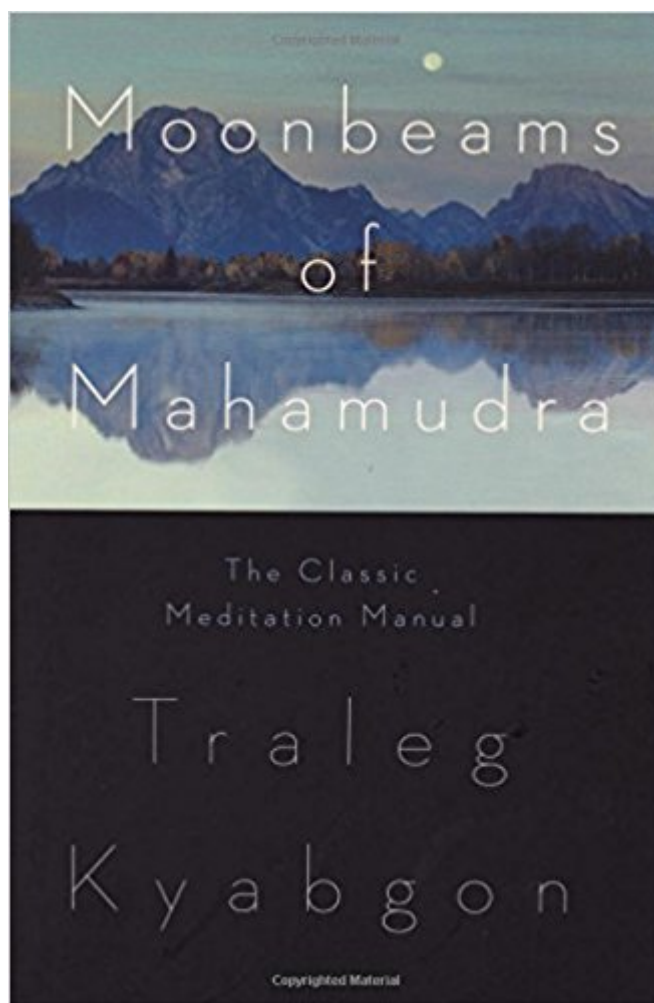


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Moonbeams Of Mahamudra: The Classic Meditation Manual



Synopsis

The Mahamudra path of direct perception is the pre-eminent method of the Dakpo Kagyu tradition. This definitive manual systematically explains its approach to meditation, complete with definitions, pointing-out instructions, and advice for the many pitfalls and errors that beset practitioners. Central to these errors is our failure to acknowledge the difference between understanding and experience, and our tendency to fixate on meditative experiences and mistake them for realization. This translation conveys the freshness and immediacy of these instructions. Belonging to the generation of teachers to first bring Tibetan Buddhism across cultures, Traleg Kyabgon (1955-2012) presents these Mahamudra instructions in a direct, relaxed, and intimate style.

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Customer Reviews

"A beautiful, profound, exquisite exposition of the consummate Buddhist path. . . . I highly recommend it for all individuals interested in the Great Liberation." — Ken Wilber author, *A Brief History of Everything* "[Kyabgon] was able to teach westerners in English in a way that is rare and important. *Moonbeams of Mahamudra* . . . is one of the most important texts on Mahamudra meditation." — Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche, author, *Essentials of Mahamudra*

Traleg Kyabgon (1955–2012) is the founder of the Kagyu E-Vam Buddhist Institute, which is headquartered in Melbourne, with a major practice center in upstate New York and a practice community in New York City. He taught extensively at universities and Buddhist centers in the U.S.,

Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Southeast Asia, and is the author of such books as *Essence of Buddhism and Karma: What It Is, What It Isn't, Why It Matters*.

Words from Traleg Rinpoche are of great blessing. This translation came many years too late but many lifetimes early. Rinpoche's words took down some cobweb from my mind. Dust off my practice... my new best dharma book.

Traleg Kyabgon Rinpoche was a very gifted author and one of the few tulku's to have a great command of English. I highly recommend this book to all those interested in Mahamudra.

