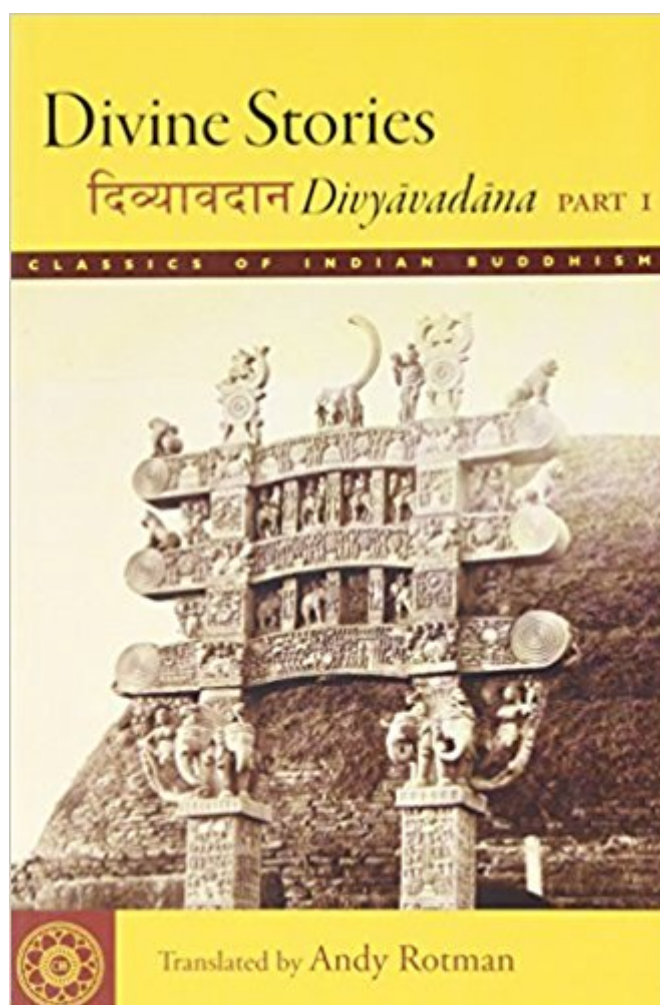


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# Divine Stories: Divyavadana, Part 1 (Classics Of Indian Buddhism) (v. 1)



## Synopsis

Divine Stories is the inaugural volume in a landmark translation series devoted to making the wealth of classical Indian Buddhism accessible to modern readers. The stories here, among the first texts to be inscribed by Buddhists, highlight the moral economy of karma, illustrating how gestures of faith, especially offerings, can bring the reward of future happiness and ultimate liberation. Originally contained in the Divyavadana, an enormous compendium of Sanskrit Buddhist narratives from the early Common Era, the stories in this collection express the moral and ethical impulses of Indian Buddhist thought and are a testament to the historical and social power of narrative. Long believed by followers to be the actual words of the Buddha himself, these divine stories are without a doubt some of the most influential stories in the history of Buddhism.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"It is our good fortune to now have part one of Andy Rotman's new translation of the Divyavadana. It is the first half of what will be the first complete translation of this important text published in a Western language, and one of the most anticipated publications in Indian Buddhism in recent years. The text as Rotman presents it is delightful and reads beautifully. Rotman spared no pains in producing the translation, conveying a sense of the text very well and often insightfully. Overall this is a very important contribution that everyone interested in Indian Buddhism should read."

(Buddhadharma)"Divine Stories offers us a rich selection from the Divyavadana, a narrative

collection of north Indian Buddhism ably translated from the Sanskrit by Andy Rotman. Sprung forth from the creative soil of the Indian Buddhist imagination, these stories concretely represent the impact of the Dharma on the lives of those who turned to it for guidance. Despite the title, these are essentially human stories which record the trials and struggles of the Buddha's personal disciples as they meander through the corridors of samsara, seeking light, purity, and final freedom."

(Bhikkhu Bodhi, author of *In the Buddha's Words*) "This new series is a very welcome initiative from Wisdom Publications. Such works are eagerly awaited by many scholars and practitioners of Buddhism throughout the world." (Jean-Luc Achard, editor of the *Revue d'Etudes Tibetaines*) "The *Divyavadana* has been known since the dawn of Buddhist studies in the West, yet no full translation of it in any European language has ever been published. Now, Andy Rotman has remedied this situation by providing a fine, readable, yet accurate rendition of the Sanskrit text, with "just the right amount" of annotation to be helpful to readers, without distracting them from the narratives. The work is of major importance, comprising dozens of stories that have been central to Buddhists for the past 1,800 years. I applaud this impressive translation and its selection as the first volume in the new Classics of Indian Buddhism series. It is really quite a remarkable achievement." (John Strong, Chair of the Department of Philosophy and Religion, Bates College) "Here are tales about ordinary people as well as monks, stories about women, princes, merchants, and slaves, not to mention a wretched pig and a bull about to be slaughtered (both of whom find their own salvation). These stories are to the Buddhist tradition what the *Arabian Nights* is to the Arabic, an ocean of stories from which Buddhist storytellers and artists throughout Asia drew their inspiration. The translation-precise, elegant, vernacular-flows clear as water in a mountain stream." (Wendy Doniger, Mircea Eliade Distinguished Service Professor of the History of Religions, University of Chicago)

Andy Rotman is an associate professor in the Religion Department at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts. He received his PhD in South Asian languages and civilizations from the University of Chicago in 2003. His research concerns the ways in which narratives and images in South Asia function as a part of social history and material culture.

While many of the early Buddhist texts and stories were written in Pali, the *Divyavadana* is one of the early texts about stories from the Buddha's life that was written in Sanskrit. Andy Rotman has done a fine translation, and these stories are a joy to read, and provide great edification. As with other stories, many revolve around past lives of the Buddha. Through these stories, one sees how

karma unfolds, and how freedom from the cycle of existence (samsara) is both desirable and possible. We are fortunate to have this fine translation and thereby an addition to the great literature available in English.

Just when you thought you knew what Buddhism was all about, these fantastic stories come along to remind you that nothing is ever as simple as it seems. Full of intrigue, magic, harrowing journeys into bizarre realms, and complex twists of fate and faith, these beautifully translated Indian narratives transport you to another place and time. Highly enjoyable, they may even blow your mind.

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