

# Juniper

## Finding Our Way

*Awakening the Mind* is Juniper's introduction to Buddhist training. We think of it as a road map or bird's eye view of the terrain. Its opening paragraph says that "Buddhist training is a system for transforming experience by training the mind . . . The Buddhist journey, therefore, is an inner one."

It is this inward orientation that makes the road map of Buddhist training unique because it is a terrain that we cannot quite see: the inner dynamics and patterns of the mind. Moreover, because it involves our inner world, there is no fixed route for traversing it; each person's journey will be tailored to his or her unique profile and patterns. If each person's journey is unique, how do we find our way?

First, we suggest exploring the terrain a little. This might involve reading, trying meditation, attending some classes, or talking to teachers or students. Develop a feeling for the lay of the land. There is no rush to jump in deeply. Notice in which direction your mind gravitates. Is it easy to meditate regularly or is there resistance? Do you prefer reading and thinking over meditation, or do you like both? Do you find it influencing your life in any way? Do Buddha images inspire you, or not? Do you like to discuss Buddhist training with others or do you prefer to keep it to yourself? See where it is that you meet the path. Don't worry if it is not the same as others.

Second, and this may come after a period of exploration, a particular school or teacher can be very helpful to point us in the right direction. Buddhist thought is not based on a centralized authority or canon. Instead, it is held in teaching lineages. For example, Juniper is an extension into modern life of a long Indo-Tibetan Buddhist lineage. If we have resistance to a particular direction, a teacher, or guide, can help us to break through it, and continue to guide us as we progress.

As we describe later in *Awakening the Mind*, we think of Buddhist Training like learning a language. We should not be surprised if it is unfamiliar at first. Through steadily persisting, however, we will grow more accustomed to it and our own way of engaging this path of inner development will unfold.