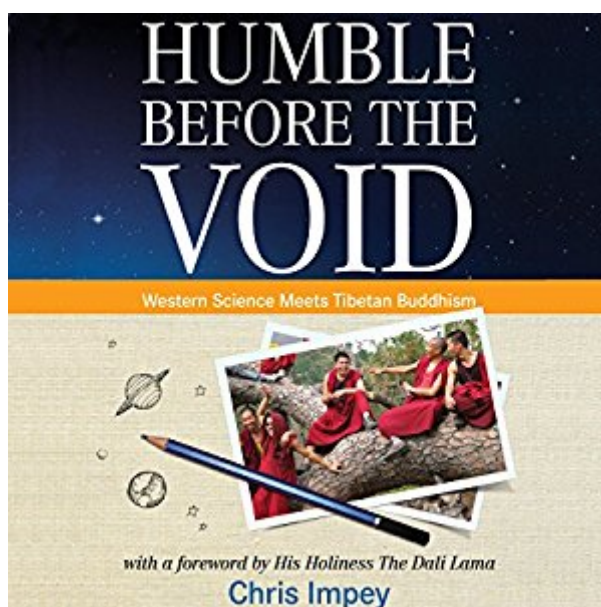


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Humble Before The Void: A Western Astronomer, His Journey East, And A Remarkable Encounter Between Western Science And Tibetan Buddhism



Synopsis

A travelogue suffused with the wisdom of an ancient religious tradition, *Humble Before the Void* is a modern-day encounter between Western science and Buddhist philosophy. In this narrative, you'll discover the relationship between ancient Indian philosophical and spiritual tradition and modern science through the experiences of a select group of Tibetan monks. Their stories will transport you to an unusual classroom where the author, Chris Impey, uses active learning techniques and low-tech materials to teach this novice group of scholars. You will follow along as he leads this group through a series of lively discussions and witness his approach manifest into success as these students, free of western social pressures, willingly throw themselves into experiments time and again. Fans of the Tibetan monks and science novices alike will fall in love with this tale of one professor and 25 monks who lose themselves to the spirit of curiosity and openly test their assumptions and preconceptions through their study of cosmology. With a foreword by His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is an especially good book for individuals with a career in teaching and education. It describes very well the teaching methods and experiences of the author as he traveled to India's border with Tibet and taught a three week class to buddhist monks. The author describes his day to day experiences, his interactions with his students, and observations of life around him during his trip. This book also contains complex cosmologic concepts that are explained in an way the average

individual can understand. I bought the kindle version because I wanted to learn more about Buddhism, and I did. But the book contains much more information about astronomy, science, physics, the nature of time.

This is a book that combines scientific information with a dive into Tibetan Buddhist culture. If there is a flaw in this book, it is that the book is too short! Wonderful and thought provoking. I enjoyed it all.

A good read but if you are looking for a book that deals with astronomy as its major focus then you may want to look at other books. I've had a class with Dr. Impey and he is both a fantastic teacher and researcher.

While I applaud Mr. Impey's enthusiasm and creative teaching methods, I was hoping for more about the culture and lives of the monks. Instead most of it seems to be about astronomical concepts and the methods he used to convey them in the classroom. I'm a teacher, writer and an astronomy buff--but I already knew most of the material the author explains in such detail. For me the book was a bit tedious. Moreover Mr. Impey relied on a translator to explain some fairly sophisticated concepts (relativity, quantum mechanics, the expansion of the universe). It's quite difficult to explain these subtle ideas to educated English-speaking westerners, and I can't help but wonder how much these monks really understood about these and other topics. I suspect not much. It was a worthy effort on his part, but something was lacking for me in this book. I guess I wanted to know more about the individual monks, their spiritual practices, and the Tibetan community as a whole. He has some material about this, but not nearly enough. By the way, one quarter of the book (kindle version) consists of the index. Take that into account when estimating the page count.

This book is well written, and provides simple, elegant means to understand complex scientific principles. I only gave it four stars because I wanted more insight into the cultural differences between the author and the monks. (I only read half way through, so maybe the rest of the book did this to a greater extent.)

This book pretty much delivers everything one would expect from its title and synopsis. The sheer enthusiasm Impey has for his subject is only matched by the monk's uninhibited desire to learn everything they can. The situation exacts every kind of on-the-spot inventiveness by Chris Impey to convey his subject 'The Cosmos' to the cloistered lives of the monks. They in turn by their presence

(both of body and mind) open Impey to a world beyond the simple materialism he works in. It's a wonderful book, to read slowly and enjoy - as well as learn from.

An interesting combination of description of a different culture, great imagination in how to teach to this culture and author's ruminations on Buddhism.

The book appears at a time when the Dalai Lama is attempting to introduce modernity to a people and a religion that have been almost hermetically sealed for centuries. In this context, potential buyers might have the expectation that this is a book illuminates the interaction of a modern science and an ancient religion. This assumption is enhanced by the subtitle of the book, ". . . A Remarkable Encounter Between Western Science and Tibetan Buddhism." On one level it is, but this book is primarily an introduction to astronomy and cosmology, and in that the author succeeds wonderfully. His terrific teaching tools throws light on some of the more obscure aspects of the field. Weaving the reactions of the monks throughout, makes the lectures more interesting but doesn't move us much closer to understanding the deepest complexities of the "remarkable encounter."

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