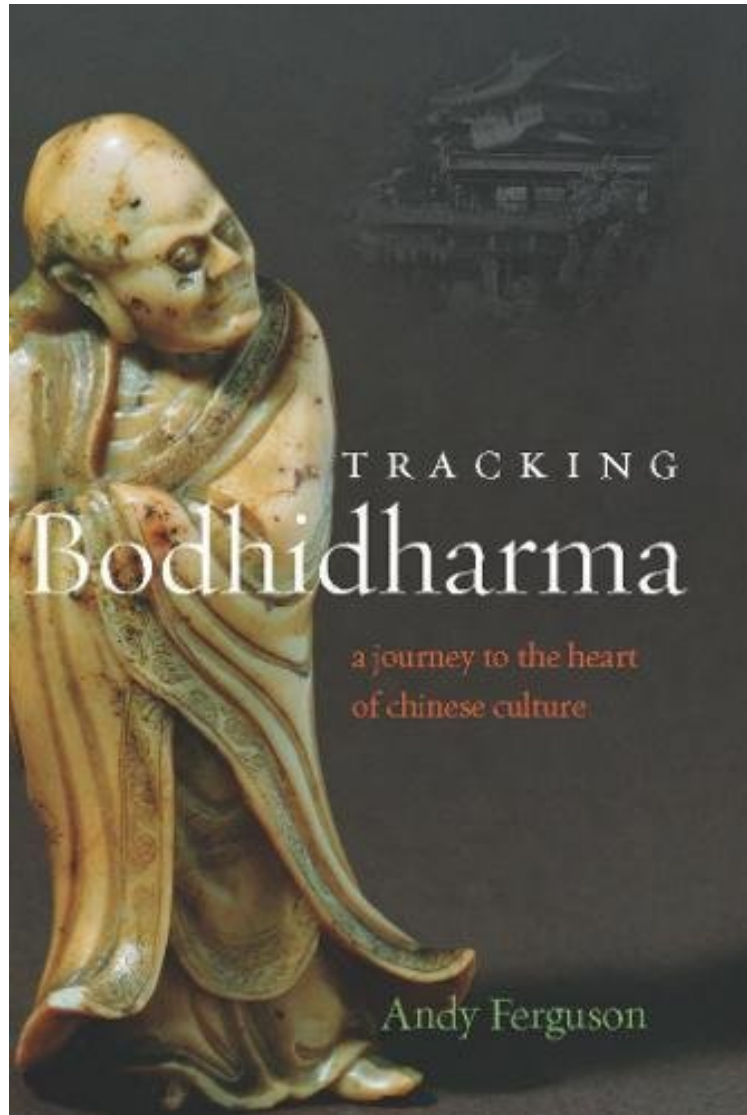


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Tracking Bodhidharma: A Journey to the Heart of Chinese Culture

Andy Ferguson

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Andy Ferguson : Tracking Bodhidharma: A Journey to the Heart of Chinese Culture before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Tracking Bodhidharma: A Journey to the Heart of Chinese Culture:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A unique book about Chinese BuddhismBy William BranchA unique mixture of modern travelogue, historical detective mystery, and personal spiritual discomfort. A "cold case" 1500 years old told in first person. If you are interested in a comprehensive and scholarly compendium then the author's book "Zen's Chinese Heritage" is a better choice.What is known about the early formation of Chan Buddhism

in China is the stuff of legends, not history. This author however is able to bring to the reader's attention some tell tale footprints that the casual reader will be unaware of, to create a context for this evidence, and salt the narrative with contemporary signs of the ripples that have spread outward from them. Both tree-view and the forest-view are made intelligible and the sad but inevitable demise of those long ago trees and forests. What is incongruous about this book, are the author's musings regarding the disturbing relationship between state religion, personal religion, collective guilt and personal guilt which deserve a much more extensive and philosophical analysis in its own volume.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This is an excellent story of Bodhidharma's life in China told in context ... By RPA This is an excellent story of Bodhidharma's life in China told in context of the author's journey in China to find relevant temples. He provided glimpses of how Chan Buddhism developed in China and how it developed as Zen Buddhism in Japan. There was a very interesting discussion of how Chan Buddhism was "institutionalized" in China and in Japan. The author tells what it like to travel in China. This book would be of interest to anyone who practices Chinese martial arts, because legend has it that Bodhidharma is the origin of Chinese martial arts.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating story By William Ross This is a reasonably well narrated tale of a fascinating part of world and 'religious' history. There aren't many easily accessible English language books that go deeply into the context and content of the interaction between the legendary and seminal characters Bodhidharma and Emperor Wu. As noted in other reviews, the author does go into a detailed travelogue which could use some paring down. But the central subject is interesting enough to justify skimming through some of those parts to get to the good stuff.

The life of Bodhidharma, the founder of Zen Buddhism, has, with the passing of time, been magnified to the scale of myth, turning history into the stuff of legend. Known as the First Patriarch, Bodhidharma brought Zen from South India into China in 500 CE, changing the country forever. In *Tracking Bodhidharma*, Andrew Ferguson recreates the path of Bodhidharma, traveling through China to the places where the First Patriarch lived and taught. This sacred trail takes Ferguson deep into ancient China, and allows him to explore the origins of Chan [Zen] Buddhism, the cultural aftermath that Bodhidharma left in his wake, and the stories of a man who shaped a civilization. *Tracking Bodhidharma* offers a previously unheard perspective on the life of Zens most important religious leader, while simultaneously showing how that history is relevant to the rapidly developing super-power that is present-day China. By placing Zen Buddhism within the countrys political landscape, Ferguson presents the religion as a counterpoint to other Buddhist sects, a catalyst for some of the most revolutionary moments in Chinas history, and as the ancient spiritual core of a country that is every day becoming more an emblem of the modern era.

About the Author Andy Ferguson is a graduate of the Chinese Language and Literature program at the University of Oregon. He has lived in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Japan, and has traveled extensively in East and Southeast Asia since 1978. He has organized and led numerous tours to visit Chinese Zen history sites. He lives in Petaluma, California.