A Bibliography on Ancient Indian Slavery

JONATHAN A. SILK

The following is a first attempt to provide an up-to-date and fairly comprehensive listing of the available secondary works on Ancient Indian Slavery. I am afraid, however, that I can lay little claim to any special expertise in the topic of the study of slavery. My own field of interest is the study of Buddhism, particularly that of Ancient (that is, pre-Muslim) India. Nevertheless, while conducting research on slavery and Buddhism in Ancient India, I came to realize that the general topic of slavery in Ancient India, much less the problem of the relations between the institutions of slavery and the Buddhist Church, has not been subject to any reliable, historically and sociologically sensitive, study. The present short work is not meant to fill this void, especially since I am separately preparing my study of the latter topic. But it does have two other main purposes.

First, I have noticed that even specialists in the study of comparative slavery tend to rely on only one or two of the same works on India again and again. I will not enter here into the quibbles I feel, as an Indologist, about the reliability of some of these works. I would like to stress, however, through this bibliography, that a fair amount of other material is available. It would certainly behoove the interested specialist to seek out this material, rather than relying, as is often done, simply on the works of Chananan and Bongert, however helpful these may be. Secondly, I would hope that this bibliography might spur some interest in the study of ancient Indian slavery, either by specialists in slavery or by Indologists. I might simply mention here that my own research on slavery and Buddhism indicates that slavery was seen, even from within religious movements moderns like to think of as socially "progressive," as a totally normal part of life in Ancient India, and it met no opposition from the Buddhist Church. This may not surprise those familiar with, for example, the history of slavery and the Christian Church in the Classical world and elsewhere, but those who concern themselves primarily with Buddhism find this result shocking. (Part of the problem here, if not the entire problem, is caused, of course, by the same prejudices pointed out with regard to Western traditions by the late Sir Moses Finley.) Another area in which detailed research remains to be undertaken is the study of South Indian slavery. Especially given the huge amount of epigraphical material available from the southern parts of the sub-continent, this should prove a most fruitful study.

I had not originally intended to compile a bibliography, and so I merely collected notes for my own research. When I realized, however, that no adequate biblio-

I am afraid, meant that I have probably missed not only the obscure, but some things I actually saw but which I decided were of no value to me and thus did not take note of. I have, moreover, intended to limit this bibliography in several ways. First of all it concerns itself almost exclusively with pre-Muslim India, India in this case meaning the Indian sub-continent, but generally excluding Ceylon. This has been done for the simple reason that my own interests are in pre-Muslim India, and in my own research, for various reasons, I decided to omit any consideration of Ceylon. To include entries on Ceylon then would have necessitated undertaking another full search of the literature. (It should be noted, however, that there seems to be much material available on Ceylonese slavery, and especially its relations with the monastic institutions of the Buddhist Church.) My ignorance of Russian and other eastern European languages has meant that what I expect is a considerable corpus of material in those languages has not been taken into account. (It may be that much of this, like the vast corpus of material in Chinese on Chinese slavery, deals not with what we might consider slavery proper but rather with attempts to establish the Marxist position that a "Slave Society" existed at a certain point. The utility for slavery studies of listing such research seems to me dubious. However, see the addendum to this bibliography.) I have also been unable to take into account material written in modern Indian languages. A few references to works in these categories, otherwise excluded, have been included when I have run across them. Many general surveys of Indian history also include some comments on slavery, but these are virtually always highly derivative and, being of little or no independent value, they have not been taken into account.

The most common Sanskrit word for slave is dāsa, feminine dāsī. In recent years interest in the study of the deva dāsī traditions of India has increased. Literally deva dāsī means "slave woman of the gods", but in usage the term refers rather to temple prostitutes. References to this topic are omitted here since I believe that, despite the literal meaning of the term, there is nothing to connect this institution sociologically or historically with slavery proper. I have, however, included references to viρi or forced labor (corvée) which, at least sociologically speaking, seems closer to the main topic.

I am quite conscious of the limitations of this bibliography, and I welcome corrections, suggestions and further references from interested readers.

---

A Bibliography on Ancient Indian Slavery

The Bibliography


---


---


---


Chaudhary, Radhakrishna: See the following.

Choudhary, Radhakrishna: "Viśti ( Forced Labour) in Ancient India", *Indian Historical Quarterly* 38/1 (1962): 44-59.


