

# Buchbesprechungen = Comptes rendus

Autor(en): [s.n.]

Objektyp: **BookReview**

Zeitschrift: **Asiatische Studien : Zeitschrift der Schweizerischen  
Asiengesellschaft = Études asiatiques : revue de la Société  
Suisse-Asie**

Band (Jahr): **53 (1999)**

Heft 3

PDF erstellt am: **22.09.2024**

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## BUCHBESPRECHUNGEN / COMPTES RENDUS

Christopher R. KING: *One Language, Two Scripts. The Hindi Movement in Nineteenth Century North India*. xii, 232 S. Bombay: Oxford University Press 1994 [1995]. ISBN 0195635655

50 Jahre nachdem die indische Verfassung ein sanskritisiertes Hindi zur Nationalsprache erhoben hat, steht deren endgültige Form noch keineswegs fest; der Einfluss des konkurrierenden Sprachstils Urdu ist weiterhin auf allen Kommunikationsebenen spürbar, auch wenn der Gebrauch der persischen Schrift auf dem Gebiet der Indischen Union sehr zurückgegangen ist. In der durch keine neueren Arbeiten überholten Zusammenfassung seiner unveröffentlichten Dissertation (1974) und dreier späterer Aufsätze untersucht der amerikanische Historiker Christopher KING den politischen Hintergrund dieser Rivalität bis zum Verwaltungsentscheid von 1900, der die mit Urdu gleichberechtigte Verwendung des Hindi resp. der *Devanagari*-Schrift bei Gerichten und Behörden der *North-Western Provinces and Oudh* gestattete und im Hindi Lager als psychologischer Durchbruch gefeiert wurde.

Dass Aussenstehende den von Nichtindern wegen mangelnder Sprachkenntnisse wenig erforschten Streit nicht automatisch unvoreingenommen betrachten, ist KING wohlbewusst. Ein persönliches statement of bias bringt seine Abneigung gegenüber jeglicher Form von Chauvinismus diplomatisch, aber unmissverständlich zum Ausdruck, und ein Appendix setzt sich kritisch mit dem Informationswert häufig zitierter Quellen und den Vorurteilen von deren Verfassern auseinander. Neben Abgewogenheit in der Formulierung und dem Bemühen um Unparteilichkeit zeichnet sich die Studie durch eine betont didaktische Konzeption aus, die sie zu einem wertvollen, im Anmerkungsteil freilich hier und da redundanten, *regional studies textbook* macht. Doch auch einschlägig vorgebildete Leser werden die präzise Erklärung indischer Begriffe, die detaillierten Personen- und Sachindices sowie die Fülle genauer Literaturhinweise zu schätzen wissen. Lediglich bei einigen vielfach neuaufgelegten Hindi Titeln vermisst man das bei näherem Hinsehen durchaus feststellbare Ersterscheinungsdatum.

Den methodischen Ansatz bezieht KING, auf dem Umweg über Paul BRASS, von Karl DEUTSCH. Wie BRASS (*Language, Religion and Politics in North India*, 1974) stellt er die Hindi-Bewegung ins Zentrum eines

gesellschaftlichen Mobilisierungsprozesses, der erst durch die Bündelung mehrerer heterogener Kampagnen und massenwirksam manipulierte religiöse Symbolik Durchschlagskraft und Tempo gewinnt. Analysiert als multi-symbol-congruence process, durch den Schrift, Sprache und Religion miteinander identifiziert werden, kann die Hindi-Bewegung zum Kristallisationskern des aufkommenden Hindu Nationalismus gemacht und überzeugend nachgewiesen werden, wie die ersten Schritte zur folgenreichen Gleichung 'Hindi - Hindu - Hindustan' schon vor der Gründung der bekannten Sprachvereine getan wurden.

Nach einem statistischen Blick auf die nordindische Buch- und Zeitschriftenproduktion, an der der Anteil der Urdu Publikationen in dem Masse zurückging, wie der der Hindi Publikationen nach Beginn der Bewegung in den 60er Jahren zunahm, untersucht KING die praktischen Auswirkungen des Konflikts vor allem im Bereich des rapide expandierenden öffentlichen Schulwesens und des zunehmend auch Einheimischen offenstehenden kolonialen Verwaltungsdienstes. Sorgfältig recherchierte Jahresberichte des *Dept. of Public Instruction* und andere administrative Aufzeichnungen belegen den allmählichen Wandel zugunsten des Hindi – aber auch, wie traditionell literate Kasten noch lange auf Seiten des Urdu angestammte Berufsfelder verteidigten. Besonders der Regierung der *North-Western Provinces* scheint der Zusammenhang zwischen Sprache, öffentlichem Schulwesen und Beschäftigungschancen jedoch zunächst verborgen geblieben zu sein. In der Widersprüchlichkeit ihrer Schul- und Amtssprachenpolitik, die einerseits Hindi – zusammen mit Urdu – als vernakulares Unterrichtsmedium förderte und damit eine wachsende Zahl Hindi-gebildeter Schulabsolventen schuf, andererseits an Urdu als Verwaltungssprache festhielt, erkennt KING einen bislang unzureichend gewürdigten Grund für das Eskalieren des Konflikts und das Scheitern späterer Bemühungen, die auseinanderstrebenden Stile in Gestalt eines als Kompromiss definierten Hindustani wieder zusammenzuführen.

