

Tao King – the Chinese version of the Mahācattārisaka Sutta” deal with Chinese translations of Buddhist canonical texts. Collette Caillat considers “Some Idiosyncrasies of Language and Style in Aśoka’s Rock Edicts at Girnar”. Points of terminology in Buddhist and Jaina texts and the Indian epic respectively feature in the papers of Jan Willem de Jong: “Notes on the Bodhisattvabhūmi”, Klaus Bruhn: “Soteriology in Early Jainism” (about terminology related to *kasāya*, as a “sectional study”), and Minoru Hara: “Invigoration”.

Orissa, where Ulrich Schneider’s “Holzgott” project was carried out, is the scene of several contributions. Hermann Kulke demonstrates that the temple chronicles of Puri, written around 1600 and without immediate predecessors, served to rework historical evidence in order to provide stability after a time of deep crisis. The concept of historical continuity was probably not rooted in political interests, but originated in the priestly circles of Puri. Jakob Rösel outlines the devastating impact of British administration in Orissa and analyzes the reasons for it in “Colonial Bureaucracy vs. the Old Agrarian Order”. Georg Pfeffer shows that different deities may complement rather than rival each other. Male and female deities worshipped among the “scheduled tribes” are shown to have an antagonistic relationship. Albrecht Wezler investigates the interrelationship of “Hinduism and Buddhism” in philosophy. He shows that the doctrine of the Nine Causes in the Yogabhāṣya was adapted from Buddhist teachings. The author of the Yogabhāṣya was influenced not only by the Sarvāstivāda, but apparently also by the Yogācāra school.

Almuth Degener

Heinz Bechert, Die Lebenszeit des Buddha – das älteste feststehende Datum der indischen Geschichte? (Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, I. Philologisch-Historische Klasse, Jahrgang 1986, Nr. 4). Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1986. 58 pages, DM 16.–

All commonly used handbooks on Indian history or on Buddhism agree in accepting as the first firmly established date in ancient Indian history the *nirvāṇa* of the Buddha in about 480 BC, while in those countries where Buddhism still flourishes, the calendar begins with a supposed *nirvāṇa* in 544/3 BC. After giving a survey of research and refuting this traditional and other dates, the number of which has increased even since this book was published (V.G. Ramachandran: Gauthama the Buddha, the date and times. Madras 1987 (?), suggesting 1817 (!) BC as the date of the Buddha’s birth), the arguments put forward in support of the “longer chronology” fixing the

nirvāṇa about 480 BC, and summed up especially by A. Bareau (1953) and R. Hikata (1980/1985) are critically examined. Here Bechert succeeds in demonstrating that this chronology, limited more or less to those sources influenced by Sinhalese Theravāda tradition, and by no means universally accepted by all Buddhist schools, presupposes, among many details difficult to accept, an absurdly long life span of the first patriarchs of Buddhism. Many of these problems were broached as early as 1958 by E. Lamotte in his history of Buddhism. It is, however, only Bechert who convincingly argues that these difficulties disappear once the "shorter chronology" is accepted, which places the death of the Buddha, and consequently that of Mahāvīra, the founder of Jainism, who died a few years earlier, within a century or even less before Aśoka. Further, the obvious lack of development of Buddhism between the *nirvāṇa* and the time of Aśoka, which is hard to explain as long as the longer chronology is accepted, is easily understood if the Buddha lived in the decades before the campaign of Alexander the Great. This obviously implies a totally new evaluation of Buddhism within its historical context. A first step in this direction will be undertaken by a conference on the date of the Buddha to be held in Göttingen in April 1988 to follow up the new perspective opened by this thorough, important, and convincing study with its far-reaching consequences for the history of religion and thought in India.

Oskar v. Hinüber

Vyankatesh Madgulkar, Das Dorf hieß Bangarvadi. Roman. Aus dem Marathi von Günther-D. Sontheimer. (Neue Indische Bibliothek, Bd. 10). Freiburg: Wolf Mersch, 1986. 152 pages, DM 22.–

Shashi Deshpande, Das Dunkel birgt keine Schrecken. Roman. Aus dem indischen Englisch von Giovanni Bandini. (Neue Indische Bibliothek, Bd. 12). Freiburg: Wolf Mersch, 1986. 231 pages, DM 25.–

Here are two more exemplary editions of modern Indian literature chosen so felicitously by the editor L. Lutze.

The first book – well known to the English reading public for nearly 30 years – deals with village life in Maharashtra at the beginning of this century – a village of mostly shepherds as seen by the narrator, a teacher sent by the government of the then raja of Audh. How the villagers of Bangarvadi react to the educational programme, how the teacher has to adjust to their needs, their mentality, how in the end the whole village dissolves as it were because of a terrible drought (a theme equal-