Certain questions have recurred throughout the history of philosophy. They are the big questions—about happiness and the good life, the limits of knowledge, the ultimate structure of reality, the nature of consciousness, the relation between causality and free will, the pervasiveness of suffering, and the conditions for a just and flourishing society—that thinkers in different cultures across the ages have formulated in their own terms in an attempt to make sense of their lives and the world around them. The essays in this book turn to the major figures and texts of the Buddhist tradition in order to expand and enrich our thinking on these enduring questions. Examining them from a comparative and cross-cultural perspective demonstrates the value of alternative ways of addressing philosophical problems, showing how different approaches can produce new and unexpected kinds of questions and answers. Engaging with the Buddhist tradition, this book shows, helps return philosophy to its practical as well as theoretical aim: not only understanding the world but also knowing how to live in it. Featuring striking and generative comparisons of Buddhist and Western thought, Philosophy's Big Questions challenges our thinking in fundamental ways and offers readers new conceptual tools, methods, and insights for the pursuit of a good and happy life.

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.
In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Buddhism in Asia was transformed by the impact of colonial modernity and new technologies and began to spread in earnest to the West. Transnational networking among Asian Buddhists and early western converts engendered pioneering attempts to develop new kinds of Buddhism for a globalized world, in ways not controlled by any single sect or region. Drawing on new research by scholars worldwide, this book brings together some of the most extraordinary episodes and personalities of a period of almost a century from 1860-1960. Examples include Indian intellectuals who saw Buddhism as a homegrown path for a modern post-colonial future, poor whites 'going native' as Asian monks, a Brooklyn-born monk who sought to convert Mussolini, and the failed 1950s attempt to train British monks to establish a Thai sangha in Britain. Some of these stories represent creative failures, paths not taken, which may show us alternative possibilities for a more diverse Buddhism in a world dominated by religious nationalisms. Other pioneers paved the way for the mainstreaming of new forms of Buddhism in later decades, in time for the post-1960s takeoff of 'global Buddhism'.

The book was originally published as a special issue of Contemporary Buddhism.
What is Buddhist Feminism? This book examines reasons why Buddhism and feminism may seem to be incompatible, and shows that Buddhist and feminist philosophies can work together to challenge patriarchal structures. Current scholarship usually compares Buddhism and feminism to judge their compatibility, rather than describing a Buddhist Feminist perspective or method. Sokthan Yeng instead looks for a pattern that connects Buddhist and feminist traditions. In particular, she explores possible exchanges between feminist and Buddhist philosophies which highlight how they each contribute to a more nuanced understanding of anger. Yeng explores how a Buddhist feminist approach would allow women's anger to be transformed from that which is outside the bounds of philosophy into that which contributes to philosophical discourse in the East and West, and between the two.

What would a Buddhist theory of texts look like through the lens of the 5th-century thinker Buddhaghosa? In Voice of the Buddha, Maria Heim reads from the principal commentator, editor, and translator of the Theravada intellectual tradition, yielding fresh insight into all three collections of the early Pali texts: Vinaya, the Suttas, and the Abhidhamma. Buddhaghosa considered the Buddha to be omniscient, the Buddha's words to be “oceanic.” Every word, passage, book—indeed the corpus as a whole—is taken to be “endless and immeasurable” in Buddhaghosa’s view. Commentarial practice thus requires disciplined methods of expansion, drawing out the endless possibilities for meaning and application. Heim considers Buddhaghosa’s theories of texts, and follows his practices of exegesis to discover how he explored scripture’s infinity. By examining the significance of the immeasurability of scripture in commentarial practice and as a general principle, this book offers new tools to understand the huge scriptural and commentarial literature of the Pali tradition. And by taking seriously a traditional commentator’s theory of texts, it beckons us to learn from commentaries themselves how we might read and interpret them and the texts on which they comment.

