

As he developed a deep-rooted philosophy for overcoming pain and selfishness, the prince gathered many students. When I was young, he would say, I slumbered through life but now I am awake. He became known as the "Awakened One" or the "Enlightened One" — that is to say, the Buddha. Like Christianity, Buddhism started as biography and became theology. It was a compelling life story prior to becoming a set of doctrines. Just as countless artists have been irresistibly drawn to retell the life of Christ, the story of the prince who woke up is a perennial inspiration for all sorts of cultural artifacts.

In the 1970s, Osamu Tezuka, the most influential and beloved of Japanese cartoonists, started working on a bizarre and wonderful freestyle recounting of Buddha's story in a comic book serial that ran to 3,800 pages. Tezuka's *Buddha* is now available to English-speaking readers thanks to a New York publishing company called Vertical, which is releasing an eight-volume translation. The first three books are already available. The series offers an occasion to not only revisit the life of the Buddha, but also the career of Tezuka, who was one of the true giants of Japanese popular culture.

Born in Toyonaka City in 1928, Tezuka was the child of middle-class parents who loved popular culture. His father has an early cinephile, who cherished American animated cartoons and the films of Charlie Chaplin. Tezuka's mother was an aficionado of the Takarazuka Revue, a sort of Japanese music hall tradition that mixed together song, dance and broad physical comedy. In his mature work, Tezuka would often try to recapture the broad burlesque comedy he saw on the screen and Takarazuka stage.

During the Second World War, Tezuka worked in a factory but would frequently break off from his monotonous duties in order to doodle. He belonged to the generation of Japanese who were deeply seared by their wartime experience.

See HEER on Page AL4



At 76, Buena Vista Social Club's Ibrahim Ferrer is happy to be a musical ambassador, but shies away from

No social vis

BY AARON WHERRY

I am a 76-year-old man, I have never done or wished anything bad to nobody ... That message from Cuban music legend Ibrahim Ferrer arrives as if from some exiled king — passed through a series of back-channel contacts and handlers, his correspondence limited to e-mail from a distant island.

Of course, Ferrer's current predicament isn't nearly that dire. It just seems that way.

In February Ferrer, the legendary Cuban musician who, after a lifetime in obscurity, rose to fame with the Buena Vista Social Club, became an unlikely target of U.S. foreign policy — the most public of sacrificial lambs in the Bush administration's continuing adventures in regime change, and an unlikely martyr in the eyes of Cuban sympathizers.

He was to have spent the first weekend of February in Los Angeles, being feted alongside pop music royalty as the Grammy winner, for *Buenos Hermanos*, of the best tropical Latin album of

the year. But in the eyes of the U.S. government, Ferrer's presence would have been "detrimental to the interests" of the country. And so his visa was denied.

"I never had problems to enter any country; well, except this time in the U.S.A. to pick up the Grammy award," Ferrer explains via e-mail — such correspondence easier for a man who speaks only

told the Associated Press shortly after Ferrer's visa denial became public, adding that money from their performances "financially enriches the Castro regime."

Says Ferrer: "I have no relationship with Mr. Fidel Castro. You see, I would be surprised if, for example, you tell me you do have a relationship with the president of your country. Politicians are very

'I have no relationship with Mr. Fidel Castro'

Spanish ("and badly!" he says) and requires a translator. "I could tell you many anecdotes. In many countries, I would be asked for autographs as I was going through Customs, people took pictures with me and some went to see my concerts afterwards."

Not so in the United States. At least, not any more.

"Most Cuban artists are compensated by the Cuban government and are therefore employees," a U.S. Immigration official

busy people, and that applies to our president as well; like any other politician of any other country, he doesn't have much time left.

"I had the pleasure to meet him once however," he adds. "I was invited to a reception together with other artists, and we shook hands ... I do pay my taxes, I guess like any other citizen of any other country."

Two weeks ago, the Bush administration formalized, just in time for the November election, the

Buddha comes to America

New translation of Osamu Tezuka's comic-strip tale of The Enlightened One



JEET HEER on Culture High & Low

There was once a prince who enjoyed all the good fortune life has to offer. Growing up in a loving royal household, he was shielded from anything unpleasant or ugly. When he came of age, he married a beautiful princess, who bore him a son.

One day, the prince saw an infirm old man on the street. He was puzzled and distressed by this, his first encounter with human pain.

The next day he saw a dying man, and the following day a corpse. Suddenly, he realized his whole life was built on a lie, on a denial of pain as a part of existence.

