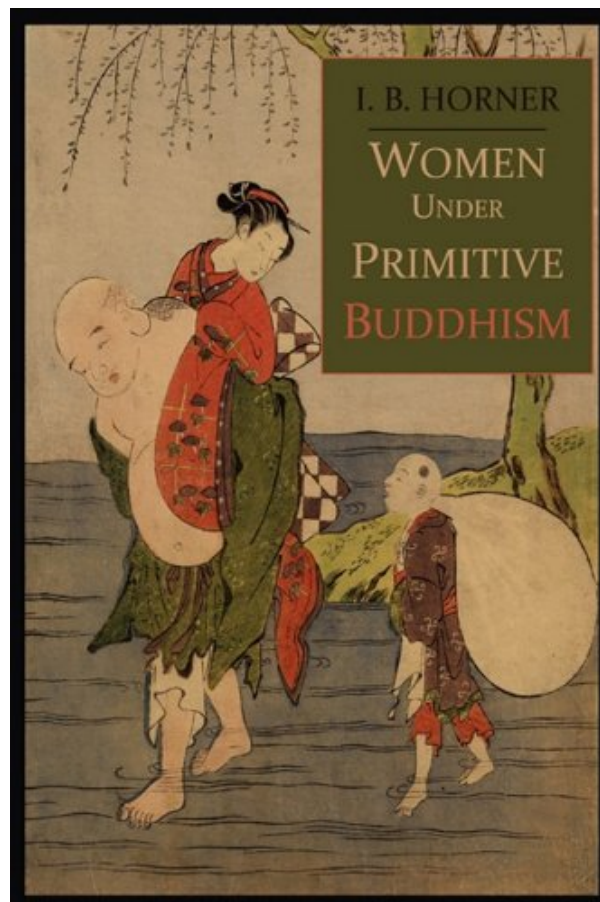
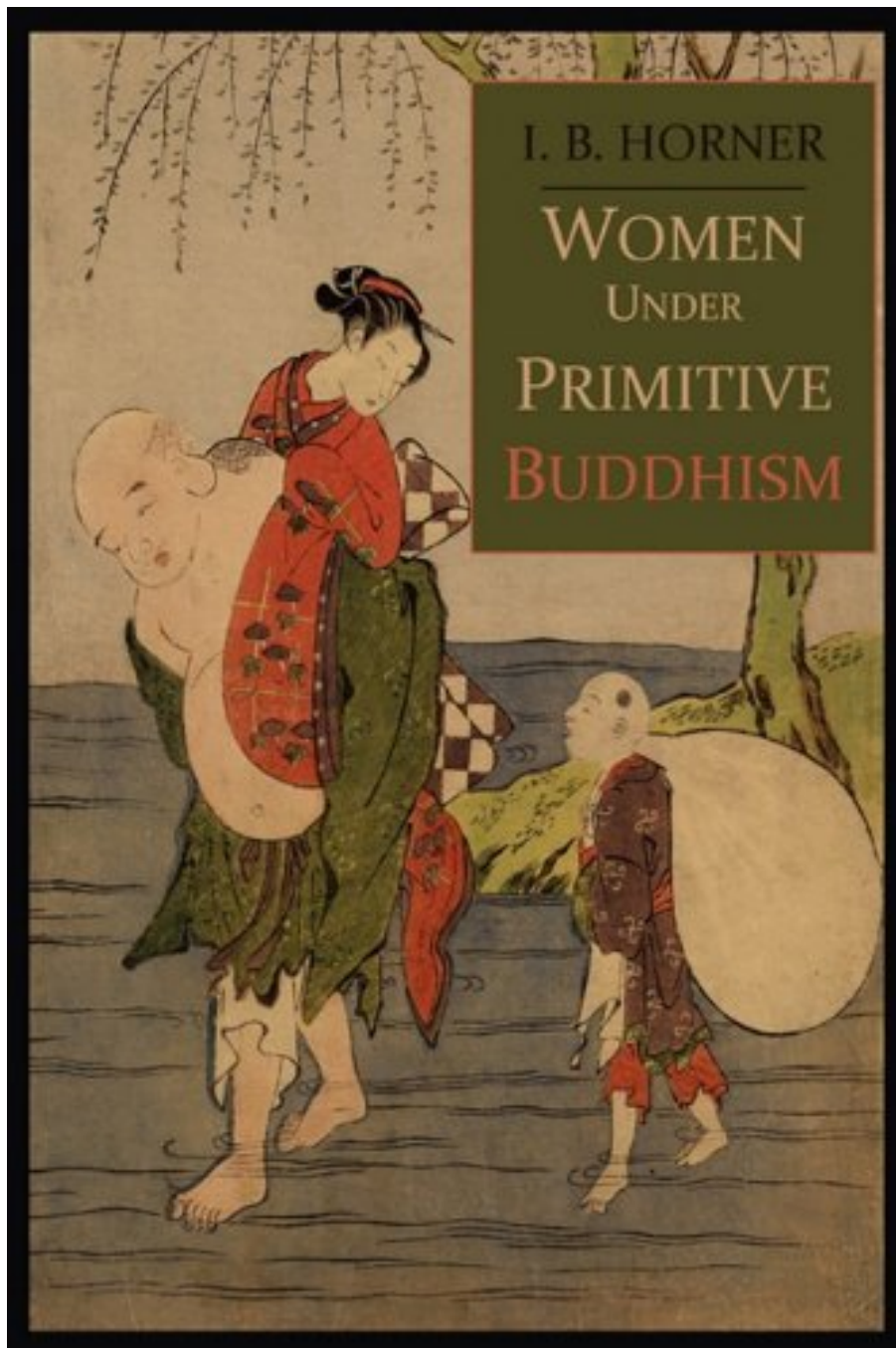


