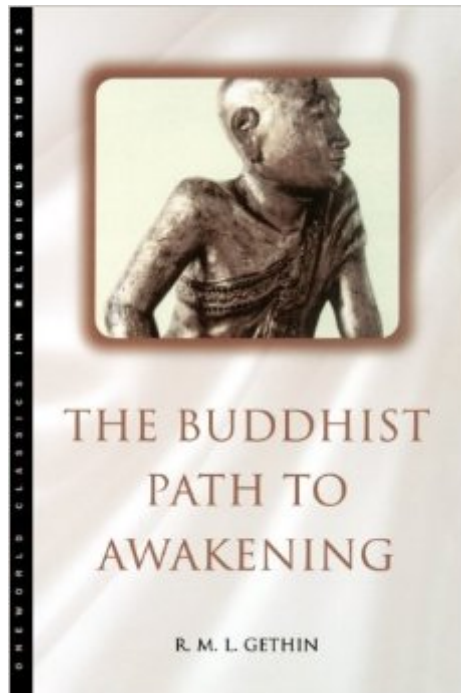


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The Buddhist Path To Awakening (Classics In Religious Studies)



Synopsis

An authoritative and critically acclaimed book, in which the author traces the path of enlightenment as it is found in 37 pieces of Buddhist literature, known as the bodhi-pakkhiya dhamma. The result is a thorough and engrossing piece of work, which provides a unique insight into the nature not only of Buddhism, but also the mystic experience generally.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a masterful work. It contains a thorough discussion of the 37 dhammas that contributes to awakening, according to the Abhidhamma, but based on the teachings in the suttas. Since these dhammas cover all important path factors (plus some repetitions), the subject is huge and highly important to understanding early Buddhism. Gethin does a great job of it and any reader is bound to find much insight to the teachings. He is especially good at discussing the details of important technical terms. If the book has any weakness it is a tendency to put too much trust in the later scholastic (Abhidhamma) interpretations of the teachings. But that is a minor quibble, this is a must read for any serious student of early Buddhism!

One of the delights of studying the Yogacara is discovering the inclusive nature of the Yogacarabhumi-Sastra. As a Mahayanist who took refuge with a Tibetan Lama in 1986 I can say without a doubt the sambhara-marga practices of the First (sravaka) Path namely 'the meditation on

the impurities', (including the famous meditation on the corpse, and functional equivalent of 'the Four Thoughts that Turn the mind'), 'the meditation on the breath' combined with 'the four topics' (which include 'the 37 actors of awakening'), is just the grounding I have seen overlooked for 25 years. No matter what rationale you are given for the effectiveness of waiting for a bolt of insight out of the blue sky to shatter the Blasted Tower of your conceptual mind - working to transform the ground of your character is not a waste of time. That is why I wanted to recommend this book: Gethin, R. M.L. - *The Buddhist Path to Awakening: A Study of the Bodhi-Pakkhiya Dhamma*. Oneworld, 2001. It is profoundly methodical, and whether you view the '37 factors of Enlightenment' as a sequential map of the path, a locator for your mind-qualities at any point in the path, or as the factors needed to be present at the moment of awakening - you will be getting it right. The discipline you get from pursuing this book will actually result in a kind of relaxation - you will have rehearsed a vocabulary of mental-qualities in enough different contexts that they become a music rather than a scaffolding. WARNING: I am not a scholar so I am unable to check his assertions against a solid background of knowing the field. I just got a lot from "moving in" to this book on and off for a month in daily sessions.

A-OK.

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