

The Complexities of Orientalism: William Knighton and His Representation of Buddhism

ELIZABETH J. HARRIS

University of Birmingham

Abstract: This paper examines the complexities within Orientalism through the case study of William Knighton (1823–1900) and his representation of Buddhism. It first surveys what is known of Knighton’s life and his literary achievements, emphasizing his use of fictional autobiographies to convey his views about religion and colonialism. It then examines his writings on Buddhism and the data on which he drew. This part argues that Knighton’s representation of Buddhism was positive and modernist, at a time when other westerners were either dismissing the religion or attempting to undermine it. Lastly, the paper focusses on why his life and writings are important within the study of religious exchange between Asia and Europe in the nineteenth century, and the transmission of Buddhism to the west. Four elements are isolated: the early date at which Knighton was offering a modernist view of Buddhism; the contrasts that can be drawn between his representation of Buddhism and those of his contemporaries; the importance Knighton gave to dialogue with Buddhists and their agency; and his promotion of Buddhist exceptionalism. The paper concludes with reflections on the inconsistencies within Knighton’s work and the all-too-human processes through which Buddhism was transmitted to the west.

Keywords: Orientalism, Buddhism, William Knighton, decolonization, Sri Lanka, India, the transmission of Buddhism to the west

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.15239/hijbs.08.01.03>

The East-West exchange that I shall examine in this paper should perhaps be called ‘when tropical rain forests met the fogs of London’ rather than when the Himalayas encountered the Alps. For several decades, an important strand of my research has been the encounter between the British and Theravāda Buddhism, particularly with Sri Lanka, hereafter ‘colonial Ceylon’,¹ and I build on this in what follows.

In 2006, I argued for an interactive and reciprocal relationship between the British and Buddhists in colonial Ceylon in the nineteenth century, albeit within the power relationships of imperialism, stating, ‘A multiplicity of witnesses to the Sri Lankan Buddhist tradition was offered to the British, and multiple orientalist expressions resulted, offered in turn to Sri Lanka and Europe’.² I was contesting one aspect of the work of Edward Said, when, in 1978, he popularized the term ‘Orientalism’ and argued that western colonial representations of the religions of the East were a power-laden, manipulative exercise that distorted lived religious traditions.³ Whilst I agreed with his basic premise concerning power and manipulation, I was aware that Middle Eastern and Asian agency was all but edited out of his work. In contrast, my own research had convinced me of the importance of Asian agency and I was not alone in this, as the work of Lopez, Clarke, and Blackburn, for instance, has demonstrated.⁴

The critique of Orientalism, however, goes far beyond Said, in this

¹ For example, Harris, *Crisis, Competition and Conversion*; *idem*, *Theravāda Buddhism and the British Encounter*; *idem*, ‘Memory, Experience and the Clash of Cosmologies’; *idem*, *Religion, Space and Conflict in Sri Lanka*.

² Harris, *Theravāda Buddhism and the British Encounter*, 4.

³ Said, *Orientalism*.

⁴ Lopez, ed., *Curators of the Buddha*; Clarke, *Oriental Enlightenment*; Blackburn, *Locations of Buddhism*.

era of decolonization. With reference to Asian Buddhism, nineteenth century Orientalists have been accused of desecrating indigenous knowledge through their white, power-based, cognitive imperialism,⁵ of ‘creating’ a textually-based Buddhism that ignored practice on the ground, and of representing their male, cultural particularity as universalism. I agree with Jørn Borup that this critique cannot be ignored: ‘the study of Buddhism cannot return to its epistemological innocence’.⁶ Yet, western Orientalists were messier, more complex and more diverse than some theorists admit. They contested and challenged each other. Those who wrote about Buddhism came up with different constructions of the religion and wrote for different purposes. They were real men and women, responding to the realities of their time. Contextually-dense examinations are, therefore, needed to examine what different Orientalists were aiming to achieve, whom they were contesting, whom they were writing for, and what dialogues and disagreements, with both Asians and other Orientalists, they engaged in.

In this paper, I examine the complexities within Orientalism through the case study of William Knighton (1823–1900) and his representation of Buddhism. He is not well-known within the field, although he appeared in *Who was Who?* for the years 1897 to 1915 and,⁷ in 2022, his great, great grand-daughter self-published a short account of his life.⁸ Almond claimed that he was ‘without doubt one of the more open-minded of early commentators on Buddhism’ but gave little context for him, other than that he had a ‘Buddhist partner in dialogue’ named Marandhan, failing to realize that Marandhan was a literary creation.⁹ Gooneratne, appraising his writings from a literary perspective, argued that his ‘attitude to the subject of personal relationships’ was ‘strikingly original’ in its realism and its empathetic portrayal of the conflicts Sri Lankans faced when engag-

⁵ Borup, *Decolonising the Study of Religion*, 26–27.

⁶ Ibid., 149.

⁷ *Who was who? Vol. 1, 1897-1915*.

⁸ Urquhart, *William Knighton 1823-1900*.

⁹ Almond, *The Buddha*, 87, 117.

ing with the British.¹⁰ She presented him as one ‘who consciously and deliberately’ wrote ‘against the tradition of contempt for all things oriental’¹¹ and who called ‘on the ideals and traditions of Buddhism, using them to formulate the moral standards of a novel, and to develop its characters’.¹²

His relative hiddenness is perhaps due to the difficulty of categorizing him. He saw himself primarily as an educationalist, a novelist and a social campaigner, but he was also fascinated by religion and history, and occupied positions within British colonial structures in colonial Ceylon and India. His representation of Buddhism is largely embedded in his literary work. I first encountered his writing through his two-volume, semi-autobiographical novel, *Forest Life in Ceylon*,¹³ when doing doctoral research in Sri Lanka in the late 1980s. He appeared in my doctorate¹⁴ and the book that followed many years later,¹⁵ and I vowed I would do more work on him. This paper is the result.

Knighton appealed to me for two main reasons. The first was his empathy, the quality noticed by Gooneratne. When working in Asia, he listened to Asians and attempted to see the world through their eyes, which meant that his intellectual gaze was turned not only on Asia and its peoples but also on himself and the British imperial project. For instance, one of his first academic papers was given to the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society. His subject was the Ceylonese literature that had been translated into European languages. He began with unimaginative stereotypes of the contrast between East and West but then switched sides, stating: ‘the self-confident European declares the literature of Asia to be turgid and tedious, let him remember that an inhabitant of the latter continent will as confidently pronounce that of Europe to be tame

¹⁰ Gooneratne, *English Literature in Ceylon 1815-1878*, 164–65.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 77.

¹² *Ibid.*, 164.

¹³ Knighton, *Forest Life in Ceylon*.

¹⁴ Harris, *Crisis, Competition and Conversion*.