Step into a Burmese temple built between the late seventeenth and early nineteenth centuries and you are surrounded by a riot of color and imagery. The majority of the highly detailed wall paintings displays Buddhist biographical narratives, inspiring the devotees to follow the Buddha’s teachings. Alexandra Green goes one step further to consider the temples and their contents as a whole, arguing that the wall paintings mediate the relationship between the architecture and the main Buddha statues in the temples. This forges a unified space for the devotees to interact with the Buddha and his community, with the aim of transforming the devotees’ current and future lives. These temples were a cohesively articulated and represented Burmese Buddhist world to which the devotees belonged. Green’s visits to more than 160 sites with identifiable subject matter form the basis of this richly illustrated volume, which draws upon art historical, anthropological, and religious studies methodologies to analyze the wall paintings and elucidate the contemporary religious, political, and social concepts that drove the creation of this lively art form. “Buddhist Visual Cultures, Rhetoric, and Narrative in Late Burmese Wall Paintings is truly a tour de force that allows us to see Burmese temple paintings of the Life of the Buddha and similar themes as an open-ended genre that, like literary discourse, participates in wider social, intellectual, and religious contexts.” —Juliane Schober, Arizona State University

“Alexandra Green introduces this relatively unknown material and subjects it to sophisticated analysis. This study is major step towards creating a template that could be used for analyzing other late traditions of Buddhist painting.” —Janice Leoshko, University of Texas at Austin

The SAGE Encyclopedia of the Sociology of Religion takes a three-pronged look at this, namely investigating the role of religion in society; unpacking and evaluating the significance of religion in and on human history; and tracing and outlining the social forces and influences that shape religion. This encyclopedia covers a range of themes from: • fundamental topics like definitions • secularization • dimensions of religiosity to such emerging issues as civil religion • new religious movements This Encyclopedia also addresses contemporary dilemmas such as fundamentalism and extremism and the role of gender in religion.
Theravada Buddhism: Continuity, Diversity, and Identity

This book provides a comprehensive introduction to Theravada Buddhism, covering its historical development, diverse aspects, and contemporary significance. It explores various themes such as Buddhist languages and texts, worldviews, religious practices, social forms, state and politics, economy, art and architecture, modernization and globalization, and interactions with other religions. The book illustrates the richness of Buddhist perspectives on these questions from history to the present day. It is evident that the positive Western image of Buddhism as a peaceful, worldly, and meditative enlightenment teaching often overlooks significant religious and economic interests, as well as the persecution of non-Buddhists or the justification of war and violence. Oliver Freiberger and Christoph Kleine aim to highlight the complexity and fascinations of Buddhism through case studies, thereby engaging interest in less popular, yet significant aspects of the religion.

A Cutting Edge Introduction to Contemporary Religious Studies Theory, Connecting Theory to Data

This innovative coursebook introduces students to interdisciplinary theoretical tools for understanding contemporary religiously diverse societies—both Western and non-Western. It covers a wide array of issues relevant to students and scholars, including theoretical approaches such as decolonial, feminist, hermeneutical, poststructuralist, and phenomenological analyses. It addresses the debate on the meaning of the term "religion," the insider-outsider debate, material religion, and lived religion. The book examines plural and religiously diverse societies, including the theological ideas of traditions and the political and social questions that arise for those living alongside adherents of other religions. Designed for instructors to explore ideas presented in each chapter in multiple ways, engage students in classroom activities, and integrate additional material, it is suitable for a range of courses.

Myanmar's security forces have conducted clearance operations in the Rakhine State since August 2017, driving a mass exodus of ethnic Rohingyas to neighboring Bangladesh. The Rohingya Crisis: Analyses, Responses, and Peacebuilding

Kawser Ahmed and Helal Mohiuddin address core questions about the conflict and its global and regional significance. They identify the defining characteristics of Rohingya identity, analyze the conflict, depict the geo-economic and geo-political factors contributing to the conflict, and outline peacebuilding avenues available for conflict transformation at the macro-, meso-, and micro-level. This book is recommended for students and scholars of anthropology, sociology, peace and conflict studies, political science, and Asian studies.

Rewriting Buddhism

Alastair Gornall argues that the reform era's (1157–1270) literary productivity was not born of political stability, as often thought, but rather of the social, economic, and political turmoil brought about by invasions and civil wars. Faced with unprecedented uncertainty, the monastic community sought greater political autonomy, styled itself as royal court, and undertook a series of reforms. Central to the process of reform was the production of new forms of Pali literature, which helped create a new conceptual and social coherence within the reformed community, preserving and protecting their religious tradition.

