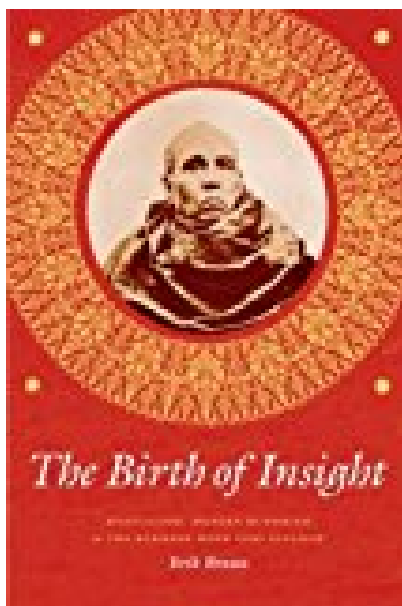


The Birth of Insight Meditation Modern Buddhism and the Burmese Monk Ledi Sayadaw Buddhism and Modernity



BOOK DETAILS

- Author : Erik Braun
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BOOK SYNOPSIS

Insight meditation, which claims to offer practitioners a chance to escape all suffering by perceiving the true nature of reality, is one of the most popular forms of meditation today. The Theravada Buddhist cultures of South and Southeast Asia often see it as the Buddha's most important gift to humanity. In the first book to examine how this practice came to play such a dominant—and relatively recent—role in Buddhism, Erik Braun takes readers to Burma, revealing that Burmese Buddhists in the colonial period were pioneers in making insight meditation indispensable to modern Buddhism. Braun focuses on the Burmese monk Ledi Sayadaw, a pivotal architect of modern insight meditation, and explores Ledi's popularization of the study of crucial Buddhist philosophical texts in the early twentieth century. By promoting the study of such abstruse texts, Braun shows, Ledi was able to standardize and simplify meditation methods and make them widely accessible—in part to protect Buddhism in Burma after the British takeover in 1885. Braun also addresses the question of what really constitutes the “modern” in colonial and postcolonial forms of Buddhism, arguing that the emergence of this type of meditation was caused by precolonial factors in Burmese culture as well as the disruptive forces of the colonial era. Offering a readable narrative of the life and legacy of one of modern Buddhism's most important figures, *The Birth of Insight* provides an original account of the development of mass meditation.

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