



**NANCY:** This book brings alive the voices of women from the past who lived and suffered in our country, after being lured from their homeland of Japan with a promise of a better life. I found this painful and difficult reading, and also knew that I needed to hear the truth of this book. Although my country has provided promise and a better life for many immigrants, it also has used and abused many first and second generation people. It's a story that repeats itself. I admire Otsuka's ability to capture the laments of her people in powerful writing, writing history that needs to be heard, stories that need to be told.



**PRISCILLA:** My heart breaks for these women. Hoping for handsome men, nice houses, a better life and being so disappointed. But they were strong women, and they did stand by their men to do the best they could.



**SALLIE:** Don't get me started. Obviously, the children perhaps had a better life in some ways than the parents, but then when they all got taken away to the camps? This is no way to treat human beings. Why? Why? Why?



**ABIGAIL:** This lament pours itself out page after page. I respect her ability to capture the pain to make this evil real and to bring it to us. A torrential deluge of sadness in my heart.



**MOLLY:** The inhumanity of it all! The concentration camps reminded me of how the Africans must have felt being kidnapped. So scary. So much silence. Why are humans so cruel, so evil?



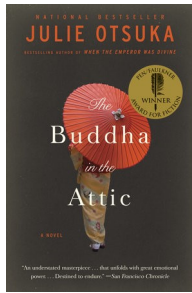
**KATHARINE:** I agree that this is a very difficult, but important read. Once again, I would encourage American history professors to incorporate this into their reading list for WWII. It



**JANE:** This is the dark side of American capitalism, isn't it? It gives me pause. What can we do about this, ladies? Perhaps we must clone our triple bottom line businesses? We know a better way! Let's share it! Hear! Hear! Who will drink to that?



# Discussion Guide



## About the Book

Book Title: The Buddha in the Attic

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## Questions for Discussion

1. What were your general impressions of this book?
2. What did you already know about Japanese Americans before you read this book? Did the stories surprise you? What did you learn?
3. The women looked forward to their new husbands on the boat. Do you remember a time in your life when you looked forward to something in the future? If so, what were you hoping for?
4. When the women's hopes were dashed, how did they respond? What discouraging experiences have you had in your life and how do you deal with them?
5. This story tells the dark side of American capitalism. What do you make of this? Is there a better way? Is there anything you can do about it?
6. Were you aware of the relocation of Japanese citizens during WWII? How did Otsuka portray this experience for the Japanese? Did this add to your understanding? What feelings and thoughts do you have about this chapter in our history?
7. What did you think of Otsuka's style of writing, pouring out details of the various women's lives, almost stream of consciousness? Was that an effective way to tell this story? Why or why not?
8. As you consider the life of immigrants in the USA, are there any current issues for immigrants that you believe echo our past. Is there anything you can do about it the way immigrants are treated here today?
9. Read over the MAMs comments on the book. Which of them do you most agree with and why?
10. In what ways, if any, will this change your life or perspective?

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**ON YouTube:** Writers on Writing: Julie Otsuka

**ON NPR:** <http://wbur.org/hereandnow/2011/09/20/japanese-picture-brides>