Over the course of the nineteenth century, most of the Theravada world of Southeast Asia came under the colonial domination of European powers. While this has long been seen as a central event in the development of modern forms of Theravada Buddhism, most discussions have focused on specific Buddhist communities or nations, and particularly their resistance to colonialism. The chapters in this book examine the many different colonial contexts and regimes that Theravada Buddhists experienced, not just those of European powers such as the British, French, but also the internal colonialism of China and Thailand. They show that while many Buddhists resisted colonialism, other Buddhists shared agendas with colonial powers, such as for the reform of the monastic community. They also show that in some places, such as Singapore and Malaysia, colonialism enabled the development of new religious concepts and practices.
creation of Theravada Buddhist communities. The book demonstrates the importance of thinking about colonialism both locally and regionally. Providing a new understanding of the breadth of experiences of Theravada and colonialism across Asia, this book will be of interest to scholars in the field of Buddhist Studies, Asian History, Comparative World History, Southeast Asian Studies and Religious Studies.

A groundbreaking exploration of a practice tradition that was nearly lost to history. Theravada Buddhism, often understood as the school that most carefully preserved the practices taught by the Buddha, has undergone tremendous change over time. Prior to Western colonialism in Asia—which brought Western and modernist intellectual concerns, such as the separation of science and religion, to bear on Buddhism—there existed a tradition of embodied, esoteric, and culturally regional Theravada meditation practices. This once-dominant traditional meditation system, known as borān kammatthāna, is related to—yet remarkably distinct from—Vipassana and other Buddhist and secular mindfulness practices that would become the hallmark of Theravada Buddhism in the twentieth century. Drawing on a quarter century of research, scholar Kate Crosby offers the first holistic discussion of borān kammatthāna, illuminating the historical events and cultural processes by which the practice has been marginalized in the modern era.

This book introduces contemporary Buddhists from across Asia and from various walks of life. Eschewing traditional hagiographies, the editors have collected sixty-six profiles of individuals who would be excluded from most Buddhist histories and ethnographies. In addition to monks and nuns, readers will encounter artists, psychologists, social workers, part-time priests, healers, and librarians as well as charlatans, hucksters, profiteers, and rabble-rousers—all whose lives reflect changes in modern Buddhism even as they themselves shape the course of these changes. The editors and contributors are fundamentally concerned with how individual Buddhists make meaning and display this understanding to others. Some practitioners profiled look to the past, lamenting the transformations Buddhism has undergone in recent times, while others embrace these. Some have adopted a "new asceticism," while others are eager to explore different religious traditions as they think about their own ways of being Buddhist. Arranging the profiles according to these themes—looking backward, forward, inward, and outward—reveals the value of studying individual Buddhists and their idiosyncratic religious backgrounds and attitudes, thus highlighting the diversity of approaches to the practice and study of Buddhism in Asia today. Students and teachers will welcome sections on further readings and additional tables of contents that organize the profiles thematically, as well as by tradition (Theravada, Mahayana, Vajrayana), region, and country.

"Discover the esoteric branch of Theravada meditation in the first English-language exploration of a practice tradition nearly lost to history. In this groundbreaking book, scholar Kate Crosby illuminates the once-dominant traditional Theravada meditation system known as borān kammatthāna. Theravadan Buddhism, though often understood as the school that most carefully preserved the practices originally taught by the Buddha, has in fact undergone tremendous change over time. Prior to Western concerns with the separation of science and religion that influenced Asian Buddhist modernizers, there existed a tradition of embodied, esoteric, and culturally regional Theravadan meditation practices. These meditation systems differ radically from the reformed, text-based meditations that are now taught in Theravada Buddhism, including Vipassana and Insight Meditation, as well as Buddhist and secular mindfulness. Drawing on a quarter century of research, Crosby offers the first holistic discussion of borān kammatthāna in the context of historical events and cultural processes by which the practice has been marginalized in the modern era. Readers of Esoteric Theravada will never see Theravada Buddhism in the same light again."

In this strikingly illustrated and authoritative volume, readers have an introduction to one of the world's greatest living faiths. 200 color photos, maps & drawings.

This book explores contemporary practices within the new institution of international meditation centers in Thailand. It discusses the development of the lay vipassana meditation movement in Thailand and relates Thai Buddhism to contemporary processes of commodification and globalisation. Through an examination of how meditation centers are promoted internationally, the author considers how Thai Buddhism is translated for and embodied within international tourists who participate in meditation retreats in Thailand.

