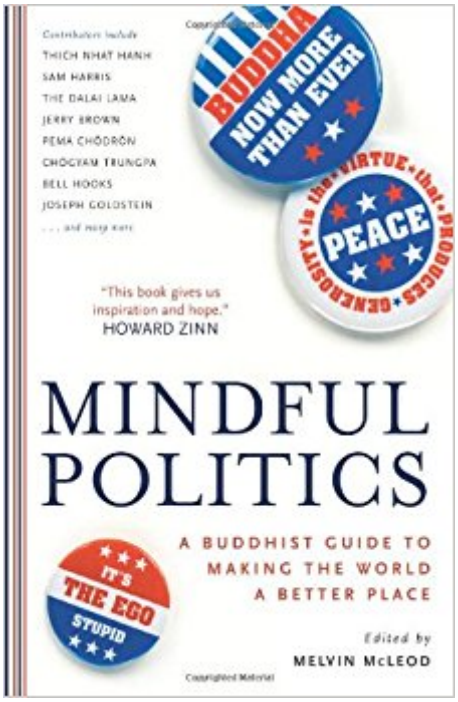
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Mindful Politics: A Buddhist Guide To Making The World A Better Place



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Synopsis

"I’ve studied politics my entire life. It’s been because of my time working on this book that I’ve finally learned what’s really important in politics." So says Melvin McLeod, editor of Mindful Politics, a book that transcends Right and Left, progressive and conservative, to get to the heart of what matters: how we can all make a positive difference in our complex political world. This is not your typical political book. It’s not written at a fever pitch, it doesn’t use a good/bad binary, and it doesn’t tout partisan policies. Instead, this timely collection addresses the less-discussed but more important questions about politics: What insight does religion have to offer politics? How can we as concerned citizens move beyond the particulars of legislation and party affiliation, and take direct action? How, amid divisive and challenging times, can personal growth and effective advocacy take place together? In short, Mindful Politics offers the perspectives of 34 important authors and thinkers on how each of us, right now, can make the world a better place. McLeod includes essays and insights from some of the brightest, and most controversial, lights of Buddhism - and beyond. Included are: Thich Nhat Hanh Sam Harris (author of The End of Faith) The Dalai Lama Jerry Brown Pema Chodron Trungpa Rinpoche bell hooks Ezra Bayda Meg Wheatley ...and many more

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Customer Reviews

This collection of essays on a Buddhist approach to politics is far-ranging. We see contributions from Buddhists engaged in politics, whether religious figures like the Dalai Lama and Zen monk Thich Nhat Hanh or Zen student and political leader Jerry Brown, as well as a wide variety of

Buddhist teachers and practitioners. McLeod, who edits two Buddhist periodicals and an annual anthology of Buddhist writing, skillfully organizes the diverse writings by using the categories that describe Buddhism’s noble eightfold path. Contributions vary in quality. Nhat Hanh is clear as a Zen sitting-room bell; the precepts of his Order of Interbeing community are specific, and he can draw on decades of peace work to illustrate that what he says is not merely possible but has already been done. Scholar Rita Gross offers fresh insight about the anger of righteousness that often motivates political involvement. Other contributions are woolly or left over from the 1960s; bell hooks’s use of leftisms ("imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy") draws on stale ideology. Margaret Wheatley does important work in community and leadership development, but should avoid writing bad poetry to express her views. Despite unevenness, this anthology usefully disputes Buddhism’s reputation as apolitical. Buddhism is quiet but not quietistic. (Aug.) Copyright Ã Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

"An anthology like this should have been published decades ago. We all know, politics sucks. It is largely a playground for (individual and national) egos that are fixated on power and self-advantage. The present volume, compiled by the editor-in-chief of Shambhala Sun magazine, consists of twenty-nine very readable contributions that envision politics as a humanitarian enterprise focused on the betterment and upliftment of all human societies. [. . .] Melvin McLeod has assembled a galaxy of notables with spiritual credentials, who can shed light on how to humanize politics and--dare we hope--politicians. Delightfully, even Jerry Brown, former governor of California, makes sense. How can the Buddha’s wisdom not guide us in that most human of activities called ’conflict resolution,’ or politics? This anthology should be must reading for all aspiring or seasoned politicians, and it also should be placed in the hands of anyone old enough to vote." (Georg Feuerstein, Traditional Yoga Studies)"Shambhala Sun editor Melvin McLeod compiled a essays, interviews, discussions, and other pieces by prominent Buddhist teachers, writers, activists, and politicians. Thich Nhat Hanh, Chogyam Trungpa, Joseph Goldstein, bell hooks, and Sulak Sivaraksa are a few of the writers represented. These selections explore an aware, engaged, and mindful approach to politics. A source of inspiration, they provide a means by which we can understand conscious political action." (LA Yoga)"The obvious failure of ordinary political thinking to create a world of peace and justice should suggest to us that we look further, deeper, for guides to action .The essays in Mindful Politics do just that, gently pushing us to think beyond orthodox solutions, drawing upon ancient wisdom to cope with the violence and insecurity of our time, giving us inspiration and hope." (Howard Zinn, author of A People’s History of the United States)"Mindful

