



Richard Wagner and Buddhism

By Urs App

UniversityMedia. Paperback. Book Condition: New. Paperback. 104 pages. Dimensions: 7.8in. x 5.0in. x 0.3in. It is little known that Richard Wagner was among the very first Westerners to appreciate Buddhism and that he was the first major European artist to be inspired by this religion. In 1856, in the prime of his creativity, the 33-year-old artist read his first book about Buddhism. Madly in love with Mathilde Wesendonck, a beautiful but happily married woman, he conceived two deeply connected opera projects: *Tristan und Isolde* which he went on to compose and stage, and *Die Sieger* (The Victors), an opera scenario based on an Indian Buddha legend translated from Sanskrit. These two projects mirrored Wagners burning desire for the consummation of his love and the necessity of renunciation. This Buddhist opera project occupied Wagners mind for decades until his death in 1883. Indeed, the composers last words were about the Buddha figure of his scenario and his relationship with women. Urs App, the author of *The Birth of Orientalism* (University of Pennsylvania Press) and the worlds foremost authority on the early Western reception of Buddhism, tells the story of Richard Wagners creative encounter with Buddhism and explains the composers last words. This...



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