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Reprint of 1936 Edition. Gutenberg Publishers, as our name suggests, is committed to the preservation of the printed word. Each reprint we publish is carefully prepared, cleaned, and preserved, producing an accurate facsimile of the original edition. From the Jacket: "The book is an attempt to present the position of Buddhist laywomen and almswomen in historical perspective. For the study of the laywomen the author has exploited the material found in the Canonical literature, and the Commentaries on them". Chapters depict the laywomen as mother, daughter, wife, widow and worker. Other chapters depict almswomen, their admission into the Order, the Eight Chief Rules, and Life in the Order. Isaline Blew Horner was one of the Presidents of the Pali Text Society, Oxford and an honorary Fellow of the International Association of Buddhist Studies.

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Beautifully written, well-argued classic

By Neal J. Pollock

This book addresses women in Indian Buddhism during the life of Buddha, Gotama. It is scholarly yet very readable with actual footnotes vs. endnotes. It includes various women's roles: laywomen (mother, wife, etc.) & almswomen=nuns (Gurudhamma & Vinaya rules, Therigatha, etc.) & their interactions with each other, almsmen & laymen. It contains details of Buddhist women's lives, relations with Buddha, & the rules of Buddhist life, but IMHO most valuable are the author's astute & penetrating insights into the philosophy, etymology, & effects of early Buddhism on modern adherents--she is obviously well-versed in Buddhism. She also contributes to Buddhist biography esp. Ananda & Visakha (worthy of inclusion in biographical texts) & considerable material on other leading Buddhist women (e.g. Khema). Her main theses, supported with considerable evidence, address Buddhism & women's liberation in ancient India, attributing most negative views of women to later monk editors (p. 308: "The texts were written down, glossed & edited by men who had little historical sense & little sympathy with the doings of women"), making much of the differences between Pali texts as opposed to earlier English translations of flawed Sanskrit & Chinese (more misogynist in tone & content) & pp. xix-xx: "In the 1st place nothing was written down for at least 200 years, & probably more, after Gotama died...It is sometimes impossible to disentangle the original matter

from later accretions." In summary, p. 82: "The position of women in Buddhist India was more ennobled & more honorable than it had been in pre-Buddhist days...They enjoyed more independence, & a wider liberty to guide & follow their own lives" & p. 312: "Gotama's methods with women & the example he set to men must have been powerful forces in raising the status of women: a boon which they repaid by their large allegiance & manifold devotion." More specifically, she presents discerning insights into: (1) monastic life: p. 214: "The entrants into the Buddhist Sangha did not and do not definitely bind themselves by vows to observe these [poverty, chastity, & obedience] major rules," p. 217: "Lassitude & meaninglessness...do not appear to have been frequent in the Buddhist Order...may in part be attributed to a healthy mingling with the laity," p. 324: "Monastic orders...originated with people who...had a genuine desire to leave the world...later members find that the demands made on them by renunciation are well-nigh intolerable: it then becomes necessary to increase external restrictions acting as guides, in the absence of spirituality, towards leading the good life," p. 335: "This body of minute rules grew up as the almswomen tried to circumvent each one of them as it was made." (2) relationships among types of adherents: pp. 253-4: "The determination of the laity to keep the recluses as different from themselves in as many respects as possible; & what the laity wished had usually the supremacy of a command. Without their goodwill the Order could not have been sustained." & (3) Gotama's teachings: p. 107: "In his original teaching the simile of the Wheel had no place; the wheel symbol was introduced later," pp. 221-2: "Renunciation sedulously pursued in the large matters will avenge itself by appearing in a multitude of trivial manifestations," & pp. 374-5: "The irrational denial of the self that later became part of the monkish teaching...has often buried or distorted Gotama's real meaning & hence has done much to damage it by perpetuating false views on his teaching, quoting Buddha, "The whole world wide we traverse without thought & nothing find more dear to man than soul."

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