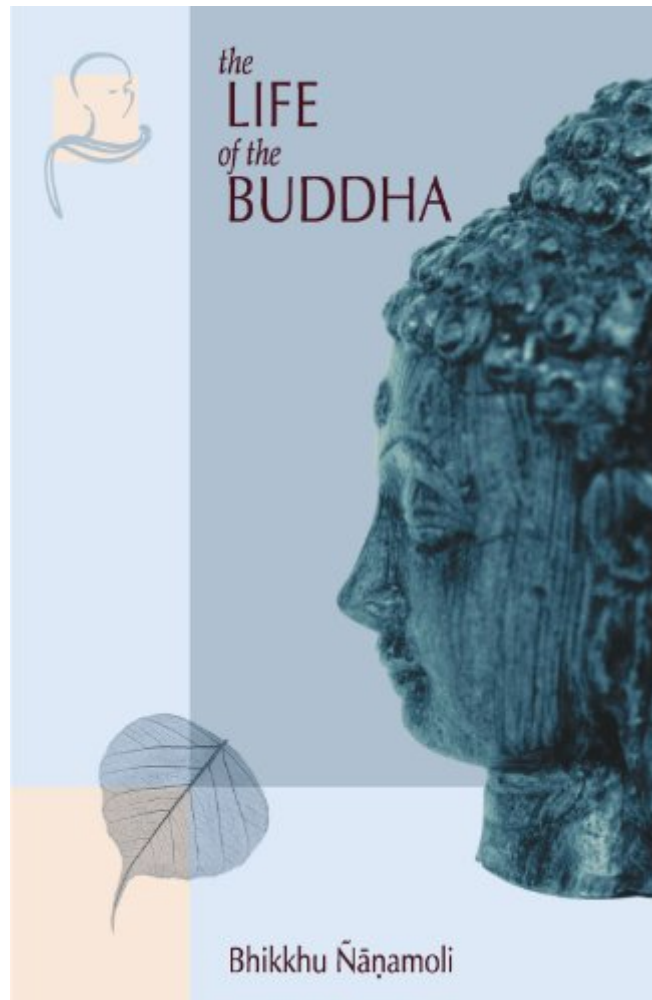


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The Life Of The Buddha: According To The Pali Canon



Synopsis

Composed entirely of texts from the Pali canon, this unique biography presents the oldest authentic record of the Buddha's life and revolutionary philosophy. The ancient texts are rendered here in a language marked by lucidity and dignity, and a framework of narrators and voices connect the canonical texts. Vivid recollections of his personal attendant Ananda and other disciples bring the reader into the Buddha's presence, where his example offers profound inspiration and guidance on the path to freedom.

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Customer Reviews

This is a great academic work, which any buddhist can benefit from it.... If, they can tolerate the very dull, dry, and schematic writing of the Pali texts. Nanamoli's work gathers, selects, and assembles all the facts of the life of Buddha from four different narrators/sources of the Pali tradition. To all those interested in studying the gradual Vehicle of Sutra (Sutrayana), they should study this "biography" first, because it allows to access the foundational teachings of the first turn of the Wheel of Dharma (Shravakayana / Vehicle of Hearers). After this, you may want to read The Great Disciples of the

Buddha: Their Lives, Their Works, Their Legacy (Teachings of the Buddha) – (more readable than the *^anamoli`s*). After these two texts, you will notice that it will be easier understand the Sutta Pitaka.

The Life of the Buddha is a ,slow, but excellent read. Bhikkhu Nanamoli's style of using 2 Narrators, 3 Voices, & a Chanter is unique & works quite well. The previous sentence may give the impression the Book is a play. It is not. It is a unique tome with enough substance for Buddhist & casual readers. I use a "Cheat" sheet defining each role as a bookmark to avoid having to flip to the front of the book to refresh my memory. The fact that the book is Theravada in nature is also a plus.

