His foray into historical archaeology and reading of English translations of texts was made possible during a year's residence in Kandy in 1983. Further use was made of old maps and illustrations.

The book consists of three parts; a brief five page introduction much of which is about critical theory and its utility for cultural geographers, a seventy-five page section on using textual analysis as an interpretative framework, and a one hundred page section on the politics of religion embedded in the grand architecture of Kandy. Several reproductions of landscape paintings of Kandy illustrate themes in the book.

Duncan seeks to distance himself from other cultural geographers who study the cultural landscape. He does this by adopting a confrontational perspective where past contributors are demeaned or ridiculed. Having purged himself of the alleged atheoretical stigma of other cultural geographers he adopts a metaphor of interpretation derived from the arts, in this case textual analysis, thereby following the shift from biological or ecosystemic models of environment or spatial organization that has occurred in geography since the 1960s.

Drawing on his interpretive skills, Duncan portrays the Buddhist Asokan model where kings infused the Kandayan hills and valleys with a landscape dominated by religious structures and public works. The intrusive Hindu, built tradition, or "Sakran discourse" as it is labelled emphasized structures that embellished the god-king. The repeated cycles of conquest, destruction, and rebuilding formed a text of a cultural landscape that when deciphered, reveals the power behind religious and political rule in Kandy. The tension between the Sinhalese and Tamil elites is constantly explored. The landscape held the diacritical marks identifying power and privilege in Kandyan society. Duncan suffuses the texts with the same degree of imagined content that many archaeologists do with artifacts. Serendipity and simple adornment count for little in the stylistic remnants available in Kandy ruins.

For scholars of Buddhism and Sri Lanka history this book brings a novel conceptual and methodological stance to bear on the cultural landscape. The casual reader should be prepared to wade through a coded version of the English language that is redolent with critical theory jargon. For cultural geographers the author's histrionic attempts to disassociate himself from his colleagues indicates a poor reading of the breadth and depth of previous cultural landscape studies. One wonders why the author chose to examine historic Kandy, remote in the misty hollows of the contemporary Buddhist battleground of competing discourses; Lhasa awaits him.

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To explain religious conflict and violence in modern India, Embree's timely volume explores several related themes. First he argues that tensions have been generated by competing visions of a just or good society. Such visions are grounded in religion but take place within the framework of a representative government. For many nationalist leaders, representative government meant the expression of individual will through free elections. However, this view was in conflict with those

who saw society composed of groups, not individuals. By the era of modern politics such groups more and more became defined in religious categories. While utopian visions of a just or good society are often rooted in some golden age of the past, their real concern is the definition of future society. "All great religions have a vision of what the world should be and how human beings should relate to this vision." (p. 129). In India both Hindus and Moslems in particular have their utopian visions. These different visions provided radically different versions of reality and when fused with nationalism became a source of great potential conflict. For many Hindu intellectuals the nationalist ideology inevitably pointed to the origins of Indian civilization and values rooted in a Hindu past. Moslem leaders likewise could espouse a nationalism based on a heritage with its own definition of a society founded on concepts of Islamic laws and values.

In addition Embree points out that an important component of nationalism, i.e., secularism and the notion of Hindu tolerance espoused by many Congress leaders (especially Nehru) was in reality misleading and in stark contrast to the beliefs of many minority groups. More recently "Hindu backlash" groups "represent a significant demand for the recognition that Indian culture has its roots in the Hindu past and that national unity demands a nationalist ideology based upon it." (p. 130). Related is his argument that Nehru and other Congress leaders promoted a 19th century view that Hinduism was eclectic, absorbing and tolerant: "Hinduism was/ was/ a religious system peculiarly sympathetic to ideas and values outside itself." (p. 19). These nationalists defined independent India as a secular state in which all religious were to be equal. Hindu tolerance would make possible an united democratic India. Nationalism so defined would be an unifying ideology denying religion as a source of potential conflict.

However, the author argues that contrary to popular interpretations Hinduism was neither absorbing, eclectic nor tolerant. Rather, Hinduism as a way of life is a persistent fundamental pattern of thought and behavior which has endured for centuries. What is closer to reality he says is that Indian civilization has been able to "encapsulate" other cultures making co-existence possible: "But encapsulation is neither toleration, absorption nor synthesis." (p. 25). Of equal concern is the implication that synthesis as a result of modernization may be illusory. A more likely outcome is that Indian society may encapsulate a modern industrial enclave in the midst of the traditional countryside subjecting India to further social and political stresses. Hence, encapsulation may take place without admitting genuine dialogue or interaction.

Of the five assumptions of classical Indian religious thought (a cyclical notion of time, the belief in Karma, reincarnation and dharma as well as the concept that there are many levels of truth), it is the latter which has often mistakenly been taken for Hindu tolerance. In any event, Embree declares that secularism was a failed policy in India. It was not accepted by the Moslem community as a satisfactory solution since it ultimately meant defining Indian civilization in a way that the Hindu majority could equate their own interests with national interests. The notion of secularism as embodied in the constitution is also controversial. While there are special laws relating to marriage, divorce and inheritance for minorities, there are increasing pressures that all Indians should come under a single common law, that minority guarantees are a threat to national unity. Moslems and other minorities (Christians and Sikhs) often feel community rights should be upheld over individual rights and as Embree deftly points out, "In both the Shah Bano and Babri Mosque incidents ... the legal rights of Muslims as a religious community within the Indian national state ... were being