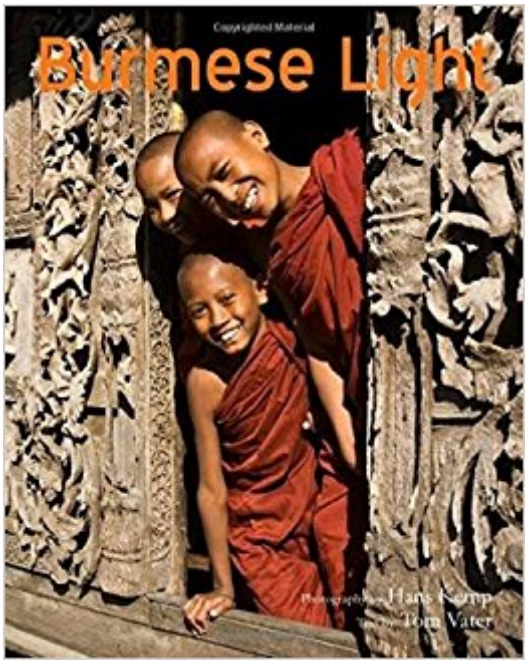
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Burmese Light: Impressions Of The Golden Land (Burma - Myanmar)



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Synopsis

Burmese Light: Impressions of the Golden Land (Burma - Myanmar) is a photographic introduction to Burma or Myanmar, as the country is currently called, the mysterious land behind the Bamboo Curtain. Stunning images by award-winning photographer Hans Kemp, paired with an insightful text by well-known author Tom Vater, take the reader on a journey through a fascinating country slowly but steadily emerging from a long period of involuntarily isolation. The 208-page book features all the country’s famous sights, its colorful people and its multitude of customs, and leaves the reader with only one wish: to pay a visit to this amazing Golden Land.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Kemp and Vater have taken an accurate, sensitive and contemporary picture of Burma.....you will feel your armchair blaze in shades of Burmese jade and gold, as long as you will keep this volume open on your lap. This book is a necessary addition to the libraries of all those who consider themselves to be lovers of Southeast Asia."Marco Ferrarese on the Vagabonding blogFirst up, let's get this out there: Burmese Light is the best photo-travelogue that I have read or browsed through in 2013 or nearly any year for that matter. Yes! It is simply that good. (The Advisor Cambodia, January 11, 2014)

Award winning freelance photographer Hans Kemp has been based in Asia for over twenty years. His editorial work has been published to great acclaim in a wide variety of international newspapers and magazines such as GEO, Sud Deutsche Zeitung, Time, Panorama, Asahigraph,

ReaderÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Digest, and many others. He has published several books of his work, of which perhaps the best known to date is the best-selling Bikes of Burden, about the motorbike culture in Vietnam. Tom Vater has written nonfiction and fiction books, travel guides, documentary screenplays, and countless feature articles investigating cultural and political trends and oddities in Asia. His stories have appeared in publications such as the Asia Wall Street Journal, The Guardian, The Times, Marie Claire, Penthouse, and The Daily Telegraph. He co-wrote The Most Secret Place on Earth, a feature documentary on the CIAÃ¢â ¬â„¢s secret war in Laos, which has been broadcast in twenty-five countries. His bestselling book Sacred Skin, the first English language title on ThailandÃ¢â ¬â„¢s sacred tattoos, has received more than thirty reviews.

I collect all books on Burma that I can find. This is definitely a winner in the photo category. The text is also interesting and insightful. This book stands head and shoulders against one done recently by a Canon Pro. A subtitle could be Burmese Life. We are not overwhelmed by pagodas and monks--as nice as those subjects are. I've felt the prime aspect of Myanmar is the people who live there. Mr. Kemp does not disappoint. There is no feeling that we are on a guide-led photo-shoot of limited venues. Nothing staged, nothing fakey. Kudos to writer Vater and photographer Kemp. I am now hunting up his book about bikes in Vietnam.

This book has truly opened my eyes in regards to Burma, such a beautiful place and wonderful stories.Burma has definitely been added to my travel list, after reading this great book.Highly recommended.

