

Living in the World Without Being Seduced by It

LIGHT OF CONSCIOUSNESS

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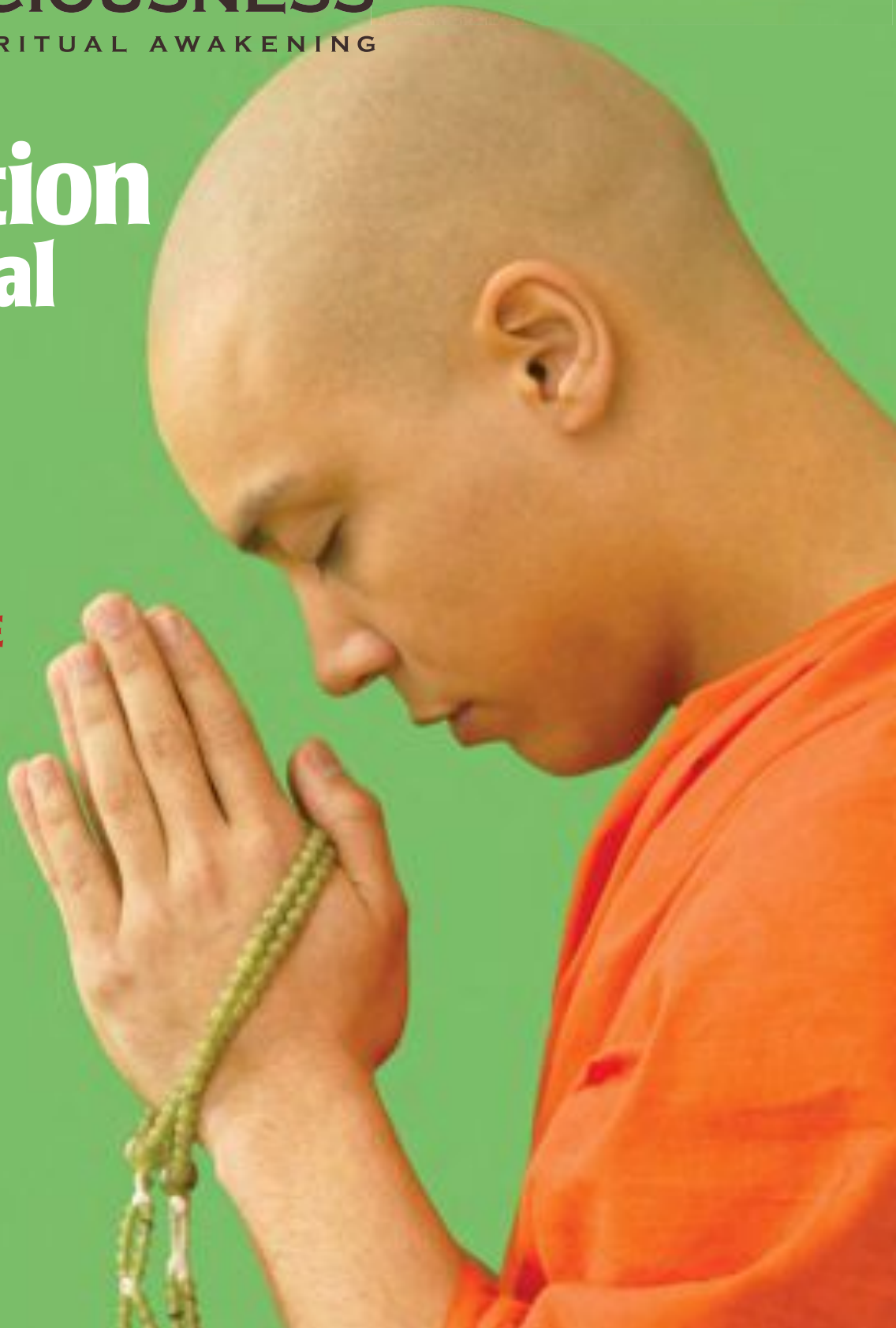
Meditation & Spiritual Practices

**HOW TO ATTAIN
FREEDOM FROM
THE MIND**

**CULTIVATING LOVE
AND COMPASSION**

**DISCOVER THE
HIDDEN YOGIS
OF TIBET**

MANTRA YOGA
**Let Words of Power
Transform Your Life**



Bodhisattva Path

Living in the World Without Being Seduced by It

Modern bodhisattvas need to have furniture and pay taxes, sit in traffic and shop for groceries—and yet must still remain serene and compassionate, one-pointedly fixated on enlightened consciousness, regardless of any disturbance, enticement, challenge, or the day-to-day deafening wails from the misery of unenlightened human life. **BY NICOLE GRACE**

What is a Bodhisattva?

THE WORD IS SANSKRIT and translates literally as “enlightenment” (*bodhi*) and “being” or “existence” (*sattva*). Buddhists believe that a bodhisattva is a particular kind of enlightened being—one whose compassion runs so deep that he or she resists a final dissolution of the soul into Eternity until all sentient beings have themselves attained liberation from suffering. The bodhisattva will continue to reincarnate in unenlightened worlds, at great personal risk and at times with considerable agony, in order to serve as a beacon of light, guiding seekers to higher consciousness and, hopefully, Ultimate Freedom.

Unlike *arhats*, enlightened souls who do not seek out suffering beings, bodhisattvas can and will enter hell itself to rescue willing seekers and drag them out by the hair if necessary *without getting trapped in the burning flames* themselves. Bodhisattvas are truly the firemen of the inner worlds. Like firemen with their fireproof uniforms, shiny red trucks equipped with reserves of water and medical equipment, bodhisattvas must have extensive tools at their disposal and go through rigorous training in order to survive their descents into the scorching depths of seekers’ confused minds and still emerge with their own freedom uncontaminated.