The prince sought relief in religion and became a monk. Yet he grew dissatisfied with his fellow ascetics, who complacently accepted the evils of life as part of the natural order. No, the prince argued, we can't simply become acquiescent. We can transcend the fetters of our existence by extinguishing the selfishness in our hearts and pushing toward enlightenment.

Ellen's ov
Her Emmy-nom
is a daytime pic

Ibrahim Ferrer will
in Canada this sum



alleries by Julia Dault

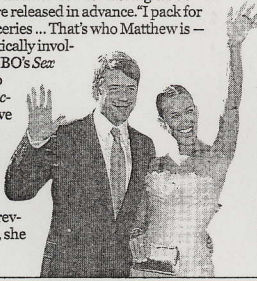
VERTICAL

ER KISS 'NOT INVASIVE'

WINNIPEG • Jan Smirnov does not dream about kissing osmith lead singer Steven Noyl longer. Smirnov, 47, is suffering from a life-threatening illness, spent an hour in the lobby of the Mont Hotel following the band's concert at Winnipeg Arena. "Up close he's still gorgeous," he said. "He gave me a kiss on the mouth. It wasn't invasive... almost like a brotherly kiss. But I wished it wasn't!" During the concert, Smirnov, who is in the wheelchair section at arena, held up a sign that read, "Kiss me before I die, Steve."

EVERY DAY IS MATTHEW BRODERICK'S DAY OFF

NEW YORK • Sarah Jessica Parker thinks her marriage to Matthew Broderick works because she does everything for him. "I take care of him," Parker told Charlie Rose in an interview for last night's *60 Minutes II* on CBS. Excerpts were released in advance. "I pack for him, I shop for him, I get his groceries... That's who Matthew is — people take care of him. It's practically involuntary." Parker, who starred in HBO's *Sex and the City*, and Broderick, who starred in Broadway's *The Producers*, were married in 1997 and have an 18-month-old son. Asked what she would change about her husband, Parker replied: "He walks too slowly. I walk really quickly. He never hails the cab — never. I've been doing it forever, so I guess he just thinks, 'Well, she does it so well.'"



RADIOHEADER GOES TO BBC

LONDON • Radiohead guitarist Jonny Greenwood will become the British Broadcasting Corp.'s new composer in residence and will write a new work for one of its radio stations. The assignment, expected to last three years, will allow Greenwood to use the BBC's resources, including the BBC Concert Orchestra. His manager, Bryce Edge, said Tuesday the appointment will allow him to "learn how an orchestra works." The role was previously held by Anne Dudley, keyboard player for '80s ambient band Art of Noise and winner of an Oscar for the score of 1997's *The Full Monty*.

EAGLEN TO SING WITH VSO

VANCOUVER • Vancouver Symphony Orchestra's Juno-winning maestro Bramwell Tovey plays host to one of the world's leading dramatic sopranos, Jane Eaglen, on May 29 as she returns to the Orpheum Theatre to perform Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde: Prelude and Liebestod*. Eaglen will also sing Richard Strauss's cycle *Four Last Songs*, which she released on CD in March. With Eaglen living in Seattle, Tovey said she has visited Vancouver a number of times and they got on "like a house on fire." Tovey secured a promise for Eaglen to return and perform with the VSO.

BO DEREK FIGHTS PLANT

SPRINGFIELD, ILL. • Bo Derek is lending her fame to politicians working to keep horses from being killed for food. The actress says it shouldn't happen in the United States since Americans don't eat horse meat. Nearly 50,000 horses were slaughtered last year, and the meat exported to Europe and Asia, according to the National Horse Protection Coalition. "I'm not going to judge another culture and what they choose to eat, but I don't see why they have to eat American horses," she said. The legislation is to keep a slaughtering plant from reopening after being destroyed in a fire.

MORE THAN 'DISNEY OF JAPAN'