Shedding new light on the decontextualization of religious practices, and raising new questions concerning tourism and religion, this book focuses on the nature of cultural.
code or form of regulation that required obedience, the Vinaya had a double nature in that its rules could be transgressed and that offenders could be dealt with appropriately in
develop a unique sense of collective governance based on self regulation, self-governance and self-discipline. Third, he argues that while the Vinaya has been seen by some as
a conception of authority. While lawmakers in some religious groups may be seen as authoritative, in the sense that leaders or founders were coercive or charismatic, the Buddhist

This book suggests that previous critiques of the rules of Buddhist monks (Vinaya) may now be reconsidered in order to deal with some of the assumptions concerning the legal

While lawmakers in some religious groups may be seen as authoritative, in the sense that leaders or founders were coercive or charismatic, the Buddhist

The concept of authority allows for a degree of freedom for the individual to shape or form themselves. Second, he shows that the confession ritual acted as a disciplinary measure to
confession rituals were a disciplinary measure to

Elverskog shows the ways in which Buddhist expansion not only entailed the displacement of local gods and myths with those of the Dharma—as was the case with Christianity and Islam—but also involved

In the current popular imagination, Buddhism is often understood to be

Meditation techniques, including mindfulness, have become popular wellbeing practices and the scientific study of their effects has recently turned 50 years old. But how much do

Elverskog demonstrates how this scriptural tradition propelled Buddhists to seek wealth and power across Asia and to exploit both the people and the environment. Elverskog shows the ways

Buddhists are perceived as extending compassion beyond people and animals to include plants and the earth itself out of a concern for the total living environment. In The

A corrective to the contemporary idea that Buddhism has always been an environmentally friendly religion. In the current popular imagination, Buddhism is often understood to be

Elverskog surveys the expansion of Buddhism across Asia in the period between 500 BCE and 1500 CE, when Buddhist institutions were built from Iran and

We know about them: what were they developed for and by whom? How similar or different are they, how effective can they be in changing our minds and biology, what are their

Dharma that declared riches to be a sign of good karma and the means by which spiritual status could be elevated through donations bequeathed to Buddhist institutions. He

Buddhism is, in fact, an expansive religious and political system premised on generating wealth through the exploitation

Elverskog demonstrates how this scriptural tradition propelled Buddhists to seek wealth and power across Asia and to exploit both the people and the environment. Elverskog shows the ways

In The Buddha's Footprint, Johan Elverskog contends that only by jettisoning this contemporary image of Buddhism as a purely ascetic and apolitical tradition of contemplation can we

Buddha's Footprint, Johan Elverskog contends that only by jettisoning this contemporary image of Buddhism as a purely ascetic and apolitical tradition of contemplation can we

we see the true nature of the Dharma. According to Elverskog, Buddhism is, in fact, an expansive religious and political system premised on generating wealth through the exploitation

Elverskog demonstrates how this scriptural tradition propelled Buddhists to seek wealth and power across Asia and to exploit both the people and the environment. Elverskog shows the ways

Buddhism is, in fact, an expansive religious and political system premised on generating wealth through the exploitation

Elverskog demonstrates how this scriptural tradition propelled Buddhists to seek wealth and power across Asia and to exploit both the people and the environment. Elverskog shows the ways

Buddhism is, in fact, an expansive religious and political system premised on generating wealth through the exploitation

Elverskog demonstrates how this scriptural tradition propelled Buddhists to seek wealth and power across Asia and to exploit both the people and the environment. Elverskog shows the ways

Buddhism is, in fact, an expansive religious and political system premised on generating wealth through the exploitation

Elverskog demonstrates how this scriptural tradition propelled Buddhists to seek wealth and power across Asia and to exploit both the people and the environment. Elverskog shows the ways

Buddhism is, in fact, an expansive religious and political system premised on generating wealth through the exploitation

Elverskog demonstrates how this scriptural tradition propelled Buddhists to seek wealth and power across Asia and to exploit both the people and the environment. Elverskog shows the ways

Buddhism is, in fact, an expansive religious and political system premised on generating wealth through the exploitation

