



Heart of Buddhist Meditation: The Buddha's Way of Mindfulness

Nyanaponika Thera , Sylvia Boorstein (Foreword)

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This is a classic text on the essence of Buddhist meditation. It is an excellent, indepth description of mindfulness practice and its benefits. It includes a concise explanation of clear comprehension, which is the kind of mindfulness you use in the course of your daily life. It also presents an easily understandable explanation of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness.

This new edition includes an introduction from noted author and teacher Sylvia Boorstein.

Although the Buddha lived over 2500 years ago, his teachings on meditation are among the most effective methods for healing the pain of grief, finding inner peace, and overcoming the sense of dislocation caused by living in the 21st century. Mindfulness is a method not only for committed Buddhists. It is for everyone interested in mastering the mind.

From the introduction by Sylvia Boorstein

The Heart of Buddhist Meditation was the first serious, didactic Dharma book I read. It was the early nineteeneighties. My teacher, Jack Kornfield, suggested it as the beginning formal training of my becoming a Mindfulness teacher. I have that original copy and I am touched by how many underlined passages, how many exclamation points in margins, how many addendums of my own written in tiny scrawl appear in its fading pages.

Heart of Buddhist Meditation: The Buddha's Way of Mindfulness Details

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From Reader Review Heart of Buddhist Meditation: The Buddha's Way of Mindfulness for online ebook

Nathan says

One of the better introductions to meditations. It lays the foundation for the mindset of what meditation should be. Yet it's frustrating at times because it frequently hints at what is to come when one attains higher levels of enlightenment, without really laying out the path.

Then again maybe the fault is in me, the reader, expecting that a book read on evenings and weekends can be a substitute for devoted monastic life.

Leon M says

I read "The Heart of Buddhist Meditation" because Erich Fromm repeatedly mentions and recommends the book in his various works from "To Have or To Be" to "The Art of Being".

Author's writing books on meditation always have a hard job because meditation is something so inherently practical that, actually, you can only really learn about it by doing it. "The Heart of Buddhist Meditation" has an even more difficult job because it focuses on the theoretical underpinnings of the satipatthna meditation and not so much on practical advice. It does a good job, however, at explaining what meditation is all about.

I have to warn the uninformed reader, though, that the book presupposes at least a minimal acceptance of spiritual ideals and it not one of those "meditation as an aid for relaxation is really cool let's get started"-kind of flashy meditation books that might be found in the self-help section of the nearest airport book shop. If you are prepared for a decidedly spiritual approach to the subject, however, this is the book to read!

So, let's see, what did I actually learn from reading this book?

The goal of mindfulness is the development of the mind for its daily tasks as well as the highest aim of deliverance from greed, hatred and delusion. This can be achieved by the two practices of "bare attention" and "clear comprehension", the latter being the active equivalent of the "bare attention" cultivated in meditation sessions applied to the daily life. "Bare attention" refers to the idea of noticing sensations without words and can be thought of as an artificial prolonging of the first stages of perception (pre-associative thinking), only on a higher level. Cultivating "bare attention" will eventually lead to the realization that change is incessant and that the ego is a mere creation of impersonal processes. How is mindfulness cultivated? You sit down and pay "bare attention" to your breathing.

All in all, I think this book was a good addition to "Mindfulness in Plain English" as it extended on the theoretical underpinnings only touched upon in that book. For people interested in serious **practice** of meditation (and I think that is the most important part of it), I would still rather recommend "Mindfulness in Plain English".

Robin Morris says

Simply the best book on Meditation I have found. Not for the beginner, but for someone who wants more insight into the process.

Brendan says

one of the better commentaries on the sattipatthana sutta i've read; the writing is clear and concise, geared somewhere in the middle ground between hardcore buddhist scholar and curious neophyte. if you've had at least an introduction to sutta-based meditation systems (vipassana, insight, etc.), this is worthwhile reading to deepen both your understanding of the technique and its connection to scriptural buddhist teaching.

Phillip Moffitt says

This is an excellent, in-depth description of mindfulness practice and its benefits. It includes a concise explanation of clear comprehension, which is the kind of mindfulness you use in the course of your daily life. It also presents an easily understandable explanation of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness.

Keegan says

I read this because I am a sheep (it's on Sam Harris' recommended booklist). Best book on meditation I've ever read. I have this problem where I only believe things I read in books, so no matter how many times Shugen tells us to "maintain the thread of concentration" through sesshin, I don't listen. But I listen to Nyanaponika Thera.

I just spent three days in an empty room, and I couldn't have been peachier. I am totally enthused to rock out the last four months at ZMM.

Erik Steevens says

I like to use a sentence from the book that speaks for itself: "Satipatthana is free from dogmas, from reliance on 'divine revelations', or any external authority in matters spiritual. Satipatthana relies only on first-hand knowledge as furnished by the direct vision of one's own experience." (p.93)

Jmp says

Quite scholarly.

Katie says

I received this book for free as part of a Goodreads giveaway.

So glad to find out I won this book, and can't wait to start reading! I'll update this with a review once I finish.

Nyilinset007 says

how to read

Craig Shoemake says

A must read, foundational text for understanding satipatthana--the four foundations of mindfulness (aka vipassana). In fact, I might almost say if you've got this and put it to work, it will be a long time before you need anything else. Highly recommended.

Andrew says

Loved this. I wish it was the second or third book on Buddhism I read rather than the first but I still learned a ton. Little difficult to read due to language but still great.

Leah says

I keep re-reading this one.

Reid says

An excellent exegesis of the Satipatthana Sutta. Thera has a vast experience to draw on and a very wise and specific knowledge of this sutta. Having said that, it would probably not be very interesting to those who are not familiar with Buddhist writings; he can be more than just a bit esoteric at times. But if you are interested in this sort of thing, there are, to my knowledge, few better guides.

Alex Hasha says

This book is more difficult than most of the Buddhist books I've been reading. It takes a decidedly theoretical approach both in content and tone. However, it introduced me to some useful concepts, such as cultivating an attitude of "Bare Attention" to whatever arises in your mind, without adding extra judgments. If judgment

arises, you simply try to notice that with Bare Attention.
