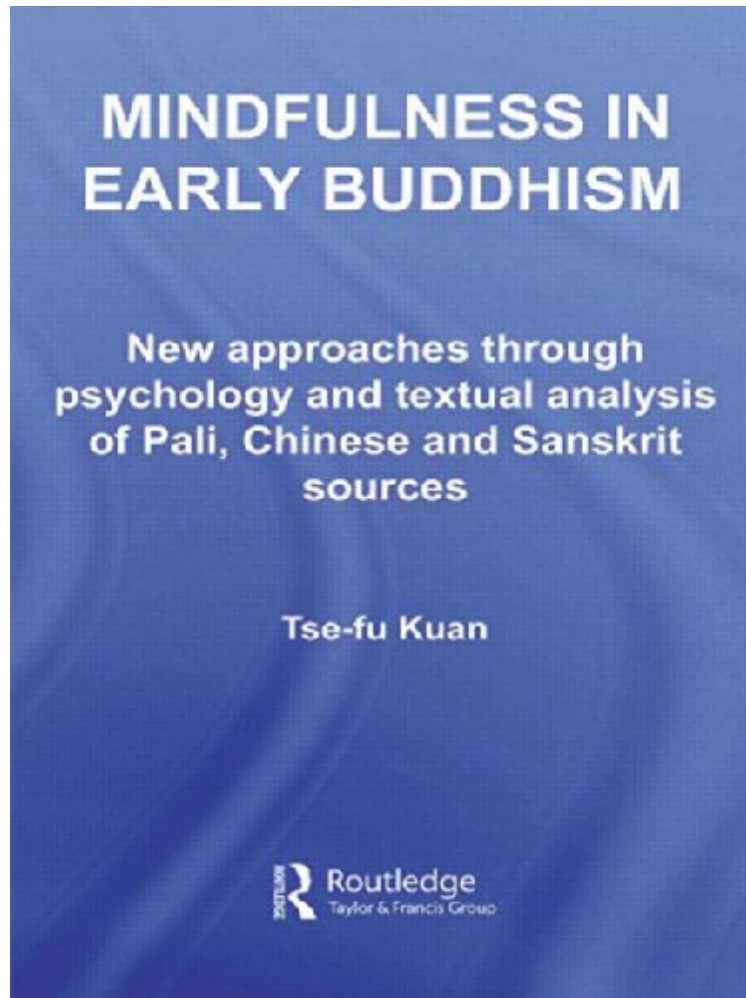


[Free read ebook] Mindfulness in Early Buddhism: New Approaches through Psychology and Textual Analysis of Pali, Chinese and Sanskrit Sources (Routledge Critical Studies in Buddhism)

Mindfulness in Early Buddhism: New Approaches through Psychology and Textual Analysis of Pali, Chinese and Sanskrit Sources (Routledge Critical Studies in Buddhism)

Tse-fu Kuan

**Download PDF | ePub | DOC | audiobook | ebooks*



DOWNLOAD



READ ONLINE

#324370 in Books 2011-09-16Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.25 x 6.25 x .75l, .94 #File Name: 0415501474256 pages | File size: 65.Mb

Tse-fu Kuan : Mindfulness in Early Buddhism: New Approaches through Psychology and Textual Analysis of Pali, Chinese and Sanskrit Sources (Routledge Critical Studies in Buddhism) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Mindfulness in Early Buddhism: New Approaches through Psychology and Textual Analysis of Pali, Chinese and Sanskrit Sources (Routledge Critical Studies in Buddhism):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. great!By Thiago SilvaI'd put this as a required reading for the

serious buddhist practitioner, along with other modern works such as Hamilton's Identity and Experience and Analayo's books. These works help immensely on clarifying the concepts developed in the suttas, which are rich and full of nuances. In this volume, through textual analysis of the early suttas (of the pali, chinese and sanskrit collections), the author sheds light in a broad spectrum of uses of the term sati (usually translated as "mindfulness").⁴

of 4 people found the following review helpful. Getting closer to the original meaning and function of sati and satipathana

