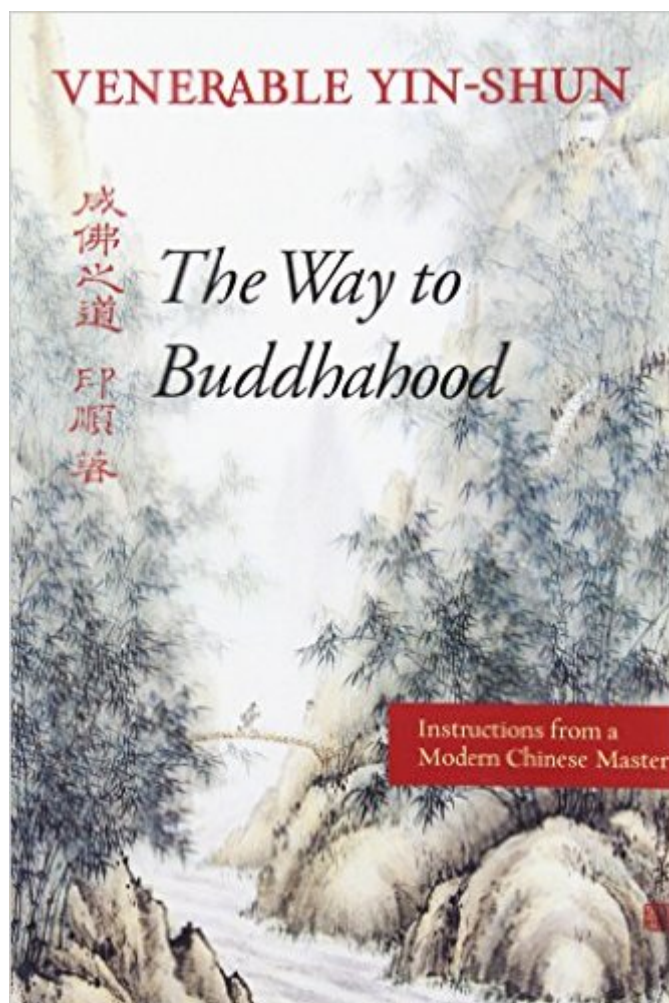


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The Way To Buddhahood: Instructions From A Modern Chinese Master



Synopsis

The Way to Buddhahood is a compendium of two thousand years of Chinese practice in assimilating and understanding the Buddhist experience of enlightenment. It is the first in-depth explanation of Chinese Buddhism by Yin-shun, the greatest living master of the Chinese scholar-monk tradition. The master's broad scope not only includes the traditional Chinese experience but also ideas from the Tibetan monastic tradition. This is one of those rare classic books that authentically captures an entire Buddhist tradition between its covers.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Yin-Shun's work provides a resource to look deeply into the tradition of Buddhism. In only a few hundred pages, he outlines the reason for seeking refuge in the teachings of the Buddha, fundamental views of Buddhism, varying traditions of Buddhist doctrine, the different methods of practice, and uses countless examples to illuminate the insight that all the teachings as a whole can bring. In a straightforward and impartial manner, Yin-Shun clearly writes of the strengths and weaknesses of varying approaches to the Buddhadharma, the beneficial effects of practice and harmful effects of common misconceptions and misguided practice. It seems that every corner of Buddhism is touched upon, to provide solid direction for the interested person or the advanced practitioner. His writings are so clear and deep, that I held my head in awe of the understanding and compassion of the Dharma. If anything, this book can inspire a sense of humility and respect for the suffering of ourselves and others, of which we can learn to liberate with the direct experience of

realization guided by the helpful teachings of compassionate leaders like Yin-Shun.

This is one of the very best books on Buddhism in English. When it comes to East Asian Buddhism, most of the books in English present a watered down Buddhism that mystifies more than it illuminates. This book, on the other hand, represents years of meticulous study and practice, and provides a really solid grounding for understanding the fundamentals of the Mahayana tradition as it developed in East Asia. Master Yinshun was concerned with finding the common ground between the various practices and sects that emerged (Pure Land, Chan, Tiantai, etc.) and showing how these different teachings, whose proponents were sometimes at odds with each other, can be harmonized. In this, Yinshun not only re-asserted the fundamentals of Buddhist tradition, but brought new insights into how the philosophical systems- madhyamaka, yogacara, tathagatagarbha- can be integrated. The book is systematic- there's no major Mahayana idea that isn't discussed; at the same time it's easy to read. While its comprehensiveness might bewilder newcomers, it would make a fine second book.

I once was at a monk's residence for instruction and was admiring the nearly two hundred hardbound volumes that constitute the Chinese canon and extended canon. When I told the monk that I would like to get my own set one day, he waved off the idea as completely unnecessary and gave me a copy of this book. In this book, Master Yunshun really does manage to compress the knowledge of the Chinese cannon into a single beautiful poem and a very comprehensive commentary.

This is an encyclopedic work on Chinese Buddhism, covering all schools. The author, Yin Shun is a Chinese monk who has studied many traditions, not just Chinese (he draws heavily upon Tsongkhapa), and is a well known modernizer. This is the best English-language (and one of the few) overviews of East Asian Buddhism. The book is more on theory than practice, and Pure Land and esoteric may feel left out. The content is there, but I find that I have to work at it to understand it. Why? The translation. First, I find the terminology awkward (extinction? annihilated? transmigrations?). As I've read quite a number of other dharma books, I have to mentally shift gears when reading this. The text is also over-formal and circuitous, reflecting the nature of the original Chinese, not the free-flowing and directness of modern vernacular English. Something gets lost in the rhetorical flourishes in translation. Also, there is a lot of hype - I'm more of the "don't tell me, show me" mindset. For more those who have been grappling with the teachings for a while, then the

end of the book is for you, which covers Madhyamaka (Empty Nature Mere Name), Yogacara (False Imagination Mere Consciousness) and Tathagatagarbha (Truly Eternal Mere Mind).

Venerable Master Yinshun has read the entire Tripitaka three times (all of the Buddhist Sutras, Vinayas, and Sastras). He details in this book all of the essential points, drawing from all of the different schools, methodologies, history and his vast knowledge of the Buddha's teachings. This book is used in the Buddhist schools as standard reading though out the world. If you want to understand the true meaning of Buddhism, this is a book to read. Most colleges and universities that have Buddhism courses are only teaching the Western stereotype of what they think Buddhism is and is incorrect.

This is clearly written by a leading scholastic, but it wasn't quite my cup of tea. It is quite polemical in many places regarding the superiority of Buddhism over other teachings. I think it is very much written for the scholastic and trainee monk, so if that is your aspiration, you will doubtlessly benefit from it. But from a non-sectarian Western Buddhist perspective, it is a bit specialised.

This is an excellent encyclopedic coverage of Buddhism. There are hundreds of sutras that explain Buddhism as taught by the historical Buddha (born 623 B.C.), so one can get excellent overview of the Buddhism in this book.

Best book on Buddhism, I have encountered. It is commentary, mostly from the Mahayana prospective which is the largest school of Buddhism by far. The wisdom of this master monk is stunning to me, I will add to my comments after I get through the whole book -- but the 5 stars will remain with out a doubt.

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