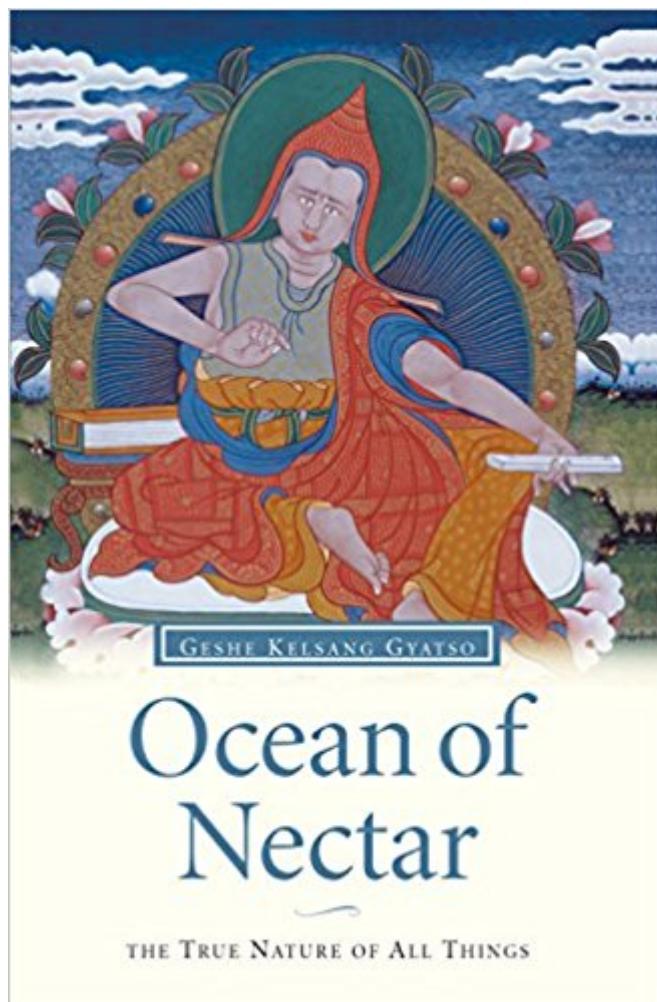


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Ocean Of Nectar: The True Nature Of Things



Synopsis

"Ocean of Nectar" is the first complete commentary in English to Chandrakirti's classic "Guide to the Middle Way," one of the most important scriptures in Mahayana Buddhism and regarded to this day as the principal text on emptiness, the ultimate nature of reality. In this long-awaited major work Geshe Kelsang provides an entirely new translation of Chandrakirti's verse masterpiece and explains with outstanding clarity the philosophical reasoning establishing Buddha's most profound view of the middle way. In the course of the book he also charts the progress of a Mahayana practitioner from the initial cultivation of compassion through to the attainment of full enlightenment, providing an indispensable guide for the serious student of Mahayana Buddhism.

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Customer Reviews

This important work handsomely repays the close reading required to fully savor the text. -- The Middle Way

Venerable Geshe Kelsang Gyatso is a fully accomplished meditation master and internationally renowned teacher of Buddhism who has pioneered the introduction of modern Buddhism into contemporary society. He is the author of 22 highly acclaimed books that transmit perfectly the ancient wisdom of Buddhism to our modern world. He has also founded over 1200 Kadampa Buddhist Centers and groups throughout the world. In his teachings, Geshe Kelsang emphasizes the importance of meditation and how to apply it in daily life. He reveals practical methods for

developing wisdom, cultivating a good heart and maintaining a peaceful mind through which we can all find true and lasting happiness. Demonstrating these qualities perfectly in his own life, Geshe Kelsang has dedicated his whole life to helping others find inner peace and happiness.

Geshe Kelsang Gyatso's Ocean of Nectar, is the first complete commentary in English to the famous Buddhist text, Guide to the Middle Way by Chandrakirti. Guide to the Middle Way is regarded to this day as the principal text on emptiness, the ultimate nature of reality. In Geshe Kelsang's completely new and authoritative translation of Chandrakirti's root text, he explains clearly and completely, the philosophical reasoning establishing Buddha's most profound view of the middle way, a term that means: anything that is free from the two extremes of existence and non-existence. These different reasonings are indispensable in improving our ability to cut the root of our ignorance and understand the selflessness of all phenomena. Not only does Geshe Kelsang provide the reader with a faultless presentation of the most profound view of emptiness, he also gives a clear explanation of the stages of the vast path. I recommend this book to the serious student interested in improving their knowledge, understanding, and experience of emptiness, the ultimate nature of reality. This is an advanced text on the subject of emptiness, so I would not recommend this to a beginner. For someone wanting to learn what emptiness is, I would recommend one of Geshe Kelsang's other books that include the subject such as Transform Your Life, or Joyful Path to Good Fortune. This book is the definitive guide to the ultimate nature of reality.

heavy but easy reading from lama gyatso of important points in buddhism the book is the true nature of all things.

