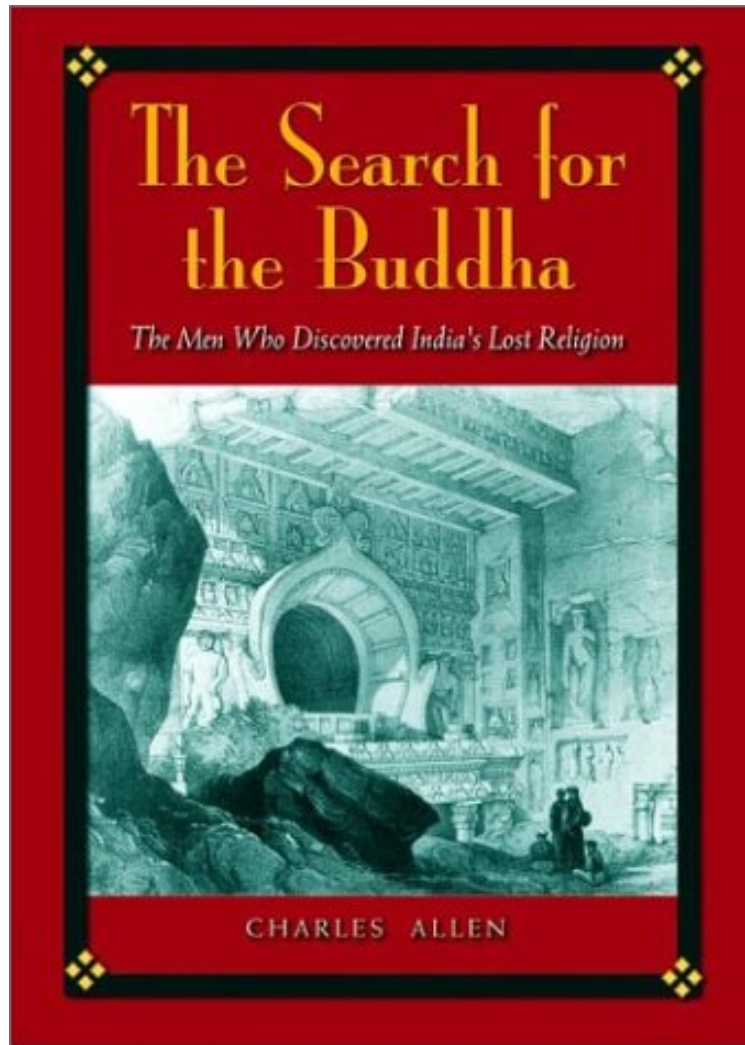


(Download) The Search for the Buddha: The Men Who Discovered India's Lost Religion

The Search for the Buddha: The Men Who Discovered India's Lost Religion

Charles Allen

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Charles Allen : The Search for the Buddha: The Men Who Discovered India's Lost Religion before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Search for the Buddha: The Men Who Discovered India's Lost Religion:

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Lucid, heartbreaking, inspiring, masterful!By Sean HoadeAs a modern Theravadin Buddhist, I pride myself on adhering to the Buddha's "original teachings," or at least as close as one can come to them. Thanks to this masterful book by Charles Allen, I know now the circuitous (and fortuitous) path the Dhamma took to reach a contemporary American's experience. The story is amazing, and actually reads like an