Elverskog demonstrates how this scriptural tradition propelled Buddhists to seek wealth and power across Asia and to exploit both the people and the environment. Elverskog shows the ways

Buddhism is, in fact, an expansive religious and political system premised on generating wealth through the exploitation

Elverskog demonstrates how this scriptural tradition propelled Buddhists to seek wealth and power across Asia and to exploit both the people and the environment. Elverskog shows the ways

Buddhism is, in fact, an expansive religious and political system premised on generating wealth through the exploitation

Elverskog demonstrates how this scriptural tradition propelled Buddhists to seek wealth and power across Asia and to exploit both the people and the environment. Elverskog shows the ways

Buddhism is, in fact, an expansive religious and political system premised on generating wealth through the exploitation

Elverskog demonstrates how this scriptural tradition propelled Buddhists to seek wealth and power across Asia and to exploit both the people and the environment. Elverskog shows the ways

Buddhism is, in fact, an expansive religious and political system premised on generating wealth through the exploitation

Elverskog demonstrates how this scriptural tradition propelled Buddhists to seek wealth and power across Asia and to exploit both the people and the environment. Elverskog shows the ways

Buddhism is, in fact, an expansive religious and political system premised on generating wealth through the exploitation
In his dramatically developing economy; and how in tightly controlled Myanmar the kathina rite, the act of giving new robes to members of the sangha after the completion of the rainy-mai or New Year’s rites in Luang Phrabang, Laos, has changed dramatically since the 1975 communist revolution and the subsequent opening up of the country to tourism; he

of the five chapters focuses on a particular rite and provides detailed historical, political, or social context: Holt shows how worship of the Phra Bang Buddha image in the annual pi

Theravada Traditions offers a unique comparative approach to understanding Buddhism: it examines popular rituals of central importance in the predominantly Theravada Buddhist cultures of Laos, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Myanmar, and Cambodia. Instead of focusing on how religious ideas have impacted the ideals of government or ethical practice,

Alicia Turner, Brian Bocking, and Laurence Cox offer a window into the worlds of ethnic minorities and diasporas, transnational networks, poor whites, and social movements.

pioneering, and improbable, Dhammaloka’s adventures ‘from below’ highlight the changing and contested meanings of Buddhism in colonial Asia. Through his story, authors

ethnicity and religious belonging in colonial Asia, and the fluidity of identity in the high Victorian period. Too often, the story of the pan-Asian Buddhist revival movement and

The Irish Buddhist is the biography of an extraordinary Irish emigrant, sailor, and migrant worker who became a Buddhist monk and anti-colonial activist in early twentieth-

sociolinguistics. It will also have strong appeal among general readers with an interest comparative religion, history, cultural criticism, communication studies, and more.

readers Sacred Languages of the World is a must-read for students of religion and language, scripture, religious literacy, education and language, the sociology of religion,

importance of language within religion Takes an interdisciplinary approach which will appeal to students and scholars across an array of disciplines, including religious studies,
Theravada Buddhism: Continuity, Diversity, and Identity

Retreat season, transformed into a season of campaigning for gift-giving and merit-making; finally, he demonstrates how, in light of the devastating losses inflicted by the Khmer Rouge, pchum ben, the annual rite of caring ritually for one's deceased kin, became the most popular and perhaps most emotionally observed of all rites in the Khmer calendar year. In short, Theravada Traditions illustrates how popular, public ritual performance, far from being static, clearly indexes patterns of social and political change. Broad but deep, rigorous yet accessible, this rich, innovative volume provides a provocative introduction to the practice of Theravada Buddhism and the nature of social change in contemporary Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia.

Buddhism, in its diverse forms and throughout its long history, has had a profound influence on Asian cultures and the lives of countless individuals. In recent times, it has also attracted great interest among people in other parts of the world, including philosophers. Buddhist traditions often deal with ideas and concerns that are central to philosophy. A distinctly Buddhist philosophy of religion can be developed which focuses on Buddhist responses to issues such as the problem of suffering, the purpose and potential of human existence, life after death, freedom and moral responsibility, appearance and reality, the nature of religious language, attitudes to religious diversity and the relationship between Buddhism and science. Buddhism: A Contemporary Philosophical Investigation examines some of the central questions that such ideas raise, drawing on ancient and more recent sources from a variety of Buddhist traditions, as viewed from a contemporary philosophical standpoint.