Neues Licht fällt auch auf interne Kontroversen innerhalb des Hindi Lagers und die Logik der Entscheidung für ein sanskritisiertes *Khari Boli* und die *Devanagari*-Schrift – gegen die als Literatursprache angesehenere, aber weniger verbreitete *Braj Bhasa* und gegen die *Kaithi*-Schrift. Diese damals gemeinhin benutzte kursive Abart des *Devanagari* scheint schon aufgrund entfernter Ähnlichkeit mit der persischen Schrift als differenzierendes Gruppensymbol ausgeschieden zu sein. Dass auf Anregung englischer Schulinspektoren eine eigene Druckform für sie entwickelt

worden war, die mehrere Jahrzehnte in Schulbüchern der Nachbarprovinz Bihar benutzt wurde, gehört zu den kaum noch erinnerten Details, die KINGS Studie auch für jene zur lohnenden Lektüre machen, die die historischen Zusammenhänge bereits zu kennen glauben.

Wer die Rivalität der beiden Sprachstile mehr unter linguistischen Gesichtspunkten betrachtet und in ihr auch ein Musterbeispiel für *multimodal* (oder *polycentric*) standardization sieht, mag vielleicht bedauern, dass ein wichtiger Aspekt nur am Rande ins Blickfeld kommt: dass die konkurrierenden Stile im Streben nach lexikalischer Distinktheit unterschiedlich weit gehen. Zwar wird deutlich, dass sich vor allem das Hindi im Wortschatz vom Urdu abzusetzen trachtete und nicht umgekehrt, doch entsteht auch bei KING der Eindruck, dass sich die Literaturstile ('High Urdu', 'High Hindi') im Endeffekt gleichermassen weit von der gemeinsamen Dialektbasis bzw. der Umgangssprache entfernen. Ein Vergleich nichtliterarischer, nichtfachsprachlicher (speziell: nicht rechtssprachlicher) Texte würde zeigen, dass jede derartige Verallgemeinerung schon für den hier zur Diskussion stehenden Zeitraum problematisch ist, und erst recht für die nachfolgende Entwicklung im 20. Jahrhundert. Wenn heute das Urdu als pakistanische Nationalsprache vergleichsweise besser dasteht und seine Stellung gegenüber dem Englischen sowohl in der staatlichen Verwaltung wie im Unterrichtswesen und in der Presse deutlich gefestigter ist als die des Hindi selbst in den hindisprachigen Regionen Indiens, dann ist dies sicher nicht allein einer sprachpolitisch entspannteren Ausgangslage oder der autoritäreren Regierungsform zu verdanken, sondern wesentlich auch einer pragmatischeren Haltung beim lexikalischen Ausbau der Sprache und einer davon profitierenden grammatischen Regelmäßigkeit. Exzessiv puristische Bestrebungen, die auch den Grundwortschatz von 'Fremd-elementen' reinigen und auf ein klassisches Ideal hin ausrichten wollten, hat es auf Seiten des Urdu nicht gegeben. Die Beispiele, mit denen die Ideen des *Shuddh Hindi*-Hardliners Raghuvira im Schlusskapitel kurz illustriert werden (S. 174), scheinen allerdings der Legende zu entstammen; in Raghuviras veröffentlichten Terminologielisten und Wörterbüchern sind sie nicht nachzuweisen.

Unnötig nivellierend wirkt die im gleichen Kapitel spekulativ geäußerte Ansicht, dass sich die archaisierende Lexik der indischen Nationalsprache womöglich auch ohne das Kontrastmodell Urdu als quasi natürliches Sanskritisierungsphänomen hätte herausbilden können (S. 182). Eine solche Spekulation läuft der argumentativen Hauptrichtung der



Untersuchung, die die Bedeutung des muslimischen Feindbilds mit Recht hervorhebt, zuwider. Sie lässt sich auch nicht mit dem Verweis auf das Beispiel anderer moderner indischer Sprachen (Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati) untermauern, deren lexikalische Entwicklung in jüngerer Zeit ebenfalls stark von antimuslimischen Ressentiments bestimmt wurde.

