

In both the Vedic and the classical periods, a special elite class of people existed that were called Brahmins. In a rough manner, one might say that their material wellbeing depended on *dakṣiṇā* in the Vedic period and on *dāna* in the classical one.

Broadening the perspective beyond *dakṣiṇā* and *dāna*, this book is on all sorts of giving in the context of pre-modern India, using Vedic, Sanskrit, Buddhist and, to a much lesser extent, Roman and Christian sources. The Brahmanical theory of the gift (i.e., the theory of dutiful gifting, *dharmadāna*) is a major focus of, and has provided a major motivation for, this study.

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