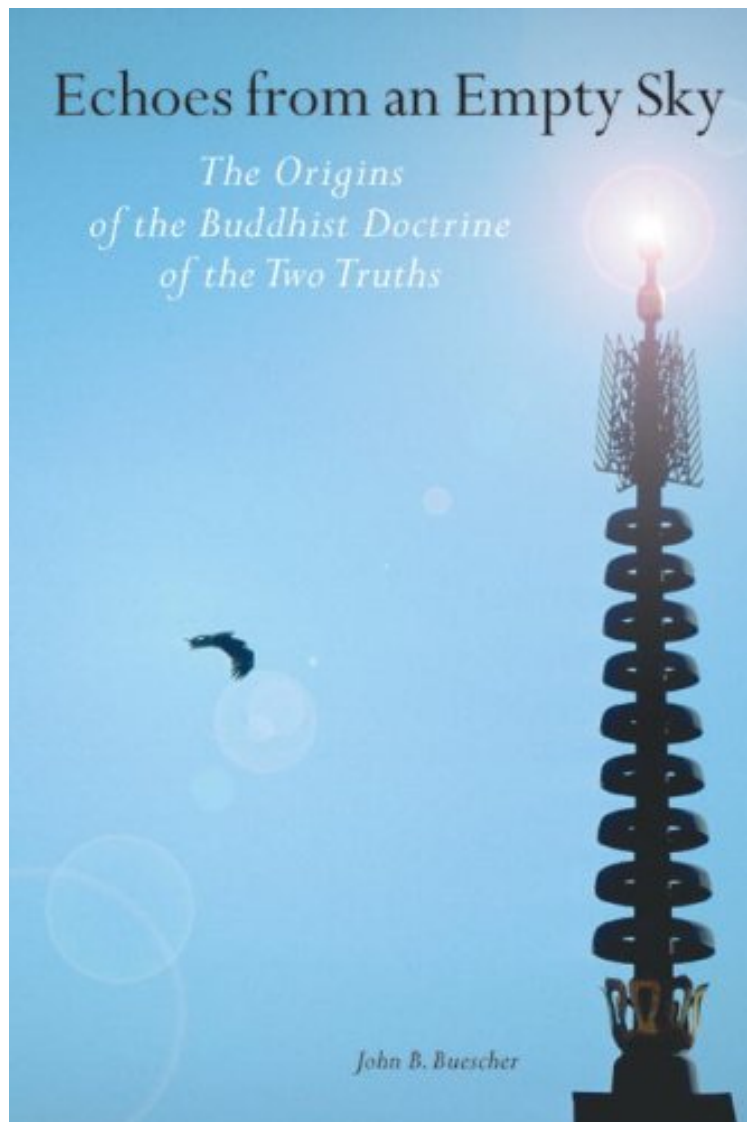


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Echoes from an Empty Sky: The Origin of the Buddhist Doctrine of the Two Truths

John B. Buescher

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John B. Buescher : Echoes from an Empty Sky: The Origin of the Buddhist Doctrine of the Two Truths before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Echoes from an Empty Sky: The Origin of the Buddhist Doctrine of the Two Truths:

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Evaluation of the fundamental Buddhist doctrine of 2 truths By Midwest Book Review Written by the head of the Voice of America's Tibetan Broadcast Service to Tibet and South

Asia, *Echoes From An Empty Sky: The Origins Of The Buddhist Doctrine Of The Two Truths* is a technical and spiritual evaluation of the fundamental Buddhist doctrine of two truths - conventional truth and ultimate truth - portrayed not as strict constructs of language, but rather as realities which language strives to accurately portray. The first truth referred to the true statements that the Buddha made; the second referred to the sorts of objects in the world. Sections discuss "Ancient Indian Speculation on Language and Reality", "Early Buddhist Views on Language, Truth, and Interpretation", "The Buddha's Word", and the two truths themselves especially in context of the Vaibhasika School and the Sravaka Schools. A scholarly study of Buddhist scripture, tenets, philosophy, and contextual reference, *Echoes From An Empty Sky* is especially recommended for intermediate to advanced Buddhist Studies reference shelves and supplemental reading lists.

