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Posted on 24 August 2019 By Osamu Tezuka

I read this book several years ago, I confess, not a whit out of any interest in Manga I'd read a scant few manga at the time was thinking why do all these books seem suspiciously similar to each other down to how the characters were drawn, their roles and most surprising, even most of the plot lines. However, my first foray into the Manga of Tezuka was I can only compare to being introduced to some of the animated films of Miyazaki or even some of the works of the great Japanese film director Akira Kurosawa. The work of these 3 men was somehow, often than not, able to transcend the limits of the medium itself surpassing form to take on a life of their own. Something which only happens when true art is created. My true purpose for coming to the work of Tezuka had been to learn much about the life of the Buddha. Through 11 beautifully illustrated, and lovingly written volumes, I was able to explore the wonder that was the life the Buddha chose to live. A simple life, yet in retrospect, so full of feeling, meaning and inspiration. Each Volume took about 2 hours to read. It is worth a mention that Vols 9-10 have been OOP for some time and can command quite a high price. Used longer to reflect on bigger issues or record a quote now than for myself, I spread the series over among a year's time. If only I could I would run clean the slate, and start right back at the 1st volume once again. I originally collected and read this series as its hardcover volumes were released in the United States, a half dozen years ago. But, having recently watched PBS's documentary about the life of Buddha, and having read several other books by

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Tezuka since then, I figured it was time to revisit the series. In all honesty, while the series is essentially about the life of Buddha, it's a very hard series to encapsulate. To start, it's worth pointing out that Buddha isn't even born until about 2/3rds the way into this first volume. And that the majority of the book, instead, focuses on the adventures of the slave Chapra and the pariah Tatta who possess the ability to, er, possess animals. Their stories, and the stories of the other characters in this book, play out as a series of allegories emphasizing the interconnectedness of all life, how violence begets violence and the roll of self sacrifice. While these stories feel true to teachings of Buddha, it's my understanding that most of them are not historical Buddhist stories, but instead are the inventions of Tezuka creatively and effectively intertwined with the tale of Buddha's life. It's also worth pointing out that, despite the subject matter, this is not a self-serious book by any regards. It's often irreverent and like many manga comics the characters switch from realistic to abstract on a near panel to panel basis. Also there are moments of meta humor when characters will interact with the panel they are standing in or often, bouncing off of or where characters make references to modern day cities or ideas. It's to Tezuka's credit that he's able to balance those moments with heady philosophical subject matter and allegories so deftly. I'm glad I revisited volume 1, and look forward to diving into the next volume.

Osamu Tezuka: A Vaunted Storytelling Genius, Consummate Skill At Visual Expression, And Warm Humanity Blossom Fully In His Eight Volume Epic Of Siddhartha's Life And Times. Tezuka Evidences His Profound Grasp Of The Subject By Contextualizing The Buddha's Ideas. The Emphasis Is On Movement, Action, Emotion, And Conflict As The Prince Siddhartha Runs Away From Home, Travels Across India, And Questions Hindu Practices Such As Ascetic Self Mutilation And Caste Oppression. Rather Than Recommend Resignation And Impassivity, Tezuka's Buddha Predicates Enlightenment Upon Recognizing The Interconnectedness Of Life, Having Compassion For The Suffering, And Ordering One's Life Sensibly. Philosophical Segments Are Threaded Into Interpersonal Situations With Ground Breaking Visual Dynamism. By An Artist Who Makes Sure Never To Lose His Readers Attention. Tezuka Himself Was A Humanist Rather