By wtThis book is a revised version of the author's Ph.D. thesis written under the supervision of Prof. R.F. Gombrich at the University of Oxford. Being a Ph.D. thesis, there is the inevitable lengthy considerations of issues such as validity of source materials, relative dating and contamination of texts, and minute points of comparison between versions of the same texts. Meditators who hope to enhance their practice through reading this book will have to be prepared to wade through (or skim) sections filled with dense academic points in order to get to those key points that have implications for practice. What are some of the implications for practice? Well, Dr. Kuan puts forward the point that sati (mindfulness) has an important role in guiding *saa* (apperception) and *vedana* (feeling), keeping them on wholesome tracks and preventing them from going astray into conceptual proliferation and emotional agitation. Sati thus helps to develop wholesome processes of cognition and an emotional equanimity that enables the accurate seeing of things as they are, which facilitates liberation. Kuan also identifies 4 different kinds of mindfulness with different functions ranging from simple awareness to the deliberate forming of inspiring conceptions. Furthermore, he critically engages with the popular teaching and conception in contemporary Theravada Buddhism that sati (mindfulness) and satipathana (establishments of mindfulness) are only associated with vipassana, and that satipathana-vipassana is the "only path" to liberation. By comparing texts such as the Satipathana Sutta, Anapanasati Sutta and Kayagata Sati Sutta from the Pali Theravada canon with each other, with their counterparts from other early Buddhist schools preserved in the Chinese Agamas, and occasionally with pre-Buddhist Upanishads, Kuan demonstrates that 1) mindfulness and satipathana were equally intrinsic to the cultivation of samatha and vipassana in the earliest strata of the Buddhist canon, 2) the Satipathana Sutta is a later compilation made up of fragments from other suttas including the Kayagata Sati Sutta, and that "kaya" did not originally mean "body" but "sentient being capable of consciousness", and 3) that the "ekayano maggo" used to refer to satipathana does not really mean "only way" but "all-inclusive path where various strands of practice converge." Dr. Kuan's analysis thus calls into question aspects of the current understanding of Buddhist meditation terms and pathways derived from Theravada Buddhism, which is the only surviving school of early Buddhism we have today. He challenges the supposed Theravadin de-valuation of samatha and jhana cultivation, and the tendency to disassociate sati from samatha/jhana and to identify sati solely with vipassana and insight. His criticism is generally valid except that it fails to account for the fact that Theravada Buddhism should not be taken as a homogeneous entity, and that modern Theravada Buddhism encompasses a spectrum of approaches towards meditation that includes both samatha and vipassana to differing degrees. In fact, Dr. Kuan's evidence from the early Buddhist canon and his arguments support those strands already existing in modern Theravada Buddhism that emphasize both samatha and vipassana in practice, for example, the approaches taught by Buddhadasa Bhikku, Pa-Auk Sayadaw and Ajahn Brahm.

Dr Kuan's analysis of the Anapanasati Sutta lends scholarly support to the view that jhanas are central in the first 12 steps of Anapanasati, and that Anapanasati is a perfect example of how samatha and vipassana works together to lead to enlightenment. The only thing is, Dr. Kuan might not have practical experience in Anapanasati meditation, and his sole reliance on textual and semantic correspondences leads to certain oversights in his interpretation. Dr Kuan concludes for example that the first tetrad leads to the 4th jhana, the second tetrad to cessation, the third tetrad to the 8th jhana and the 4th tetrad to the 7th jhana. He comes to these conclusions firstly by interpreting the word "calming" (*passambhaya*m) in the fourth step of the 1st and 2nd tetrads as "have been calmed" (*patippasadha*). Logic alone will show that "calming" does not have to be the same as "calmed" - the first is a process, the second is the culmination of the process. In fact, the first and second tetrads do not even have to culminate in jhana or absorption, because they are steps LEADING to it (exemplified by the word "calming" instead of "have calmed"). So, these tetrads can denote access concentration prior to jhana instead of absorption concentration which is jhana, or cessation which is *Nibbana*. Secondly, Dr. Kuan's analysis of the third tetrad is particularly weak as he does not address the first step of the tetrad, can only infer relying on one other sutta that gladdening the mind and concentrating the mind relate to jhana, and that liberating the mind relates to jhana, but is unable to shed light on what these 4 steps actually signify in practice. This can be because the suttas make no explicit mention of the *nimitta* (sign) in relation to jhana. In actual practice however, "perceiving the mind", "gladdening the mind", "concentrating the mind" and "liberating the mind" might have everything to do with the perception of the *nimitta* and the entry into full absorption or jhana, a process that is discussed in detail in the *Vishuddhi-magga*. This part of Dr. Kuan's analysis shows up the inevitable limitations for practice of an approach that is guided solely by intellect and based only on the textual study of the "earliest strata of the canon." Such very minor caveats aside, this work of early Buddhist scholarship has a very important contribution to make to the practice and teaching of (early Buddhist/Theravada) meditation; it deserves to be read widely and its points adapted for practice. I recommend this book highly for scholars and students of early Buddhism, teachers of samatha-vipassana and the serious practitioner of Buddhist meditation.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The True, Original Practice of Mindfulness

