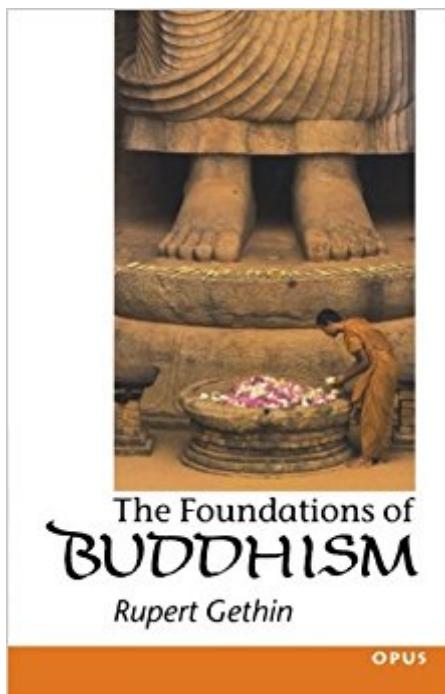


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The Foundations Of Buddhism (Opus S)



Synopsis

Buddhism is a vast and complex religious and philosophical tradition with a history that stretches over 2,500 years, and which is now followed by around 115 million people. In this introduction to the foundations of Buddhism, Rupert Gethin concentrates on the ideas and practices which constitute the common heritage of the different traditions of Buddhism (Theravada, Tibetan, and Eastern) that exist in the world today. From the narrative of the story of the Buddha, through discussions of aspects such as textual traditions, the framework of the Four Noble Truths, the interaction between the monastic and lay ways of life, the cosmology of karma and rebirth, and the path of the bodhisattva, this book provides a stimulating introduction to Buddhism as a religion and way of life.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"This is the best introduction to Indian Buddhism that I have seen. It makes extensive use of the most current scholarship."--David Carpenter, St. Joseph's University

Rupert Gethin is co-founder of the Centre for Buddhist Studies at the University of Bristol and a specialist in Indian Buddhism.

Though Gethin's book is now a little old, it remains the best introduction to Buddhism for Western academics. He treats all topics within and divisions of Buddhism with respect and a scholar's eye for accuracy. He respects the tradition, and even goes so far as to dispel myths perpetuated by early

Western scholars of Buddhism, while still giving an academic treatment that will be intelligible and accessible to those with no background in Eastern thinking. This book may be slightly boring for those with a firm grounding and broad knowledge base, but I found myself picking up nuances and details that had not been covered by the other books I read on the topic. This is the only book on Buddhism that I have read so far that I feel does not require a teacher or extensive background knowledge to make it clear.

I'm new to the study of Buddhism, but I have an academic background, and the style of this book very much addressed my learning style and needs. There is a lot of information, presented in such a way as to not disparage one sect or school, or favor one at the expense of another. This text presents information as straightforwardly as possible, making an attempt to share what is common to all Buddhists, and then delves into some of the differences between individual schools and practices without favoring one at the expense of another.

--Just a brief five-star vote for this wonderful book.--The author has been President of the venerable Pali Text Society, among the most significant Buddhist organizations in the West (the Society did most of the "heavy lifting" for the English translations of the classical Pali texts, the language used by early practitioners and scholars in the Theravada tradition).--Other reviewers have adequately highlighted the values of this text. It's an excellent overall introduction. The author's background is most valuable for classical Buddhism, but he provides a solid foundation for understanding later Buddhism. A superb and credible viewpoint and a superb choice for an introduction to Buddhist thought.

It was the textbook that a study group went by, and I went whenever I could. It definitely opened the areas of Buddhism that I was not familiar with before and certain part about meditation is in-depth. It requires and is worth and more review, thinking, practice, etc.

Good!

This book is an excellent introduction to Buddhism for serious students. In some depth, it introduces all of the main Buddhist texts and their contents and histories, and provides an overview of Buddhist thought and practice from the relatively straightforward (e.g. the Four Noble Truths and the different branches of Buddhism through history and up to the present) to the incredibly complex (e.g.

Buddhist cosmology and its evolution out of the developing Hindu and other contemporary religions and sects). Excellent bib as well. Very highly recommended.

The best introductory text I have read on Buddhism; beautifully written and very accurate as far as my ability to judge extends. Regarding the controversy in the reviews here, people need to remember that there are more components to Buddhism than the words of the Buddha. First, the worldview in India at that time included gods, demons, hellworlds, reincarnation etc, and it would be unrealistic to expect them to not be a part of Buddhist writings. Second is the the huge religion and tradition of writing that expanded upon the words of the Buddha. In the west, we have a wide variety of those Buddhist traditions available, and we have the luxury of being able to pick one that suits us best.

I found this to be a fascinating general history of Buddhist thought, very dense with information and insights. (And I mean dense - this is not an "Idiot's Guide to..." by any means.) I am looking forward to reading it again in the near future. P.S. Contrary to the (very puzzling) one-star review below, this book hardly has "page after page listing date after date

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