

panorama. The volume will be of special interest to the researcher and students in the field of gender studies, sociology, history, political science and culture studies.

*Madhumita Sarkar*

SVEN BRETTFELD, *Das singhalesische Nationalepos von König Dutthāgāmani Abhaya*. (Monographien zur Indischen Archäologie, Kunst und Philosophie, 13). Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 2001. CXXVII, 276 pages, € 94.50. ISBN 3-496-02712-6

King Dutthagamani, who reigned around the second century B.C., is one of the most illustrious persons in the history of Sri Lanka, being famous for his heroism and generosity alike. He not only brought the whole island under his dominion after defeating the Tamil ruler Elara in a duel, he is also credited with the construction of two remarkable religious buildings, the multi-storeyed Lohapasada with its copper roofing, and the Mahathupa. Both his military prowess and his generosity towards the Buddhist *sangha* made him an ideal Buddhist ruler; and many Sinhalese today regard him as a model to be followed in the struggle to re-establish Sinhalese rule over the whole island. Legends and stories about his life and deeds, which seem to have come into existence soon after his death, exist in various versions. Perhaps best known is the "Dutthagamani epic" from the 6<sup>th</sup> century Sinhalese chronicle *Mahavamsa* (which is also the earliest known version in writing), but there are later records as well. One of these works, the 14<sup>th</sup> century *Rasavahini* by the monk Vedeha, is the subject of Bretfeld's dissertation.

Bretfeld has prepared a new edition of this text, for which purpose he has consulted no less than 14 manuscripts (including the printed version of the text), which he has arranged in a stemma (p. CXIX-CXX). Moreover, he carefully compared the information from the *Rasavahini* with other literary sources like the *Mahavamsa*, the *Sahassavatthupparakana* etc. His conclusion is that the first and diverging versions of the Dutthagamani epic had come into existence by the early centuries of the Christian era. The epic was obviously so popular that the compiler of the *Dipavamsa*, which is our earliest extant textual reference to the story, could restrict himself to the Pali memorial verses, taking it for granted that his audience would know the full story. Mahanama, the supposed author of the *Mahavamsa*, and Vedeha who composed the *Rasavahini*, both made more deliberate use of the full story, though with different predilections and for different purposes. Bretfeld traces all these traditions and moreover rounds up his survey with further fragments and versions of the Dutthagamani epic from sources other than Vedeha's.

Bretfeld is certainly to be commended for this solid study which is both pioneering and comprehensive in every respect. He draws our attention to the wealth of literary and historical records that exist beyond the 'classical' sources,

the Pali chronicles *Dipavamsa* and *Mahavamsa*, without denying the importance of the latter. He also shows that careful philological studies of texts are still indispensable for a society and its history. Finally, historians of Sri Lanka will be grateful to Bretfeld for supplying them not only with a critical edition of the text, but also with an easily accessible translation. However, while acknowledging the strength of the research done by Bretfeld, it is precisely this focus on the study of the text which may seem dissatisfying. History is of public concern in Sri Lanka, and a national hero like Dutthagamani is part of the political discourse. Strictly confining himself to the study of the text, Bretfeld hardly pays attention to its context, except for a few short remarks in the introduction. This omission applies not only to the present situation (for which works by Obeyesekere and others might have been taken into regard), but also to the political environment in 14<sup>th</sup> century Sri Lanka in which Vedeha related once again the story of Dutthagamani and gave it a much stronger anti-Tamil bias than writers before him. In this respect alone, an otherwise laudable work falls somewhat short of a reader's expectations.

*Tilman Frasch*

MARLENE NJAMMASCH, *Bauern, Buddhisten und Brahmanen. Das frühe Mittelalter in Gujarat*. (Asien- und Afrika-Studien der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, 2). Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2001. XXI, 423 pages, € 116.—. ISBN 3-447-04137-4

One of the various regional dynasties which had come to power in the aftermath of the Gupta empire were the Maitrakas who held sway over Gujarat between c. 600 and 850 C.E. Though most of the Maitraka kings were Hindus and supported Brahmins, they also made donations to the Buddhist monasteries located in and around their capital city Vallabhi. The major source for the study of the Maitrakas are inscriptions (c. 130 sometimes much damaged copper plates are known), as most of the architectural remains of Vallabhi are buried under the modern town Vala. Due to the complete lack of other sources, such as historiographical traditions, the author, Professor of Ancient South Asian History in Berlin, has consequently placed the focus of her study on the inscriptions.

The first chapter of the book deals with the administrative structures, royal power and bureaucracy. The second chapter analyses the situation of the village peasantry and the land system. This is continued in chapter 3 which looks at the hydraulic works. The remaining three chapters focus on religious institutions, covering Buddhist monasteries, Brahmanical settlements and temples. Three appendices supply a list of the Maitraka inscriptions (ordered chronologically as far as possible), drawings of field markings related to ch. 2.1, and a map indicating the Buddhist monasteries of ancient Gujarat. The insights presented in the book as a whole are based on a thorough and detailed survey of the available epigraphs. The strength of the book clearly lies in the solid empirical research.