

given full treatment in "An autopsy of Arun-3", written after the World Bank pull-out, and "Arun-3 Impasse: is there an escape from this blind alley?", published in 1990. Another major issue is the Mahakali treaty of 1991 between Nepal and India, which Dipak Gyawali decries in the chapter "Mahakali treaty: what next?" as a continuation of deals over shared development of water resources between Nepal and India, to the detriment of the former "Water conflicts in southern riparian lands" extends the perspective on Nepal's water resources even further beyond its borders, by analyzing the implications for Nepal of water conflicts in the Indian state of Bihar on its southern boundary that have been created by inappropriate river regime modifications as well as by squabbles over water allocation between the state governments of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, and the central government in Delhi. The other chapters "Contesting hydropower policy", "High dams for Asia", "Three legged water science for Nepal", and "Troubled politics of Himalayan waters" deal with Dipak Gyawali's central concern – water resource development misguided by too narrowly informed and focused policies – from various perspectives. Other recurrent themes are: Nepal's donor dependency, which has led to institutional distortion, i.e. the government monopoly over power production and the dominance of a single government agency: the NEA; the neglected potential of the private sector and of communities as players in the field of energy supply; and finally Nepal's ambiguous and troubled relations with India over water.

*Rivers, Technology and Society* is not a "balanced" scientific inquiry, but provides the partisan view of one who has taken a clear stance in the controversy over hydro-development. As such it is extremely worthwhile reading, and supports Dipak Gyawali's reputation as leading expert on water in Nepal. Its broad perspective, the wealth of facts and figures, the author's erudition, and – last but not least – his elegant, lucid and richly metaphorical prose make this book a pleasure to read.

In sum, this is an excellent book written by one of Nepal's most original minds. It is a must for anyone interested in water development in Nepal, and highly recommended reading for those interested in the emerging trends of interdisciplinary thinking on natural resources management.

Dietrich Schmidt-Vogt

NORBERT PEABODY, *Hindu Kingship and Polity in Pre-Colonial India*. (Cambridge Studies in Indian History and Society, 9). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. XIII, 190 pages, £ 40.00. ISBN 0-521-46548-6

A book published under such a general title as *Hindu Kingship and Polity in Pre-colonial India* – and even more so if it does not have any qualifying subtitle – surely raises certain expectations. Any good introduction to the history of South Asia shows that the idea of royal authority in the subcontinent is by no means

constant in time and displays great regional variants. It cannot be seriously claimed that, e.g., the empire of Harsha of Kanauj and Krishnadevaraya's Vijayanagar are kingdoms of the same type, albeit the term "Hindu" may be attributed to both states. If a book bears such a general title, one may first of all expect a discussion of the history and structure of royal authority in South Asia. The more so as this topic has come to the fore with N. Dirks' *The Hollow Crown* (Cambridge 1987) and has remained part of the current discourse through all shifts of paradigms ever since. There are topics enough for such a discussion and any contribution, be it comparative, systematic or exemplary, would be welcome. Peabody's book, however, does not contribute to such a discourse. If we take its title at face value, the book could be seen as completely off the subject: it contains a collection of articles about the 18th and 19th century kingdom of Kota in Rajasthan and nothing else. How would experts react to a book entitled "Christian Kingship in Pre-modern Europe" containing the history of a single Scottish clan or a Friesian chieftain? Publishing details on just one Indian kingdom under such a general title might also arouse suspicion of Orientalism: knowing Kota means knowing Rajasthan and, as an extension, India as a whole.

Yet, it is this very logic of a narrow orientalist discourse which Peabody, following Said, criticises in his introduction (pp. 9–12). This can only lead to the conclusion that it was another, equally narrow logic which dominated here, namely, that of the market. It is to be hoped that Cambridge University Press will not allow their sales promotion department alone to think up the titles of their books. At least one would hope for an explanatory subtitle.

Looking at the papers themselves, the volume presents itself in a much more favourable light. Besides the introduction entitled "The Logic of the Fish", it contains five articles which were written in a span of about ten years since 1990. Among these are two previously published ("The King is Dead, Long Live the King! [...]") (1997); "In Whose Turban Does the Lord Reside? [...]" (1991, and a largely revised "*Kota Mahajagat, or the Great Universe of Kota [...]*" (1991). Peabody's subtle analysis and explanation of historical processes with the aid of illustrative source material in the form of texts and images and his ability to read systems of symbols as part of the historical context deserves to be presented to a larger public in the form of these collected essays. His approach enables him to weave narratives close to the sources of events at a level generally ignored by textbook history be it "colonial" or "national" in its outlook: this is micro history which enables the reader to take a look at the interconnected historical spheres of city, nobility, ritual sovereignty, taxation, and the effects of colonial first encounters. The author provides the reader with the facts and background knowledge necessary for understanding e.g. the agrarian system and its close connection with fiscal rights of the military nobility, and then shows the impact of growing urban elites and religious movements in this field. In this way, while taking away the orientalist exoticism of the "other", Peabody avoids glossing over the cultural and temporal distance between actors and readers. Only now and then does the impression arise that the author is a bit negligent when refer-

ring to other regions of South Asia. It is clear that any methodological discussion has to include Dirks' Putukottai (*The Hollow Crown*) und Narayana Rao/Shulman/Subrahmanyam (*Symbols of Substance*, Delhi 1992), but the bibliography does not include much of the more recent literature. More of the older literature should also have been included where useful, e.g. for understanding rituals of legitimation performed by the Kota kings. Might the reader not be interested in learning that Maharao Bhim Singh (r. 1707-20) was not the first to donate his kingdom to his *ishtadevata* (personal deity) Brijnathji, who carried on ruling as *divan* on the god's behalf (p. 17), but other kings as well, and this much earlier? This was a current notion at least since the times of the Ganga king Anangabhima III (1211-1238). Anangabhima had surrendered his sovereignty to the *rashtradevata* (state deity) Jagannatha and taken the title of *rautta* or *rajaputra* (H. Kulke, "King Anangabhima, the Veritable Founder of the Gajapati Kingship and the Jagannath Trinity at Puri", *JRAS* 1981, pp. 26-39). In this encounter of different regional histories the book has its few weak points.

Apart from its misleading title, Peabody's collected papers make interesting reading and provide good examples of how to master the twofold translation from another space and another time.

Georg Berkemer

TESSA J. BARTHOLOMEUSZ, *In Defense of Dharma. Just-war Ideology in Buddhist Sri Lanka*. (Critical Studies in Buddhism). London: Routledge Curzon, 2002. XXII, 209 pages, £ 16.99 (pb). ISBN 0-7007-1682-3

If one had to summarize the history of Sri Lanka since independence, "violence" and "civil war" would perhaps top the list. These two key terms describe the tragic aspects of Sri Lanka's political development during the last century, that have caused considerable bewilderment to observers and scholars: How can people adhering to a religion committed to non-violence and peacefulness (of mind and behavior) fall almost collectively into a state shaped precisely by the very opposite? This is the basic question of the book, and the answer the author gives is as simple as it is persuasive: Sinhalese Buddhists would generally adhere to the principles of the Buddha's teachings, but history has taught them that occasionally it may be necessary to defend their religion by all means. Violence, war and even killing are justifiable as long as the case is just. This is, in short, the conclusion of the present work.

It begins with a theoretical discussion of the ethics of war, especially in relation to international law, against the background of the civil war in former Yugoslavia. The second chapter explores what Buddhism has to say about violence and war. As the canonical scriptures remain almost silent about this topic, the discussion naturally focuses on what commentarial literature says, most notably the Mahavamsa. This exploration is continued in the following chapter,