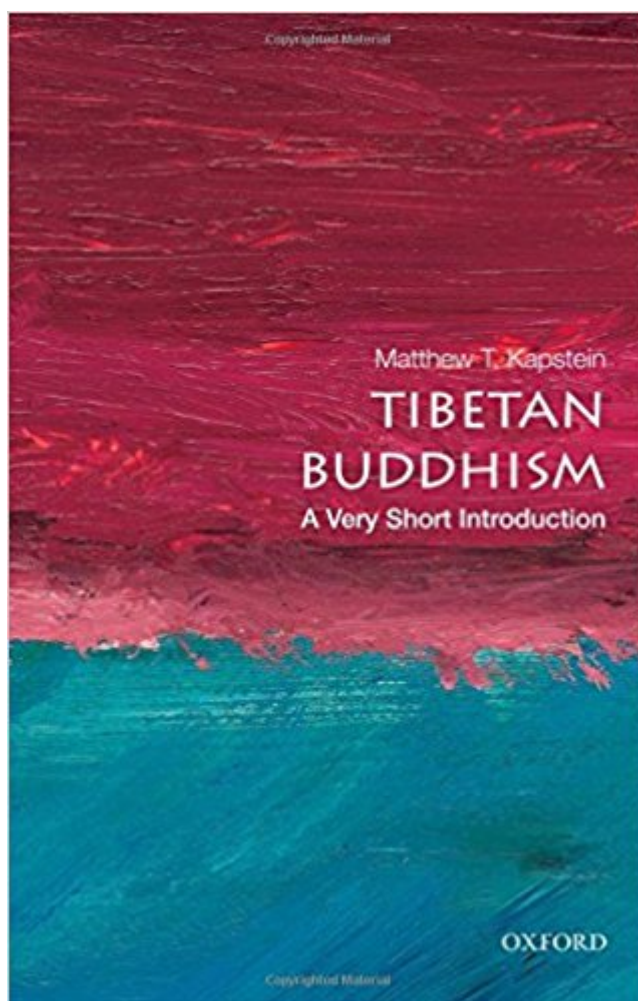


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Tibetan Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions)



Synopsis

The Tibetan Buddhist tradition has known over thirteen centuries of continuous development. During that time, it has spread among the neighboring peoples - the Mongol, Himalayan, and Siberian peoples, Manchus and Chinese. At its height it has been practiced in regions as far west as the Volga river and to the east in Beijing. Its capacity for creative adaptation is demonstrated by its recent growth in Europe and America. At the same time, it is at the center of political contestation in ethnically Tibetan regions of China, while its best known exponent, the Dalai Lama, has become one of the most admired religious leaders in the world today. But what does this religion teach? Just what is the position of the Dalai Lama, and how will his succession be assured? Is it true that Tibetan Buddhism is entirely suppressed in China? Scholar Matthew Kapstein offers a brief account responding to these questions and more in this Very Short Introduction, in terms that are accessible to students, general readers, journalists, and others who are curious to learn the most essential features of Tibetan Buddhist history, teachings, and practice. About the Series: Oxford's Very Short Introductions series offers concise and original introductions to a wide range of subjects--from Islam to Sociology, Politics to Classics, Literary Theory to History, and Archaeology to the Bible. Not simply a textbook of definitions, each volume in this series provides trenchant and provocative--yet always balanced and complete--discussions of the central issues in a given discipline or field. Every Very Short Introduction gives a readable evolution of the subject in question, demonstrating how the subject has developed and how it has influenced society. Eventually, the series will encompass every major academic discipline, offering all students an accessible and abundant reference library. Whatever the area of study that one deems important or appealing, whatever the topic that fascinates the general reader, the Very Short Introductions series has a handy and affordable guide that will likely prove indispensable.

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Series: Very Short Introductions

Paperback: 152 pages

Publisher: Oxford University Press; 1 edition (October 25, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0199735123

ISBN-13: 978-0199735129

Product Dimensions: 6.6 x 0.5 x 4.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.5 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 8 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #137,071 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #27 in Books > Textbooks > Humanities > Religious Studies > Buddhism #140 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Eastern > Buddhism > Tibetan #26238 in Books > Religion & Spirituality

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"A splendidly lucid and insightful account of Tibetan Buddhism. The book surveys the full spectrum of religious ideas, culture, and practices, from everyday ritual to rarified philosophical doctrine and yogic states, all situated in their historical contexts and studded with clarifying charts and choice excerpts from the original texts. The perfect overview for layman and specialist alike." --Janet Gyatso, Hershey Professor of Buddhist Studies, The Divinity School, Harvard University

Matthew T. Kapstein is Director of Tibetan Studies at the École Pratique des Hautes Études in Paris and Numata Visiting Professor of Buddhist Studies at the University of Chicago. He has published fifteen books, including *The Tibetans* (2006), *The Rise of Wisdom Moon* (2009), and *Buddhism Between Tibet and China* (2009), and is co-editor of the journal *History of Religions*.

Perfect introduction to a complex tradition. Particularly interesting is the recount of the relationship between the autochthonous tradition bon and the introduction of Buddhism to Tibet. A worthwhile reading.

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