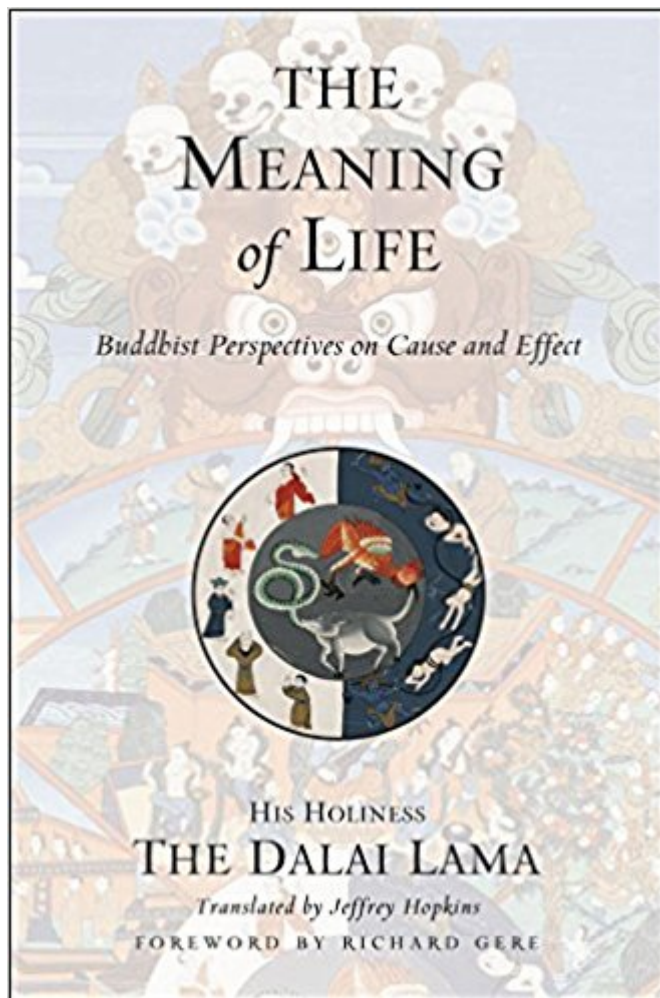


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The Meaning Of Life



Synopsis

Using the traditional Buddhist allegorical image of the Wheel of Life and the teaching of the twelve links of dependent origination, the Dalai Lama deftly illustrates how our existence, though fleeting and often full of woes, brims with the potential for peace and happiness. We can realize that potential by cultivating a wise appreciation of the interdependency of actions and experience, and by living a kind and compassionate life. A life thus lived, the Dalai Lama teaches, becomes thoroughly meaningful for both oneself and for others.

Book Information

Paperback: 164 pages

Publisher: Wisdom Publications; Revised edition (November 1, 2000)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0861711734

ISBN-13: 978-0861711734

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.5 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.5 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 23 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #776,172 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #91 inÂ Books > Religion & Spirituality > Other Eastern Religions & Sacred Texts > Karma #104 inÂ Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Eastern > Buddhism > Dalai Lama #695 inÂ Books > Religion & Spirituality > Religious Studies > Ethics

Customer Reviews

The Dalai Lama never shies away from the big questions. The Meaning of Life is a collection of lectures given in London in 1984 on the Buddhist worldview, before he had won the Nobel Peace Prize or become a bestselling author in English. Still, his message is essentially the same: practice nonviolence, cultivate altruism, and transform consciousness. In these lectures, the Dalai Lama begins with a painting of the wheel of cyclic existence, depicting the levels of karmic existence and symbols of the 12 links of dependent-arising. In other words, this painting, presented in seven color plates, is a visual summation of the basic tenets of Buddhism. The Dalai Lama draws on the painting to explain the 12 links of dependent-arising and then the path that leads to liberation from them. A nuts and bolts book, readers will enjoy it for its detail and for the broad range of questions elicited in listeners. --Brian Bruya

