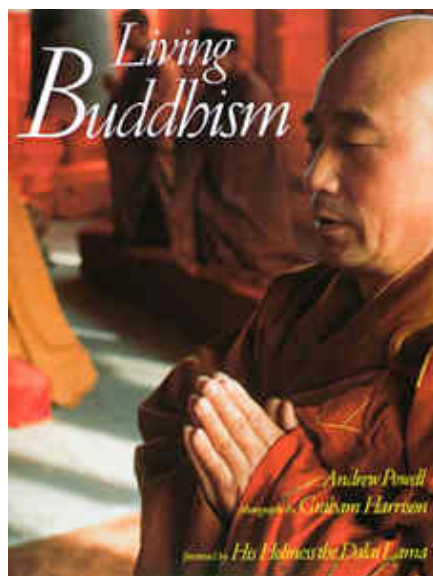


## Living Buddhism in Retrospect and Prospect — A Photographic Exhibition and Related Events —

Displays at the Main Library, the University of Edinburgh  
12th September to 6th October 2011



*Living Buddhism* was an illustrated book and accompanying exhibition on the Buddhist religion. The British Museum published the book and hosted the exhibition in 1989. The photographs, the work of the renowned photographer [Graham Harrison](#), grew partly out of a major exhibition of the Museum's Buddhist artefacts in 1985, *Buddhism: Art and Faith*, curated by Vladimir Zwalf. Graham Harrison undertook two long journeys around Asia in 1984–5 and 1987, in addition to an earlier journey around Korea in 1983, to produce his photographic record of this major world religion. Andrew Powell, who accompanied Graham Harrison on the last of those journeys, provided the book's evocative descriptions of Buddhism in the modern world. The collection has now been transferred to Edinburgh and the forthcoming exhibition and related events are a celebration of the revival of this important resource and the starting point of a long-term project which seeks to maintain and develop the impetus behind the original venture.

This exhibition is not simply a display of the original photographs but also augments and complements them with recent work by Ian Astley, whose research has taken him to Japan, China and Korea since the 1980s.

### Related Events

On the 15th September, Graham Harrison came to Edinburgh and conducted visitors round the displays. There was also a public talk by Ian Reader (University of Manchester), an internationally renowned scholar of Japan, on "Buddhism in Crisis? The problems of Temple Buddhism in Contemporary Japan", a topic all too easily ignored against the backdrop of the continuing splendour of its major institutions.

We also showed the film [KanZeOn](#) (2011) for the first time in Scotland, the work of Neil Cantwell and Tim Grabham, independent filmmakers based in London. The film has been described as, "A mysterious and compelling meditation on sound, song, story, ritual, performance, nature, tradition and Japanese Buddhism." We included it here not only for its intrinsic qualities but also for the part it can play in our questioning just how vital Buddhism is in the modern world, with all the contrasting and confusing phenomena being presented to us. A visit by these innovative filmmakers is planned for later this autumn.

From the 10th October the exhibition will be moved to New College on The Mound, where it will feature in the entrance foyer. The foyer is much smaller than the Main Library, so we will be displaying the photographs in sequence, into the new year.

*Living Buddhism* will not stop here: there are plans to digitize a fully representative sample of Graham Harrison's work (he took some 10,000 photographs during his travels through Asia) and augment the database in a continuous, open-ended project which aims to show change in the Buddhist world.

### Acknowledgements

The exhibition and related events have been made possible through the co-operation of the Department of Asia at the British Museum; with assistance towards transport costs from the [Japan Society of Scotland](#); and with a generous grant from the [Knowledge Exchange programme of the University of Edinburgh](#). Thanks are due to all

these people.

**For further information**, please contact either Ian Astley (Organizer) on [ian.Astley@ed.ac.uk](mailto:ian.Astley@ed.ac.uk) or Christian Jowers (Events Secretary) on [cjowers@staffmail.ed.ac.uk](mailto:cjowers@staffmail.ed.ac.uk).