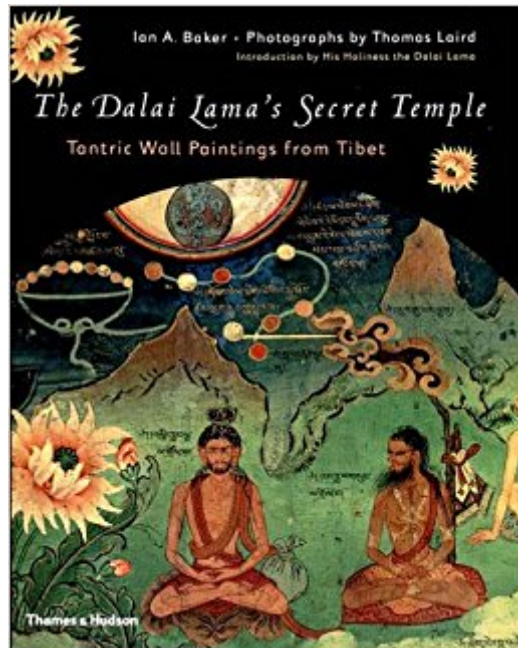




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The Dalai Lama's Secret Temple: Tantric Wall Paintings From Tibet



Synopsis

Behind Tibet's Potala Palace -- seat of the Dalai Lamas since 1649 -- lies a sacred pond said to be inhabited by serpentlike deities called Lu. There, on a willow-covered island in the middle of the lake, is a pagoda roofed Khang, or temple. During the brief reign of the Sixth Dalai Lama, who built the temple in the eighteenth century, unknown artists created a series of mysterious paintings on the walls of the temple's private chapel. Comparable in quality and ambition to the Sistine Chapel in Rome, these master-pieces of Tibetan art are reproduced for the first time in this extraordinary publication. The chapel was reserved exclusively for the Dalai Lamas as a place of meditation and spiritual retreat. For centuries the Lukhang murals, which illustrate the path to spiritual liberation, guided the Dalai Lamas in a form of mystical contemplation called Dzogchen -- the most secret practice in Tibet's Tantric tradition. Beyond their Tibetan origins, the murals display a universal spiritual vision. Merely to contemplate them, Tibetans believe, can open the mind to timeless spiritual truth. At the heart of this book are more than 150 color photographs of the murals and their temple, taken in the most difficult conditions by the American explorer-photographer Thomas Laird. Ian Baker's text, which places these remarkable works within their historical and cultural perspective, is augmented by accounts from other Tibetan sources. A special feature of the book is an introduction and quotations by Tenzin Gyatso, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama of Tibet, as well as additional drawings from Buddhist texts. This treasure of Tibetan Buddhist spirituality is presented in a magnificent large-format edition. The vivid detail, rich color, and awe-inspiring impact of this path to spiritual liberation can at last be experienced outside the Lukhang chapel.

Book Information

Hardcover: 216 pages

Publisher: Thames & Hudson; First Edition edition (October 2000)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0500510032

ISBN-13: 978-0500510032

Product Dimensions: 13 x 9.8 x 1 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.6 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars 21 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #731,663 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #94 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Eastern > Buddhism > Dalai Lama #309 in Books > Arts & Photography > History & Criticism > Themes > Religious #348 in Books > Arts & Photography > Architecture >

Customer Reviews

Tibet's Lukhang temple, a private retreat for the Dalai Lama established in the late seventeenth century, contains what was, until the Chinese invaded, a secret meditation chamber covered with a set of extraordinary murals. These murals present a host of figures engaged in the basic cycles of life or practicing Tantric meditation techniques in pursuit of inner transformation. Instead of rejecting desire as other Buddhist practices do, Tantra harnesses this intrinsically human drive and turns it into "boundless compassion." So powerful and potentially dangerous is this path to spiritual awakening, only the most enlightened of Tibetan Buddhist monks are initiated into the tradition. Tibet expert Baker's decoding of the murals' images and history of the Tantric tradition are cogent and deeply moving. In his introduction, the Dalai Lama, who was unable to visit Lukhang before being forced into exile, writes that many believe that the very sight of these paintings opens the viewer's mind to spiritual truths, and, indeed, their effect is powerful. Donna Seaman Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

A timeless work, one for readers to dip into again and again over the years. -- Joi Eden, New Age Retailer, March/April 2001

The content itself is excellent, hence the rating of 4 stars. Highly recommended. The book goes into a lot of great detail in a rather clear and lucid way, something that is not usually apparent in tantric writing. The binding is really cheap however! After just one reading the cover on my copy came right off. All I did was read the book mind you, so it's not as though it was treated harshly!

The only criticism I have of this book is the title: calling it "the secret temple" is a marketing ploy, as this temple is a major tourist attraction in china (formerly in part of tibet). But, the essays are enlightening on tibetan buddhist art. I'm not sure that the comparisons to Bosch and Breughal hold up to anyone who knows anything about european art, but that aside, it gives a fascinating overview of the history of the dali lamas and their relationship to art. i'd recommend this to anyone interested in art, buddhism or tibet. also, excellent page stock, photographs and binding.

I feel that this book would be my precious thing in my dharma collection. Nowhere we could find Dzogchen teaching so visually presented.

This is an insightful book on the Dalai Lama's Secret Temple that could only come from someone with a deep caring for Tibet and the Dalai Lama. The photographs are stunning.

This book is a valuable asset to anyone desiring an illustrated view of tantric Buddhism. With gorgeous pictures of the walls of the Lukhang Palace, and plenty of supporting documentation, the reader can truly appreciate the spiritual value of this book.

Beautifully done! Great pictures and explanations. Very useful for meditators and practitioners of channels and winds.

Amazing !

Great product and service.

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