

February 2014

Book Reviews Volume 1

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Recommended Citation

Fernandes, Carlos (2014) "Book Reviews Volume 1," *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage*: Vol. 1: Iss. 1, Article 10.

doi:<https://doi.org/10.21427/D7B145>

Available at: <https://arrow.tudublin.ie/ijrtp/vol1/iss1/10>

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Book Reviews

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Coleman, Simon and Eade, John (2004) *Reframing Pilgrimage: culture in motions*. Routledge, London. 224pp. ISBN 10:0415303559 / ISBN 13:9780415303552 £28.99 / 80.00

In their work *Reframing Pilgrimage: Culture in Motions*, the anthropologists Simon Coleman and John Eade point out the need for a new approach in pilgrimage research because of cultural changes. Pilgrimage and sacred travel are still space-temporal movements, since they require the study of mobility; but mobility changes. Although movements towards sacred sites still contribute to space's never-ending creation, it is also important to investigate the human's inner disposition.

The book collects eight contributions, including the introduction. These are supported by case-studies, which are located in different countries (Senegal, Spain, Ghana, etc.). In their introduction, the editors discuss the immaterial dimension of pilgrimage. As a matter of fact, throughout the book, pilgrimage is considered as a spiritual exercise, not necessary related to religion and taking place at different geographical scales. In this sense, Simon Coleman highlights that symbols along routes ensure the essence of sacred spaces. Consequently, pilgrimage is becoming a social practice, which, as Bente Nikolaisen states, engenders new experiences.

Some examples of these new forms of pilgrimage are presented by Paul Basu and Katharina Schramm in the form of celebrated memories, tombs of national martyrs and the Diaspora. A further example is proposed by Jill Dubisch; in her study she enriches the definition of secular pilgrimages and underlines the importance of the whole journey. This last point is shared by Eva Evers Rosander; furthermore, although pilgrimage has its well-known connotations, she believes that it might involve immobility combined with imaginary religious mobility. A further kind of mobility is the one proposed by Hildi Mitchell; in this case, feelings and emotions are the forces producing an interior movement, which slowly acquires a spiritual status.

Pilgrimage, as well as other kinds of movement, is culturally determined; the actual continual movements make the condition of the human being always more complex. Consequently, the space changes, as it is imbued with values determined by the performances taking place in it. In conclusion, in reading this volume, slipping from the material to the immaterial level, we might catch the polysemy of pilgrimage.

By: **Lucrezia Lopez**, Adjunct Professor, Department of History, Art and Geography, University of Vigo, Ourense, Spain.

Singh, Rana P.B. (2013) *Hindu Tradition of Pilgrimage: Sacred Space and System* (Planet Earth & Cultural Understanding Series, Pub. 9). Foreword: Prof. Robert H. Stoddard (Emeritus, University of Nebraska, USA). A5 22 x 15cm, xiv + 400pp; 20 tables, 48 figs. Dev Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi Hb, ISBN (13): 978-93-81406-25-0. INRs 1275/-, US\$ 35.

Forty years after the publication of a classic, and the most popular book on the subject, i.e. Surinder Bhardwaj's *Hindu Places of Pilgrimage in India* (UCP Berkeley 1973), this is a further milestone on the subject that deals the inner vision and multiplicity of Hindu pilgrimages. On the book-cover blurb Professor Bhardwaj notes:

Here is a work that at once captures the rich diversity of existing pilgrimage scholarship, which Professor Singh himself helped to fuel, over the last quarter of a century. He has done so primarily through his own prolific scholarship, as well as by personally fostering and facilitating a large and distinguished international community of pilgrimage-tourism scholars. In this work, Rana Singh provides a wide range of scholarly perspectives on Hindu sacred centres and spaces. His abiding research on Hindu cosmology, and long term firsthand experience of contestations at sacred spaces embedded in this book, should spur fruitful interdisciplinary research. In fact, this stimulating book provides a whole storehouse of exciting ideas for both seasoned and budding scholars.

