

Foundations of Indian Buddhism: Suggestions for Further Reading

Below are a few excellent sources of basic information about Buddhism. They provide a good starting point for further reading and reflection.

General Works on Buddhism

Conze, Edward. *Buddhist Thought in India: Three Phases of Buddhist Philosophy*. Ann Arbor, 1967. Broad-ranging and detailed. Useful after reading, e.g., Williams's *Buddhist Thought* (see below).

Gethin, Rupert. *The Foundations of Buddhism*. Oxford, 1998. An excellent exposition of those ideas and practices that constitute a "common heritage" of an otherwise complex and diverse religious tradition. Contains chapters on Buddhist scriptures, core doctrines and their elaboration in the Abhidharma literature, the religious community, Buddhist cosmology, meditative practice, and Mahāyāna Buddhism.

Paul, Diana. *Women in Buddhism: Images of the Feminine in Mahāyāna Tradition*. Berkeley, 1979. Introductions to and translations of nineteen Mahāyāna texts, illustrating "the ambivalent attitude toward women that has been apparent in Buddhist lands in all ages and epochs."

Rahula, Walpola. *What the Buddha Taught*, rev ed. New York, 1994. The classic introduction, still timely, to basic Buddhist doctrine and practice from the perspective of the Theravāda tradition. Does not discuss Mahāyāna Buddhism.

Schumann, Hans Wolfgang. *Buddhism, An Outline of its Teachings and Schools*, translated by Georg Feuerstein. Wheaton, Ill., 1973. A serviceable overview of the tradition for the general reader, particularly with respect to the foundational doctrines of early Buddhism.

Williams, Paul, with Alexander Wynne and Anthony Tribe. *Buddhist Thought: A Complete Introduction to the Indian Tradition*. 2d. ed. New York, 2012. Another excellent introduction, written in a very approachable style. Summarizes a great deal of more recent scholarship on the development of Buddhism in India.

Williams, Paul. *Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations*, 2d ed. New York, 2009. If Williams's introduction to Buddhist thought in India has whetted your appetite for a deeper dive into the Mahāyāna, then this book is the main course. Includes chapters on the Huayan and Lotus traditions in China.

Anthologies of Buddhist Texts

Conze, Edward. *Buddhist Scriptures*. Harmondsworth, 1959. Useful especially for its grouping of texts by topic.

Conze, Edward et al., eds. *Buddhist Texts Through the Ages*. New York, 1964. Texts from the Mainstream (largely, Theravāda), Mahāyāna, and Tantric traditions, concentrating on issues of doctrine and religious practice.

deBary, Wm. Theodore et al., eds. *The Buddhist Tradition in India, China, and Japan*. New York, 1969. Representative texts from India, China, and Japan, with brief introductions.

Vedic Literature

O'Flaherty, Wendy Doniger. *The Rig Veda: An Anthology*. Harmondsworth, 1981. A translation of 108 topically arranged hymns, selected for the general reader for their religious and literary significance.

Olivelle, Patrick. *Upaniṣads*. New York, 1996. Translation of twelve early Upaniṣads with a very useful introduction to the social and literary history of the texts, Vedic ritual and cosmology, and the cosmological and psychological significance of the human body and human personality.

Reference Works and Websites

Buswell, Robert E. and Donald S. Lopez, Jr.. *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*. Princeton, 2014. A meticulously written and edited dictionary, with more detailed explanations than are usually required by the general reader. Nonetheless, the comprehensive scope of this work makes it invaluable for serious students of the tradition.

Klcey, Michael. *Buddhism, A Guide to Research*, 2d ed. <https://research.lib.buffalo.edu/buddhism/home>. From the University of Buffalo comes this “comprehensive overview of the most authoritative scholarly and popular resources on the life and teachings of the Buddha, the origins, history, ideas, beliefs, and practices of Buddhism across the globe, and a selection of links to further digital resources.” A useful bibliographical tool and a good starting place for further research.