adventure novel -- one that pleasingly replaces violent derring-do with intellectual cliffhangers and edge-of-your-seat escapes. This may sound like a strange way to describe a book about philology, archaeology, and academic squabbles, but read the book and I think you'll agree it is highly appropriate. We in the West who are blessed enough to have been exposed to the Buddha's teaching owe a huge debt of thanks to these intrepid adventurers, and any reader of *The Search for the Buddha* will be glad to give thanks to Charles Allen and his publisher as well. HIGHLY recommended for all Buddhists, as well as for people interested in Indian history and comparative religion. 5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. The Vagabond's Tale By Bruce I guess my favorite character in this immensely entertaining and instructive book would have to be Alexander Csoma de Koros a "Hungarian vagabond" (as Charles Allen characterizes him), born in Transylvania in 1784, who "had been obsessed from an early age with the idea of discovering the origins of the Hungarian people." As Allen explains "of the various theories about their origins, the one he favoured was that they were descendants of the tribe of Attila the Hun whose original homeland lay somewhere to the east of the high Pamirs." His quest led him, almost by accident, to the culture and (more important) to the language of Tibet. He compiled a Tibetan-English dictionary, making himself virtually the first Western master of this vast and complicated civilization. Aside from its intrinsic merit, Csoma de Koros' inquiry into Tibetan culture made him a player in a remarkable historical enterprise: the recovery of Indian Buddhism. Buddhism was born in India (or at any rate, on the India-Nepal border). Yet it virtually vanished from its homeland and by the time the British arrived, its culture languished in obscurity and its monuments stood uncomprehended. Aside from Csoma de Koros, the recovery of the history of Indian Buddhism can be traced in large measure to the work of a handful of British imperialists, mostly young men somehow connected with the British East India Company, most of them exemplars of the tradition of amateur scholarship. Perhaps the most famous is Sir William ("Oriental") Jones, who mastered Sanskrit and grasped the insight that the language of the Brahmins must somehow be related to Greek and Latin. Mostly they worked by a kind of triangulation, working from Tibet, Burman and Ceylon (where Buddhism did survive) back to India, where it did not. The enterprise crystallized about 1836, when scholars first saw that these diverse traditions derived from a common source. Allen's story is rich enough in character and incident to prove almost unmanageable at times-I found myself assembling my own character-list on the inside flyleaf. But it is a marvellous yarn, well worth the effort. Csoma de Koros, by the way never did find Atilla (apparently the Hungarians are not descendants of the Huns after all). He died in Darjeeling, trying to reach the "Yoogatr"-the Uighurs, now identified with Xinjiang province in Western China. He never himself became a Buddhist. Yet in Japan, of all places, in 1933, he was made a bodhisattva, canonised in the grand hall of Tokyo University. As Allen reports, "a bronze statue of [him] meditating in the lotus position can be found in the Japanese Imperial Museum." 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Fabulous! By Clear Englebert Fabulous story---fabulous writing---who could ask for more? I was hooked from the start and have recommended this book to MANY people.

Buddhism is now 2,500 years old and has about 300 million followers worldwide and almost 3 million adherents in the United States. Yet, until the late eighteenth century when Sir William Oriental Jones broke the Brahmins prohibition on learning the sacred language of Sanskrit, the Buddhas teachings were treasures unappreciated in the West. Uncovering clues about Buddhism's origins from inscriptions on pillars and rocks, Jones pioneered an enthusiastic band whose search for the Indian subcontinent's secret religion is chronicled in this book of high adventure and monumental historical detection. Acclaimed narrative historian Charles Allen brings to life extraordinary eighteenth- and nineteenth-century characters and travels to lost holy places across the Eastern world as he tells the story of how Westerners found the Buddha. Allen has recorded the Western birth of a religion whose influence in America has increased tenfold in the just the past forty years.

From Publishers Weekly With the variety of resources on Buddhism so effortlessly available to us today, it's easy to forget that not so long ago, Buddhism was simply unknown in the West and had also been all but forgotten in India itself. Allen (*Tales from the Dark Continent*) weaves an engrossing tale of the process by which some of Britain's brightest military men, civil servants and employees of the powerful East India Company began in the late 18th century to uncover both the existence of Buddhism and its enormous impact on ancient Indian history. He focuses on the careers of several remarkable Orientalists, including Oriental Jones, a judge in Bengal who pioneered the influential Asiatic Society to foster archeological and linguistic study of India's remote past, and James Prinsep, an employee of the East India Company who eventually deciphered an important form of Sanskrit. In the space of a century, these and other men achieved remarkable success, including completing a chronology of ancient Indian monarchs, excavating numerous topes or stupas, identifying important Buddhist sites and introducing Buddhism to the West. With the aid of dozens of black and white photographs and illustrations, Allen helps the reader to imagine the excitement of discovery, like the early, tantalizing finding of a 1,000-year-old stone plaque with an inscription commemorating Bood-ha, a mysterious, heretofore forgotten deity. Allen has written a deeply appealing book that is certain to engage historians and students of Buddhism alike. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. "This account of the

discovery of Buddhism's origins in India is a fabulous detective story."