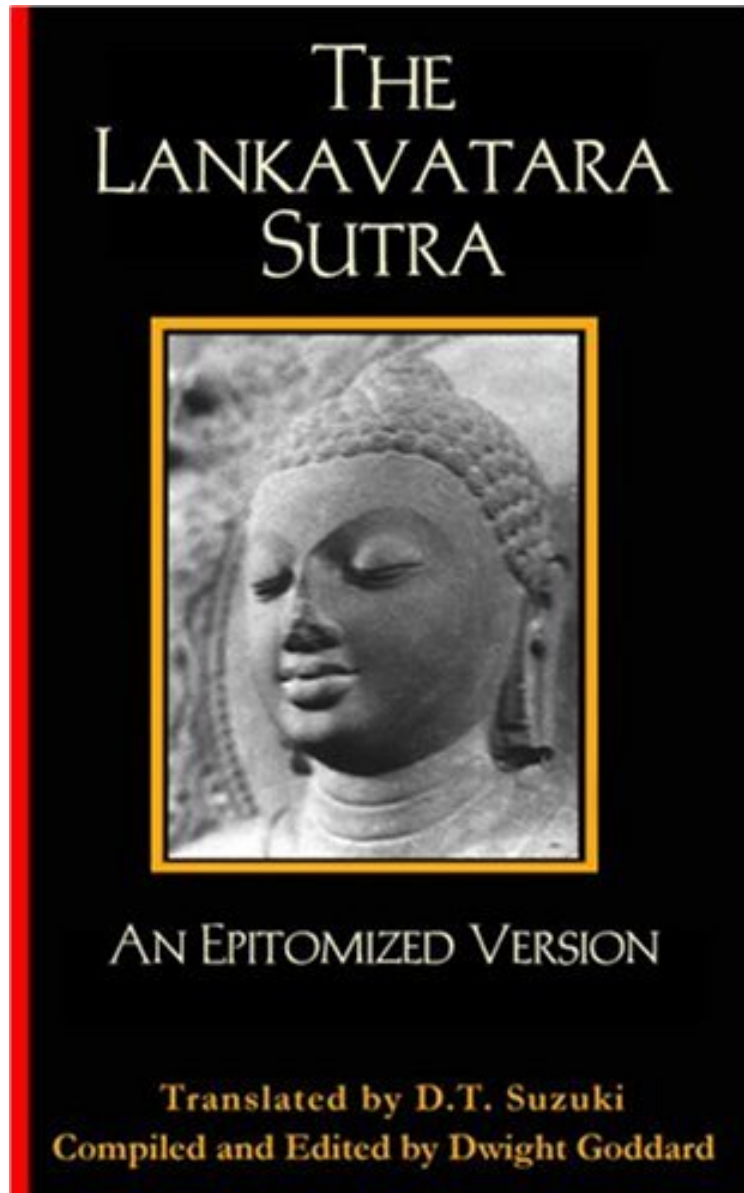


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## The Lankavatara Sutra: An Epitomized Version (Provenance Editions)

*D.T. Suzuki*

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**D.T. Suzuki : The Lankavatara Sutra: An Epitomized Version (Provenance Editions)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Lankavatara Sutra: An Epitomized Version (Provenance Editions):