¹⁵ Harris, *Theravāda Buddhism and the British Encounter*, 76–85.

and insipid'.¹⁶ Thirty years later, he claimed that, during his time in Ceylon and Calcutta, he constantly met and conversed 'with the native aristocracy' and evidence of this can be seen in his writings.¹⁷ He was able to listen and to reflect on what he heard. The second reason was that he represented Buddhism in a positive light at a time when other British people were either ridiculing it or, in the case of the evangelical Christian missionaries, systematically undermining it.¹⁸

In this paper, I first survey what we know of Knighton's life and his literary achievements. I then examine his writings on Buddhism and the data on which he drew. Lastly, I explore why his life and writings are important within the study of religious exchange between Asia and Europe in the nineteenth century, and the transmission of Buddhism to the west.

William Knighton: Biographical Details

William Knighton was born in 1823 and died on March 31, 1900.¹⁹ He gained his higher education in Glasgow, at Glasgow University²⁰ and the Normal Seminary there.²¹ The latter trained him in the most up-to-date educational methods of his time. The Normal Seminary

¹⁶ Knighton 'On the Training System of Education', 30; Harris, *Theravāda Buddhism and the British Encounter*, 77.

¹⁷ Knighton, *The Policy of the Future in India*, 5.

¹⁸ These missionaries were products of independent missionary societies formed at the end of the eighteenth century and the first part of the nineteenth century, as part of the Evangelical Revival in Britain. The first to arrive in colonial Ceylon were members of the London Missionary Society (1805). Baptists followed in 1812, Wesleyan Methodists in 1814 and members of the Anglican Church Missionary Society in 1818.

¹⁹ *Who was who? Vol. 1, 1897-1915*, 294; Urquhart, *William Knighton 1823-1900*, 88.

²⁰ It is worth remembering that students at this time could enter Scottish universities at sixteen years or even earlier.

²¹ *Education in Ceylon: A Centenary Volume*, 408.

or School was founded in 1837 by David Stow of the Glasgow Educational Association. It had four model schools for different age groups and an institution for professional teacher training, the first in the United Kingdom.²² Later in his life, Knighton stood in for Stow to give a paper on Stow's methods, which included the use of play in education and strategies to meet the needs of socially deprived children, who might be tempted by 'the evil training of the streets and the lanes'.²³

In 1843, at the young age of nineteen or twenty, he travelled to colonial Ceylon to be Principal of the new Central School in Colombo, which included a Normal School for the training of teachers.²⁴ He no doubt took with him the pioneering methods he learnt from Stow. He remained there for over three years and took an active part in the intellectual pursuits of the colonial administration, becoming Secretary of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, formed in 1845, as a successor to the Colombo Literary Society.²⁵ He was instrumental in arranging the incorporation of the branch into the parent association in London and read the previously mentioned paper on Ceylonese literature on May 1, 1845.²⁶ He also travelled around the island, including to Kandy and Śrī Pāda or Adam's Peak, and wrote a history of Ceylon, using translations that had been made of colonial Ceylon's historical chronicles.²⁷

One of his mentors at this time was John Gibson MacVicar (1800–1884), a Church of Scotland minister in Colombo, who was a member of the Central Schools Commission. From its

²² The name of the pioneering Normal Seminary in Glasgow was taken from the French, *École Normale*, a professional training institution. See O'Brien, 'Glasgow led way in teacher training'.

²³ Knighton, 'General Observations on the Translated Ceylonese Literature', 264.

²⁴ *Education in Ceylon: A Centenary Volume*, 408; Smith, 'Introduction', vii.

²⁵ Harris, *Theravāda Buddhism and the British Encounter*, 38.

²⁶ Knighton, 'On the Training System of Education'.

²⁷ Knighton, *The History of Ceylon from the Earliest Period to the Present*.

inauguration 1841, the Commission had aspired to establish Central Schools and a Normal School, perhaps under the influence of the Scottish MacVicar, who might have known of Stow's work.²⁸ It was, therefore, natural that MacVicar should take Knighton under his wing when he arrived in colonial Ceylon as Head of these schools. It was MacVicar who encouraged and advised him in the writing of his history of Ceylon.²⁹ MacVicar also became a fellow-office holder within the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.

It is possible that Knighton also became 'a partner in a coffee plantation'³⁰ whilst in colonial Ceylon. Histories of education in colonial Ceylon are quite clear that he was the first Headmaster of the Central School, as I have outlined above.³¹ Knighton's letters to the British colonial authorities make no mention of commercial work in the coffee sector, only of his role in education.³² However, the vivid and convincing description of the life of a coffee planter in the previously-mentioned *Forest Life in Ceylon* convinced some scholars that he was indeed a planter and then a journalist, as described in this work. Yasmin Gooneratne,³³ Lyn de Fonseka, myself in my doctorate and the book that followed,³⁴ and Judy Urquhart argued this,³⁵ Urquhart no doubt drawing on oral memory within the family. This conundrum can be resolved through Smith's description of Knighton's life in his introduction to the 1921 edition of *The Private Life of an Eastern King*. This stated that, while Knighton was in Ceylon, as well as being the Headmaster of the Normal School, he became 'a partner in a coffee plantation'.³⁶ The

²⁸ Anon 'Report of the Ceylon Central School Commission', 90.

²⁹ See Preface to Knighton, *The History of Ceylon*.

³⁰ Smith, 'Introduction', vii.

³¹ For example, *Education in Ceylon: A Centenary Volume*, 408.

³² For example, Knighton, *Government Education in India*; *idem*, *Struggles for Life*.

³³ Gooneratne, *English Literature in Ceylon 1815-1878*.

³⁴ Harris, *Theravāda Buddhism and the British Encounter*, 77.

³⁵ Urquhart, *William Knighton 1823-1900*.

³⁶ Smith, 'Introduction', vii.

first 'coffee boom' occurred between 1839 and 1847, with the acreage of coffee plantations in the country doubling to 50,000 acres.³⁷ There would certainly have been opportunities for the young Knighton, who no doubt had energy to undertake new projects in addition to his teaching. Moreover, being a 'partner' would have meant that his involvement need not have been full-time or have necessitated him living continuously on the plantation. It would nevertheless have given him enough experience to write a novel about planting life, which I will return to later.

After 1845, there is no further reference to him within the records of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society. This is because he had moved to India. He joined the Hindu College of Calcutta in the Autumn of 1846, becoming Professor of History and Logic.³⁸ Not much more than a year after this, he was appointed Principal of the Normal or Training School for teachers in Bengal.³⁹ In 1847, he married Louisa Agnes Duhan in India. They would have four children, three boys and a girl. All the boys were called Edgar and not one survived into adulthood. The girl, Louisa, lived until she was ninety-three.⁴⁰

According to Urquhart, Knighton was back in Britain by 1852.⁴¹ This broadly accords with Knighton's self-definition in the letter he wrote to Lord Cranborne in 1867, in which he claimed that his initial period in colonial Ceylon and India lasted seven and a half

³⁷ Wickramasinghe, *Sri Lanka in the Modern Age*, 37. When Knighton was in colonial Ceylon, coffee was the main plantation crop. Its rapid expansion was affected by the world economic depression in 1846 (*ibid.*, 37). In the late 1860s, a fungal blight ruined coffee cultivation and planters turned to other crops, particularly tea, which had spectacular success. The tea acreage in 1875 was only about one thousand. By 1930, it had increased to 478,000 acres (Nadesan, *A History of the Up-Country Tamil People in Sri Lanka*, 45).

