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Songs Of The Elder Sisters



Synopsis

These songs were composed during the Buddha's lifetime about 2,500 years ago by women who had renounced home life and society and joined the group of nuns founded by the Buddha. These poignant songs are about loss of beauty, wealth and family, balanced by the greater gains of peace and wisdom through enlightenment in old age. All the songs are ascribed to particular women, whose names we know. They speak as individuals, not as wives, mothers and daughters. Although Buddhist in intent, the songs are highly personal rather than pious and formal and are full of character and personality. They were passed down orally through chanting for 600 years before being written down and are among the earliest extant poems written by women. They also form the only canonical work in any religion written entirely by women. There have only been two previous translations of the works into English, neither of which was in verse. This is a translation from the Pali originals of a small selection from the 73 works in the Therigatha; no attempt has been made to capture the rhythm of the Pali language in which they were composed, just the character of the women's voices. In the original Pali texts the songs are usually set out in order of length, but I have arranged them into five sequences according to their themes.

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Customer Reviews

Unfortunately, it's all written in rhymes making it sound a bit odd and even naive in comparison to the more literary translation from the original pali version.

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