

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 14th 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.

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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.

However, her competence in tackling inscriptions has unfortunately prevented Njammasch from taking into regard anything but inscriptions. Little is said about the historical or religious background during Maitraka rule (e.g. the Jainist-Buddhist dispute which may have contributed to the decline of Buddhism is completely ignored), and, still worse, there is no theoretical discussion of e.g. the concepts of early Indian statehood to guide the reader through the wealth of the inscriptional evidence. The few and scattered references to the model of Indian feudalism are scarcely adequate. On the whole, this is historiography of a very traditional, positivist kind, and it is hardly astonishing to note that Njammasch's book hardly differs from a thesis on exactly the same topic, a study of the Maitrakas which, though published only recently, had been submitted to Baroda University in 1949 (H.G. Shastri, *Gujarat under the Maitrakas of Vallabhi*, Vadodara 2000 (Gaekwad's Oriental Series, 180)).

Furthermore, Njammasch's book is not even original. Scholars familiar with the "Beiträge des Südasien-Institutes", a journal edited by the then South Asia Institute of the Humboldt University, Berlin, will find nearly everything there in the form of separate articles. Thus (to give two examples chosen at random), the part on "Die Dorfgemeinde im Maitraka-Reich" (pp. 27–52) is taken from vol. 1 (1992), pp. 1–49, and the chapter "Tempelschenkungen auf Kathiawar" (pp. 331–354) was published in vol. 3 (1993), pp. 27–70. As the earlier versions which had been designed as separate articles have been reprinted with only minute alterations (even mistakes remain uncorrected, e.g. the "maxim of the follow land" on p. 220), many repetitions occur. The term *svatala* is explained several times, and long passages on pp. 239–255 repeat previous statements. The poor standard of copy-editing is also illustrated by the fact that the first para on pp. 239–240 is printed twice. Ironically, the only article that has not been reprinted from the journal addresses a very interesting topic, the question of faked inscriptions. These fakes may be of little value to historians in search of „true“ and „objective“ history, but they can reveal a lot about notions of justice as well as historical awareness and perceptions of the past of those who had the fakes inscribed.

This work leaves the reader with rather mixed feelings. Carefully and systematically scrutinizing the inscriptions, Njammasch clearly demonstrates her potential as a scholar of Sanskrit epigraphy, while on the other hand she hardly ever tries to relate her work to current research on the political and economic history of early medieval South Asia. On and off one gets the impression that the book emerged as a mere by-product of an intended critical edition with an annotated translation of the Maitraka inscriptions. If plans for such a project indeed exist, we would look forward to having the corpus of Maitraka inscriptions available in due course.

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