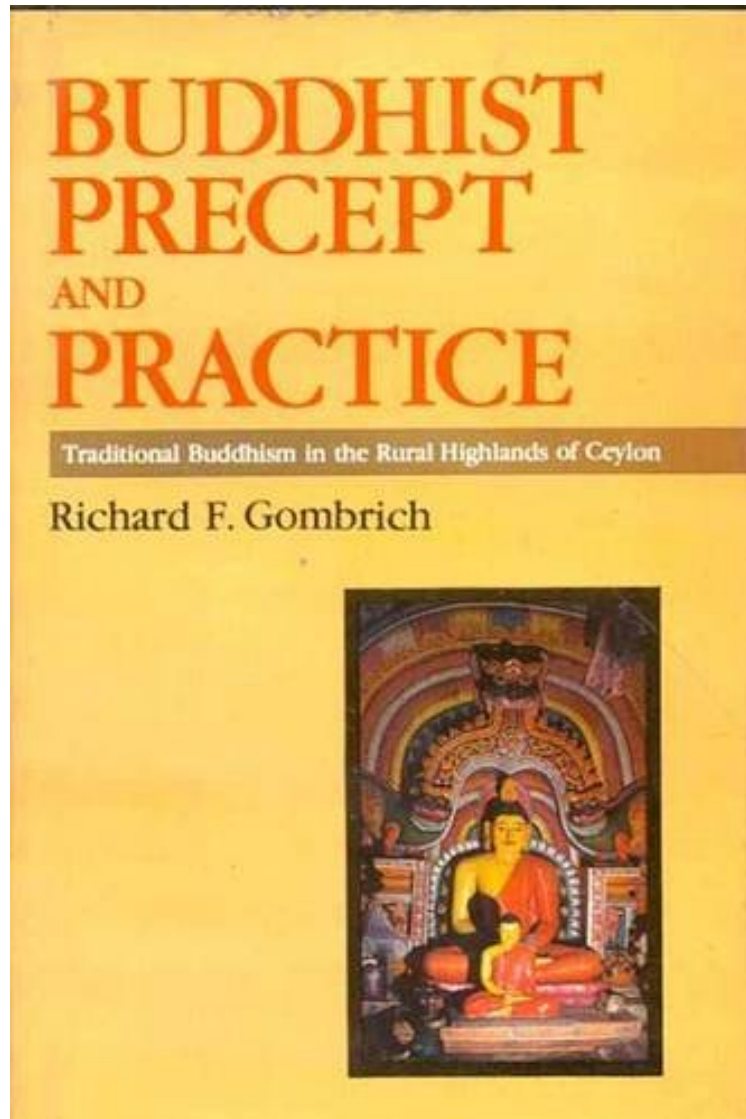


Buddhist Precept and Practice: Traditional Buddhism in the Rural Highlands of Ceylon

Richard F. Gombrich

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Richard F. Gombrich : Buddhist Precept and Practice: Traditional Buddhism in the Rural Highlands of Ceylon before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Buddhist Precept and Practice: Traditional Buddhism in the Rural Highlands of Ceylon:

6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. It saved me in Sri Lanka!By Sarah CalhounA year ago I was on an off-campus studies program in Sri Lanka and happened to have this book with me as I was studying in Lankatilike,

one of the places Gombrich describes. It was so interesting to be able to read about how things were 50 or so years before I was there. The shrines even looked basically the same! It is also a great introduction to Sinhalese Buddhism (the closest thing to a How-To Guide for Sudus I've found). However, it is an old book and a lot has happened in Lanka since it was written. Even so, I love it as a reference book and keep it by me at all times when I'm doing research on Lanka.

When this book was first published in 1971, under the title *Buddhist Precept and Practice*, *The Times Literary Supplement* wrote: This is an epoch-making piece of research which must mark a change in direction and appreciation if it is taken seriously and studied in details. Dr. Gombrich is concerned with religious change in belief and practice, not only in modern times but over the two and a half millennia during which Buddhism has flourished. He concludes that Sinhalese Buddhism has been remarkably conservative and rejects the assumption that it degenerated from an original high standard, by questioning whether it ever was as pure as a superficial reading of classical texts might suggest. It would be very difficult to provide a combination of scholarship and sympathy such as that which pervades Dr. Gombrich's book and makes it a landmark in the study of religion. Out of print for many years, the book is now republished corrected but substantially unchanged. Richard Gombrich has been Boden Professor of Sanskrit, Oxford University and Professor Fellow of Balliol College since 1976. He has published 8 books and about 40 articles, mostly on Buddhism. His most recent books are *Theravada Buddhism: A social History from Ancient Benares to Modern Colombo* and *Buddhism Transformed: Religious Change in Sri Lanka*; the latter is intended to do for modern Sinhalese Buddhism in the cities what *Precept and Practice* did for its traditional manifestation in the countryside.