



How the Dharma Landed: Towards an Understanding of how Buddhism arrived in New Zealand

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In this paper, I describe how Buddhism arrived in New Zealand, and offer a preliminary discussion about its emerging contours. I propose that the 1970s was a watershed decade, effectively delineating an early period (pre-1970s) and a contemporary period (post-1970s). I demonstrate that in the contemporary period a "two Buddhisms" model - "convert" and "ethnic" (Prebish; 1979, 1993) - helps frame an understanding of the emerging contours of Buddhism in New Zealand. I argue that in the contemporary period the fuel for the ongoing arrival, dissemination and growth of both "convert" and "ethnic" Buddhism in New Zealand is a continuing interplay of import and export dynamics: as Buddhism is "demanded", so it continues to be fetched or sent. Furthermore, while the two strands remain distinct, there are ambiguities, and it may be wiser to conclude, following Numrich (1996:64), that the Buddhism of "Asian immigrants" and the Buddhism of "New Zealand converts" is a more appropriate descriptor for the foreseeable future.