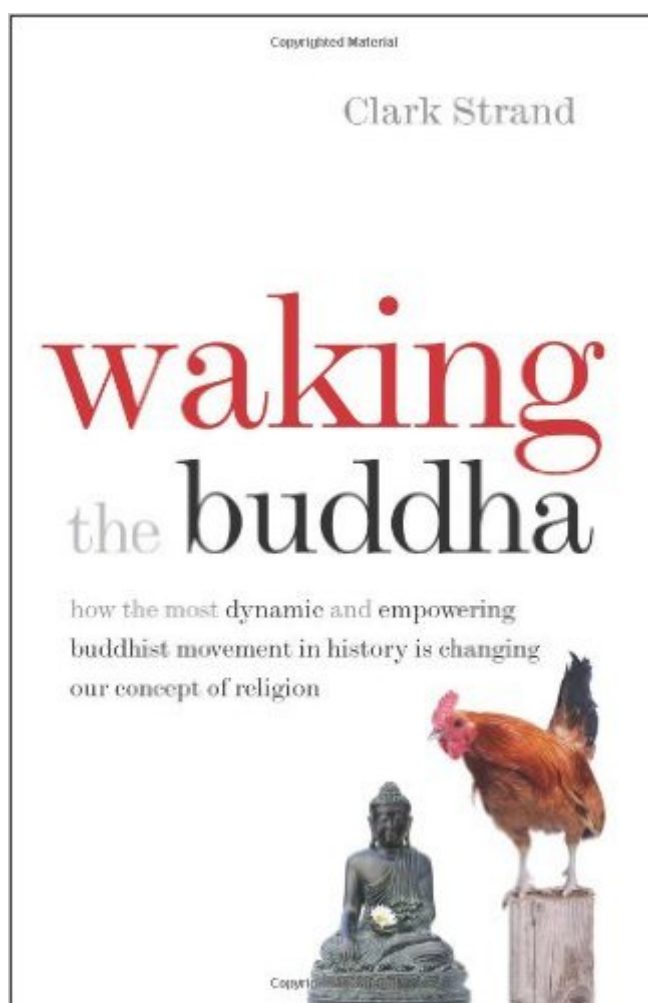


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Waking The Buddha: How The Most Dynamic And Empowering Buddhist Movement In History Is Changing Our Concept Of Religion



Synopsis

Is there more to Buddhism than sitting in silent meditation? Is modern Buddhism relevant to the problems of daily life? Does it empower individuals to transform their lives? Or has Buddhism become too detached, so still and quiet that the Buddha has fallen asleep? *Waking the Buddha* tells the story of the Soka Gakkai International, the largest, most dynamic Buddhist movement in the world today—and one that is waking up and shaking up Buddhism so it can truly work in ordinary people's lives. Drawing on his long personal experience as a Buddhist teacher, journalist, and editor, Clark Strand offers broad insight into how and why the Soka Gakkai, with its commitment to social justice and its egalitarian approach, has become a role model, not only for other schools of Buddhism, but for other religions as well. Readers will be inspired by the struggles and triumphs of the Soka Gakkai's three founding presidents—individuals who staked their lives on the teachings of the Lotus Sutra and the extraordinary power of those teachings to help people become happy.

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Customer Reviews

I am a Nichiren Buddhist, probably like so many others who bought the book. I was amazed at the author's profound understanding of the Nichiren Buddhism. For someone who doesn't practice this philosophy he did quite a good job of explaining it. The deeper elements were missing but then I had to keep reminding myself that since he doesn't practice it, there would be limits to his understanding. I think the one thing that stood out was when he mentioned that different people have said to him that Nichiren Buddhist "isn't really a religion". I'm surprised that he didn't clarify that

by "religion" most people mean a "God" outside of themselves; whereas this Buddhism believes that the "god" is within....that we are the Buddha. He did speak of personal responsibility for changing lives without mentioning begging some exterior being for help. He sort of danced around the issue perhaps not wanting to offend anyone that we don't believe that a "God" exists. However he did a mighty job and I was impressed. And in fact I DID learn new things.

