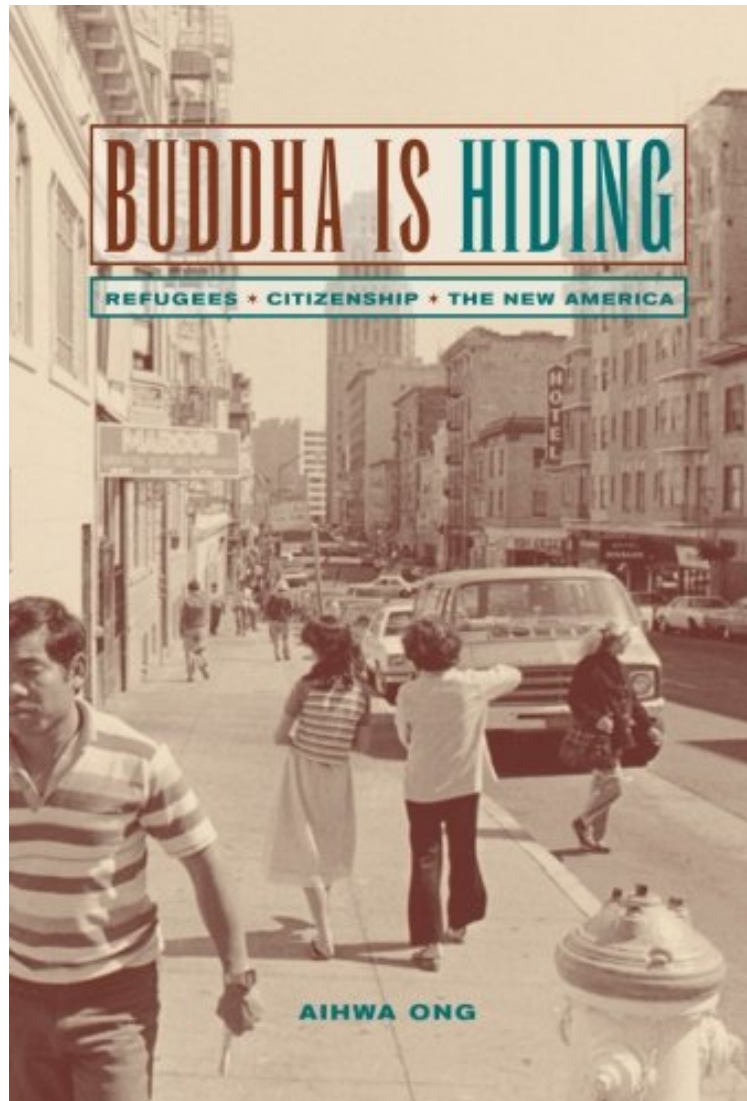


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Buddha Is Hiding: Refugees, Citizenship, the New America (California Series in Public Anthropology)

Aihwa Ong

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Aihwa Ong : Buddha Is Hiding: Refugees, Citizenship, the New America (California Series in Public Anthropology) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Buddha Is Hiding: Refugees, Citizenship, the New America (California Series in Public Anthropology):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great insight into citizenship issues By Lizz Aihwa Ong gives a new

depth to citizenship study through illustrations of the struggles of refugees in a new country. After being forced to leave their homes, these refugees are faced with a new world of cosmopolitan ideas. Ong explains that the United States is a place where ethnic succession rules (only being considered "American" after a number of generations). It's a great book and essential to anyone studying citizenship, cultural Anthropology, or the San Francisco Bay Area.

Fleeing the murderous Pol Pot regime, Cambodian refugees arrive in America as at once the victims and the heroes of America's misadventures in Southeast Asia; and their encounters with American citizenship are contradictory as well. Service providers, bureaucrats, and employers exhort them to be self-reliant, individualistic, and free, even as the system and the culture constrain them within terms of ethnicity, race, and class. *Buddha Is Hiding* tells the story of Cambodian Americans experiencing American citizenship from the bottom-up. Based on extensive fieldwork in Oakland and San Francisco, the study puts a human face on how American institutions of health, welfare, law, police, church, and industry affect minority citizens as they negotiate American culture and re-interpret the American dream. In her earlier book, *Flexible Citizenship*, anthropologist Aihwa Ong wrote of elite Asians shuttling across the Pacific. This parallel study tells the very different story of "the other Asians" whose route takes them from refugee camps to California's inner-city and high-tech enclaves. In *Buddha Is Hiding* we see these refugees becoming new citizen-subjects through a dual process of being-made and self-making, balancing religious salvation and entrepreneurial values as they endure and undermine, absorb and deflect conflicting lessons about welfare, work, medicine, gender, parenting, and mass culture. Trying to hold on to the values of family and home culture, Cambodian Americans nonetheless often feel that "Buddha is hiding." Tracing the entangled paths of poor and rich Asians in the American nation, Ong raises new questions about the form and meaning of citizenship in an era of globalization.

"A fascinating look at an often overlooked group of Asian Americans, *Buddha Is Hiding* takes the reader on an ethnographic journey with Cambodian refugees as they negotiate American citizenship in an American system that tries to produce a particular type of liberal, economic, and individual subject." *From the Inside Flap* "In this tour-de-force ethnography, acclaimed anthropologist Aihwa Ong trains her awesome ethnographic and theoretic talents on the brutal forces reconfiguring citizenship in a globalized world of war refugees, economic immigrants, and technicians of the modern soul. A work of breathtaking brilliance, beauty, perception and compassion that should bestir Buddha and the rest of us to action." *Judith Stacey, author of Brave New Families* "In this impressive and substantial work, Ong brings together rich ethnographies of Southeast Asia immigrants with a conceptually deft and poignant analysis of the human technologies of citizen-making. At stake is no less than a radical rethinking of the conditions of life, the meaning of the human, and a conception of power beyond the confines of traditional sovereignty." *Judith Butler, author of The Psychic Life of Power: Theories of Subjection* "Ong's vivid ethnography, filtered through her astute theoretical gaze, transforms and enlarges our understandings of immigration and citizenship in an increasingly multicultural nation. Ong closely follows the everyday lives of Cambodian refugees in California, as they struggle to make sense of, selectively embrace, and talk back to American demands for personal autonomy, narcissism, greed, and materialism, which fly in the face of Cambodian values of compassion, community, and reciprocity. Like her subjects' lives, this book is a marvelous and remarkable achievement." *Nancy Scheper-Hughes, author of Death without Weeping*