



THE  
**BUDDHIST VIṢṆU**

*Religious Transformation, Politics, and Culture*

**JOHN CLIFFORD HOLT**

# The Buddhist Visnu Religious Transformation Politics And Culture

**R. Michael Feener, Anne M. Blackburn**

## **The Buddhist Visnu Religious Transformation Politics And Culture:**

The Buddhist Visnu John Clifford Holt, 2008 John Holt's groundbreaking study examines the assimilation transformation and subordination of the Hindu deity Visnu within the contexts of Sri Lanka's history and Sinhala Buddhist religious culture. Holt argues that political agendas and social forces as much as doctrinal concerns have shaped the shifting patterns of the veneration of Visnu in Sri Lanka. Holt begins with a comparative look at the assimilation of the Buddha in Hinduism. He then explores the role and rationale of medieval Sinhala kings in assimilating Visnu into Sinhala Buddhism. Offering analyses of texts many of which have never before been translated into English, Holt considers the development of Visnu in Buddhist literature and the changing practices of deity veneration. Shifting to the present, Holt describes the efforts of contemporary Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka to discourage the veneration of Visnu, suggesting that many are motivated by a reactionary fear that their culture and society will soon be overrun by the influences and practices of Hindus, Muslims, and Christians.

*Buddhist Extremists and Muslim Minorities* John Clifford Holt, 2016-09-30 The rise of right wing groups of Sinhala Buddhists in Sri Lanka in recent years has caused a new wave of religious violence in this case with Muslims being the primary targets. *Buddhist Extremists and Muslim Minorities* presents a collection of essays that investigate the history and current conditions of Buddhist-Muslim relations in the country in an attempt to ascertain the causes of the present conflict.

*The Buddhist Art of Living in Nepal* Lauren Leve, 2016-08-05 Theravada Buddhism has experienced a powerful and far-reaching revival in modern Nepal, especially among the Newar Buddhist laity, many of whom are reorganizing their lives according to its precepts, practices, and ideals. This book documents these far-reaching social and personal transformations and links them to political, economic, and cultural shifts associated with late modernity and especially neoliberal globalization. Nepal has changed radically over the last century, particularly since the introduction of liberal democracy and an open market economy in 1990. The rise of lay vipassana meditation has also dramatically impacted the Buddhist landscape. Drawing on recently revived understandings of ethics as embodied practices of self-formation, the author argues that the Theravada turn is best understood as an ethical movement that offers practitioners ways of engaging and models for living in a rapidly changing world. The book takes readers into the Buddhist reform from the perspectives of its diverse practitioners, detailing devotees' ritual and meditative practices, their often-conflicted relations to Vajrayana Buddhism and Newar civil society, their struggles over identity in a formerly Hindu nation-state, and the political, cultural, institutional, and moral reorientations that becoming a pure Buddhist as Theravada devotees understand themselves entails. Based on more than 20 years of anthropological fieldwork, this book is an important contribution to scholarly debates over modern Buddhism, ethical practices, and the anthropology of religion. It is of interest to students and scholars of Asian Religion, Anthropology, Buddhism, and Philosophy.

**The Oxford Handbook of Contemporary Buddhism** Michael K. Jerryson, 2017 The Oxford Handbook of Contemporary Buddhism offers a comprehensive collection of work by leading scholars in the field. They examine the

historical development of Buddhist traditions throughout the world from traditional settings like India Japan and Tibet to the less well known regions of Latin America Africa and Oceania

**Studying Buddhism in Practice** John S.

Harding,2013-06-17 This book introduces the rich realities of the Buddhist tradition and the academic approaches through which they are studied Based on personal experiences of Buddhism on the ground it provides a reflective context within which religious practices can be understood and appreciated The engaging narratives cover a broad range of Buddhist countries and traditions drawing on fieldwork to explore topics such as ordination pilgrimage funerals gender roles and film making All the entries provide valuable contextual discussion and are accompanied by photographs and suggestions for further reading

