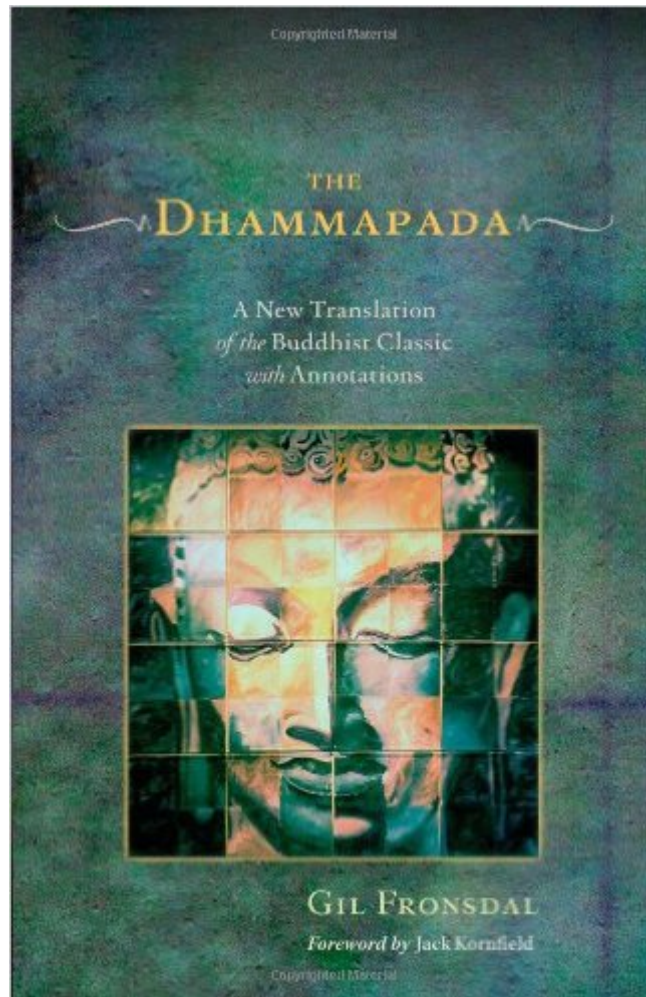


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The Dhammapada: A New Translation Of The Buddhist Classic With Annotations



Synopsis

The Dhammapada is the most widely read Buddhist scripture in existence, enjoyed by both Buddhists and non-Buddhists. This classic text of teaching verses from the earliest period of Buddhism in India conveys the philosophical and practical foundations of the Buddhist tradition. The text presents two distinct goals for leading a spiritual life: the first is attaining happiness in this life (or in future lives); the second goal is the achievement of spiritual liberation, freedom, absolute peace. Many of the key themes of the verses are presented in dichotomies or pairs, for example, grief and suffering versus joy; developing the mind instead of being negligent about one's mental attitude and conduct; virtuous action versus misconduct; and being truthful versus being deceitful. The purpose of these contrasts is, very simply, to describe the difference between what leads to desirable outcomes and what does not. For centuries, this text has been studied in its original Pali, the canonical language of Buddhism in Southeast Asia. This fresh new translation from Insight Meditation teacher and Pali translator Gil Fronsdal is both highly readable and scholarly authoritative. With extensive explanatory notes, this edition combines a rigorous attention to detail in bringing forth the original text with the translator's personal knowledge of the Buddhist path. It is the first truly accurate and highly readable translation of this text to be published in English.

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Customer Reviews

The Dhammapada, which literally means "foot," "tool," "saying," or "path" (Pali: pada) of "experience" (Pali: dhamma), is a small collection of sayings about the Middle Way, the Path of

Awakening which leads to Nirvana and which is embodied by the Buddha, and also about its opposite, the path of unskillful living which leads to a hellish life and which is embodied by the devilish figure of Mara. Each of us must choose which of these two paths to follow. We cannot avoid choosing: even if we do not choose, we will become subject to forces outside ourselves (media, advertisement, family, friends, enemies, lovers), and so will have chosen the path of unskillful living by default. Only by consciously choosing the Path of Awakening, and by training our minds so that everything we do is free of unhealthy desire, aversion, and delusion, can we be truly enlightened and happy. The Dhammapada gives voice to the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism: that suffering exists, that there is a cause to suffering, that suffering has an end, and that there is a means to this end, namely the Noble Eightfold Path. But the Dhammapada focuses mostly on the Noble Eightfold Path, and specifically on the choices we face, at many junctures in our lives, between two starkly contrasting possibilities. It is a message of hope that if we choose wisely, and if we choose now rather than later, we shall find relief for both our own suffering and the suffering of others. Thus the Dhammapada is similar to other great works of life philosophy, such as Epictetus' Enchiridion. Both focus on the fact that we must choose between two radically different kinds of lives. Both advocate a life of virtue and spiritual practice in order to make progress in life.

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