HEER

Continued from Page A1

I had seen his country fight to ruin by a cabal of mad artists who pre-emptively attacked other nations. The war is home to Tezuka with particular ferocity when Osaka, the city he grew up in, was reduced to rubble by firebombing. Tezuka's long engagement with anti-politics and Buddhist philosophy can be traced to this period. After the war, Tezuka studied medicine but drew cartoons for magazines as a way of paying for his studies. While he eventually became a doctor, his passion for cartooning overwhelmed him as for a medical career. In the early post-war years, Tezuka more or less created the modern genre of Japanese comics known as manga. Manga were distinguished from earlier comics by their length (they would run hundreds if not thousands of pages) and also for their fast-paced, cinematic style. Reading manga is often like flipping through the storyboard of a movie, following the swift movement from one scene to the next. Influenced by Walt Disney cartoons, Tezuka's early manga were notable for the extreme simplicity of their style, which pushed inherent iconic tendency of animation to the limit. In Tezuka's manga, cartooning almost became a form of calligraphy, a swift shorthand language that melded elegance of form with a breakneck narrative momentum. Tezuka was phenomenally prolific: He created more than 100 novel-length books which total at least 150,000 pages. He is found time to direct and supervise many animated cartoons. In his early days, Tezuka's endeavors aimed mostly at children: told tales of buried treasure, ducky adventurers and robots fought for peace (in the popular *Astro Boy* series). Starting in the 1960s, Tezuka moved on to more serious and adult stories, loring the global rise of fashion in historical novels and titling on the futility of trying to overcome death in a multi-media series titled *Phoenix*. His work on *Buddha* dates from this early period, and he finished it 17 years before he died in 1990. Even after his death, Tezuka's cartoons continue to sell in the millions in Japan. It is difficult to overstate the pervasiveness of Tezuka's influence on Japanese popular culture. He is sometimes described as "the Walt Disney of Japan," yet arguably his artistic range was larger even the mastermind behind Mickey Mouse. After all, ani-



Tezuka's decorative touches always serve a fast-moving narrative.

ated cartoons have an audience but remain only a small part of the film industry. Manga, by contrast, is a fixture of everyday life in Japan. A quarter of all books sold in Japan each year are manga.

As Frederik Schodt, an expert on Japanese popular culture, noted in his 1983 book *Manga! Manga!*, Walt Disney was more of a businessman than an artist. Disney's success was based on his ability to package and sell other people's ideas. Tezuka, although he dabbled in running an animation studio, was a creator more than anything else. His works always bore the imprint of his own sensibility, although they influenced innumerable other artists. In Japan, Tezuka was often described as *manga no kamisama*, the god of Comics. (Some people also thought Buddha was a god, although he was demur enough to deny divine status.)

In recent years the god of Comics has been gaining followers outside of Japan. The success of animated cartoons like *Pokemon* and *Sailor Moon* (both influenced by Tezuka's early work) has created a market for manga translations. While other publishers are reprinting Tezuka's *Astro Boy* series and his *Phoenix* chronicle, Vertical has undertaken the task of bringing

his *Buddha* series to North America. In handsome volumes designed by Chip Kidd, the Vertical books present Tezuka at his best.

In recounting Buddha's spiritual journey, Tezuka also wanted to present a panoramic view of ancient Indian society. Thus he created a host of fictional and semi-fictional characters who represent the many facets of Indian society: Tatta, an "untouchable" street urchin who wages war on

TEZUKA WAS OFTEN DESCRIBED AS MANGA NO KAMISAMA, THE GOD OF COMICS

the social order; Chapra, a slave boy who aligns himself with the ruling elite; Migaita, a beautiful girl who falls in love with Buddha; and General Budai, a rough-neck soldier who dreams of conquest. Their stories are intertwined with Buddha's biography to show that life offers many paths. In finding his own way in the world, Buddha had to overcome the temptations presented by these other paths, the lure of

revenge, social success, physical beauty and victory on the field of conquest.

The visual splendor of Tezuka's work is on full display. With deft strokes, he evokes the natural and manmade wonders of India. His early scientific training shines in many fine delineations of landscape and wildlife. Yet these decorative touches are always in the service of the fast-moving narrative. Like a trusted friend guiding us through a teeming city, Tezuka shows us wonders but keeps moving toward the destination he's seeking.

Those who like their religion solemn and high-toned will be put off by Tezuka's *Buddha*. Even in this series, he maintained his stance as a popular entertainer, so his work brims over with a giddy cartoony exuberance. There are many anachronistic jokes along the way, and the minor characters often look like extras from a Warner Bros. cartoon. If you can imagine Bugs Bunny reenacting the final days of Christ, you have some sense of how outlandish Tezuka can be.

Yet in his antic ebullience, Tezuka was faithful to the spirit if not the letter of Buddhist thought. Those who are hostile to Buddhism often accuse it of being a life-denying religion of renunciation. Some blinkered Christian polemicists even use the word "nihilistic" to describe Buddha's thoughts. Nothing could be further from the truth. While seeking to transcend the pain of life, Buddha remained deeply alive to the surface pleasures of the world. The images of the laughing Buddha give the true face of this sage.

