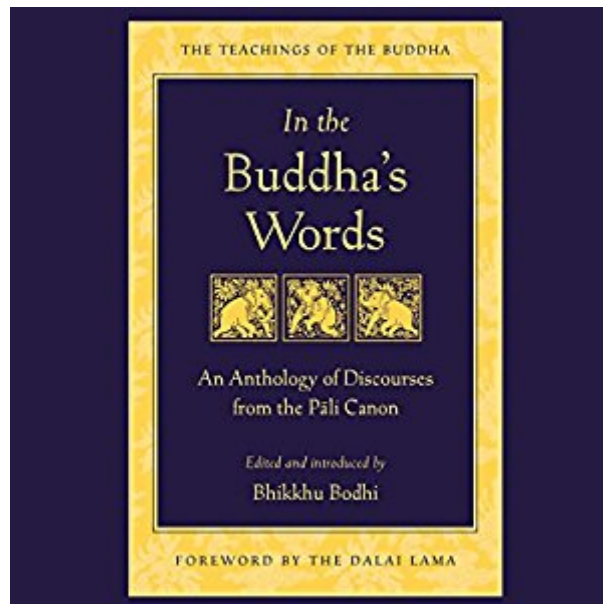


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In The Buddha's Words: An Anthology Of Discourses From The Pali Canon



Synopsis

This landmark collection is the definitive introduction to the Buddha's teachings - in his own words. The American scholar-monk Bhikkhu Bodhi, whose voluminous translations have won widespread acclaim, here presents selected discourses of the Buddha from the Pali Canon, the earliest record of what the Buddha taught. Divided into 10 thematic chapters, *In the Buddha's Words* reveals the full scope of the Buddha's discourses, from family life and marriage to renunciation and the path of insight. A concise, informative introduction precedes each chapter, guiding the listener toward a deeper understanding of the texts that follow. *In the Buddha's Words* allows even listeners unacquainted with Buddhism to grasp the significance of the Buddha's contributions to our world heritage. Taken as a whole, these texts bear eloquent testimony to the breadth and intelligence of the Buddha's teachings, and point the way to an ancient, yet ever-vital path. Students and seekers alike will find this systematic presentation indispensable.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Thank you to Bhikku Bodhi for his tremendous effort. If you are a serious practitioner, especially a lone practitioner as I am, this book is invaluable for making available the undiluted teachings of the Buddha himself. Most of the books in my Buddhist library have been helpful to some extent or other but most are explanations of the teachings, i.e. the Buddha's words once-removed. I rank very highly *What the Buddha Taught*, by Walpola Rahula. This book is much more extensive. It is also more accessible than *The Middle Length Discourses* (trans. Bhaddhu Nanamoli and Bhaddhu Bodhi)

because it is organized into general topics, such as "The Human Condition" and "Mastering the Mind." Highly recommended as a life reference.

This book is written in clear and understandable English. It gives very understandable explanations of all major Buddhist Dhamma teachings while avoiding all the mythology that entered Buddhism in the later centuries. This summary of the Pali Canon is very close to the original Buddha of history. You will find how to overcome greed, hatred, and delusion by overcoming clinging and the false view of self. It has the greatest explanation of the Noble Eightfold path I have ever read. The Four Noble truths are the main theme of these scriptures. If you have already read the Dhammapada and have some understanding of Buddhism then buy this for the advanced learning. However this book is not for beginners and non-Buddhists may not be able to grasp it. Bhikkhu Bodhi has written wonderful introductions to each section that really prepare you to receive the teachings. 5 Stars, thank you Bhikkhu.

It seems there are many books telling us how the Buddha would date, eat, work...etc. These books may be helpful, but why not get as close to the original sources as possible? Unfortunately the Suttas (or sutras...the collected remembrances of the Buddha's talks) can be overwhelming for many of us because of their vast number, the repetitive language, the obscure references, and they are not anthologized in a helpful way. In this book you have excerpts of the most foundational suttas. They are presented in chapters related by topic and each chapter has a wonderful introduction. The structure is oriented towards practice - ethical training, meditation, and wisdom. If you are looking for a book that is beyond a basic introduction and can be a touchstone for your own development - this could be a book you could work with for years to come. I can't recommend it highly enough.

I own many of the longer and complete translations of the Pali Canon available now and have spent years studying and teaching, to the best of my ability, the contents and character of each. What I find most useful about Bhikkhu Bodhi's anthology is its concise and focused selection of Suttas and the logic of the overall outline, making it an extremely useful learning tool of the heart of Buddhism. Also, I took an extended trip recently and this was the only book of scripture I took along. Its physical size combined with the translations themselves and Bhikkhu Bodhi's erudite and clear commentary made this a wonderful traveling companion. If your Buddhist library can hold only one book, I highly recommend this volume.

I will come right out and say it: the vast majority of what is called Buddhism today was created by people other than Shakyamuni Buddha. All of Mahayana and Vajrayana doctrine was created by elite monks after Gotama's death. If you want to know the teachings of the Buddha, it is here. It is in this little book. There is no Pureland, no Zen, no Tantra, no Yoga, no mudra, no medicine wheels, no ritual, no esoteric transmission, no gurus, no deity yoga, no bardo, no Dalai Lama, no phowa, no koans, etc. There are the 4 noble truths, the 3 facts of existence, the 8 noble path. Now go meditate.

Anybody interested in pursuing an understanding of Buddhism and Buddhist teachings can tell you how overwhelming it can be to try to sift through the religious texts. First of all, the Pali canon is quite huge, such that it would take a lifetime to read and absorb it all, and the printed versions of it (in Pali, there is still no complete English translation) are anywhere from 35 to 58 volumes. From this vast ocean of scripture Bhikkhu Bodhi effectively organizes it into chapters based on major points of doctrine. Each chapter has a few pages of Bhikkhu Bodhi's own interpretation and explanation, but the bulk of the book is devoted to the scripture. I highly recommend it to anybody who wants to better understand Buddhism (including Mahayana Buddhism). As for those who are as intensely interested in Theravada Buddhism as I am, I would say that this book, along with a good translation of the Dhammapada, is essential.

After having read a few books on buddhism, which caused some confusion around what Buddhist (would) say, what they believe and what Buddha actually said, I found this book fundamental. I was always afraid of the long long sutras - and I almost gave up reading the original words of Buddha. Now I think there is no better introduction to Buddhism than the real source. After this, explanations and summaries of buddhism are easier to grasp and judge. But I needed a good introduction to it. It was this book. I particularly liked the sensible 'shortenings', i.e. when repetitions are omitted. It might be strange for the first time, but you soon get used to it and it makes sense. It is a thick book anyway with many essential areas of what Buddha said to the lay people and to monks and to his own disciples. A wonderful compilation.

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