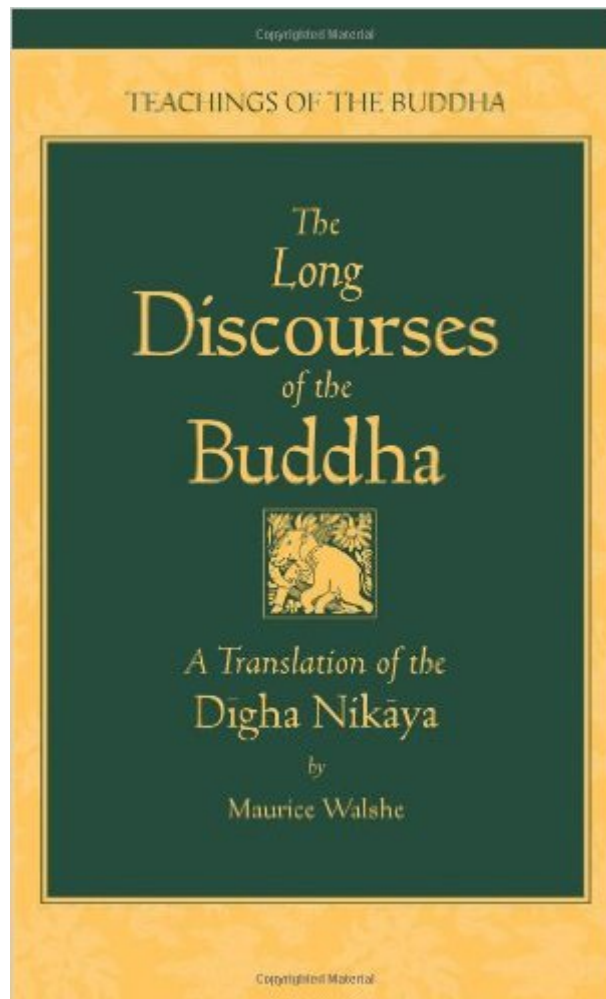


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The Long Discourses Of The Buddha: A Translation Of The Digha Nikaya (Teachings Of The Buddha)



Synopsis

This book offers a complete translation of the Digha Nikaya, the long discourses of the Buddha, one of the major collections of texts in the Pali Canon, the authorized scriptures of Theravada Buddhism. This collection--among the oldest records of the historical Buddha's original teachings, given in India two and a half thousand years ago--consists of thirty-four longer-length suttas, or discourses, distinguished as such from the middle-length and shorter suttas of the other collections. These suttas reveal the gentleness, compassion, power, and penetrating wisdom of the Buddha. Included are teachings on mindfulness (Mahasatipatthana Sutta); on morality, concentration, and wisdom (Subha Sutta); on dependent origination (Mahanidrana Sutta); on the roots and causes of wrong views (Brahmajala Sutta); and a long description of the Buddha's last days and passing away (Mahaparinibbana Sutta); along with a wealth of practical advice and insight for all those travelling along the spiritual path. Venerable Sumedho Thera writes in his foreword: "[These suttas] are not meant to be 'sacred scriptures' that tell us what to believe. One should read them, listen to them, think about them, contemplate them, and investigate the present reality, the present experience, with them. Then, and only then, can one insightfully know the truth beyond words." Introduced with a vivid account of the Buddha's life and times and a short survey of his teachings, The Long Discourses of the Buddha brings us closer in every way to the wise and compassionate presence of Gotama Buddha and his path of truth.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is a modern translation of the Long Length Discourses of the Buddha, a seminal collection of early Buddhist texts. The Digha is part of the scripture of the Theravada school of Buddhism. The Theravada school is the oldest surviving form of Buddhism and is still practiced in Sri Lanka, Thailand, Burma, and elsewhere. Together with other forms of Buddhism, Theravada has attracted a great deal of interest in the West, and this book will be invaluable in making its teachings accessible. This collection of discourses is considered canonical by all other schools of Buddhism. Subsequent understanding of the Buddha's teachings built upon it, even when they seemed to depart from it. The Digha is a collection of 34 discourses (suttas), originally written in Pali. The form of the teaching differs from that of later Buddhist teachings in that in the Digha, the Buddha is presented as a person wandering through India and teaching his disciples, followers of other sects, kings, princes, gods, and anyone who is open to listen. The teachings are difficult but the emphasis in this collection is on psychology more than metaphysics. The Buddha described his dhamma as designed to end suffering and to teach people how to be happy. That is the core of this volume. Many scholars believe that the Digha was written specifically to introduce the Buddha's teaching to lay followers. Most (but not all) the suttas in the collection involve discussions between the Buddha and various lay people or followers of other sects. The suttas in the collection include a great deal of mythology and story-telling. These factors, together with the content of the discourses, tend to show it was designed for a large audience, rather than only for close followers of the Buddha's teachings.

The Digha Nikaya was apparently the first portion of the Pali Canon to be recited after the Buddha's passing and contains some of his most important discourses. This book compresses all 30 odd discourses (suttas) into a relatively slim volume compared to the original with its repetitions which would run into tens of volumes. The only alternative to this edition which is reputable is still probably Rhys David's translation for the PTS in 3 volumes which is actually good but archaic, harder and pricier to get hold of. Walshe's translation reads easily and his notes are quite chatty but a few of his comments could have been avoided. The Buddha comes across as quite human in his speech and earnest in conveying something to his listeners (the English is highly readable and fairly simple as opposed to older and archaic rendering), commanding as usual but cool and detached with a tremendous sense of compassion. More abstruse passages within certain suttas will not be understood by most readers without meditation practice or guidance from teachers and the book itself lacks sufficient explanation, in fact some elements of the translation may be wrong or

mis-interpreted. This book is a boon companion for anyone who feels s/he needs the highest security. Most of the suttas here are applicable to lay people as well as monks (the usual audience the Buddha addressed) and this volume contains seminal discourses such as 1. The Great Discourse on the foundations of mindfulness, 2. The discourse of the Great decease of the Buddha and 3. Fruits of the homeless life. There are many others such as one specifically as to how lay-people should live and guard their worldly affairs and at least two dealing with gods or conversations with celestial beings.

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