Loved the book, brought back very happy memories of my three week holiday in Burma last September, when I travelled up the Chindwin and Irrawaddy Rivers.

Good book, has lots of nice photos in it. Arrived on time.

Stone Buddha statues poised near the golden evening glow of an intricately carved temple wall, the gleam of gold radiating from the legendary Schwedagon Pagoda that defines the Yangon skyline, a line of young nuns garbed in rose-pink robes--this book's introduction to Burma is portrayed through images of that country's strong spiritual faith, which underpins Burmese Light as it does the country itself. The beauty of its temples, the bare feet of monks as they walk on their alms rounds, the playfulness of novice nuns and monks who are still children, the 4000 temple ruins stretching across

the plain of Bagan, all shown against a glorious open sky with its rich variety of light, are the images that comprise much of this book. They are almost otherworldly in their undisturbed relationship to the world that swirls around them, a backdrop that is both natural and manmade, enduring and temporal, changing faster in the past year than it has in previous decades.A procession of oxcarts makes its way to a traditional village Nat Festival; there they will watch men in heavy make-up and ornate robes become mediums for the spirits that briefly take up residence within the body of the men who channel them. A heavily laden motorcycle transports young lambs to market, one sprawled across the driver's lap, two more peering from a basket that's tightly bungie-corded to a platform built over the rear tire. In Yangon the traffic that flows past the Schwedagon is decidedly more modern--vans, SUVs, shiny new automobiles. Burma missed a large portion of the 20th century; now it's eager to leap into the 21st. "By the end of the 19th century," author Tom Vater says of Yangon, "it boasted public services on a par with those of London." Infrastructure has crumbled since then and inhabitants are hungry for civic improvements.Although showing colonial buildings in Yangon and the old palace moat in Mandalay, Hans Kemp's photographs linger longest in the countryside where women sell bundles of firewood and men harvest rice by hand, where cheroots are smoked and betel is chewed, and women beautify their faces with swirls of a sunscreen and cosmetic paste ground from the bark of a thanaka tree. The diversity of the country's people is well-represented in Burmese Light; with "some 135 distinct ethnic groups" bringing their cultures and customs to that of the Burmese, "who make up almost 70-90% of the population and dominate public life." Beautiful, proud faces fill the pages of this book, jostling with the stunning landscape shots for pride of place.In their creative collaboration, Kemp and Vater provide a taste of a country that is transforming itself, documenting Burma as changes began to come. This is far from a typical coffee table book. It's a springboard into more exploration, more illumination, more...I'm begging them for a sequel.

Burmese Light, with photographs by Hans Kemp and text by Tom Vater offers viewers and readers a tantalizingly beautiful glimpse into contemporary Myanmar at a transitional point in its history. In an age where it seems that everyone with some type of image making device, be it a camera-phone or expensive DSLR or anything in between considers himself/herself a photographer, Burmese Light shows us why this is anything but the case. In this brilliant book, we see what happens when an experienced photographer with a thorough understanding of his medium, encounters a land and a people for which he obviously has deep feeling. Photography is a medium which depends on light to carve its images and Mr. Kemp reveals himself to be a genuine light-master. Virtually every

image glows with an ethereal presence which transforms everyday events into transcendental moments; fixed in time but somehow continuing on in the viewer's mind.One extraordinary aspect of this book is how the viewer/reader becomes a participant in the authors' journey, rather than merely a passive observer. The intricate play between photographer and that which is front of his lens clicks magically to invite the viewer into the scene. We are not watching life go by, but we are going along for the ride. Our feet are walking that street, hearing the sounds we cannot hear but know are there, smelling the fish and the smoke, while everything is bathed in a gorgeously glowing radiance. This is a book which brings smiles with every turn of the page.In addition, the book is logically laid out, broken down by place but within each place we have a multitude of details to explore along with the authors.Finally, Mr. Vater's text beautifully and unpretentiously compliments the photographs, providing a footing from which to further appreciate where we are and what is going on around us.I would highly recommend this book for anyone who appreciates real photography and/or has an interest in Burma or Asia in general. You will find yourself returning to it often, each time discovering new delights.

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