



Homeland of the Buddha: A guide to the Buddhist holy places of India and Nepal

Mr John Tosan McKinnon

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'Homeland of the Buddha' is a guide for those visiting the major sites of Buddhism which lie on the great plain of the Ganges in India and Nepal. The main emphasis is the life of the Buddha; how each location was significant during his time; and how that history came to be known in the modern world. It is also useful for those who seek to know where and how the Buddha taught, two and a half thousand years ago. Although it discusses some aspects of what the Buddha taught, it does not seek to be a book about Buddhism. A chapter is devoted to each site. The first section of each chapter summarises the reason why the place has Buddhist significance and details how the Buddha, and other individuals contributed to our knowledge of that place. The 'Today' section of each chapter summarises what the modern traveller can see in each place, in the sequence that they experience them. Numerous maps and photos enliven the narrative. Travel or Pilgrimage? Every visitor to India is changed, no matter how much, or how little, they may be cosseted by luxury, or how little they are attuned to the realities of life which India forces on them. It is a truism that India alters the way people think about themselves and their lives. In that sense any travel to India is a pilgrimage. How much more so therefore, when your travel is directed to walking the same paths as one of the world's greatest teachers and more so, if your intent is towards self-awareness. Whatever your intention, you can anticipate as you head to India, that the one who returns will be different from the one who left. When touring the homeland of the Buddha, we all carry the metaphorical staff of a pilgrim.

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