

Booklist

Advanced Review – Uncorrected Proof

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Why Buddhism Is True: The Science and Philosophy of Meditation and Enlightenment.

Wright, Robert (Author)

Aug 2017. 304 p. Simon & Schuster, hardcover, \$27. (9781439195451). 294.3.

Using a framework of evolutionary psychology and philosophy, Wright (*The Evolution of God*, 2009) leads his readers on a scientific search for the truth of Buddhism. In doing so, he proves to be an often witty, occasionally self-deprecating guide who eschews what he calls the “supernatural or more exotically metaphysical parts of Buddhism” and focuses instead on its naturalistic aspects. Some of those parts, it should be acknowledged, are dauntingly esoteric and abstruse, such as *anatta* or “not-self,” the idea that the self doesn’t exist. Happily, Wright has a talent for bringing clarity to this and what could otherwise be his subject’s murkier aspects. His examination includes familiar elements of Buddhism: Nirvana, Enlightenment (with both capital and lower-case E’s), dharma, mindfulness, and, importantly, meditation, to which he devotes the final chapter. It should be acknowledged that this is not a book for the casual reader; it requires extremely close reading and intense concentration. But the patient reader will find much here that is worth contemplating and that is, well, enlightening.

— *Michael Cart*