

# **Radical Dharma: Talking Race, Love, and Liberation**

Rev. Angel Kyodo Williams, Lama Rod Owens, Jasmine, Ph.D. Syedullah



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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.

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