Of course, Bhardwaj's statements are well illustrated; however some aspects are still not highlighted, e.g.

participatory experiences, examples of experiential expositions, statistical and structural analysis, sacred architecture, and ecofriendly planning and environmental concerns. However, for the first time critical appraisal and applicability of Cosmic Ordering and Self Organisation, and Green Pilgrimage Initiates are examined with reference to pilgrimage and religious tourism, profusely illustrated with tables, data and diagrams.

In another blurb a Japanese scholar of Medieval Hindu tradition, Taigen Hashimoto, narrates that,

Since the recorded history of the Mahabharata, ca 1000 BCE, India is known as the land of sacred spirits and divine beings that represented in the system of sacred places that are preserved and practiced in the lived traditions of Hindu pilgrimages. The medieval period traditions of devotionism (bhakti) have envisioned and further promoted the pilgrimage traditions, integrating various sects and thoughts. Even today millions and millions of devout Hindus perform pilgrimage and pay their tribute through rituals at these holy places. This book is a pioneering attempt on the line of interdisciplinary approaches, theoretically and empirically. The insights and resources in this book are enlightening to understand the inherent messages of sacred landscapes of India.

In the “foreword” a pioneer of Hindu pilgrimage studies, Professor Robert Stoddard (p. 4) rightly concludes:

the abundant research on the geography of pilgrimages, especially on India, during the last half century has provided readers with a variety of viewpoints; and when extrapolated to other disciplines, it is apparent that this field of study in totality has a rich body of literature. This master-piece, written from insiders’ spirit and long personal experiences, continues this scholarly tradition with a set of well-researched theoretical and empirical essays on the Hindu pilgrimage systems and associated sacredscapes, illustrating different sacred and cultural landscapes of India.

by: **Dr. Pravin Singh Rana**, Assistant Professor in Tourism Studies and Management, Faculty of Arts, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, India. (Email: psranabhu@gmail.com).

Jacobsen, Knut A. (2012) *Pilgrimage in the Hindu Tradition: Salvific Space* (Routledge Hindu Studies Series, Pub. 17). 24 x 16cm, xii+224 pages, notes (pp. 171-176), references (177-186), 20 B-W photographs; Routledge, London and New York. Hb ISBN (13): 978-0-415-59038-9. Price: £85.

Experiencing the power of place through acts of pilgrimage has been a central feature of Hinduism. For Hindus, pilgrimage is a sacramental process that both symbolizes the participation of the pilgrim in the spiritual realm and actively establishes a two-way reciprocal relationship between the pilgrim and the divine. In mythology texts, many of the blessings described concern the relief of sins or the fulfilment of wishes for health, wealth, success and so forth. Such places are described as salvific spaces (see pp. 19-24); this is the focus of this book.

This book published in Routledge Hindu Series, is written by a scholar of Hindu religion and Indian philosophy (especially Samkhya), who in fact has not seriously studied pilgrimage traditions. Therefore, this book deals with Hindu pilgrimage within the Indological frame, and lacks a background to the multifunctional structure and functioning of Hindu pilgrimages. A few of the chapters (i.e. 2, 3 and 5) are revised version of the earlier papers. The most important and practiced attributes of Hindu pilgrimage, i.e. goddesses worship and the holy and motherly river Ganga (*Ganges*) have not been referred to at all! The narration of salvific space exemplified with sage Kapila (chapter 5) is not befitting to the whole debate; of course it may however be taken as a good read for philosophic discourse.

This work projects the discourses within theological and mythological frames, explaining the ancient literary sources as base and demonstrative (historical-cultural frame) for the Hindu pilgrimages, illustrated with the author’s own experiences. This results in a ‘salvific’ notion of Hindu traditions. Following Euro-centric approach of classical Indology, the book lucidly narrates the stories of pilgrimage places (*tirthas*), using a number of *Sthalapuranas* (traditions of locality) and *Mahatmyas* (glorifying literature), praising the salvific power of the places and raises several questions that need to carefully look into other dimensions too. The author has succeeded to narrate how the traditions of salvific space exemplify the decentred polycentrism that defines Hinduism (or amalgam of several Hindu traditions), where pilgrimage lies at the core. However, the book puts at the margin the intensity, meaning and practices of spirit of sacrality and the acceptability of transformation in the passage of time, and also the

present scenario of pilgrimage-tourism that has emerged so strongly in Hindu India. One expects the links within the contemporary world together with the lifeworld and related dramas and performances occurred within the counter-acting and reciprocity of functioning spatiality of time (*sthanarupiya kala*), temporality of space (*kalarupiya sthana*) and manifestive sacrality all around (now discussed under the umbrella of *faithscape*).