KING beschliesst seine Untersuchung mit einer persönlichen Stellungnahme, in der er, den Erfolg des Englischen anführend, für die Rückkehr zu einer assimilierenden Sprachkultur plädiert. Allein ein massvoller Mittelweg biete Aussichten auf einen stärkeren nationalen und – wie von Hindi-Aktivisten aus Prestigegründen propagiert – internationalen Gebrauch der Sprache. Inzwischen rechnet man in Indien kaum noch mit einer baldigen Ablösung des Englischen durch das Hindi, und gelegentlich wird auch hier schon der Verdacht geäußert, dass neben den gewöhnlich genannten *vested interests* der Beamtenschaft und der Opposition des dravidischen Südens andere, in der Künstlichkeit der ideologisch überhöhten Sprache selbst liegende, Gründe für die Verzögerung verantwortlich sein könnten. In der Tat dürfte die jetzt noch ausstehende wissenschaftliche Aufarbeitung der jüngsten (post 1970) Epoche mit historisch-politologischen Beschreibungsmodellen allein nicht zu leisten sein; immer mehr zeichnet sich ab, dass technisch-sprachplanerische Aspekte verstärkt in die Betrachtung einbezogen werden müssen. Hier wäre als erstes zu klären, inwieweit die im 19. Jhr. entwickelten und bis heute nicht hinterfragten Grundannahmen der indischen Nationalsprachenideologie aus sprachplanerischer Sicht tatsächlich realistisch sind, ob nicht eher jenem Mythenarsenal zugehören, mit dem die Sanskrit-Begeisterung romantischer Europäer eine ebenso phantastische wie dauerhafte Nachblüte erfährt. Die Frage rührt an die Wurzeln des modernen indischen Selbstverständnisses, doch sollte dies kein Grund sein, sich nicht auch ihrer auf dieselbe taktvoll-nüchterne Weise anzunehmen, mit der der sprachliche Separatismus hier von seinen soziokulturellen Hintergründen her analysiert worden ist.

Dietmar Mayan

Axel MICHAELS: *Der Hinduismus. Geschichte und Gegenwart*. München: C.H. Beck, 1998. ISBN 3-406-44103-3. 458 pp.

This is an important new book about Hinduism, which deals with its various aspects in richly documented fashion. After chapters on theoretical principles and historical bases, it treats in detail the place the “Hindu-religions” occupy in society, the rites of transition that accompany Hindus throughout their lives, conceptions of death and life after death, the so-called caste system and the role of the Brahmin and the gods and goddesses, etc. etc. On each of these topics MICHAELS has something to say, often new, always well reflected, and without exception extremely well-informed. Thirty-five tables give detailed information about a variety of topics. A number of well-chosen pictures illustrate the text. This book can be strongly recommended to any reader interested in Hinduism.

Those who, on the basis of the title, expect to find in this book a history of Hinduism may however be disappointed. The book talks a lot about the past, but makes no attempt to present a history of Hinduism. Rather it refers to the historical background of various aspects of present-day Hinduism, without trying to introduce a truly historical perspective. This often (but not always) means that the present situation is compared with the one met with in Vedic and its ancillary literature. This sometimes produces the impression that the past is to some extent presented as it figures in the self-image of many modern Hindus, which does not necessarily always coincide with the past as revealed in historical research.

It is one of the great merits of the book under review that it not only presents facts, but makes a major effort to explain them, or at any rate to understand them in the light of more general features that supposedly characterise Hinduism. An important example is the feature which MICHAELS describes as “the cohesive force, which holds the Hindu-religions together and makes them resistant against foreign influences” and which he calls the “identificatory habit” (*identifikatorischer Habitus*) (p. 19). This notion is introduced with some examples, the second one being the fact that India has obtained remarkably few Olympic medals during the hundred years of existence of the Olympic movement. According to MICHAELS (p. 21) this might show that in India the individual accomplishment does not receive much appreciation.

It is possible that MICHAELS’ “identificatory habit” is capable of explaining many aspects of Hinduism – more will be said about this below

– but the example of the Olympic medals may not fall in this category. It may rather illustrate how easy it is to misunderstand the present situation of India, the result of British colonial rule followed by half a century of planned economy and over-bureaucratisation, as characteristic of Hinduism in general. Numerous Hindu emigrants in Europe, Africa, South-East Asia, North-America and elsewhere adapt themselves without any difficulty to competitive societies and show that for them individual accomplishment receives full appreciation. And as far as Olympic medals are concerned, the following newspaper article – which appeared under the title “We were thrilled to strike gold but India cared two hoots for us” in *The Indian Express*, Pune Newline p. 2 on Tuesday, December 29, 1998 – in which former sportswoman Namrata Shah recalls her experience of bureaucratic India following the Asian Games in New Delhi in 1982, may explain more than does the “identificatory habit”:

Namrata Shah nee Nazleen Madraswala, former hockey captain of India under whose steering India had won the gold medal in the 1982 Asian Games in New Delhi has a woeful story to narrate.