We live in a world where religion often seems to be the enemy of enlightenment, indeed even the foe of simple kindness and decency. Sikh-Canadian fanatics are on trial in Vancouver for blowing up an airliner. Faced with death threats from Hindu extremists, Sonia Gandhi chooses not to become Prime Minister of India. Nick Berg was beheaded by those who claim allegiance to Allah. In Washington, the Bush White House draws up plans for the Middle East in consultations with frothy fundamentalist Christians, added souls who hunger for the apocalypse.

In our dire situation, it is good to remember that religion doesn't have to be evil. At its best, as in the life of Buddha, religion is a balm that heals the deepest wounds of our condition. For all its occasional wackiness, Tezuka's *Buddha* reminds us of the inspiring story of the prince who woke up.

National Post
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'Regarding life in Cuba... everyone has a particular opinion'

FERRER

Continued from Page A1

Castro used the occasion to rally a massive protest of American policies, vowing to defend Cuba's sovereignty with "every last drop of blood."

Ferrer's plight, in the rhetoric of some critics, has come to symbolize the excesses of Bush doctrine. But his representatives are loath to address the political climate directly. "I would be charmed of explaining to you our artistic projects that I think they are more interesting [than] the politics," explained one via e-mail. "We don't have plans of travelling to U.S.; for this reason we don't have information about the visa situation."

Ferrer is equally reluctant to delve into the complicated issues that keep him from the United States.

"I just can say I don't understand it," he explains. "We have been in the U.S.A. many times before, and always by reasons of cultural exchanges. A cultural exchange between two great cultures, so that we get to know each other's music and culture, and get the audience to know our music and culture. This is the same thing in Cuba: Many U.S. musicians come to the Jazz Festival of La Habana so that we can enjoy their music."

He proudly accepts the suggestion that he is something of a Cuban ambassador — a spokesman for a maligned nation — but is hesitant to wave the flag too forcefully. "Regarding life in Cuba, I [think] this is like everything, everyone has a particular opinion. I can only say to anyone who wants to know Cuba, and has the opportunity to travel, just come and see it with your own eyes."

The bureaucratic posturing of an election-year president must, of course, matter little to a man who already considers himself the recipient of a second chance in life and in music — a man who, seven years ago, he says, "retired myself."

"During all those years working as a musician I had to cross many obstacles: I was always told that my voice was no good, my name doesn't appear in many albums I have recorded," he says of nearly 70 years spent in obscurity as a struggling musician in Cuba. Eventually he quit. And took to shining shoes.

"I used to clean shoes, but this was not to survive. I was on a pension and I had enough money to me and my family, but at that time I use to have some little bad habits, like smoking or drinking, having a rum with friends every now and then," he says. "So I used

to clean shoes to be able to afford these bad little habits."

Then American guitarist Ry Cooder tracked him down and asked him to take part in a project called the Buena Vista Social Club — a collective of forgotten Cuban musicians largely unheralded outside their country. Those sessions spawned a critically acclaimed, chart-topping, Grammy-winning album of the same name, helping to launch a renewed love affair with Latin music in the United States. A film chronicling the group's creation was nominated for an Academy Award.

The rush of attention after so many years of neglect left Ferrer feeling "born again." He is now, he says, more a seven-year-old boy than a 76-year-old man.

He's quit smoking ("I still drink, but very little") and, when not on tour (he maintains a rather ambitious schedule, one that includes a visit to Canada in July), spends most of his time at home in La Habana, Cuba, playing dominos with his grandchildren and great-grandchildren or relaxing with his three dogs: Principe, Rocco and Travi.

"Music is my passion, my life, it is what I like to do best," he says. "I feel lucky to receive this gift from life at my age... and I want to enjoy it as much as I can. You must remember I fought all my life for music, and I didn't get much. I finally gave up, I retired, and then it turns out to be that the best was still about to come into my life... When you do things with love, everything turns out well."

He keeps a small room in his house — "my museum" he calls it — for presents and awards. Not so long ago, he added his most recent Grammy, won in absentia, to the collection (he may not be able to enter the United States, but his award is permitted to leave it).

"I think music has no passport and no politics, it arrives to everyone and it always brings you something, maybe love, maybe hope, strength... This is my political principles: my music, and my wish is to bring music and my love message to all people and all around the world," he says. "I think that all kind of art: music, painting, literature... art is above all. Art captivates and has the power to make you see life in another perspective. And I don't think this can be stopped by no means."

■ Ibrahim Ferrer and his band will play the Montreal Jazz Festival on July 8, the Winnipeg Folk Festival on July 9 and Massey Hall in Toronto on July 10.

