

Buddhism in China: Suggestions for Further Reading

Below are a few excellent sources of basic information about Buddhism and its development in China. They provide a good starting point for further reading and reflection.

General Works on Buddhism

Schumann, Hans Wolfgang. *Buddhism, An Outline of its Teachings and Schools*, translated by Georg Feuerstein. Wheaton, Ill., 1973. A very serviceable introduction to the tradition, particularly with respect to the foundational doctrines of early Buddhism.

Rahula, Walpola. *What the Buddha Taught*. New York, 1959. The classic introduction, still timely, to basic Buddhist doctrine and practice from the perspective of the Theravāda tradition. Does not discuss Mahāyāna Buddhism.

Gethin, Rupert. *The Foundations of Buddhism*. Oxford, 1998. An excellent introduction to Mainstream Buddhist thought, but with only scant attention to Mahāyāna Buddhism.

Williams, Paul, with Alexander Wynne and Anthony Tribe. *Buddhist Thought: A Complete Introduction to the Indian Tradition*. 2d. ed. New York, 2012. Considerably more detailed than the works above, and free from many of the sectarian limitations of their discussions. Summarizes a great deal of more recent scholarship on the development of Buddhism in India.

Williams, Paul. *Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations*, 2d ed. New York, 2009. If Williams's introduction to Buddhist thought in India has whetted your appetite for a deeper dive into the Mahāyāna, then this book is the main course. Includes chapters on the Huayan and Lotus traditions in China.

Buddhism in China

Wright, Arthur. *Buddhism in Chinese History*. Stanford, 1959. This little (127 pages) book remains the best overall introduction to the growth and assimilation of the tradition in China. As the title indicates, it emphasizes the large-scale social, political, and institutional forces that bore upon the process.

Ch'en, Kenneth. *Buddhism in China, A Historical Survey*. Princeton, 1964. A detailed examination of the topic, from earliest times through the modern period, with considerable attention to both institutional and doctrinal history.

Textual Anthologies

Conze, Edward et al., eds. *Buddhist Texts Throught the Ages*. New York, 1964. Texts from the Mainstream (largely, Theravāda), Mahāyāna, and Tantric traditions, concentrating on issues of doctrine and religious practice. Chinese and Japanese texts receive only brief attention.

deBary, Wm. Theodore et al., eds. *The Buddhist Tradition in India, China, and Japan*. New York, 1969. Representative texts from India, China, and Japan, with brief introductions.

deBary, Wm. Theodore and Irene Bloom, comps. *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, vol 1, *From Earliest Times to 1600*. 2d ed. New York, 1999. Part Three, "Later Daoism and Mahāyāna Buddhism in China," contains a representative selection of Buddhist texts of importance in China, with excellent introductory discussions. Important also for its coverage of "Dark Learning," or *xuanxue* (see the Glossary for a brief definition) and the development of the Daoist church.