"Studded with jewels...The Meaning of Life brings together the theory of Buddhist teachings and the practice of ordinary life. The Dalai Lama's exposition-thorough, gentle and precise-reflects the depth and breadth of his training, communicating the living quality of the tradition." (Shambhala Sun)"Conveys his personal warmth and compassion." (CHOICE: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries)"Here, the Dalai Lama has very skillfully examined the existential questions of meaning, purpose, and responsibility, showing how every aspect of our suffering can be ultimately uprooted through a profound understanding of our true nature." (Jeffrey Hopkins in Eastern Horizon)

This book is the second volume of a trilogy written by HH the Dalai Lama. The first volume is The Buddhism of Tibet and the third one is The Middle Way. It is well grounded in Reason. Practitioners consider Buddhism either a religion, or a philosophy or a science (first-person science). This trilogy, in my opinion, describes Buddhism as a technology related to the mind. It shows the conditions to achieve enlightenment: accumulation of merit and accumulation of wisdom. In order to understand the deep meaning of Buddhism, the reader needs to study the trilogy, a superficial reading is not enough. The Meaning of Life describes the twelve links of dependent arising and gives important information about the foundation of the practices concerning with Tibetan Buddhism. HH the Dalai Lama, in this book, recommends that the practice of Buddhism by Westerners must be adapted to West. Buddhism practiced by Tibetans was influenced by Tibetan culture; it would be a mistake for Westerners to practice a Tibetanized Buddhism. It is a good practice to remain good citizens in their own communities. Isolation is unnecessary.

There are many layers to this book. I must admit when I first read this book there was a lot I didn't understand, and the book felt kind of dry. After a recent retreat I've had a new interest in re-reading this book. It is not as dry as it was before. In fact, it is very exciting now. So my advice to anyone having a hard time with it is to put it away for awhile and then keep coming back to it! There are a lot of instances in the book of just one or two sentences having a wealth of information. It is easy to miss this information if you are used to reading something like Harry Potter. I am most familiar with Theravada. More accurately: I don't know much about Tibetan and/or Mahayana Buddhism. This book can shed light on some of those subjects. For example, in one or two sentences of the book I find pointers to things that I would have just glossed over at an earlier stage of my practice. In particular: my understanding of non-self and the nature of consciousness vs. the book's discussion of Mahayana views on non-self and the nature of consciousness. This book has a lot of info on

dependent origination. Each of the 12 links is given an exposition. For example the 3rd link is broken into two forms of consciousness; cause consciousness and effect consciousness. The name and form link is described in terms of the five clinging aggregates. In addition, the whole chain is put into context; how it relates to lifetimes, how there are multiple chains occurring during one lifetime, etc. The 12-links are open to different interpretations. I find this book's treatment of them very informative. The book can give the bhavacakra a new found meaning to you.

A concise insight into the wheel of life. & wonderfully illustrated & explained by His Holiness Dalai Lama and how it's all intertwined with our own actions & karma. When there is birth, there is bound to be suffering. Therefore we must aspire to reach the deathless state. Explanatory in modern context. A definite must have for all readers, regardless of religions. & also the detailed explanations of the 3 roots of poisons, 6 realms of existence, 12 dependent originations & Enlightenment.

Brings additional meaningful clarity to the concept of cause and effect. I recommend this book by the Dalai Lama as an important resource text.

these teachings are like drops of pure nectar each time I listen to them. Meditation instructions that are so informative, I have been a meditator for over 30 years and I still felt like a beginner which is so good for me. The Wheel of Life is a fascinating teaching and incorporates everything to improve our lives, should we but listen and practice.

know words to be able to read this and have time to contemplate it, not what you want if you're looking for easy

Who doesn't want to know what the Dalai Lama has to say about life? Some of the ideas he presents are not familiar to me and I found that part difficult to read. But, in the end, he goes on to confirm that kindness and doing no harm are truly the way.

This is a must read from His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama. He explains the Buddhist principle of dependent arising in a very down to earth method. He is the master at taking a very deep theoretical Buddhist subject and breaking it down and showing how it applies to our everyday life. Taken from a series of teachings His Holiness gave in 1984 in London, the book is a lightly edited transcription by Jeffrey Hopkins, who was the translator for His Holiness at these lectures truly

makes this a must read if you want to understand the Twelve Links of Dependent Arising.

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