



Structural Buddhism: The Creation and Extinction of Culture

Liam Martin

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Every religion, when it encounters a new culture, transforms that culture and is in turn transformed by it. Buddhism is no exception. With each new culture it encountered - Japan, China, Tibet, Indo-China and Sri Lanka - it emerged in a new form, whether Zen, Chan, Vajrayana, or Theravada. Its latest encounter is with the West, and this cannot but prove significant, for we have the most scientific of cultures in the West, and the most scientific of religions in Buddhism. The result, as this book shows, is the merging of Buddhism and Anthropology. All the material of Cultural Anthropology is explained by Buddhism. The daring proposal of this book is that Buddhism is a universal phenomenon, but that it has not achieved this through force of arms, or even through peaceful conversion, but through natural laws. Everyone is a Buddhist practitioner, whether they know it or not. Everyone practices the Four Noble Truths and the Chain of Co-dependent Origination, because these constitute the structure of consciousness itself, and of all cultural expression. From the person in the most primitive society to the one in the most modern society, from shaman and witchdoctor to Christian, Muslim and Jew, and to Hindu and atheist, everyone obeys Buddhist laws.

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