



### EATING WILDLY

Foraging for Life, Love, and the Perfect Meal

By Ava Chin

Simon & Schuster 2014; 256 pp., \$25 (cloth)

Don't read *Eating Wildly* when you're hungry. Ava Chin has such a luscious knack for describing anything steamed, sautéed, or deep-fried that you'll be left with your mouth watering and your stomach grumbling. She recreates the dishes of her Chinese-American childhood, such as lobster Cantonese with lacy egg whites and soy sauce chicken wings dripping in brown-sugar glaze, but foraging in New York and other urban jungles is her specialty. She takes us on her hunts for savory lambsquarters, mellow-sweet mulberries, and morels infused with the taste of earth and springtime. For Chin, foraging is a moving meditation that has a healing quality. Bit by bit, bite by bite, she comes to terms with her romantic failures, her grandmother's death, and the long-lingering pain of her father's abandonment. This story of self-discovery is complete with recipes.

### THE PATH TO AWAKENING

How Buddhism's Seven Points of Mind Training Can Lead You to a Life of Enlightenment and Happiness

By Shamar Rinpoche, edited and translated by Lara Braitstein

Delphinium Books 2014; 178 pp., \$14.95 (paper)

While the Tibetan term *lojong* translates into English as "mind training," the practice transforms the heart as well. It was established in Tibet by the celebrated yogi-scholar Atisha (c. 982–1054) and for years was only taught orally. Then Chekawa Yeshe Dorje (1101–1175) wrote *The Root Text of the Seven Points of Mind Training*, in which he summarized lojong into fifty-nine pithy aphorisms or slogans and divided them into seven sections. One way that lojong can be practiced is to memorize these slogans so they will pop into your mind when you need them. "Train

uninterruptedly" and "Do not hold on to anger" are two that seem fairly straightforward. Others are quite obscure, such as "Guard the two even at the cost of your life" and "Make the three inseparable." Generation after generation of teachers have commented on *The Root Text of the Seven Points of Mind Training*, and *The Path to Awakening* is the Kagyu figure Shamar Rinpoche's contribution.

### THE MINDFULNESS SURVIVAL KIT

Five Essential Practices

By Thich Nhat Hanh

Parallax Press 2014; 208 pp., \$12.95 (paper)

Do not kill, steal, commit sexual misconduct, lie, or take intoxicants. Thich Nhat Hanh recognized the timeless wisdom of these traditional Buddhist precepts but wanted to make them more accessible for people today. So he rewrote them using fresh, contemporary language, taking into account the realities of this modern world, including the Internet, video games, television, and climate change. In his version, Thich Nhat Hanh calls the five precepts "the five mindfulness trainings," and he lists them as: reverence for life, true happiness, true love, deep listening and loving speech, and nourishment and healing. In *The Mindfulness Survival Kit*, he delves deeply into the trainings and offers concrete practices for each. He emphasizes that the trainings are free of dogma, religion, and sectarianism, and they can be adopted by anyone, not just Buddhists.

### SELFLESS LOVE

Beyond the Boundaries of Self and Other

By Ellen Birx

Wisdom Publications 2014; 248 pp., \$15.95 (paper)

"Our lives are constrained," says Zen teacher Ellen Birx, "because we have a limited view of who we are and who God is." For Birx, the word "God" refers to the unknowable, the ineffable. In short,

God is a synonym for ultimate reality. *Selfless Love* begins with two chapters on why and how to meditate, and Birx, who has a Ph.D. in psychiatric nursing, informs this material with her solid knowledge of cognitive science. But she is clear about her personal motivation, which is spiritual. Meditation, as she sees it, is a kind of prayer, and its purpose is to let go of all concepts and experience unbounded awareness. When we have this direct experience of no-self, we can express our own unique gifts without being self-centered. As Birx puts it, “You and God are not two separate realities. God loves. You love. God’s love and your love are one reality.”

**DAILY DOSES OF WISDOM**  
**A Year of Buddhist Inspiration**

Edited by Josh Bartok

*Wisdom Publications 2013; 438 pp., \$16.95 (paper)*

From the editor of *Daily Wisdom* comes *Daily Doses of Wisdom*, a new collection of 365 contemplative quotes, plus nine longer selections. Contributors include the poet Jane Hirshfield, the psychoanalyst and Zen teacher Barry Magid, and the Buddhist ecologist Stephanie Kaza, as well as the Dalai Lama, Mahatma Gandhi, Dogen, and the Buddha. From kindness to koans, fairness to freedom, a broad range of topics are explored. “Use your own problems to remember that others have problems too,” said by Kathleen McDonald, is one of the pithier quotes that I enjoyed. Another is Issa’s classic haiku: “The world of dew/Is the world of dew./ And yet, and yet...” Bartok, who is head teacher at the Greater Boston Zen Center, suggests reading one quote each day upon waking up or before going to sleep or meditating. But he also points out that there is no wrong time for the dharma, which is, as the Buddha put it, “good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end.”

**JET BLACK AND THE NINJA WIND**

By Leza Lowitz and Shogo Oketani

*Tuttle 2013; 320 pp., \$17.99 (cloth)*

Growing up in New Mexico, Jet has a secret. Unlike the other kids in her class

who watch TV in the evenings, she is always training with her mother—learning things like how to fight, how to hide, how to move without being heard. But Jet doesn't understand why she needs these skills. Then, when she's seventeen years old, her mother dies, leaving her with the instruction to go to Japan—her mother's native land—and find her grandfather. Suddenly Jet is thrust into a dangerous world, but slowly she unravels its mystery. *Jet Black and the Ninja Wind* is a young adult novel that will entertain readers with action and romance while also exposing them to Japanese culture and history, focusing particularly on the Emishi tribes and their struggle to save their land. The Buddhist thread that runs through the story makes it a natural choice for budding practitioners.

#### LITTLE PANKA SWEEPS THE MIND

Written by Fa Ze, illustrated by Du Lu

*Buddha's Light Publishing 2013; 28 pp., \$8.95 (paper)*

*Little Panka Sweeps the Mind* is a colorful treat of a picture book for children ages three to eight. It tells the story of Culapanthaka—Little Panka—and his remarkable achievement in the face of challenges. Big Panka, his elder brother, was a quick study. But Little Panka could never remember anything, so eventually his teacher gave up on him and Big Panka drove him from the temple. All alone, Little Panka sobbed. Then suddenly the Buddha was at his side, offering to be his teacher and instructing him to sweep while repeating the verse: "I sweep the dust, I remove the waste." Little Panka struggled to remember the words, yet he kept sweeping and repeating, and after a long time he began to ask himself what it meant to sweep. More time passed, and he realized that in his mind there was dust and waste that couldn't be removed with a broom. Clearing his mind of dust and waste such as anger and pride, Little Panka opened his heart to kindness, gratitude, and modesty. The Buddha recognized Little Panka as an awakened one. ♦