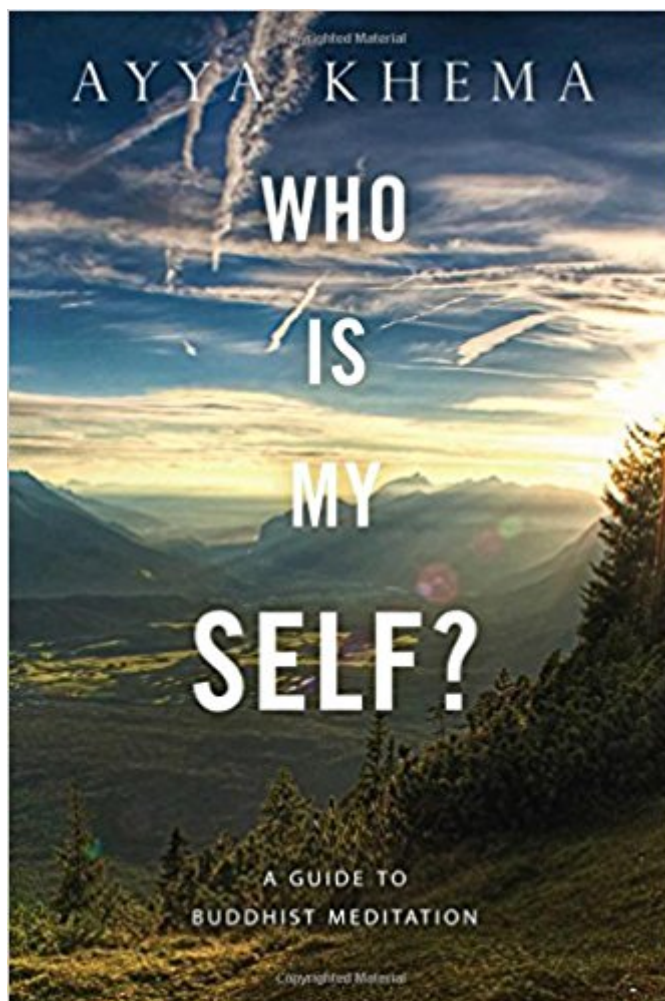


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Who Is My Self?: A Guide To Buddhist Meditation



Synopsis

Self-transformation is an essential element in all forms of Buddhist meditation--from Tantra to Zen. Ayya Khema, author of the best-selling *Being Nobody, Going Nowhere*, uses one of the earliest Buddhist suttas to guide us along the path of the oldest Buddhist meditative practice for understanding the nature of "self." By following the Buddha's explanation with clear, insightful examples from her years of teaching meditation, she guides us back and forth between the relative understanding and higher realizations of the Buddhist concept of "self." Her thoughtful contemplation of the Buddha's radical understanding of "self" and her practical advice for achieving insight offer the reader a profound understanding of the "self." Both beginning and advanced practitioners will greatly benefit from Ayya Khema's warm and down-to-earth exposition of the Buddha's meditation on "self."

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Customer Reviews

"Who Is My Self? gives us the recipe and the motivation to practice what is accessible to all, yet accomplished by few." (Inquiring Mind)"Ayya Khema is a meditators' meditator, a real expert, as clear about the nuts and bolts of technique as she is about the basic sanity and profound peacefulness that is the goal of all technique. Who is my Self? is a truly astonishing book. A commentary on the Potthapada Sutta, it discusses the well-known eight stages of meditative absorption. If you are interested in Buddhist meditation in all its color, depth, and refinement, you will want to pay close attention to this book." (Norman Fischer, Co-Abbot, San Francisco Zen

Center)"Ayya Khema's teachings are strongly grounded in a practical, daily-life perspective, yet she knows how to experience sublime states in meditation. In this excellent book, she lays out the path specified by the Buddha himself--a path that leads to transcendent joy and liberation from suffering." (Sandy Boucher, author of *Turning the Wheel* and *Opening the Lotus*)"Abounds with down to earth wisdom and contemporary relevance...a wonderful practical introduction to the practice of Buddhist meditation." (Booknews (Australia))"Khema expertly translates the Buddha's powerful words...into terms which the lay Buddhist, and even the non-Buddhist, can understand...she is well equipped to teach the ways of the Buddhist faith and its search for the real self." (NAPRA ReVIEW)"A much appreciated and valued contribution." (Wisconsin Bookwatch)

In this beautifully crafted guide to one of the Buddha's most famous teachings, Ayya Khema leads you, as the Buddha led his disciple Potthapada, through progressively higher levels of understanding and realization of the true nature of the "self". Interpreting this famous discourse with insightful examples from her years of teaching meditation, she guides you along the path of perhaps the most effective Buddhist meditative practice for personal transformation. Along the way you will learn about the language, customs, and culture of the era in which the Buddha gave his discourses and be surprised at how pertinent this 2500 year-old teaching is for you and your world.