Buddhists have no equivalent of the Bible. But this book is perhaps is as close as it comes in the English language, a history of the Buddha, his teachings, and his community, derived entirely from original translations of the earliest sources. Shortly after World War II, Englishman Osbert Moore went to Sri Lanka to monastic vows - and a Buddhist name. In his 11 years of practice, he translated a number of important Buddhist texts to English, but perhaps his best known work is this history of the Buddha, published posthumously after a heart attack at the age of 55 in 1960. Bhikku Nanamoli's work is based on his own translations of the Tripitaka, the earliest written records of the Buddha and his teachings, recorded in the ancient language of Pali more than 200 years after the Buddha's death. The bulk of the material included monastic rules and a collection of suttas, the Buddha's lectures and sermons. There is no chronological history linking these rules and teachings, which requires a historian to search the Tripitaka for clues to help place events in some sort of sequence. Nanamoli consulted two additional sources in corroborating his sequencing, a 5th century BCE Pali source (the Acariya Buddhaghosa) and a 15th century Burmese history (the *Malalankaravatthu*). Besides problems of historicity, Nanamoli has in brining this text to a modern English readership to wrestle with issues of accuracy and style. As the Tripitaka was for nearly three centuries an oral tradition, it's structure was built on repetition, both of phrases and key ideas. As modern song writers employ a verse-chorus-verse-chorus pattern, so too did the monks of 2,500 years ago repeat elements in their verse to facilitate memorization. For a modern reader, these elements are initially quaint, but very quickly become tiresome. Nanamoli has judiciously elided most of the extraneous recycled verses, thankfully leaving in a smattering taste. The result is a work that reads like epic myth, with a flavor and texture lacking in modern biographies. This is often charming and engaging, as in the repetition throughout the text of key phrases, such as: + Thus I heard. At one time the Blessed One was living at ...+ The Blessed One instructed and urged and

roused and encouraged with talk on the Dhamma.+ She paid homage and sat down at one side of the Blessed One.+ He paid homage to the Blessed One and departed, keeping him on his right.+ The Blessed One set out to wander by stages toIt is also to be found in refrains, as from this extract where the Buddha shows his exasperation with a monk who broke his vows by having sex with an alms giver's daughter:=====Have I not taught the Dhamma in various ways for the sake of dispassion, not for the sake of passion? Have I not taught the Dhamma in various ways for the sake of unfettering, not for the sake of fettering? Have I not taught the Dhamma in various ways for the sake of relinquishing, not for the sake of clinging? The Dhamma thus taught by me for dispassion, unfettering, and relinquishment you would conceive to be for passion, fettering and clinging. Has the Dhamma not been taught by me in many ways for dispassion, disintoxication, for curing thirst, for abolishing attachment, for severing the round of being, for exhausting craving, for dispassion, for cessation, for Nibbana? Have I not described in many ways the abandoning of sensual desires, the full understanding of perceptions of sensual desires, the curing of thirst for sensual desires, the eradication of thoughts of sensual desires, the allaying of the fever of sensual desires?

(p159)=====Attentive readers will have no trouble comprehending the main ideas or following Nanamoli's narrative, though at times the text would benefit from explanatory notes. In some instances historical or cultural references are perplexing, such as fire chambers, the Four Divine Kings, or the Brahma Sahampati, the god that knows the Buddha's mind and as his better conscience intervenes from time to time to change the course of events. Conversation in verse between Buddha and his nemesis Mara is not attributed, causing the reader to have to parse the exchange. And there are times when an explanation of nomenclature would save time searching for references, such as Mara's Hindu name, Namuci. In order to preserve the historical accuracy of his text, Nanamoli provides no analysis or interpretation, an understandable decision but one that will leave many readers without a clear understanding of some of the more difficult theories, such as Dependent Origination. Thankfully, the author has collected most of these suttas on theory to a separate chapter on Doctrine. These are small quibbles, though, and in no way detract from the overall experience of the text or from an appreciation of the scholarship, expertise and effort that went into the translation, organization and composition of this book. It is recommended especially for Buddhists who'd like to sample the original source material without having to first master Pali.#

Whether someone is just starting their journey in to Buddhism or has read about its variants

extensively - it is a great insight into the life of the Buddha. Unlike many religious figures (Jesus, Mohammed, prophets and mystics), Buddha lived for many years after his enlightenment and spoke of the "path" extensively. It portrays a very human side, even when there are some supernatural events described. For me this text gives us a more personal view of the man and the ideas that have been commented upon for over 2000 years in a myriad of forms and it reminds me that all that commentary and religious activity started with the teachings of a real man.

If you are serious about knowing Buddha, about what he achieved and teach, if you want to get away from the hype and distortions, this is perhaps the simplest book on the subject and it hold to the Pali cannon information which is the most reliable stuff we have on Gautama Buddha.

Unblemished, unadorned and stark. Compelling for this reason. Moved beyond words: Shaken by this narrative of the Unshakable.

I think its a very informative easy read that spiritual people will enjoy. I have purchased other books from the seller and i am quite happywith the customer service,

Dense and obviously thorough. Will keep and re-read often, no doubt. Glad I had a Psychology of Buddhism class to accompany it.

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