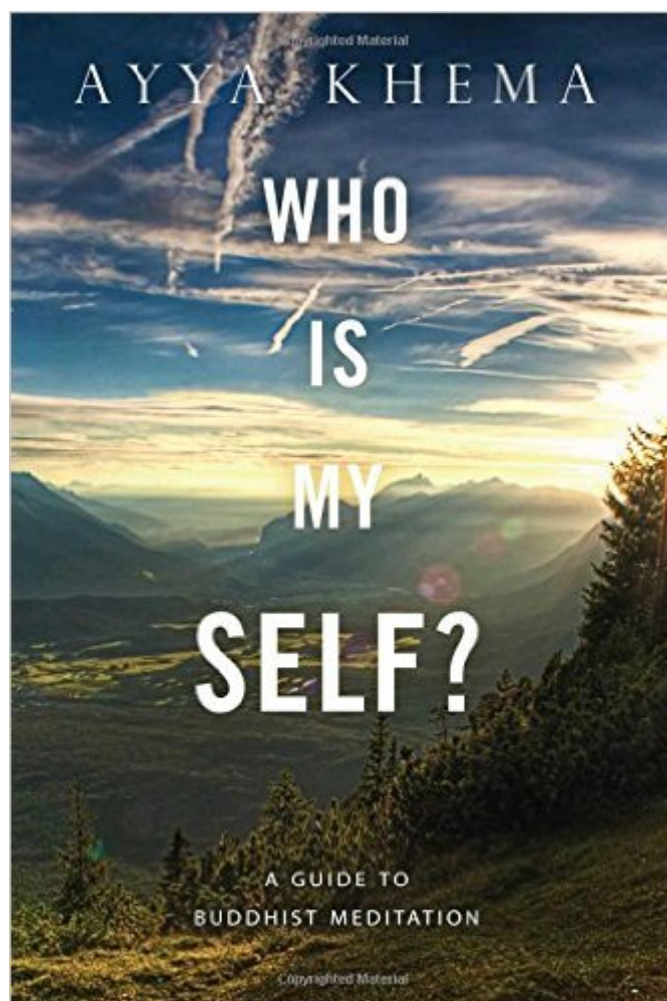


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# Who Is My Self?: A Guide To Buddhist Meditation



## 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."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

--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."

I stumbled upon this gem and decided to give it a chance, despite not being familiar with the author. I had another book that went through the jhanas in my hand and comparatively, this one seemed to be more organic and contextual. Additionally, the author's voice is conversational, an amazing feat in and of itself. She has to know her stuff inside out to present something so profound and unpack it the way she does. The book is comparatively short given the breadth of the topic. The sutta contains the whole of the practice. Other reviewers basically said what I feel, so I won't repeat it. If I could take but one meditation book to a deserted island, this would be it. It engages ALL one needs to consider to become liberated, not only meditation. The book is very true to the original teachings and without any egotistical need to put her stamp on it. The title is really not a good representation of all the book contains but by the end, you will hopefully understand why she picked it. Losing our belief in an existent "self" is the sinequanon of the why of buddhist practice and what liberation is dependent upon. That idea is impossible to comprehend and will only make sense after meditative experience. The author provides a map from the beginning of our path (the confused person who does not understand what practice is all about) and the end (becoming a Buddha- awakening to the ultimate reality vs. what we thought was "true" all along). I love it and I can't say enough. It is packed with the wisdom and experience of someone who has tasted the fruit of practice. Her engagement of path and fruition (fruit) is clear and compelling. I've read this short chapter multiple times and will continue to do so.

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