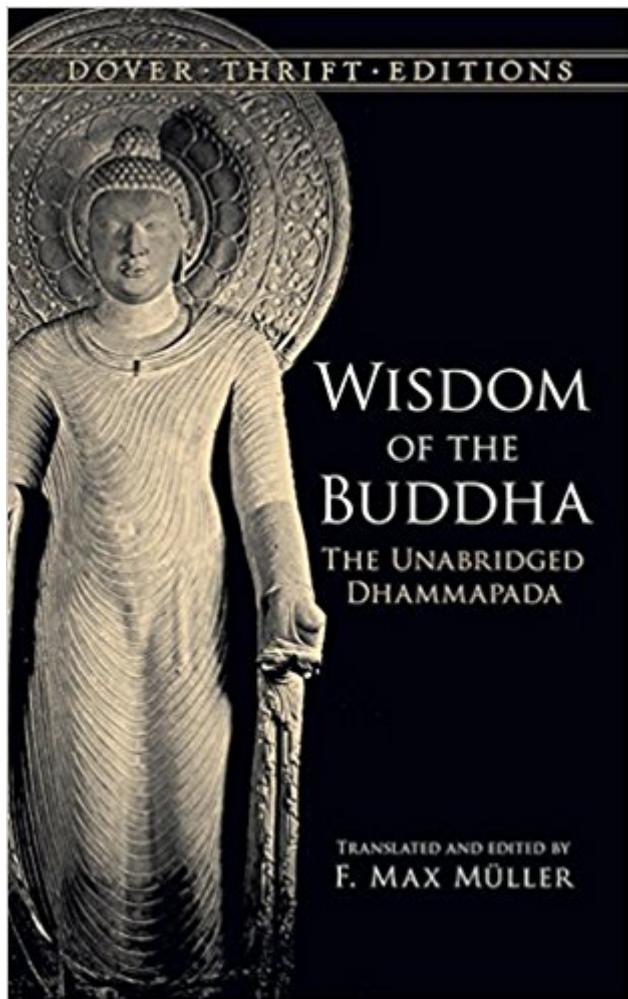


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Wisdom Of The Buddha: The Unabridged Dhammapada (Dover Thrift Editions)



Synopsis

These ancient verses offer a compelling introduction to Buddhist thought, revealing the Four Truths — concerning the nature of the world and our lot in it — and the Eightfold Path to enlightenment, the means by which to overcome the essential suffering revealed by the Four Truths as the essence of life.

Book Information

Series: Dover Thrift Editions

Paperback: 64 pages

Publisher: Dover Publications; Unabridged edition (March 24, 2000)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0486411206

ISBN-13: 978-0486411200

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.1 x 8.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (28 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

The Dhammapada (in Pali/the Lankan scriptural language as derived from the original Pankrit), or the Dharmapada (in Sanskrit), the Pali being the original, in this case, is a pocket-size selection of the "essence" of Gotama Buddha's thought (the dhamma, or dharma) culled from the massive Tripitaka, the comprehensive collection of all of the Buddha's recorded discourses. The selection was made by the Sangha (the Buddhist community (in those days monks and nuns) sometime between 200 to 700 years after the death of Gotama Buddha in the fifth century B.C. The succinctness, gravity, and beauty of these verses has more than stood the test of time. The Dhammapada is, in my opinion (I first heard the dhamma formally in this lifetime in 1970), the best introduction to the buddha/dhamma: a bedside book, a wake-up book, a wonderful and lifelong friend. This translation was among the first in a European language. Muller was an enormous figure in religious studies, who in the late nineteenth century conceived, edited, and contributed to the encyclopediac fifty tome collection of translations of Sacred Texts of the East of which this work is

one volume. The original companion texts seemed to have been deleted for this paperbound edition. In any case, Muller's notes have been included and are useful, though at times, obscure. The translation is strictly nineteenth century prose, and exhibits both pros and cons of the genre. At times the translation may not suit our criteria for either accuracy or aesthetic refinement. However, as Gracian has said, to be first is to be great, and Max M was most definitely, along with Szekeley the elder . . . first. Which ever translation of the Dhammapada you choose, please do chose one.

Just as Moses is thought to have found divine revelation on Mount Sinai and Jesus supposedly gained his fortitude in the Judean desert, Siddhartha Gautama discovered truth after intense meditation under a tree. Siddhartha, born perhaps in the 560s BC, was the son of a tribal lord in Nepal who provided him with any comforts he wanted and shielded him from pain and adversity. Separated from the family's populous throughout his youth, the prince began to travel through their land by the age of 30 and witnessed the effects of misery and sickness. Moved by the sufferings of mankind, Siddhartha left his palaces to become a mendicant, or wanderer who survives through alms. He spent years with Hindu scholars and went through a period of self-mortification before attaining enlightenment after nearly 50 days under a Bodhi tree in the Indian region of Bihar. Siddhartha then became Shakyamuni Buddha, or 'the Awakened One,' and organized a travelling ministry that grew to over 1,000 disciples. The Dhammapada (Pali for 'path to virtue') is one of mankind's oldest existing spiritual texts. It is the result of Buddhist scholars who collected Shakyamuni Buddha's numerous teachings as a minister and social philosopher. The principles advanced in the Dhammapada remain a treasure-trove to practicing Buddhists, those of other faiths, and non-religious persons alike, largely because of its all-encompassing ideals and simple, clear-minded views of human existence. Dover Publications, who continues to impress with its Thrift Editions of classic literature, offers a strong translation of the Dhammapada in 'Wisdom of the Buddha: The Unabridged Dhammapada.'

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