By Carter WoodPerhaps the most helpful book

I've ever read on Buddhism. Mindfulness and its place in the path was something I never understood because modern Buddhism's interpretation of it is different from what the historical Gotama Buddha taught. This book does a wonderful job explaining the original practice of mindfulness and its place in the path, and it all makes 1000 times more sense than the modern schools. For example, Mindfulness is not just "present moment awareness" or "bare attention" as the modern schools teach. How does present moment awareness or bare attention overcome one's greed, hate, and delusion? It didn't make sense. But this book shows, through rigorous scholarship, that the original practice of mindfulness was more about proper awareness, not present awareness. Forming correct conceptions of things (like impermanence), and then apperceiving according to those conceptions (perceiving things according to the doctrine of impermanence), and other things like that. It also explains the role of the jhanas in the path and how they relate to mindfulness, which again makes 1000 times more sense than anything taught today. I would recommend this book to anyone with an interest in the benefits Buddhism has to offer who is also willing to put up with a lot of dense scholarship and pali/sanskrit terminology.

This book identifies what is meant by sati (smṛti), usually translated as mindfulness, in early Buddhism, and examines its soteriological functions and its central role in the early Buddhist practice and philosophy. Using textual analysis and criticism, it takes new approaches to the subject through a comparative study of Buddhist texts in Pali, Chinese and Sanskrit. It also furnishes new perspectives on the ancient teaching by applying the findings in modern psychology. In contemporary Buddhism, the practice of mindfulness is zealously advocated by the Theravada tradition, which is the only early Buddhist school that still exists today. Through detailed analysis of Theravada's Pali Canon and the four Chinese Agamas - which correspond to the four main Nikayas in Pali and belong to some early schools that no longer exist - this book shows that mindfulness is not only limited to the role as a method of insight (vipassana) meditation, as presented by many Theravada advocates, but it also has a key role in serenity (samatha) meditation. It elucidates how mindfulness functions in the path to liberation from a psychological perspective, that is, how it helps to achieve an optimal cognitive capability and emotional state, and thereby enables one to attain the ultimate religious goal. Furthermore, the author argues that the well-known formula of ekaayano maggo, which is often interpreted as the only way, implies that the four satipa.t.thaanas (establishments of mindfulness) constitute a comprehensive path to liberation, and refer to the same as kaayagataa sati, which has long been understood as mindfulness of the body by the tradition. The analysis shows that kaayagataa sati and the four satipa.t.thaanas are two different ways of formulating the teaching on mindfulness according to different schemes of classification of phenomena.

About the Author Tse-fu Kuan is an Assistant Professor at the College of General Studies, Yuan Ze University, Taiwan. He is interested in Indian Buddhism and is the author of *An Introduction to Samatha and Vipasyana of the Mahayana* (co-authored with Ven. Dr Huimin Bhikkhu, Taipei: Dharma Drum Culture, 1997) and several articles in leading journals including the *Journal of Indian Philosophy*.