**Spirits of the Place** John Clifford Holt,2009-07-29

Spirits of the Place is a rare and timely contribution to our understanding of religious culture in Laos and Southeast Asia Most often studied as a part of Thai Vietnamese or Khmer history Laos remains a terra incognita to most Westerners and to many of the people living throughout Asia as well John Holt s new book brings this fascinating nation into focus With its overview of Lao Buddhism and analysis of how shifting political power from royalty to democracy to communism has impacted Lao religious culture the book offers an integrated account of the entwined political and religious history of Laos from the fourteenth century to the contemporary era Holt advances the provocative argument that common Lao knowledge of important aspects of Theravada Buddhist thought and practice has been heavily conditioned by an indigenous religious culture dominated by the veneration of phi spirits whose powers are thought to prevail over and within specific social and geographical domains The enduring influence of traditional spirit cults in Lao culture and society has brought about major changes in how the figure of the Buddha and the powers associated with Buddhist temples and reliquaries indeed how all ritual spaces and times have been understood by the Lao Despite vigorous attempts by Buddhist royalty French rationalists and most recently by communist ideologues to eliminate the worship of phi spirit cults have not been displaced they continue to persist and show no signs of abating Not only have the spirits resisted eradication but they have withstood synthesis subordination and transformation by Buddhist political and ecclesiastical powers Rather than reduce Buddhist religious culture to a set of simple commonalities Holt takes a comparative approach using his nearly thirty years experience with Sri Lanka to elucidate what is unique about Lao Buddhism This stimulating book invites students in the fields of the history of religion and Buddhist and Southeast Asian studies to take a fresh look at prevailing assumptions and perhaps reconsider the place of Buddhism in Laos and Southeast Asia

**Religious Hatred** Paul Hedges,2021-03-11

Why does religion inspire hatred Why do people in one religion sometimes hate people of another religion and also why do some religions inspire hatred from others This book shows how scholarly studies of prejudice identity formation and genocide studies can shed light on global examples of religious hatred The book is divided into four parts focusing respectively on theories of prejudice and violence historical developments of antisemitism Islamophobia and race contemporary Western antisemitism and Islamophobia and prejudices beyond the West

in the Islamic Buddhist and Hindu traditions Each part ends with a special focus section Key features include A compelling synthesis of theories of prejudice identity and hatred to explain Islamophobia and antisemitism An innovative theory of human violence and genocide which explains the link to prejudice Case studies of both Western antisemitism and Islamophobia in history and today alongside global studies of Islamic antisemitism and Hindu and Buddhist Islamophobia Integrates discussion of race and racialisation as aspects of Islamophobic and antisemitic prejudice in relation to their framing in religious discourses Accessible for general readers and students it can be employed as a textbook for students or read with benefit by scholars for its novel synthesis and theories The book focuses on antisemitism and Islamophobia both in the West and beyond including examples of prejudices and hatred in the Islamic Hindu and Buddhist traditions Drawing on examples from Europe North America MENA South and Southeast Asia and Africa Paul Hedges points to common patterns while identifying the specifics of local context Religious Hatred is an essential guide for understanding the historical origins of religious hatred the manifestations of this hatred across diverse religious and cultural contexts and the strategies employed by activists and peacemakers to overcome this hatred

The Sri Lanka Reader John Holt,2011-04-13 Fifty four images and more than ninety classic and contemporary texts introduce Sri Lankas recorded history of more than two and a half millennia

**Hindu Christian Faqir** Timothy S. Dobe,2015-10-02 Hindu Christian Faqir compares two colonial Indian holy men the Hindu Rama Tirtha and the Christian Sundar Singh Challenging ideas about modern Hinduism indigenous Christianity and sainthood the study focuses on the vernacular ascetic idioms that both men creatively drew upon to appeal to transnational audiences and pursue religious perfection

