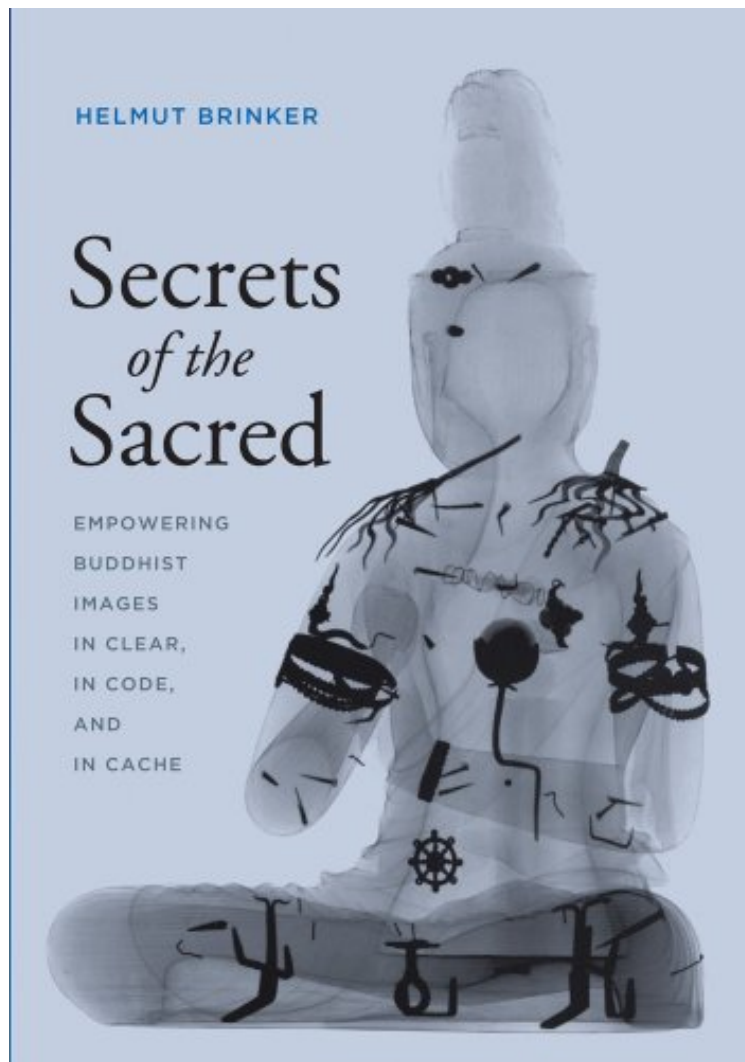


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Secrets of the Sacred: Empowering Buddhist Images in Clear, in Code, and in Cache (Franklin D. Murphy Lecture Series)

Helmut Brinker

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Helmut Brinker : Secrets of the Sacred: Empowering Buddhist Images in Clear, in Code, and in Cache (Franklin D. Murphy Lecture Series) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Secrets of the Sacred: Empowering Buddhist Images in Clear, in Code, and in Cache (Franklin D. Murphy Lecture Series):

Secrets of the Sacred illuminates the role of icons and relics in Buddhist writing and practice, with particular attention to the transformation of inanimate material images into potent icons animated by the divine. The earliest canonical scriptures indicate that images of the Buddha were created before the concept of transcendental identity was developed. Later writings reveal a connectedness between image and deity, and eventually art transformed into a means of creating a receptive environment for communication with the divine power and attaining wisdom. Icons became the perceivable bodies of the divine. Esoteric practices within Buddhism trace back at least as far as the first century CE but did not develop into a religio-philosophic movement until after the fifth century. They relied on mysteries handed down from teacher to pupil. Sacred texts provided clear descriptions of the qualities and appearance of the Esoteric pantheon, but were so elaborate that they challenged the imagination and skill of Buddhist artists. Brinker traces the original meaning and function of individual icons and relics across the various schools of Buddhism. He discusses their origin, style, meaning, and individual histories. Beautiful illustrations complement the histories of these important icons and relics.

"Brinker, a renowned specialist in East Asian Buddhism, its art, and texts, marshals a range of sources, including extraordinary eyewitness accounts. The result is to make these familiar case-studies compelling. Summing Up: Recommended." *Choice*, February 2012 "Through the combination of art-historical studies with philological, archaeological and historical anthropological research, Brinkers work gives a valuable impetus for further investigation in the field of Buddhist art of Central Asia, China and Japan and at the same time opens up new dimensions and a wider geographic and historical scope for interdisciplinary research in Buddhist studies." Christian Jahoda, *Social Anthropology* About the Author Helmut Brinker is professor emeritus of East Asian art at the University of Zurich. His previous books include *Treasures from the Rietberg Museum*, *Zen in the Art of Painting*, *Chinese Cloisonn: The Pierre Uldry Collection*, and *ZEN - Masters of Mediation in Images and Writings*.