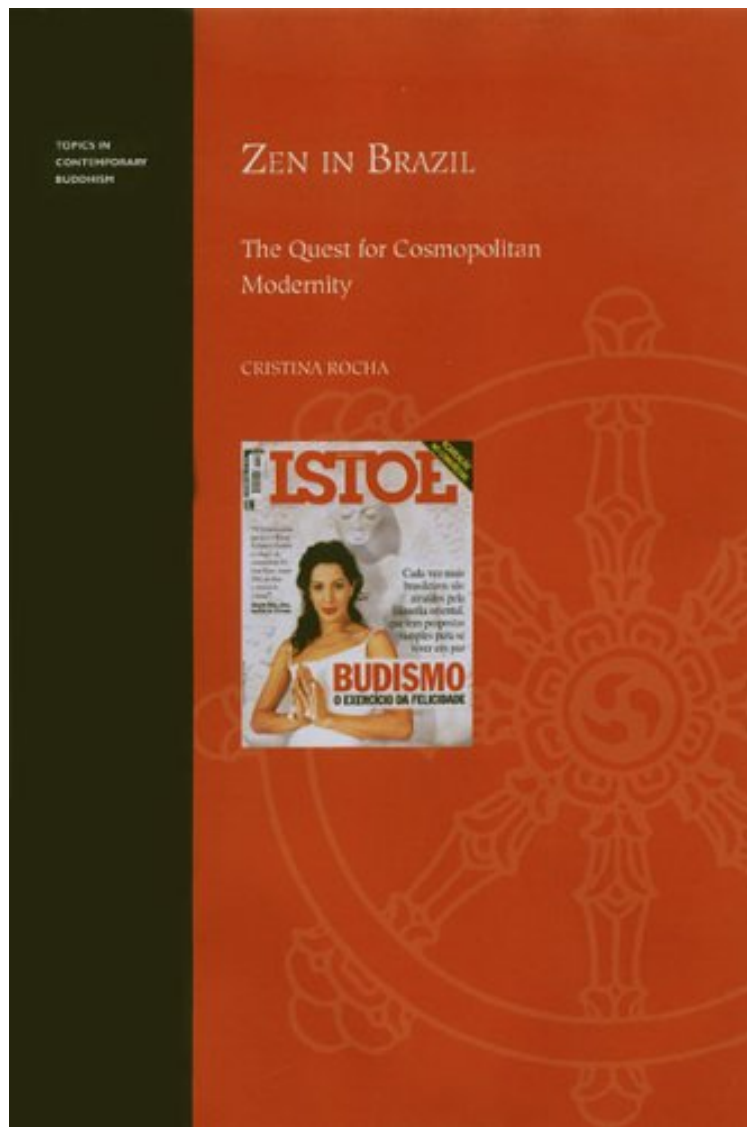


(Download pdf) Zen in Brazil: The Quest for Cosmopolitan Modernity (Topics in Contemporary Buddhism)

## Zen in Brazil: The Quest for Cosmopolitan Modernity (Topics in Contemporary Buddhism)

*Cristina Rocha*

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#3086579 in Books Univ of Hawaii Pr 2005-12-31 2005-12-31 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.25 x 6.25 x 1.251, .0 #File Name: 082482976X270 pages | File size: 50.Mb

**Cristina Rocha : Zen in Brazil: The Quest for Cosmopolitan Modernity (Topics in Contemporary Buddhism)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Zen in Brazil: The Quest for Cosmopolitan Modernity (Topics in Contemporary Buddhism):

Widely perceived as an overwhelmingly Catholic nation, Brazil has experienced in recent years a growth in the popularity of Buddhism among the urban, cosmopolitan upper classes. In the 1990s Buddhism in general and Zen in particular were adopted by national elites, the media, and popular culture as a set of humanistic values to counter the rampant violence and crime in Brazilian society. Despite national media attention, the rapidly expanding Brazilian market for Buddhist books and events, and general interest in the globalization of Buddhism, the Brazilian case has received little scholarly attention. Cristina Rocha addresses that shortcoming in *Zen in Brazil*. Drawing on fieldwork in Japan and Brazil, she examines Brazilian history, culture, and literature to uncover the mainly Catholic, Spiritist, and Afro-Brazilian religious matrices responsible for this particular indigenization of Buddhism. In her analysis of Japanese immigration and the adoption and creolization of the Sōtō school of Zen Buddhism in Brazil, she offers the fascinating insight that the latter is part of a process of "cannibalizing" the modern other to become modern oneself. She shows, moreover, that in practicing Zen, the Brazilian intellectual elites from the 1950s onward have been driven by a desire to acquire and accumulate cultural capital both locally and overseas. Their consumption of Zen, Rocha contends, has been an expression of their desire to distinguish themselves from popular taste at home while at the same time associating themselves with overseas cultural elites.

About the Author Cristina Rocha is adjunct research fellow at the Centre for Cultural Research, University of Western Sydney.