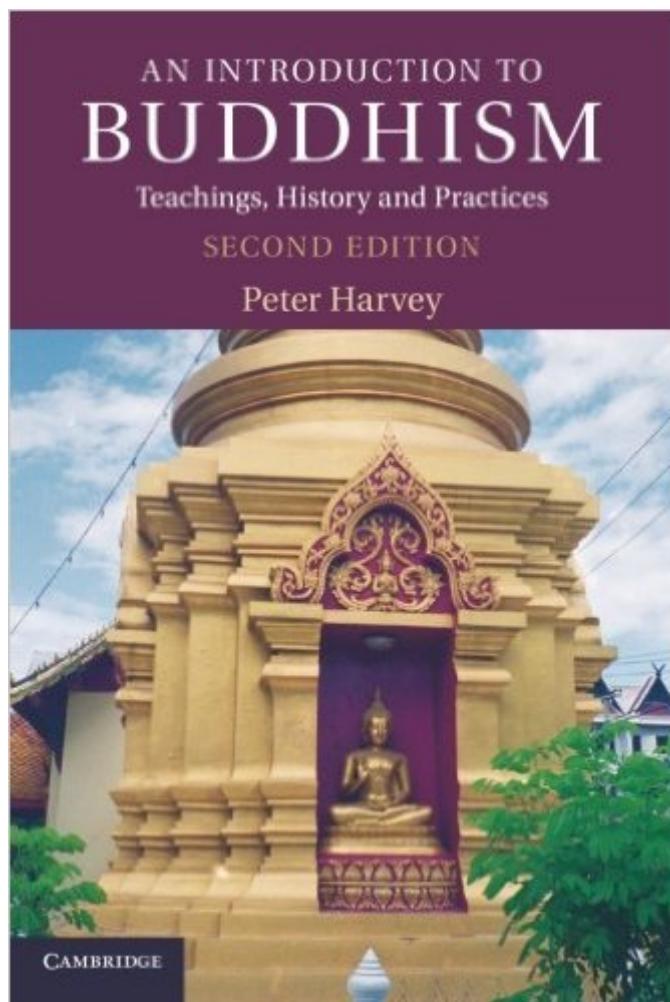


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# An Introduction To Buddhism: Teachings, History And Practices (Introduction To Religion)



## **Synopsis**

In this new edition of the best-selling Introduction to Buddhism, Peter Harvey provides a comprehensive introduction to the development of the Buddhist tradition in both Asia and the West. Extensively revised and fully updated, this new edition draws on recent scholarship in the field, exploring the tensions and continuities between the different forms of Buddhism. Harvey critiques and corrects some common misconceptions and mistranslations, and discusses key concepts that have often been over-simplified and over-generalised. The volume includes detailed references to scriptures and secondary literature, an updated bibliography, and a section on web resources. Key terms are given in Pali and Sanskrit, and Tibetan words are transliterated in the most easily pronounceable form, making this is a truly accessible account. This is an ideal coursebook for students of religion, Asian philosophy and Asian studies, and is also a useful reference for readers wanting an overview of Buddhism and its beliefs.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Most books available on Buddhism on bookshelves at the popular level leave a great deal to be desired. Either they are written by people who have had no contact with Buddhism, culturally or by practice (or at best very little practice of the wrong sort) thus taking a literalist approach to translated Buddhist scripts or they are too specialist, providing a view of Buddhism based on only one school or a narrow emphasis, often hawking for influence. Professor Harvey has both contacted Buddhism culturally and continues to make an honest attempt to put Buddhism into practice. An introduction to

Buddhism is one of the best overall introductions to this vast subject now available, superseding equivalent good books which are by now up to 50 years too old. Harvey combines scholarship including a knowledge of Pali and Sanskrit along with sensitivity to the contexts in which the various scriptures can be seen. In the forest of competing books out now, this one can be recommended without reservation.

Excellent introduction for the beginner, and/or anyone who wants to increase their historical and conceptual knowledge of Buddhism & Buddhist beliefs and practices. There are tons of books out there regarding Buddhism, its different strains, texts, and interpretations. Many of these books seem to me to be "California Zen Pop-Buddhism," while others are 50 years old, very dry, and esoteric. After patiently skimming through various chapters at the bookstore, I realized that I had finally found a well-written book on this subject. I will also look into other works by Peter Harvey.

Peter Harvey's book is dull but extremely useful for those wanting help in learning about the history, practices, and divisions of Buddhism. If a comprehensive, encyclopedia-like reader is wanting you are needing, then this book is your answer, although I would advise taking "no dose" while reading it. Harvey sets forth a historical explanation for all elements of Buddhism and presents the sanskrit form of names and terms. I personally found Harvey's review of Tantra and Zen Buddhism to be particularly helpful. Too often, books and documentaries emphasize the sexual aspects of Tantra and the meditation of Zen without clearly stating what each denomination believes and, more importantly, why they believe such things. Also, before this book, I had trouble finding where to begin in learning about Buddhism, and this book leads its reader by the hand and into the most important issues of Buddhism, escaping the confusion caused by a western interest in Buddhism since the 1960's.

Harvey does a wonderful job of introducing the reader to the Buddhism of the Buddha. Then he takes you through the development of Buddhism country by country, showing you how mythology and cultural influences were then added to give us the different denominations we have now.

This text is used at university to explain the history of Buddhism, not an easy read but useful if you want an in-depth review and source of reference. Comprehensive introduction to the Buddhist tradition as it has developed in three major cultural areas in Asia, and to Buddhism as it is now developing in the West. It is intended to be a textbook for students of religious and Asian studies

respectively, but will also be of interest to those who want a general survey of Buddhism and its beliefs. Unlike many other general books about Buddhism, it not only explores Buddhist beliefs, but also seeks to show how Buddhism functions as a set of practices. Since being written in 1990 some information is now out-of-date.

The more I can learn about Buddhism the happier I am, so all books contain something that another book might not, and one always learns something. This was recommended for an intro to Buddhism class I took at Queens College, NYC.

Heavy book about Buddhism. Covers different countries and customs. This book is more for studying Buddhism than a how to guide to be a good Buddhist.

Very detailed and informative, but could be somewhat dry.

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