

Pointing Out the Great Way: The Stages of Meditation in the Mahamudra Tradition

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Many books have been published in recent years on the topic of mahamudra, or meditation on the fundamentally clear nature of the mind. This book is different in the systematic way it draws from a variety of source texts in order to construct a complete, graded path of practice informed by an understanding of the particular obstacles faced by meditators in the West. Dan Brown is a clinical psychotherapist who has also spent much time evaluating the experiences of meditators on longterm retreats. He knows the Tibetan literature on mahamudra meditation and has over thirty years of both personal meditation experience and observation of the experiences of others. He co-wrote, with Ken Wilber and Jack Engler, the book *Transformations in Consciousness*, and he teaches an annual seminar on mahamudra meditation at the Esalen Institute.

Pointing Out the Great Way is a spiritual manual that describes the Tibetan Buddhist meditation known as mahamudra from the perspective of the 'gradual path.' The gradual path is a progressive process of training that is often contrasted to sudden realization. As such, this book contains a step-by-step description of the ways to practice, precise descriptions of the various stages and their intended realizations, and the typical problems that arise along with their remedies. Simply put, mahamudra meditation involves penetrative focus, free of conceptual elaboration, upon the very nature of conscious awareness.

A unique feature of this book is its integrative approach to the stages of mahamudra meditation. A number of works on Buddhist meditation stages in general and mahamudra meditation in particular are already available in English, yet none, single text or commentary on the stages of mahamudra meditation, captures the inner experience of these stages in sufficient detail to convey its richness. This book represents the needed alternative by integrating material from a variety of root texts, practical manuals, and commentaries. Another unique feature of this book is its relational approach. It is intended as a return to the original teacher/student style of teaching meditation, which may be better suited to Western culture than the monastic or retreat style of practice. The book distills and codifies the experiences of many great masters who have traversed the path of meditation to the point of perfect mastery.

Daniel P. Brown is the director of the Center for Integrative Psychotherapy in Newton, Massachusetts, and an associate clinical professor of psychology at Harvard Medical School. Trained in Buddhist philosophy and languages at the University of Chicago and the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he did his dissertation on mahamudra meditation texts, he has maintained close relations with Tibetan teachers of the Gelug, Kagyu, and Nyingma lineages for more than thirty-five years as well as exploring the Theravada mindfulness traditions in Burma and Thailand. The author of fourteen books, including *Transformations of Consciousness*, he lives in Newton, Massachusetts. "Pointing Out the Great Way weaves together insights from a variety of Buddhist root texts, practice manuals, and commentaries, into a step-by-step 'gradual path' description of the methods of Mahamudra practice, descriptions of the various stages of practice and associated experiences, as well as common obstacles and their antidotes. The text is dense but surprisingly readable and contains a helpful introduction, elaborate footnotes, and an extensive glossary and index." Source: Mandala

"I rejoice and congratulate [Dan Brown] for this grand achievement, and I rejoice and congratulate the readers, who will find by working through and living with this monumental book, a real pointing out of the gentle, 'great embrace' that this beautiful reality holds them in right now, whatever else they think might be going on." Author: Robert A.F. Thurman

"A clinical psychotherapist and meditation instructor, Daniel Brown has spent more than thirty years studying and translating the vast Tibetan literature on the Mahamudra system of meditation. In Pointing Out the Great Way, he expertly guides the reader through each stage of the path in plain English, referencing the classic sources on Mahamudra sparingly and in a manner that supports his presentation without confusing it. The resulting manual is a valuable synthesis of more than a thousand years of meditation instructions filtered through the author's understanding of Tibetan and Western ways of describing the mind." Source: Buddhadharma: The Practitioner's Quarterly

Other Books

Words on Cassette, 2002.

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