

## SUMMARY

The aim of the thesis is to trace the emergence and development of Buddhism in British literature on the example of selected literary works from the 1870s up to 1998. The thesis is composed of five themed chapters, the first of which is an introduction to the British and continental European encounters with Buddhism, the following two being devoted to Victorian literature, and chapters IV and V to twentieth-century literature. Chapter I provides an overview of the philological and archaeological work on the origin of Buddhism and the subsequent appearance of Buddhist scholarship and discourse. Starting with a brief history and main assumptions of Buddhism, the author presents the history of European and British encounters with the religion. Moreover, the chapter reviews several scholarly attempts to define the nature of the British contact with Buddhism and places them in the context of postcolonial studies. Chapter II analyses three Victorian poetic works: Richard Phillips' *The Story of Gautama Buddha and his Creed* (1871), Sidney Arthur Alexander's *Sakya-Muni: The Story of Buddha* (1887), and Edwin Arnold's *The Light of Asia* (1879). Chapter III traces the Buddhist motifs in Rudyard Kipling's novel *Kim*. Chapter IV introduces Buddhist thought present in literary works of twentieth-century writers such as T.S. Eliot, Iris Murdoch, Aldous Huxley, and John Fowles. The final chapter includes an analysis of two utopian novels, *Lost Horizon* by James Hilton and *Island* by Aldous Huxley.

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