History was inscribed in golden letters when, for the first time, the Indian women’s hockey team struck gold in the Asian Games. After tears of pride that rolled down these sportswomen’s eyes when they stood on the podium with the national anthem ringing in their ears and the national flag fluttering before their eyes, it was tears of humiliation and distress all the way.

Narrates Namrata, “We were thrilled to have the gold medal around our necks which had brought pride to India, but India cared two hoots for us after that. No arrangements were made for us to go home. I called my parents in Pune and told them I was coming by the Jammu Tavi Jhelum Express in an unreserved compartment and that they should look out for me at the Pune station.”

When she got on the train at Delhi, she could not find [a] seat in the unreserved compartment. A concerned middle-aged man took pity on Namrata who still had the medal round her neck and asked her whether she had brought honour to the country. When she nodded, he sacrificed his seat. That’s how she got a place to sit, while travelling thousands of miles down to Pune. Rues Namrata, “At the Pune station, there were just four or five of my family members. Otherwise, not even a dog was around to know that two medalists of the country had arrived in their hometown. And of course, no congratulatory messages from the prime minister, chief minister or even for that matter the mayor of Pune!”

Her arrival in Pune was followed by “*chota mota* clubs in Pune felicitating her. It was an indelible aftermath, after winning the gold medal. It really hurt at that point of time.”

After a couple of months, in December 1982 that is, Namrata received a letter from the sports ministry inviting her to participate in the Republic Day parade of

January 26, 1983. Says Namrata, "All the medal winners marched along but that's it, we were not even honoured."

More agony followed. The Government of Maharashtra, says Namrata, announced a prize of one lakh rupees for every gold medalist of the Asian Games. "But," rues Namrata, "when I approached the Directorate of Sports in Pune, the official told me that since there are too many medalists from the State, it was not possible to give the one lakh rupees. Instead they asked me to settle for Rs. 25,000. When I tried to argue, they said that 'if you want to take it, it is fine, otherwise you can forget about it.' I had no choice but to accept the Rs. 25,000 which came to me after one year."

The identificatory habit, MICHAELS tells us on pp. 25-26, sums up *his* working understanding of India, but it is not a theory which has a claim to validity independently of those to whom it is communicated. It is irrefutable, MICHAELS says, but it can be rejected.<sup>1</sup> It is not clear to me what is gained by presenting the theory in this way. By stating that the theory is irrefutable, one is supposedly entitled to refrain from looking for cases that might go against it, and concentrate on features that agree with it. The small number of Olympic medals illustrates in this way the theory, but alternative explanations do not have to be taken into consideration because the theory is in any case irrefutable. Statements of academic modesty ("it is only *my* theory without any claim to wider validity") are in this way in danger of becoming excuses for not taking all the relevant evidence into consideration.

Similar objections could be raised to the application of the notion of identificatory habit to earlier periods of Indian history. The Vedic period lends itself easily to such an interpretation, but is the same true for the intervening period? In the realm of philosophy MICHAELS emphasises currents like Advaita-Vedānta (p. 285), in which the identification *ātman* = *brahman* plays a central role. He does not however mention that Vedānta philosophy is a relative late-comer in the realm of Indian philosophical thought, and that the many centuries (perhaps as many as ten) that separate the Vedic period from the coming into prominence of Vedānta philosophy

1 Pp. 25-26: "Der identifikatorische Habitus fasst *mein* Arbeitsverständnis Indiens in zwei Worte, er ist der gemeinsame Nenner *meiner* Beschäftigungen mit verschiedenen Themen, aber er ist keine Theorie, die Anspruch auf eine Gültigkeit erhebt, die unabhängig von denjenigen besteht, denen sie mitgeteilt wird. In seiner expliziten Subjektivität ist die Theorie des identifikatorischen Habitus sogar unwiderlegbar, wohl aber ablehnbar."

saw various schools of thought (esp. Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Sāṃkhya, as well as the Buddhist and Jaina schools) which have little or no connection with the identificatory habit. It is true that Vedānta is much more popular in modern India than all those other systems of thought which have no real adherents left today. But the situation was altogether different in the first half of the first millennium. Do we have to assume that the identificatory habit was interrupted for a millennium and then regained the upper hand again? Questions like these could elucidate, modify or further specify a potentially useful notion, on condition that it can be criticised and, in the extreme case, refuted. By presenting this notion as irrefutable, MICHAELS deprives us of the sole instrument we have to test its merits.

