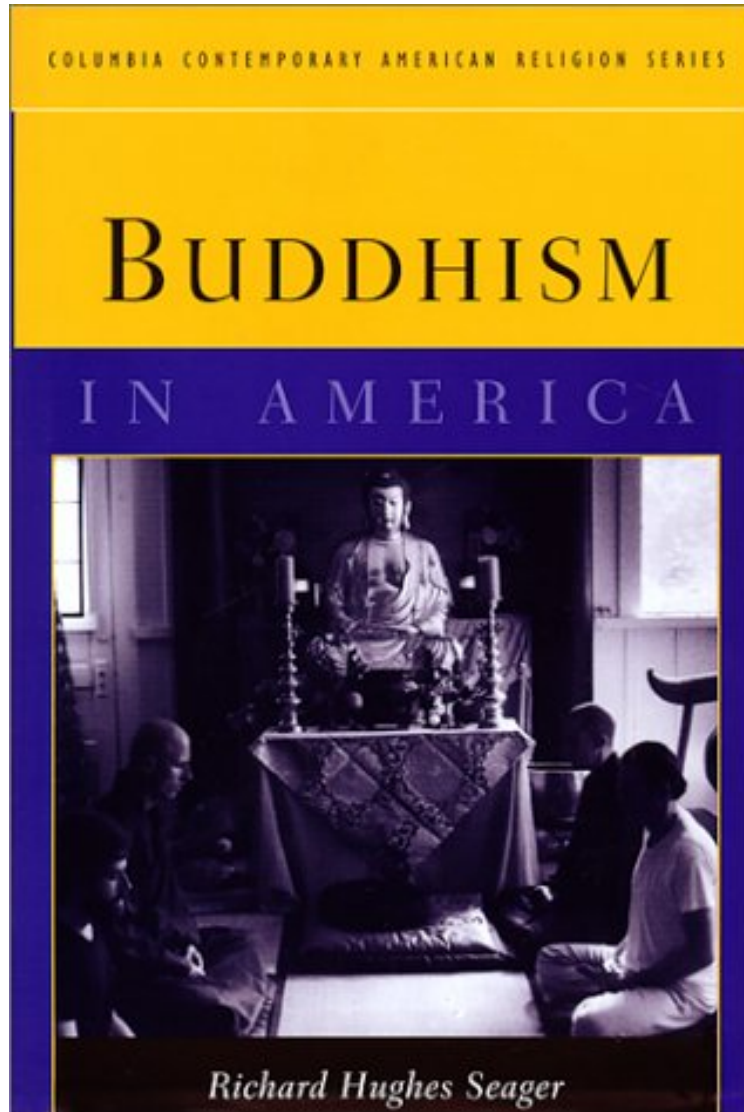


(Download) Buddhism in America

## Buddhism in America

*Richard Hughes Seager*

*DOC | \*audiobook | ebooks | Download PDF | ePub*



DOWNLOAD



READ ONLINE

#1091875 in Books 2000-01-15 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.02 x .88 x 5.981, 1.29 #File Name: 0231108680336 pages | File size: 29.Mb

**Richard Hughes Seager : Buddhism in America** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Buddhism in America:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Love this book, have used it for several classes By Lily Penny In "Buddhism in America", Richard Seager gives a history of the events, people, and places that lead to the development of the Buddhism we now see as a separate, functioning, religion in the United States. In his first chapter, Seager gives a short overview of Buddhism as it is practiced today in America and introduces the reader to the different types of practitioners; he says these types are "convert Buddhists", "immigrant Buddhists", and those "who have practiced

