

AKBAR S. AHMED, *Resistance and Control in Pakistan*. London/ New York: Routledge, 1991. (pb edition) xxiv, 207 pages.

Between 1978 and 1980 the author of this collection of eloquent essays in applied anthropology was the Political Agent (P.A.) of the South Waziristan Agency, one of the Tribal Areas of Pakistan's turbulent N.W.F.P. area. What we find here is much more than a cleverly composed autobiography, however. This book can clearly be read at various levels, appealing to the adventurous romantic ex-colonial as well as to development specialists, political scientists and those concerned to understand Islam in its contemporary manifestations. In effect, what we find here is an intricate combination of an academic anthropologist's self-reflection and participant observation, a Muslim scholar's experience of Islam 'in the field' and a senior civil servant's account of his achievements in familiar and yet potentially treacherous territory. Ahmed conveys vivid images of upright people, hardened by the rigours of their beautiful, rugged habitat, and motivated by codes of honour that are as much local as Muslim and have little in common with the comparatively sedate rest of Pakistan that seeks to assert its supremacy over these 'tribals'.

The shrewd anthropologist administrator appears to have had a most successful period of office, which leads to the serious argument that all civil servants (at any rate in Pakistan and neighbouring countries) should be trained in anthropology. I see a major contribution of this book (and Professor Francis Robinson's searching foreword) in its focus on issues of development and Islamic studies. On processes of development, Ahmed appears to conclude (p. 101) that, contrary to conventional wisdom, society does not always modernize by linear progression. Regarding Islamic studies, Ahmed has some interesting things to say about ethnicity in Muslim societies and the perception of ethnic minority concerns in Pakistan, which have become an increasingly important factor in the process of nation-building of this still very young state.

The author, somewhat unconvincingly, if one follows the arguments of Robinson, also seeks to introduce his own concept of the Islamic district paradigm, which re-appears in various parts of the book and is linked to the study of Islamic segmentary societies. Ahmed concludes (p. 143) that the segmentary theory retains its usefulness in examining Islamic tribal groups and, applying this to Waziristan, suggests that his Islamic district paradigm may be explored further.

This very readable book is much more than a case study of a 'mad mullah' and a potentially wide readership will benefit from the author's insights.

Werner F. Menski

HEINZ BECHERT (Hrsg.), *The Dating of the Historical Buddha/Die Datierung des historischen Buddha*. Pt. 1. (Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, phil.-hist. Klasse, Folge 3, Nr. 189). (Symposien zur Buddhismusforschung, IV, 1). Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1991. XV, 525 pages, DM 310.- (ISBN 3-525-82476-9).

Until quite recently, the dating of Siddhārtha Gautama, known as the Buddha, was considered as practically certain. His Nirvāṇa, believed to have taken place around 480 BC, was cited as one of the very few certain dates, indeed the earliest date, of ancient Indian history. Few scholars questioned the historicity of the traditional dates which appeared time and again in handbooks and encyclopaedias and served as the basis for all early Indian chronology.

Since the early 1980s H. Bechert has renewed discussion of the dating of the Buddha. In a booklet<sup>1</sup> published in 1986 he gave a summary of research, pointing out that none of the relevant sources can be relied upon as evidence for the exact dates of the Buddha. Since the dating of the Buddha is of considerable interest not only for students of Buddhism, a symposium on "The Date of the Historical Buddha and the Importance of its Determination for Historiography and World History" was held in Hedemünden near Göttingen on April 11-18, 1988 under the sponsorship of the Göttingen Akademie der Wissenschaften<sup>2</sup>. Among the participants were indologists, historians and archeologists as well as specialists on Tibet, Central Asia and East Asia.

In order to render the standard of discussion as high as possible, a new procedure was followed that seems highly recommendable: all contributors had the opportunity to get acquainted with each other's views before the actual conference through the circulation of all papers re-

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1 Die Lebenszeit des Buddha - das älteste feststehende Datum der indischen Geschichte? NAWG 1986, 127-184 (cf. review in Vol. 19 (1988), p. 99).

2 See *Internationales Asienforum*, 19, 1988, 391-403.