Is the Vedic identificatory habit the same as the one which supposedly characterises modern Hinduism? MICHAELS has the following to say about the origin of this habit (p. 357): “Indem es aufgrund von interreligiösen und sozio-ökonomischen Veränderungen möglich wurde, die opferrituelle Deszendenz zu ersetzen, zu individualisieren und zu verinnerlichen, entwickelte sich nicht nur die hindu-religiöse Askese, sondern auch ein die Hindu-Religionen und deren Kulturen prägender identifikatorischer Habitus.” This suggests that there is an important difference between the two, which is unfortunately not further explained.

Another feature adduced by MICHAELS to explain certain aspects of Indian society is the concern with purity. The use of this notion in explaining Indian social life is well-known, but there are cases where its use is less evident. MICHAELS uses it to explain the Jaina tradition of fasting to death: this is supposedly to be understood as a total avoidance of contact with (the producers of) food, and of the impurity this entails (pp. 194, 203).<sup>2</sup> This, however, is ignoring an element which the Jaina texts themselves emphasise in this context: the need to abstain from all activity in order not to create new karmic impressions which will lead to future retribution, and to destroy the karmic impressions already acquired earlier. It is of course possible that the Jainas themselves did not fully fathom the

2 See in this connection a recent article by Patrick Olivelle (“Caste and purity: a study in the language of the Dharma literature”, *Contributions to Indian Sociology* (n.s.) 32(2), 1998, pp. 189-216) which “finds that the texts establish no link between [purity and social hierarchy] and that they rarely, if ever, refer to purity as an abstract condition or state”.



significance of their ascetic practices (even while fasting to death), but it is not immediately clear in which respect the “purity-explanation” is superior to the other one.

[On p. 355 a different explanation for the same phenomenon is given: the Jaina monks, being “dead”, don’t need food. This explanation, contrary to the preceding one, is not foreign to the indigenous literature of India, but it is, to my knowledge, never used in connection with the fasts to death of Jaina monks. It is used in connection with the Brahmanical *saṃnyāsin* who, in the early texts concerned, is to be distinguished from other Brahmanical and non-Brahmanical ascetics, most notably from the *parivrāja*. We are here evidently confronted with a failure to take seriously the distinctions respected by the ascetics involved themselves, this for the purpose of fitting the different forms of asceticism more easily into the straitjacket chosen by the modern investigator, and of arriving at an elegant but simplified explanation of India’s multiple religious phenomena.]

The same explanatory scheme (concern with purity) leads to questionable conclusions elsewhere, too. We learn on p. 360 that in the Sāṃkhya philosophy *prakṛti* is pure as long it is not mixed: “Daher werden alle Erscheinungen als Mischungen von drie Eigenschaften (*guṇa*) erklärt: 1. *sattva*..., 2. *rajas*..., 3. *tamas*...” Does this imply that non-mixed *sattva*, *rajas* or *tamas* are pure? This is no doubt true for *sattva*, but hardly for *rajas* or *tamas*. No reference to any Sāṃkhya text accompanies this passage.

The identificatory habit is presented as a theory, although an irrefutable one. Other theories appear to be presented without any indication that they are theories. We read, for example, a great deal about the consciousness or experience of time (*Zeitbewusstsein, Zeiterfahrung*) of the Hindus. Consciousness of time, we are given to understand (p. 335), can be cyclical, and is then based on a corresponding experience of time. We are further told that linear and cyclical experiences of time are anthropologically so fundamental that no simple connections with nomadic resp. agricultural ways of life should be postulated. All this may very well be true, but no Indian source is cited to substantiate it. And indeed, it may be difficult to find an Indian source, not influenced by modern discourse in religious studies, that could substantiate it.<sup>3</sup> This raises the question whether we are

3 One thinks in this connection of a passage from the *Padārthadharmasamgraha* (*Praśastapādabhāṣya*) which describes time (*kāla*) as the cause of the coming into being of the following notions: the relationship between prior and posterior,

entitled to ascribe to Indians forms of consciousness and experience which they never have bothered to report. We can, certainly, hypothesise that they had and have such forms of consciousness and experience in order to explain their well-attested belief in the cyclical recreation of the world and other things, but it is far from clear that such a hypothesis explains much. One might of course maintain that saying that certain people have a cyclical experience of time is just another way of stating that they believe in the cyclical repetition of the world (or of the seasons, or of something else). But such an alternative expression can only lead to confusion: if one wishes to talk about beliefs, one should speak about beliefs, and not confuse them with experiences.

