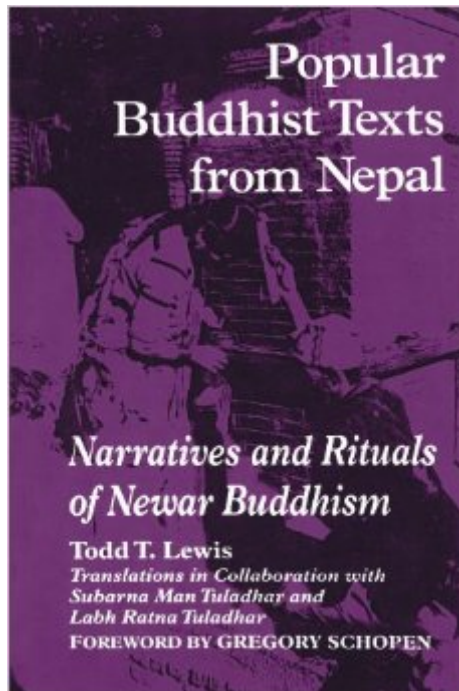


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Popular Buddhist Texts From Nepal: Narratives And Rituals Of Newar Buddhism



Synopsis

This book demonstrates how popular ritual texts and story narratives have shaped the religious life and culture of the only surviving South Asian Mahayana Buddhist society, the Newars of Kathmandu. It begins with an account of the Newar Buddhist community's history and its place within the religious environment of Nepal and proceeds to build around five popular translations, several of which were known across Asia: the Srngabheri Avadana, the Simhalasarthabahu Avadana, the Tara, the Mahakala Vratas, and the Pancaraksa. Lewis documents how the respective texts have been domesticated in Nepal's art and architecture, healing traditions, and rituals. He shows how they provide paradigmatic case studies that transcend the Nepalese context, illustrating universal practices or issues in all Buddhist communities, such as gender relations and stupa veneration, the role of merchants, ethnicity, violence, devotions to celestial bodhisattvas by kings and women, and the role of mantra recitations and healing rituals in the lives of Buddhists.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Although the book is geared toward scholarly readers, it uses a limited amount of jargon and carefully explains the background of all of the texts provided, making it accessible to any reader with an interest in this subject. Despite the popularity of Nepal as a destination for tourists, the religions of Nepal are very poorly understood by most Westerners. This book, by presenting texts which are actually popular among modern Newar Buddhists gives an excellent feeling for how the religion is understood by the people who live and practice it. On the more scholarly side, his discussion of the

"domestication" of texts and the role of stories and ritual in culture is insightful, though there is clearly room for his argument to be taken further.

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