³⁸ *Who was who? Vol. 1, 1897-1915*, 294; Knighton, *Government Education in India*, 140.

³⁹ Knighton, *Government Education in India*, 18.

⁴⁰ Urquhart, *William Knighton 1823-1900*, 39.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 39.

years, namely from 1843 to 1850 or 1851.⁴² Back in Britain, in the 1850s, he became a lecturer at Whitelands Training Institution in Chelsea. Founded in 1841, this was another pioneering college, one that trained women teachers.⁴³ The fact that he stood in for David Stow at the Educational Exhibition of the Society of Arts, Manufacturers and Commerce in 1854, explaining and supporting Stow's methods, suggests that he taught Stow's methods at Whitelands.⁴⁴ During this time, he also wrote to the colonial administration in India on the topic of education and devoted himself to literature, writing *Forest Life in Ceylon* (1854), *Tropical Sketches* (1855), *The Private Life of an Eastern King* (1855), and *Edgar Bardon: An Autobiographical Novel* (1856).

Knighton's 1854 letter to the colonial administration expressed his Christian commitment. It recommended that the teaching of English and the teaching of the Bible should go together in government schools in India, as it did in colonial Ceylon. Betraying his sympathy for some missionary attitudes, he judged the East India Company's policy to be 'godless' and pointed to the difference between the Central School Commission in Ceylon and the Council of Education in Calcutta (now Kolkata).⁴⁵ His other writings at this time betray his knowledge of contemporary literary conventions, particularly the fictional autobiography. Watt, in his study of 'British Orientalisms' examines several such autobiographies, including James Morier's *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan*, published in Paris and London in the 1820s.⁴⁶ For the Paris edition of 1824,

⁴² Knighton, *The Policy of the Future in India*, 5.

⁴³ The College survives to this day as Whitelands College, part of the University of Roehampton.

⁴⁴ Knighton, 'On the Training System of Education'; see also Urquhart, *William Knighton 1823-1900*, 40. See the description of Knighton in the report of the Exhibition as 'William Knighton, M.A., M.R.A.S., Lecturer on Education in Whitelands Training Institution, Chelsea; Author of "Tropical Sketches"'.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Knighton 'On the Training System of Education', 100.

⁴⁶ Watt, *British Orientalisms 1759-1835*, 228-47; Morier, *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan in three volumes*.

Morier did not put his name on the frontispiece but adopted the persona of a Rev. Dr. Fundgruben, who is sent the autobiography of Hajji Baba by a person called Peregrine Persic.⁴⁷ The autobiography then continues as if written by Hajji Baba.

This convention throws light on Knighton's method. *Forest Life of Ceylon* tells the story of a young man who travelled to colonial Ceylon in order to manage a coffee-estate⁴⁸ and who then went into journalism in Colombo, after a 'ruinous speculation'.⁴⁹ Knighton entered this character empathetically, using the first person, and drawing both on his experience in planting and his first-hand knowledge of Colombo. As I have shown, the result was so convincing that it was mistakenly judged by a number of scholars to be Knighton's autobiography rather than a work of fiction. *Tropical Sketches* continued the story of this young man as he travelled to India but, unlike Knighton, he did not work in education. Knighton came even closer to Morier's method in *The Private Life of an Eastern King*,⁵⁰ which did not give Knighton's name on the front page, being attributed to an English man who had lived at the court of Lucknow in Oudh for over three years, and knew its corruption and mismanagement. The message of the book was political, namely that Oudh should be annexed by the British to eradicate corruption.⁵¹ It could well have been inspired by conversations that Knighton had in Britain.

In *Edgar Bardon*, Knighton adopted another persona, that of an 'Edgar' who had a sister named Emma and a father who was head

⁴⁷ Morier, *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan in three volumes*, vol 1: *Introductory Epistle*.

⁴⁸ Knighton, *Forest Life in Ceylon*, vol. 1, 60.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, vi.

⁵⁰ Knighton, *The Private Life of an Eastern King*.

⁵¹ *The Private Life of an Eastern King* was published when the annexation of Oudh was under discussion and could have influenced the annexation by representing the court in Oudh as corrupt and abusive. Smith wrote 'it was referred to in parliamentary debates and was translated into French, whilst a second edition was called for in 1856'. See Smith, 'Introduction', xi.

partner of 'the celebrated East Indian firm of Bardon Brothers'.⁵² Against his father's wishes, this Edgar travelled to India with the East India Company's Bengal Horse Artillery,⁵³ where he fell disastrously in love and returned home almost penniless. There were further adventures for Edgar and his beloved sister. In the end, all was resolved and broken relationships were restored. It was a moving narrative, within which Knighton could have imaginatively played with what one of sons might have experienced, if he had lived.

All these literary works were fictional, although rooted in experience and real-life conversations. Nevertheless, it was through his fiction that Knighton commented on religions, contested some of the imperial attitudes of the British and reflected on what he saw as the inevitable ascendancy of the West.

In the late 1850s, Knighton returned to India, to the state of Oudh, which, by then, had been annexed by the British. Urquhart states that it was to become Assistant Commissioner in the state,⁵⁴ but this position was probably not granted immediately and Urquhart recognizes that the situation was complex.⁵⁵ He was certainly an Assistant Commissioner when, six and a half years after arriving in the state, he wrote to Lord Cranborne.⁵⁶ The internal evidence of the letter, however, indicates that he had also filled the positions 'of a Magistrate, of a Justice of the Peace and of a Collector of Revenues'.⁵⁷ In 1865, he published, perhaps with his wife,⁵⁸ *Elibu Jan's Story or The Private Life of an Eastern Queen*.⁵⁹ Following Morier's literary convention, the tale is narrated by Elihu Jan, purportedly a young woman who spends time at the court in Lucknow, before coming to work in the Knighton household. In a

⁵² Knighton, *Edgar Bardon*, vol. 1, 2.

⁵³ Ibid., vol. 1, 275.

⁵⁴ Urquhart, *William Knighton 1823-1900*, 45.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 46.

⁵⁶ Knighton, *The Policy of the Future in India*.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 5.

⁵⁸ Urquhart, *William Knighton 1823-1900*, 47.

⁵⁹ Knighton, *The Private Life of an Eastern King together with Elihu Jan's Story*.

similar way to *The Private Life of an Eastern King*, the work had a political message, this time that the state of Oudh was much more prosperous under the British than it had been under its previous royal court.

