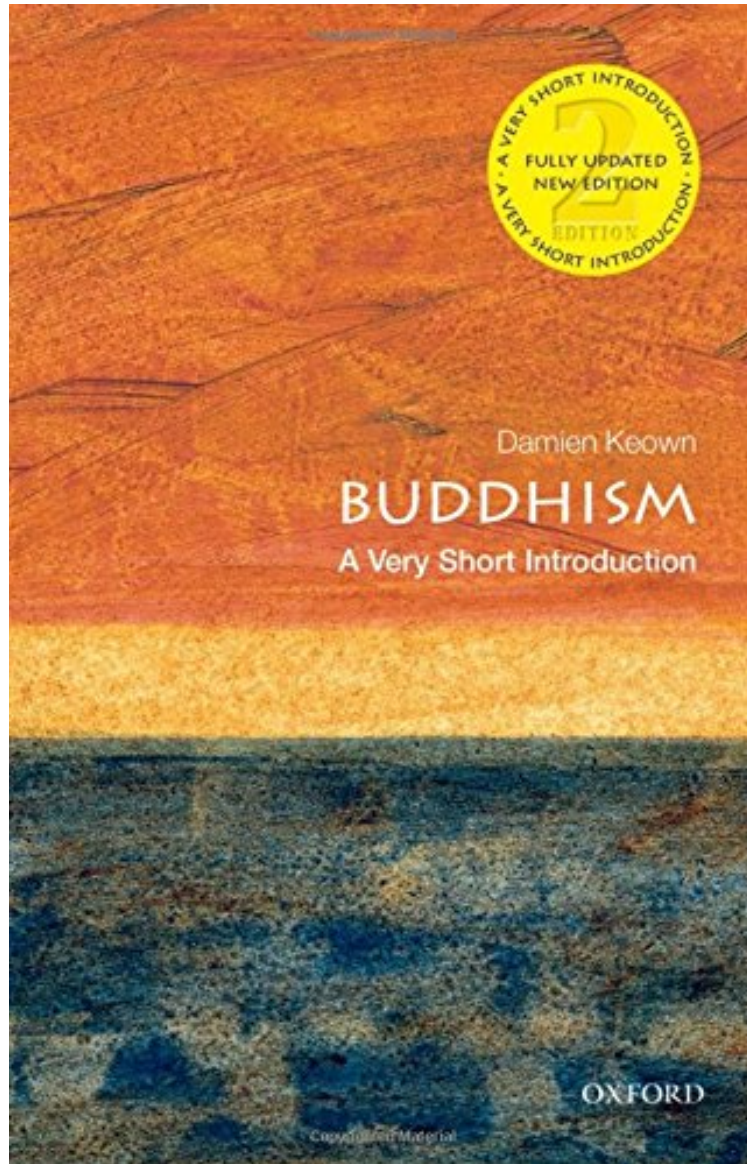


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Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions)

Damien Keown

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Damien Keown : Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions):

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Short and sweet By FrKurt Messick Part of a series by Oxford University Press, this book, 'Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction', follows the same format as other texts in the Very Short Introduction series -- it has fewer than 150 pages, is well indexed, has a useful glossary, accessible and

enjoyable narrative, and captures the essence in a very short space the major points of its topic. There are probably nearing 100 volumes in this Very Short Introduction series (making it, ironically, not a Very Short series), but among those that I have read, this text stands out as being one of the best. Damien Keown, of the University of London and the Royal Asiatic Society, addresses Buddhism past and present, East and West. Beginning with narrative tales the help to exhibit the principles, Keown examines in turn the major questions. First, with regard to Buddhism, is this -- is Buddhism really a religion? Often categorised as such, it is often the exception proving the rule. Many take strong spiritual and philosophical ideas from Buddhism (sometimes without knowing it) but do not subscribe the larger system of practices -- but perhaps most telling, Buddhism is a non-theistic way of being. Keown looks at seven dimensions of religion, and concludes that Buddhism does fit a broader definition of religion. Keown proceeds from there to look at the origins of Buddhism, the life of the Buddha, ideas of karma and reincarnation, and the central ideas of the Four Noble Truths in Buddhism. From these beginnings, Buddhism branches out, the largest grouping being the Mahayana (who get their own chapter), and other spreading first across Asia and then to the rest of the world. Like other books in this Very Short series, there are useful maps, a nice snapshot timeline, and suggestions for further reading, should the Very Short introduction not prove sufficient (and for many, this sample will leave the reader wanting more). I cannot speak too highly of this series, and of this volume on Buddhism by Keown in particular. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Danyael W Timely delivery and good price 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Found this little volume to be exactly what I hoped ... By Arnold Sealove Found this little volume to be exactly what I hoped it would be. The author presented the information in an interesting, informative and objective manner. Specifically comparing the various forms of Buddhism to one another as well as similarities and differences between Buddhism, and other Judeo-Christian religions. If one is looking for a brief introduction, this seems to be right on line.

