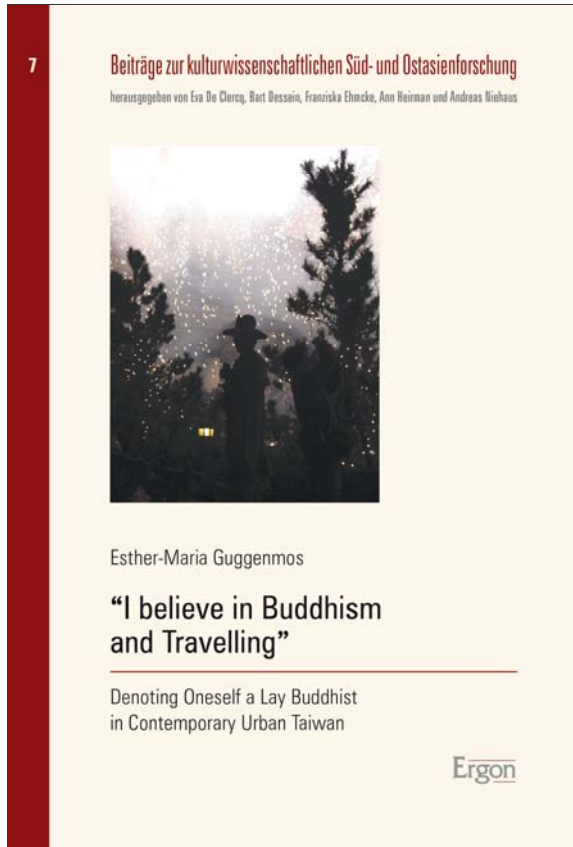


Esther-Maria Guggenmos

“I believe in Buddhism and Travelling”

Denoting Oneself a Lay Buddhist in Contemporary Taiwan

(= Beiträge zur kulturwissenschaftlichen Süd- und Ostasienforschung | 7)



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Buddhists are more frequent in urban than in rural Taiwan-this statistical discovery of the present volume leads to an investigation into the motivations of people who denote themselves as Buddhists. Nine biographical narrative interviews stand central to an analysis following *Structural Hermeneutics*-a sociological method applied for the first time in an Asian context.

Guggenmos analyses why it can be attractive for urban citizens to consider themselves lay Buddhists. She surveys the underlying conventional orientations as well as modes to exploit Buddhism intensively for a modernity compatible self-construction. Are Buddhist identification patterns advantageous to members living under constant cultural fluctuations? The Buddhist religious field reveals an integrative dynamic. Buddhists in Taiwan construct Buddhism as a highly flexible script with a strong experiential dimension. Self-aesthetisation, leisure-time management, entertainment, body-shaping and bodily practices, conscious life-construction, up to an international awareness, are creatively applied. Historical developments, organisational resources, Buddhist discourses like that on “Engaged Buddhism”, as well as reflections on the role of religion in cities deliver helpful background information. A comparative approach to Mainland China rounds off this picture.

The book provides a comprehensive overview about lay Buddhist orientations in Taiwan and describes how the driving force and the major reason for the attraction of denoting oneself a lay Buddhist in contemporary Taiwan are to be found at the core of the social dynamic in the transforming society.

BESTELLUNG

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