Buddhism in this country for four or five generations" (Seager 9-10). He then uses these categories to discuss differences in practice and ideology for the remainder of the book. In the following chapters he tells the history of Buddhism in America, starting with events that shaped its beginning and development, moving into discussions of important groups and people, and finally talks about social issues that are specific to the religion in America. He uses extensive research and quotations directly from American Buddhist text as the background for his writing. Seager does a great job of providing a thorough and detailed history while managing to stay accessible to readers who may be new to the topic. His goal is to show and explain how Buddhism has been Americanized since its arrival, and how it is now its own entity, different from the Buddhist sects around the world. He has example after example to support his statements; when talking about the "flower power" 60s, he quotes several different people and gives specific details about times and places such as "Storlie recalls finding himself at Sokoji for the first time in 1964, after an LSD trip on Mount Tamalpais" (Seager 99). There is no room for generalizations in his work, and this book represents a wealth of knowledge that could probably not be equaled in five other books on the subject. The only problem with this book is that he spends so much time detailing events and the lives of the people involved in them, that he neglects to really discuss the practices and thoughts driving the Americanization. There are points where the reader is so caught up in keeping track of people, places, and events that when he makes a statement such as, "Some Buddhists are also concerned that Americanization will lead to a decline in the dharma if the aspiration to realize Buddha mind becomes overidentified with psychotherapy, or if practice becomes too accommodating to the economic and emotional needs of the American" (Seager 112), that the reader is too surprised to really pay attention to the point of the statement. These few ideological statements are usually posited at the very end of chapters, probably because he feels he needs to say something conclusive before moving on to the next sections. These would be much more interesting if he actually gave them attention in the bulk of the text, instead of as afterthoughts related to the history. The reader reaches the end of the work having gained a multitude of knowledge regarding specific information about Buddhist American history, but having no knowledge of the ideas and actual practices that were at the heart of Buddhist Americanization.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. AN INTERESTING OVERVIEW OF AMERICAN BUDDHISM By Steven H Propp At the time this book was published in 1999, Richard Hughes Seager was associate professor of religious studies at Hamilton College; he has also written/edited the books, Encountering the Dharma: Daisaku Ikeda, Soka Gakkai, and the Globalization of Buddhist Humanism, The World's Parliament of Religions: The East/West Encounter, Chicago, 1893 (Religion in North America), and The Dawn of Religious Pluralism: Voices from the World's Parliament of Religions, 1893. He wrote in the Introduction, "I was commissioned to write this book with a mandate to design it for the general reader... My primary goal has been to fashion an engaging and informative text to introduce interested people to the fascinating world created by Buddhists in the United States in the last half century. I have come to think of it as a road map to the American Buddhist landscape..." Here are some additional quotations from the book: "(Henry Steel) Olcott later became prominent when he helped Buddhist leaders in Sri Lanka defend themselves against Christian missionaries. He also worked to create a united front among Theravada and Mahayana Buddhist leaders in south, southeast, and northern Asia in an effort to resist the encroachment of Christianity in the age of European imperialism. Olcott is now regarded as a Sri Lankan national hero. (H.P.) Blavatsky and Annie Besant, Blavatsky's successor as head of the Theosophical Society, are remembered today as innovative spiritual leaders and as great sympathizers with the religious traditions of Asia." (Pg. 35) "By and large, (American converts) have not been willing to submit themselves to the kind of institutional rigor found in Asian monasteries. Most are not celibate and need to balance practice with the demands of the nuclear family. But most have also not adopted the Asian lay role of providing support for monastics as a form of religious activity." (Pg. 39) "Nichiren Shoshu ... is primarily a form of convert Buddhism... as a result of its successful propagation in American cities, (Soko Gakkai International) also has a larger proportion of African American and Hispanic American members than other convert Buddhist groups." (Pg. 70) "There are differences among Tibetan Buddhism, Tantric Buddhism, and Vajrayana, but the terms are used more or less synonymously in this country." (Pg. 114)

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent Introduction to Buddhism in America By C. Medine This is a very helpful book for getting the landscape of Buddhist practice in the U.S., and of understanding Buddhism in general. I would recommend it as a great introduction by an excellent scholar. Well-written and clear.

With a history stretching back to ancient India, Buddhism has influenced American culture since the American Transcendentalist movement in the 1830s and '40s. Only in the past few decades, however, has this transplanted philosophy begun to blossom into a full-fledged American religion, made up of three broad groups: a burgeoning Asian immigrant population, numerous native-born converts, and old-line Asian American Buddhists. In *Buddhism in America*, religious historian Richard Seager offers a perceptive and engaging portrait of the communities, institutions, practices, and individuals that are integral to the contemporary Buddhist landscape. The book begins with a brief survey of Buddhist beliefs -- the story of the Buddha's life, the meaning of enlightenment, realization, the cultivation of nonattachment, and other core concepts -- and Buddhist history in both Asia and the United States. In part 2, Seager presents six well-crafted profiles of Buddhist traditions that have been brought to the United States from Japan, Tibet,

