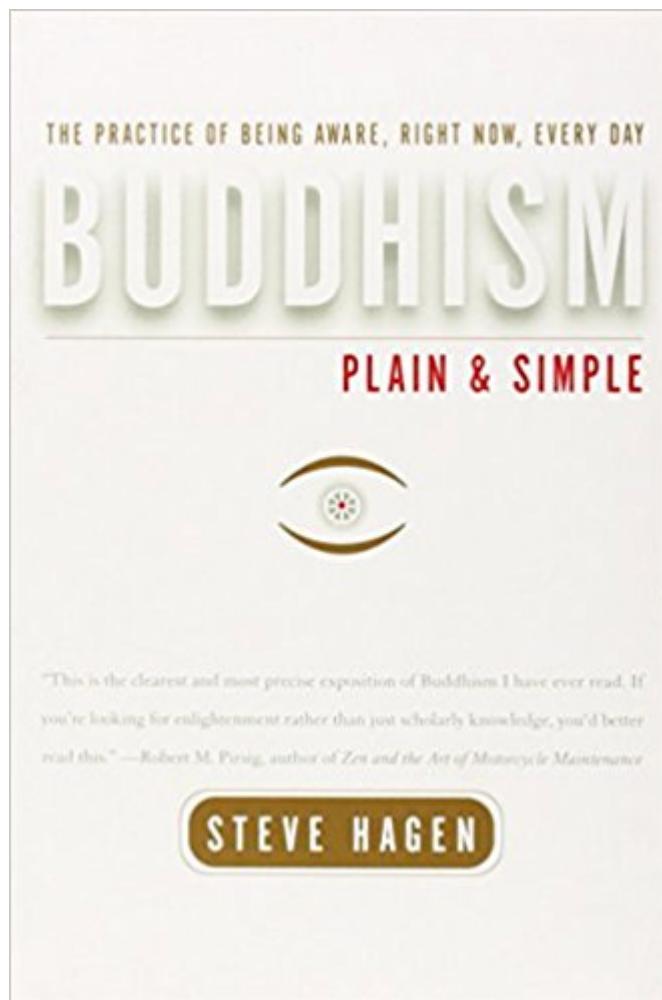


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# Buddhism Plain And Simple: The Practice Of Being Aware, Right Now, Every Day



## **Synopsis**

This book offers a clear, straightforward approach to Buddhism in general and awareness in particular. It is about being awake and in touch with what is going on here and now. When the Buddha was asked to sum up his teaching in a single word, he said, "Awareness." The Buddha taught how to see directly into the nature of experience. His observations and insights are plain, practical, and down-to-earth, and they deal exclusively with the present. In *Buddhism Plain and Simple*, Steve Hagen presents these uncluttered, original teachings in everyday, accessible language unencumbered by religious ritual, tradition, or belief.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Over the last fifteen years, a growing number of books have shown up in trade paperbackland on the subject of Buddhism. More seem to arrive daily, invited or not. Most of them are aimed at the general reader and beginning buddhist. This makes it progressively more difficult to sort out the superlative from the merely satisfactory. Of all that I've read [and I've read them all] "*Buddhism: Plain and Simple*" stands out from the rest. Steve Hagen succeeds in one of the hardest tasks in writing: being straightforward without being dull; being concise without seeming frugal. No essential point of Buddhism is left uncovered, yet the author never pontificates or short-changes the reader. The book is a gem of both inspiration and practicality. It takes a subject that often seems far too idealistic and places it at a level that resonates with the daily Western experience of life. It is a "quick read" without ever coming off as "*Buddhism For Dummies*." All this and at a price that will make it a

convenient and affordable present for all those friends that have so often asked us, "what the heck is Buddhism?" Find it, read it and buy another copy for someone you love. Better yet, give it to someone you don't love. It might just change their life.

"~I am a newcomer to Buddhism, but when I get a hankering to learn about any subject, I read about it voraciously. This has been almost counter-productive in studying Buddhism since, as Hagen stresses, no words can really describe the reality we seek. In fact, I have read several books about Buddhism, Zen, and the like; but I own just two: Buddhism Plain and Simple, and Peace is Every Step by Thich Nhat Hanh. By far, Hagen's book is my favorite. the wrong reasons -- to control my emotions, to sort out moral dilemmas, and to find peace of mind. Through Buddhism, I've made great progress in all those areas by simply eliminating them as goals and just experiencing life moment by moment. This may sound odd if you haven't practiced Buddhism, but you will quickly appreciate this lesson after reading Hagen's book. You will discover that the practice of Buddhism does not involve traveling to the Himalayas or meditating in the forest. You will learn that you don't have to abandon your religion or your friends or your job. The word Buddhism stems from the Sanskrit word for Buddha, the awakened one. Buddhism is simply the path of awakening. This book is a wonderful guide on that path. You will not be the same after reading it.

The best little book on Buddhism that is available. Masterfully written. This book needs to be studied, not just read. It is worthwhile to read again and again. If you only read one book on Buddhism, then this is the one to read. The author is an American Zen teacher whose clarity of explanation will appeal to the American Zen student. Steve Hagen prefers to call Buddhism "the buddha-dharma." He states that "It's a process, an awareness, an openness, a spirit of inquiry -- not a belief system, or even (as we normally understand it) a religion. It is more accurate to call it 'the teaching of the awakened,' or the buddha-dharma." We start by learning the four truths: (1) life involves suffering; (2) this suffering arises within us; (3) we can end the most profound and existential forms of suffering; and (4) the way we end this suffering is by following the eightfold path. The existential angst we experience from the unanswered question of what life is about is at the heart of our suffering. The buddha-dharma is like a journey. By following the middle way we can reach enlightenment and nirvana. There are three kinds of suffering, or duhkha: (1) pain, both physical and mental; (2) change; and (3) being. Our goal is to just see. We must awaken from our confusion. We need to see reality for what it is. The eightfold path is a concrete way for us to practice bringing about the cessation of duhkha. The eight aspects of this path are right view, right

intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right meditation. Nothing in this book is offered as something you are to believe. Somehow through his life of contemplation the Buddha was able to formulate these notions. They are simply a guide. The Buddha can only point the way. It is left for each one of us to find the way for ourselves.

There are already many English books about Buddhism way of thinking written by Japanese and western authors. But many of them describe only the history and facts of Buddhism and repeat old Asian style puzzling logic that is not valid for the modern mind. This is the first English book I have read that describes the genuine meaning of Buddhism in simple words. Simplicity is not elementary. It is true understanding. The only regret is that this book still insists much on liberation from anguish and less on the creative and positive side of Buddhism.

This book is one of the most life altering reads of My 55years. My Ego is strong and my soul is steeped in the academic knowledge of Western Culture. Steve Hagan succeeds in explaining the Buddha's transformation to enlightenment and his affect upon his contemporary world and the following 2500 years of human existence without preaching and with respect for other philosophical concepts. I can honestly say my life has been made better and happier by the experience of reading this book.

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