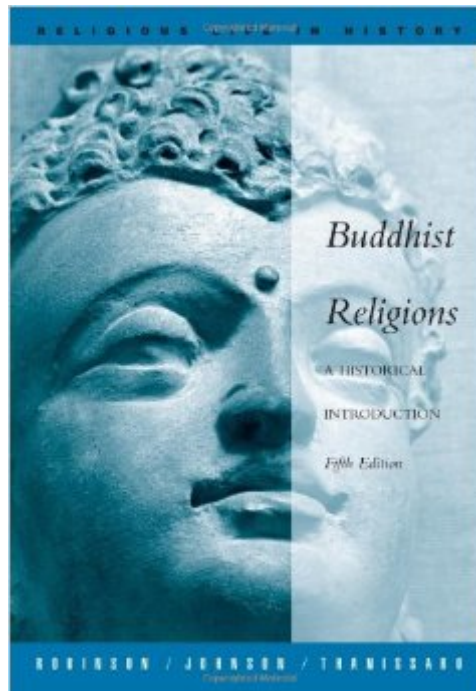


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# Buddhist Religions: A Historical Introduction (Religious Life In History)



## Synopsis

This historical introduction to Buddhism presents students with an engaging exploration of the diversity of thoughts and practices of a wide segment of followers of the Buddha. It covers five main aspects of Buddhism: ritual, devotionism, doctrine, meditation, practice, and institutional history.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (16 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

I used an earlier edition of this book and the companion Experience of Buddhism in an introductory buddhism course in college, and found (and still find) both to be extremely useful as overviews and wide-ranging sourcebooks for information about the full spectrum of buddhist practice and thought. I'm not sure what grammatical errors the previous reviewer refers to -- perhaps peculiar to the present edition -- but I grew up to be an english teacher and recall no such dramatic flaws and logical inconsistency. As textbooks, both are definitely expensive, but actually are the best resources I can think of for an overview of the whole religion rather than one specific branch of it. (Though it is true that the writing in this particular book is a bit dry -- it is a textbook, after all).

I have taught from this book for several years, and I believe it is one of the best Buddhism survey textbooks available. The current edition is as much the work of Thanissaro Bikkhu as it is Willard Robinson. Bikkhu incorporates much of the most recent scholarship in Buddhist studies from scholars such as Gregory Schopen, Donald Lopez, etc. There are no grammatical mistakes I am aware of in the current edition. I suspect the book's only one-star rating came from a disgruntled

student. This is not a book that dumbs down the Buddhist religion, or attempts to please everyone. It uses sophisticated language and presents a definite point of view. As such, it may not be appropriate for undergraduates at some colleges. Strong's anthology "The Experience of Buddhism" is paired by the publisher with this text, and it too is excellent.

The one star review below was likely made by someone who read an early edition of the book - the past two editions have been an ambitious re-write by Thanissaro Bhikkhu. The result is a book whose clarity is unmatched by any other text I've come across that addresses the history of Buddhism.

This is one of the important surveys of Buddhism: origins, doctrine, history. Lots of information, and all conveyed clearly, reliably, readably. There are newer studies, of which I really can't speak, but this one is a classic I use continually for reference.

Enjoyed the early parts. Becomes painfully academic later on, tracing each little twist and turn of each of the doctrinal traditions. I set it aside when I realized I was only reading it because I thought I should read it, and seldom even then.

college textbook

Exactly what I was wanting. Informative.

Great reference

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