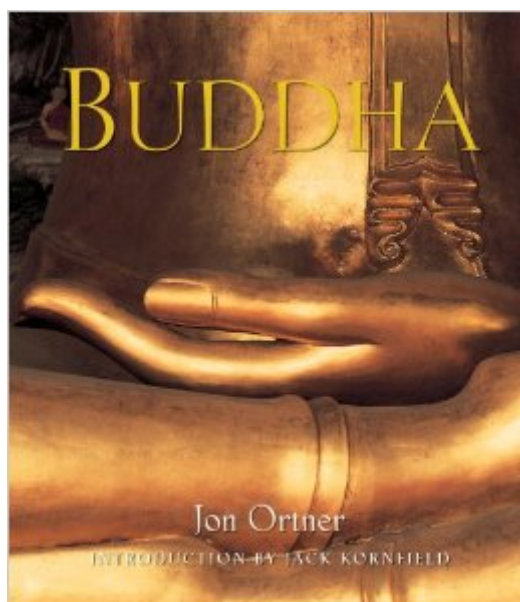


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Buddha



Synopsis

In the twenty-five centuries since the Buddha's death, his profound teachings and path have guided and enlightened millions of lives. The Buddha also has inspired some of the most beautiful and magnificent artistic creations ever produced by humanity. Jon Ortner's photographs of over 150 of these extraordinary works of art grace this volume. From the hundreds of rare Laotian Buddhas filling the Pak Ou Caves to the colossal gold and gem-encrusted Maha Muni Buddha of Mandalay, the Buddha's wisdom, compassion, and serenity are eternally present. Simple but powerful verses from the sacred teachings of the Buddha accompany the photographs. The foreword by Jon Ortner talks about their creation and the introduction by Jack Kornfield gives the reader an understanding of the Buddha's life and influence. Additional notes in the back of the book provide descriptive and historic information on key images. Back in print with a stunning new cover, this is the perfect gift for practicing Buddhists as well as anyone simply looking for an added measure of beauty and peace in his or her life.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I received this book as a gift and immediately ordered 10 to give out as holiday gifts. The book is a brilliant gem in all ways. I flipped through the pages and felt an instant feeling of excitement and calmness at the same time. The placement of quotes and photos is inspiring. I was especially moved by a photo titled Bayon, Angkor Thom, Siem Reap, Cambodia, which shows a stone Buddha draped elegantly in an orange cloth next to a holy person holding a simple incense stick. I was

moved by the simplicity and honesty of this photo and all the photos in the book. The cover and binding are beautiful. I've had the book on my desk for a day and everyone who came into my office picked it up and admired it. I couldn't get any work done because each person looked through the book. It wasn't the normal reaction that people have to a beautiful book. There is something much deeper going on with this book. In these troubled times, this is the perfect book to have because it seems to dispense some kind of peace to everyone who touches it.

In offering this window into a sacred world, Ortner has done a dharma - a service or duty - for us all. Each image is unique and yet over the course of this extraordinary, visionary book one distills out a basic, fundamental Buddha. While most of the Buddhas are pristine - others are ancient and untended - and yet every one of these extraordinary, resonant images of a living god is unique and at the very pinnacle of Himalayan sacred art. Coupled with the perfectly matched sacred writings, the effect is more direct and more spiritual - more transformative - than other books on Asia and Buddhism. Certainly, texts on the Buddha come nowhere near the presence and deep connection created by the Ortner book. Some of the locations are recognizable to anyone who has traveled in Asia, but many remote, little-known shrines are included - such as Kakku, Po Win Daung Caves and Kyaiktiyo in Myanmar, Pak Ou Caves in Laos, and Beng Mealea in Cambodia. Only a lucky few who have journeyed to these sacred places can understand the difficulties that Ortner must have faced and overcome, as well as the years of research and personal exploration necessary to understand the meaning of these historically- and spiritually-charged sites. The production values in this book match its sacred subject and Ortner's crystal-clear, brilliant color images. This art-object book is beautifully designed in an orange satin cover (the saffron of a monk's robe) featuring a gold-stamped lotus, the symbol of Buddhist purity. The company chosen to reproduce these superb color photographs, Toppan, as evidenced by the exquisite clarity and color fidelity, is yet another sign of the top-to-bottom care taken with this gem. Also worthy of note are the spare, uncluttered translations of the Dhammapada by Oxford scholar, Thomas Byrom, offering the wisdom of the Buddha, in his own words, without the usual religious dogma that gets between the reader and the Buddha's actual message. This book was clearly meant to be a precious object: small enough to be held in your hands, it is the very personal photographic expression of what shines through as Ortner's own quest: the artistic expression of spiritual wisdom through his extraordinary images. This volume succeeds beautifully, perfectly, on all its levels and is a true contribution to our cultural, personal and spiritual development. Most highly recommended - a beautiful, jewel of a book.

I'm not a Buddhist and I don't believe in reincarnation but I love this book anyway! It's packed with astonishing beauty and more than a few nuggets of wisdom. Virtually every page displays a breathtaking color photograph of stunning art or spectacular architecture. Highly recommended.--Guy P. Harrison, author of *50 Reasons People Give for Believing in a God* and *50 Popular Beliefs That People Think are True*

Like a precious stone. This book is small while its value is great. I suspect they made it that size to keep it very affordable and portable. After the first time I thumbed through it I already had a list of friends that I knew would love to have it. The translations of the verses from the Dhammapada are stunning. The wisdom deep and simple. One need not be Buddhist to feel the depth and draw from the wisdom. But the real luster and light that make up the "facets" of this particular precious stone are the photographs of the Buddhas and Buddhists. The lengths that Ortner must have gone to, the rareness of the images (many of the Buddhas in this book are in places where very few outsiders are allowed to go and in places very difficult to get to) are a tribute--an offering if you will--to his own devotion toward achieving and sharing the incredible beauty he seems so greatly drawn to. It is our good fortune that this book, filled with radiance and simplicity, is so affordable. Like the gift of prayer flags, both giver and receiver will feel blessed.

I became a fan of Jon Ortner's incredible work when I was given a copy of *Where Every Breath is a Prayer* (Abbeville Press: 2001). This new book entirely on Buddha is a fantastic revival of the essence of Buddhism. The book has a Foreword by Jon giving insight into his motivations and intentions, which brings his heart into the process shining brightly. The Preface by Kornfield is a must read for anyone new to Buddhist spirituality, as it is clear and concise, showing the meaning of Enlightenment (a much overused word). Then the feast begins with Jon's extraordinary photo journalism leading you on a tour of Asian Buddhist places of pilgrimage. Wow! The combination of photos and sayings from Siddhartha the Great Lord Buddha, make this a perfect gift for all your Buddhist friends, or a gentle introduction to the life of this Avatar. Great work Mr. Ortner! May all beings be happy. May all beings be free. Laurent

I expected that this book would have more content than it did. Basically it's just some short blurbs followed by some stunning looking pictures. I take it that it's supposed to be an amazing coffee table book, of some sort. The version I received a really high quality print with a very neat texture on the cover. It only took about 20 minutes to read the entire thing, so I feel a bit cheated on that part. But I

still like having it around.

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