This Very Short Introduction offers readers a superb overview of the teachings of the Buddha, as well as a succinct guide to the integration of Buddhism into daily life. What are the distinctive features of Buddhism? Who was the Buddha, and what are his teachings? Words such as "karma" and "nirvana" have entered our vocabulary, but what do they mean? Damien Keown provides a lively, informative response to these frequently asked questions about Buddhism. As he sheds light into how Buddhist thought developed over the centuries, Keown also highlights how contemporary dilemmas can be faced from a Buddhist perspective. In the second edition Keown provides new perspectives on Buddhist thought, including up-to-date material about the evolution of Buddhism throughout Asia, the material culture of Buddhism and its importance, new teachings on the ethics of war and peace, and changes to ethnicity, class, and gender. About the Series: Oxford's Very Short Introductions series offers concise and original introductions to a wide range of subjects--from Islam to Sociology, Politics to Classics, Literary Theory to History, and Archaeology to the Bible. Not simply a textbook of definitions, each volume in this series provides trenchant and provocative--yet always balanced and complete--discussions of the central issues in a given discipline or field. Every Very Short Introduction gives a readable evolution of the subject in question, demonstrating how the subject has developed and how it has influenced society. Eventually, the series will encompass every major academic discipline, offering all students an accessible and abundant reference library. Whatever the area of study that one deems important or appealing, whatever the topic that fascinates the general reader, the Very Short Introductions series has a handy and affordable guide that will likely prove indispensable.

.com Buddhism: Questions for Consideration and Discussion In what ways is the Buddhist worldview similar to or different from the traditional Western one, and how do both of these compare to the current scientific way of thinking? Are the Buddhist and Western conceptions incompatible? Does it make sense to believe in reincarnation? If "no," are people like the Buddha deluded when they claim to remember past lives? If "yes," what evidence is there for it? What difference would it make to you now if you believed you would be reborn and live again? Is karma the same as destiny, in the sense that everything that happens to you is predetermined? Do you believe that "what goes around comes around," and if so is this the same as karma? Does everyone get what they deserve, in the end? Do people have a soul, and if so, what is it like? If not, what is it that makes you who you are, and how do you remain the same person if--as science tells us--the material basis of your being changes continuously? If your memories changed, would you be someone else? Is Buddhism more or less environmentally friendly than Christianity? Which aspects of Buddhist teachings might make it appear in harmony with contemporary ecological attitudes? Do you think Buddha was concerned about the environment? from previous edition: "Damien Keown ... His short account has been tried out in draft on students and is admirably lucid, anticipating and dealing well with the questions that are bound to come up." -- Roger Farrington, *The Middle Way*, Vol. 71, No. 4, February 1997 "Damien Keown's book is a readable and wonderfully lucid introduction to one of mankind's most beautiful, profound, and compelling systems of wisdom. His impressive powers of explanation help us to come to terms with a vital contemporary reality." -- Bryan Appleyard "an excellent and highly readable account of a complex and multifarious subject. Even if you were to read nothing else, you would probably come away with a fair idea of what Buddhism is all about." -- Looi Siew Tip, *New Straits*

Times "impressive" --Sarah Marriott, Irish Times 13/5/00
About the Author
Damien Keown is Reader in Buddhism at Goldsmiths College, University of London. His books on Buddhism include *Dictionary of Buddhism* and *Buddhist Ethics: A Very Short Introduction*. He is also Editor of *The Journal of Buddhist Ethics* and Co-Editor of *The Curzon Critical Studies in Buddhism* series.