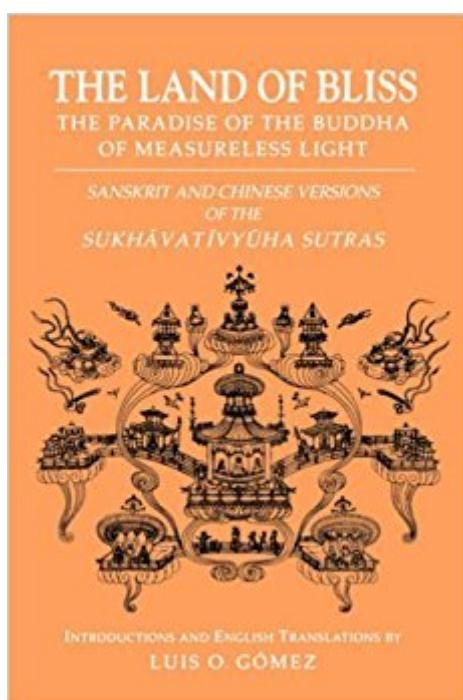


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The Land Of Bliss, The Paradise Of The Buddha Of Measureless Light: Sanskrit And Chinese Versions Of The Sukhavativyuha Sutras (Studies In The Buddhist Traditions)



Synopsis

This is a free translation of two Buddhist texts on what is arguably the most popular of all Buddhist conceptions of an ideal world, the "Land of Bliss" of the Buddha Amitabha, the Buddha of Infinite Light. The two texts, known to Western students of Buddhism as the "Smaller" and "Larger" Sukhavatīyūha Sutra, explain the conditions that lead to rebirth in the Pure Land and the manner in which human beings are reborn there.

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A work of admirable scholarship.... No one interested in the development of the Mahayana, and more especially in Pure Land, should disregard this book.-- "The Middle Way"

A work of admirable scholarship.... No one interested in the development of the Mahayana, and more especially in Pure Land, should disregard this book. (The Middle Way)

Wonderful book, perfect condition and very fast shipping. Thank you!

Enjoyed this book very much.

Luis O. Gomez has translated both the Smaller and the Larger Sukhavatī-vyūha Sutras. What is particularly unique about this book is that he has translated both CHINESE and SANSKRIT versions

of these two great Pure Land Buddhism sutras. There are more than one source, and he has steered a middle course, offering both a competent and a lyrical English rendition of these two (actually four) sutras. The main Pure Land sutras also include the Meditation Sutra, which only exists in Chinese (and later Japanese), and may never had a Sanskrit version at all according to Buddhist scholars. Hence Dr. Gomez did not include the Meditation Sutra in this translation. Pure Land Buddhism took different forms in the three countries where it most significantly developed: first in India, where the Sanskrit sutras are traditionally held to be the actual sermons of Shakyamuni Buddha; second, in China, where Buddhism as a whole developed into the Great Vehicle (Mahayana) and where the Pure Land tradition took on a more meditative and devotional aspect; and finally, Japan, where Pure Land Buddhism metamorphosed once again into Shin Buddhism, or the doctrine of enlightenment by faith alone in the Buddha of Infinite Light and Life, Amida Buddha, the Buddha expounded in all three Pure Land Sutras. Dr. Gomez has provided generous but not belabored forewords to each of the four separate translations in his book, along with detailed but not overabundant footnotes. Further, he has constructed a diagram at the end of the book showing (not proportionally) the "structure" of the Pure Land (Sukhavati) of Amida Buddha, as described in the sutras translated. Also included are references for further reading. While this translation seems to be motivated more by scholarly impulses than religious - as contrasted to Hisao Inagaki's translation of all three Pure Land sutras, published by the Numata Translation Center, which contains elaborate annotations on Pure Land doctrine and faith - nevertheless, Gomez' translations come across, to this reader, as powerfully spiritual. This, I feel, is because the Pure Land school of Buddhism thrives on precision of expression, and Gomez' translation is precise, the words well chosen, the flow convincing and poetic. The translator has promised a follow-up volume of intensive annotation which will consider the differences between the various editions, Sanskrit and Chinese, that are extant in manuscript. But this is for the scholar. It is to our great fortune that he decided to publish a more "popular" and readable version first, as Pure Land Buddhism itself is intended for laypeople of all walks of life, intellectual or not, regardless of upbringing, nationality, or any other circumstances of life. Aside from the Three Pure Land sutras translated by Hisao Inagaki by the Numata Center, English versions of the Pure Land sutras are not abundant. There is a much earlier translation from about a century ago, the final 49th volume of the SACRED BOOKS OF THE EAST series, Max Mueller, editor and translator. Mueller's translation is from the Sanskrit, and his manuscript sources were considerably poorer than Gomez and Inagaki. Further, Mueller's translation suffers from now antiquated linguistic and editorial conventions and a generally pedantic tone. Both Gomez and Inagaki have remedied this and given us excellent translations of these great sutras of the

Mahayana Buddhist Canon. It is a great pleasure to be able to write about Dr. Gomez's fine addition to scholarship and spirituality with THE LAND OF BLISS.

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These fine translations from both Sanskrit and Chinese will undoubtedly stand for many years as the definitive work in this area. They are a great improvement over any previous translations of the Buddhist Pure Land sutras, and the value of this work is enhanced by the scholarly introduction and footnotes. This is a great contribution to the field of Buddhist studies, and will be especially appreciated by anyone with an interest in the various Pure Land traditions and practices.

This book contains two major mahayana sutras that any Buddhists practitioners should know and study deeply and practice. They are invaluable. One must have a lot of merits to meet these sutras. Thanks so much to Gomez for his work.

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