In the late 1860s, Knighton returned to Britain. He was probably able to support himself without working,⁶⁰ and again devoted himself to writing. At this point in his life, however, he did not choose lengthy, fictional autobiographies but addressed social and political issues more explicitly, particularly those connected with poverty—a concern that had been present throughout his life. His letter to Lord Cranborne, when Assistant Commissioner in Oudh, for instance, had warned of further insurrection if the concerns of ordinary people and the resentments of the ‘brahmins’ were not taken into account.⁶¹ In 1878, in line with this, he founded and edited a monthly magazine ‘for the working classes’, called *Progress*. The first issue stated that the journal owed ‘its origin to a committee of working men’, who sought to create a low-priced magazine that would be in the reach of ‘all classes of readers and workers—whether they work by hand or head—from the crossing-sweeper to the cabinet minister’.⁶² It contained articles that were evidently pedagogical, with moral upliftment in mind, for example an article by Thomas Burt M.P. on ‘Thrift: An Address to Working Men’.⁶³ In each issue, there was also a monthly ‘discussion point’. In April 1878, the theme was ‘Strikes or Arbitration’. Both sides of the argument were offered, through letters claimed to be from readers.⁶⁴ The first issues of the magazine also contained short, anonymous, humorous memoirs by ‘a coffee planter’ in colonial Ceylon, most probably written by Knighton, in the persona of a Mr. Gregg, who had a wife, Mrs. Gregg.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Urquhart, *William Knighton 1823-1900*, 46.

⁶¹ Knighton, *The Policy of the Future in India*.

⁶² Knighton, ‘Address’, 1.

⁶³ Burt, ‘Thrift: An Address to the Working Men’.

⁶⁴ ‘Strikes of Arbitration’.

⁶⁵ For example, ‘Highway Robbery by Monkeys by a Ceylon Coffee Planter’.

A lengthy study of human culture and endeavour followed in 1886—*Struggles for Life*.⁶⁶ It began with stories of poverty-stricken families within the slums of London and then widened out to cover struggles for life in different historical and geographical contexts. With reference to Britain, however, the book warned of civil war unless change happened, and called on the churches and society in general to act. For instance, Knighton wrote:

We must not visit the poor in order to preach to them, to lecture them, to act the part of beneficent superiors come to succour and relieve. We must learn from them much, in the first instance, before we can be of any use to them. We must learn humility, and put our pride altogether away from us..... We must be prepared to share with them our superfluity of comfort and luxury or else there is no use engaging in this work at all.⁶⁷

The book gained international recognition. According to its front page, Knighton was Vice-President of the Royal Society of Literature at the time. Here, again, there are differences in the accounts that we have. Urquhart claimed he became President of the Society.⁶⁸ *Who was Who? 1897-1915* claimed he was simply a Member of the Council of the Society. When I contacted the Society, I was unable to confirm which of these was correct or even if all of them were.⁶⁹ *Who was Who?* also stated that he became Vice-President of the International Literary and Artistic Association in Paris.⁷⁰ Again, I was unable to corroborate this with the Association but they con-

⁶⁶ Knighton, *Struggles for Life*.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁶⁸ Urquhart, *William Knighton 1823-1900*, 69.

⁶⁹ I contacted both the Royal Society of Literature and the library of Cambridge University, where the archives of the Society are kept. The offices of the Royal Society of Literature were affected by a fire at Somerset House in London and some records were destroyed. The special collections in Cambridge did not hold any lists of office bearers of the Society in the 1880s.

⁷⁰ *Who was who? Vol. 1, 1897-1915*, 408.

firmed that he facilitated the erection of a statue of Shakespeare in Paris in 1888, possibly in connection with this position. The sculptor was Paul Fournier and it was located at the corner of L'Avenue de Messine (Messine Avenue). Unfortunately, it was destroyed under the German occupation during World War II.⁷¹

In this last part of his life, his contribution to intellectual thought was also recognized by the granting of honorary degrees. Smith stated that he received the degrees of M.A., Ph.D. and LL.D. (Doctor of Laws) from Geissen University.⁷² Urquhart mentions an honorary degree from Glasgow University and that he was 'elected to the Atheneum Club in London'.⁷³

Knighton's wife, Louisa, died of TB in 1882, in Sydenham, where the couple had been living. Knighton married again. His second wife was Charlotte Marshall, who outlived him by twenty-two years. The correspondence left by her allowed Urquhart to chart in detail the last eighteen years of Knighton's life, during which he remained actively involved in educational and commercial matters but did not write extensively.⁷⁴

Survey of Knighton's Writings on Buddhism

The first published work of Knighton that addressed Buddhism was an 1844 article entitled 'Buddhism and the Philosophy of Greece', published in the *Ceylon Miscellany* and then appended to Knighton's, *The History of Ceylon*, published in London.⁷⁵ It came out in the same year as Eugène Burnouf's *Introduction à l'histoire du Bouddhisme*

⁷¹ Correspondence with Professor Dr. Fabienne Brison, Secretary General of the Artistic and Literary Association International (ALAI) on April 21, 2024. Smith stated that he 'was selected to unveil the statue' (Smith, 'Introduction', viii). Urquhart also covers this event (Urquhart, *William Knighton 1823-1900*, 73).

⁷² Smith, 'Introduction', viii.

⁷³ Urquhart, *William Knighton 1823-1900*, 73.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 55–91.

⁷⁵ Knighton, *The History of Ceylon*, 337–53.

indien [Introduction to the History of Indian Buddhism] but there is no internal evidence that Knighton drew on Burnouf in this article, although he cited it in *Forest Life in Ceylon*.⁷⁶ In 1844, his main sources were the translations of the *Vinaya* and the *Dhammapada* by the Wesleyan Methodist missionary and Pali scholar, Daniel J. Gogerly (1792–1862),⁷⁷ published in *The Friend*, a Wesleyan Methodist journal in colonial Ceylon. In addition, he had engaged in dialogue with Buddhists on the ground, through his work as an educationalist, and could have read accounts of Buddhism by Ceylonese Buddhists. I will return to this later. What he wrote about Buddhism at this early point set the tone for his later writings and was completely different from missionary representations and indeed other British representations of Buddhism in colonial Ceylon at this time, with the exception of George Turnour (1799–1843), translator of Ceylon's historical chronicles, and Jonathon Forbes, an associate of Turnour in colonial Ceylon,⁷⁸ both of whom Knighton used in *The History of Ceylon*. For instance, Knighton wrote in this early article:

Buddhism is essentially a philosophical religion. Its virtue is meditation, and its perfection an entire victory over the senses and passions. Its teachers were also philosophers of no mean attainments; they inculcated and practiced the moral virtues, whilst the universe was hinged, not on fate or chance, but on the merit and demerit of its professors.⁷⁹

On the evidence of this quote and his later writing, I wrote in 2006:

Knighton's construction of Buddhism parallels the Protestant Bud-

⁷⁶ Knighton, *Forest Life in Ceylon*, vol. 2, 20.

⁷⁷ Gogerly, 'On Buddhism'; *idem*, 'Dhamma-Padam'.

⁷⁸ See Harris, *Theravāda Buddhism and the British Encounter*, 44–85.

⁷⁹ Knighton, 'Buddhism and the Philosophy of Greece', 338. The article as a whole argued that the philosophy of Pythagorus, Plato, and the Buddha were 'parts of one system, and all based upon the same foundation', speculating that Buddhism came first and that the Buddha's teachings were communicated to Egypt and, from there, to Greece and Rome.

dhism defined by Bond and Obeyesekere⁸⁰ in three ways: rejection of what could be seen as superstitious elements in favour of what is obviously rational: emphasis on ethics and mind-training and the drawing of a strong distinction between Buddhist religious practices and non-Buddhist ones.⁸¹

Discussions of 'Protestant Buddhism' have largely given way to the study of Buddhist modernism, and Buddhism and decolonization.⁸² Significant for me, however, is that Knighton's representation of Buddhism had a modernist slant at a very early date and that this was communicated to the West as early as 1845.

