

While academic and popular studies of Buddhism have often neglected race as a factor of analysis, the issues concerning race and racialization have remained not far below the surface of the wider discussion among ethnic Buddhists, converts, and sympathizers regarding representations of American Buddhism and adaptations of Buddhist practices to the American context. In *Race and Religion in American Buddhism*, Joseph Cheah provides a much-needed contribution to the field of religious studies by addressing the under-theorization of race in the study of American Buddhism. Through the lens of racial formation, Cheah demonstrates how adaptations of Buddhist practices by immigrants, converts, and sympathizers have taken place within an environment already permeated with the logic and ideology of whiteness and white supremacy. In other words, race and religion (Buddhism) are so intimately bound together in the United States that the ideology of white supremacy informs the differing ways in which convert Buddhists and sympathizers and Burmese ethnic Buddhists have adapted Buddhist religious practices to an American context.

Cheah offers a complex view of how the Burmese American community must negotiate not only the religious and racial terrains of the United States but also the transnational reach of the Burmese junta. *Race and Religion in American Buddhism* marks an important contribution to the study of American Buddhism as well as to the larger fields of U.S. religions and Asian American studies.

JOSEPH CHEAH is Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Religious Studies and Theology at Saint Joseph College in West Hartford, Connecticut.

“In a compelling and wide-ranging account, Joseph Cheah convincingly demonstrates how white supremacy has fundamentally shaped Buddhist religious practices both in Burma and the United States. Shuttling between different time periods, countries, and scales, he contextualizes how religious practices ‘travel’ and highlights the role of colonialism and race in structuring the rearticulation of religious beliefs, traditions, and practices.”

—MICHAEL OMI, co-author of *Racial Formation in the United States*

“Joseph Cheah’s hard-hitting, insightful look into the racial politics of American Buddhism is a must-read for the religious studies scholar and Buddhist lay practitioner alike. Cheah skillfully employs contemporary theory, historical research, and his own deep understanding of Burmese American Buddhists to craft a compelling account. The narrative he traces illuminates the ways in which ‘whiteness’ pervades Americans’ sense of Buddhism and the competing forces that ethnic practitioners must deal with in order to maintain their religious identity.”

—JANE IWAMURA, author of *Virtual Orientalism: Asian Religions and American Popular Culture*