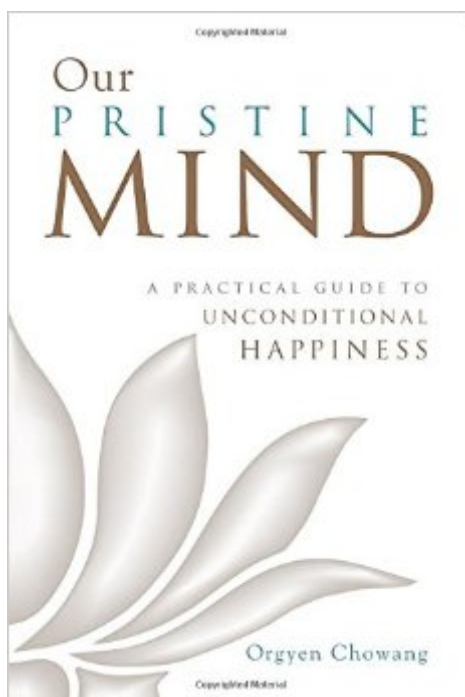


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Our Pristine Mind: A Practical Guide To Unconditional Happiness



Synopsis

A Tibetan Buddhist master shows us how to go beyond mindfulness to journey deep into ultimate happiness and transform every area of our lives. The true nature of our mind is brilliant, clear, and joyful. But we don't experience this reality amid the swirl of stresses, thoughts, and emotions of day-to-day life. *Our Pristine Mind* is a practical guide to uncovering our naturally comfortable state of mind and reconnecting with the unconditional happiness that is already within us. Using straightforward, accessible language, Orgyen Chowang Rinpoche leads us through the path of Pristine Mind meditation, a practice from the profound teachings known as Dzogchen. This book presents the entire journey of meditation, from the very beginning all the way to the complete happiness of enlightenment. It is a realistic, natural process that can be practiced and experienced by anyone.

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Customer Reviews

I have been involved with Buddhist methods of spirituality for over 30 years..in that time I have explored all three phases of Buddhism: hinayana, Mahayana, and tantric Buddhism...This book addresses in the most clear form that I have ever witnessed the practice of Dzogchen, a mind essence meditation technique that comes from the Nyingma Tibetan Buddhist order...I have read countless books on this subject...and none can compare with Orgyen Chowangs book!! It is a difficult subject to address, and is explained here in a manner so extraordinary that reading it is a life changing experience...A second Tibetan Buddhist mind essence meditation method is mahamudra, and associated with the Kagyu order of Tibetan Buddhism..I believe it is much the same as

Dzogchen, in its essence, but I have never encountered an exposition of mahamudra as clear as Orgyens writing on Dzogchen. Namaste Orgyen Chowang!!! You have given a priceless gift to all sentient beings!!!!

In his opening remarks Orgyen Chowang shares his concerns as a native Tibetan with the lingual difficulties inherent in transitioning the Buddha's teaching from east to west. His concern is well taken. Many of the teachings translated to date seem awkward, burdened by the transition from the Tibetan language and Tibetan rituals. So how does Orgyen Chowang's new text explaining Dzogchen fare? It deserves accolades. The author promises a "complete" guide to Dzogchen, a practice considered the highest practice of Buddhism and capable of bringing enlightenment in a single lifetime. It is systematically explained without awkward linguistics or foreign ritual and certainly no requirement of guru worship. The essence of the teaching shines clearly and brightly. The author summarizes the differences between pristine mind and ordinary mind, then lays out in some detail why we can never rely on our ordinary mind to provide anything but temporary happiness. He then details how to achieve pristine mind, and then how to maintain it. You won't hit any speed bumps from this seamlessly flowing writing. Mid- book the author outlines the principle meditation practice for pristine awareness as instructed by Padmasambhava; (1) Don't follow the past, (2) Don't anticipate the future, (3) Remain in the present moment, and (4) Leave your mind alone. The author frequently returns to this practice and expands on it as a useful method both in and out of formal meditation. He also discusses other meditation methods including the mindfulness of breathing as useful at times in establishing the tranquil mind necessary to set the stage to engage the pristine mind. The author is taking us beyond theory into practical application. In the last few years the number of dzogchen texts and commentaries translated from Tibetan has increased exponentially, but most are still laden with tradition. This text has completely transformed itself for the western pallet and it's a very enjoyable way to feast.

