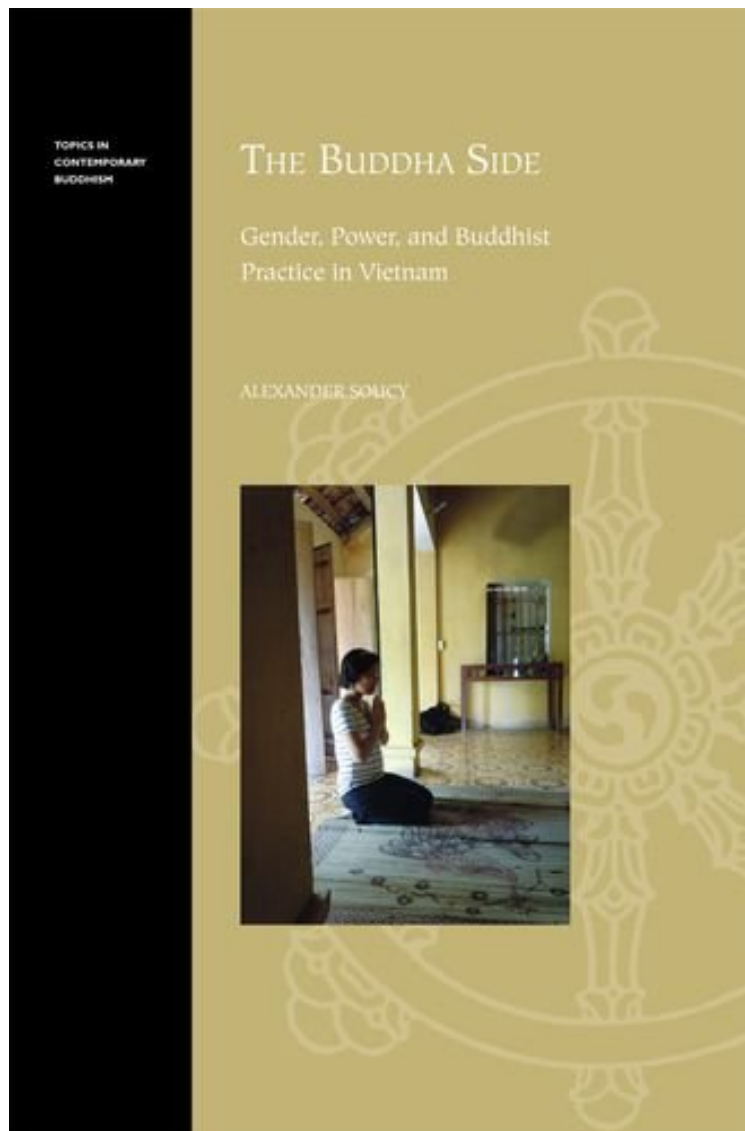


[Download] The Buddha Side: Gender, Power, and Buddhist Practice in Vietnam (Topics in Contemporary Buddhism)

The Buddha Side: Gender, Power, and Buddhist Practice in Vietnam (Topics in Contemporary Buddhism)

Alexander Soucy

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Alexander Soucy : **The Buddha Side: Gender, Power, and Buddhist Practice in Vietnam (Topics in Contemporary Buddhism)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Buddha Side: Gender, Power, and Buddhist Practice in Vietnam (Topics in Contemporary Buddhism):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good book
By Joseph G. Walser
This is really a lovely book. Soucy delves into gender relations in and around two different pagodas in Vietnam. I taught this book as part of a semester long course on Zen. He brings a perspective to the gendering of religion (and secularism) that students could then use to interrogate other contexts such as Korea, China and Japan. This book is definitely worth the read. My only criticism is that he deals exclusively with lay Buddhists. There are monks and nuns who make cameos in this work -- just enough for the reader to become curious about ways that gender and gendered power work within monastic communities in Vietnam. Soucy does not address this at all. I wouldn't say that its omission here is a failing of this book. It is rather that I am hoping that he will address monastics in his next book.

The most common description of the supernatural landscape in Vietnam makes a distinction between Buddhist and non-Buddhist sides. The Buddha side (ben phat) is the focus of this investigation into the intersection of gender, power, and religious praxis. Employing an anthropological approach to Buddhist practice that takes into account modes of action that are not only socially constructed and contextual, but also negotiated by the actors, *The Buddha Side* uniquely explores how gender and age affect understandings of what it means to be a Buddhist. In seeking to map out the ways and meanings of Buddhist engagement, Alexander Soucy examines everything from the skeptical statements of young men and devotional performances of young women to the pilgrimages of older women and performances of orthodoxy used by older men to assert their position within the pagoda space. Soucy draws on more than four years experience conducting ethnographic research in Hanoi to investigate how religious practice is grounded in the constitution and marking of social identity. From this in-depth view, he describes the critical role of religion in shaping social contexts and inserting selves into them. Religion can thus be described as a form of theatre in which social identities (youth, old age, masculinity, femininity, authority) are constructed and displayed via religious practice. A compelling look at the performative aspect of Buddhism in contemporary Vietnam, *The Buddha Side* will be welcomed by anyone with an interest in Buddhism as it is practiced on the ground.

In *The Buddha Side: Gender, Power, and Buddhist Practice in Vietnam*, Alexander Soucy presents the myriad possibilities of what it means to be a Buddhist in Ha N?i. . . . Soucy succeeds in capturing a wide range of individual practices of Vietnamese Buddhism.-- "Journal of Vietnamese Studies"
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About the Author
Alexander Soucy is associate professor of religious studies at St. Mary's University, Halifax, Canada.