Delta of Venus

Metamorphoses

Lady Chatterley's Lover

Kushiel's Dart

Sappho's Leap

Claudius the God and His Wife Messalina

A Princess of Mars

The English Patient

Robert Mapplethorpe and the Classical Tradition

Tropic of Cancer

The Piano Teacher

I, Claudius

Sex and the City

The Nude: A Study in Ideal Form

Thy Neighbor's Wife

Than A Buddhist, And His Magnum Opus Is Not An Attempt At Propaganda Hermann Hesse S Novel Or Bertolucci S Film Is Comparable In This Regard In Fact, Tezuka S Approach Is Slightly Irreverent In That It Incorporates Something That Western Commentators Often Eschew, Namely, Humor After a long time I ve found a book that has hooked me from the start.It also raises many philosophical questions on life. I tried but I couldn t like this manga The storytelling feels flat for me There are some recurring POV fictional characters in this manga, but I don t feel they give additional value for the story, and some of their plots are inconclusive. Excellent joy ride The art, the plot, the character build up, action, dialogues everything is carved to perfection.Could relate to lot of stuff from Mahabharata Born a shudra, serving as a Kshatriya, challenging duals, magical realism, saints monks, wishes and curses.Parallel stories intertwined in an interesting manner.Only thing missing was ummm Buddha Was in split minds whether to pick this series after reading Herman Hesse Instincts gave a go ahead and I m glad to have found this Anime Buddha with no expressions spared what next So, you walk into a bookstore and you see shelf after shelf of manga, different categories, crazy volume after volume of individual titles and you go nah, don t know where to start, too cartoony, don t get it, too much of an investment, what s the best way to go for an adult just wanting to sample some of the best stuff That was me, 3 4 years ago, and since I was teaching a graphic novels class, I asked the young manga experts to suggest the best manga series they knew and so I read 1 2 of their suggestions Ranma 1 2, Deathnote, Fruits Basket, Berserk, etc which not surprisingly were YA oriented titles, which was okay for me in the sense that I also teach YA classes but still, pretty unsatisfying to me as an adult reader I stumbled on a transition from the silly smash em up, cartoony goofiness of manga which I really don t like to serious themes through Lone Wolf and Cub which Road to Perdition owes a lot to , which has gorgeous historical scenes and is not silly, and especially through Kawasaki s Barefoot Gen, which focuses on the author s personal survivor, was there experience of Hiroshima and its aftermath silly, smash em up, goofiness AND total devastation The mix of goofy cartoony hey, manga for kids and serious subjects scenes, exquisitely drawn, in contrast

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in Barefoot Gen is at the heart of the nature of Tezuka's serious work, and the eight volume Buddha is considered by most to be his masterwork, his magnum opus. Tezuka, the grandfather of manga, is one place to start, and I have been making my way slowly, dabbling, through a lot of his work, but this is finally my first run at Buddha, which mixes fictional characters who are pariah, slave and brahmin with actual historical figures, places, and events, and religion spirituality mythology as you prefer. The cartoony stuff I still don't like, though I suppose it makes the potentially boring epic tale a little lighter, less ponderous and serious. It throws in a mix of irreverence with its reverence for Buddhism. Thanks, Seth Hahne, for that observation, too, and read HIS review and others for detailed actual awesome review accounts that tell you plot and character stuff in true review fashion. This is just my typical ramble, better for kid readers to whom maybe he intends to introduce Buddhism. Not sure. Gorgeous, detailed drawings of places and events contrast cartoony pissing pariah Tatta. We get to know main characters and like them and a couple of them die, so it feels not trivial and what do I know about Buddha and Buddhism so far? Not much, since the Buddha was just born. We situate that huge spiritual event person in the contrast of a real, very casted world where you get to care about the people and their travails first, which makes a lot of sense for how to situate Buddhism. The complexity of the artwork and its strategies and the storytelling are worthy of a Master of Manga great work, from the seventies and so I'll read on and haven't with Black Jack and others from him, so that's a good sign, I guess. Exploring Buddhism a little bit through a comic book, a lighter source than huge religious tomes, is part of the attraction to Tezuka's Buddha, not surprisingly, perhaps. I read Herman Hesse's Siddhartha and other books from him and others then when I was in high school during a period when many folks raised in Christianity found like me, who became essentially agnostic, non-religious, though spiritual, trying to be ethical, etc. It's too patriarchal and Western and authoritarian and were looking to the East for alternatives. I have friends who seem to be highly influenced by Buddhism, and some who became and still are actual Buddhists so that is part of my interest, to know a bit, I guess, as well as to get to know a Japanese master and his masterworks as I have gotten