For centuries, wherever Thai Buddhists have made their homes, statues of the Buddha have provided striking testament to the role of Buddhism in the lives of the people. The Buddha in Lanna offers the first in-depth historical study of the Thai tradition of donation of Buddha statues. Drawing on palm-leaf manuscripts and inscriptions, many never previously translated into English, the book reveals the key roles that Thai Buddha images have played in the social and economic worlds of their makers and devotees from the fifteenth to twentieth centuries. Author Angela Chiu introduces stories from chronicles, histories, and legends written by monks in Lanna, a region centered in today's northern Thailand. By examining the stories' themes, structures, and motifs, she illuminates the complex conceptual and material aspects of Buddha images that influenced their functions in Lanna society. Buddha images were depicted as social agents and mediators, the focal points of pan-regional political-religious lineages and rivalries, indeed, as the very generators of history itself. In the chronicles, Buddha images also unified the Buddha with the northern Thai landscape, thereby integrating Buddhist and local conceptions of place. By comparing Thai Buddha statues with other representations of the Buddha, the author underscores the contribution of the Thai evidence to a broader understanding of how different types of Buddha representations were understood to mediate the "presence" of the Buddha. The Buddha in Lanna focuses on the Thai Buddha image as a part of the wider society and history of its creators and worshippers beyond monastery walls, shedding much needed light on the Buddha image in history. With its impressive range of primary sources, this book will appeal to students and scholars of Buddhism and Buddhist art history, Thai studies, and Southeast Asian religious studies.

This special issue presents discussions of the role and meaning of religion for Korean society. Covering wide-ranging time periods, the authors explores with their own cases four major characteristics of Korean religion: Creativity, Greater Responsiveness, Adaptability, and Prophethood. Their topical religious traditions include Neo-Confucianism, Christianity, Buddhism, and Korean new religious movements.

Swami Vivekananda, the nineteenth-century Hindu monk who introduced Vedanta to the West, is undoubtedly one of modern India's most influential philosophers. Unfortunately, his philosophy has too often been interpreted through reductive hermeneutic lenses. Typically, scholars have viewed him either as a modern-day exponent of Sankara's Advaita Vedanta or as a "Neo-Vedantin" influenced more by Western ideas than indigenous Indian traditions. In Swami Vivekananda's Vedantic Cosmopolitanism, Swami Medhananda rejects these prevailing approaches to offer a new interpretation of Vivekananda's philosophy, highlighting its originality, contemporary relevance, and cross-cultural significance. Vivekananda, the book argues, is best understood as a cosmopolitan Vedantin who developed novel philosophical positions through creative dialectical engagement with both Indian and Western thinkers. Inspired by his guru Sri Ramakrishna, Vivekananda reconceived Advaita Vedanta as a nonsectarian, life-affirming philosophy that provides an ontological basis for religious cosmopolitanism and a spiritual ethics of social service. He defended the scientific credentials of religion while criticizing the climate of scientism beginning to develop in the late nineteenth century. He was also one of the first philosophers to defend the evidential value of supersensuous perception on the basis of general epistemic principles. Finally, he adopted innovative cosmopolitan approaches to long-standing philosophical problems. Bringing him into dialogue with numerous...
philosophers past and present, Medhananda demonstrates the sophistication and enduring value of Vivekananda's views on the limits of reason, the dynamics of religious faith, and the hard problem of consciousness.

Buddhism or Buddhisms? By the time they move on to Buddhism in Japan, many students who have studied its origins in India ask whether this is in fact the same religion, so different can they appear. In Buddhisms: An Introduction, Professor John S. Strong provides an overview of the Buddhist tradition in all its different forms around the world. Beginning at the modern day temples of Lumbini, where the Buddha was born, Strong takes us through the life of the Buddha and a study of Buddhist Doctrine, revealing how Buddhism has changed just as it has stayed the same. Finally, Strong examines the nature of Buddhist community life and its development today in the very different environments of Thailand, Japan, and Tibet. Enriched by the author's own insights gathered over forty years, Buddhisms never loses sight of the personal experience amidst the wide-scope of its subject. Clear in its explanations, replete with tables and suggestions for further reading, this is an essential new work that makes original contributions to the study of this 2,500 year-old religion.