These critical remarks are not meant to detract from the value of an outstanding book, which can be recommended without reservation.

Johannes Bronkhorst

Kevin TRAINOR, *Relics, Ritual, and Representation in Buddhism: Rematerializing the Sri Lankan Theravāda Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997 (Cambridge Studies in Religious Traditions 10). Pp. xiv+223. ISBN 0-521-58280-6 (hardback). \$ 60.00.

This is an important work written on the cult of relics among Sri Lankan Theravāda Buddhists. It is written well and easily readable and good for advanced students in Buddhist Studies as well as for average readers. Initially written for the doctoral degree at Columbia University, this has incorporated field research carried out in Sri Lanka in 1985-86 and 1991. Initial inspiration for this work comes from Peter BROWN's *The Cult of Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (1981). The book contains five chapters: (i) "Orientations," (ii) "Buddhist relic veneration in

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simultaneity and non-simultaneity, of long duration and fast; *Word Index to the Praśastapādabhāṣya: A complete word index to the printed editions of the Praśastapādabhāṣya*, by Johannes BRONKHORST & Yves RAMSEIER, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1994, p. 13 § 67. Is it a linear or a cyclical experience of time which finds expression in this passage?

India,” (iii) Relics and the establishment of the Buddhist *sāsana* in Sri Lanka,” (iv) “Paradigms of presence,” and (v) “Ritual and the presence of the Buddha.” The Epilogue begins with TRAINOR’s experience with a Buddhist family and serves as the concluding portion.

This work’s primary source is the fourteenth century Pāli chronicle *Dhātuvamsa*. In addition, Trainor has used the fourth and fifth century Sri Lankan Pāli chronicles the *Dīpavamsa* and the *Mahāvamsa*. While utilizing relevant sections from the Pāli canon and its commentaries, he has incorporated some archaeological materials readily available in the *Epigraphia Zeylanica* (1912–84) edited by WICKREMASINGHE and PARANAVITANA. TRAINOR’s attempt to reconstruct a holistic picture of relic veneration among Sri Lankan Theravāda Buddhists has become a partial representation because of the visible absence of Sinhala sources in this study though TRAINOR himself has acknowledged their importance (pp. 25, 191).

Trainor characterizes Sri Lankan relic veneration “as a technology of remembrance and representation” (p. 27). In this ‘remembrance,’ Gotama, the Buddha, who passed away over two-thousand five hundred years ago comes to life among the pious in their ‘remembrances’ through his corporeal relics. This ‘technology of remembrance,’ according to TRAINOR, is ‘a cultural strategy’ which bridges the “temporal and spatial separation through a complex interaction of material objects, abstract notions, emotional orientations, and ritualized behaviors” (p. 27).

Trainor examines Sri Lankan relic veneration in light of the nineteenth century ‘orientalist’ scholarship generated by the members of the Pali Text Society, London (f. 1881) and the Theosophical Society headed by Henry Steel OLCOTT (1832-1907), the American who produced a ‘catechism’ for Buddhists. TRAINOR maintains that early scholarship had ritualized devotion to the Buddha as signs of ‘degeneration.’ This preoccupied assumption and interest in ‘pure’ or original form of Buddhism led to the dismissal of the study of relic veneration. Further, the nineteenth century British scholarship encountered an interpretive problem: Buddhists who reject an almighty God somehow were engaged in venerating the Buddha almost like a god. Ritualized devotion to the Buddha, ‘idoltrous’ character of Buddhist piety were the target of missionary attack.

The mutual interactions between native informants (mostly monks) and western scholars, TRAINOR characterizes as an ‘economy of material exchange.’ Dharmapāla’s, Subhūti’s and Silakkhandha’s reverence for

Buddha's relics aptly demonstrates the status and place relic veneration played in the lives of leading nineteenth century Sri Lankan Buddhists. Their shared interests in handling both scriptural texts and relics were an 'economy of material exchange.' This exchange also illustrates European constructions of Buddhism which heavily relied on 'scriptural texts' with absolute distrust of corporeal relics. However, both early Western scholars on Buddhism and their Sri Lankan monastic aids shared a similar social space in terms of scholarship and remained divided and different from each other in their involvement with Buddha's relics.