to know Yukio Mishima in fiction and Akira Kurosawa in film icons of art For other great manga, you can go to my pretty damned slight manga list and then other GR listopia lists, of course, but Seth Hahne has been so far my best source for great manga to read Few months before, I read Siddhartha to know about Buddha and eastern philosophy That book gave me cancer This is my first course towards recovery. Manga felt a bit childish at first, on a wtf level, like Dragonball with a messiah complex Even locusts from Leviticus made an appearance Well, once I made peace with the weirdness and explicitness, this Eisner award winning comic soon became an adorable run This is a variegated and unique interpretation against the historical one we are familiar with, with completely fictional characters and accords, so far at least Geography and cultural background is very similar to what I ve been exposed to, and by the look of it, manga seems to be following the Mahayana tradition associating Siddhartha with divinity and halo So far, Buddha has just made his appearance in the story, and I am reserving my opinions to further installments Unlike the usual treatment of caste system with dharma , individualism and conceptual obligation towards moksha , this narrative gives it a morbid take of oppression and privileges And the comic cleverly distracts readers off this morbidity and pain with lively drawings, lovable characters and occasional humour It is stupidly funny at times, I spilled my coffee at a scene where a sixth century BC Doctor made his appearance with stethoscope and a lab coat. One minor issue with this issue though, the characters kinda look like Astroboy. I admit I m not the most enlightened rim shot thank you guy when it comes to Buddhism, or religion in general for that matter, in knowing its origins, tenets, and so on But I do have a rudimentary understanding of Buddhism and the Buddha having read Hermann Hesse s Siddhartha a few years ago, and because of osmosis through pop culture Buddhists believe all life is sacred, something about existence being suffering, and reincarnation, with the Buddha as an enlightened chap who figured out everything while sat under a special tree and now lives in space I thought reading a book, or the first volume anyway of a series, celebrating and informing readers of the life of the Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama, would leave me somewhat knowledgeable about the guy and the religion It

turns out that Volume 1 Kapilavastu , has surprisingly very little to do with the Buddha, with a brief segment of its 400 pages dedicated to the Buddha's birth before turning focus back to the main story which is about a young slave called Chapra who is determined to overcome the caste system into which he was born and become a nobleman. Accompanying Chapra is a kind of wild child called Tatta who doesn't wear clothes and has a weird superpower which enables him to transfer his consciousness into any animal he wishes. There's also a monk called Narradatta who is looking for the Chosen One and we see the tenets of Buddhism being formed by his master, the wise saint Asita. The other big surprise in this book is how nutty the tone of the story is. I expected it to be somber and reverential but Osamu Tezuka isn't afraid to throw in slapstick humour or fantastical flights of fancy, or include action fight sequences. It's a very anachronistic take on this story with the characters all speaking in modern day vernacular. Bro, hey, ya and honey all feature frequently and possessed of 20th century sensibilities despite this story being set in c.560 BCE. Early on he even draws a packet of cigarettes and a pocket watch falling out of a monk's robes. But I like that Tezuka's playing fast and loose with the storytelling. He's not being disrespectful but giving this story his own spin on it. Tezuka's drawing style also compliments his storytelling approach perfectly. The characters look very manga-esque with big eyes, hair. Chapra looks like a million manga leading guy characters while Tatta looks deliberately like Tezuka's most famous creation, Astro Boy. Female readers might be put off by his portrayal of women in this book who all, strangely, look the same. A very idealised beauty with almost every woman going topless throughout. And despite being malnourished, etc they all have large, perfectly round breasts. And then there are side characters that look really cartoonish with exaggerated features like foreheads or mouths or eyes or body shapes that don't even try to resemble reality. He even draws himself into the comic, giving himself cameos at random points for no real reason other than he was bored. Awesome. So for those readers put off of this book by thinking it would be a boring religious tract or straightforward biography, think again. This first volume at least is a rollicking adventure set in ancient times written and drawn by a master comics storyteller who's clearly having fun with the material.

and who knows when to scale back the ribaldry and bombast to emphasise important points about the story of the Buddha It s a very fast paced, enjoyable and funny book with some excellent scenes, great characters, and a riveting story that ll keep you entertained from the first page to the last.

