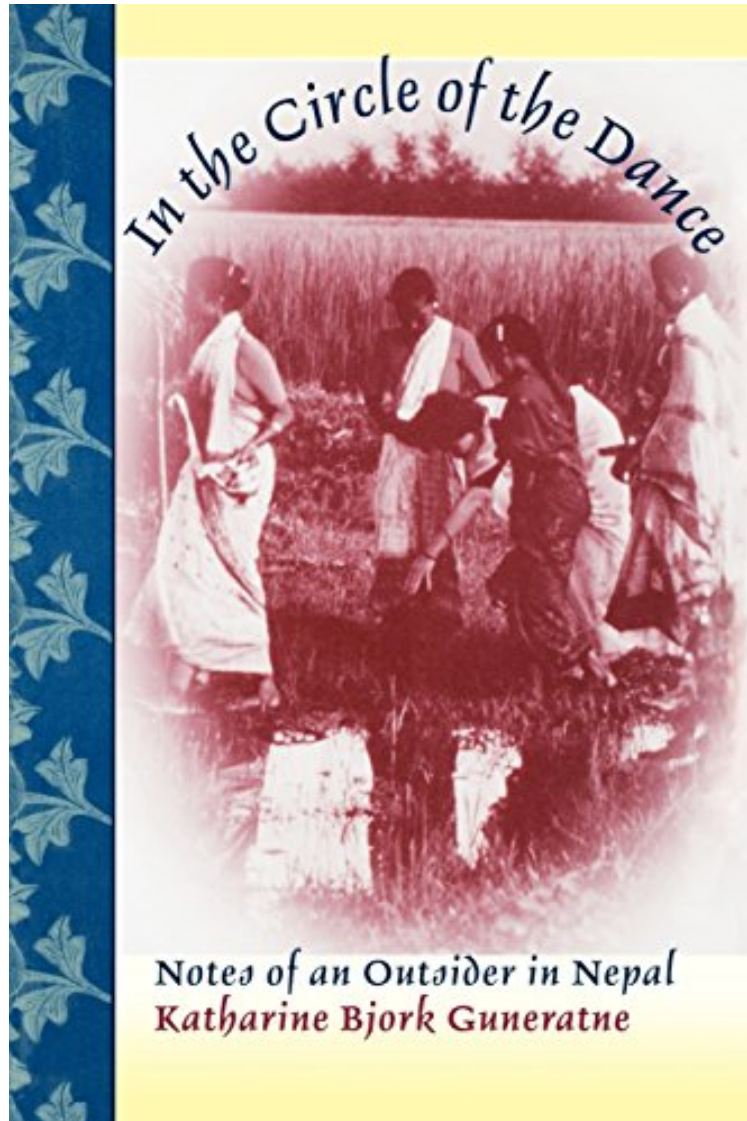


[E-BOOK] In the Circle of the Dance: Notes of an Outsider in Nepal

## In the Circle of the Dance: Notes of an Outsider in Nepal

*Katharine Bjork Guneratne*

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**Katharine Bjork Guneratne : In the Circle of the Dance: Notes of an Outsider in Nepal** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised In the Circle of the Dance: Notes of an Outsider in Nepal:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. very thoughtful and insightful By Joe Niemczura Before I travel I always look for a book to describe the country. I don't like the usual travelogue that might just describe the monuments or temples. I look for one which describes the every day lives of the people there. And so I ordered this book.... wow. It

is a description of rural life in a village in the terai of Nepal, the lowlands near the border with India. The author spent time with the local women while her spouse did his field work for an anthropology PhD. The writing goes between descriptions of rural life and includes some passages detailing what was going through her mind at the time in terms of how her own cultural background influenced her relationships in the host culture. The perspective which she brought was amazing to me - a very mature and thoughtful outlook indeed! After my own trip to Nepal I will know more about whether to recommend this I suppose - but in the meantime, I enjoyed reading it, it was wonderfully done, and it stands by itself very well as an example of wonderful travel writing esp if you are interested in the daily life of people from a very different culture than our own... Joe Niemczura Honolulu Hawaii 4 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Entering the Circle By rockcr This book depicts the adventures of a young American woman staying in a Tharu village in Nepal. While her husband was there as an Anthropologist, she was there as a visitor. The author tries to adapt to everyday life in the village, and in doing so gives us a unique insight into what it is like to be a young Tharu woman--as the author, herself, goes through a period of discovery about what it means to be a woman.

Feeling initially aimless and out of place in rural Nepal where she accompanied her anthropologist husband for a year of fieldwork, Katharine Bjork Guneratne turned to writing to make sense of her sojourn in the shadow of the Himalaya. The resulting book is both an acute portrait of a village and an intimate account of her struggles to adapt to a different way of life. Like the best cultural travel narratives, *In the Circle of the Dance* draws on the author's experiences to illuminate both exterior and interior worlds. Bjork's book is in many ways a primer on the realities of fieldwork, from setting up house to participating in the work of the village women to finding ways to communicate across cultural divides. It describes how this outsider achieved a gradual and provisional inclusion in the community, an inclusion represented by her participation in a traditional women's circle dance. The book also depicts the effects of modernization and tourism on a society that remained closed to the West well into this century, while offering comparative insights about wider South Asian cultures. The author's lyrical, frequently moving descriptions of everyday life guide her readers through the stages of her cultural apprenticeship. In the end, as Bjork joins the circle dance, she is a stranger to the community still, but a familiar and welcome one.

"Katherine Guneratne has created in her delightful and insightful book *Inside the Circle of the Dance*. . . a thoughtful and sensitive portrait of the Tharus she got to know in a village in Chitwan in the Tarai. A compelling feature of the book is that she then also shows how her encounters with her Tharu friends inevitably shed light on her own self and her own society. It is the way she shows how this self-knowledge grew in sometimes comical fits and starts out of casual ethnographic knowledge that many readers will find especially appealing." James Fisher, Carlton College. *Himalayan Research Bulletin*, Vol. XIX, No. 2, 1999. "Guneratne shares unforgettable images from her experience in the field as the wife of anthropologist Upali Arjun Guneratne. . . Her sensitivity and her humility are disarming and the result is a story as much about the landscape of human relationships as it is about the culture of Nepal." *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine*, March/April 2001 "Engaging. . . Guneratne provides insight into life in contemporary Nepal and shows how life in the field influences the inner person and continues to do so after one departs." *American Ethnologist* "The book is enjoyable to read. The writing is skillful, often amusing and full of insight. It will appeal to a very wide readership, and I shall be recommending it to my anthropology students. It would be good if anthropologists and ethnographers could manage to write as well as this." Christian McDonough. *European Bulletin of Himalayan Research*, November 2001 "An insightful and compelling book. The thoughtfulness of the author's engagements, the reflective perspective characteristic of her story, and her recurrent consideration of the theme of 'familiar foreignness' rather than exoticism have shaped a singular account. She treats often unconsidered issues such as tourism and its local implications, identity and quotidian discrimination, gender, and the complexities of relative wealth." Don Brenneis, University of California, Santa Cruz