



Kālidāsa. *The Loom of Time: A Selection of His Plays and Poems* by Chandra Rajan; Kālidāsa
Review by: L. R.

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Ph.D. degree from the same institution with a thesis on "Main Trends in Indian Historiography since Independence," under the supervision of Professor Sobhag Mathur. The first volume under review (henceforth 1996) is based on the first three chapters of the dissertation, the second (henceforth 1997) on chapters five and six. One of two earlier volumes by Shankar Goyal, *History and Historiography of the Age of Harsha* (Jodhpur: Kusumanjali Prakashan, 1992), was reviewed by David N. Lorenzen in the *JAOS* (113 [1993]: 480–81; Lorenzen's and other reviewers' appreciative comments on that book are quoted at 1997, 168–69); the other volume, *Aspects of Ancient Indian History and Historiography* (New Delhi: Harman Publishing House, 1993) contains a collection of twenty-three unconnected articles on Indian history and historiography.

Now going on forty, Shankar Goyal, the son of Indian historian S. R. Goyal, is becoming one of the most prolific writers on classical Indian history. Within a period of six years he has authored the four volumes mentioned earlier, co-edited several books and monographs with senior Indian scholars, and written more than seventy research papers ("About the Author," facing the title pages of 1996 and 1997).

Both volumes under review survey the "changing approaches" to the study of certain periods of Indian history. The 1996 volume deals with the "traditional history" of the Vedic, pre-Buddha age, followed by the age of the warring Janapadas and the Nanda empire, and, more extensively, the Maurya empire (subdivided into a chapter on pre-Independence and one on post-1947 history writing). The 1997 volume follows the same pattern: three chapters on history writing about the Imperial Guptas, two on the early Kanauj empires, and one on the dynasties of the Deccan and the Far South.

The quantity and variety of bibliographical materials on which the two volumes are based are nothing less than enormous. Any one scholar who has published or just voiced an opinion on the periods of Indian history covered in the two books is mentioned and, in most cases, critically evaluated. Only those who wrote in languages other than English fare less well. Louis de La Vallée Poussin's works in the series *Histoire du monde* receive little attention (1996, 79 footnote; 1997, 19–20), since the author relies solely on A. L. Basham's "Modern Historians of Ancient India," in C. H. Philips's *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*. Bernhard Breloer's *Kauṭīliya Studien* and Johann Jacob Meyer's *Arthaśāstra* translation are referred to as quoted by K. A. Nilakantha Sastri (1996, 68 footnote).

In each volume the bibliography is spread over the footnotes and the "bibliographical index." Systematic bibliographies at the end of both volumes would have enhanced the value of Goyal's books as reference tools.

L. R.

Kālidāsa. The Loom of Time: A Selection of His Plays and Poems. By CHANDRA RAJAN. New Delhi: PENGUIN BOOKS (INDIA), 1990. Pp. 343. Rs 65, \$8.95.

This volume, reprinted one year after its original edition in 1989, contains the translation of Kālidāsa's *Rtusamhāra*, *Meghadūta*, and *Abhijñānaśākuntala*. The translation is preceded by a "Note on Texts and Translations" (pp. 13–20) and a substantial "Introduction" (pp. 21–102). In the "Note" Rajan discusses the choice of editions on which her translations are based. Of special interest is her defense of the Bengal recension against the shorter Devanāgarī recension of *Śākuntala* (pp. 13–16); the translation of the play follows the text established in Dileep Kumar Kanjilal's *Reconstruction of the Abhijñānaśākuntalam* (1980), which is close to Pischel's (1877, 1922). The translation of the *Meghadūta* is based on the edition, with Bharatamallika's commentary *Subodhā*, by J. B. Chaudhuri (1952), which is close to S. K. De's (1957), rather than on the longer version, as commented on by Mallinātha. The "Note" also includes some thoughtful comments on the art of translating Sanskrit *kāvya* into English.

From the "Introduction" I must mention the author's view that "the relative chronology of Aśvaghōṣa and Kālidāsa is disputed; but it is not unlikely that Kālidāsa is earlier than Aśvaghōṣa" (p. 28). Kālidāsa's works also precede the *Nāṭyāśāstra*: "That a creative writer of Kālidāsa's genius and accomplishment would write according to the book is not very likely; it seems more plausible that a critic and theorist would draw upon the work of a great writer to formulate his theories" (p. 29). According to Rajan, "it is plausible to argue that Kālidāsa lived and wrote at the close of either the middle of the second or the first century BC" (p. 311), which, if I read it correctly, means: between ca. 125 and 50 B.C.

When reading a new translation of Kālidāsa's works one cannot resist the temptation to compare it with other, recent, translations. For the *Meghadūta*, comparisons might be made with Leonard Nathan's *The Transport of Love* (1976) based on De's edition. As far as *Śākuntala* is concerned, Chandra Rajan's translation is quite different from Barbara Stoler Miller's in *Theater of Memory* (1984), partly because the latter is based on the Devanāgarī recension, but mainly because of a different attitude toward translation. One example, taken at random, illustrates the point. Rajan translates verse 6.5 correctly and literally:

He loathes all beautiful things; to his ministers
he is not free of access as before;
he passes nights sleepless, tossing in bed;
to the queens in the Royal Apartments,
he extends all formal courtesies, but,
addresses them wrongly, mistaking their names;
then, he remains long plunged in painful
embarrassment.

