

BOOK REVIEWS

HIMANSHU P. RAY, *Monastery and Guild: Commerce Under the Satavahanas*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1986

Since the publication of E.H. Warmington's path breaking study, **The Commerce between the Roman Empire and India**, in 1928, there have been a number of studies dealing with ancient India's foreign trade, especially with the western world. Although Warmington's work was essentially based on the western sources later writers have attempted to incorporate material from Indian as well as from other non-classical sources in their writings on Indian trade with the outside world. Himanshu Prabha Ray's **Monastery and Guild** is the latest addition to this fairly rich body of literature on the subject of ancient Indian trade and commerce. It deals mainly with the commercial activity of the western Deccan in the Satavahana period.

Ray begins the study by attempting to clear certain problems concerning the chronology of some classical writings such as the **Periplus of the Erythrean Sea** which contain a wealth of information on Rome's trade with the east. The author also makes use of many Indian sources not only to supplement the information of the classical writings, but also to clarify certain problems and to obtain fresh information. However, the basic value of Ray's work lies in the manner in which the limited amount of archaeological data available is made use of in a very fruitful manner, and in this respect, this work stands far ahead of many of the writings of the previous scholars. The author makes a praiseworthy attempt to correlate the archaeological data with information from literary works to present a more comprehensive picture and what is amazingly interesting is the mutually complementary nature of the two categories of sources.

The author also does a fairly detailed study of the geographical setting of the Satavahana dominion, laying emphasis on the mineral resources and soil types in the region, then attempts to identify possible areas of agricultural expansion and population concentration, and in this background takes a fresh look at the archaeological data. Ray's observation that major settlement areas always corresponded with sites of rich mineral resources is interesting but one wonders whether all the mineral deposits known today were also known to the early settlers.

Although the title of the book would lead the reader to expect the work to devote a reasonable part of it to examine the link between the monasteries and guilds and the role of these institutions in the general economy of the Satavahana period, he is bound to be thoroughly dissatisfied, for, these