

natives, or their “own” working classes, the Hindu middle class over Muslims, or indeed British feminists over their Indian sisters—it became necessary . . . to also resort to the darker side of the discourse of modernity . . . to the language of race, hierarchy, and “communalism,” over that of egalitarianism, improvement, liberal nationalism, or global sisterhood. (p. 185)

Passages such as this one lump together in indistinguishable fashion particular histories of oppression. They suggest that the difference in historical experience of the actors involved do not matter at any fundamental level. While Joshi disagrees with Bayly, his conclusion suggests that colonial rule plays no analytical role in his story aside from providing the institutional backdrop for the birth of a new public sphere and inaugurating a fresh scramble for status. The anguish of those members of the Indian middle classes who genuinely felt both enriched and damaged by colonial rule—a Bankim in the nineteenth century or a Ramanujan in the twentieth—would not resonate with the story Joshi tells. But maybe there was no colonial anguish among members of the middle class in Lucknow. If this was true, then it would show only that it is hard to generalize about the Indian middle classes of the colonial period from a study of only one region. The time may have arrived for comparative studies that not only compare India to Europe and other places but also compare one region of India with another. Maybe then we would be in a better position to realize what lay at the heart of critiques of the anglicized Indian’s ardor for emulating the British by men such as Sivanath Sharma, Sajid Hussain, or Bishan Narain Dar. It would also make us cognizant of not reducing the entire gamut of middle-class activism in colonial India to a banal jockeying for power.

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*Buddhist Sculpture in Clay: Early Western Himalayan Art, Late 10th to Early 13th Centuries.* By CHRISTIAN LUCZANITS. Chicago: Serindia, 2004. xiv, 353 pp. \$85.00 (cloth).

Even for those of us fortunate enough to have traveled extensively throughout the Himalayan region and Tibetan plateau in search of temple art in all its splendor, Christian Luczanits’s *Buddhist Sculpture in Clay: Early Western Himalayan Art, Late 10th to early 13th Centuries* reveals images wondrous to behold. This is the first publication (other than Luczanits’s doctoral dissertation and his numerous articles and essays on the topic) dedicated to the otherwise rarely studied clay sculpture of Tibetan-Buddhist art.

*Buddhist Sculpture in Clay* contributes far more than a simple survey of the existence of these artworks and their (sometimes astounding) construction. Luczanits examines these sculptures in situ—carefully considering the overall artistic programs at numerous still-extant sites in the little documented Tibetan cultural areas in what is today the Indian Himalayas. Complementary to detailed publications that have focused on more famous sites (such as Alchi and Tabo), Luczanits’s work is specifically crafted to paint a broader historical and art historical context. The clay sculptures and temples he scrutinizes exemplify a wide range of aesthetics that, he postulates, originate from several different artistic traditions. All of these fall within the well-defined physical region of the Western Himalayas (in which he includes Guge-Purang, Ladakh, Spiti, and Kinnaur) and the temporal space of the late tenth to early thirteenth

centuries. He even briefly examines how these artistic foundations evolved in late thirteenth to sixteenth centuries for the same region.

As Luczanits states, one of his goals is to provide “the reader with the first-ever historical overview of western Himalayan art” (p. ix). To this end he suggests chronologies for no less than fourteen greater and lesser-known temple complexes surveyed. In dating these sites, he carefully considers inscriptional evidence alongside historical texts as well as artistic and construction styles. Dating both sites and artworks is one of the many challenges confronting historians of Tibetan art. There exists little consensus on this hotly debated topic. It is therefore refreshing to have not only the bulk of Luczanits’s reasoning for his dating theories, but also the footnoted history of his own changing views, as new research comes to light.

Of potentially greater significance, yet far less examined in the literature, Luczanits highlights issues of temporal shifts in religious practice as reflected in artistic programs. He specifically discusses the preference for a three-Buddha-family configuration in tenth- and eleventh-century monuments that later shifts to a five-Buddha-family configuration (p. 222–23). He also notes that in contrast to earlier monuments that reflected Yoga Tantra cults promoting a five-Buddha-family configuration, monuments in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries begin to include iconographic plans from the Anuttarayoga Tantras. Luczanits proves these assertions with qualitative *and* quantitative analysis of the sites surveyed—another rarity for the field.

Luczanits’s analysis (not surprisingly) confirms that even within a relatively narrow geographical and temporal framework there is “considerable variety in both the deities and their configurations. Despite the repeated occurrence of the same iconographic configurations, each of the monuments surveyed appears to present its own programmatic conception and is thus iconographically unique” (p. 223). This honest disclosure simply reinforces how ambiguous much of the material truly is, even with many of the variables removed (i.e., the statues remain in their original sites, many with contemporary murals).

