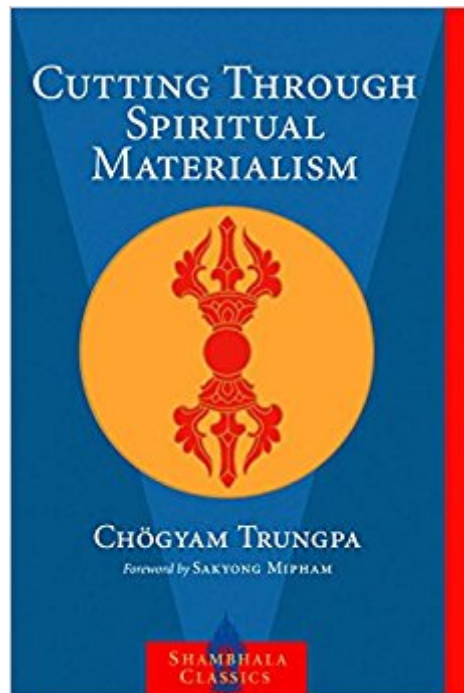




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Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism (Shambhala Classics)



Synopsis

In this modern spiritual classic, the Tibetan meditation master Chögyam Trungpa highlights the commonest pitfall to which every aspirant on the spiritual path falls prey: what he calls spiritual materialism. The universal tendency, he shows, is to see spirituality as a process of self-improvement—the impulse to develop and refine the ego when the ego is, by nature, essentially empty. "The problem is that ego can convert anything to its own use," he said, "even spirituality." His incisive, compassionate teachings serve to wake us up from this trick we all play on ourselves, and to offer us a far brighter reality: the true and joyous liberation that inevitably involves letting go of the self rather than working to improve it. It is a message that has resonated with students for nearly thirty years, and remains fresh as ever today. This new edition includes a foreword by Chögyam Trungpa's son and lineage holder, Sakyong Mipham.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A no-nonsense, firm, but gentle warning note to those of us committed to the so-called path of self-development. Trungpa patiently brings into fresh air the dangerous and destructive method by which we typically approach the notion of spirituality: i.e. as something to be developed, learnt through discipline or otherwise achieved much as we seek to acquire the prizes in our everyday material life. Trungpa's message was ideally suited to that aspect of ourselves - the Eastern mind as much as the Western - which is constantly looking for something external through which we hope to

secure our sense of self and make us happy. Exposing this tendency with great skill and clarity, he outlines a more open, direct and yet infinitely more challenging way to experience Mind beyond the self through correct meditation. Even amongst Buddhist literature this is wonderfully refreshing and at once destroys all hope of bettering oneself and yet points to a far brighter fact: that true liberation inevitably involves letting go of the self rather than working to improve it. The often rather painful process of spiritual awakening is made sense of in this book if we begin to see that our emotions and thoughts cloud our direct experience of reality. An apt message befitting an enlightened being who wore his suits 2 sizes too small as a constant reminder of the irritation and dissatisfaction of the samsaric world.

Chogyam Trungpa, often referred to as one of the few oriental, Buddhist lamas who truly understood the Western mind, here transcends East and West by addressing simply and eloquently, the processes of the mind and ego. Trungpa illuminates how some of these processes can undermine an otherwise wholesome relationship to ourselves and our basic goodness (buddha nature) and our relationship with others. These processes can cause our suffering and the suffering of others and disrupt our efforts to be decent and skillful. The non-theistic text, transmitted by this extraordinarily gifted meditation master, is presented freely without proselytizing and is offered clearly without judgment, blame, guilt, hope or fear. Cutting Through is an important stepping-stone towards developing self-awareness, fearlessness, friendship and loving kindness. A 'must-read' for any diver or warrior of heart and courage. Also recommended are Trungpa's: Shambhala, Path of the Warrior and/or Meditation in Action.

Trungpa lets loose with his cannon in this book. Christianity, Islam, and Judaism are totally false because they are "eternalists". They believe in a permanent soul that just goes on and on and on. Hindus are eternalists. Theravada Buddhists are what Trungpa calls "atomistic eternalists". They don't realize that an ant sees a flower as a jungle. Or a spot of dirt as a mountain. The observer of phenomena is left out. Enlightenment consists of a Self observing impermanence, suffering, and selflessness. The Self is indicated from the fact that the observer is not dealt with. And there is no observer. So Trungpa states that "atomistic materialists" are "half right". Zen speaks of a Big Mind. There is no "Big Mind". And he isn't done with us yet. The spiritual path is horrible! All pain. My collecting of spiritual teachers is called "Spiritual Materialism". My examining self-help books AND doing reviews on them is called "psychological materialism". The last is "Physical Materialism". And Trungpa seems to indicate that this last form of materialism is the least harmful! He states that the

Guru will cut through your suit of armor. He will keep at you until you are exposed naked. You will try and struggle to keep your armor intact. But the Guru will see your pretense and expose whatever you are hiding. He will strip you clean of all three forms of materialism. WOW! Please remember that this book is composed of his lectures to his students. It is simply brilliant beyond belief in its ability to destroy illogical assumptions made by people. It is a classic. Trungpa always had a way of examining the American Mind and striking at our delusions. It is a great read. Like seeing us all excited about our spiritual journey and kicking here and there until we fall. A must read. Buy it and read it three times like I did. Trungpa always cuts. See what you can do with this book. Thank you.

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