The book *Moonbeams of Mahamudra* by Takpo Tashi Namgyal (1512-1587) is the classic meditation manual for Mahamudra Meditation, including its unique combination of instructions on Tranquility Meditation (Shamata) and Insight Meditation (Vipassana). Although I learned to read a little Tibetan a long time ago, it was never good enough to tackle a book like this. So I have been, up to this point, dependent on the English translation by Lobsang P. Lhalungpa in his book *Mahamudra: The Quintessence of Mind and Meditation* as published by Shambhala Publications, which is an excellent book. Until now, this translation is all that I knew. I am sure that many readers here have had the same experience. I don't have to introduce readers to the Ven. Traleg Kyabgon Rinpoche (the 9th Traleg Tulku), one of the highest lamas in the Karma Kagyu Lineage, his incarnation going back to Saltong Shogam (one of the Three Men of Kham), a student of Gampopa. His untimely death a few years ago was a shock to all of us. Over the last forty or so years, I have had the good fortune to meet many Tibetan rinpoches, most of the Kagyu order, and have many of them visit our dharma center here in Big Rapids, Michigan, and, of course, take teachings from them. This includes Traleg Rinpoche and his wife Felicity. Of all the great teachers that I have met, none has studied Western philosophy, psychology, and literature to the degree that Traleg Rinpoche has. So, I am more than happy to suddenly have two excellent translations of this classic text. My point in posting this mini-review is just to briefly point out how, in my opinion, they differ. If I have to come up with one word as to that difference, it would be that the Traleg Rinpoche translation is more integral. It is very elegantly written, so that everything coheres quite naturally. If you have read Traleg Rinpoche's other works, then you are aware that he really knows (and enjoys) the English language, much as the Ven. Chogyam Trungpa did. This book proves that. The great many quotations in the book from other sources read like the poetry they are. The prose commentaries are equally elegant and easy to read. In fact, the book is quite

magical in the way that it expresses the meaning of this very detailed text. If you ask me if we need another and newer translation of this great classic, my answer is that indeed we do. It's like discovering an entirely new book for me. I can read and understand it! This book is a wonderful addition to those of us studying or practicing the Mahamudra tradition. In a nutshell: I always found this book, in the earlier Lhalungpa translation, very difficult to grasp. I would work at it. The same book in Traleg Rinpoche's translation is simply laid open to my mind, especially the translations of the original-source quotes, which are now sheer poetry. What a brilliant adventure this new translation is! Incidentally, the last time I saw Traleg Rinpoche was in 2004 at the inauguration of a new shrine-room at Thrangu Monastery in Kham, Tibet. I can never forget when Traleg Rinpoche arrived at the monastery. People were lined up along the road as far as one could see (I am told for five miles), all with white scarves which they piled on Rinpoche's car. The car carrying Traleg Rinpoche had to stop every 100 feet or so to remove the scarves, because the driver couldn't see the road. I include a photo taken in 2004 at the opening of the gompa. That is the Ven. Traleg Rinpoche sitting at the far end in, I believe, Mahamudra meditation. It was an awesome experience.

"Moonbeams of Mahamudra: The Classic Meditation Manual" is one of the most highly regarded texts of Tibetan Buddhism, having been called its "most important sacred text" by Drukpa Thuksey Rinpoche (1916-1983) and others. Although a monumental and highly-regarded English translation of this work is already available ("Mahamudra - The Moonlight: The Quintessence of Mind and Meditation" by Lobsang Lhalungpa), as a student and teacher of this path for more than forty-five years, I have found it not to be uncommon to hear from students that the parts of this earlier translation are difficult to understand. I find this new translation to be both remarkably easy to read and highly accurate, with footnotes clarifying important points. It was carried out by Traleg Kyabgon (1955-2012), a very well-known and highly-respected teacher of this tradition, who possessed completely fluent command of both Tibetan and English, and was fully trained in this approach (including under Thuksey Rinpoche.) Encapsulating the wisdom of generations of "great meditators" from ancient India and Tibetan regions, this extensive root text has already proven its worth by serving as "one of the most important meditation manuals" of Tibetan traditions for almost five centuries. It will be of interest to anyone who practices meditation or has an interest in exploring the nature of mind. The manual starts with considering "why we meditate on the nature of mind" and then summarizes the key common elements of Tranquility and Insight meditation as presented in the general Buddhist

sutras. It then moves into a thorough presentation of the treasured, uncommon Mahamudra meditations, including (a) an explanation of Mahamudra and its history, (b) the instructions for practice of its Tranquility and Insight meditations, (c) the essential pointing-out instructions of coemergent mind, thoughts and appearances, (d) guidance on how to recognize and deal with flaws in meditation and (e) the profound "leaping over to confidence" as inseparable from the natural clarity or self-awareness of the nature of mind itself. Finally it teaches us how to (1) bring adversities such as disturbing thoughts and emotions, suffering, disease and fear and facing the process of death, "on to the path" and (2) how to come to understand and practice the renowned four yogas of Mahamudra. If explored systematically and carefully, the practices in this book will prove themselves to be useful guides to self-understanding and self-discovery of the most profound type. In support of doing so, many students may find oral instructions traditionally presented along with the text, to be helpful. An example of these may be found in the book "Essentials of Mahamudra: Looking Directly at the Mind" by Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche. Thrangu Rinpoche and Traleg Rinpoche were true "spiritual brothers" so these teachings serve as a harmonious and illuminating companion to Traleg Kyabgon's oral translation of Dakpo Tashi Namgyal's manual. This splendid translation completes one more essential step in the transmission of Mahamudra teachings to English speaking students in West. A teacher who presents essential Mahamudra teachings, upon doing so, will usually add, "Now that you have received these sacred, treasured teachings, the main thing is to put them to practice." This book makes that possible and provides essential support for successfully doing so. I trust that this text will be a source of inspiration for practice and joy for many generations to come.

great

An excellent book!

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