

## BOOK REVIEWS

167

published comments (full references are not given), though many have dated it in the 5th century. He calls the Mankuwar Buddha "astonishingly archaic" (p. 19), but continues to date it in A.D. 449, having missed a recent article redating the inscription to Gupta Era 108/A.D. 427-28 (*Journal of Ancient Indian History*, III, pp. 133-37).

In addition, references are not integrated into the text, so that a phrase such as "as a scholar has recently pointed out" (p. 12) can be followed up only if one knows beforehand that the reference is to Joanna Williams's article listed under the entry for plate 23; the phrase "as Stella Kramrisch wrote long ago" in the note to plate 53 can be followed up only if one has already looked at Harle's "Bibliographical Note" (p. 32), where Kramrisch's *Wiener Beiträge zur Kunst und der Kulturgeschichte Asiens* (which Harle says "was written . . . in the late 1920s") is mentioned. The text is arranged regionally, the plates regionally and at times chronologically; but dates are given only in the notes, not in the captions. In spite of this regional arrangement, little is actually done to suggest the problems of regional patronage and style. Yet the text often suggests such issues, leaving it to the student to settle them on his own.

Let me leave such little carping aside, however. This book, illustrated by so many fine photographs from the archives of the American Institute of Indian Studies, Varanasi (and neatly, if perhaps less than finely, got up by the Oxford University Press), usefully brings together the principal material that must be considered in making an evaluation of Gupta art. It does so for the sake of those who will carry analysis further, and gives reference to readings that will help (or sometimes hinder) the student carrying out further work. That the book takes us so little beyond past analysis perhaps only emphasizes the need for such a collection.

MICHAEL W. MEISTER

University of Texas at Austin

**Early Chola Temples: Parantaka I to Rajaraja I (A.D. 907-985).** BY S. R. BALASUBRAHMANYAM. New Delhi: Orient Longmans, 1971. xxxii, 351 pp. 322 Plates, Index. Rs. 97.50

**Laddigam (A Later Chola Temple).** BY B. VENKATARAMAN. New Delhi: Orient Long-

mans, 1971. 62 pp. 17 Plates, Index. Rs. 9.50 (paper)

**The City of the Cosmic Dance: Chidambaram.** BY B. NATARAJAN. New Delhi: Orient Longmans, 1974. 164 pp. 28 Plates, Index. Rs. 45

The three books under review represent a single family's contributions to the history of temples in South India. Those symbolic forms—piled, enclosed terraces of a sacred palace supporting a "high temple"—provide a major portion of our evidence for Indian architectural genius, and deserve more careful attention than they have as yet received.

Balasubrahmanyam, the father of this active family, has spent a lifetime collecting data on Chola art, searching out temples and reinterpreting inscriptions. Because many temples, originally built in brick, were rebuilt in stone during the Chola period, and older inscriptions either incorporated into the new fabric or copied over in the older style, this work has been a labor of some difficulty and will be of lasting significance. *Early Chola Temples* continues the author's major final statement begun in *Early Chola Art, Part I* (1966); the author goes temple by temple through more than sixty monuments, all attributed to the short but supremely significant period A.D. 907-985.

He gives brief descriptions, some detailed analysis, and considerable epigraphic argument. At every point, the author's devotion to knowledge is apparent, providing a rich mine for historical information. His final brief synthetic chapters also are rich in reference—if not, to my mind, sufficiently conclusive as overall statements of development or style. It is this limited attempt at visual analysis that seems to me to limit the value of this volume; certainly it sometimes limits the historical conclusions the author reaches on only epigraphic grounds. The author's strength is his always searching for historical sources for standing monuments. He himself explains that "what is attempted here is a critical history of art-objects, not their aesthetic appreciation" (p. xv); aesthetic "appreciation," of course, can also be a source for historical analysis.

