

Splendours Of The Raj: British Architecture In India, 1660-1947

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

151

as was the custom. Besides stone, terra-cotta and ivory are wood carvings which include a richly ornamented representation of Chintamani Lokeshvara. (pp. 114-5), and a temple bracket adorned by the goddess Mahesvari (p. 138). The achievements of the metal-workers assume an advantage by their variety, from the ornate plaque of the god Vishnu (p. 94 and plate 46), through the intricate "Scenes from the life of Buddha" (p. 103), to the elegant Avalokitesvara (p. 108). (Happily these skills are being sustained and stimulated by the programme of restoration and repair to the ancient palaces, temples and shrines, both Hindu and Buddhist, which is being funded through UNESCO).

The Museum's most unusual acquisitions are the artists' model-books and the priests' manuals which are presented in the second section. The period extends from the XVth to early XXth century and Dr. Pal claims, with possible justification, that these form "the largest and most extensive group of such material in the world" and adds that the "sketches further demonstrate the breadth of the Nepali artist's repertoire, which can not be discerned by study of surviving sculptures and paintings alone" (p. 145). Some sketch books have over a hundred drawings, others have incomplete folios. Only a page or two from each manuscript is shown in the catalogue, but the introduction and the relevant documentation beside each drawing encompasses the contents of all the books and manuals. The books, which have been held by the same families for generations, should provide a unique opportunity for students of iconography to examine these interesting drawings.

The third part of the catalogue deals with paintings which are presented in black and white. Fortunately many are reproduced in colour in another part of the volume where their delicate details can be appreciated. The illuminated manuscripts, painted wood manuscript covers, mandalas, book illustrations, pictures on cloth and paper, and a royal portrait date from the XIth to the early XIXth century. There is a generous introduction to these works and full explanations of each print. Discussing the portrait of the young King Girvan Yuddha Vickram Shah, Dr. Pal writes: "His principal political act was to appoint as prime minister Bhimsen Thapa, who ruled Nepal with an iron hand from 1806 to 1837". (p. 231). Girvan Yuddha was barely nine years old when the appointment was made. It was the wise Queen Regent, Tripura Sundari, who chose a strong minister at a time of political uncertainty and when there was a minor on the throne.

An appendix, titled *Indian Summer* of Sanskrit and Newari terms, a bibliography and index complete this volume, the second in a series documenting the Museum's holdings. It bears the mark of the authoritative scholarship we have come to expect from Dr. Pal and is a book that will enlighten and delight those readers who are interested in Nepal and her art.

MAYURA JANG KUNWAR.

SPLENDOURS OF THE RAJ: BRITISH ARCHITECTURE IN INDIA 1660-1947. By PHILIP DAVIES. pp. 257. 201 illus. London, John Murray, 1985. £25.00.

This is the most comprehensive book yet to appear on the subject of Anglo-Indian architecture. Over the past few years several books on this subject have appeared. Pioneers in this field were Sten Nilsson's *European Architecture in India 1700-1850* (1968) and Mark Bence-Jones' *Palaces of the Raj* (1973). An extremely detailed account of the building of New Delhi by Robert Grant Irving, called *Indian Summer* was published in 1981. Most recent is *Stones of Empire* (1983) by Jan Morris. But none of these have the range of Davies's book. Jan Morris's book covered similar territory but although beautifully written was deficient in hard facts.

The author covers many subjects, principally by showing how some of the major cities like Calcutta, Madras, Bombay and New Delhi developed, but also by dealing with problems of style and social divisions. In these ways he provides a good exposition of Palladianism in Bengal, the development of town planning, hill-stations and bungalows, and the emergence of Indo-British architecture.

Beneath the surface of the book there is a continuously evolving theme: that of how styles of architecture reflected the changing political concerns of an imperial power. In the late XVIIIth century as British power and confidence increased so did Company servants and merchants demand Palladian grandeur. This found a premature apotheosis in Captain Charles Wyatt's Gov-

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