A timely essay collection on the development and influence of secular expressions of Buddhism in the West and beyond. How do secular values impact Buddhism in the modern world? What versions of Buddhism are being transmitted to the West? Is it possible to know whether an interpretation of the Buddha's words is correct? In this new essay collection, opposing ideas that often define Buddhist communities—secular versus religious, modern versus traditional, Western versus Eastern—are unpacked and critically examined. These reflections by contemporary scholars and practitioners reveal the dynamic process of reinterpreting and reimagining Buddhism in secular contexts, from the mindfulness movement to Buddhist shrine displays in museums, to whether rebirth is an essential belief. This collection explores a wide range of modern understandings of Buddhism—whether it is considered a religion, philosophy, or lifestyle choice—and questions if secular Buddhism is purely a Western invention, offering a timely contribution to an ever-evolving discussion. Contributors include Bhikkhu Bodhi, Kate Crosby, Gil Fronsdal, Kathleen Gregory, Funie Hsu, Roger R. Jackson, Charles B. Jones, David L. McMahan, Richard K. Payne, Ron Purser, Sarah Shaw, Philippe Turenne, and Pamela D. Winfield.

Burmese master silversmiths produced a magnificent body of work from the mid-19th to the early 20th centuries – the Burmese Silver Age. This aesthetic and functional work is characterized by a unique decorative style and superb technical artistry. Many of the artefacts are embellished with mysterious visual narratives drawn from ancient religious and mythological sources, communicating spiritual beliefs and values that resonate to this day. Burmese silverwork is a distinct and little-known genre of silver art. This book tackles this obscurity by illuminating and describing for the first time 100 Burmese silver artefacts in a stunning photographic gallery. This silverwork – from the Noble Silver Collection – represents some of the rarest and finest quality work from the Burmese Silver Age. The centrepiece gallery of silverwork masterpieces is bookended by two well-illustrated and informative chapters that provide readers with deeper insights into Burmese silverwork: a robust frame of reference chapter summarises the 2,000-year history and cultural tradition of Burmese silverwork; and a chapter following the gallery deciphers the complex and allegorical iconography of the decoration, which gives the reader a deeper appreciation of its religious and cultural meaning and origin. This book captures the great, almost mystical, allure of Burmese silverwork – from the sublime artistry of the decoration, to the extraordinary skill of the silversmith and the profound meaning and importance of the visual narratives. In doing so, Burmese Silver Art takes its place as a definitive reference work for any art historian, collector, expert, student, or general reader interested in this hitherto-overlooked body of noble art.

Is it possible to capture the spirit of Buddhist meditation, which depends so much upon silence and unspoken wisdom? Can this spirit be found after two millennia? This wise and reassuring book reminds us that the Buddhist meditative tradition, geared to such concerns from its inception, has always been transmitted through texts. A great variety of early writings—poems, stories, extended practical guides, commentaries, and chants—were purposely designed to pass teachings on from one generation to the next. Sarah Shaw, a longtime practitioner and teacher of Buddhism, investigates a wide and varied range of ancient and later Buddhist writings on meditation. Many of these texts are barely known in the West but, as the author shows, they can be helpful, moving, and often very funny. She begins with early texts of the Pali canon—those that describe and involve the Buddha and his followers teaching meditations—and moves on to “commentaries,” with their copious range of practical tips, anecdotes, and accounts of early meditators. The author then considers other early texts that were inspirational as Buddhist traditions spread through India and on to China, Korea, Japan, and Tibet. Centuries after being written, early
Buddhist texts have lost none of their relevance, this authoritative book shows. In a tradition characterized by flexibility and mobility, these writings offer wisdom unchanged by time.

Theravada Buddhism provides a comprehensive introductory overview of the history, teachings, and current practice of an often misunderstood form of one of the world's oldest religious traditions. Explores Theravada Buddhism's origins, evolution, teachings, and practices.

Considers the practice of Theravada beyond Sri Lanka and Thailand, by exploring a wealth of material from countries including Bangladesh, Cambodia, and Vietnam.

Reveals its rich and varied traditions, and corrects common misunderstandings about links to other practices, such as early Buddhism or Hinayana Buddhism.

Incorporates student-friendly features including a glossary and other study aids.