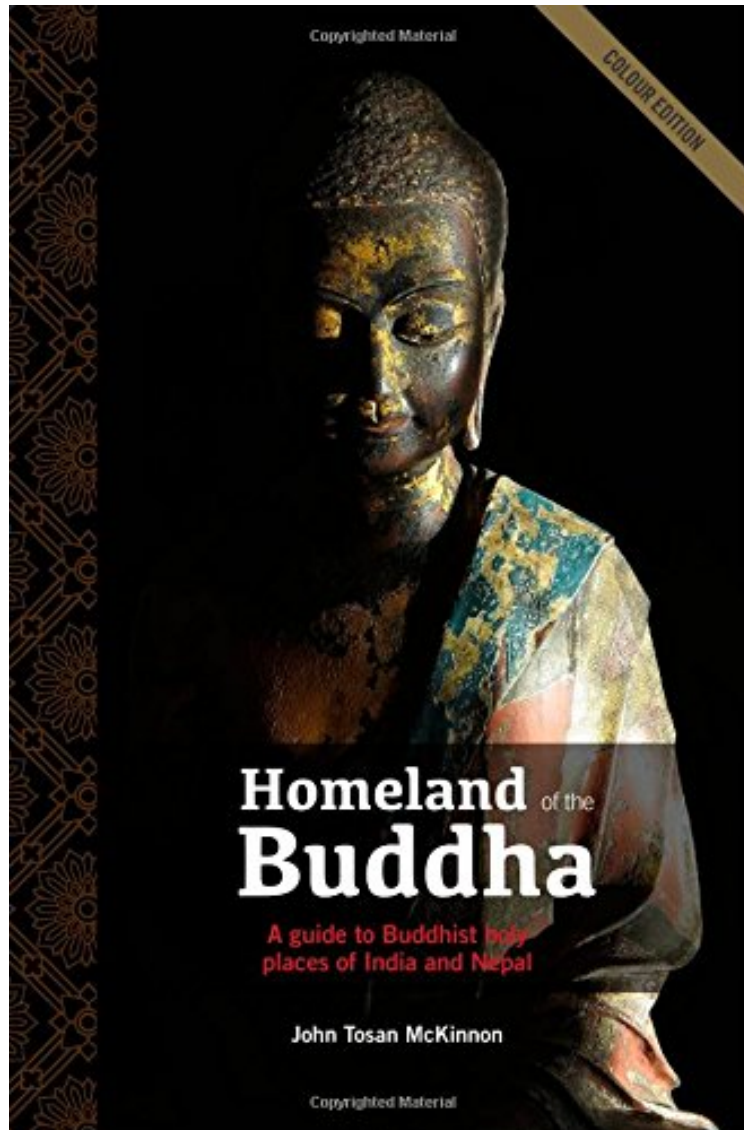


(Get free) Homeland of the Buddha: A guide to the Buddhist holy places of India and Nepal

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

*Mr John Tosan McKinnon*

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**Mr John Tosan McKinnon : Homeland of the Buddha: A guide to the Buddhist holy places of India and Nepal**  
before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Homeland of the  
Buddha: A guide to the Buddhist holy places of India and Nepal:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. This is an excellent read, visually stunning and an invaluable

guide. By maloneyandmaloney I could not recommend this book more highly. In fact, after reading it I'm ready to pack my bags and follow the path in the Homeland of the Buddha. For those who wish to learn more about the Buddha's life and/or travelling through India and Nepal this book is a must have guide. The clarity of the maps and the descriptions of the sites is indispensable. The photos give you some insight into the places and monuments that commemorate the life of the Buddha, and the people who travel this route. These places were lost over the years and only in recent times have been re-discovered. John's book takes you on this journey of re-discovery which makes it an essential guide for your travels. It is very well written, historically fascinating, practical and filled with wonderful photography. The path of your journey has been well laid out for you. All you need do is start. The Buddha is quoted as having said "If anything is worth doing, do it with all your heart." That is surely what John has done in writing this book.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A worthy guide for travellers and armchair travellers alike. By G. S. Moore I read *Homeland of the Buddha* cover to cover. Although its main function is as a guidebook and commentary to Buddhist sites, it will also appeal to armchair travellers (of which I'm one), particularly those familiar with the Buddhist tradition. It was inspiring reading - giving me a new understanding of who the Buddha was, and how his teaching affected the societies of northern India. I enjoyed the way the author told the story of each historical site. I liked McKinnon's informal style, the dashes of sardonic wit. As a well-seasoned Zen practitioner, his writing achieves a balance between reverence, street-smarts and humour. Most of the stories from the Pali canon I knew. It was satisfying to hear them retold, and to get a sense of where the events occurred. I think the author did a great job of giving a geography/home to the Pali-canon stories. I was surprised by the size of the region that the Buddha walked through, and the scale of the stupas impressed me - and what that said about the hard work which ancient communities/leaders were willing to do for Buddhist projects. There is so much evidence in the archeology of what an extraordinary personality the Buddha was recognised to be in his lifetime. As a practising Buddhist of European extraction, reading about the ruins of monasteries and stupas gave a context to our fledgling practice in the west: in terms of continuity with what has gone before, and how small we are within the historical footprint of the tradition. Reading "Homeland" made me feel differently about sitting at my local Buddhist meditation group - I could see a bit more of what we are handing forward from the tradition. Isn't it great that we have science, archeological techniques, and a form of history which allows us to better understand what has actually gone on? The interweaving of scriptural history, archeological history, and the experience of present-day travellers is a strength of the book. The chapter on Nalanda was interesting to me. As in other parts of *Homeland*, I was struck by how such a developed institution could fall to ruins and be largely forgotten about... and then, a thousand years later, be discovered and revered again. Loved the extracts and information from Faxian and Xuanzang, the renowned Chinese pilgrims to India. Interesting to know something of what they did, and thought important to record. In general I found this book inspiring and helpful. The colour photos were clear and confirmed the monumental scale of many of the stupas. For someone considering visiting the Buddhist sites in Northern India and Nepal, this is a great source of inspiration and information: clear, straight-forward, concise, interwoven with lots of stories from the Buddha's life, and written for travellers. It includes a suggested itinerary of 17 days which will be helpful to those planning their itinerary. The bibliography will also be helpful for keen readers.

'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 cossetted 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.

About the Author John McKinnon has visited the holy Buddhist places numerous times since the 1960s. For more than twenty years he has been a practitioner of Zen Buddhism. As a young man, he lived in the Mount Everest region, where he was the first doctor at Khunde Hospital. It was in Khunde that he developed an interest in Buddhism. Returning to New Zealand, John trained and practiced as an ophthalmologist. Since those early years he has been continuously involved with Sir Edmund Hillary's development work in Nepal. John's wife Diane, was a constant companion during that time. With her extensive knowledge of Nepal, Diane became a guide for trek-groups in the

Himalaya, later starting her own company, Footprints Tours Ltd. Using her detailed interest in Asian textiles she took groups to visit the craftspeople of Asia. John often joined these groups to commentate on regional history and the art of Buddhism. Homeland of the Buddha brings this lifetime experience of Asia into focus as a practical, informative guide to the major Buddhist sites of India and Nepal.