In the face of such challenges, Luczanits expands his stylistic analysis with fruitful comparisons between clay sculptures not only with their accompanying temple murals (p. 142–43), but also as related to bronze, wood, and ivory sculptures as well as illustrated manuscripts. For example, he acutely notes similarities between two small bronze Vairocana figures and their clay counterparts, the central four-fold Vairocana in the Tabo Assembly Hall and the Vajradhātu-Vairocana in the Vairocana chapel at Lalung (pp. 206–7, 45, 91). Similarly, what Luczanits calls “throne frames” (pp. 251–54)—found in both bas-relief and three-dimensional clay sculptures in several of these western Tibetan temples—intriguingly parallel earlier (eighth-century) wood and ivory examples from Kashmir. While it is hardly surprising that these iconographies transcend the medium of their construction, it is rare to find these relations so deftly illuminated in such a broad variety of materials. However, to truly see some of these stimulating comparisons, it is necessary to examine images from the supporting literature, as they are not all depicted in the book’s illustrations.

*Buddhist Sculpture in Clay* helps to fill in a much-needed level of knowledge. It is a more profound assessment than general surveys of Tibetan art or museum collections that attempt to cover all periods, regions, and materials in a single publication, all while introducing the neophyte into the complex world of Tibetan Buddhism. It is also a broader scholastic contribution than volumes that analyze a single figure (e.g., the Dalai Lama), site, or illustrated manuscript, with only slight references to the rich context in which these random data points appear. In addition to being more comprehensive, *Buddhist Sculpture in Clay* is also more financially and physically accessible

than the myriad of outstanding but brief and often hard-to-obtain academic and quasi-academic articles that are scattered in numerous disparate journals, conference proceedings, and now electronic publications. Nonetheless, it is difficult to determine exactly who the intended audience is for this book.

Luczanits presupposes the reader to already understand some of the geography of western Tibet, as the two maps included display no referenced overview of Asia. He assumes his readers possess a fairly sophisticated understanding of Tibetan Buddhism. For example, there are no explanations of what Yoga Tantra comprises or how the Vajradhātumahāmandala fits within Yoga Tantra. But these are not weaknesses, just appropriately high expectations for his readers. However, his lack of definition of the term “Central Asia” or things “Central Asian” physically, culturally, or temporally is more problematic. He does mention some specific sites, such as Dunhuang, Xinjiang, Serinde, Tumsuq, Sharçuq, Karaşahr, Karagahr, and Ming-oi (pp. 25, 41, 70, 109, 226, 245, 273, 276). However, he never conclusively defines this elusive space of “Central Asia” or what “Central Asian” characteristics are.

This volume would have been more useful as a reference for all readers had it included a condensed timeline on a single page, an annotated list of illustrations, diagrams differentiated from figures, dates in the figure captions, the measured dimensions of the clay sculptures in a table in the appendix, and more descriptive and less poetical chapter headings. Nonetheless, dedicated scholars of Tibetan Buddhism will benefit from Luczanits’s understanding and explanation of this physical manifestation of the faith in clay temple sculpture. Rigorous scholars and advanced students of Tibetan art will rejoice that Luczanits has raised the bar for the expected readership. And, the majority of the text aside, enthusiasts will revel in the spectacular color photographs and the ghostly black-and-white archival images of these little-known and hard-to-access sites—all wrapped up into one (relatively) affordable and well-distributed tome.

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*Nectar Gaze and Poison Breath: An Analysis and Translation of the Rajasthani Oral Narrative of Devnarayan.* By ADITYA MALIK. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005. xxv, 548 pp. \$74.00 (cloth).

Less than two decades ago, research on India’s living oral epic traditions was modestly booming, resulting in full translations, performative analyses, and interpretive discussions of regional vernacular texts from all over the subcontinent. Since then, scholarly practice—under the influence of postcolonial theory and fascinations of globalization—tilted radically away from slow, laborious, and rarely professionally rewarding projects focused on highly localized oral literatures. Happily, a few important exceptions have emerged—most recently Susan Snow Wadley’s *Raja Nal and the Goddess: The North Indian Epic Dhola in Performance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004) and now Aditya Malik’s beautifully executed *Nectar Gaze and Poison Breath*.

Published in a library edition, Malik’s work is clearly not destined for paperback distribution or classroom use. It is nonetheless an invaluable resource, not only for the painstaking translation of a narrative rich in cultural and religious knowledges and meanings, but also for its illuminating introductory material—about 170 pages

# The Journal of Asian Studies

Volume 65 • Number 2 • May 2006

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