National Post
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Felled Washington Monument

HARRYHAUSEN

Continued from Page A1

being imitated in everything from *Independence Day* to *Mars Attacks!* Says Harryhausen: "I

From 1958 to 1981, Harryhausen animated the Kraken and Medusa, Pegasus and centaurs. But after *Clash of the Titans*, he found studios were no longer interested in his stop-motion work. Their interest had shifted to com-

age is no longer unique."

But the pioneer says his old tricks still have merit. Indeed, he says it's possible for CGI to become too realistic and destroy the fantasy world movies try to create.



From: "Jeet Heer" <jeetheer@hotmail.com>
Date: Thu May 20, 2004 10:04:47 AM US/Eastern
To: CKidd@randomhouse.com
Cc: burch@vertical-inc.com
Subject: Buddha review

Hi Chip,
My review of Buddha finally appeared. There is an online version available, but you have to be a national post subscriber. Here is the link --

<http://www.canada.com/national/nationalpost/columnists/story.html?id=34621738-cef0-4215-9df0-8db3f874aeb1>

I've also posted the article below (this is the version I sent into the Post -- the print version is trimmed). Also, I want to send you and Vertical copies of the print version. Where can I mail them to?

I'll try and do the Amy and Jordan book soon.

Hope all is well with you.

Buddha

By Jeet Heer

There was once a prince who enjoyed all the good fortune life has to offer. When he was born his parents were assured by a soothsayer that the boy was destined for greatness, so they took special care in raising their son. Growing up in a loving royal household, he was shielded from anything unpleasant or ugly. When he came of age, he married a beautiful princess, who bore him a son.

One day while going for a walk, the prince saw an infirm old man on the street. He was puzzled and distressed by the sight, his first encounter with human pain. The next day he saw a dying man, and the following day a corpse. Suddenly, the prince became aware of the reality of misery, of aging, sickness and death. Now he realized that his whole life was built on a lie, on a denial of pain as a part of existence.

The prince sought relief in religion and became a monk. Yet he grew quickly dissatisfied with the standard pious message of his fellow ascetics, who complacently accepted the evils of life as part of the natural order of things. No, the prince argued, pain is real and powerful but we can't simply become acquiescent. We can transcend the binding fetters of our existence, he thought, by extinguishing the selfishness in our own hearts and pushing towards enlightenment.

As he developed a deep-rooted philosophy for overcoming pain and selfishness, the prince gathered many students around him. When I was young, the prince would say, I slumbered through life but now I am awake. Therefore he became known as the iAwakened One or the iEnlightened One, that is to say, the Buddha.

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In the 1970s Osamu Tezuka, the most influential and beloved of Japanese cartoonists, started working on a very bizarre and wonderful freestyle recounting of Buddha's story in a comic book serial that ran to 3,800 pages. Tezuka's Buddha is now available to English-speaking readers thanks to a New York publishing company called Vertical, which is releasing an 8 volume translation of the series. The first 3 books are already available. The series offers an occasion to not only revisit the life of the Buddha, but also the career of Tezuka, who was one of the true giants of Japanese popular culture.

Born in Toyonaka City in 1928, Tezuka was the child of middle-class parents who loved popular culture. His father was an early cinephile, who cherished American animated cartoons and the films of Charlie Chaplin. Tezuka's mother was an aficionado of the Takarazuka Revue, a sort of Japanese music hall tradition that mixed together song, dance and broad physical comedy. In his mature work, Tezuka would often try to recapture to the broad burlesque comedy he saw on the screen and Takarazuka stage.

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After the war, Tezuka studied medicine but drew cartoons for magazines as a way of paying for his studies. While he eventually became a doctor, his passion for cartooning overwhelmed his plans for a medical career. In those early post-war years, Tezuka more or less created the modern genre of Japanese comics, known as manga. Manga were distinguished from earlier comics partially by their length (they would run for hundreds if not thousands of pages) and also for their fast-moving cinematic style. Reading a manga is often like flipping through the story-board of a movie, following the swift movement from one scene to the next.

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It is difficult to overstate the pervasiveness of Tezuka's influence on Japanese popular culture. He is sometimes described as the Walt Disney of Japan, yet arguably Tezuka's artistic range was larger than even the mastermind behind Mickey Mouse. After all, animated cartoons have an audience but they remain only a small part of the film industry. Manga, by contrast, is a fixture of everyday life in Japan. A quarter of all books sold in Japan each year are manga.

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