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The Star Spangled Buddhist: Zen, Tibetan, And Soka Gakkai Buddhism And The Quest For Enlightenment In America

"Ourvan offers a succinct but illuminating overview of Zen, Tibetan, and Soka Gakkai Buddhism." — Publishers Weekly

The Star-Spangled BUDDHIST



Zen, Tibetan, and Soka Gakkai Buddhism
and the Quest for Enlightenment
in America



J E F F O U R V A N



Synopsis

Ourvan offers a succinct but illuminating overview of Zen, Tibetan, and Soka Gakkai Buddhism." Publishers Weekly Approximately four million Americans claim to be Buddhist. Moreover, hundreds of thousands of Americans of various faiths read about Buddhism, are interested in its philosophical tenets, or fashionably view themselves as Buddhists. They're part of what's been described as the fastest-growing religious movement in America: a large group of people dissatisfied with traditional religious offerings and thirsty for an approach to spirituality grounded in logic and consistent with scientific knowledge. The Star-Spangled Buddhist is a provocative look at these American Buddhists through their three largest movements in the United States: the Soka Gakkai International, Tibetan/Vajrayana Buddhism, and Zen Buddhism. The practice of each of these American schools, unlike most traditional Asian Buddhist sects, is grounded in the notion that all people are capable of attaining enlightenment in this lifetime. • But the differences are also profound: the spectrum of philosophical expression among these American Buddhist schools is as varied as that observed between Reformed, Orthodox, and Hasidic Judaism. The Star-Spangled Buddhist isn't written from the perspective of a monk or academic but rather from the view of author Jeff Ourvan, a lifelong-practicing lay Buddhist. As Ourvan explores the American Buddhist movement through its most popular schools, he arrives at a clearer understanding for himself and the reader about what it means to be and how one might choose to be a Buddhist in America.

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Customer Reviews

I've read a lot of books on Buddhism but never one that I felt was this good at explaining Buddhism to a non-Buddhist. I feel this is the perfect Buddhist book that has been sorely lacking in our American literature and culture. Clearly the author seems to be a very well informed and deeply spiritual person but also practical and extremely engaged in trying to help the reader understand the differences in 3 popular sects of Buddhism in America. I really love that I can feel both the passion and compassion in this writing. I loved the introduction where the author really showed us his human side and let us get an inside view into his introduction into Buddhism. I think anyone who has a self-effacing attitude and can be real is always a gem - so kudos to the author for that! It was also very refreshing that the author, Jeff Ourvan, who practices Nichiren Buddhism seems able to impartially view the different practices and allow the reader to come to their own conclusions. He states his reasonings for practicing the Buddhism he has chosen but does so in a very informative and respectful manner. Again, what a satisfyingly refreshing and enlightened read. I really appreciated the explanation of the mentor disciple relationship in Buddhism as that has always confused me. The author's own explanation of his experience in selecting a mentor was helpful. I also am always very interested in what kind of person wrote this book, being a fledgling writer myself, and I really like how he ended it by saying "I now live with my new wife, our three children, and, in my heart, my mentor on our mundane and exquisitely ordinary own little island of dharma." And then he goes on to say how he is able to strive for his own happiness daily through his Buddhist chanting. Very cool!

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