Among the other themes that emerge from Knighton's writings on Buddhism, all of which have a modernist ring, are:

- the Buddha as a reformer and contestor of Brahmanism;
- the Buddha as a 'god-man' rather than a supernatural being and the biography of the Buddha as simple but later overlaid by false 'miraculous machinery';
- the Buddhism of Mongolia and Tibet as heresies, when compared with the teaching of 'Gotama';
- Buddhism as exceptional in its morality and its peacefulness, placing it above all other religions except Christianity.

I will examine each in turn.

The Buddha as a reformer and contestor of Brahmanism

Knighton was not the first to represent the Buddha as a reformer. William Jones, founder of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784,⁸³

⁸⁰ Bond, *The Buddhist Revival in Sri Lanka*, 50–63; Obeyesekere, 'Religious Symbolism and Political Change in Ceylon'.

⁸¹ Harris, *Theravāda Buddhism and the British Encounter*, 170.

⁸² For example, McMahan, *The Making of Buddhist Modernism*; Borup, *Decolonising the Study of Religion*.

⁸³ Jones, 'On the Gods of Greece, Italy and India', 235–36.

Wesleyan Methodist missionary, William Harvard,⁸⁴ and the doctor, John Davy, claimed this before him.⁸⁵ Not one of them, however, coupled this view with a vituperative condemnation of ‘Brahmanism’, as Knighton did. At the beginning of volume two of *Forest Life in Ceylon*, he inserted a chapter on Buddhism and represented the Buddha, after his renunciation and six-year search, as ‘issuing forth from that forest, at thirty-five, to preach down the most terrible and pernicious of systems—Brahmanism’.⁸⁶ Describing the Buddha’s sensibility before he renounced, he added:

He saw Brahmanism in active operation around him, and of all creeds, Brahmanism is the most foul and soul-polluting.....Sensuality and cruelty go hand in hand in their creed, the one not more refined than the other. Gotama saw all this, and a thousand times more than a European public could be told, or would believe. His mind was strong, active and imperturbable.⁸⁷

He then inserted these words into the Buddha’s mind, ‘I will attempt the reformation at all costs, let what will come’.⁸⁸

This representation of ‘Brahmanism’ was taken uncritically from contemporary writings about Indian religions. Almond claimed that the Scottish historian, James Mill, created the norm with *The History of British India* in 1817.⁸⁹ Knighton’s writings demonstrate that he knew this work.⁹⁰ I would argue, however, that ‘the benchmark’ was set earlier, by the writings of evangelical missionaries and their friends,⁹¹ for instance by British East India Company

⁸⁴ Harvard, *A Narrative of the Establishment and Progress of The Mission*, iv.

⁸⁵ Davy, *An Account of the Interior of Ceylon*, 205; Harris, *Theravāda Buddhism and the British Encounter*, 170.

⁸⁶ Knighton, *Forest Life in Ceylon*, vol. 2, 6.

⁸⁷ Ibid., vol. 2, 10.

⁸⁸ Ibid., vol. 2, 11.

⁸⁹ Almond, *The Buddha*, 288; Mill, *The History of British India*.

⁹⁰ For example, Knighton, *The History of Ceylon*, 170.

⁹¹ Oddie, *Imagined Hinduism*, 66–94.

employee and politician, Charles Grant (1746–1823),⁹² Claudius Buchanan (1766–1815),⁹³ and the Baptist missionary, William Ward (1769–1823). In 1811, Ward, helped by his Baptist colleague, William Carey (1761–1834), published the first edition of his multi-volume, *Account of the Writings, Religion and Manners of the Hindoos*.⁹⁴ Its influence was seminal, representing Hinduism as containing superstition, irrationality and idolatry, and social iniquities such as caste ('this iniquitous system of social misrule')⁹⁵ and the devaluation of women.⁹⁶ Of women in Hinduism, for instance, Ward wrote:

The Hindoos are seldom happy in their marriages; nor can domestic happiness be expected where females are reduced to a state of complete servitude, and are neither qualified nor permitted to be the companions of their husbands. A man, except he is of the low cast, never enters into conversation with his wife, during the day, nor is she ever permitted to eat in the presence of her husband, or to sit in the company even of near friends. An elder brother never looks at his younger brother's wife.⁹⁷

Missionaries to India in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, when Knighton began to write, built on these perspectives⁹⁸ and no doubt they were transmitted through missionaries such as MacVicar to colonial Ceylon. Knighton adopted these perspectives, seemingly without critical awareness.

⁹² Grant, *Observations on the State of Society*.

⁹³ Buchanan, *Christian Researches in Asia*.

⁹⁴ Oddie, *Imagined Hinduism*, 67–83 and 157.

⁹⁵ Ward, *A view of the History, Literature, and Mythology of the Hindoos*, vol. 1, x.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, xiv; see also Sugirtharajah, *Imagining Hinduism*, 74–89.

⁹⁷ Ward, *A view of the History, Literature, and Mythology of the Hindoos*, vol. 1, 135.

⁹⁸ Oddie, *Imagined Hinduism*, 184–202.

The Buddha as a god-man

Knighton's representation of the Buddha as a 'god-man' was linked to the reformer image and was part of the de-enchantment of the Buddha that happened in the nineteenth century, as western Orientalists discovered the texts. Knighton summarized what he perceived as the Buddha biography in more than one of his works. In 1845, he declared that the Buddha, after he had conquered demons, 'proceeded on his mission of reforming the world and establishing his own deityship'.⁹⁹ In the 1850s, he expressed it like this:

The miracles with which the legendary account of his life abounds are to us simply exaggerations and lies, but I cannot see that they were absolutely necessary to the *first* spread of the faith....Hence it is that I regard the miraculous narratives as inventions of later ages and not of the period in which Gotama himself lived.¹⁰⁰

From his perspective as a Christian, he recognized that Buddhists attributed to the Buddha god-like qualities. His own conviction, however, was that the Buddha was a young man, who voluntarily renounced luxury to find a way of countering and reforming Brahmanism, projecting back into the Buddha's time the abuses the British saw in contemporary Hindu traditions in India. The Buddha, for Knighton, was neither a god nor a celestial being.

The Buddhism of Mongolia and Tibet as heresies

That the Mahayana Buddhism of countries such as Tibet, Mongolia and China was a distortion of the teaching of the Buddha became a strong trope within the early transmission of Buddhism to Britain. This was partly because information about Buddhism largely came to Britain from colonial Ceylon and Burma rather than Mahayana

⁹⁹ Knighton, *The History of Ceylon*, 8; Harris, *Theravāda Buddhism and the British Encounter*, 84.