Our Pristine Mind is a unique and wonderful book with a very unusual, deliberate and organic structure. Starting with the stylized lotus designs on its front and back covers unfolding to make a flower whole, and the telling first word "Our" in the book's title, it is very rich and engaging and needs to be read from beginning to end. Buddhist teachings need to be understood in the context of Buddhist practice. Buddhist practice needs to be understood in terms of the state and nature of our minds and lives. At some point, in order for practice to develop, faith in

the teachers, teachings and goals of Buddhist practice must be engendered. Learning, faith and practice

modern Buddhist books in the West, facing new and curious but sometimes skeptical, busy and hassle-averse audiences, have to find a way to bridge these divides. Our Pristine Mind blazes trail. The book, written throughout in clear and modern English, starts out with a familiar thematic "how-to" approach. First comes "Our" human predicament, the problematic consequences of having a mind, and knowing it, of living with and at the mercy of uncontrollable thoughts, emotions and all kinds of "mental events." This leads to the subject of "changing our minds" through the practice of meditation. Next, the simple, straightforward techniques of pristine mind meditation are taught. Then, over the course of several key chapters, the stages of development of proficiency in this practice, from beginning to advanced, are described experientially in exquisite detail. These are depictions that the author, Orgyen Chowang Rinpoche, can offer because he is a meditation master who lives these things. How does it feel to think like this? What is the difference from our normal thinking? How does this change our lives? How does this affect the environment in which we live? This is where this book really starts to surprise and really takes off. I think most readers who have some experience in meditation will be able to understand, believe and relate to the experiences described as the early stages of development of pristine mind meditation. We are inspired that we can do that, or are close to that. But, if we are honest, we may have to admit that the higher stages of the practice sound great, but are beyond our present personal reality. At the same time, because of the skillful way that the higher stages are shown to be a direct continuum of what comes before, these stages do not seem foreign or incredible at all. On the contrary, they seem at hand. This is an inspiring revelation for the reader. Faith is elicited and hope is taught. At the same time the author, Orgyen Chowang Rinpoche really comes to light here as a teacher, explaining, showing something to us that we did not know before. He is indeed part of the "our" in Our Pristine Mind, a person, having a mind like us, and practicing meditation. But there is separation in that he has gone farther than we have. So now the atmosphere of the book expands, not by exalted title, by executive order or hyperbole, but organically. Positive humility, the humility of accepting the person or even the possibility of a teacher, allows for the emergence of honest questioning, so honest questions emerge. How to get there? Reflecting this, the book's next section beautifully answers questions, such as "the purpose of it all," "going beyond mindfulness," "overcoming obstacles," "don't give up," "student-teacher relationship" and "dying with pristine mind." And goes on to introduce the need to develop a "good heart," how to live our lives, by way of the four cardinal virtues of

boundless love, compassion, rejoicing and equanimity, as the concomitants of meditation practice in daily life. Now, surprisingly, the book shifts again to higher ground, from mind and meditation to the subject of enlightenment itself, pointing out that the changes that pristine mind meditation brings about *are* the process of awakening our enlightened nature. Here, a formal, authoritative explanation (based on the teaching of Mipham Rinpoche's Dzogchen text Spacious Path of Bliss) of the meaning of the word *enlightenment* is presented in clear and unequivocal terms. Finally, the connection between us, *our minds*, *mental change* and the blossoming of enlightenment, undistorted, blissful and true beyond change, is made explicit. This is magical, practical, revelatory. And so Our Pristine Mind concludes with a prayer of poetic aspiration to Guru Rinpoche, Padmasambhava, that this may be accomplished. I too hope this may be accomplished, and that this review encourages people to connect with this wonderful book, its author and its and its teachings.

I am a clinical psychologist who has studied the mind for over forty years. This book and Rinpoche's teachings have been the most exciting and illuminating experience of the mind I have ever had. Western psychoanalysis gives us more freedom to move about within our mind. These ancient teachings show us from a different perspective how to be free from the untoward effects of that mind itself. What Rinpoche has gone through to bring them to the West is an enormous tribute both to him and to the teachings. I have gotten to know him well and I have never met a more dependable, honest, and kind human mind. Nor have I ever met a smarter psychologist. In this book, you have twenty-five hundred years of wisdom and practice clearly explained by a loving and brilliant man.

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