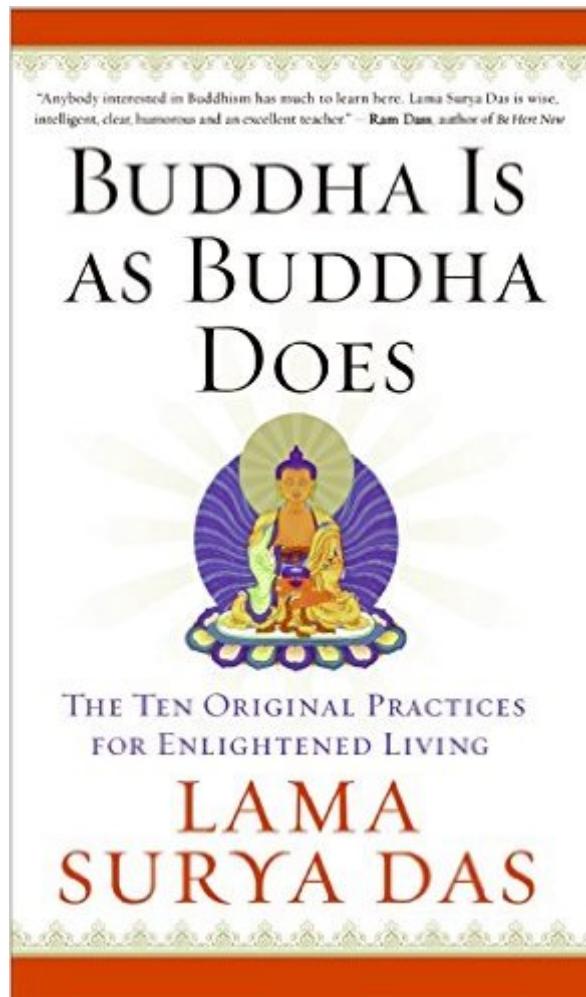


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Buddha Is As Buddha Does: The Ten Original Practices For Enlightened Living



Synopsis

In the book you now hold, national bestselling author Lama Surya Das offers a thorough map to the richest treasure a human being can findâ "the Buddha's advice for living to your true potential. Appropriate for new seekers as well as experienced practitioners, and accompanied by lively anecdotes and practical exercises, this is one of the most accessible books to date on the ancient and timeless wisdom of the Buddha. Buddha Is as Buddha Does is for everyone who seeks to become a better person and share in the bounty of true Buddha nature.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is the first of Lama Surya Das's books that I have read and it will not be the last. Buddha Is as Buddha Does is the most practical and useful book I have read yet on Buddhism for the modern American mind. The wisdom within its pages can be appreciated and applied by Buddhists and non-Buddhists (such as myself) alike. Lama Surya Das guides his readers along a ten-step path towards spiritual enlightenment utilizing the original six paramitas (perfections) of the Buddha: generosity, ethical behavior, patience, heroic effort, mindfullness through meditation, and wisdom, and appends the four additional practices of Mahayana Buddhism: skillful means, spiritual aspirations, higher accomplishments, and awakened awareness. It is as if this book has two parts, the first encompassing the original six practices on how to live a life of selfless compassion. The second part outlining the latter four practices borders on the mystical or miraculous, but enlightenment itself is a miracle in our modern world. For those like myself who wish to live a better,

more fulfilled life while still adhering to the mundane necessities of contemporary life, such as meeting sales quotas to pay the mortgage, etc., this is a useful book. What I appreciate the most is that although Lama Surya Das is a lama trained in Tibetan Buddhism, he demonstrates a knowledge of all religions, including in this book inspirational passages from the Christian bible, Sufi mystics, and his own Jewish roots, as well as other schools of Buddhism such as Zen. It is this inclusiveness that has attracted me to Buddhist literature.

I had actually looked forward to reading this book. Das is a well-known name in Buddhist circles, and his book *Awakening the Buddha Within* was promoted by Ken Wilber and even became a best seller. The man apparently also has several (3?) intensive retreats Tibetan-style (living in a shack for 3 years, sleeping upright, the works) so I assumed he must have an abundance of insight to offer. Maybe he does. I've now read the book, but I'm still not entirely sure. You see, the first thing that hit me when I started it was that it felt like a self-improvement tract, ala Anthony Robbins. There is the relentlessly exuberant optimism that pervades much of the more lightweight self-improvement books, and the saccharine prose was freighted with the sort of populist, feel-good catch phrases of American Buddhism that I've really become tired of - "we're all Buddhas" filled with "Buddha-nature" if only we could see into our "inner being" yada yada yada. The book is about the paramitas ("perfections") as they are described in Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism. Contrary to the subtitle, though, the practices described here are in no way "original." The oldest texts (the Pali) also describe ten perfections, but they are a different ten. (See Acarya Dhammapala's little gem of a work *A Treatise on the Paramis* for more about this.) The later traditions (Mahayana and Vajrayana) compiled a different set of practices (also ten), but even there the Mahayana initially had only six, and these form the core of the list Das describes. This kind of loose "scholarship" (if that's the right word for it) is evident also in his frequent quotes from Buddhist literature and sutras.

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