Venkataraman and Natarajan, the sons, now serve in the Indian Administrative Service and the Indian Railways. They follow their father by filling in their spare time with the study of South

Indian art and culture. *Laddigam* is a small guide, but goes beyond presenting merely the single temple of its title. As a brief statement of the whole "later Chola period," beginning from the reign of Kulottunga I (A.D. 1070–1120), this volume admirably condenses a complex record, surveying sixteen additional temples beyond Laddigam. Perhaps most importantly, the author lays out evidence for the development, in this period, of the multiple enclosures and temple gateways so often thought to characterize only temples of a later period. By surveying this material, Venkataraman successfully supplements his father's more major contribution to the Chola's earlier phase.

*The City of the Cosmic Dance* analyzes the development of the single sacred site Chidambaram, seat of the Nataraja cult. Afflicted only at moments by his family's historical preoccupations, Natarajan does still provide a thorough argument for dating the earliest gateway to this massive complex within the Chola period. Unlike his brother and father, however, this author gathers together devotional and personal memories of his shrine—information on saints and festivals, music and even temple management which will be appreciated not only by the devoted worshipper but also by the curious and impassioned visitor from abroad.

*Early Chola Temples* is massive scholarship, published with support from the Ford Foundation, who found it "a significant research effort contributing to the preservation of knowledge of an important phase in the development of Indian art." The publisher informs me it would probably no longer be financially possible to print so well illustrated a volume (though I would carp that its plates have not yet been well enough published), even with such support. The two brief volumes of Balasubrahmanyam's sons have been printed as part of a "Southern Art Series" with aid from the Mudgala Trust, set up by the family itself to continue the study of "monuments of special significance in the evolution of Southern Art." One can only hope that such dedication and largess will continue.

MICHAEL W. MEISTER

*University of Texas at Austin*

**The Mahābhārata. Book 2: The Book of the Assembly Hall; Book 3: The Book of the Forest.** TRANSLATED AND EDITED BY J. A.

B. VAN BUITENEN. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975. xi, 864 pp. Map, Notes, Index. \$33.00

Van Buitenen's careful reply to Robert Goldman's review (*JAS*, XXXV, 3, 1976) of his translation of the first book of the Mahābhārata invites subsequent reviewers to sustain a level of constructive criticism that will keep the translator aware of his audience at every stage of his work. With the publication of the second volume of the projected seven-volume translation, van Buitenen has now presented in English a substantial segment of the Poona critical edition of the epic. The work continues to surpass any previous attempt to translate the remarkable richness of the Mahābhārata into a European language. It is unlikely that the effort will be repeated in the near future, and van Buitenen remains aware of his responsibility to non-Sanskrit readers interested in the panorama of Indian culture and values articulated in the epic.

The slender annotations to the translation are a disappointment mainly to scholars of Indian literature, who want to share the insights of van Buitenen's intense involvement with the epic. For the audience of general readers, it is unlikely that heavier annotation would render the text more available. Only attention to details of content, language, and style within the context of the translation itself can assure a meaningful experience of the epic for the English reader. The notes to books 2 and 3 suffer most from a randomness and casual mixture of scholarly and general material. For example, amidst points of textual detail, one finds the following note to explain Duryodhana's significant act of exposing his left thigh to Draupadī after she has been staked at dice and lost to his cousin by her husband Yudhiṣṭhira (vol. II, p. 817; note to 2.63.10):

*He exposed his left thigh:* while one might well think that the exposure of the thigh is a bowdlerized version of the exposure of more private parts, there is no reason to. What Duryodhana is doing in showing Draupadī his left thigh is to invite her to sit on it as his wife. Compare *The Beginning* 1.92.9–10: "You embrace me while sitting on my right thigh, beautiful woman, that is the place to sit for children and daughters-in-law. The share of the mistress (= wife) is on the left." Of course, Indian art is replete with examples of wives sitting on their husbands' left thighs, from the donor couples of Bharhut and Sanchi onward; the posture is particularly prevalent in the iconography of Śiva and Pārvatī.

The point is of sufficient general importance to be included in the introduction. This problem can be