¹⁰⁰ Knighton, *Forest Life in Ceylon*, vol. 2, 16.

peacefully but then changed into a violent force that believed in 'love to our friends, hatred to our enemies'.¹⁰⁷ In the later *Elihu Jan's Story or the Private Life of an Eastern Queen*, Elihu Jan empathetically describes the Muslim practices and festivals honoured by the Lucknow court.¹⁰⁸ Hinduism, however, was consistently presented by Knighton as 'bigoted' in line with what I have previously outlined,¹⁰⁹ although Knighton preferred it to irreligion and so was able to say of a Hindu merchant:

This man is a Hindu in more than name, and, horrible as may be his faith to our eyes, disgusting and revolting its practices, he stands on a higher footing than the unreasoning infidel, who believes in no God and laughs at all systems.¹¹⁰

Buddhism, however, was ranked above all of these traditions because of its peacefulness and its morality. It is consistently surrounded, throughout Knighton's writings, with an aura of exceptionalism. In 1845, he referred to 'those pure and excellent moral laws which distinguish his [the Buddha's] religion from that of most other superstitions'.¹¹¹ In 1854, he went further:

The ethics of Buddhism is that part of the system which gives it its highest value in Christian eyes. In its moral aspect, and in the purity which it inculcates—a purity extending to thought and words, as well as to action—it comes nearer to the sublimity of Christianity than any other religious system in Asia; and this, too, without endeavouring to lure on its votaries to holiness and piety by any hopes of sensual happiness like Mohammedanism, or denunciations of

¹⁰⁷ Knighton, *Tropical Sketches*, vol. 2, 32.

¹⁰⁸ Knighton, *The Private Life of an Eastern King together with Elihu Jan's Story*, 270–81.

¹⁰⁹ For example, Knighton, *Tropical Sketches*, vol. 2, 20.

¹¹⁰ Knighton, *Tropical Sketches*, vol. 2, 79; Harris, *Crisis, Competition and Conversion*, vol. 2, 473.

¹¹¹ Knighton, *The History of Ceylon*, 7.

physical evil in this life, like the faith of Zoroaster.¹¹²

In illustrating this, one of Knighton's favourite texts is the *Dhammapada* but, in *Forest Life in Ceylon*, he also draws from other texts, mainly selected from the work of Gogerly and his Wesleyan Methodist compatriot, Robert Spence Hardy (1803–1868), particularly Spence Hardy's *Manual of Buddhism*,¹¹³ which, for instance, used translations of Sinhala texts to re-tell the biography of the Buddha.

In line with Knighton's representation of Brahmanism, Buddhism was also cast as the victim. In 1886, for instance, he explained the disappearance of Buddhism from India, as due to the violence of Brahmanism, writing:

Of the struggle that ensued between the mild and peaceful system of Buddha, and the domineering and warlike system of the Brahmans, we have no adequate details but it is probable that persecution and open warfare combined drove Buddhism at last almost out of India....Notwithstanding the peaceful character of its teachings and the violence to which it has been exposed, Buddhism at the present day numbers more of the human race amongst its votaries than any other faith.¹¹⁴

By 1886, perceptions towards Hinduism among the intelligentsia had changed, due to the availability of texts, such as those within Max Müller's *The Sacred Books of the East* series.¹¹⁵ Missionary writings, however, continued to contest positive representations of Hinduism and Knighton aligned himself with them.

¹¹² Knighton, *Forest Life in Ceylon*, vol. 2, 53.

¹¹³ Spence Hardy, *A Manual of Buddhism in its Modern Development*.

¹¹⁴ Knighton, *Struggles for Life*, 94.

¹¹⁵ Almond, *The Buddha*, 290.

The Importance of Knighton's Life and Writings for the Study of Religious Exchange between Asia and Europe in the Nineteenth Century

Knighton was a man of his time, born into privilege,¹¹⁶ Christianity, and a country that was creating an empire. As a curious and intelligent young man, it is unsurprising that he took advantage of the travel opportunities the Empire gave him. Why stay in the fogs and cold of Britain, if you could experience the heat and excitement of Ceylon and India! At least at first, he probably thought little of his own white supremacy. In this light, he could be dismissed as a typical Orientalist, who believed he could interpret Buddhism, and indeed Hinduism and Zoroastrianism, to the West, on the basis of his limited years in the East. In addition, some of his writings betray condescending attitudes to Asians, for example his representation of 'coolies' in the reminiscences of a coffee planter that he places in his journal, *Progress*.¹¹⁷

I would argue, however, that he is worth examining closely and has importance for any study of nineteenth century religious exchange between East and West. I argue this not only because of his capacity for empathy with Asia and his critique of the more gross of colonial attitudes but also for the following four reasons, all of which point to the complexities of Orientalism.

First, his representation of Buddhism as essentially about ethics, meditation and self-restraint—a modernist approach—came very early in the nineteenth century, beginning in 1844. Knighton came to his position through Gogerly's translations of texts such as the *Dhammapada* and the *Vinaya*. He could also have accessed writings that Ceylonese Buddhists presented to Europeans, for example Ven.

¹¹⁶ Knighton's ancestors were part of Britain's aristocracy. Smith, at the end of his introduction to Knighton's work, included part of a letter by Knighton's grandson, which recorded that Knighton attempted to restore the Knighton baronetcy 'in his own person' but failed because he was a liberal, at a time when the government was conservative. Smith, 'Introduction', 1921.

¹¹⁷ Such as 'Highway Robbery by Monkeys by a Ceylon Coffee Planter'.

Kitulgama Devamitta, who, in 1826, completed a compendium on Buddhist doctrine for Simon Sawers, then Judicial Commissioner. It was abridged, translated and placed in the Ceylon Almanac of 1835,¹¹⁸ eight years before Knighton arrived. Devamitta, for instance, described *bhāvanā* (meditation) in this way:

Meditating on these circumstances of evanescence, sorrow and change [*anicca*, *dukkha*, *anattā*, previously described], on the attributes of the Buddha – on the virtues of mercy, and of benevolence, which wisheth to all beings exemption from disease and grief – reflecting that the corporeal frame is but the semblance of a vessel replete with impurities, though externally beautified with bright and shining colours, and that it is like a stagnant pool teeming with worms – and that *Winyaana*, or intellect, which subsists in the organization of other elements, vanisheth at death, as light vanisheth at the setting of the sun – such meditation is termed *Bhaaweena*.¹¹⁹

Devamitta's work, together with verses from the *Dhammapada*, would have been enough to explain Knighton's modernist characterization of Buddhism in 1844. Both mount a challenge to theories that place the arising of Buddhist modernism much later in the century and attribute it to western appropriation of the texts.

Second, Knighton's approach to Buddhism contrasted with that of his British contemporaries, with the exception of Turnour and Forbes, and demonstrates the intra-orientalist debates that happened throughout the nineteenth century. On the one hand, Christian missionary representations framed Buddhism as nihilistic, ethically impotent, and irrational,¹²⁰ sending a message back to Britain that was intended to increase support for missionary work. On the other

¹¹⁸ Harris, *Theravāda Buddhism and the British Encounter*, 181–85; Devamitta, 'Jinapaawachanaalankaare'.

¹¹⁹ Harris, *Theravāda Buddhism and the British Encounter*, 184; Devamitta, 'Jinapaawachanaalankaare', 229.

