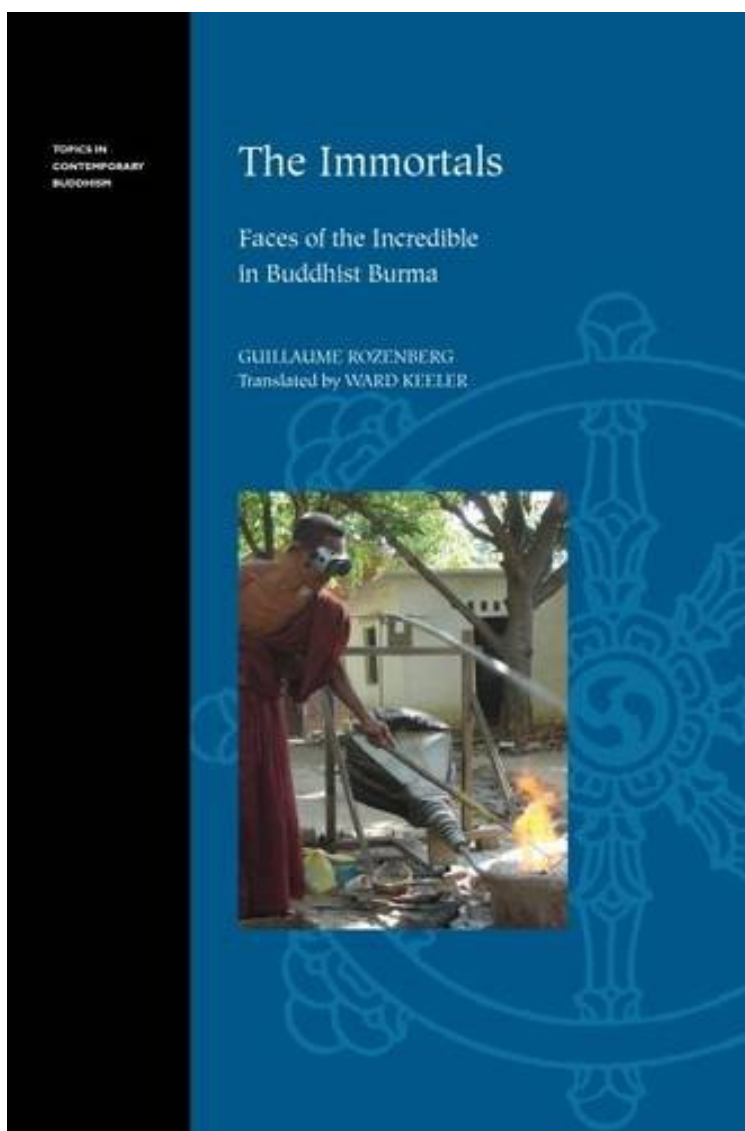


(Download pdf ebook) The Immortals: Faces of the Incredible in Buddhist Burma (Topics in Contemporary Buddhism)

The Immortals: Faces of the Incredible in Buddhist Burma (Topics in Contemporary Buddhism)

Guillaume Rozenberg

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Guillaume Rozenberg : The Immortals: Faces of the Incredible in Buddhist Burma (Topics in Contemporary Buddhism) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Immortals: Faces of the Incredible in Buddhist Burma (Topics in Contemporary Buddhism):

In 1952 a twenty-six-year-old man living in a village in Central Burma was possessed by weikzahumans with extraordinary powers, including immortality. Key figures in Burmese Buddhism, weikza do not die but live on in an invisible realm. From there they re-enter the world through possession to care for people's temporal and spiritual needs while protecting and propagating Buddhism. A cult quickly formed around the young peasant, the chosen medium for four weikza ranging in age from 150 to 1000 years. In addition, these weikza appeared regularly in the flesh. The Immortals plunges us into the midst of this cult, which continues to attract followers from all over the country who seek to pay homage to the weikza, receive their teaching, and benefit from their power. The cult of the four weikza raises a number of classic anthropological issues, particularly for the anthropology of religion: the nature of the supernatural and of belief; the relations among religion, magic, and science; the experience of possession. It also provides a window on contemporary Burmese society. To contemplate both, the author adopts an unconventional approach, which itself reflects representation in anthropology, or, more precisely, how anthropology uses description and the interpretations description occasions to make sense of what it studies. The writing makes clear both the indigenous take on reality and the work of anthropological understanding as it is being elaborated, along with the ties that connect the latter to the former. Mixing narration of the incredible with reflection on the forms religious experience takes, The Immortals offers us a way to accompany the author into the field and to grasp to take up and make our own the anthropologist's interpretations and the realities to which they pertain.

The Immortals is a fascinating account of a major religious phenomenon in Burma. As well as telling a good story, the book touches on important social and religious issues of interest to both the general reader and a student of Burma or Buddhism.-- "Buddhistdoor Global" Ward Keeler has done an excellent job translating the book from French into English. The beauty of the language, the complexities of the ideas and theories involved, and the storytelling come across without any distractions from the translation. In sum, The Immortals is invaluable on many levels. It left me thinking deeply about both how and why people believe in the incredible, and how anthropologists can negotiate the delicate balance between respecting people's beliefs and practices and drawing conclusions that enable those from other places and societies at least to begin to make sense of, if not fully comprehend, those beliefs.-- "Pacific Affairs" Based on fieldwork carried out in the early 2000s, Rozenberg's book--an ethnographic study of mainly one loosely organized cult group devoted to four weizzas situated in the village Mebaygon in Central Burma--is therefore a welcome contribution. . . . a fascinating study of a Burmese phenomenon and an important contribution to the scholarship . . . Providing the reader with a glimpse into a hitherto rather unknown world of marvels in Burma, the book contains great narratives about miracles and is pleasant to read, being quite literary.-- "Nova Religio" The Immortals is a fascinating account of a major religious phenomenon in Burma. As well as telling a good story, the book touches on important social and religious issues of interest to both the general reader and a student of Burma or Buddhism. (Buddhistdoor Global) Based on fieldwork carried out in the early 2000s, Rozenberg's book an ethnographic study of mainly one loosely organized cult group devoted to four weizzas situated in the village Mebaygon in Central Burma is therefore a welcome contribution. . . . a fascinating study of a Burmese phenomenon and an important contribution to the scholarship . . . Providing the reader with a glimpse into a hitherto rather unknown world of marvels in Burma, the book contains great narratives about miracles and is pleasant to read, being quite literary. (Nova Religio) Ward Keeler has done an excellent job translating the book from French into English. The beauty of the language, the complexities of the ideas and theories involved, and the storytelling come across without any distractions from the translation. In sum, The Immortals is invaluable on many levels. It left me thinking deeply about both how and why people believe in the incredible, and how anthropologists can negotiate the delicate balance between respecting people's beliefs and practices and drawing conclusions that enable those from other places and societies at least to begin to make sense of, if not fully comprehend, those beliefs. (Pacific Affairs) About the Author Ward Keeler is associate professor of anthropology at the University of Texas at Austin.