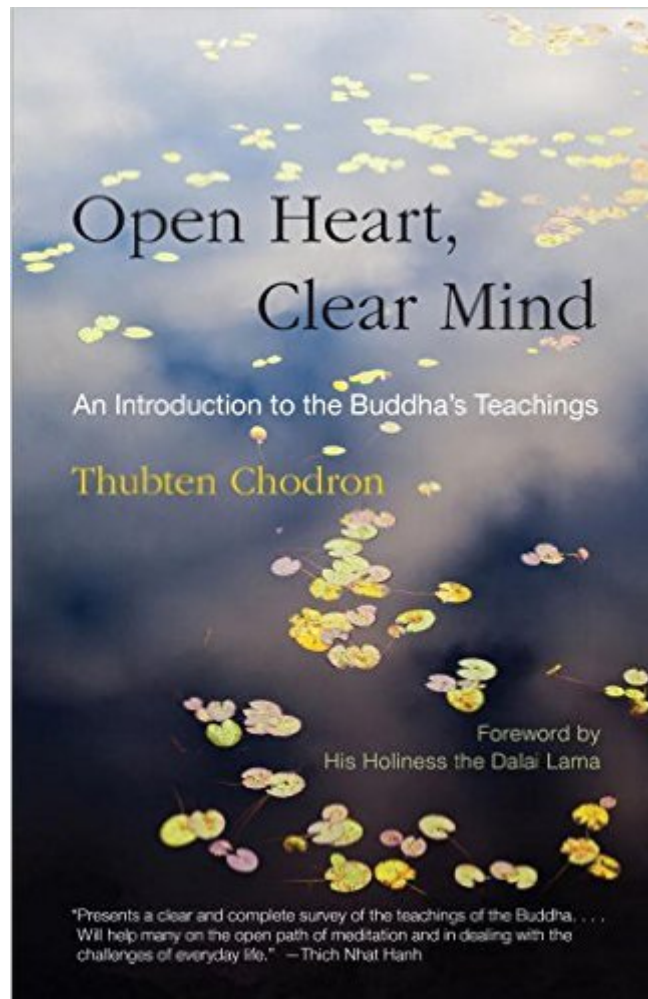


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Open Heart, Clear Mind: An Introduction To The Buddha's Teachings



Synopsis

This practical introduction to Buddhism focuses on the application of Buddhist psychology to modern life. Thubten Chodron, an American Buddhist nun, presents the basic points of this path for understanding ourselves and improving the quality of our lives. In a straightforward style and with warmth and humor, Chodron gives us the fundamental points of the Buddha's teaching on transforming habitual attitudes and realizing our full human potential.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is the kind of book a person cherishes forever. It explains in plain English the basic truths in Buddhist philosophy and psychology. It's written from a uniquely American voice, that of a California-born woman who spent much of the last 20 years in serious study from the greatest Tibetan teachers in the modern age. The author treats the subject (human suffering and the path from chaos to peace), with agility and grace. We are told in very readable and down-to-earth prose some timeless and practical lessons that immediately calm a troubled mind and give deep food for thought - ultimately to be used on the spiritual journey to enlightenment. I confess that I'm hooked on Buddhism and that this book hits on all the most powerful themes. For a non-Buddhist this book is ideal in its simplicity, clarity and pragmatic approach to the subject. If you consider the book in context of everyday life, there is no doubt that you can make progress, first in decreasing your own suffering and ultimately toward developing your own self confident compassion and wisdom. The best thing about it is it's plain-spoken and pragmatic approach. There is nothing mystical in this Buddhist guide, which is, ultimately, its true strength.

Chodron Thubten's book was recommended to me as a good book to gain a basic understanding of Buddhism. It is that but it is also a book that has helped me keep my life on an even keel. I read it quickly and then I read it again. I now keep it with me and on the many occasions when I have to wait for one of my children, I read a few paragraphs, a few pages or a few chapters. I've bought two more copies for friends and I expect I'll continue to do that. Not all will understand or appreciate the book but for those who do, it will be a blessing.

Amazing book that breaks down the core beliefs of Tibetan Buddhism. Chodron makes wonderful analogies regarding how you can deal with anger, have compassion, and be happy. Her writing style is very easy to read. The book stays with you long after reading it... it is like a breath of fresh air. I thoroughly enjoyed it.

This book, written in a flowing conversational style, has 7 sections: an introduction, an extremely fine rendition of Buddhist psychology-aimed at human emotions, the "current situation" on cyclic existence/karma, the future-Buddhahood, the path to take, the past-brief Buddhist history; & conclusion. Overall, it's a very fine introduction to basic Buddhism & a terrific companion to Ven. Chodron's Q&A "Buddhism for Beginners" & "Working with Anger." While the author is a Gelugpa Tibetan Buddhist Bhikshuni (ordained nun), the book is more generic. The pp. 25-80 psychology portion is convincing: e.g. p. 40: "The sources of the pain & confusion are our own biased projections & the selfish expectations we've placed on others," but goes a bit far, stating p. 77: "all problems arise from the self-cherishing attitude." Later sections present std. Buddhist doctrines, dogmas, mythology, & terminology-very different from the psychology section. For example, as I read Websters, "kindness" implies intention; while one can be grateful to another for some benefit, an unintended benefit is not a "kindness." Similarly, p. 161 the discourse on emptiness ignores the mixed definition of "cracker"--Websters says it must be baked, it is not simply the sum of its parts + synergy is possible. She has some questionable (though not unusual) assumptions-saying p. 196 there were no Buddhist wars (but the Gelugpas came to power over the Karmapa via Mongol military strength etc.). The discussion on soul/self is also party line e.g. p. 163: "the Judeo-Christian idea of an eternal, unchanging soul" & p. 166: "the self still exists, but in a gentler & softer way. It's merely a convention, not a real entity." IMO it depends on one's definitions of words used. This basic book doesn't address specific Vajrayana or Mahamudra perspectives, but Ven. Chodron says very valuable things when speaking for herself: p. 206: "Others may not be our relatives, but they are someone's parents & children. They are the same in being parents & children, only the

possessive pronoun describing them is different: 'their' instead of 'our.' Once we recognize the arbitrariness of these labels 'mine' & 'others,' our love & compassion can spread to everyone impartially. In this way, feelings of alienation & barriers between people fall away." I find this observation very useful in developing lovingkindness, compassion, Bodhichitta & Tonglen & p. 209: per Lama Yeshe, "We do whatever we can, with whatever wisdom we have...to the best of our ability. This in itself will be of enormous benefit to others; we don't need to wait until we become Buddhas before we can begin to act."

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