¹²⁰ See Harris, *Theravāda Buddhism and the British Encounter*, 53–75, 101–09.

hand, the writings of casual observers were a mixture of populism and ignorance. Edward Sullivan, for example, condemned Buddhism with an arrogance that was deeply offensive to Buddhists but which might have appealed to the imagination of some British people.¹²¹ Knighton, in contrast, sought to be fair. Drawing on the textual translations of the missionaries, he drew different conclusions from them, repeatedly praising Buddhism for its ethics and its ethos of peace. This representation of Buddhism was also transmitted to the West, becoming influential. His role as contestator undercuts simplistic statements about the uniformity of Orientalism. Orientalists can certainly be seen as a family of writers, bound together by the power relationships of imperialism, but they were a dysfunctional family, continually arguing among themselves about the objects of their study.

Third, Knighton affirmed in his writings the importance of dialogue with Buddhists and the agency of Buddhists. Appendixed to the second volume of *Forest Life in Ceylon* were four dialogues with a Buddhist whom Knighton called Marandhan. Marandhan is presented as a friend of Knighton's and an equal partner in dialogue intellectually, although Knighton admits that he was a literary creation.¹²² Marandhan is, nevertheless, used by Knighton to demonstrate the sophistication of Buddhism, the difficulties of communicating Christianity in a Buddhist environment, the failures of the British and the agency of Asians. Knighton's stated agenda in the dialogues is to make Marandhan more open to Christianity. Marandhan, however, is shown to resist this. He challenges Knighton on questions concerning God and punctures western superiority claims. He is recorded as saying, for instance:

We, too, have had our thinkers and our writers, our moral and mental philosophers, and our logical disputants; nor was a tenet argued in the metaphysics of Greece, nor probably is there a tenet,

¹²¹ For example, Sullivan, *The Bungalow and the Tent or A Visit to Ceylon*; Harris, *Theravāda Buddhism and the British Encounter*, 44–52.

¹²² Knighton, *Forest Life in Ceylon*, vol. 1, vii.

apart from purely Christian ones, argued in the metaphysics of modern Christendom, which was not a subject of discussion a thousand years ago in India and Ceylon.¹²³

Marandhan is also shown contesting negative representations of *nibbāna*, forcing Knighton into accepting that he had judged through prejudice.¹²⁴ At another point, Marandhan accuses Knighton of an 'admirable self-complacency' in judging absurd what is believed by half the world, namely 'metempsychosis' [rebirth]¹²⁵ and points out that just as there may be 'weak points of Buddhism' so there are some in Christianity.¹²⁶ Later, he declares, 'O, Mr Knighton, ignore not the evils of Christianity when you descant so eloquently on those of Buddhism'.¹²⁷

The Dialogues are *a tour de force*, in which Knighton, in his partly fictitious persona as planter, adopts more extreme positions than he in fact held, in order for the Buddhist response to be made clear. At the end, Marandhan promises to explore Christianity further but he is not shown as converting. He retains his independence and his agency. Knighton, his British audience in mind, no doubt intended to puncture stereotypes about western supremacy and simplistic claims about the superiority of Christianity. To a certain extent, therefore, he escapes the charge of cognitive imperialism, in that he sincerely sought to see things from the other side.

Fourthly, there is more to explore in the exceptionalism attributed to Buddhism in Knighton's writing. Knighton's case demonstrates that Orientalists did not always judge the religions of 'the East' uniformly. Whilst Knighton contested Christian missionary negativity about Buddhism, because of his experience in colonial Ceylon, translations of the texts and possibly the writings of Ceylonese Buddhists, he did not do so when it came to Hinduism, even when positive

¹²³ Knighton, *Forest Life in Ceylon*, vol. 2, 373.

¹²⁴ Ibid., vol. 2, 383.

¹²⁵ Ibid., vol. 2, 395.

¹²⁶ Ibid., vol. 2, 405.

¹²⁷ Ibid., vol. 2, 421.

representations of the tradition were more accessible in the west in the second part of his life. I have not been able to discover why this was so, other than that it might have been due to mentors such as MacVicar or particular experiences of Hindu practices in India. Nevertheless, it had an impact on the transmission of Buddhism to the west and prepared the way for the embracing of Buddhism by those in Britain who were critical of the hegemony of Christianity and the rhetoric of Empire.

Concluding Thoughts

Knighton in some respects remains an enigma. His literary flair and empathy meant that he could adopt different literary masks, some of which were more plausible than others. *Forest Life in Ceylon* is written with realism and insight into character. *The Private Life of an Eastern King*, however, is an orientalist romp, aimed at encouraging the annexation of Oudh, through a 'true' account by an eye witness to the corruption and excess at the heart of its governance. On the one hand, he was capable of criticizing the British Empire and the arrogant hopes of Christian missionaries, presenting Buddhism as a religion with sublime characteristics. Yet, on the other hand, he saw the West as in the ascendant and Christianity as the most sublime religion. Inconsistencies of attitude thread through his life and work. Yet, it is possible that these inconsistencies are the point! Human beings faced with change, challenge and tragedy are rarely completely consistent. The transmission of Buddhism to the West within the power relationships of British imperialism and the diversity of orientalist representations was an all too human process, with its contradictions, its exercises in misinformation and its relative successes.

Bibliography

- Almond, Philip C. *The British Discovery of Buddhism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.
 ———. *The Buddha: Life and Afterlife between East and West*.

- Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2024.
- Blackburn, Ann M. *Locations of Buddhism: Colonialism and Modernity in Sri Lanka*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 2010.
- Bond, George D. *The Buddhist Revival in Sri Lanka: Religious Tradition, Reinterpretation and Response*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1988.
- Borup, Jørn. *Decolonising the Study of Religion: Who owns Buddhism?* London: Routledge, 2023.
- Buchanan, Claudius. *Christian Researches in Asia with Notices of the Translation of the Scriptures into Oriental Languages*. Second edition. London: Cadell and Davies, 1811.
- Burt, Thomas. 'Thrift: An Address to the Working Men'. *Progress* 1.1 (1878): 10–15.
- Clarke, J. J. *Oriental Enlightenment: The encounter between Asian and Western Thought*. London: Routledge, 1997.
- Davy, John. *An Account of the Interior of Ceylon and of its Inhabitants with Travels in that Island*. London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1821.
- De Fonseka, Lyn. 'Knighton's Sketches of Life in the Island'. *Sunday Times*. February 15, 1953.
- Devamitta, Kitulgama. 'Jinapaawachanaalankaare'. In *Ceylon Almanac 1835*, translated by J. Armour, 211–29. Colombo: Government Printer, 1835.
- Dodin, Thierry, and Heinz Räther, eds. *Imagining Tibet: Perceptions, Projections and Fantasies*. Somerville: Wisdom, 2001.
- Education in Ceylon: A Centenary Volume*. Colombo: Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, 1969.
- Forbes, Jonathon. *Eleven Years in Ceylon*. 2 vols. London: Richard Bentley, 1841.
- Gogerly, Daniel J. 'Dhamma-Padam'. *The Friend* 4.2 (August 1840): 21–26; 4.3 (September 1840): 41–47; 4.5 (November 1840): 81–84.
- . 'On Buddhism – Laws of the Priesthood'. *The Friend* 3.4 (October 1839): 61–67; 3.6 (December 1839): 101–6; 3.7 (January 1840): 121–27; 3.8 (February 1840): 141–46; 3.9 (March 1840): 162–66.
- Gooneratne, Yasmine. *English Literature in Ceylon 1815-1878*.

