



The Buddha from Brooklyn: A Tale of Spiritual Seduction

Martha Sherrill

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Washington Post reporter Martha Sherrill takes us on one of the strangest and most entertaining spiritual journeys in the history of American religion in this tale of a big-haired, much-divorced Brooklyn-born Jewish-Italian woman who finds herself recognized as the reincarnation of a seventeenth-century Tibetan Buddhist lama.

When Catharine Burroughs takes on the mantle of a living Buddha and becomes Jetsunma Ahkon Lhama, she commits herself to the creation of the largest Tibetan Buddhist center in America and inspires her disciples to all night prayer vigils and monastic vows. She also indulges her passion for shopping, develops a hair-care product as a way to raise funds, seduces male and female devotees, and divorces another husband. As Martha Sherrill delves into the passions and practice of Jetsunma and her followers, she explores the practices of Tibetan Buddhism and its uneasy fit in the West and reveals how difficult it is to be truly spiritual in America today.

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