"Ravanisation": The Revitalisation of Ravana among Sinhalese Buddhists in Post-War Sri Lanka Deborah de Koning,2022-01-05 This book discusses Ravanisation the revitalisation of Ravana among Sinhalese Buddhists in post war after 2009 Sri Lanka The Hindu Ramayana generally portrays Ravana as a cruel king How and why then has Ravana gained the interest of Sinhalese Buddhists This study takes an ethnographic perspective to answer these questions The book discusses multiple Ravana representations that have emerged at an urban Buddhist site the Sri Devram Maha Viharaya and a rural site Lakegala and discloses how Ravanisation relates to Sinhalese Buddhist ethno nationalism In addition the material ritual and spatial perspectives offer unique insights in the personal and local relevance of Ravana Dr Deborah de Koning holds a PhD degree in Religious Studies Tilburg University research funded by the Dutch Research Council and currently works as lecturer Intercultural Communication and Hinduism and Buddhism at the Christian University of Applied Sciences CHE The Netherlands

**(Dis)connected Empires** Zoltán Biedermann,2018 Dis connected Empires offers a new contribution to the current debate on the role of global history in a world of resurgent nationalisms Biedermann explores the world of early diplomatic connections between Europe and Asia in the Renaissance focusing on the rarely told story of Portuguese encounters with the Buddhist kingdoms of Sri Lanka

*Re-exploring the Links* Jorge Manuel Flores,2007 The island of Ceilao occupied a permanent and singular place in the political imagination of

early modern Portugal Concurrently the Portuguese left a strong imprint in the Sri Lankan collective memory of the period Five centuries later a group of historians art historians anthropologists and linguists reflect on the multiple dimensions of this phenomenon by rethinking texts and maps ruined churches and ivory caskets oral tales and Creole communities Authored by 15 international scholars Re exploring the Links is divided in four parts Political Realities and Cultural Imagination Religion Conflict and Interaction Space and Heritage Construction Representation Language and Ethnicity Identity and Memory While published on the occasion of the Portuguese arrival in Sri Lanka five centuries ago this book is far from being a celebratory piece Re exploring the Links does not conform to nationalist models of historical interpretation and refuses both the rhetoric of discovery and the rhetoric of aggression The aim of the volume is not to celebrate encounters but to reinvent an academic debate independent of any political agenda and concerning a history that is Portuguese and Sri Lankan alike

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY Chandra R de Silva Portugal and Sri Lanka Recent Trends in Historiography POLITICAL REALITIES AND CULTURAL IMAGINATION S Pathmanathan The Portuguese in Northeast Sri Lanka 1543 1658 An Assessment of Impressions Recorded in Tamil Chronicles and Poems Rohini Paranavitana Sinhalese War Poems and the Portuguese Karunasena Dias Paranavitana The Portuguese Tombs as a Source of Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Sri Lankan History Rui Manuel Loureiro The Matter of Ceylon in Diogo do Couto's Decadas da Asia Jorge Flores Maria Augusta Lima Cruz A Tale of Two Cities a Veteran Soldier or the Struggle for Endangered Nobilities The Two Jornadas de Huva 1633 1635 RELIGION CONFLICT AND INTERACTION Alan Strathern The Conversion of Rulers in Portuguese Era Sri Lanka John Clifford Holt Buddhist Rebuttals The Changing of the Gods and Royal Relegitimization in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Sri Lanka Ines G Zupanov Goan Brahmans in the Land of Promise Missionaries Spies and Gentiles in Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Sri Lanka Jurrien van Goor State and Religion under the Dutch in Ceylon c 1640 1796 SPACE AND HERITAGE CONSTRUCTION REPRESENTATION Zoltan Biedermann Perceptions and Representations of the Sri Lankan Space in Sixteenth Century Portuguese Texts and Maps Helder Carita Portuguese Influenced Religious Architecture in Ceylon Creation Types and Continuity Nuno Vassallo e Silva An Art for Export Sinhalese Ivory and Crystal in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries LANGUAGE AND ETHNICITY IDENTITY AND MEMORY Kenneth David Jackson Singelle Nona Jinggli Nona A Traveling Portuguese Burgher Muse Dennis B McGilvray The Portuguese Burghers of Eastern Sri Lanka in the Wake of Civil War and Tsunami

