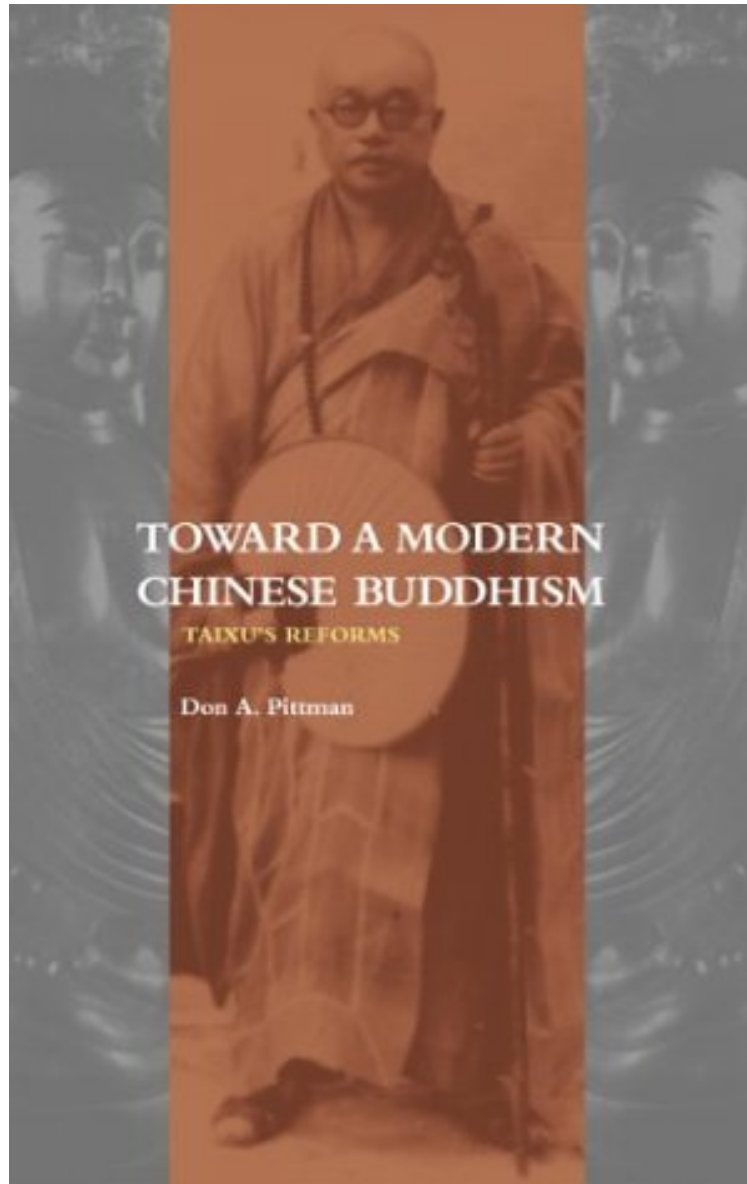


(Free and download) Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism: Taixu's Reforms

Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism: Taixu's Reforms

Don A. Pittman

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



[Download](#)

[Read Online](#)

#3910451 in Books 2001-02 Original language: English PDF # 1 1.25 x 6.30 x 9.25l, 1.58 #File Name: 0824822315389 pages | File size: 72.Mb

Don A. Pittman : Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism: Taixu's Reforms before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism: Taixu's Reforms:

7 of 8 people found the following review helpful. "The Buddhist teaching regarding the nature of the universe has nothing of the mystical or mysterious in it..."By Crazy FoxThe oncoming of modernity during the nineteenth century proved every bit as extremely jarring for Buddhism as it did for most religious traditions. This fact is easy to overlook

nowadays though as many of the innovative solutions advanced by Buddhist reformers in response have insinuated themselves into common sense notions of what Buddhism is, thus managing to pass unquestioned as timeless characteristics of this ancient religious tradition. Understanding this understudied process is slippery and tricky at best and yet fundamentally important for getting a handle on Buddhism's historical development, and so a reliable in-depth study like Don Pittman's "Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism: Taixu's Reforms" cannot but be a welcome contribution. The early twentieth-century Buddhist reformer Taixu (1890-1947) makes for an interesting focus. For one, as Pittman convincingly argues, he's an exemplary representative of a certain kind of religious figure especially prominent in the modern period, one who prioritizes socially responsible ethical action in the present world. At the same time he's hard to pigeonhole and is a somewhat ambivalent personality--too moderate in the eyes of more fiery proponents of extreme change and yet far too sweeping a reformist for the more settled conservative monastic leaders of his era. Still, a fully ordained monk qualified to discuss the issues with religious authority like Taixu is better placed to give us insight into the inner workings of Chinese Buddhism's modern vicissitudes than, say, some voices in modern Buddhism who tend to be marginally affiliated with the tradition in question. The book is nicely organized. An initial chapter sets the stage, as it were, sketching the circumstances faced by Buddhism during late-nineteenth and early twentieth century China (the end of the Qing Dynasty and the tumultuous Republican period) and perceptions of the tradition by important Chinese intellectuals. The next few chapters deal directly with Taixu's life in roughly chronological order, detailing his many attempts to organize Buddhism into a viable force in modern society as well as his evolving attempts to redefine the Buddhist tradition as rational and scientific and thus uniquely qualified to be spiritually relevant and vitally beneficial in the modern world. The last few chapters then step back and explore more carefully his formulation (or reformulation) of what Buddhism is all about and the complex balance of tradition and reform found therein. Finally, despite Taixu's own self-perception of overall failure, the final chapter outlines his far-reaching influence on more recent Buddhist leaders in the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, and most especially Taiwan. If the book has one weakness, it's that Pittman sometimes seems to rely too much on previously published secondary sources in English (especially those by Holmes Welch) and, less problematically but still overabundantly, observations and characterizations of Taixu by American and British Christian missionaries stationed in China at that time. Not that Chinese sources and reactions are totally neglected by any means, but on balance more would have perhaps been appropriate. Still, this is a minor quibble in what is on the whole an imminently readable and significant monograph on a fascinating Buddhist monk and his key role in developing the East Asian forms of Buddhist religiosity we see very much active today. Highly recommended.

The Venerable Master Taixu (1890-1947) is the most important and controversial Chinese Buddhist reformer of the twentieth century. This is the first major study in English to focus on the charismatic reformer and his teachings and provides a comprehensive and absorbing interpretation of Taixu's aims and the divisive controversies that surrounded him. This nuanced work is richly documented with quotations from Taixu's own writings and from various Chinese intellectuals and evangelists of the period.