- Dehiwela: Tisara Prakasakayo, 1968.
- Grant, Charles. *Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain*. 1792. Parliamentary Papers No. 282, Commons, Vol. 10, 1812–1813.
- Harris, Elizabeth J. 'Crisis, Competition and Conversion: The British Encounter with Buddhism in Nineteenth Century Sri Lanka'. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kelaniya, 1993.
- . 'Manipulating Meaning: Daniel John Gogerly's Nineteenth Century Translations of the Theravāda Texts'. *Buddhist Studies Review* 27.2 (2010): 177–95.
- . 'Memory, Experience and the Clash of Cosmologies; The Encounter Between British Protestant Missionaries and Buddhism in Nineteenth Century Sri Lanka'. *Social Sciences and Mission* 25.3 (2012): 265–303.
- . *Religion, Space and Conflict in Sri Lanka: Colonial and Postcolonial Contexts*. London: Routledge, 2018.
- . *Theravāda Buddhism and the British Encounter: Religious, missionary and colonial experience in nineteenth century Sri Lanka*. London and New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Harvard, W. M. *A Narrative of the Establishment and Progress of The Mission to Ceylon and India Founded by the Late Rev Thomas Coke under the Direction of the Wesleyan-Methodist Conference*. London: W. M. Harvard, 1823.
- 'Highway Robbery by Monkeys by a Ceylon Coffee Planter'. *Progress* 1.1 (1878): 15–19.
- Huc, Eviariste and Joseph Gabet, trans. *Travels in Tartary, Thibet and China, 1844-1846*. Translated by William Hazlitt. London: Routledge, [1851] 1928.
- Jones, William. 'On the Gods of Greece, Italy and India: Written in 1784 and since Revised.' *Asiatic Researches* 6 (1799): 221–75.
- Knighton, William. 'Address'. *Progress: A Monthly Magazine for the Working Classes* 1 (January–June 1878): 1–2.
- . 'Buddhism and the Philosophy of Greece'. *Ceylon Miscellany*. May 1844. Appendixed to Knighton, *The History of Ceylon from the Earliest Period to the Present Time with an Appendix Containing an Account of its Present Condition*, 337–353.
- . *Edgar Barton: An Autobiographical Novel*. 3 vols. London:

- Hurst and Blackett, 1856.
- . *Forest Life in Ceylon*. 2 vols. London: Hurst and Blackett, 1854.
- . ‘General Observations on the Translated Ceylonese Literature’. *Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 1 (1845): 29–36.
- . *Government Education in India*. London: Francis and John Rivington, 1853.
- . *The History of Ceylon from the Earliest Period to the Present Time with an Appendix Containing an Account of its Present Condition*. London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1845.
- . ‘On the Training System of Education, particularly as adapted for Large Towns’. In *Lectures in Connection with The Educational Exhibition of the Society of Arts, Manufacturers and Commerce delivered at St Martin’s Hall*, 262–67. London: G. Routledge and Co, 1854.
- . *The Policy of the Future in India A Letter to the Right Hon. Lord Cranborne, Secretary of State for India etc. etc.* London: Longmans, Green, and Co, 1867.
- . *The Private Life of an Eastern King by a member of the household of his late Majesty, Nurris-u-Deen, King of Oude*. Second edition. London: Hope and Co, 1855.
- . *The Private Life of an Eastern King together with Elihu Jan’s Story or The Private Life of an Eastern Queen*. Edited with introduction and notes by S. B. Smith. London: Humphrey Milford Oxford University Press, 1921.
- . *Struggles for Life*. London: Williams and Norgate, 1886.
- . *Tropical Sketches or, Reminiscences of an Indian Journalist*. 2 vols. London: Hurst and Blackett, 1855.
- Lopez, Donald S., Jr., ed. *Curators of the Buddha: A Study of Buddhism under Colonialism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.
- McMahon, David L. *The Making of Buddhist Modernism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Mill, James. *The History of British India*. London: Baldwin, Cradock and Joy, 1817.

- Morier, James. *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan in three volumes*. Paris: A. and W. Galignani, 1824. Reprint: London: J. Murray, 1828.
- Nadesan, S. *A History of the Up-Country Tamil People in Sri Lanka*. Colombo: Nandalala, 1993.
- O'Brien, Irene. 'Glasgow led way in teacher training when Britain's first dedicated college opened its doors in city'. *Glasgow Times Archives*. December 29, 2021. <https://www.glasgowtimes.co.uk/news/19803314.glasgow-led-way-teacher-training-britains-first-dedicated-college-opened-doors-city/>.
- Obeyesekere, Gananath. 'Religious Symbolism and Political Change in Ceylon'. *Modern Ceylon Studies* 1.1 (1970): 41–63.
- Oddie, Geoffrey A. *Imagined Hinduism: British Protestant Missionary Constructions of Hinduism, 1793-1900*. New Delhi: Sage, 2006.
- 'Report of the Ceylon Central School Commission for the first six months of 1841'. *Ceylon Miscellany* 1.1 (1842): 88–92.
- Rhys Davids, T. W. *Buddhism: Being a Sketch of the Life and Teachings of Gautama, the Buddha*. Revised edition. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1894.
- Spence Hardy, R. *A Manual of Buddhism in its Modern Development*. London: Partridge and Oakley, 1853.
- Smith, S. B. 'Introduction'. In *The Private Life of an Eastern King together with Elihu Jan's Story or The Private Life of an Eastern Queen*, by William Knighton, edited with introduction and notes by S. B. Smith, vii–xli. London: Humphrey Milford Oxford University Press, 1921.
- 'Strikes of Arbitration'. *Progress* 1 (1878): 114–16.
- Sugirtharajah, Sharada. *Imagining Hinduism: A Postcolonial Perspective*. London: Routledge, 2003.
- Sullivan, Edward. *The Bungalow and the Tent or A Visit to Ceylon*. London: Richard Bentley, 1854.
- Turnour, George. *The First Twenty Chapters of the Mahawanso and a Prefatory Essay on Pali Buddhistical Literature*. Colombo: Cotta Church Mission Press, 1836.
- Urquhart, Judy. *William Knighton 1823–1900: An Account of his Life by his great, great grand daughter*. Self-published through

Amazon, 2022.

Ward, William. *A view of the History, Literature, and Mythology of the Hindoos, including a minute description of their manners and customs, and Translations from their principal works in two volumes*. Second edition. Serampore: Mission Press, 1818.

Watt, James. *British Orientalisms 1759–1835*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019.

Who was who? Vol. 1, 1897-1915. London: A & C Black, 2008.

Wickramasinghe, Nira. *Sri Lanka in the Modern Age: A History*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014.