This book is a gem for all Buddhist meditators and meditators in other traditions. Reading Ayya Khema is like sitting down with her for tea and talk. The delivery is clear and personal. She demystifies meditative states and absorptions (jhanas) and reduces them to basic consciousness events that occur as one progresses in practice. It seemed obvious to me that she writes from her own direct experience. Before this, I had read "Being Nobody, Going Nowhere." These two go together well.

Terrible Kindle version...for example here is a sample of words/names that somehow have become garbled: Poññāphāḍa, Anāthapiñḍika™s, Sāvatthi, Tathāgata, māras, Brahmās, Nirvāṇa, dāna, ānāpānasati, jhānas, Āg Veda. This is a great book which has been done a total injustice by . They should be ashamed. By all means, buy the book. It is absolutely one of the best I have read, but perhaps you ought to think twice about paying for this.

--This wonderful book, despite its somewhat misleading title, is a modern commentary on

Buddhism's Jhanas, or supreme meditative contemplations (others might use terms like "peak spiritual experiences" or "liberated states of awareness."). The Jhanas include eight levels of conscious awareness, and they appear to be the mystical "mystical experiences" that so many pilgrims from so many religious traditions have sought for so many centuries. This book gives a Buddhist perspective on them, although the methodology for approaching and assessing the Jhanas are subjects of some debate within the Buddhist community.--Ayya Khema, a well-respected Buddhist nun, centers her book around a little-known part of Buddhist scripture called the Potthapada Sutta, in which a well-meaning but unsophisticated student asks the Buddha how to achieve the highest level of conscious awareness. The Buddha often answered such complicated questions very simply and with some humor, but he now takes the reader into a journey full of wisdom and depth. Instead of answering the student directly, he defers the answer until he has addressed the preparation needed to comprehend the question. The Buddha clearly indicates that the higher mental states should be approached indirectly, carefully, and with great ethical and mental preparation. Such preparation usually takes tremendous effort and personal change, but without them, chasing after something like the "highest conscious states" may not only be useless but a dangerous source of attachment and delusion. Far from being an esoteric spiritual cookbook, Buddhism demands adequate awareness, a practiced discernment of existence, and an ethical "guarding of the sense doors." Only then can the various Jhanas be productively accessed, although they are not simply "obtained" by our own efforts. Liberation depends on comprehending existence, not manipulating it.--Ayya Khema then gives a superb commentary on the Buddha's description of the Jhanas, and discusses what they mean for us. The author suggests the Buddha viewed these supreme mystical experiences far differently from many other religious leaders. Although the Jhanas are a supremely wonderful and useful place for the mind to be, they too are subject to arising and passing away, and are not the End of the Road. Instead, their value is to allow the mind to become so clear and so focused that Insight Meditation becomes more, well, insightful. As the author puts it, the Jhanas can have indispensable value in "understanding experience," and in managing the questions of old age, suffering, and death. When all becomes still and one becomes kind, all becomes obvious.--Ayya Khema has artfully described a wonderful teaching. She has introduced us to steps on the spiritual journey that many of us had not expected to take -- those of discipline, renunciation, heightened awareness, and decency. Life isn't easy, but it can be positive for one who pays attention and changes accordingly.--This book deserves the attention of anyone interested in this dimension of Buddhist meditation. You may also want to consider a directed Jhana retreat, such as one of those found on her student Leigh Brasington's website.--I should add the

Potthapada Sutta is not only an excellent commentary on the Jhanas, it gives superb advice about the overall Buddhist path.

This book has been my guide as I have explored the jhanas, deepened my practice and enjoyed what has unfolded as a result. I always return to this book, wherever I am in my practice. I don't believe there's anything out there like "Who Is My Self" when it comes to a guide for the meditative absorptions. This book also gives detailed descriptions of stream entry - and actually all four steps/moments - on the path to full awakening. This may be the only book of its kind in this regard, and I find this to be invaluable. It's clear Khema experientially knows of what she speaks. This book is a valuable tool for practitioners of all levels and one that may be returned to, time and again, kept by the bedside, dog eared and highlighted, for many years to come.

I disagree that this book's title is misleading. True, the focus is on meditation and the jhanas, but the point is that if you practice in this manner you WILL discover who the self is, or rather that it is not. Ayya has a very readable writing style. And Just as a question arises in my mind, she answers it. She starts out with the difficulties we all have when starting meditation by focusing on the need for an ethical lifestyle, then detailing the hindrances we all face from time to time, and then going into details of the stages of the Jhanas. I get much out of all of Ayya's books, and am currently in the process of rereading them. Each time I learn more. I think this is my favorite Ayya book. Her books are well organized, superbly written, and the ideas well articulated, easy to understand, with many wonderful examples. And she sticks to the Buddha's teachings and interjects quotes from various texts of the Canon. I can't recommend this book enough.

Love it!!

Ayya Kheyma was the most inspirational person I have ever known (by book, video and a meeting years ago). She embodies kindness, selflessness, heart, knowledge, wisdom. I wish I could give this book to everyone I know.

Sister Khema writes with such clarity that it surely came from someone who truly practiced what she preached.

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