Finally, TRAINOR's argument with regard to the *vamsa* texts and their relationship to preaching traditions need attention. This brings out a gray area in TRAINOR's study. With reference to the 'intended audience' of *vamsa* texts, TRAINOR explains their influence on Buddhist religiosity. With few exceptions, most of the *vamsa* texts were composed in Pāli, and thus they were not intelligible to the lay audience who knew only Sinhala. If they had any influence on Sinhala audience, it was only indirectly. Though TRAINOR suggests that the "basic stories and themes" of the *vamsa* literature were incorporated into preaching and that they were used in religious festivals "related to the subject matter of the chronicles" (p. 81), he fails to cite adequate literary or inscriptional evidence to support his position. The one and only reference to a recitation of *Thūpavamsa* is found in the *Ruvanvālisāya Slab-inscription* of Queen Kalyāṇavatī (*Epigraphia Zeylanica*, Vol. 4, pp. 253–260). With reference to this very case, PARANAVITANA had rightly pointed out that it was a reference *not* to a recitation of Pāli *Thūpavamsa* but its Sinhala version (pp. 254-5). The available evidence in Sri Lanka suggests that rather than using Pāli chronicles, the subject materials of TRAINOR's study, Sinhala Buddhists listened to preaching given on the basis of Sinhala *Jātakapota* and 'vernacular' Buddhist texts such the *Saddharmaratnāvaliya* and the *Pūjāvaliya*.

Mahinda Deegalle

Andreas BIGGER. *Balarāma im Mahābhārata. Seine Darstellung im Rahmen des Textes und seiner Entwicklung*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1998. (Beiträge zur Indologie, Band 30). 207 pages. DM 118. ISBN 3-447-04121-8.

In this book, originally a doctoral dissertation, Andreas BIGGER's aim is to reconstruct the historical development of the figure of Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa's elder brother, through the various textual layers of the Mahābhārata (MBh). Thus his enterprise is essentially philological, and the author accepts and bases himself on the basic premise of the Critical Edition of the MBh, namely, that the text was fixed in writing at a particular point in time (which cannot be dated with any accuracy). This written text, which the Critical Edition has tried to reconstruct, is what the author calls the "normative redaction". In his Introduction, BIGGER justifies the necessity of a study of the figure of Balarāma in the MBh, on the ground that so far scholars have paid only superficial attention to the MBh as a source while dealing with Balarāma, whereas it is the earliest text giving any sort of importance to this personage. Besides, many scholars have dealt with Balarāma from a biased point of view, considering that he was originally a *nāga*-godling or an agricultural/bucolic divinity. This makes an in-depth investigation of the MBh a desideratum, in order to further our knowledge about Balarāma.

In part 2, "Balarāma in the normative redaction", BIGGER examines the figure of Balarāma along a "synchronic axis", namely, as this personage is represented in the normative redaction. The author notes that although Balarāma is a secondary personage, he is well integrated in the story and his movements are always accounted for. Then he discusses in detail all the passages where Balarāma appears, with three excursus. The first one concerns Balarāma's penchant for drink, which is always emphasized by secondary sources: BIGGER shows that except in one single verse Balarāma is not described as a drunkard in the MBh. The other two concern Śeṣa and the *vyūha* Saṃkarṣaṇa. According to BIGGER, "Apart from being incarnated into Baladeva, [Śeṣa] has no connection with the Vṛṣṇi-hero." (p. 161). The *vyūha* or *deva* Saṃkarṣaṇa, who is mainly mentioned in the Nārāyaṇīya, was originally different from Balarāma. The amalgamation of these three distinct figures must have happened as follows: the *vyūha* Saṃkarṣaṇa is often designated as the "rest" (*śeṣa*), i.e., what is left of the soul immediately before its absorption into Vāsudeva. Hence the *nāga* Śeṣa,



who was already associated with Balarāma, was connected with Saṃkarṣaṇa, who in turn came to be associated with Balarāma.

In part 3: “Looking back: Balarāma before the normative redaction”, the author, in an attempt to reconstruct the historical development of the figure of Balarāma, seeks to pin-point, in the previously identified passages, interpolations on the one hand (i.e., verses or passages which can be removed from the body of the text without leaving any noticeable gaps), and reworkings on the other (which cannot be removed without inconsistency, and are therefore more delicate to identify). Interpolations are not necessarily later than reworkings.

Following the diagram given on p. 110, we can summarize the textual history of the Balarāma passages in the following manner. BIGGER first establishes an oldest layer, representative of the *kṣatriya-dharma*. To this layer belong most importantly 1.211-213, the abduction of Subhadrā and 5.1-7, the discussions between the Pāṇḍavas and their allies before the war. He identifies a few passages which are interpolated into this first layer, namely 9.33, 9.54 and 9.59, Balarāma’s arrival and subsequent behaviour at Bhīma and Duryodhana’s mace-fight. After this first layer, BIGGER identifies a *brāhmaṇa-dharma* layer, which he subdivides into four different layers: 1) the Balarāma *tīrthayātrā* layer (9.34-53). 2) the Bhārgava layer, with which Balarāma has no connection. 3) the Pāñcarātra-layer, to which belong the story of king Śālva’s attack on Dvārakā (3.13 and 3.15-23), as well as a few didactic passages of Books 12 and 13 concerning mainly the *vyūha* Saṃkarṣaṇa. 4) the Nārāyaṇīya B layer, to which belong many passages, most notably of course the Nārāyaṇīya B itself (i.e. MBh 12.327-339), with the exception of a few passages belonging to the previous layer. Also belonging to the Nārāyaṇīya B layer are 1.16, in which Balarāma is described as Śeṣa’s incarnation, the interpolated 1.176-184, describing Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma’s first meeting with the Pāṇḍavas at Draupadī’s *svayaṃvara* and Book 16 (*Mausala-parvan*), describing Balarāma’s death, etc.

