



# The Story of Buddhism: A Concise Guide to Its History & Teachings

By Donald S. Lopez Jr.

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- How and when did the many schools of Buddhism emerge?
- How does the historical figure of Siddhartha Guatama relate to the many teachings that are presented in his name?
- Did Buddhism modify the cultures to which it was introduced, or did they modify Buddhism?

Leading Buddhist scholar Donald S. Lopez Jr. explores the origins of this 2,500-year-old religion and traces its major developments up to the present, focusing not only on the essential elements common to all schools of Buddhism but also revealing the differences among the major traditions. Beginning with the creation and structure of the Buddhist universe, Lopez explores the life of the Buddha, the core Buddhist tenets, and the development of the monastic life and lay practices. Combining brilliant scholarship with fascinating stories -- contemporary and historical, sometimes miraculous, sometimes humorous -- this rich and absorbing volume presents a fresh and expert history of Buddhism and Buddhist life.

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**Bibliography**

- Sales Rank: #185997 in Books
- Published on: 2009-08-11
- Released on: 2009-08-11
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.00" h x .65" w x 5.31" l, .48 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 288 pages

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## **Editorial Review**

### Amazon.com Review

Much of what we hear about Buddhism today in the West focuses on its philosophy, and how it can change one's life. Throughout history, however, Buddhism's mythology, scriptures, heroes, and its promise for salvation from rebirth have been the Buddhist teachings that most people have known. Religion professor Donald Lopez has mastered a good deal of this immense lore and managed with *The Story of Buddhism* to get it into a manageable package. Rather than providing a chronological history or country-by-country breakdown, Lopez explores general topics, meandering through two-and-a-half millennia, from India to Japan. In sections such as "Monastic Life," "Tantra," and "Pilgrimage," he talks about the origins of each topic and its mainstream manifestations. In addition, he spices up his work with delectable, if occasionally bizarre, examples from specific cultures. There is, for instance, the story of the depraved man who, once having said the words "Lotus Sutra," was saved from Hell. And the tale of the practice called the "act of truth," in which a perfectly candid statement can have magical powers. Or the story of the monk who attempted to rescue some maggots by opening his own flesh for them. No doubt, Buddhism is interesting, but it takes a competent scholar and a good storyteller to get it just right. Lopez fills the bill. --*Brian Bruya*

### From Publishers Weekly

Lopez, a professor of Buddhist studies at the University of Michigan, says that his primary aim for this book is "to focus on Buddhist practice as a religion." Unlike more superficial how-to books on Buddhism, this book gives a thorough historical and theological explanation of Buddhism's major tenets, starting with Buddhist cosmology and then moving to chapters dedicated to the Three Jewels of Buddhism (the Buddha, dharma and sangha) before ending with a chapter on enlightenment. Interspersed are anecdotes intended to teach key principles in keeping with the idea of Buddhism-as-story; unfortunately, these vignettes are a bit overpowered by lengthy discourse on the history and interpretations of those principles. The bulk of the chapter on "lay practice," for example, focuses on various countries' traditions of lay ordination and funeral rituals, as well as monasteries' relations with their respective states, rather than explicating actual daily lay practice. In trying to explain not only Buddhism's key teachings but also their variations by country, region, teacher and school, the text loses focus. Lopez provides a list for further reading at the end of each chapter as well as a bibliography and glossary at the end of the book, which should be helpful for the student of world religions. His command of the subject is obvious, but his prose is sometimes dry, and the scope may be overly ambitious for the general reader.

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### Review

"At long last we have here an introductory volume on Buddhism that goes beyond the usual clichés."  
(Bernard Faure, Professor of Religious Studies, Stanford University)

"Heads my list of books to give to someone ready to be introduced to the Four Noble Truths." (Phil Catalfo, Yoga Journal)

"The clearest book we have on the history, variety, and meaning of what we now call Buddhism." (Kenneth Woodward, Newsweek)

“The Story of Buddhism is one of those rare books that gives fresh insights on repeated readings.” (San Francisco Chronicle)

“A portrayal of Buddhism that...is readily accessible and appealing...[a] good introduction to Buddhism.” (Choice)

“Aims to make the tradition both accessible and compelling, as well as to demystify its practices, teachings, and schools.” (Tricycle)

## **Users Review**

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#### **Adam Cohn:**

Nowadays reading books be a little more than want or need but also work as a life style. This reading addiction give you lot of advantages. The huge benefits you got of course the knowledge even the information inside the book in which improve your knowledge and information. The data you get based on what kind of book you read, if you want have more knowledge just go with training books but if you want really feel happy read one along with theme for entertaining for instance comic or novel. The The Story of Buddhism: A Concise Guide to Its History & Teachings is kind of book which is giving the reader unpredictable experience.

#### **Jeremy Turner:**

Can you one of the book lovers? If yes, do you ever feeling doubt when you are in the book store? Try and pick one book that you find out the inside because don't judge book by its protect may doesn't work at this point is difficult job because you are afraid that the inside maybe not while fantastic as in the outside look likes. Maybe you answer could be The Story of Buddhism: A Concise Guide to Its History & Teachings why because the fantastic cover that make you consider concerning the content will not disappoint an individual. The inside or content is usually fantastic as the outside or even cover. Your reading 6th sense will directly direct you to pick up this book.

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