Southeast Asia, and elsewhere. This section highlights challenges and problems that have come with transporting and adapting an Asian religion to late twentieth-century America: Who can teach and who can lead? What are the proper roles of laypeople and monks in a society lacking a strong monastic tradition? The last section takes up the general theme of Americanization, looking at recent developments in three important areas -- gender equity, progressive social change, and intra-Buddhist and interreligious dialogue. Arguing that the gulf between recent converts and new immigrant communities is the most prominent feature of the contemporary scene, Seager assesses American Buddhism as a whole and looks into its future: Will the dharma, traditional Buddhist teachings, be watered down to suit the lifestyles of middle-class, consumerist Americans? Will this highly decentralized religion develop strong national associations, as Catholicism and Judaism have? What institutions -- universities, monasteries, or dharma centers run by and for laypeople -- will be most effective in preserving and developing an American Buddhist tradition? This lucid survey lays the foundations for understanding one of the United States' most vital new religions.

This book cries out for use as a textbook for classes on Buddhism in America. (Franz Aubrey Metcalf *The Journal of Religion*) This well-informed book provides a comprehensive survey of a variety of Buddhist traditions in the contemporary U.S.... [its] strength, apart from being a mine of information, is Seager's insistence on taking a historically informed and comparative perspective. (Martin Baumann *Religious Studies*) Unbiased and insightful, *Buddhism in America* offers a view of how far the Buddhist movement has come in little more than a century and a peek at where it is going at the dawn of a new millennium. (Don Morreale *Tricycle*) [Columbia University] Press continues to bring excellent scholarship to the general reader with this outstanding study of American Buddhism. (Jana Reiss *Publishers Weekly*) Seager's account convincingly places developments within the broader context of the North American history of religion and immigration. Apart from the perceptive observations and the straightforward structure, it is this contextualising perspective which gives the book its particular strength. Although clearly intended for a general readership, a specialist will nevertheless benefit from being directed to take the experience of 'immigrant Buddhism' as seriously as that of 'convert Buddhism'. (AASL, PLA, University Press Books Selected for Public and Secondary School Libraries) Richard Seager marks out a magnificent road map, directing us to important people, places, and issues in multifaceted Buddhist America at the turn of the millennium.... Under Seager's guidance we discover a great deal about the Buddhists of America, but also a great deal about the Americanization of Buddhism. (Paul David Numrich, director of the Buddhist Chicago Project; author of *Old Wisdom in the New World: Americanization in Two Immigrant Theravada Buddhist Temples*) The first comprehensive treatment of Buddhism in America to take seriously the experiences of immigrants, *Buddhism in America* is a fascinating road map to the contemporary Buddhist landscape, with Seager as the expert guide. (Stephen Prothero, author of *The White Buddhist*) From the Inside Flap WITH A HISTORY stretching back to ancient India, Buddhism has influenced American culture since the American Transcendentalist movement in the 1830s and '40s. Only in the past few decades, however, has this transplanted philosophy begun to blossom into a full-fledged American religion, made up of three broad groups: a burgeoning Asian immigrant population, numerous native-born converts, and old-line Asian American Buddhists. In *Buddhism in America*, religious historian Richard Seager offers a perceptive and engaging portrait of the communities, institutions, practices, and individuals that are integral to the contemporary Buddhist landscape. The book begins with a brief survey of Buddhist beliefs -- the story of the Buddha's life, the meaning of enlightenment, realization, the cultivation of nonattachment, and other core concepts -- and Buddhist history in both Asia and the United States. In part 2, Seager presents six well-crafted profiles of Buddhist traditions that have been brought to the United States from Japan, Tibet, Southeast Asia, and elsewhere. This section highlights challenges and problems that have come with transporting and adapting an Asian religion to late twentieth-century America: Who can teach and who can lead? What are the proper roles of laypeople and monks in a society lacking a strong monastic tradition? The last section takes up the general theme of Americanization, looking at recent developments in three important areas -- gender equity, progressive social change, and intra-Buddhist and interreligious dialogue. Arguing that the gulf between recent converts and new immigrant communities is the most prominent feature of the contemporary scene, Seager assesses American Buddhism as a whole and looks into its future: Will the dharma, traditional Buddhist teachings, be watered down to suit the lifestyles of middle-class, consumerist Americans? Will this highly decentralized religion develop strong national associations, as Catholicism and Judaism have? What institutions -- universities, monasteries, or dharma centers run by and for laypeople -- will be most effective in preserving and developing an American Buddhist tradition? This lucid survey lays the foundations for understanding one of the United States' most vital new religions.