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Lankavatara Sutra By J.J.M. Full of insight into the essence of True Mind and how to recognize those who have attained it. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Priceless By Hendrix If you hold truth in higher esteem than anything else, get this book now. Don't let anyone's misdirected attention (and subsequent opinion) prevent you from reading this book. People tend to worry about whether translations are accurate and representative of the original work. Focusing on these minor discrepancies blinds critics from seeing the treasure hidden within the pages of this book. I've read and outlined my copy of this book 3 times now. Words cannot describe how beneficial this piece has been to my personal development. Getting the opportunity to read a Sutra of this caliber is truly incredible. Our circumstances on Earth are infinitely fortunate - we have the opportunity to study Truth, and to do it on behalf of others. We must not waste our opportunity. Sitting here trying to come up with a description, all I can think of is one word to describe this work - priceless. This Sutra transformed me. 2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. The Invasion of Buddhism by Samkhya By L. Ron Gardner I'm going to begin this review by suggesting that readers also check out my (two-star) review of Red Pine's "Lankavatara Sutra" in order to get a more complete picture of this important Mahayana text. Although D.T. Suzuki's text has flaws, at least he, in contrast to Red Pine, understands the essential points in this text - that it is all about Mind (the Alaya, the Unborn Substratum), that this Mind is a metaphysical substance, and that the world is the objectification, or manifestation, of this Mind. This point of view, called "cittamatra" (or Consciousness-only), is in diametrical opposition to Red Pine's point of view, called "vijñaptimatra," which is that the world is nothing but ideas, with no Reality or realities behind them, and that all "dharmas" (or things) are mere mental projections, or cognitions, or representations, of one's individual mind. The Lankavatara Sutra is a hybrid, or mishmash, of three different schools: Yogacara, Madhyamika, and Samkhya, which is the yoga philosophy of Patanjali. If you really want to understand the Lankavatara Sutra, you need to study Patanjali, and the text I recommend for this is "Yoga Philosophy of Patanjali" by Swami Hariharananda Aranya. To anyone who has studied Patanjali and Advaita Vedanta, it is obvious that the Mind that the Blessed One (or Buddha) discourses on in the Lankavatara Sutra is the same Metaphysical "Substance" as the Self, or Atman, or Siva. In fact, throughout this "Hinduized" text, awakening to, and as, Mind is equated to Self-realization, which is a synonym for Nirvana, or Buddhahood. The Lankavatara Sutra is not an easy, amenable read. It is, as Buddhist scholar Edward Conze puts it, "an unwieldy system of viewpoints, paths, and categories, explained in difficult technical terminology." It is convoluted, repetitious, replete with contradictions, and flies off on speculative metaphysical tangents that have no bearing on the central theme of Mind-realization. A major reason for the contradictions is that the text is the work of more than one author, at different times. For example, as Suzuki points out, the section against meat eating is clearly a later addition to the root text, and was added to mitigate criticism against Buddhism for condoning flesh consumption. A major problem with this text is that it briefly mentions, but fails to elaborate and integrate, important elements of the Buddhahood project, such as baptism and the Dharmamegha (or Dharma Cloud). A couple times in the text, the Blessed One, in a sentence, mentions Buddhas baptizing Bodhisattvas, but nothing more is said, and no details are provided, about this Spirit (or Shakti)-transmission. The Blessed One equates Mind Awakening with the Tenth or final stage of Buddhahood, known as the Great Dharmamegha. This is likewise the final stage of Self-realization in Patanjali's Yoga system, hence Buddhism coincides with Hindu yoga at this point. What is the Dharmamegha? Although I'm not a fan of the late Osho (Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh), he summarizes it nicely: "Dharmamegha means that the Self-nature has started showering you, and you yourself become bathed in it, drown in it." In the Lankavatara Sutra, the Blessed one describes the Bodhisattva's final stage thus: "Going through the successive stage of Bodhisattvahood, he finally reached the state of the Dharma Cloud [Dharmamegha]." To the spiritual cognoscenti, The Dharmamegha (or Dharma Cloud) is the unobstructed descent of Anugraha Shakti, or the Holy Spirit, or the Sambhogakaya: the Blessing/Blissing Power that makes a Buddha a Blessed One. When this Clear-Light Energy unites with contracted Mind or Siva (mano-vijnana and klista-manas, which Suzuki improperly designates as just "manas") in the Tathagatagarbha (the womb of the Buddhas, which is akin to the Hindu Heart-cave, or "Hridayam"), then Mind shines freely as Bodhicitta, or Siva-Shakti, or Cit-Ananda. If you really want to deeply grok the Lankavatara Sutra, you will have to expand your spiritual horizons beyond Madhyamika and Zen, and in addition to Patanjali, also study Dzogchen, Hindu Kashmir Shaivism, Ramana Maharshi's esoteric teachings, and Adi Da's Daism. A final point: In this text, the Blessed One repeatedly depicts people as "ignorant," "stupid" and "simple minded." But we now live in a dumbed-down, politically correct world, and when I do this in my reviews, I catch hell. If you don't believe me, check out the reactions (comments and negative votes) to my review of Red Pine's "Lankavatara Sutra."

The Lankavatara Sutra, according to tradition, contains the actual words of the Buddha spoken in Sri Lanka (Ceylon). Nothing is known about its author, the time of its composition, or its original form. Scholars have tended to date the original compilation to early in the first century, and the written work to the fourth century of the Common Era. The sutra was foundational in establishing the central tenets of Mahayana Buddhism, and especially Zen. The Lankavatara was virtually unknown in the West until D. T. Suzuki's *Studies in the Lankavatara Sutra* was published in 1929. Suzuki's subsequent translation and publication of the *The Lankavatara Sutra* in 1932 earned him the respect and gratitude of

scholars and Buddhists worldwide. Professor Suzuki felt that an editing of the Lankavatara, for the sake of easier reading, would make the sutra more widely accessible. He encouraged the editor Dwight Goddard to take on the challenge, and the publication of the epitomised version appeared in print also in 1932, under the title, *Self-Realization of Noble Wisdom: The Lankavatara Sutra*. Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki was a renowned Buddhist scholar largely responsible for the popularity of Buddhism in the West. He was born in 1870 in North Japan. As a disciple to Zen masters at Engakuji Monastery in Kamakura, he received the name Daisetz (great humility) as a mark of enlightenment. He wrote over twenty books in English, and a similar number in Japanese. He lectured and taught in the United States, Europe and Japan. He died in 1966. Dwight Goddard was a pivotal figure in early American Zen Buddhism. Born in Worcester, Massachusetts in 1861, Goddard was an industrial engineer who made his fortune with the US government during WW1. Disillusioned with the war, he subsequently became a missionary, sent first to China, and later to Japan, where he lived in and studied at a Zen Buddhist monastery outside Kyoto for a year. After his return to the States in 1924, he began writing books on Buddhism. He wrote and edited nine titles, among them, *The Buddhist Bible*, a work credited with influencing the views of Jack Kerouac and other Beat Generation authors. John Daido Looi is the abbot of Zen Mountain Monastery in Mt. Tremper, New York and the author of many books on Buddhism. Trained in koan Zen as well as in the subtle school of Master Dogen's Zen, he is a dharma heir of Hakuyu Taizan Maezumi Roshi. He has received transmission in both the Rinzai as well as Soto lines of Zen Buddhism.

About the Author Daisetsu Teitaro Suzuki was a Japanese author of books and essays on Buddhism, Zen and Shin that were instrumental in spreading interest in both Zen and Shin (and Far Eastern philosophy in general) to the West. Suzuki was also a prolific translator of Chinese, Japanese, and Sanskrit literature. Suzuki spent several lengthy stretches teaching or lecturing at Western universities, and devoted many years to a professorship at Otani University, a Japanese Buddhist school.