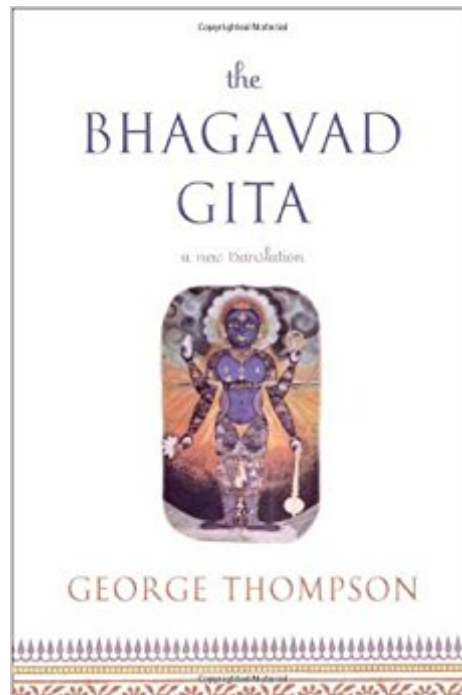




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The Bhagavad Gita: A New Translation



Synopsis

A fresh, new prose translation of the classic Indian poem, ideally focused for students and teachers and for yoga teacher training The Bhagavad Gita, a small section of the massive Sanskrit epic the Mahabharata, is one of the central texts of Indian culture and philosophy, and one of the great works of world literature. It has been translated into English many times since 1785, and has had a profound influence in America, beginning with the transcendentalists and continuing today. It is taught in introductory world literature, religion, and Eastern religion courses, and is often prescribed in yoga teacher training courses because it explains the core principles of Vedic philosophy, which are central to yoga practice. Some of the currently available translations are in verse and, while well crafted, often do not accurately reflect the forms, sounds, and rhythms of the original. Older scholarly translations convey little feel for language. George Thompson's intention is to be as accurate and engaging as possible, and to create a translation that has scholarly bona fides, literary sensibility, and greater accuracy than previous translations. He emphasizes the social, historical, literary, and philosophical contexts surrounding the text. His introduction explains the development of Hindu thought and where the philosophy of the "Gita" fits historically, along with a history of the text and its place in Indian literature and philosophy and history..

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Customer Reviews

“This new translation of the Bhagavad Gita comes as close to the liveliness, topicality, and flow of the original as any I have seen. Professor George Thomson has more than twenty years of

experience teaching it to students. His Introduction explains the Yoga of the Gita. It is learned without being heavy. Notes and bibliography are helpful and succinct. I recommend this translation without reservation to scholars and teachers of Sanskrit and to beginning students of Indian culture. It remains the most popular book of one of the largest and most creative civilizations of the contemporary world.

—Frits Staal, Professor Emeritus, University of California at Berkeley

“The Bhagavad Gita is and has always been a must read for anyone interested in India, ancient or modern. No wonder it has been translated and re-translated into so many languages, English being perhaps the most frequently used medium. Dr. Thompson’s translation is truly novel, because not only does it render the poem’s Sanskrit quite differently, but also offers groundbreaking interpretations of many stanzas, even well-known ones. It retains poetic qualities of the original and is a genuine pleasure to read. Moreover, it fully meets expectations that even the most demanding readers of our time have come to count on in an academic translation: it is precise and thoroughly researched. The translation and commentary testify to the author’s ample erudition. Compelling comments will no doubt be of great service to inquisitive minds who would want to understand the author’s approach to translating some of the most difficult Sanskrit passages that are rendered masterfully. I wholeheartedly recommend this translation to all readers.”

—Boris Oguibenine, Professor, Université Marc Bloch de Strasbourg

“George Thompson brings his fine-tuned sense of poetic language and his deep knowledge of the Indian, especially Vedic, religious tradition to this fresh and vigorous new translation of this foundational text.”

—Stephanie W. Jamison, Professor of Asian Languages and Cultures, UCLA

“With this elegant, new rendering of The Bhagavad Gita, George Thompson has achieved the seemingly impossible: his translation is accurate, yet readable; written in crisp, straightforward prose, but filled with poetic brilliance; accompanied by a learned introduction and valuable commentary, both of which are informed by profound Indological scholarship that illuminates rather than intimidates. In short, this is a gem that will be appreciated by anyone who wishes to familiarize himself or herself with one of the world’s greatest religious and philosophical classics. It will be of particular interest to those who are studying or practicing Yoga, but will also be warmly welcomed by anyone who wishes to learn more about traditional Indian culture and thought.”

—Victor H. Mair, Professor of Chinese Language and Literature Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations, University of Pennsylvania

“The Bhagavad Gita has been used in numerous ways from Gandhi to proponents of nuclear war. The central issue is one of belief strong enough to override any other consideration, including one’s own death. George Thompson’s translation is clear and luminous; it opens a space of engagement that

other translations often miss. I was able to read and think about the Gita as a contemporary text, one arguing in relation to our concerns as well as those of ancient Hinduism. Thompson's introduction brings out both the background of the Gita and its current relevance. His translation presents the philosophical/ethical issues that underly it and brings the Gita to life and to relevance both as historic document and contemporary discourse. This version seems lucid and true and wonderful; everyone should read it.

— Alan Sondheim, West Virginia University, Center for Literary Computing

“George Thompson's new translation of The Bhagavad Gita is a gift to teachers, students and seekers. The prose is lucid, lively and admirably literal. The key metaphors are skillfully rendered, the core teachings precisely delineated; most important, the philosophical and spiritual radiance of the original shines through.”

— Carol Zaleski, Professor of World Religions, Smith College

George Thompson, a Vedic scholar and Sanskritist, has more than twenty years of experience teaching the Bhagavad Gita at college level. He is an assistant professor at Montserrat College of Art in Beverly, Massachusetts.

Having read atleast 3 versions of the Bhagavad Gita (Radhakrishnan, Prabhupada, Easwaran), Thompson's translation is suprisingly poetic and has a refreshing feel to it that many editions miss in pursuit of philosophical,doctrinal discussion that are indeed useful for advanced students and seekers, but not for introductory reading for someone that is new to Hindu, samkhya philosophy. I'm glad my Intro to Hinduism professor chose this edition of the Bhagavad Gita because it is very readable and still manages to capture the main messages and brilliance of Krishna's doctrine to Arjuna. This translation is very accurate, Thompson does indeed have a thorough understanding of Sanskrit as is evidenced by the flow of language in his rendering of the Gita. Certainly recommend this translation to anyone reading the Bhagavad Gita for the first time or for just a casual, but accurate reading.

This book came in good condition, and it worked well for class, even though I would not read it on my own.

It as a prose translation of the BG. It is meant for very basic readers and doesn't have relevant discussions or information about the text.

This is a great book! George Thompson does a wonderful job! I really loved this book, and found it fascinating!

This book was required for my daughter's College Religions class. It was perfect for what she needed and was required.

As has been reported by Koenraad Elst on his blog from April 2012, George Thompson holds racist views about Hinduism and Krishna. I can't imagine somebody translating the Bhagavad Gita who is not sympathetic to Hinduism. I wouldn't buy the book.

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