

Hitching Rides With Buddha

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take a humorist from the great white north one part bob and doug mckenzie the other bill bryson feed him lots of sake and set him loose hitchhiking his way through polite japanese society the result is one of the warmest and funniest travelogues you ve read it had never been done before not in four thousand years of japanese recorded history had anyone followed the cherry blossom front from one end of the country to the other nor had anyone hitchhiked the length of japan and as ferguson learns it illustrates that to travel is better than to arrive

originally published as hokkaido highway blues with limited distribution in canada will ferguson s classic book about japan for all fans of the bestselling beauty tips from moose

jaw with the same fervour they have for outlandish game shows and tiny gadgets the japanese go nuts each spring when the cherry blossoms sweep from island to island towards the country s northerly tip will ferguson was celebrating the event in the standard fashion and after way too much sake he announced he would be the first person in recorded history to follow the blossom s progress end to end to make it a challenge worth doing he d hitchhike all the way relying on the kindness of some very weird and wonderful strangers mixing his penchant for biting observation with wicked humour ferguson starts at the southernmost tip of cape sata and heads north for distant hokkaido whether he is doing the forbidden and not knowing it or holding conversations by non sequitur it is a journey full of misadventures and revelations the resulting travelogue is one of the funniest and most illuminating books ever written about japan to make matters worse i decided to hitchhike striking a heroic stance i declared my intention to my japanese friends to become the first person ever to hitchhike the length of japan end to end cape to cape sea to sea this did not impress them as much as i had hoped why would you want to do that they asked genuinely puzzled there is no reason to hitchhike that s why we built the bullet train others worried about my safety but i would argue japan is a very safe country is it not oh yes very safe safest in the world so why shouldn t i hitchhike because japan is dangerous and so on now i will admit that mooching rides across japan is not a major achievement i mean it s not like i paddled up the amazon or discovered insulin or anything but i am the first person ever to do this so allow me my hubris when i left my home in minamata city aboard a southbound train i felt suitably bold with my backpack and muscular thumb i m going to hitchhike the length of japan i told the man beside me he smiled and nodded i m going to follow the cherry blossoms he nodded all the way to russia i said he smiled again and soon after changed seats from hitching rides with buddha

this is the first book to bring together visual images of buddha and christ in the same volume drawing on over twenty years of college teaching in religious studies and several research expeditions in europe and asia the author deals with much of the common ground between these two religions as well as the distinctiveness of each from an unusual and fascinating perspective almost 140 illustrations two thirds of them in colour taken from sources as diverse as ancient manuscript masterpieces of art coins film advertisements and childrenis drawings are accompanied by a commentary of 55 000 words together with explanatory notes the text ranges from biographical sketches of gautama and jesus to description of the way in which visual images embody the history myth and doctrine of the buddhist and christian faiths the work has a threefold purpose to provide a unique introduction to buddhism and christianity through visual images to contribute to the growing buddhist christian dialogue and to make some of the worldis most significant art more accessible through an explanation of its patterns symbols and styles it will be invaluable not only to art lovers and students of comparative religion but also to those wishing to gain a greater understanding of a culture which dominates much of the world that we share and seems very distinct from our own but which as we are becoming ever more aware has many points of contact with it

the dictionary details the characteristic attributes chronology and symbolism of over twelve thousand main and minor deities it reflects the extraordinary cultural literary aesthetic and spiritual achievements of several nations of asia over two millennia it will help to identify the masterpieces along with the profusion of masters and divine beings around them the last few decades have seen an exuberant flourishing of the study and popularisation of the patrimony of buddhist art for its aesthetic magnificence this dictionary will add a dimension of precision and depth of perception to the visual tradition

of paintings and sculptures

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