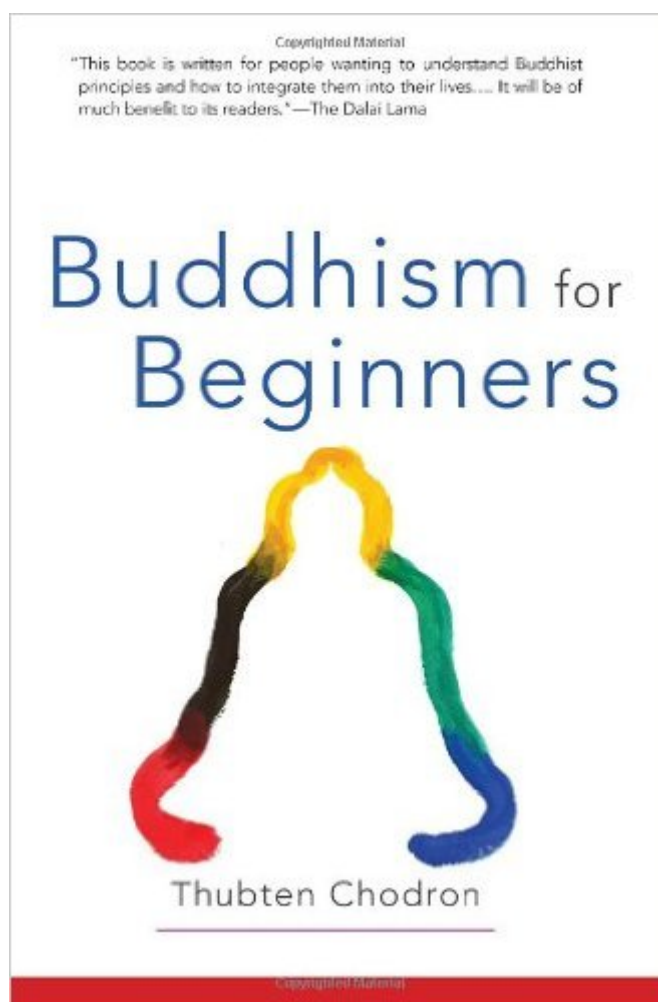


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Buddhism For Beginners



Synopsis

This user-friendly guide to Buddhist basics takes the most commonly asked questions—beginning with “What is the essence of the Buddha’s teachings?”—and provides simple answers in plain English. Thubten Chodron’s responses to the questions that always seem to arise among people approaching Buddhism make this an exceptionally complete and accessible introduction—as well as a manual for living a more peaceful, mindful, and satisfying life. Buddhism for Beginners is an ideal first book on the subject for anyone, but it’s also a wonderful resource for seasoned students, since the question-and-answer format makes it easy to find just the topic you’re looking for, such as:

- What is the goal of the Buddhist path?
- What is karma?
- If all phenomena are empty, does that mean nothing exists?
- How can we deal with fear?
- How do I establish a regular meditation practice?
- What are the qualities I should look for in a teacher?
- What is Buddha-nature?
- Why can’t we remember our past lives?

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I was looking for a good beginner’s book on Buddhism, and found it with this one. Thubten Chodron did an excellent job in teaching the basics of Buddhism, its history, and the difference in interpretations by various nations. She breaks down the chapters into various topics, from “Meditation” to “Social Activism & Ethical Issues.” Each chapter is composed of Q&A’s, like “What is karma? How does it work?” After reading this book, I got a great idea of how Buddhists view their world. This book is rather brief (150 pages) but it accomplishes its intended purpose well.

Venerable Thubten Chodron is a wonderful writer - she explains things simply and sometimes humorously, and always holds the reader's interest. If you are beginning to practice Buddhism or are contemplating doing so, this book is a great place to start. It is the perfect book to give to friends or family members who are not familiar with Buddhism but want to understand your newfound spirituality.

I read this book after I finished a more scholarly book on Buddhism. It was quite refreshing to read "Buddhism For Beginners", as it is an easy read. The book is full of questions and answers from cover to cover. You can pick up the book, read it for an hour or so, or just read it for 5 minutes with ease. You can thumb through it looking for subjects that interest you, or you can go from cover to cover. Either way, it is a nicely written book, with clear and simple text. For one who actually wants to begin studying and practicing Buddhism I also suggest they read "Buddhism Plain and Simple" by Steven Hagen. These are both very good books!

This is a great book for beginners with a little bit of knowledge about Buddhism already. If I knew nothing at all I think it would be very overwhelming because of the amount of information presented so quickly. It answers some great questions about the practice of Buddhism and I would certainly recommend it. My only advice is that if you do get overwhelmed and you really are just beginning, don't give up learning about Buddhism- it is a wonderful practice!

Great Introduction to Buddhism This book was written in response to many - "can I ask you a question about Buddhism?" I really enjoyed the question and answer style that this is written in - for example in chapter one the question is asked - "What is the essence of Buddha's teachings?" and an excellent and easy to understand answer given. "What is the goal of the Buddhist path?" and again another easy to understand and terrific answer given etc - These and other great questions throughout the book are questions that someone looking into Buddhism would be asking. Some of the questions I hadn't really considered before, but was really glad they were asked and fully interested in the answers and learned new things. This is an easy and enjoyable book to read. Great for the beginner or someone just curious about Buddhism. Great for someone further along the path to sit, smile and enjoy.

This book grew out of a smaller work entitled "I Wonder Why;" it "is not designed to be a comprehensive introduction to Buddhism, but to clarify points, provide Buddhist perspectives on

modern issues, and stimulate the curiosity and questioning minds of the readers" (p. 10). The author makes some profound statements about questions: p. 7: "In the beginning one should remain skeptical and rely on questioning and checking the teachings based on one's understanding" and p. 9: "I believe that spiritual practice is more about holding questions than finding answers. Seeking one correct answer often comes from a wish to make life-which is basically fluid-into something certain and fixed." The latter applies directly to Buddhism itself: p. 77-8: "As the Buddha's teachings spread from one country to another, they adapted to the culture and mentality of the people in each place without changing the essential meaning...The external forms and ways of doing things are not the Dharma." Thus, she differentiates between true practitioners and p. 118: "joss stick Buddhists." Needless to say, this book is for people truly interested in or at least honestly curious about Buddhism. The author corrects many incorrect views: p. 42: "There is nothing inherently wrong with the world; the real problem lies in our disturbing attitudes" and p. 63: to set reachable short-term goals as well as long-term resolve when purifying negative traits and actions. In addition to considerable information on helping the dying, a mantra to say when about to eat meat (p. 109: "Om Ahbirakay tsara hung" said 7 times & pray for animal to have fortunate rebirth), types of Buddhist nuns and robes, and especially children (p. 132: "When children see an adult sitting peacefully, they get the idea that they can as well" and p. 134: "Love is more important to children than material possessions. Choosing to earn more money at the expense of good family relations may mean later having to spend that extra income on therapy and counseling for both parents and children!"). Her words are worth considerable thought though they are quite basic and virtually nonsectarian. It's worth your time now since: p. 41: "No one dies thinking, 'I should have worked more overtime.'"

This is a wonderful book. Great introduction, with great answers for common questions. You should probably read 'A Buddhism Primer - An Introduction to Buddhism' as well for a little more in depth but complimentary book to this one.

As other reviewers have said, this is not really for beginners wishing for information about practicing buddhism. It's a question and answer format aimed at buddhists who want to fully understand their practice better. It was overwhelming for someone who wanted more of a beginning understanding of buddhism practice today. I recommend a title change to keep the true beginner away. Packed full of information otherwise, but not what I was hoping for.

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