of Spiritual Life](#),
by Jack Kornfield**

We all need guides along the spiritual path, and beloved Buddhist teacher and psychotherapist Jack Kornfield is one of the best of our time. Jack illuminates the many gifts and challenges we may encounter on the journey of awakening including issues with teachers and communities and our own needs for personal healing. And he writes with enduring kindness, compassion, and grace.

**[The Joy of Living: Unlocking the Secret and Science of Happiness](#),
by Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche**

A wonderful book that offers some pragmatic tips for getting started with meditation practice. Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche has been called the "happiest man in the world," and shares his practices of cultivating joy, compassion, and awareness. Using his deep experience with spiritual practice and an understanding of the science of the mind, he offers powerful encouragement and practices to meditate. He covers some benefits to meditation practice, as well as offering ancient Tibetan practices, a great read for those new to Tibetan Buddhism.

**[In Love With The World: A Monk's Journey Through the Bardos of Living and Dying](#),
by Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche**

A young high reincarnate Lama, Abbot of a monastery, head of a lineage, decides to secretly leave the confines of the monastery and go on a wandering. This book describes his experience, written in first person.

[The Heroic Heart: Awakening Unbound Compassion](#) by Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo

A modern commentary on *The 37 Practices of a Bodhisattva*, this book is simple, direct, practical advice for daily life. It is a terrific introduction to being a bodhisattva in training, a



compassionate hero, “facing the uncertain tides of the world”, whether one is familiar with the *37 Practices* prior to reading or not.

[The Words of My Perfect Teacher: A Complete Translation of a Classic Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism](#), by Patrul Rinpoche

One of the most popular and well-respected books on Tibetan Buddhism, this is constantly recommended by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. “The first half of the book contains a series of contemplations on the frustration and deep suffering of samsara, and the enormous value of our human life...;” “the second half explains the first steps of the Vajrayana, the ‘Diamond Vehicle’....” It is a manual of practical advice. This is a great book to take these powerful teachings and begin applying them to our everyday life. With essays, poems, and more, this book is both intensely useful and interesting.

[The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying](#), by Sogyal Rinpoche.

A book that covers all fundamentals of the Vajrayana vehicle. A must read!

[Ancient Teachings in Modern Times, Buddhism in the 21st Century](#), by Venerable Lama Losang Samten

An excellent overview of Buddhist teachings and practices from a man who was born in Tibet and who lived and studied as a monk at Namgyal Monastery for over 20 years. It is written in a gentle voice and contains frequent stories which illustrate the teachings. Venerable Lama Losang founded the Chenrezig Tibetan Buddhist Center of Philadelphia in 1989 and is the Center's Teacher and Spiritual Director.

This book tells the story of how the teachings of Buddha can help anyone of any culture or faith achieve greater peace and joy, while explaining the essence of the Buddha's teachings. It is a wealth of information and, best of all, it is in the words of our precious Teacher.

[No Self, No Problem: Awakening to Our True Nature](#), by Anam Thubten.

This book delves more deeply into the profound Buddhist philosophy of *Emptiness*. It is based on the Buddhist wisdom tradition which it discusses in simple but profound and inspiring language.

[Fragrance of Emptiness: A Commentary on the Heart Sutra](#), by Anam Thupten

Easy-to-read commentary on the *Heart Sutra*. The *Heart Sutra* has been a catalyst for the awakening of many people over the centuries.

[As It Is, Volume I](#), Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche

Profound Teachings on the path of Dzogchen by a realized master.

[Buddhism in a Nutshell \(Kindle Edition\)](#), by Lama Thubten Yeshe, Lama Zopa Rinpoche and Ven. Amy Miller



Lama Zopa Rinpoche provides an overview of the complete Buddhist path to enlightenment. It combines the blessings and transformational teachings of Tibetan Buddhist masters Lama Thubten Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche with the candidly refreshing perspective of Western teacher, Venerable Amy Miller. Students will find the information they need for their spiritual journey along with advice on how to integrate these teachings into daily life. (*Look for a paperback edition with the MP3 CD included.*)

Also, the *Discovering Buddhism Modules* from [FPMT](#) are now available on YouTube for those who are looking to listen and learn in addition to reading:

<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL70E7832E292DAAB4>