

The Buddha

Buddhist Civilization in India and Ceylon

Trevor Ling



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What we today call a religion is the remains of what was once a complete civilisation. This is the theme of Professor Ling's study of the Buddha and his teaching.

Far from being a recluse concerned only with an inner mystical experience, the Buddha always involved himself closely in the social and political world of his time. If he preached detachment from many of the things by which ordinary men are tied, he did so as a means of enriching life rather than escaping from it.

Trevor Ling describes the India into which the Buddha was born, recounts what is known of his life and the development of his teaching, and then follows the course of Buddhism through succeeding centuries in India and Ceylon.

He describes how it achieved a peak of influence through the conversion of the emperor Asoka, how it proved itself capable of forming the basis of a noble civilisation, but how in the end it lost its influence over public life in India, though it remained influential in Ceylon until the domination of that country by the Europeans.

Throughout the book Professor Ling reveals the intimate links between religious thought and the society in which it exists.

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