

Here he presents the debate about an inscription on one *yaksa* figure in the Mathura museum that is sometimes thought to mention a fifth-century BCE king (pp. 127–8). Lefèvre extends his argument to encompass depictions of historical figures as religious leaders, especially after their deaths, most famously of Buddha and Mahavira. And though the author attempts to link the first depictions of Kṛṣṇa with an actual heroic/royal person, this reviewer was not convinced.

The fifth and final chapter of the volume is devoted to the artistic creation of portraits. Here Lefèvre draws on iconographic texts, such as the *Visnudharmottara Purana*, which describes the making of human images, such as *mahapurusa* and *bhupa*, or great men and kings (p. 153). Whether such textual prescriptions ever actually dictated sculptural or pictorial figures remains to be demonstrated. From here the author progresses to allegorical portraits, such as that of the fifth-century ruler Candragupta II in the great Varaha relief at Udayagiri, and of the eighth-century Pallava ruler Nandivarman II at Kanchipuram. The latter king was patron of the Vaikuntha Perumal temple at Kanchipuram, the compound walls of which are covered with scenes of coronation, sacrifice, battle and courtly reception. However, the extremely eroded condition of the reliefs means that the identifications proposed by the author (pp. 183–7) can only be speculative.

If the critical reader is left with doubts about some of Lefèvre's suggestions this only reflects the uneven and incomplete nature of the archaeological and literary record. Though Lefèvre's interpretations may elude confirmation, this in no way detracts from what is surely the most wide-ranging and stimulating exploration of portraiture in India yet published.

**George Michell**

DAUD ALI and EMMA J. FLATT (eds):

*Garden and Landscape Practices in Pre-colonial India: Histories from the Deccan.*

(Visual and Media Histories.) xxii, 201 pp. New Delhi and London: Routledge, 2012. £75. ISBN 978 0 415 66493 6.

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This handsomely produced volume presents nine miscellaneous essays on different aspects of garden culture, history and technology – not from the Hindustan of the Mughals, as is usual in studies on Indian gardens, but from the Deccan region of peninsular India. In order to explore the gardens from this region the authors of this volume draw on a broad range of literary, visual, archaeological and art historical materials. But Daud Ali and Emma J. Flatt do not attempt to impose on these diverse contributions a coherent picture of this mostly vanished corpus of Deccan gardens and contrived landscapes. On the contrary, in their introduction, the editors remind readers that the current knowledge of Indian gardens and historical landscapes is mostly informed by studies on Mughal and Timurid practices and aesthetic ideals. To this end they take space to introduce the Deccan as the locale of a particular historical experience that impacts on a distinctive garden culture, distinguishing approaches that stress the social aspects of gardens, as spaces designed, built and enjoyed by different groups, from those that emphasize the conceptual aspects of gardens, as imagined ideals or metaphors. Both of these approaches are touched on by Akira Shimada on gardens in early Buddhism. While such gardens clearly fulfilled an indispensable function for the urban and

courtly societies of the time, garden descriptions in Buddhist literature are generally more concerned with paradisiacal abodes for Buddha and his divine entourage and human devotees. Such texts abound in glittering trees, fragrant flowers and sparkling ponds filled with lotuses and fish, imagery that finds visual expression in the decorative portions of Buddhist stūpas. Though here the author mostly refers to monuments in northern India, she does include materials from Nagarjunakonda in Andhra Pradesh.

Daud Ali's chapter concentrates on garden references in the *Mānasollāsa*, a Sanskrit text written at the court of the twelfth-century Cālukya king Someśvara III at Kalyan in northern Karnataka. While the geographical settings and arboreal features found here cannot be verified from any surviving gardens, they do accord with a larger corpus of horticultural and agricultural data given in Sanskrit literature. Of particular interest here is the notion of the pleasure garden as an extension of the king's household – a setting for both formal meetings and convivial entertainments. This royal dimension of gardens is further pursued by Ronald Inden, who concentrates on the gardens of different designs associated with the throne rooms, audience halls and residential apartments of the fifteenth–sixteenth-century citadel at Bidar in northern Karnataka. Inden's discussion is complemented by Klaus Rötzer and Pushkar Sohoni, who offer a technical account of water features in the royal and funerary gardens in and around Bidar. Their analysis of the water management techniques developed under the Bāhmani and Barīdi sultans may be considered a significant contribution to the archaeology of Indian garden studies.

