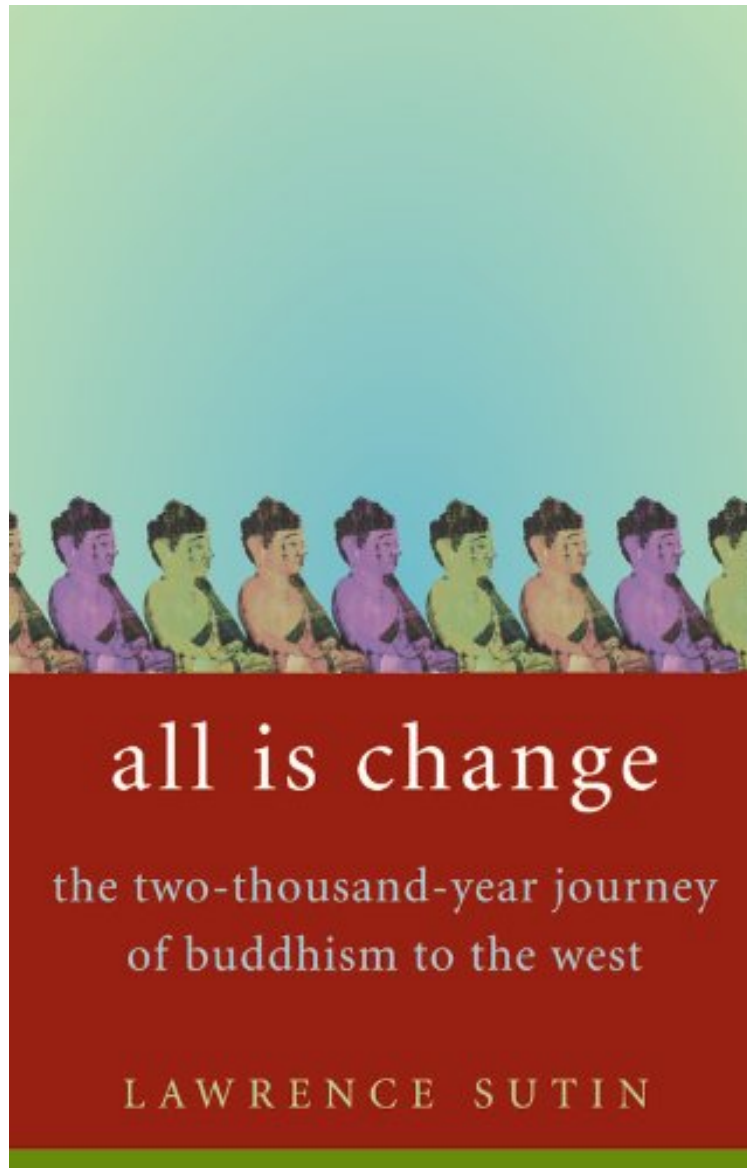


(Download) All Is Change: The Two-Thousand-Year Journey of Buddhism to the West

# All Is Change: The Two-Thousand-Year Journey of Buddhism to the West

*Lawrence Sutin*

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**Lawrence Sutin : All Is Change: The Two-Thousand-Year Journey of Buddhism to the West** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised All Is Change: The Two-Thousand-Year Journey of Buddhism to the West:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Seems a decent historical additionBy Brad4d-"Change" seems a