**The Buddhist World** John Powers, 2015-10-05 The Buddhist World joins a series of books on the world's great religions and cultures offering a lively and up to date survey of Buddhist studies for students and scholars alike It explores regional varieties of Buddhism and core topics including buddha nature ritual and pilgrimage In addition to historical and geo political views of Buddhism the volume features thematic chapters on philosophical concepts such as ethics as well as social constructs and categories such as community and family The book also addresses lived Buddhism in its many forms examining the ways in which modernity is reshaping traditional structures ancient doctrines and cosmological

beliefs     **Remapping Sound Studies** Gavin Steingo, Jim Sykes, 2019-03-14 The contributors to *Remapping Sound Studies* intervene in current trends and practices in sound studies by reorienting the field toward the global South. Attending to disparate aspects of sound in Africa, South and Southeast Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, Micronesia, and a Southern outpost in the global North, this volume broadens the scope of sound studies and challenges some of the field's central presuppositions. The contributors show how approaches to and uses of technology across the global South complicate narratives of technological modernity and how sound making and listening in diverse global settings unsettle familiar binaries of sacred/secular, private/public, human/nonhuman, male/female, and nature/culture. Exploring a wide range of sonic phenomena and practices from birdsong in the Marshall Islands to Zulu ululation, the contributors offer diverse ways to remap and decolonize modes of thinking about and listening to sound. Contributors: Tripta Chandola, Michele Friedner, Louise Meintjes, Jairo Moreno, Ana Mar a Ochoa, Gautier Michael, Birenbaum Quintero, Jeff Roy, Jessica Schwartz, Shayna Silverstein, Gavin Steingo, Jim Sykes, Benjamin Tausig, Herv Tchumkam     [Sri Lanka at the Crossroads of History](#) Zoltán Biedermann, Alan Strathern, 2017-06-07 The peoples of Sri Lanka have participated in far-flung trading networks, religious formations, and Asian and European empires for millennia. This interdisciplinary volume sets out to draw Sri Lanka into the field of Asian and Global History by showing how the latest wave of scholarship has explored the island as a crossroads, a place defined by its openness to movement across the Indian Ocean. Experts in the history, archaeology, literature, and art of the island from c. 500 BCE to c. 1850 CE use Lankan material to explore a number of pressing scholarly debates. They address these matters from their varied disciplinary perspectives and diverse array of sources, critically assessing concepts such as ethnicity, cosmopolitanism, and localisation, and elucidating the subtle ways in which the foreign may be resisted and embraced at the same time. The individual chapters and the volume as a whole are a welcome addition to the history and historiography of Sri Lanka, as well as studies of the Indian Ocean region, kingship, colonialism, imperialism, and early modernity.     [Theravada Buddhism](#) Kate Crosby, 2013-09-16 *Theravada Buddhism* provides a comprehensive introductory overview of the history, teachings, and current practice of an often misunderstood form of one of the world's oldest religious traditions. Explores Theravada Buddhism's origins, evolution, teachings, and practices. Considers the practice of Theravada beyond Sri Lanka and Thailand by exploring a wealth of material from countries including Bangladesh, Cambodia, and Vietnam. Reveals its rich and varied traditions and corrects common misunderstandings about links to other practices such as early Buddhism or Hinayana Buddhism. Incorporates student-friendly features including a glossary and other study aids.     [Unearthly Powers](#) Alan Strathern, 2019-03-21 This ground-breaking study sets out a new understanding of transformations in the interaction between religion and political authority throughout history.     [The Temple Road Towards a Great India](#) Marta Kudelska, Dorota Kamińska-Jones, Agnieszka Staszczyk, Agata Świerżowska, 2019-11-30 This book presents an analysis of the foundations organised by the Birla family in India. Several generations were involved in the

