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The author's anthropological approach uncovers the inherent discrepancies between the normative teachings of Buddhism and what its followers practice. Framing his discussion on some of the most prominent Western thinkers of sexuality--Georges Bataille and Michel Foucault--Faure draws from different reservoirs of writings, such as the orthodox and heterodox "doctrines" of Buddhism, and its ...

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The Red Thread: Buddhist Approaches to Sexuality by Bernard Faure manages to be both scholarly and a fun read at the same time. In an attempt to uncover "a Buddhist discourse on sex" Faure examines a wide variety of source, ranging from monastic texts, novels, plays, poetics, legal texts myths etc., and considers the role both social and political factors play in shaping religious doctrine.

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The dialectics inherent in Mahavyvna Buddhism, in particular in the Tantric and Chan/Zen traditions, seemed to allow for greater laxity and even encouraged breaking of taboos. Faure also offers a history of Buddhist monastic life, which has been buffeted by anticlerical attitudes, and by attempts to regulate sexual behavior from both within and beyond the monastery.

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Is there a Buddhist discourse on sex? In this innovative study, Bernard Faure reveals Buddhism's paradoxical attitudes toward sexuality. His remarkably broad range covers the entire geography of this religion, and its long evolution from the time of its founder, Xvkyamuni, to the premodern age. The author's anthropological approach uncovers the inherent discrepancies between the normative teachings of Buddhism and what its followers practice. Framing his discussion on some of the most prominent Western thinkers of sexuality--Georges Bataille and Michel Foucault--Faure draws from different reservoirs of writings, such as the orthodox and heterodox "doctrines" of Buddhism, and its monastic codes. Virtually untapped mythological as well as legal sources are also used. The dialectics inherent in Mahvyvna Buddhism, in particular in the Tantric and Chan/Zen traditions, seemed to allow for greater laxity and even encouraged breaking of taboos. Faure also offers a history of Buddhist monastic life, which has been buffeted by anticlerical attitudes, and by attempts to regulate sexual behavior from both within and beyond the monastery. In two chapters devoted to Buddhist homosexuality, he examines the way in which this sexual behavior was simultaneously condemned and idealized in medieval Japan. This book will appeal especially to those interested in the cultural history of Buddhism and in premodern Japanese culture. But the story of how one of the world's oldest religions has faced one of life's greatest problems makes fascinating reading for all.

An ideal introduction to Buddhism for anyone who has unanswered questions about one of the world's largest and most popular religions. A fascinating, short book that challenges us to strip away existing preconceptions we may have about Buddhism Considers questions such as: Can we talk of Buddhism as a unified religion or are there many Buddhisms? Is Buddhism a religion of tolerance and pacifism as many people think? And is Buddhism a religion without god(s), or is it more of a philosophy than a religion? Traces the basic history, beliefs and nature of Buddhism in easy-to-understand language Written by renowned Buddhist scholar, Bernard Faure, it is an ideal introduction for anyone who has unanswered questions about one of the world's largest and most popular religions

Bernard Faure's previous works are well known as guides to some of the more elusive aspects of the Chinese tradition of Chan Buddhism and its outgrowth, Japanese Zen. Continuing his efforts to look at Chan/Zen with a full array of postmodernist critical techniques, Faure now probes the imaginaire, or mental universe, of the Buddhist Soto Zen master Keizan Jokin (1268-1325). Although Faure's new book may be read at one level as an intellectual biography, Keizan is portrayed here less as an original thinker than as a representative of his culture and an example of the paradoxes of the Soto school. The Chan/Zen doctrine that he avowed was allegedly reasonable and demythologizing, but he lived in a psychological world that was just as imbued with the marvelous as was that of his contemporary Dante Alighieri. Drawing on his own dreams to demonstrate that he possessed the magical authority that he felt to reside also in icons and relics, Keizan strove to use these "visions of power" to buttress his influence as a patriarch. To reveal the historical, institutional, ritual, and visionary elements in Keizan's life and thought and to compare these to Soto doctrine, Faure draws on largely neglected texts, particularly the Record of Tokoku (a chronicle that begins with Keizan's account of the origins of the first of the monasteries that he established) and the kirigami, or secret initiation documents.