Politics lifts the political discussion out of the muck of fundamentalism and turf protection. This book is uplifting, practical, and gives hope where I thought there may no longer be any. Now if only we could sneak copies into the Oval Office." (Susan Piver Browne, bestselling author of The Hard Questions)"Mindful Politics: A Buddhist Guide to Making the World a Better Place has instantly become one of my favorite books. It is an amazing collection of thoughtful and helpful reflections. For the sake of our planet, I can I only hope it will become a bestseller." (James Ishmael Ford, head teacher of Boundless Way Zen, and author of Zen Master WHO? and If You're Lucky, Your Heart Will Break)"Dharma and Politics. It's a marriage made in America, that great, rich melting pot of contradictions. Mindful Politics has gathered the big names--former California guv'ner Jerry Brown, Pema Chodron, Thich Nhat Hanh, even the Dalai Lama himself--around an ancient idea whose time is more relevant than ever: that the enlightened governance of a society transcends issues of gender, class, race--even partisanship. Melvin McLeod's Mindful Politics offers us a first hint of what the consummation between Buddhadharma and American politics might look like--and how to get there." (Waylon Lewis, editor of elephantjournal.com)"Imagine a mindful politics! That is exactly what these thinkers, activists, and teachers are doing in this marvelous collection of essays. May these perspectives and practices inspire, inform and nurture the next generation of political leaders as well as all of us--since we are all vital living 'cells' in the body of this one world--as we ponder and hopefully contribute in ways little and big to the health of the body-politic, which is nothing less now than the health of not just the nation but the whole world." (Jon Kabat-Zinn, author of Coming to Our Senses: Healing Ourselves and the World Through Mindfulness)"This collection of essays on a Buddhist approach to politics is far-ranging. McLeod, who edits two Buddhist periodicals and an annual anthology of Buddhist writing, skillfully organizes the diverse writings by using the categories that describe Buddhism's noble eightfold path. This anthology usefully disputes Buddhism's reputation as apolitical. Buddhism is quiet but not quietistic." (Publishers Weekly)"[There is] a growing dialogue, well-represented in this anthology, [including Asian Buddhist teachers as well as] Western meditators, ecologists, and systems analysts, from Joseph Goldstein and Bernie Glassman to bell hooks and Margaret Wheatley. Perhaps their true common denomination is spiritual politics, since they also invoke Gandhi, Merton, and King. Recurring concepts like mindfulness, interbeing, and non-clinging give the book a coherent and uniquely Buddhist flavor." (Inquiring Mind)"A substantive contribution on how to skillfully address the current state of [political] affairs. This book offers what has been missing from so much progressive theory and practice: ways of bringing peace right into the heart and heat of the struggle. Many pieces stand out, including Charles Johnson's brilliant essay, 'Be Peace Embodied,' and Thich Nhat Hanh's kick-ass exhortation to the

US Congress of how to better govern the most powerful country in the world. I recommend reading and re-reading it. I'm glad to have such a feast to learn from. The world needs it." (Diana Lion, founder of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship Prison Program, in Fellowship magazine)

The last chapter, written by Sam Harris, is the most challenging to Buddhists. I don't remember him mentioning the violence in Sri Lanka, and I think the essay might have been written before violence in the name of Buddhism in Myanmar and Thailand. Without mentioning such specific instances, I think we should all acknowledge that Buddhism can have a dark side, like other religions. When I was younger I thought no wars were ever fought in the name of Buddhism, and was probably a bit smug about it. While there's some validity in this, unfortunately some Buddhists do practice violence and it is wrong to deny this. I think Buddhism is fairly unique in that it can be a life philosophy for atheists, and it is beneficial for a secular Buddhist to call out religious Buddhists on issues like fundamentalism. Others here have reviewed other parts of the book, and as a whole, so I'm not going to repeat these. Don't be surprised by the critical look at Buddhism at the end. It is good, if bitter, medicine to take.

Lots of wisdom, and really cool to hear it from people like Jerry Borwn, former gov. of CA. Excellent stuff, but could have been shorter. A LOOOOT of redundant entries, and it doesn't quite live up to its claim of bringing Buddhist philosophy into concrete terms for the real world issues. It stays pretty philosophical. Also, good for them for including the against-the-grain Sam Harris piece.Not perfect but still important reading.

Just wonderful.

Good

I'm not Buddhist, but I am very politically active, and that's why I decided to check out this book. 2006 looks to be a year of changes, probably because the powerful have become disconnected from reality, and a group of people who have questioned the "reality" and dared to think in new ways are pushing forward. The essays in this book encourage the reader to question assumptions... especially the assumption that Buddhists are above politics. The last, best essay by Sam Harris poses the most subversive question: would getting rid of the religion of Buddhism make the world a better place?

WARNING: This book is highly informative and may induce increased nationalism and a pacifist view on state affairs. Great masterpiece!

This book is excellent. My son ordered 3 Buddhist books at the same time for a term paper concerning war. This was far and away the best of the three. It is a collection of essays, some of which touch on war. The essays are well worth reading.

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