Raj, Dev. See Chanana, Dev Raj.


Ruben, Walter: Die Lage der Sklaven in der altindischen Gesellschaft. Sitzungsberichte der Deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin. Klasse für Sprache, Literatur und Kunst, Jahrgang 1955, # 2 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1957). [Ruben himself elsewhere refers to his own "Über die Rolle der Sklaven in der altindischen Gesellschaft," Abhandlungen der Deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin 1956. Probably that is this very study, the title of which was changed before publication.]


Singh, Madan Mohan: "Slavery as known from the Buddhist Pāli Sources", Indian Historical Quarterly 39/1-2 (1963): 1-12.


Suryanarayana: "Bhārata dāśa-prathā", [Slavery in India] Viśva Sanskṛtam (Hoshiarpur) 4/1 (Nov. 1966): 52-68. [not verified].


Addendum

When he sent me the proofs for the present bibliography, the editor, Professor Wezler, kindly included a list of suggested additions he had received from Dr. Maria Schetelich, "Ergänzung zur Bibliographie 'Sklaverei im alten Indien'," containing mostly Russian titles. I reproduce these below as is, although I am unable to evaluate their relevance or importance. As Dr. Wezler observed in his letter to me, it may be that some of these studies are significant only in "throwing light on the ideological fetters of Soviet, and East European, Indology." Dr. Schetelich's list also contained reference to several works in English and German on śūdras; I have omitted these since I believe the study of the latter to be a separate problem from that of slavery, although of course the two are in some ways related. Three valuable works on slavery noted by Dr. Schetelich were overlooked by me initially, though I have taken the liberty of adding them to the bibliography above, namely Breloer 1928 and 1929, and Meyer 1929: I have been able to see only the latter two. I take this opportunity to thank Dr. Schetelich for her generosity, and herewith list the Russian titles she has added:


Istorija Indii Rabstvo i ego osobennosti.


— Istorija drevnego Vostoka: Materiały po istoriografi (Moscow, 1991); Chpt. 4: "Rabstvo v drevnej Indii."


'TASAKI KUNIHIKO 田崎國彦, '仏'仏教教団における財産所有の問題 - 土地・金銭類・奴隷 - 東洋大学大学院紀要 27 (199-): 156-137 (1-20)

Contents

VIDYUT AKLUKAR: The Self-reflective Rhetoric of Ram Ganesh Gadkari (1885-1919) ........................................... 1

HEIDRUN BRÜCKNER / NARASIMHA POTI: "Dhûmâvati Bhûta": An oral Tulu-text collected in the 19th cent. Edition, Translation, and Analysis ................................................... 13

GEORG BUDDRUSS: Waigali-Sprichwörter ........................................... 65

GERHARD EHLERS: Zum Jyotiṣṭoma Ritual des Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa ................................................... 81

DAVID P. JACKSON: A Recent Translation of Sa-skya Paṇḍita’s Thub pā’i dgon gsal ................................................... 93

BERNHARD KÖLVER: Das Symbol evam ........................................... 101

LEONARD W. J. VAN DER KUIJJP: Notes Apropos of the Transmission of the Sarvadurgatipariśodhantatantra in Tibet ................................................... 109

MICHAEL MARTINEC: Anmerkungen zur Katalogisierung indischer Handschriften in Deutschland ................................................... 127

M. A. MEHENDALE: Avestan garad- and garzdi- ........................................... 147

MAREK MEJ Ř: Some Problems of the Sanskrit Lexicography (Review Article) ................................................... 149

THOMAS OBERLIES: Verschiedene neu-entdeckte Texte des Cândravyākaraṇa und ihre Verfasser (Studien zum Cândravyākaraṇa II) ................................................... 161

CLAUS EITKE: Pragmatic Implicatures and Text-Interpretation (the Alleged Logical Error of the Negation of the Antecedent in the Mūlamadhyamakakārikās) ................................................... 185

SREERAMULA RAJESWARA SARMA: Astronomical Instruments in Mughal Miniatures ................................................... 235

JONATHAN A. SILK: A Bibliography on Ancient Indian Slavery ................................................... 277

ALBRECHT WEZLER: Paralipomena zum Sarvasarvāvatmakavādā II: On the Sarvasarvāvatmakavādā and its Relation to the Vṛksāyurveda ................................................... 287

Publications Received ................................................... 317

Contributors ................................................... 319