



Recovering Buddhism in Modern China (The Sheng Yen Series in Chinese Buddhist Studies)

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Modern Chinese history told from a Buddhist perspective restores the vibrant, creative role of religion in postimperial China. It shows how urban Buddhist elites jockeyed for cultural dominance in the early Republican era, how Buddhist intellectuals reckoned with science, and how Buddhist media contributed to modern print cultures. It recognizes the political importance of sacred Buddhist relics and the complex processes through which Buddhists participated in and experienced religious suppression under Communist rule. Today, urban and rural communities alike engage with Buddhist practices to renegotiate class, gender, and kinship relations in post-Mao China.

Using fresh archival and primary sources, along with extensive ethnographic research, this volume vividly portrays these events and more, recasting Buddhism as a critical factor in China's twentieth-century development. Each chapter connects a moment in Buddhist history to a significant theme in Chinese history, creating a new narrative of Buddhism's involvement in the emergence of urban modernity, the practice of international diplomacy, the mobilization for total war, and other transformations of state, society, and culture. Working across an extraordinary thematic range, the book reincorporates Buddhism into the formative processes and distinctive character of Chinese history.

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