

Since the inscriptions of Ashoka provide the earliest evidence with regard to Buddhist doctrine which can be dated precisely, L. Schmithausen closely examines Buddhist canonical texts and doctrinal terms mentioned in Ashokan inscriptions. The use of certain doctrinal terms as well as certain concepts and notions seem to render a rather short chronology more probable, even though some other features seem to presuppose considerable development and therefore a longer distance in time between Ashoka and the Buddha.

H. von Stietencron, investigating the puranic genealogies, points out that major mistakes are not likely to occur in either the royal genealogies or in the line of the masters of *vinaya*, since both play a role in the transfer and recognition of charisma. In all the lists of the different kingdoms, the generation of the Buddha's contemporaries is separated by 9 or 10 generations from Ashoka, thus excluding a very late dating of the Buddha. However, in terms of absolute chronology the calculation of the date of the Buddha need not be binding, for the years of individual reigns are less reliable in those texts whose purpose is to establish rights of succession. A. Yuyama re-examines the manuscript readings and meanings of certain numbers relevant to the problem of chronology in Buddhist canonical literature. New proposals about the Buddha's dating are made by A.K. Narain (483 BC) and R. Gombrich (ca. 404 BC).

The book also contains a short introduction by the editor H. Bechert.

*Almuth Degener*

INSTITUTO CULTURAL DE MACAU (ed.), *Os Mares da Asia 1500-1800. Sociedades Locais, Portugueses e Expansão Europeia. The Asian Seas 1500-1800. Local Societies, European Expansion and the Portuguese.* (Revista de Cultura, No. 13/14). Macau: Instituto Cultural de Macau 1991. 361 pp., 100 Patacas; 200 escudos; 13 US \$.

The present volume edited by the Instituto Cultural de Macau attempts to analyse the impact and consequences European expansion had for the local societies of the Asian seas between the Indian Ocean, China and Japan during the period 1500-1800.

Thematically the articles - most of them in English, some in Portuguese or French - first treat "Ports, Cities and Trading Networks", fol-

lowed by further titles dealing with "Merchants", "Routes and Ships", "Politics & Diplomacy" and, finally, "Image".

The first articles deal with commercial life on the Asian Seas. Roderich Ptak compares the Chinese expansion in the first thirty-five years of the 15th century, when the middle kingdom's commercial activities reached their climax, with the Portuguese presence seventy years later. Analysing these two trade systems and pointing out their differences as well as their common elements, Ptak directs his attention to the continuity, emphasizing that the frontiers between the so-called pre-European and the European period are fictitious. The role that some cities played in this trade is subject of the following articles. Geneviève Bouchon writes about Calicut at the beginning of the 16th century. This city had already reached its zenith economically and politically when the Portuguese fleet arrived. Sanjay Subrahmanyam deals with the city of Thatta, which was an important harbour on the river Indus from the 16th up to the mid-17th century. Ayutthaya, a city in the Thai kingdom, and its fast economic development during the Portuguese presence is the subject taken up by John Villiers. Luis Filipe Thomaz analyses how Malaca became a typical Asian-Portuguese city, based on naval and military power and reinforced by the acculturation between Portuguese and Asian inhabitants. Claude Guillot writes about the Portuguese presence in Banten, from where Portuguese ships took pepper for sale on the Chinese market. Macau's sea trade at the beginning of the 19th century is the subject of Manuel Bairrão Oleiro. This group of articles is concluded by a typology of port cities in the Western Indian Ocean, in which Rene Jan Barendse stresses the relation between the coastline and the hinterland.

In the second part Om Prakash treats the importance of European and Asian merchants in the intra-Asian trade. Based on Chang Hsien's manuscript, Leonard Blussé and Zhuang Guotu deal with the trade in the province of Fukien. Sinnappah Arasaratnam writes about the commercial communities of Coromandel and the political circumstances between 1650 and 1700, while Catherine Manning concentrates on the French presence in the same region between 1720 and 1750. Ashin Das Gupta shows - exemplified by commercial activities in Surat in the 1840s - particular interest in the intermediate trade carried out by Indian brokers. The history of French-Oriental commercial relations, as illustrated by Captain Pierre Blancard, is analysed by Ernestina Carreira.

The following thematic group deals with the information that historical sources offer about routes and ships. In this context Lotika Vara-



darajan considers that the meeting of Portuguese and Eastern captains resulted in recording traditional Asian and occidental techniques of navigation. José Alberto Leitão Barata draws attention to the "Peregrinação" of Fernão Mendes Pinto as a source of ship typology in the Asian seas.

The fourth thematic group contains studies on the history of diplomatic relations between Portugal and Ceylon in the first part of the 16th century (Chandra R. de Silva) and later (António Vasconcelos de Saldanha). Relations with Japan are analysed by João Paulo Costa, devoting special attention to the role of Oda Nobung, the most important and powerful Japanese between 1568 and 1582, who allowed the entrance of occidental civilisation - from technology to religion. George Winius treats the so-called "shadow-empire" Portuguese in the Bay of Bengal: although this "empire" had not been conquered by the Portuguese nor had Portuguese law been introduced, their presence can be observed in a generation of Euro-Asians, traders and missionaries. Consequences of the Spanish-Dutch war (1568-1648) in Malaca are discussed by Mark Vink. This group of articles concludes with Carmen Radulet's presentation of hitherto unpublished works of D. António José de Noronha, Bishop of Halicarnasso and Nabab of Dilavargenga, which are very important for an analysis of the Estado da India in the second part of the 18th century.

The last two studies of the volume try to answer the question how the Portuguese were regarded by Asian people. While A. Jan Qaisar analyses the image of the Portuguese in Mughal paintings in the times of Emperor Akbar, K.C. Fok deals with the Chinese attitude towards Portuguese settlement in Macau.

This issue of the *Revista de Cultura*, arranged and introduced by Jorge Manuel Flores, deserves our appreciation. It contains a comprehensive selection of studies about the Asian seas; undoubtedly a fruitful instrument of research, it presents essential material for maritime and Asian-European history between 1500 and 1800. The Instituto Cultural de Macau has contributed to an important volume by inviting the most erudite and well-known specialists and including a lot of illustrations in black and white as well as in colour.

*Marília dos Santos Lopes*