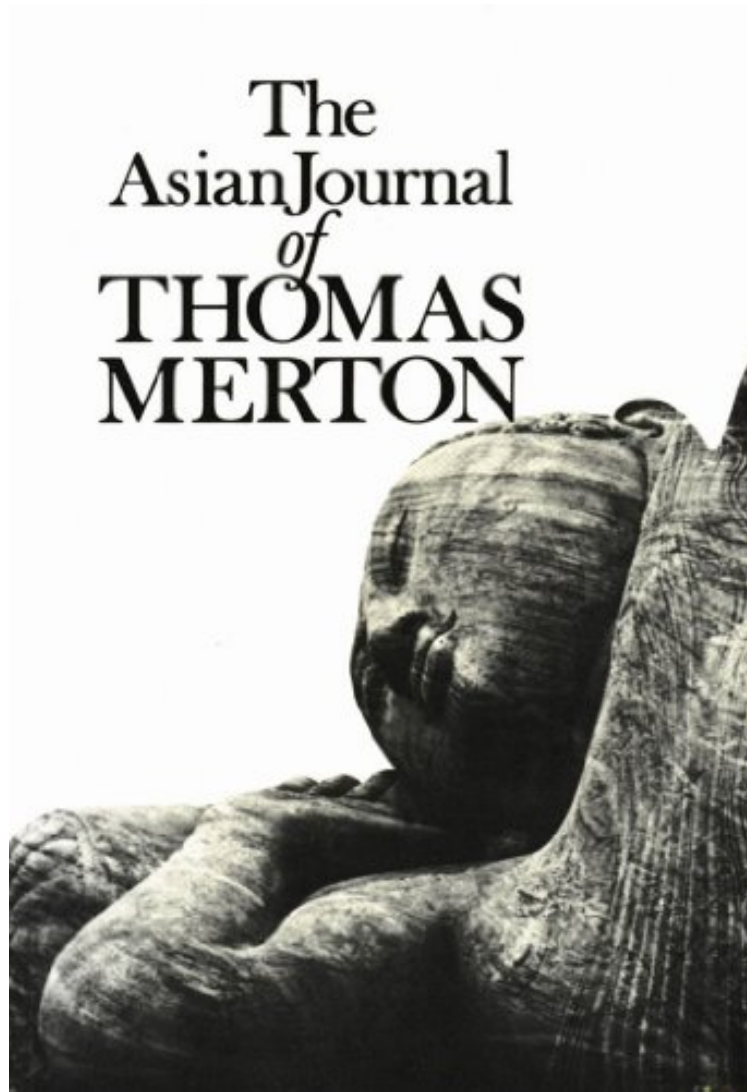


[E-BOOK] The Asian Journal of Thomas Merton (New Directions Books)

## The Asian Journal of Thomas Merton (New Directions Books)

*Von Thomas Merton*

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**Von Thomas Merton : The Asian Journal of Thomas Merton (New Directions Books)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Asian Journal of Thomas Merton (New Directions Books):

Kurzbeschreibung" This is quintessential Merton." The Catholic . "The moment of takeoff was ecstatic...joy. We left the

groundI with Christian mantras and a great sense of destiny, of being at last on my true way after years of waiting and wondering..." With these words, dated October 15, 1968, the late Father Thomas Merton recorded the beginning of his fateful journey to the Orient. His travels led him from Bangkok, through India to Ceylon, and back again to Bangkok for his scheduled talk at a conference of Asian monastic orders. There he unequivocally reaffirmed his Christian vocation. His last journal entry was made on December 8, 1968, two days before his untimely, accidental death. Amply illustrated with photographs he himself took along the way and fully indexed, the book also contains a glossary of Asian religious terms, a preface by the Indian scholar Amiya Chakravarty, a foreword and postscript by Brother Patrick Hart of the Abbey of Gethsemani, as well as several appendices, among them the text of Merton's final address..deThis volume, the journal Merton kept on the journey to Asia where his life ended, also is a culmination of his long spiritual journey as a writer. "His ecumenism was total," the editors remind us, "and we find him ranging from Tantric Buddhism to Zen, and from Islam and Sufism to Vedanta." The book, however, is not dryly academic; rather, as the foreword suggests, "Merton's pilgrimage to Asia was an effort to deepen his own religious and monastic commitment." Merton himself was clear about this sense of pilgrimage; so too was he clear that this meant in no way a break with his Christian roots. "I think we have now reached a stage ... of religious maturity," he writes, "at which it may be possible for someone to remain perfectly faithful to a Christian and Western monastic commitment, and yet to learn in depth from say, a Buddhist discipline and experience." This book is the fruit of such learning. Including descriptions of his meetings with the young Dalai Lama, the book is meticulously edited and supplied with useful explanatory notes and appendices, including transcriptions of talks that Merton gave during his trip. Most movingly, however, the journal itself concludes with the narrative of his transformative experiences in Ceylon where he visited three colossal figures of Buddha carved from huge stones. "Surely," he writes, "my Asian pilgrimage has come clear and purified itself." A few days later he passed away. --Doug ThorpePainstakingly edited by a team of scholarly admirers, but still tantalizingly unfinished, the journal is a collage of Asian images, sacred and profane....And the book itself is a kind of mandala, drawing the reader deep into a philosophical analysis, then abruptly forcing him out into the physical world. "