For many people attracted to Eastern religions (particularly Zen Buddhism), Asia seems the source of all wisdom. As Bernard Faure examines the study of Chan/Zen from the standpoint of postmodern human sciences and literary criticism, he challenges this inversion of traditional "Orientalist" discourse: whether the Other is caricatured or idealized, ethnocentric premises marginalize important parts of Chan thought. Questioning the assumptions of "Easterners" as well, including those of the charismatic D. T. Suzuki, Faure demonstrates how both West and East have come to overlook significant components of a complex and elusive tradition. Throughout the book Faure reveals surprising hidden agendas in the modern enterprise of Chan studies and in Chan itself. After describing how Jesuit missionaries brought Chan to the West, he shows how the prejudices they engendered were influenced by the sectarian constraints of Sino-Japanese discourse. He then assesses structural, hermeneutical, and performative ways of looking at Chan, analyzes the relationship of Chan and local religion, and discusses Chan concepts of temporality, language, writing, and the self. Read alone or with its companion volume, *The Rhetoric of Immediacy*, this work offers a critical introduction not only to Chinese and Japanese Buddhism but also to "theory" in the human sciences.

Innumerable studies have appeared in recent decades about practically every aspect of women's lives in Western societies. The few such works on Buddhism have been quite limited in scope. In *The Power of Denial*, Bernard Faure takes an important step toward redressing this situation by boldly asking: does Buddhism offer women liberation or limitation? Continuing the innovative exploration of sexuality in Buddhism he began in *The Red Thread*, here he moves from his earlier focus on male monastic sexuality to Buddhist conceptions of women and constructions of gender. Faure argues that Buddhism is neither as sexist nor as egalitarian as is usually thought. Above all, he asserts, the study of Buddhism through the gender lens leads us to question what we uncritically call Buddhism, in the singular. Faure challenges the conventional view that the history of women in Buddhism is a linear narrative of progress from oppression to liberation. Examining Buddhist discourse on gender in traditions such as that of Japan, he shows that patriarchy--indeed, misogyny--has long been central to Buddhism. But women were not always silent, passive victims. Faure points to the central role not only of nuns and mothers (and wives) of monks but of female mediums and courtesans, whose colorful relations with Buddhist monks he considers in particular. Ultimately, Faure concludes that while Buddhism is, in practice, relentlessly misogynist, as far as misogynist discourses go it is one of the most flexible and open to contradiction. And, he suggests, unyielding in-depth examination can help revitalize Buddhism's deeper, more ancient egalitarianism and thus subvert its existing gender hierarchy. This groundbreaking book offers a fresh, comprehensive understanding of what Buddhism has to say about gender, and of what this really says about Buddhism, singular or plural.

This book explores historical, textual, and social questions relating to the position and experience of women and gay people in the Buddhist world from India and Tibet to Sri Lanka, China, and Japan. It focuses on four key areas: Buddhist history, contemporary culture, Buddhist symbols, and homosexuality, and it covers Buddhism's entire history, from its origins to the present day. The result of original and innovative research, the author offers new perspectives on the history of the attitudes toward, and of the self-perception of, women in both ancient and modern Buddhist societies. He explores key social issues such as abortion, he examines the use of rhetoric and symbols in Buddhist texts and cultures, and he discusses the neglected subject of Buddhism and homosexuality.

Bringing together 15 essays by international Buddhist scholars, this book offers a distinctive portrayal of the life of Buddhism. The contributors focus on a range of religious practices across the Buddhist world, from New York to Tibet.

"Described by his contemporaries as a cross between Albert Schweitzer and Paul Gauguin, Elwin was a man of contradictions, at times taking on the role of evangelist, social worker, political activist, poet, government worker, and more. Intensely political, the Oxford-trained scholar tirelessly defended the rights of the indigenous and despite the deep religious influences of St.

This book explores the potential interface between Foucaultian discourse analysis and the development of an indigenous rationale for the practice of contemporary Western Buddhism, along with the growing significance of such a rationale for "traditional" Buddhism in an era dominated by disciplinary/bio-power.

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