In part 4: “Looking forward: Balarāma in the appendix-passages”, BIGGER examines if and how the picture of Balarāma is developed in these passages and what new facets are added to his personality. Appendix-passages are not necessarily later additions, but may also represent parallel versions to the normative redaction. These parallel versions can be identified as such if so-called “empty verses” refer to them in the normative redaction. The only parallel versions which can be traced with certainty in

the case of Balarāma concern the episode of Subhadrā's abduction. On the whole, appendix-passages belonging to the Southern Recension add a few motifs pertaining to Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma's childhood, which were already well-known in the purāṇic tradition and Harivaṃśa; in some manuscripts of the Northern Recension Balarāma is fully identified with Śeṣa and developed into a *nāga*-deity; and in one manuscript of the Devanāgarī Recension, Balarāma is for the first time described as a drunkard.

BIGGER concludes that Balarāma was not originally a god who was later represented as a member of the Yadu clan, but that, on the contrary, as the text-history shows, he was originally a Yādava and was subsequently deified as Śeṣa and as the *vyūha* Saṃkarṣaṇa. Similarly, his chronic state of intoxication is shown to be a late development. Thus all the earlier theories propounded by Indologists are disproved. In many respects, the author notes, it appears that the main developments concerning the figure of Balarāma have taken place outside the MBh, which merely reflects them.

The book is rounded off by an Index of all the names/epithets of Balarāma in the MBh (including star- and appendix-passages), an English summary, Bibliography, Index of quoted or discussed passages, and a very comprehensive General Index.

BIGGER's book reflects the amount of careful, serious and precise work which has gone into its making, and the conclusions he reaches are very valuable for Indological and religious studies. Of course, the text-reconstructive method itself is not an exact science, and for this reason the whole study may appear flawed to many Indologists. But BIGGER is conscious of these draw-backs and always proceeds carefully. His knowledge of the manuscript tradition of the MBh is impressive, and his warning not to ignore star- and appendix passages just because they are often late additions (= worthless in the eyes of many) is well taken.

There are a few points on which I cannot quite agree with BIGGER. One of them is his statement that Balarāma has no connection with Śeṣa apart from being his incarnation. This raises our suspicion from the start: why should Balarāma be Śeṣa's incarnation if nothing further connects him with the *nāga*? And indeed, the MBh establishes a rather exact parallelism between the two personages. In 1.32, a passage which BIGGER discusses – though he does not make the point I am about to make –, it is said that Śeṣa withdrew from his brothers to do *tapas*, not just because he did not like them, but more precisely because they were in a constant feud with their half-brother Garuḍa. Thus Śeṣa is in the same existential predicament as

Balarāma, who does not wish to take sides in the war involving two sets of equally related family members, and goes on a pilgrimage instead. Furthermore, if we may risk a comparison outside the MBh (which the author as a rule refrains from doing for the sake of a deeper investigation of the MBh itself), we notice that in (admittedly late) passages of the Vālmīki-Rāmāyaṇa, as well as in other Rāmāyaṇas, Lakṣmaṇa too is represented as Śeṣa's incarnation. The underlying conception seems to be that Viṣṇu could not incarnate himself without his "resting place" (in all the senses of the word), and who could be better suited for that role than a brother of the avatar?

While discussing the *vyūha* Saṃkarṣaṇa, BIGGER, perhaps carried away by his "diachronic" perspective, always emphasizes the fact that Balarāma is not identical with Saṃkarṣaṇa. Of course, he is not "identical" with him. But once the *vyūha*-theory was taken up in the MBh – a text in which Kṛṣṇa is systematically represented as the supreme god – we cannot conceive how any redactor/listener/reader of the MBh could have failed to connect these *vyūhas* with the Epic characters belonging to the Yadu-clan whose names they bear. The MBh redactors were skilful myth-makers, consistently keeping in mind the various levels of interpretations of their characters – both principal and secondary ones like Balarāma.

Danielle Feller