In Jacobsen's *Pilgrimage*, the changing nature of functional and spatial organisation, economic structure, overseers, stakeholders, pilgrims' own perception and behaviour, and pilgrimage as heritage resource for sustainable tourism planning together with environmental and sacredscapes planning (e.g. Green Paradigm Initiatives) have not been touched at all. Additionally, the theoretic constructs as propounded by Turner and Turner (1978), Bhardwaj (1973), Morinis (1984), and Singh (1987) have not been re-evaluated, and thus one cannot find a rational and suitable formulation for Hindu pilgrimage studies. [Editor's note: These gaps are to a reasonable extent filled by Singh's *Hindu Tradition of Pilgrimage* (2013); see the following review].

by: **Prof. Rana P.B. Singh**, Professor of Cultural Geography & Heritage Studies, and Head, Department of Geography at Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, India (Email: ranapbs@gmail.com)

Raj, Razaq, Morpeth, Nigel and Griffin, Kevin (Eds.) (2013) *Cultural Tourism*, Wallingford, CABI (2013) 260pp. 17x24cm. ISBN 13: 9781845939236 ISBN 10: 1845939239. £75.00 / \$145.00 / €100.00

This book starts by highlighting the complexity of the cultural tourism phenomenon. This complexity is not only based on the natural complexity of tourism, but also based on the different understandings that various approaches have given to the term culture. That is probably the reason why the authors initially went towards the more philosophical context of the idea, describing culture, heritage, identity, multicultural events and cross-cultural experiences. This philosophical debate helped the reader in two directions 1) to have a clear overview of cultural related concepts; but at the same time 2) to allow reflection on the cultural tourism imaginery linking it to their own experience.

After this nice immersion into the cultural tourism concept, the book lands back on earth, taking care of

more tangible aspects of the daily life of cultural tourism, and here comes elements linked to management issues, governance and policies regarding cultural tourism, available resources, and even the impacts derived from cultural tourism. These impacts are specially oriented to the idea of acculturation suffered by host communities, but also impacts in terms of heritage protection, or in well-being generation, among other kind of impacts.

Chapters 6, 7 and 8 look at key concepts for the future of cultural tourism, using as illustrative support, short case studies. The first key concept is about Interpretation, clarifying how tourism flows need extra explanations for cultural resources. It is perfectly clear that heritage and culture identities and experiences are usually obvious for local communities but are not so obvious for tourists coming from different background, thus interpretation is crucial. Interpretation links also with the emergence concept, especially because the authors argue that there exists a real need for a broader conception of cultural tourism, meaning that culture can be implicit not only in heritage but also in landscapes and human life. In this framework, cultural tourism reveals its cross-disciplinary nature - a key element to understanding the phenomenon. And those ideas lead us to the final reinvention of cultural tourism, defined exquisitely in chapter 8 through use of the British national cultural identity, compared with the Australian national cultural identity.

One of the main values of the book is the eleven case studies from where to extract direct knowledge to understand cultural tourism in the widest possible way. Even if it is a bit daring on my part because all cases deal with cross-cutting themes, I think that all of them can be grouped into four boxes. Initially those related to 1) Management cases; related to 2) Governance and policies; linked to 3) resources and; 4) explaining the different impacts of cultural tourism. This grouping helps the authors to close the circle started with the tangible aspects defined at the beginning, with real life examples, creating an excellent balance between theory and practice.

To conclude, it is important to mention that this book can particularly help researchers in the initial conceptualization phase of cultural tourism, and especially tourism and hospitality students in order to support their studies about the topic, while solving the discussion questions defined after each chapter.

By: **Dr. Lluís Prats Planaguma**, Assistant professor at the Faculty of Tourism in the University of Girona.