What a great book...thank you Mr. Clark Strand! I was one of those baby boomers who delved into Buddhism after the social turbulence of the sixties...ricocheting from transcendental meditation to New Thought and eventually becoming a student of the Theravada. Always a seeker...but never completely satisfied. Meanwhile, the world became darker as human beings continue to wage war with one another and destroy nature. One day I was presented with a card that had Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo inscribed on it. It sat on my desk for a few years but I eventually researched, studied, and embraced this practice. It transformed my life! This book explains the SGI movement and its vision for the world to experience lasting peace and security through humanity's embrace of the humanistic principles of Buddhism. Nichiren Buddhism is practical Buddhism. Progress in your practice leads to changes within you. These changes are always marked by concurrent changes in your environment, which mirrors your inner life. This is Cause and Effect. Faith in Nichiren Buddhism is constantly directed toward transforming reality.

Having read essays by Clark Strand previously, I was really looking forward to reading his book, "Waking the Buddha". It was even more engaging than I imagined and I read it in only one sitting. Mr. Strand's accounts of the fearlessness of the first three Soka Gakkai Presidents, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, Josei Toda and Daisaku Ikeda, deeply inspired me and re-ignited a fighting spirit in my own life. Ethan Gelbaum

Clark Strand has been on a lifelong quest to understand religions and religiosity. Raised a Southern Baptist, he subsequently practiced Zen Buddhism and was the first senior editor of the American Buddhist magazine Tricycle. In Waking the Buddha, he seeks the heart of what drives the Soka Gakkai International (SGI), especially in its astonishing growth in America over the past 50 years. He describes the SGI as remarkably free of antiquarianism and Orientalism, especially when compared to other American Buddhist groups. When the Soka Gakkai began to spread Nichiren Buddhism outside of Japan in the 1960s, its modern interpretation and modern organization were already well established. Strand asserts that the SGI's organizational model of the small discussion

meeting is able to serve the members instead of the members serving the organization. This book is a bracing wakeup call for anyone interested in applying the wisdom found in religious faith to the problems of daily life. I recommend it enthusiastically and without reservation.

I like Clark Strand's writings. Though I am not a Buddhist, I have learned much from the writings of David Reynolds and Gregg Krech. In this book, Mr. Strand writes what appears to be a concise synopsis of Soka Gakkai, the largest and most influential lay group in Buddhist history which spreads a reconfigured teaching of Nichiren Buddhism. Although important, this synopsis really serves a different purpose. By showing the manner in which Soka Gakkai functions within its community, it serves as a model for other religions to promote peace and social justice through the empowerment of the self. It would appear not to be pie in the sky since it finds its roots in its reaction to Japanese militarism and as a means of hope for Post-war Japan devastated by this militarism and the A-bomb. To be truthful, I am not convinced, but I was willing to listen in that I have purchased some of the founders' classic texts to learn more deeply about this form of Buddhism which Mr. Clark believes may be a way for our species to save the souls of all beings as we madly and blindly rush to destroy the world that supports all living things. It is worthy to read and to think about.

This is one of the best books on the Soka Gakkai in USA and on Nichiren Buddhism out there today. As a 30+ year practitioner, I highly recommend it. The author thoroughly researched the subject and has presented an informed objective view that accurately portrays the largest and most diverse Buddhist lay organization on the planet. For Buddhism to be relevant to this day and age, to be truly contemporary and accessible to the widest and most diverse population is a matter of utmost importance to the survival of humanity and our wonderful home, planet Earth. Nichiren Buddhism has impacted the lives of over 12 million people around the world and transformed people at the very core revealing a way of life of unsurpassed happiness for those who practice it and their environments. This is the true purpose of the appearance of the historical Buddha, Shakyamuni and is based on the Lotus Sutra which he taught as the essence of Buddhism. I am eternally grateful to Mr. Strand, a practitioner of many spiritual paths, a former zen monk and a dedicated journalist for his courageous and very well written work. It is my greatest desire that this book finds its way into the hands of countless people and exposes them to the Soka Gakkai, its three founding presidents Makiguchi, Toda and Ikeda and the Buddhism of the Sun - Nichiren Buddhism. Nam Myoho Renge Kyo. Also recommended: Unlocking the Mysteries of Birth and Death by Daisaku Ikeda, The

Buddha in Your Mirror by Ted Morino, Greg Martin and Woody Hochswender and The Buddha in Your Rearview Mirror by Woody Hochswender.

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