



# After Buddhism: Rethinking the Dharma for a Secular Age

*Stephen Batchelor*

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## **After Buddhism: Rethinking the Dharma for a Secular Age** Stephen Batchelor

Some twenty-five centuries after the Buddha started teaching, his message continues to inspire people across the globe, including those living in predominantly secular societies. What does it mean to adapt religious practices to secular contexts?

Stephen Batchelor, an internationally known author and teacher, is committed to a secularized version of the Buddha's teachings. The time has come, he feels, to articulate a coherent ethical, contemplative, and philosophical vision of Buddhism for our age. *After Buddhism*, the culmination of four decades of study and practice in the Tibetan, Zen, and Theravada traditions, is his attempt to set the record straight about who the Buddha was and what he was trying to teach. Combining critical readings of the earliest canonical texts with narrative accounts of five members of the Buddha's inner circle, Batchelor depicts the Buddha as a pragmatic ethicist rather than a dogmatic metaphysician. He envisions Buddhism as a constantly evolving culture of awakening whose long survival is due to its capacity to reinvent itself and interact creatively with each society it encounters.

This original and provocative book presents a new framework for understanding the remarkable spread of Buddhism in today's globalized world. It also reminds us of what was so startling about the Buddha's vision of human flourishing.

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