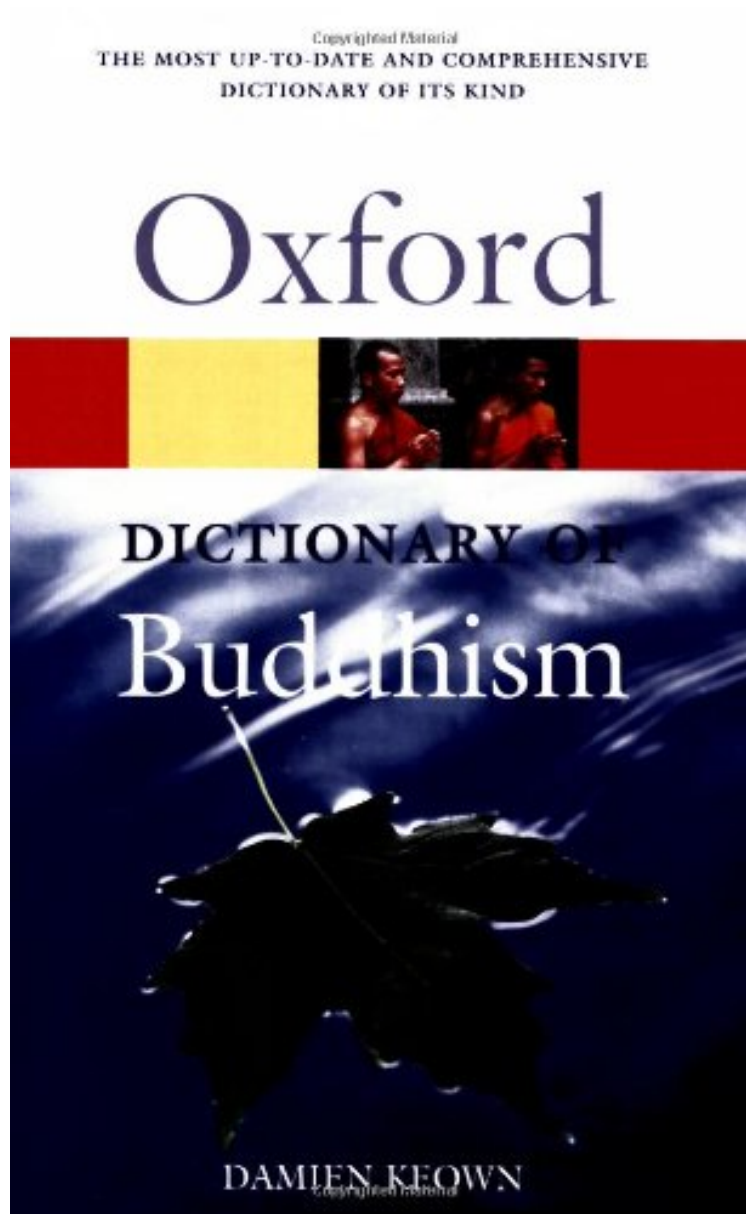


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## A Dictionary of Buddhism (Oxford Quick Reference)

*Damien Keown*

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With over 2,000 wide-ranging entries, this dictionary is the most up-to-date and comprehensive reference of its kind. Written by a leading expert in the field and incorporating research by regional specialists, this dictionary covers both historical and contemporary issues in Buddhism and includes all Buddhist schools and cultures. Elegantly illustrated with line drawings of religious structures, iconography, and ritual objects, the Dictionary of Buddhism includes entries on the history and doctrines of the major Buddhist schools, information on the spread of Buddhism in Asia and the West, and coverage of issues of contemporary concern such as human rights, abortion, euthanasia, and the role of women in Buddhist teachings. An ultimate reference, the dictionary also contains appendices that include a chronology of important dates, a guide to canonical scriptures, and a pronunciation guide for difficult names and terms. Beliefs, doctrines, major teachers and scholars, place names, and artifacts are all covered in a clear and concise style making the Dictionary of Buddhism an invaluable resource for students and practitioners alike.

From Publishers Weekly Although Keown regrettably concedes that the vast subject of Buddhism cannot be "compressed into the pages of a volume such as this," and that his illustrated dictionary is "far from exhaustive," it may well be the most judicious encyclopedia of Buddhism ever to be crammed into a single volume. The entries cover Buddhist terms (20% of the text), biography (18%), scriptures (12%), important places (8%) and schools (7%), with the remaining portions given to brief discussions of ethical issues and other matters. The entries are short-- "dharma," for example, merits only a single paragraph, and "Mahayana" gets just two--but such accessibility is the very reason why this should be on the bookshelf of every student of Buddhism. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist The Buddhist tradition is a venerable one, widely practiced and studied. Yet, until recently, substantial reference works have lagged behind the interest in the subject. Most available in English are single-volume works that address terms, concepts, or deities. Oxford's new dictionary, although also a single volume, treats doctrines, practices, biography, scriptures, schools and sects, art, architecture, and more. More than 2,000 entries are alphabetically arranged from abhabba- tthana, the five things of which an arhat, or enlightened one, is said to be incapable, to Zimme Pannasa, the Burmese term for a collection of birth stories of the Buddha. Most entries are transliterations from Sanskrit, Chinese, Japanese, Pali, and so on, giving the work a very academic flavor and seeming to require some prior knowledge of the subject. In fairness, the author does state in his preface that this work is more of a companion to the growing literature on Buddhism rather than an introduction to it. The treatment of particular countries (e.g., China, India) as well as those for collections of sacred texts can serve as introductory essays of a sort. There are entries for terms in English (e.g., Diet, Reincarnation), including some on contemporary issues, such as Cloning and Stem cell research. Despite the work's academic bent, entries provide no supplemental bibliographies. This is an especially disappointing omission in the appendix, which outlines the divisions of the three main collections of canonical scriptures (i.e., Pali Canon, Chinese Canon, and Tibetan Canon), as finding translations of particular sacred texts can be difficult. The Concise Encyclopedia of Buddhism (Oneworld, 2000) also lacks a true index and supplemental bibliographies for entries but has some features the Oxford title doesn't, namely, a nice introductory essay on Buddhist history, doctrines, and literature as well as a thematic bibliography. Its coverage, however, is not as comprehensive, with just over 900 entries. Although Oxford's Dictionary of Buddhism may not be all it could be, it does provide authoritative and convenient treatment of a wide range of subjects. Academic and public libraries would do well to acquire it. RBB Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "Oxford's dictionary becomes a new standard for dictionaries devoted to Buddhism.... Highly Recommended." --Choice