Excellent exposition of the different Buddhist schools and their approach to emptiness, yet easy to understand although the called root text is quite deep material. An enlightening reading, a profound writing, wonderful!

This profound book is like a great treasure chest full of definitive gems. It takes contemplation to understand and time to incorporate the concepts, but it is well worth the effort required. Why? The result is beneficial - a peaceful and happy mind and a loving and kind heart.

With characteristic clarity and insight, the author has presented a very profound subject in an extremely straightforward way. This book provides a comprehensive explanation of the

Bodhisattva's path to enlightenment. Guided by his own complete experience of the subject, Geshe Kelsang skillfully explains Buddha's ultimate intention, the subtle view of the "middle way" or *Madhyamika*. I feel it's difficult to read this book too many times. In a word, this book is deep ... very deep. "Ocean of Nectar" is a delight to study and learn from.

There is at least one reviewer who thinks this is a bit too sectarian in its approach. Who cares! The beauty of the broad availability of ancient and modern commentaries on the esoteric Dharma-teachings is a great blessing. Those who have an intellect capable of understanding such deep concepts as set out by Chandakirti in the "Guide to the Middle Way" are quite capable of extracting the wheat from the chaff. There is enough wheat in this book to satisfy most enquiring Dharma-minds. The book is eminently readable and is a more than useful addition to a Dharma-library. Four and a half stars would be fairer, but at least this 5-rating balances another reviewer's 3 to some extent.

This book is a mixed bag. The fact that this book represents one specific and acutely sectarian viewpoint is made abundantly clear by both the translators and Kelsang himself throughout the book. This is unfortunate and detracts from its readability for anyone who is not a member of the New Kadampa Tradition that Kelsang heads. This book is a translation and commentary on the *Entrance to the Middle Way* (*Madhyamakavatara*) by Indian *Madhyamika* Chandrakirti. Chandrakirti offers a strong interpretation of Nagarjuna in this work and in his commentary to Nagarjuna's *Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way* entitled *Clear Words*. The root text translated herein is a summation of what Chandrakirti saw to be the philosophical essence of Nagarjuna's teachings. The presentation is organized using the structure of the ten progressive Bodhisattva Grounds by which the yogi is said to progress on the path to Buddhahood. Most of this book is occupied with an analysis of the Sixth Bodhisattva Ground, wherein the yogi completes the perfection of wisdom. Chandrakirti (and Kelsang) present their interpretation of emptiness, which came to be called *Prasangika-Madhyamaka* by Tibetans, and seek to refute rival interpretations of Buddhist scripture, particularly those espoused by the Mind Only idealist school of Indian philosophy. Kelsang Gyatso's commentary does not view itself as an interpretation; rather it is framed as an explication of the actual meaning of Chandrakirti's text. A reader new to the material may be surprised to learn that the commentary goes well beyond the scope of what Chandrakirti could have argued. Nor does he distinguish between issues that Chandrakirti may have been addressing and those which arose centuries later in Tibet. The result of this is that the reader is left with little sense of the widely

divergent uses to which Nagarjuna's thought has been put throughout the Buddhist world. One might think from reading this book that the arguments which Kelsang recasts against holders of other tenet systems are current. In fact, no Buddhist school has defined itself as Cittamatrin for many centuries, and no school has defined itself as Svatantrika ever. I wonder why so much energy is spent reliving debates that have been over for more than a thousand years, and so little energy is spent understanding competing views that are actually propounded by living people. In any case, this book contains a strong translation of the root verses, and the commentary is serviceable, though it is strongly patterned after Je Tsong Khapa's commentary and is not particularly original. I am personally turned off by the quiet (but ubiquitous) sectarianism of this work, but I value it as a good translation of an important Madhyamaka text. The commentary is also useful as a methodical presentation based on Ge-luk-ba sources. For a very different (but also flawed) translation and commentary of the Madhyamakavatara, see Huntington's *The Emptiness of Emptiness*. For a Ge-luk presentation of the sixth chapter, see Geshe Rabten's *Echoes of Voidness*. The first through the fifth chapter are translated with Tsong-kha-pa's commentary in Jeffrey Hopkins' *Compassion in Tibetan Buddhism*. A wonderful but extremely challenging study of the issues can be found in the magnificent *Path to the Middle* by Kensur Yeshe Thubten and Anne Klein.

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