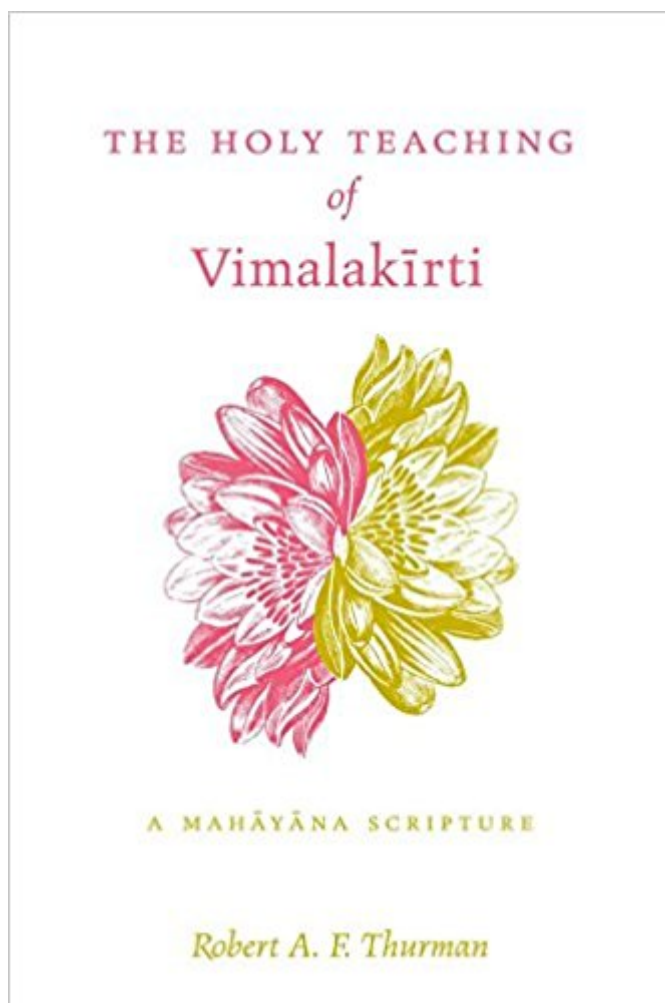


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# The Holy Teaching Of Vimalakirti: A Mahayana Scripture



## Synopsis

This book presents the major teachings of Mahāyāna Buddhism in a precise, dramatic, and even humorous form. For two millennia this Sāstra, called the Āgama “jewel of the Mahāyāna Sāstras,” has enjoyed immense popularity among Mahāyāna Buddhists in India, central and southeast Asia, Japan, and especially China, where its incidents were the basis for a style in art and literature prevalent during several centuries. Robert Thurman’s translation makes available in relatively nontechnical English the Tibetan version of this key Buddhist scripture, previously known to the English-speaking world only through translations from Chinese texts. The Tibetan version is generally conceded to be more faithful to the original Sanskrit than are the Chinese texts. The Tibetan version also is clearer, richer, and more precise in its philosophical and psychological expression. The twelve books of the Sāstra are accompanied by an introduction and an epilogue by Dr. Thurman and by three glossaries: Sanskrit terms, numerical categories, and technical terms.

## Book Information

Paperback: 117 pages

Publisher: Penn State University Press; 7.12.2003 edition (August 11, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0271006013

ISBN-13: 978-0271006017

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.4 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 18 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #78,074 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #4 in Āgama Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Eastern > Buddhism > Mahayana #11 in Āgama Books > Textbooks > Humanities > Religious Studies > Buddhism #18 in Āgama Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Eastern > Buddhism > History

## Customer Reviews

Robert A. F. Thurman, who was ordained a Buddhist monk in 1964 by Tenzin Gyatso, the current Dalai Lama, is the current director of Tibet House in New York City. He is the father of five children including the actress Uma Thurman. One of the world’s most respected scholars and translators of Tibetan and Sanskrit, Thurman has translated *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* (1994) and is the author or translator of many books including *The Central Philosophy of Tibet: A Study and*

Translation of Jey Tsong Khapa's Essence of True Eloquence (1984), Speech of Gold: Reason and Enlightenment in Tibetan Buddhism (1989), Inside Tibetan Buddhism (1995), and Infinite Life: Seven Virtues for Living Well (2004). This book was published in cooperation with The Institute for Advanced Studies of World Religions.

This is heavy duty Buddhist scripture. Thurman's prologue and introduction do a great job of setting up the actual scripture reading itself. Considered advanced for adherents of Buddhist thought, for those that aren't (like myself), the introduction is critical - don't skip it. The proposition is that all is unified, and dualism is not real. The artificial dualism and the concept of voidness (the absence of dualism, not nihilism) permeate the reading. The apparent paradox of an existent void is exactly the "Zen like" koan that is pondered and meditated on to attempt to understand the profundity of reality. A tough read, but a good one. A strong working knowledge of Buddhist thought will be very helpful before diving in.

We've been studying this Sutra for the past 5 semesters in one of our Zen Buddhism classes at Chung Tai Monastery Sunnyvale. This version--a different translation than the Burton Watson--is not the one we use. It's based on Tibetan sources. However, this translation has PRIMO notes! So I keep it at hand right along with my Watson. Very good for the serious Buddhism student.

"[T]hose living beings who, having heard this teaching of the Dharma, accept it, remember it, read it, and understand it deeply will be, without a doubt, true vessels of the Dharma... They will cut off all possibility of unhappy lives, will open their way to all fortunate lives, will always be looked after by all Buddhas, will always overcome all adversaries, and will always conquer all devils." So read it. What have you got to lose?

If you have found your way to Vimalakirti....you are approaching the summit.

The first thought that comes to mind about this outstanding piece of literature: it is a great "next-step" for readers of, say, any of the Carlos Castaneda writings (of his adventures with the shaman don Juan in Mexico). Well, why would I think of that? Some Castaneda readers, not all, once they finish all or any one of his books, will reflect on it and think "how do I go beyond these writings? There has to be a deeper understanding, but which direction do I go to find it?" "The Holy Teaching of Vimalakirti" is that stepping stone such a reader would emigrate to. Mind you, I say it is

a stepping stone, not a final destination, yet certainly a direction leading readers to what they are single-focusedly seeking. In a way, you could say Vimalakirti is the next shaman who picks up where don Juan left, a reincarnation, an evolution. The common thread of the Castaneda writings has a Taoist flavor to it, to those who are familiar with Taoist or early Chinese Buddhist literature. Listen to the bodhisattvas as they each describe their encounters with Vimalakirti; listen to each of the disciples as they, too, recount their exchanges with this sage. Inspired readers can't put this book down and soon find themselves returning to it again and again, and why not? The message is compelling, it penetrates our outer shell and strikes the heart of our True Self. What is the next stepping stone, then? Well, that's an entirely subjective question: my answer would be the Lankavatara Sutra or the Surangama Sutra; for another reader, it could be a sojourn with the tribes of the or Borneo, but the message will be the same and still remain incomprehensible: it has to be experienced to be believed yet resistant to linguistic explanation. This book is a fantastic right direction..... I give it my highest recommendation.

Great and Easy to read

Good book! got it for a class, and enjoyed the tales it told. Print quality was decent. The book doesn't need a review... it's the holy teaching of Vimalakirti!!! get with it!

The best thing that can be said of this sutra is that after reading it you'll know why this is high praise:...

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