reasonably good historical summary of Buddhism's entry into the West. The book begins at the dawn of Buddhist thought with speculation that Greek and Christian thought may have interacted with early Buddhism. It continues to early recorded contacts during the Age of Exploration (when a world-wide xenophobia misrepresented Buddhism as negativist), then outlines the developing appreciation of Buddhism's positive elements in the mid-19th Century, and concludes with the 20th Century (as Buddhism evolved into a sophisticated, specifically Western form).-I learned much and found it a welcome addition. "Change" gives a well-written foundation for understanding how Buddhism has interacted with its Western hosts, and there is considerable research here. I'm not an expert historian, but based on some cross-checking, it does seem accurate, although the author is not a historian (that's OK, neither am I) and there will be the inevitable controversies here and there. The Bibliography is extensive, although many direct references are from secondary sources. The coverage of late 20th Century Buddhism reflects the author's apparent fascination with Beat Generation Buddhism, and he overemphasizes this colorful countercultural aspect at the expense of more genuine practices. But hey, this adds some spice to the book and there are plenty of other excellent sources on recent Western Buddhism. The author also refrains from discussing Buddhism's often-challenging philosophy or psychology -- this would stray from the range of his objective familiarity (and the book's topic) and besides, many good resources already exist.-"Change" gave a good understanding of Buddhist historical interactions with the West (especially prior to the mid-20th Century) and may be a nice addition to your understanding of contemplative, psychological, and philosophical interactions. I found it well worth the time it took to read, and hope you will too.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A subtle, non-partisan tale of cultures in transformationBy Brian GriffithSutin gives a remarkably full overview in the interaction of Buddhism and Western civilization. It's a kind of history writing that takes real literary sensitivity. To pull this off, Sutin has to attain helpful insight into history of nations, art, literature, theology, philosophy and spiritual practice. For quite a while he catalogues the sporadic encounters between Westerners and Buddhists, detailing the almost stupefying misunderstanding that prevailed down to the late 1800s. Then we have a rising chorus of personal adventures and biographical sketches, showing those who popularized Buddhism in the West as teachers, charlatans, scholars, novelists, or history-changing activists. Even a partial role call of the people involved looks momentous for world history: Nyogen Senzaki, D.T. Suzuki, Helena Blavatsky, Paul Carus, Lafcadio Hearn, William James, Alexandra David-Neel, Okakura Kakuzo, Friedrich Max Muller, Christmas Humphries, Hermann Hesse, Nikos Kazantzakis, Alan Watts, T. Lobsang Rampa, Carl Jung, Thomas Merton, Allan Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, Thich Nhat Hahn, Gary Snyder, E.F. Schumacher, Chogyam Trungpa, Rita Gross, Jack Kornfeld, Geshe Wangyal, Maureen Stuart, Richard Baker, Pema Chodron, Joanna Macy and the 14th Dalai Lama. The story is huge, and it's told by a historian with a keen eye for turns in popular culture.15 of 15 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating but flawedBy daruma-gThis is a fascinating journey through the history of Buddhism's ever-increasing interaction with the western world. The first chapter was a little tedious, but then things picked up nicely, and often my attention was riveted. But as I neared the end of the book, my enthusiasm was dampened. When I was a little disturbed by Sutin's apparent justification of the alcoholism and sexually abusive behavior of Chogyam Trungpa, I reminded myself that Trungpa remains controversial, and that this is, after all, a book of history. But the section on Shin, which includes the stunning error "The founder of Shin Buddhism was Nichiren Daishonen" (p. 338), and which repeatedly and thoroughly confuses Shinshu and Nichirenshu, really shook my confidence. The section comes near the end of the book: was Sutin in a hurry to finish his work? Perhaps so: the book does seem to conclude abruptly. In any case, the error, which ironically illustrates the "resistance" to Pure Land Buddhism that the author mentions at the beginning of the section, is most unfortunate. Another complaint I have is the unconventional deployment of notes. There are many endnotes, but there are no indications of them in the text: that makes for smoother reading, but it also makes it likely that the reader will miss useful notes. And I was surprised that R. H. Blyth was mentioned only in passing, and that not indexed. Despite those issues, I liked the book and recommend it, with caveats, as an enjoyable and mostly well-researched introduction to the story of Buddhism and the West.

In the tradition of Karen Armstrong, Jack Miles, and Thomas Cahill comes a magisterial history of the coming of Buddhism to the West.

From Publishers WeeklyThis hefty history of Buddhism in the West starts at the very beginning: combing through the works of ancient Greeks and proceeding from that time to find references to Western encounters with, or knowledge of, Buddhism in the East. Sutin, a teacher and author of biographies and memoirs, has set himself an ambitious and sometimes dusty task, querying Gnosticism, the missionary history of the Society of Jesus, Enlightenment thought and other currents of Western intellectual history, in his quest for the Buddha. Some of what he finds is fascinating, including the Jesus Messiah sutra, a 7th-century document that explains Christianity in Buddhist and Confucian terms. Other times what he considers Buddhist-influenced is a stretch that blurs distinctions: the mathematician Leibniz, for example, is roped into his analysis, but what Sutin cites shows the German philosopher to be an admirer of China, not necessarily of Buddhism. General readers may find this book ponderous, with lengthy quotes from source materials

and occasional small side disquisitions about such matters as the racism behind the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. However, its comprehensiveness and depth will interest those in the field of Buddhist studies and others with patience to slog through it. (Aug.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist\*Starred \* Sutin, biographer of Philip K. Dick and Aleister Crowley, proves himself to be a superb synthesizer in this avidly detailed chronicle of Buddhism's flow from East to West. After unearthing the footings of the bridge between cultures constructed 2,000 years ago as the Greeks and Buddhists in India found common metaphysical ground, Sutin provides an unusually cogent explanation of Buddhism's great schism and the resulting Theravada and Mahasanghika schools, one monastic, the other populist. He documents intriguing parallels between Buddhist and gnostic teachings, credits Marco Polo with writing the first popular Western account of the Buddha's life story, and discovers both racist and tolerant reactions to Buddhism in the writings of Jesuit missionaries. The influence of Buddhism on the work of various European philosophers and the theosophist Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, as well as the impact of Buddhism on such seminal Americans as Thoreau, Emerson, Lafcadio Hearn, Jack Kerouac, and Gary Snyder, inspires Sutin to nimble analysis, accompanied by discerning profiles of various international Buddhist teachers, including D. T. Suzuki, Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, and the Dalai Lama. Sutin's uniquely comprehensive, interpretative, and vital history is a cornerstone study that maps a remarkable spiritual migration and evolution. Donna Seaman Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved About the Author Lawrence Sutin is a professor in the M.F.A. program at Hamlin College and holds a J.D. from Harvard University. His works include "Divine Invasions: A Life of Philip K. Dick; Jack and Rochelle: A Holocaust Story of Love and Resistance;" and "A Postcard Memoir".