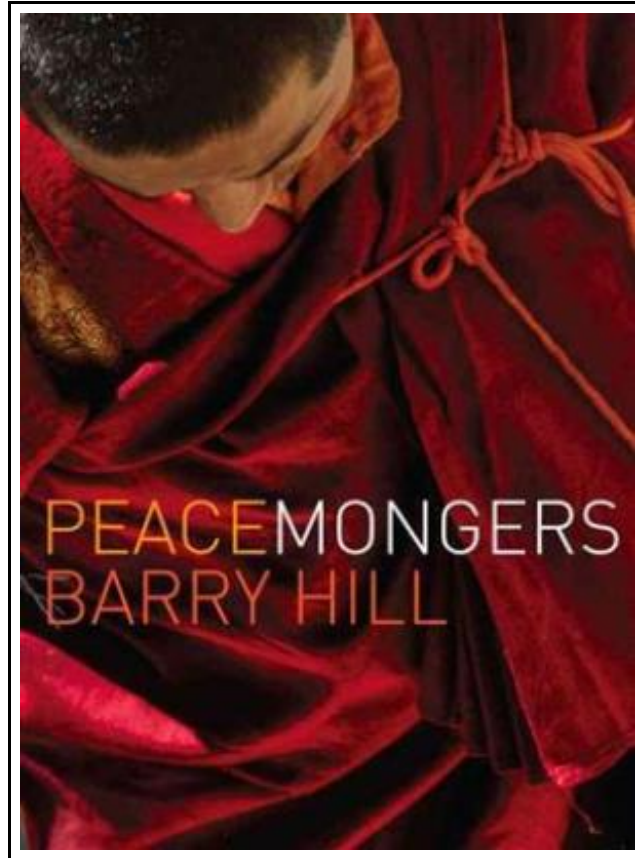


Peacemongers



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Reviews

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(Jamar Stracke)

PEACEMONGERS

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U.Q.P., 2014. Hardcover. Book Condition: New. 1. 0 x 0 cm. In his first major prose work since 2002's *Broken Song*, Barry Hill has written an epic ? a travel book, a history book, a peace book. His odyssey begins with a pilgrimage to Bodhi Gaya in India, where the Buddha received enlightenment and ends after he reaches Nagasaki, Japan, in the aftermath of its atomic bomb. His travelling is imbued with the life and ideas of Indian's greatest artist and intellectual, Rabindranath Tagore, along with that of MK Gandhi. Hill then travels, like Tagore, in Japan, and meditates on its militarist turn, its warmongering Buddhism and the Tokyo War Crimes Trial, with its riddled post-colonial legacy. He goes to Zen temples, secret islands, and into some of the recesses of Japanese history, all the while musing on his own capacity for inner-disarmament. Hill also has his late father with him, a union man and Australian peace activist, whose dated left-humanism may not be enough for the wars and ruins the West has recently created. The discourse of this incredible work ? poetic, mobile, ambivalent ? seeks to be an antidote to the political impotence of progressive thought over the last decade. But *Peacemongers* does not peddle hope, and when it sights hope it tends to be as an epiphany, as it was with Tagore. In what turns out to be an astonishing attempt at spiritual decolonization and reorientation, Barry Hill sets off on a journey to what Europe once called 'the East,' but which is, strictly speaking, his North. In India, Japan and Thailand, he encounters ? some among the living, some among the dead ? bull-horn slicing martial-arts masters, soft-handed Brahmins, rampaging Buddhist imperialists, unapologetic sociopaths, great activists of civil disobedience, incomparable polymaths, the material and social traces...

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