

modern Indian literature. Peter Gaeffke, the author of several standard books on Hindi literature, has argued that the mere fact that works were written in Hindi practically excludes an evaluation of them according to standards developed for Western literature. Walter Schmitt's book is an attempt to challenge this assumption. As a major contribution to the problem of whether or not Western literary criticism may be applied to modern Indian literature at all, it is of interest not only to indologists but to all students of Asian literature. The book is divided into 3 parts: 1) a critical discussion of works on Hindi literature and of literary theories about Western literature whenever relevant to the present study, 2) a thorough analysis of 40 stories, including quotations in German translation and in Hindi wherever necessary, and 3) a summary of the results. As a suitable corpus to work on, Schmitt selected from the collection of stories *Manasarovar* those stories which are told in the first person. The presence of a first person narrator (not identical with the author) is essential for describing the "narrative situation" (*Erzählhaltung*). Contrary to Gaeffke's emphasis on the determinating force of Hindi as a language, Schmitt points out that the narrative perspective is determined rather by the role adopted by the narrator in various contexts, according to the degree and modus of his personal involvement. Another important section is devoted to "temporalisation" (*Zeitgestalt*). This deals with time both as narrated time, and time as it will be experienced through the more or less rapid succession of different narrative elements, i. e. the temporal structure and the rhythm of the narrative. Finally, the work includes an analysis of the titles as representative of the whole story. The fact that the methods adopted and the theories advanced are consistently verified by the texts makes this book entirely convincing. As the only point worth mentioning I noticed the omission of B. Romberg: *Studies in the narrative technique of the first person novel*, Stockholm 1962, in the bibliography.

*Almuth Degener*

**Christiane Hurtig:** *Les Maharajahs et la politique dans l'Inde contemporaine*. Paris: Presse de la fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1988. 369 pages, FF 220,—

We tend to forget that India, before Independence, was only partly British India. There were more than 500 indigenous states, some of them quite small and un-

important, some, however, big in size and economically very viable. All of them were - directly or indirectly - connected to the Crown by treaties.

Christiane Hurtig wanted to know what happened to the rulers of those princely states. How did they fare after Independence? Do they have a political role within the contemporary set-up? Did they "integrate" as envisaged by the founder fathers of the constitution?

Christiane Hurtig first paints a tableau of the historical developments up to 1971. That year was crucial for the princes, because it brought the abolition of the Privy Purses. The political process that led to the final legislation is described in detail. This first part of the book, however, does not produce any new findings. The story of the Privy Purses and their abolition can be found elsewhere.

The second part of the book is more interesting. Christiane Hurtig visits a number of former princes who have entered modern politics. Most of them in State politics, a few also on the national level. The interviews were obviously given with great pleasure. Most of the former nobility are opposed to the ruling party and to the present government and were quite happy to express their dissatisfaction. What the princes complain about does not, however, specifically concern their former status and role but reflects their general discontent about contemporary politics. Many seem to be frustrated, since they couldn't really adjust to party politics. However, the few who did succeed, show very interesting profiles: transition from tradition to modernity within one generation. The most striking case in point here is Karan Singh. (It might have been even more interesting to include V. P. Singh in the sample of interviews!)

In present day India most of the former princes are reduced to spectators of the political scene. Democracy and Congress socialism put an end to the *ancien régime*. The abolition of the Privy Purses was only a final blow and was unnecessary as such. No wonder that most Rajahs are forgotten or serve only as historical reminiscences.

The former members of ruling families, who did and/or do play a role in modern Indian politics, are doing so on account of their individual capacity. They are elected or defeated in the same way as other candidates. And former princely regions like Rajasthan, obviously do not differ much from former British areas like U. P.

Christiane Hurtig's book is enjoyable to read. It is not scientific in the strict sense. There is no fixed interview sample, and there is little theory, to be verified or falsified. The interviews were conducted at random; and as far as

theory is concerned: the Indian princes do not qualify to demonstrate the dialectics of tradition and modernity.

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**Heinz Bechert:** *Buddhismus, Staat und Gesellschaft in Ländern des Theravāda-Buddhismus. Band 1: Grundlagen. Ceylon (Sri Lanka). Nachdruck der Ausgabe von 1966. ( Veröffentlichungen des Seminars für Indologie und Buddhismuskunde der Universität Göttingen, Bd. 5). Göttingen 1988. XXI, 404 pages.*

From reports about riots and communal clashes in Buddhist countries like Burma and Sri Lanka, it has become clear to even a casual observer that quite frequently Buddhist monks are not only asked their opinion on political matters but even take an active part in politics. In Sri Lanka especially, there is an obvious relationship between nationalism and religion, with Singhalese Buddhism on the one hand and Tamil Hinduism on the other. A flood of publications on various aspects of Buddhism has come out in recent years. Only in very rare instances, however, does one find even so much as an attempt to explain the connexion of Buddhism with political agitation.

The reprint of Heinz Bechert's book on "Buddhism, State, and Society in the Countries of Theravāda Buddhism", published originally in 1966, is therefore greatly to be welcomed. While vols. 2 and 3 are still available, vol. 1 has for a long time been out of print. The first part of the book is devoted to a study of Buddhism, Buddhist modernism, and its functions in the context of modern politico-social doctrines in general. The second part consists of a detailed documentation of the developments in Sri Lanka, including quotations from a great number of sources written in European languages and translated from Singhalese. Particularly helpful for a critical examination of the present situation in Sri Lanka is Bechert's evaluation of the doctrinal and historical background to modern political and social developments, and his account of the role played by political Buddhism in Sri Lanka from the time of independence to 1965. The reprint is furnished with a preface by the author, with references to recent publications, an index, and a sheet of corrigenda. Even 20 years after its first publication this important book must be warmly recommended to anyone interested in the political and social life of South and South East Asia.

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