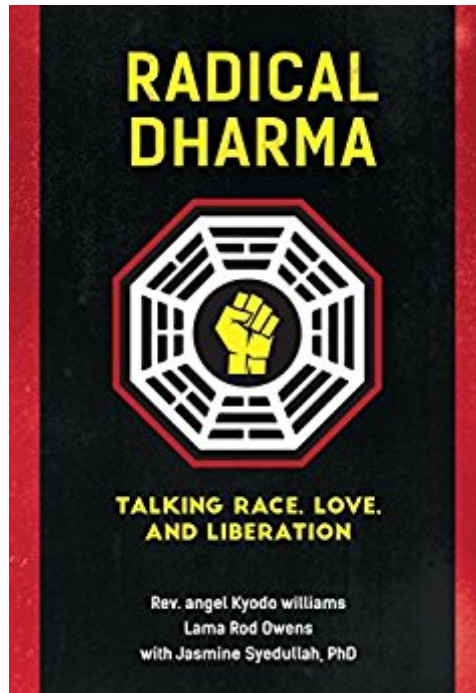


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# Radical Dharma: Talking Race, Love, And Liberation



## Synopsis

Igniting a long-overdue dialogue about how the legacy of racial injustice and white supremacy plays out in society at large and Buddhist communities in particular, this urgent call to action outlines a new dharma that takes into account the ways that racism and privilege prevent our collective awakening. The authors traveled around the country to spark an open conversation that brings together the Black prophetic tradition and the wisdom of the Dharma. Bridging the world of spirit and activism, they urge a compassionate response to the systemic, state-sanctioned violence and oppression that has persisted against black people since the slave era. With national attention focused on the recent killings of unarmed black citizens and the response of the Black-centered liberation groups such as Black Lives Matter, *Radical Dharma* demonstrates how social transformation and personal, spiritual liberation must be articulated and inextricably linked. Rev. angel Kyodo williams, Lama Rod Owens, and Jasmine Syedullah represent a new voice in American Buddhism. Offering their own histories and experiences as illustrations of the types of challenges facing dharma practitioners and teachers who are different from those of the past five decades, they ask how teachings that transcend color, class, and caste are hindered by discrimination and the dynamics of power, shame, and ignorance. Their illuminating argument goes beyond a demand for the equality and inclusion of diverse populations to advancing a new dharma that deconstructs rather than amplifies systems of suffering and prepares us to weigh the shortcomings not only of our own minds but also of our communities. They forge a path toward reconciliation and self-liberation that rests on radical honesty, a common ground where we can drop our need for perfection and propriety and speak as souls. In a society where profit rules, people's value is determined by the color of their skin, and many voices—including queer voices—are silenced, *Radical Dharma* recasts the concepts of engaged spirituality, social transformation, inclusiveness, and healing. From the Trade Paperback edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Several different perspectives are shared within this book. There are essays and discussions. I think this is a fairly positive book. It sees hope in the future of America even with the healing that the USA still needs to do with its people. I had a bit of a hard time relating sometimes because I'm not as peaceable as the folks in this book. I feel the book would suggest self reflection on that. I struggled also with some of the spiritual components of this book. I don't consider myself to be a spiritual person and I'm an atheist. So, I was just along for the ride on some parts of the book. I like the focus on community and the focus on discussion and on self reflection and self care. But I felt that there was more of a need for direction for this book. Quotes: "The tiptoeing around race and other forms of difference as if in fear of waking a sleeping lion is one of the most subtly toxic attributes of whiteness in our culture right now." -Jasmine Syedullah "Love is the wish for myself and others to be happy. Love transcends our need to control the recipient of love. I love not because I need something in return. I love not because I want to be loved back, but because I see and understand love as being an expression of the spaciousness I experience when I am challenging my egoic fixation by thinking about the welfare of others. I go where I am loved. I go where I am allowed to express love. In loving, I have no expectations." -Lama Rod Owens "Predatory capitalist greed has deeply ingrained a self-worth confusion into our psyche We associate our value as human beings with our financial worth. Our relationships are governed by the shadow game of acquisition. We can never have enough. The result is a devastating disconnect to a felt sense of our experience." -Rev. angel Kyodo williams If this sounds like something you would enjoy reading check it out.

Radical Dharma: Talking Race, Love, and Liberation This is a book of how three people used

meditation and practice to transform themselves in the face of America's race illness and how they are now working on liberating others and the world. I got to live and breathe and cry through the pain they faced and then to listen as they brought their learnings into dialogs around the country on race, love, and liberation. There were moments I put the book down and just said "Damn." So much truth here. A must read.

This book is both beautifully simple, and deeply profound. Every few pages I set the book down to cry. Sometimes I cried with grief. Sometimes I cried at the relief of having my own deepest experiences splaid out on the page. Sometimes I cried with a deep hurt that I have never been able or free to give words to. This book is love in written form - an offering made from a place of the impossible commitment to free all souls, and from minds that are sharp and clear and also funny. More than once my skin crawled with goosebumps as I felt like in the pages of this book I had finally found a secret wonderful group of people committed to love and justice. I felt both included and welcomed, and charged with the heavy responsibility of undoing the injustice that is around me constantly. As a white woman, I cannot begin to express the depth of the gratitude I have for these authors, for the generosity, courage, sacrifice, wisdom, and above all, love in their sharing. I will read this book again, and again. 5 stars. Must read.

Any American Buddhist must read this book. This book gives a way for practicing Buddhist to APPLY the teachings of the Buddha to the karma of being an American. If you really want to test your practice and see where you are on your path, READ THIS BOOK. In a gentle but firm way, Rev Williams and Lama Rod show us where we can improve and how we can use the teachings of the Buddha to push beyond the samsaric cycle of life in America. So challenge yourself and your path and READ and PRACTICE this book.

If you have practiced Buddhism for some time, hearing only the standard dharma talks about the Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path, sitting in meditation, cultivating ethics, and chanting -- all with no connection to who you are as a person of African descent living in a racially brutalizing culture, this book is for you. If you are a White person automatically privileged through racism and wonder if Buddhism can help transform a privileged mind, this book is for you. If you are a person who is not Black and is not White, and wondering what Buddhism can say to you in your ethnicity, you too can be enlivened by "Radical Dharma." "Radical Dharma" is, in part, a provocative and dynamic argument for predominantly White Buddhist communities in the U.S. to examine their

attachments to the comfort of meditative transcendence while simultaneously "transcending" the suffering of African-descended people in the sangha and the country. Perhaps if and when Williams, Owens, and Syedullah write together again, there will be additional emphasis placed on the importance of their queerness, the influence of Black Christianity, and the hint of Islamic influences on the shaping of their prophetic voices. Read this book with your guards down so you can get up off the cushion with open heartedness.

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