

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, Bodh-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, find 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

Lankan records is not explained. But his suggestion that Buddhist institutions had their historical tradition is no doubt correct. The recurring question is why the mainstream Indian traditions had no historical sense.

Duncan Forbes' *The Buddhist Pilgrimage* is an interesting book to read in spite of the abundance of trivial details about his encounters with the people. It is rewarding to see the Buddhist sites through the eyes of a sensitive observer from another culture. – *Ananda W. P. Guruge*

### **Buddhist Women Across Cultures**

**Edited by Karma Lekshe Tsomo,  
Published by State University of New  
York Press, Albany, 1999, 326 pp.  
ISBN: 0-79144-138-5**

One of the most significant topics of the century in organized religions is the role of women. This anthology presents a critical work on the issues faced by women in Buddhism. An important addition to the growing writings on feminist studies, this volume is a collection of articles all of which were delivered in the six International Conferences on Buddhist Women held in various places in Asia and one in the USA. The authors ranging from scholars, monastic devotees and lay practitioners write from diverse perspectives of academic analysis and monastic reflections to personal experiences. Drawing both on the primary texts and on a wide range of stories, legends, rituals, this team of international scholars and practitioners looked into the core area of Buddhism, as well as areas or topics often overlooked or not discussed in the traditional writings. An understanding of how these concepts have been addressed both in classical and contemporary scholarship proves a much needed direction in this field of study.

The goal of this volume is four fold. First and foremost, the authors sought to outline how Buddhist societies have traditionally perceived women. Second, how Buddhist women view themselves. Third, what role the women have traditionally played in the secular and monastic spheres of Buddhist societies. Fourth, how the role might be expanded and changed through the voices of Buddhist women from various socio-religious heritage. The methodology used in this anthology documents the self reflections, interactions, inter-pretations and actual involvement of Buddhist women in their specific denomination. These essays together form a vivid picture of status of Buddhist women in their respective cultures to the contemporary readers. This book is organized into two sections: Buddhist Women in Asian Traditions and Contemporary Buddhist Women. Within the theme of each one of these sections, authors expose a particular aspect of Buddhism as it relates to feminism.

The introductory article provides a foundation for reading the particular philosophical questions posed in each chapter. Each article is distinctive and demonstrates a critical yet often overlooked or contested aspect of Buddhism.

In the article 'Female in Buddhism', Elizabeth Harris speaks of the ambiguous nature of women presented in the Buddhist texts. On one hand women are downgraded as morally irresponsible temptresses and on the other they are revered as mother. Instead of a cohesive statement of women's status in Buddhism this anthology presents a small sampling of the various ways women have been viewed in Buddhism.

Hai Ju Sunna raises a question whether a woman could achieve enlightenment without being, transformed into a male body in her article on "Can women achieve enlightenment." She recounts the story of the sea dragon's