Practicing as a bodhisattva requires living in the world without becoming seduced by it, nor overly repulsed by it. It requires dealing with the world and all of its tragedies, temptations and complexities, while remaining inwardly immune to its influences. We cannot escape to a monastery, convent or cave and shut everything out but Light, prayer and the company of others equally intoxicated by God. No, modern bodhisattvas need to have furniture and

pay taxes, sit in traffic and shop for groceries—and yet must still remain serene and compassionate, one-pointedly fixated on enlightened consciousness, regardless of any disturbance, enticement, challenge, or the day-to-day deafening wails from the misery of unenlightened human life. When some of us think about the extraordinary compassion, generosity and bravery of these beings, it becomes an all-consuming pursuit to dedicate ourselves to the advanced practices necessary to one day become a heroic spiritual servant as they have.

When you come to understand that no one is truly separate from another—that we are all just waves arising from one vast ocean of consciousness—then you realize that there is no pain that is not your own pain, and no ecstasy that is not also your own ecstasy. In the appreciation of non-duality—the understanding that there is only the one Ocean, and that Ocean is Infinite Love—we naturally accept into ourselves both pain and bliss and everything in between. This may seem shocking, but in fact, this practice transports the practitioner to ecstasies hard to imagine or describe, like a small rowboat delivered hundreds of feet into the air by a tsunami.

Through the bodhisattva path we can rise to heights far beyond our individual means in a more conservative practice, all the while increasing the size of our boat. One day, as the Indian saint Ramakrishna described, we can become “like big steamships, which not only cross the ocean themselves but carry many passengers to the other shore.” (*The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, by M.)

The great bodhisattva, Padmasambhava, also known as Guru Rinpoche, said:

“For anyone, man or woman, who has faith in me, I, the Lotus Born, have never departed – I sleep on their threshold.”

Indeed He does. Bodhisattvas are always “on duty,” watching our backs, offering assistance. Could anything be more comforting than knowing that? And could anything be more compelling than the promise of one day returning the favor, by becoming oneself a servant of the Dharma, qualified to stand guard? Well, not for a bodhisattva.

Composing the verses in this book became a vital part of my own practice. I pray that by reading them perhaps at least one person may feel a sense of rapprochement with his or her own struggles and realizations and, with that, the will and joy to persevere in this most unusual occupation.

May everyone who seeks Light, find it.

Flock of Thoughts

Take time
To gaze into the sky
With no purpose
Other than to just be
And be quiet.
Be a witness to your thoughts
Watch them as though from afar
Like a flock of migrating birds
Specks of grey,
Then flapping wings,
V formation, then
Gone.
The flapping in your mind
No more yours
Than the birds are
Passing across the
Blue expanse.

Faith

Faith
Is not
Believing
The invisible hand
Of God
Will catch you
If you fall
Taking a step
Into the Unknown,

Rather
Faith is
Not caring
Whether you are
Caught or not,
Being willing
To fall,
Seeing falling
As a fine
Outcome
If that is
What is
Right.

The Project

You turn every step
Of the Pathway to Enlightenment
Into a project
Something to achieve
To conquer
Or to procrastinate over...
You try to turn
Love Itself
Into an object to obtain,
Grabbing at it,
Missing the whole point.
You have managed to take
Oneness
(Simple enough – there is only ONE)
And twist it into
Twos and Threes and Fours.
It’s always about YOU and
Then God I suppose
And everyone else,
The ones on your side
And the ones who are fighting you.
So much work
So much paranoia
So much self-importance.
Now take a deep breath and
Listen:
What if you are seeing this
All wrong?
Maybe
It’s just not that complicated.
Maybe there is

Just LOVE –
Love that is in every particle of existence
That IS every particle of existence.
You are made of that love
And if you are
Very quiet
And still
If you stop stirring up the water
Obscuring it with all that swirling sand
You will finally
SEE
And understand.
Oh...
You will say,
I,
The center of my own universe,
Don’t even really exist
Not in the way I thought.
Oh God...
There is only
Love.

Be Mine

Eternity called.
She wanted to know
If you would be
Her Valentine.
She promised she would
Always
Be with you,
Love you
Forever
Unconditionally,
Show you
Unlimited
Unimaginable ecstasy, and
If you could just
Love Her
More than you love
Anyone or anything else
She will make sure that you
Never feel
Lonely,
Anxious,
Fearful,
Angry, or

Lost
Ever again.
What should I tell Her
If she calls back?

Sacrament

Breathe deep
The morning sun
Filling your every cell
With the radiant oxygen of sunshine
Exhale the poison
Of worldly pursuits.
Nourish your Temple with
Rays of life force from a golden setting moon
And purge the holy chambers
Of confusion and ignorance.
Take into yourself the
Scented magnificence of trees and wildflowers
And release cravings and doubt.
Breathing itself can be
An act of prayer
Or a gorging on illusion.
So drink from the
Currents of enlightenment
Not the streams of desire
And you will become the ocean itself.
See the world as an infinite garden of Light
Your body as God’s palace
And every act
Becomes an offering
To the Divine,
Your whole life
A sacred poem
To Love.

How to Make a Pilgrimage

Travel
Light

© 2010 by Nicole Grace, a Buddhist monk and author who teaches Buddhism, mysticism and meditation to students around the world. This article was excerpted from her award-winning book, *Bodhisattva: How to Be Free/Teachings to Guide You Home*, published by Mani Press, Santa Fe. For more information visit www.bodhisattvabook.com.