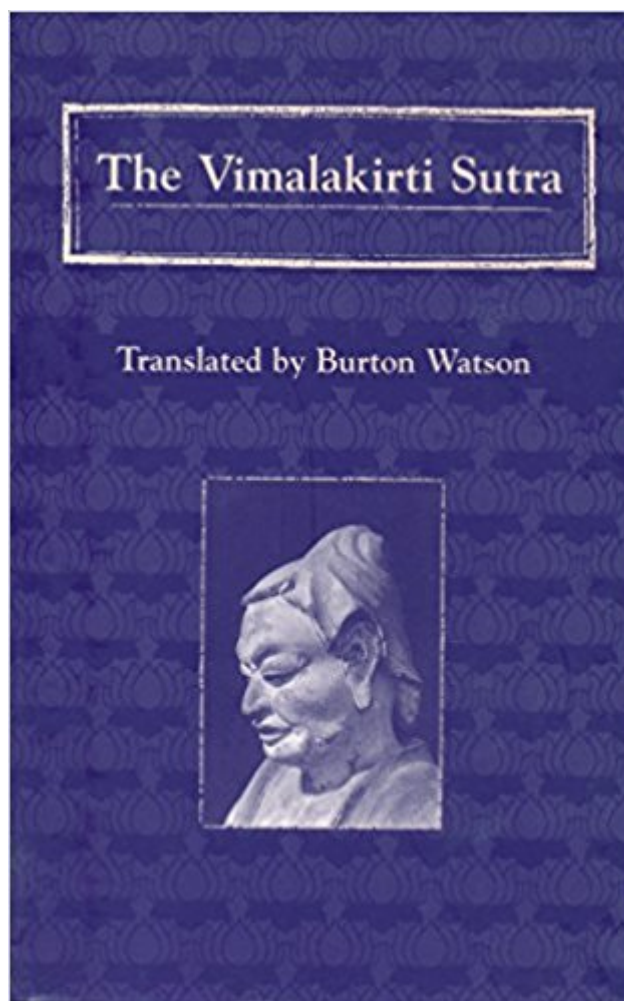


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The Vimalakirti Sutra



Synopsis

One of the most popular Asian classics for roughly two thousand years, the Vimalakirti Sutra stands out among the sacred texts of Mahayana Buddhism for its conciseness, its vivid and humorous episodes, its dramatic narratives, and its eloquent exposition of the key doctrine of emptiness or nondualism. Unlike most sutras, its central figure is not a Buddha but a wealthy townsman, who, in his mastery of doctrine and religious practice, epitomizes the ideal lay believer. For this reason, the sutra has held particular significance for men and women of the laity in Buddhist countries of Asia, assuring them that they can reach levels of spiritual attainment fully comparable to those accessible to monks and nuns of the monastic order. Esteemed translator Burton Watson has rendered a beautiful English translation from the popular Chinese version produced in 406 C.E. by the Central Asian scholar-monk Kumarajiva, which is widely acknowledged to be the most felicitous of the various Chinese translations of the sutra (the Sanskrit original of which was lost long ago) and is the form in which it has had the greatest influence in China, Japan, and other countries of East Asia. Watson's illuminating introduction discusses the background of the sutra, its place in the development of Buddhist thought, and the profundities of its principal doctrine: emptiness.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"A new translation of any of the classics... from the hand of Burton Watson is an event to be welcomed with gratitude." -- "Journal for Asian Studies"

Originally written in Sanskrit, this sutra is one of the most influential works in the Mahayana canon. This beautiful translation of Kumarajiva's popular Chinese version highlights the sutra's frequent touches of humor, the liveliness of its episodes, and its eloquent, orderly exposition of basic Mahayana tenets. Watson includes a brief history of early Buddhism and an introduction to the doctrine of non-dualism, a key tenet in Mahayana thought.

The teaching is easy to understand in this translation although I don't think I can follow most of them. For the benefit of everybody, I reproduce this memorable passage from the Vimalakirti Sutra that you may want to incorporate as your spiritual aspiration: Pleasure of the Dharma from the Vimalakirti Sutra From now on, you should devote yourselves to find joy in the pleasure of the Dharma, and should take no pleasure in desires. What is the joy in the pleasure of the Dharma? It is the joy of unbreakable faith in the Buddha, of wishing to hear the Dharma, of serving the Sangha and honouring the spiritual benefactors without pride. It is the joy of renunciation of the whole world, of not being fixed in objects, of considering the five aggregates to be like murderers, of considering the elements to be like venomous serpents, and of considering the sense media to be like an empty town. It is the joy of always guarding the spirit of enlightenment, of helping living beings, of sharing through generosity, of not slackening in morality, of control and tolerance in patience, of thorough cultivation of virtue by effort, of total absorption in meditation, and of absence of passions in wisdom. It is the joy of extending enlightenment, of conquering Mara, of destroying the passions, and of purifying the Buddha field. It is the joy of accumulating all virtues, in order to cultivate the auspicious marks and signs. It is the joy of the liberation of non-intimidation when hearing the profound teaching. It is the joy of exploration of the three doors of liberation, and of the realisation of liberation. It is the joy of being an ornament of the seat of enlightenment, and of not attaining liberation at the wrong time. It is the joy of serving those of equal fortune, of not hating or resenting those of superior fortune, of serving the spiritual benefactors, and of avoiding sinful friends. It is the joy of the superior gladness of faith and devotion to the Dharma. It is the joy of acquiring liberation techniques and of the conscious cultivation of the aids to enlightenment. Thus the Bodhisattva admires and finds joy in the delights of the Dharma.

This is a superb translation of a classic of Buddhist sacred writings. The author has taken a work written in Chinese in the year 406 C.E. and made it accessible, understandable and enjoyable for the modern reader..

The Vilmalakirtri Sutra is a classic in Mahayana Buddhism. A must read for any student of Buddhism. I do recommend reading the Diamond Sutra first as this Sutra refers to previous Sutra and revises the teaching. It is a classic in Eastern Thought.

Great story, best read with a group under direction of a sensi or Abbott.

great

It is a excellent book... it is kinda high level.

Great and Easy to read

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