Non-royal patronage of gardens in the Deccan is the subject of Phillip B. Wagoner's contribution, which focuses on Amīn Khān, an *amīr* of one of the sixteenth-century sultans of Golconda. Evidence for Amīn Khān's benefaction is mostly restricted to a Persian–Telugu language inscription on his tomb at Patancheru in Andhra Pradesh. Wagoner offers an appendix listing all the plants mentioned in the inscription, together with their cooking and medicinal uses, thereby expanding our appreciation of the social purposes of the charitable garden during the Qutb Shāhi era. That Deccan gardens were also related to magic and astrology is a subject explored by Emma J. Flatt in her contribution, which concentrates on the *Najūm al-'Ulūm*, a Persian manuscript ascribed to 'Alī 'Ādil Shāh I of Bijapur in Karnataka. The talismanic dimensions of the garden are here visualized in painted illustrations showing astrological signs together with figures and animals engaged in making gardens fertile and flourishing. An appendix specifies the presumed connections between the planets and the different garden plants, flowers, vines and trees.

Deccan literature confirms that gardens in this region could also be linked to human emotions, whether expressed in poems or in romantic narratives. Ali Akbar Husain examines the *Gulshan-i 'Ishq*, a *masnavī* by Mulla Nusratī, a poet at the seventeenth-century court of Bijapur. In this work the garden is considered a place where the triumph of love may occur, as well as an appropriate re-ordering of peace, justice and prosperity, thereby creating a desirably auspicious environment for 'Alī 'Ādil Shāh II, the work's royal dedicatee. Contemporary miniature painting at Bijapur offers an intriguing visual counterpart to this concept. Deborah Hutton examines a series of related figural compositions incorporating extravagant flowers, trees with dense foliage, and distant crags. Hutton demonstrates that such settings were also employed in the 34 illustrations accompanying the Dakani-language *masnavī*, the *Pem Nem*, or "Laws of Love", the manuscript of which is now in the British Library. While these natural settings cannot be construed as true gardens, the author is surely correct in proposing that these landscapes contributed to the emotional unfolding of the story itself.

Sunil Sharma is the only author to consider the gardens of Ahmadnagar in Maharashtra. To this end he concentrates on the *Sāqīnāma* by Zuhūrī, a poet at the Nizām Shāhi court towards the end of the sixteenth century. This work includes a detailed account of urban life in Ahmadabad and the special role of gardens in and around the city, which are described in some detail. However, Sharma is not concerned to correlate Zuhūrī's descriptions with actual garden remains, a task that awaits further exploration. However, he does reproduce a garden with fruit-bearing trees arranged in symmetrical plots either side of a water channel emerging from an axial pleasure pavilion. This unique illustration forms part of the British Library manuscript of the *Sāqīnāma* (Plate 8.1), but does not appear to be a "portrait" of an actual garden.

The editors must be congratulated for assembling such a wide range of scholars who successfully communicate their fascination for the subject, while at the same time suggesting directions for future research. The editors include a useful glossary of Indian terms at the beginning, as well as an index at the end; the authors have provided their own bibliographies.

**George Michell**

ISHVARCHANDRA VIDYASAGAR:

*Hindu Widow Marriage. A Complete Translation, with an Introduction and Critical Notes by Brian A. Hatcher.*

xxiv, 242 pp. New York: Columbia University Press, 2012. £48.50.

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The appearance in 1855 of Ishvarchandra Vidyasagar's two tracts advocating the marriage of Hindu widows, we know, was a historic event. Heightening public passions and forcing rival social forces into uncompromising positions, it led within less than a year to the legalization of widow marriage. Those epochal tracts, astonishingly, had not in the intervening hundred and fifty years been available in a complete English translation. Vidyasagar, seeking legislation and realizing the strategic urgency of making his argument available in the rulers' language, had himself promptly translated the tracts under one cover as *Marriage of Hindu Widows*. But his translation, as he explained, was "neither entire nor literal". Believing that the "understanding" of the English readers was different from that "of the native population", he had virtually rewritten and heavily abridged the tracts in the course of "translating" them. (See Ishvarchandra Vidyasagar, *Marriage of Hindu Widows*, with an introduction by Dr. Arabinda Podder, Calcutta: K.P. Bagchi & Company, 1976, p. ii.)

A great deal has since been written and discussed on the subject, for it concerns a vital issue that remains unresolved. A large proportion of that writing, and an even larger proportion of that talk, has not had access to those catalytic texts in their entirety. The appearance of Hatcher's authoritative, unabridged and eruditely annotated translation is, thus, a historiographic event. It is also a literary *tour de force*. Indeed, the translation could not have been a historiographic event without its literary merit.

Hatcher has shown that what some theorists believe to be translation's inherent cannibalism can be overcome. Ironically, it was Vidyasagar who, in his anxiety to make sense to the rulers, had cannibalized his own twin-texts. He succeeded in his aim, and successive generations relied on his abridged English version. Hatcher