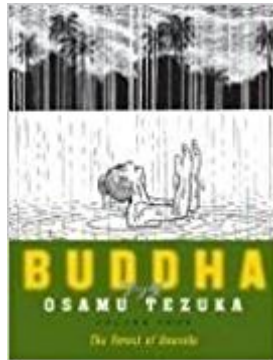


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Buddha, Vol. 4: The Forest Of Uruvela



Synopsis

The Eisner and Harvey Winner
In this fourth volume of the award-winning graphic novel biography, Buddha slowly discovers that his destiny lies in a path not readily available to him. With fellow ascetics Dhepa who has complete faith in the purifying quality of painful physical ordeals, and Assaji, who can predict everyone's death to the hour, Buddha travels through the kingdom of Magadha into the Forest of Uruvela, where The Middle Path and Enlightenment wait beyond a series of death-defying trials. Awake under the Pippala tree...

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Customer Reviews

"Infused with humor and history, the epic of Siddhartha is perhaps Osamu Tezuka's crowning achievement and illustrates why, without irony, Tezuka is referred to as 'The King of Japanese Comics'." - LA Weekly
"Buddha is one of Tezuka's true masterpieces. We're lucky to have this excellent new edition in English." - Scott McCloud, author of Understanding Comics
"In handsome volumes designed by Chip Kidd, the Vertical books present Tezuka at his best." - National Post
"Buddha is an engrossing tale. The armchair philosopher, the devout Buddhist, the casual manga fan - this book satisfies all with its tale of humanism through sequential art, and definitely earns its place on a bibliophile's bookshelf." - Anime Insider
"This is one of the greatest achievements of the comics medium, a masterpiece by one of the greats." - Artbomb.net
"In Tezuka's world, the exquisite collapses into the goofy in a New York minute, the goofy into the melodramatic, the melodramatic into the brutal, and the brutal into the sincerely touching. The surprising result is a work wholly unique and downright fun." - Time Out NY
"Tezuka's Buddha is a striking and memorable

confluence of ancient wisdom and contemporary popular art." -Yoga Journal

Osamu Tezuka (1928-89) is the godfather of Japanese manga comics. He originally intended to become a doctor and earned his degree before turning to what was then a medium for children. His many early masterpieces include the series known in the U.S. as Astro Boy. With his sweeping vision, deftly intertwined plots, feel for the workings of power, and indefatigable commitment to human dignity, Tezuka elevated manga to an art form. The later Tezuka, when he authored Buddha, often had in mind the mature readership that manga gained in the sixties and that had only grown ever since. The Kurosawa of Japanese pop culture, Osamu Tezuka is a twentieth century classic.

This being Volume 4 of Osamu Tezuka's graphic novel of the life of Buddha the flow of the narrative is comfortable. The level of the art work remains high even if he has begun to simplify some of the images expecting us to understand the conventions of this series. The narrative style is familiar but we are being taken deeper into the mysteries of Buddhism and how this belief system would have appeared to those watching it mature. I had thought Vol 3 was the best of the series, four is better. An unfortunate aspect of the narrative style is Tezuka's continued reliance on anachronisms. They can be short cuts that help the reader get the point quickly or just lazy writing. In this book they are too intrusive and distracting. The not yet Buddha, Siddhartha continues to follow Dhepa deeper into the world of the aesthetics. With them is the much younger Assaji. In Assaji Siddhartha has the example of a person certain of the day of his death, and at peace with his fate. Siddhartha has yet to understand why there must be death and what is it about humans that they alone carry awareness of the fate all living things share. In volume 3 we were shown the realization ordeals that intended to purify the soul and only bring death are futile. Yet the purpose of our heroes arrival in the Forrest of Uruvelta is to practice just such ordeals of purification. Instead of finding ever more purified souls we find emaciated and sometimes dead would be priests who are as petty and given to pride and violence as people less determined to be purified. Siddhartha will attain his status as the sacred Buddha, but there remain lessons to be learned. I remain less than satisfied. The most beautiful acts of Siddhartha happen when he is most engaged with the living. Acting for life seems to me to be the best actions of the future Buddha. Yet he is most protective of his need to separate himself from love and any human loyalty. Siddhartha, now Buddha seems to understand this completely. Perhaps I will need the rest of the books to catch the glimmer of the deeper lesson.

When I was first assigned to read this graphic novel, I was very skeptical. I had always looked with disdain upon such media, thinking them very suitable for light entertainment but unable to convey anything meaningful. I was wrong. Those familiar with the story of Buddha will find this very different from what they learned. A whole new cast of characters is introduced to embellish the tale, such as Yatala the giant slave, the Crystal Prince, and Tatta and Migaila, two reformed bandits. Familiar characters are also enhanced. Sujata plays a much larger role than simply offering him milk, and Brahma himself even makes an appearance. Throughout the book, Tezuka does not forget that this is first of all a comic. There are plenty of moments of comic relief, including baseball references and author self-insertion. Despite the threat of death ever looming over the plot, the reader is constantly smiling at the characters' antics. The Forest of Uruvela, in the end, is a stunning display of artistry that perfectly captures Buddha's moment of Enlightenment and shows clearly why Tezuka is considered the godfather of Japanese comics.

Great series. A very quick read, but well worth it.

Tezuka continues his epic story of the Buddha in Manga form, I cannot find any fault with it. The art is fantastic, the story stays close to scholarship. Tezuka's interpretation is vital, human and multifaceted, I read it in one long sitting. A monumental achievement in sequential art, Buddha belongs on your shelf with the classics of dharma, art, and graphic novels. A must-read.

I am Buddhist, so I may have a biased opinion about this series. I honestly am not a big comic book/manga fan, but this series caught my interest. I ended up buying the whole 8 book series and very much enjoyed reading them. These books are not for young children, as there is definitely adult themes, language and drawings of violence and sex in them. These books are not for people looking for serious Buddhist dialogue either, but they are fun and a new and interesting way to view the life of the Buddha. I originally got them for myself and will keep them to share with my children when they get in the mid to late teens. They are worth a read and I recommend them to all interested in the Buddha's life, but from a fresh and not so serious point of view.

I picked up one of these books at our local library and fell in love with the story. After purchasing the complete set, I am glad I went into the library that day.

I have read the Japanese version of this and bought English sets for my boyfriend. We are super happy, everybody should have a set in their house.

Just as incredible as the rest of the series. I recommend it to everyone! I've re-read it many times, and you always pick up new things with each read.

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