Miller, less literally, but more pungently:

Despising what he once enjoyed,
he shuns his ministers every day
and spends long sleepless nights
tossing at the edge of his bed—
when courtesy demands that
he converse with palace women,
he stumbles over their names,
and then retreats in shame.

Chandra Rajan, a teacher of English literature, and the author of *Winged Words* (an anthology of poetry from Jonson to Eliot) and a book of poems, *Re-visions*, has produced a very readable—and affordable—translation of Kālidāsa's works. That she is not a professional indologist is evident from some minor technical inaccuracies: *visarga* is not normally transliterated in roman as *h*, but as *ḥ*; the aspirated cerebrals not as *ḥḥ* and *ḍḍ* but as *ṭṭ* and *ḍḍ*; *ṇ* when dotted is not a dental, etc. (p. 12), and the critical edition of the *Rāmāyaṇa* was not produced at the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute (p. 342) but at the Oriental Institute, Baroda.

L. R.

Descriptive Catalogue of Manuscripts in the French Institute of Pondicherry, vol. 3: *Mss. 276–375*. By V. VARADACHARI. Publications de l'Institut français d'Indologie, vol. 70.3. Pondicherry: INSTITUT FRANÇAIS DE PONDICHÉRY, 1990. Pp. xv + 483.

This is the third volume in a series devoted to the description of manuscripts preserved at the French Institute in Pondicherry. The first volume (mss 1–115) was published in 1986, the second (mss 116–275) in 1987. Like the third, the earlier volumes were edited by V. Varadachari, with the help of various other scholars; each time the editor provides a substantial introduction. The first volume contains a longer, the second a shorter preface by N. R. Bhatt.

Ever since the French Institute at Pondicherry was established in 1955, one of their goals has been to edit Āgama texts, more particularly Śaivāgamas. (If my calculation is correct, from 1961 until today at least nine volumes of the Institute's publication series have been devoted to Āgamas, most of these by N. R. Bhatt.) To do so they made a major effort to acquire manuscripts. "Most of these manuscripts were in the private collections of the priests—gurukkals or deśīkars. As a result we have now in our collection, after 31 years, about 12000 palm-leaf manuscripts mostly in grantha script, some in Malayalam, Telugu, Nandināgari and Tulu scripts" (Bhatt, vol. 1, p. v). The

fact that the manuscripts were acquired as collections accounts for the arrangement of the catalog: each collection (sometimes called bundle, "made up at the time of collection or afterward" [vol. 3, p. i]) receives a serial number; each manuscript within the collection is given a sub-serial number. Some of the collections are large: number 91 contains 55 manuscripts.

The editor has produced models of what "descriptive catalogs" ought to be. When a collection comprises more than one text, the entry opens with a general description, which is then followed by detailed descriptions of the individual manuscripts: contents, significant parts of the beginning and the end, colophons, etc. Each volume closes with indexes of titles and authors.

The three volumes published so far describe some 3,000 manuscripts, which means that about one quarter of the work has been completed, and that we may possibly look forward to another nine volumes. Although, in 1986, Bhatt (vol. 1, p. vi) projected that one volume would be published in each successive year, and even though the introduction to volume three does refer to "subsequent volumes," a computer search seems to indicate that, at this time, no further volumes have reached American libraries.

L. R.

Erste heidelberger Südasiengespräche. Edited by DIETMAR ROTHERMUND. Beiträge zur Südasiensforschung, Südasiens-Institut, Universität Heidelberg, vol. 135. Stuttgart: FRANZ STEINER VERLAG, 1990. Pp. ix + 124. DM 38.

Pakistan: Zweite heidelberger Südasiengespräche. Edited by DIETER CONRAD and WOLFGANG-PETER ZINGEL. Beiträge zur Südasiensforschung, vol. 150. Stuttgart: FRANZ STEINER VERLAG, 1992. Pp. ix + 162. DM 50.

Sri Lanka: Fünfte heidelberger Südasiengespräche. Edited by GEORG BERKEMER and TILMAN FRASCH. Beiträge zur Südasiensforschung, vol. 171. Stuttgart: FRANZ STEINER VERLAG, 1995. Pp. x + 148. DM 54; ÖS 421.

Die deutsche Zusammenarbeit mit Südasiens: Sechste heidelberger Südasiensgespräche. Edited by GEORG BERKEMER and TILMAN FRASCH. Beiträge zur Südasiensforschung, vol. 176. Stuttgart: FRANZ STEINER VERLAG, 1997. Pp. xix + 180. DM 66; ÖS 482 (paper).

Ernährungssicherung in Südasiens: Siebte heidelberger Südasiengespräche. Edited by HANS-GEORG BOHLE et al. Beiträge zur Südasiensforschung, vol. 178. Stuttgart: FRANZ STEINER VERLAG, 1997. Pp. ix + 162. DM 58.

Even though the editor of the *JAOS* received only five out of seven volumes of the *Heidelberger Südasiengespräche*, I thought it might be worthwhile for this review to look at all the volumes