renovation and establishment of sanctuaries temples and other sacral buildings As a result between 1933 and 1998 nineteen Birla Mandirs were established mainly in northern and central India All the temples have the capacity to surprise with their various decorative motifs not seen in other places which apart from their aesthetic function above all bear important symbolic content Therefore is it possible to treat the Birla Mandirs as a specific medium the carrier of a particular message that is not only religious but with a significance that permeates other layers of social and political discourse This message as the authors of the book claim have a bearing on the socio political thought of India supported by the creation and propagation of ideas related to identity and a national art It also conveys the idea of hierarchical Hindu inclusivism which although considering all religions as equal treats Hinduism in a unique way seeing within it the most perfect form of religion giving man the opportunity to learn the highest truth The book also examines whether the temples founded by the Birla family and the religious activities undertaken therein apply the concept of inventing tradition and whether traditions created or modernised in contemporary times are a way of enhancing the appeal of the message conveyed from temple to society The Vastness of Culture is a series of publications presenting cultural studies and emphasizing the role of comparative research and analyses that reveal similarities differences and intercultural influences In our publications cultures and civilizations are in a state of constant flux engaging in dialogue creating new understandings competing for meaning under the influence of global content without any clear boundaries but with a vastness that forces questions to be raised

**Killing for Religion**  
Stephen R. Schwalbe, 2022-06-13 The book will inform Westerners about how the three primary Asian religions facilitate violence and conflict Each of the three Asian religions selected Hinduism Buddhism and Shinto is defined and compared with the others and with the three Abrahamic religions Judaism Christianity and Islam Next these Asian religions are analyzed to see how each allows for violence and conflict Then the nature of religious conflict within them is compared to the nature of religious conflict within two of the Abrahamic religions Christianity and Islam Religious facilitated conflicts in Asia have already occurred for many centuries are occurring today and likely will continue to occur Although Asian religions may profess to be peaceful they still end up facilitating violence and conflict It is important to enlighten both the American members of the armed forces currently stationed in the Asia Pacific region numbering over one hundred thousand as well as American taxpayers whose taxes pay for this security regarding the religious aspect of conflict in Asia

**Buddhist and Islamic Orders in Southern Asia**  
R. Michael Feener, Anne M. Blackburn, 2018-11-30 Over the last few decades historians and other scholars have succeeded in identifying diverse patterns of connection linking religious communities across Asia and beyond Yet despite the fruits of this specialist research scholars in the subfields of Islamic and Buddhist studies have rarely engaged with each other to share investigative approaches and methods of interpretation This volume was conceived to open up new spaces of creative interaction between scholars in both fields that will increase our understanding of the circulation and localization of religious texts institutional models ritual practices and literary specialists The book s approach is to



scrutinize one major dimension of the history of religion in Southern Asia religious orders Orders here referring to Sufi ar  
gas and Buddhist monastic and other ritual lineages established means by which far flung local communities could come to  
be recognized and engaged as part of a broader world of co religionists while presenting their particular religious traditions  
and their human representatives as attractive and authoritative to potential new communities of devotees Contributors to the  
volume direct their attention toward analogous developments mutually illuminating for both fields of study Some explain how  
certain orders took shape in Southern Asia over the course of the nineteenth century contextualizing these institutional  
developments in relation to local and transregional political formations shifting literary and ritual preferences and trade  
connections Others show how the circulation of people ideas texts objects and practices across Southern Asia a region in  
which both Buddhism and Islam have a long and substantial presence brought diverse currents of internal reform and notions  
of ritual and lineage purity to the region All chapters draw readers attention to the fact that networked persons were not  
always strongly institutionalized and often moved through Southern Asia and developed local bases without the oversight of  
complex corporate organizations Buddhist and Islamic Orders in Southern Asia brings cutting edge research to bear on  
conversations about how orders have functioned within these two traditions to expand and sustain transregional religious  
networks It will help to develop a better understanding of the complex roles played by religious networks in the history of  
Southern Asia

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