

urban sectors since the economic cost of raising children is very expensive. The over all birth rate in Africa is the world's highest. There is little short-term hope for significant changes to occur unless international forces "back off."

In looking at the combined viewpoints concerning the issue of religious perspectives on population, consumption, and ecology, I would have to say that there is some hope that if a new cooperation, without exploitation, occurs, we could "save the planet." A popular bumper sticker might give some basis for this change: For humans "to be" is not "to shop." It is "to share."

— Ricahrd L. Kimball

Rituals, Folk Beliefs and Magical Arts of Sri Lanka

By Mihindikulasuriya Susantha Fernando,

Published by S. Godage & Brothers, Colombo, 2000.

Described as a "treatise on rituals, folk beliefs, folk practices, habits, superstitions, symbols, gods, deities, saints, demons, spirits, pretas, sorcery and demonic crafts of the Sri Lankan people," this substantial volume of 502 A-4 (23cm) pages is a storehouse of information. Neatly got up and copiously illustrated in both black-and-white and full color, it is a publication which gives credit to both the writer and the publisher.

It has been hailed by Sri Lankan scholars. One calls it "an herculean effort unprecedented in the annals of book publishing in Sri Lanka" and praises it as a "priceless research publication sure to be appreciated by both scholars and laymen interested in the psychological, spiritual, social and cultural development of the Sri Lankan people". Another considers it "an original contribution made in the field of folklore, folk life and anthropology." There is no doubt that the book is a rich

source of data. The author claims it to be the "first compendium ever published in Sri Lanka" of beliefs and practices which "make up the fabulous folk culture" of the country.

The author admits no originality for the material he had compiled in an easily accessible form in a single volume. He spells out his first objective to his readers as follows:

Instead of looking in vain for various books on many different elements of our folk culture, which have been written in the past by different authors, but become out of print now after limited editions, it is prudent for you to acquire and preserve this com-prehensive illustrated Digest of all the divergent aspects of the fascinating subject, not only for enriching your erudition, but also for using as guide to various ancient practices and ideas which may come handy at times in getting over many a misfortune.

Some readers may be amused by the suggestion in the italicized part of the above statement to the effect that the superstitions, rites and rituals and diverse magical cults, described in the book, have an immediate utilitarian value in the new millennium. In this he shares with his compatriots a credulity which has enabled the folk rites and beliefs to survive near universal education and technological development.

As far as the importance of the book as a Digest of available works is concerned, one notes that each of the twelve chapters is followed by end-notes and a substantial bibliography is added at the end of the book. One may, however, find that most of the information goes undocumented. This omission restricts the use of the book for research and serious study as the reader is not given the data to verify the accuracy and the authenticity of the information. Some bibliographical references are

incomplete to trace the work and the author (e.g. on p. 372 one de Silva is credited with the significant statement that there are 4470 forms of evil spells. Page 381 gives the reference without the full name of the author or adequate details of the book. The Bibliography does not include this work.)

Much has to be taken on the word of the author. It is hoped that the author will rectify this defect in a future edition, if he wishes to make this otherwise extremely useful book an adequate tool for the scholar.

Apparently, the author and the publisher intended this significantly presentable publication to be a coffee table book on Sri Lanka to cater to foreign tourists who look for such books as souvenirs. Its value as a successful conversation-starter should also be stressed. Sri Lanka lacks compendia of trivia and Susantha Fernando fills that gap admirably. To say this is not to detract from the value of this compendium of useful and relevant material on Sri Lankan folk culture.

— Ananda W.P. Guruge

The Buddhist Pilgrimage

By Duncan Forbes

Buddhist Tradition Series:

Edited Alex Wayman

Published by Motilal Banarsidass,

Delhi, 1999

ISBN 8-12081-650-1

Duncan Forbes is already well known as a travel writer from his excellent works: *The Heart of Nepal* and *The Heart of India*. The book under review narrates in his customary style his visits to the following places of Buddhist interest during the last decade: Lumbini, Kapilavastu, Piprahawa, Uruvilva, Bodhi-Gaya, Sarnath, Rajagaha, Shravasti, Vaishali, Pava and Kushinagara and Nalanda. Alex Wayne in a foreword says, "Forbes uses fine descriptive power to present his own travel experiences... and

is aided by recent archaeological discoveries for establishing certain other centers of the Buddha's pilgrimage. ...Fortunately he knows scholarly facts of the Buddha's life to combine with the travel accounts. This is certainly a commendable work."

To test Alex Wayman's commendation, an analysis was made of how Forbes dealt with the conflicting claims which Nepal and India made as regards the location of the Buddha's hometown, Kapilavastu, within each country's borders. On pages 43-44 he shows, on the basis of the account of Fa-Hsien, evidence that appears to lend strength to those who identify Tilaura Kot with Kapilavastu. After his visit to Piprahawa in India, Forbes waives and says, "It is possible to say that both Tilaura Kot and Piprahawa were the Buddha's Kapilavastu." (p.73) But on realizing that the ruins at Piprahawa are suggestive of monastic complexes rather than royal palaces, he argues, "Looking at it in another way, we have to admit that Piprahawa must have been a powerful one to encourage such great monastic activity there, even if it is only the monastic remains that we are so far able to see" (pp. 72-73). His indecision, however, finds expression in the question "So what is the sense in regarding Tilaura Kot as Kapilavastu rather than, for example, one of the other eight 'cities' of the Shakyas that are named in the Buddhist texts?"

All information he gives does not tally with Buddhist accounts. For example, Prince Siddhartha, he states, saw a sick man, a blind man and a dead man!

He has a novel explanation as to "why we have to find evidence for the wonderful great days of Indian Buddhism in Chinese, Tibetan and even *Sri Lankan records*." He says, "Such was the ruthless barbarity of the conquest of Middle India by the Moslem fundamentalists that the manuscripts went up in flames along with the Buddhist cultural centuries." Why he had to be condescending in referring to Sri