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A Cultural History of Japanese Buddhism offers a comprehensive, nuanced, and chronological account of the evolution of Buddhist religion in Japan from the sixth century to the present day. Traces each period of Japanese history to reveal the complex and often controversial histories of Japanese Buddhists and their unfolding narratives Examines relevant social, political, and transcultural contexts, and places an emphasis on Japanese Buddhist discourses and material culture Addresses the increasing competition between Buddhist, Shinto, and Neo-Confucian world-views through to the mid-nineteenth century Informed by the most recent research, including the latest Japanese and Western scholarship Illustrates the richness and complexity of Japanese Buddhism as a lived religion, offering readers a glimpse into the development of this complex and often misunderstood tradition

In its teachings, practices and institutions, Buddhism in its varied Asian forms is centrally concerned with death and the dead. This title offers a comparative investigation of this topic across the major Buddhist cultures of India, Sri Lanka, China, Japan, Tibet and Burma.

"For more than a thousand years, Buddhism has dominated Japanese death rituals and concepts of the afterlife. The nine essays in this volume, ranging chronologically from the tenth century to the present, bring to light both continuity and change in death practices over time. They also explore the interrelated issues of how Buddhist death rites have addressed individual concerns about the afterlife while also filling social and institutional needs and how Buddhist death-related practices have assimilated and refigured elements from other traditions, bringing together disparate, even conflicting, ideas about the dead, their postmortem fate, and what constitutes normative Buddhist practice." "Death and the Afterlife in Japanese Buddhism constitutes a major step toward understanding how Buddhism in Japan has forged and retained its hold on deathrelated thought and practice, providing one of the most detailed and comprehensive accounts of the topic to date."--BOOK JACKET.

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Becoming the Buddha is the first book-length study of a key ritual of Buddhist practice in Asia: the consecration of a Buddha image or "new Buddha," a ceremony by which the Buddha becomes present or alive. Through a richly detailed, accessible exploration of this ritual in northern Thailand, an exploration that stands apart from standard text-based or anthropological approaches, Donald Swearer makes a major contribution to our understanding of the Buddha image, its role in Buddhist devotional life, and its relationship to the veneration of Buddha relics. Blending ethnography, analysis, and Buddhist texts related to this mimetic reenactment of the night of the Buddha's enlightenment, he demonstrates that the image becomes the Buddha's surrogate by being invested with the Buddha's story and charged with the extraordinary power of Buddhahood. The process by which this transformation occurs through chant, sermon, meditation, and the presence of charismatic monks is at the heart of this book. Known as "opening the eyes of the Buddha," image consecration traditions throughout Buddhist Asia share much in common. Within the cultural context of northern Thailand, *Becoming the Buddha* illuminates scriptural accounts of the making of the first Buddha image; looks at debates over the ritual's historical origin, at Buddhological insights achieved, and at the hermeneutics of absence and presence; and provides a thematic comparison of several Buddhist traditions.

Buddhism is popularly seen as a religion stressing the truth of impermanence. How, then, to account for the long-standing veneration, in Asian Buddhist communities, of bone fragments, hair, teeth, and other bodily bits said to come from the historic Buddha? Early European and American scholars of religion, influenced by a characteristic Protestant bias against relic worship, declared such practices to be superstitious and fraudulent, and far from the true essence of Buddhism. John Strong's book, by contrast, argues that relic veneration has played a serious and integral role in Buddhist traditions in South and Southeast Asia-and that it is in no way foreign to Buddhism. The book is structured around the life story of the Buddha, starting with traditions about relics of previous buddhas and relics from the past lives of the Buddha Sakyamuni. It then considers the death of the Buddha, the collection of his bodily relics after his cremation, and stories of their spread to different parts of Asia. The book ends with a consideration of the legend of the future parinirvana (extinction) of the relics prior to the advent of the next Buddha, Maitreya. Throughout, the author does not hesitate to explore the many versions of these legends and to relate them to their ritual, doctrinal, artistic, and social contexts.

Offering the complete English translation of the Buddhist chronicle called the 'Sinhala Thupavamsa', composed by Parākrama Paṇḍita in 13th century Sri Lanka, this work also relates the mythological history of the Buddhas previous lives as a bodhisattva and concludes with a prediction about the future Buddha Maitreya.

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Magnificent art and architecture created for the emperor with the financial support of powerful warlords at the beginning of Japan's early modern era (1580s-1680s) testify to the continued cultural and ideological significance of the imperial family. Works created in this context are discussed in this groundbreaking study, with over 100 illustrations in color.

As an incredibly diverse religious system, Buddhism is constantly changing. The Oxford Handbook of Contemporary Buddhism offers a comprehensive collection of work by leading scholars in the field that tracks these changes up to the present day. Taken together, the book provides a blueprint to understanding Buddhism's past and uses it to explore the ways in which Buddhism has transformed in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The volume contains 41 essays, divided into two sections. The essays in the first section examine the historical development of Buddhist traditions throughout the world. These chapters cover familiar settings like India, Japan, and Tibet as well as the less well-known countries of Vietnam, Bhutan, and the regions of Latin America, Africa, and Oceania. Focusing on changes within countries and transnationally, this section also contains chapters that focus explicitly on globalization, such as Buddhist international organizations and diasporic communities. The second section tracks the relationship between Buddhist traditions and particular themes. These chapters review Buddhist interactions with contemporary topics such as violence and peacebuilding, and ecology, as well as Buddhist influences in areas such as medicine and science. Offering coverage that is both expansive and detailed, The Oxford Handbook of Contemporary Buddhism delves into some of the most debated and contested areas within Buddhist Studies today.

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