The important Buddhist doctrine of the two truths--conventional truths and ultimate truths--is the subject of this book. It examines how the doctrine evolved within early Buddhism from efforts to make sense of contradictions within the collected sayings of the Buddha. The two truths, however, came to refer not primarily to statements or language, but to the realities to which statements or language referred. As such, the doctrine of the two truths became one through which Buddhist philosophers focused their efforts to elaborate an abhidharma, a higher teaching which allowed them to explain how the mind apprehends and misapprehends the world, how it attaches itself to objects that do not exist in and of themselves, thereby creating suffering. In effect, the doctrine then evolved into a distinction between different sorts of objects rather than a distinction between different sorts of statements. The doctrine of the truths understood in this way played a key role in the articulation of the Mahayana by its followers in distinguishing it from what they called Hinayana, especially in defining the central ideas of selflessness and emptiness. Unlike prior books on this topic which concentrate on the doctrine within the context of the Mahayana, Buescher's examines it within the context of the Hinayana. Tibetan Buddhist syntheses of Buddhist doctrine provide a fascinating perspective from which to compare the positions of the major Indian schools. Such works, however, often lack the historical perspective from which to discern the development of these positions.

"In *Echoes from an Empty Sky*, John Buescher offers a clear and accessible translation of an early nineteenth-century Tibetan overview of one of the most famous doctrines in Buddhist philosophy: the two truths. In a substantial introduction, he traces the history of the relation between language and truth in ancient India, focusing especially on the question of the conventional and ultimate nature of the Buddha's words." Donald S. Lopez Jr., Carl W. Belser Professor of Buddhist and Tibetan Studies, University of Michigan "A terrific book crucial for understanding and penetrating the false veils of appearance." Jeffrey Hopkins, Professor, University of Virginia From the Publisher The doctrine of the two truths--conventional and ultimate--evolved as early Buddhists struggled to reconcile apparent contradictions within the collected sayings of the Buddha. Over time, the teachings on the two truths have taken their place at the heart of the Buddhist view of reality. Buddhist philosophers have made them central to the elaboration of an abhidharma, a "higher teaching" that explains how the mind apprehends and misapprehends the world. It is through the two truths that we understand how mind attaches itself to objects having no intrinsic existence, thereby creating suffering. Understood as a teaching on reality as opposed to merely a linguistic distinction, the doctrine played a key role for the followers of Mahayana in articulating the essential differences between their own view and what they called the Hinayana view--especially in defining the central ideas of selflessness and emptiness. *Echoes from an Empty Sky*, for the first time, eschews an exclusively Mahayana standpoint for the exploration of the two truths in order to examine the doctrine in the context of the Hinayana. John B. Buescher received his Ph.D in Religious Studies from the University of Virginia. He currently heads the Voice of America's Tibetan Broadcast Service to Tibet and South Asia. He is the author of numerous books and articles. From the Back Cover The important Buddhist doctrine of the two truths--conventional truths and ultimate truths--is the subject of this book. It examines how the doctrine evolved within early Buddhism from efforts to make sense of contradictions within the collected sayings of the Buddha. The two truths, however, came to refer not primarily to statements or language, but to the realities to which statements or language referred. As such, the doctrine of the two truths became one through which Buddhist philosophers focused their efforts to elaborate an abhidharma, a "higher teaching," which allowed them to explain how the mind apprehends and misapprehends the world, how it attaches itself to objects that do not exist in and of themselves, thereby creating suffering. In effect, the doctrine then evolved into a distinction between different sorts of objects rather than a distinction between different sorts of statements. The doctrine of the truths, understood in this way, played a key role in the articulation of the Mahayana by its followers in distinguishing it from what they called Hinayana, especially in defining the central ideas of selflessness and emptiness. Unlike prior books on this topic, which concentrate on the doctrine within the context of the Mahayana, Buescher's examines it within the context of the Hinayana. "Tibetan Buddhist syntheses of Buddhist doctrine provide a fascinating perspective from which to compare the positions of the major Indian schools. Such works, however, often lack the historical perspective from which to discern the development of these positions. In *Echoes from an Empty Sky*, John Buescher offers a clear and accessible translation of an early nineteenth-century Tibetan overview of one of the most famous doctrines in Buddhist philosophy, the two

truths. In a substantial introduction, he traces the history of the relation between language and truth in ancient India, focusing especially on the question of the conventional and ultimate nature of the Buddha's words."-- Donald S. Lopez, Jr., Carl W. Belser Professor of Buddhist and Tibetan Studies, University of Michigan "A terrific book crucial for understanding and penetrating the false veils of appearance."-- Jeffrey Hopkins, Professor, University of Virginia and author of more than thirty books including *Maps of the Profound*, *Meditation on Emptiness*, and *Fluent Tibetan*. John B. Buescher received his Ph.D. in Religious Studies from the University of Virginia. He currently heads the Voice of America's Tibetan Broadcast Service to Tibet and South Asia. He is the author of numerous books and articles.