egalitarian nature of the store and the give-and-take of the salesclerk-customer relation did not normally extend to rural people ("peasants") who were considered "not normal" by urbanites.

In many ways, this kind of bias extended to the rather more chaotic *geti* markets of The Underground. "Here ... the people working in the market – both the merchants and the young women who were their hired help – were widely perceived as unscrupulous and disruptive people" (121). Outsiders considered them uncouth, uncultured and undeserving of respect. In *getihu* markets selling cheap merchandise of uncertain quality, origin, and value, low-income consumers "must haggle over consumer goods that are of poor quality and may be dangerously substandard" (51). In this environment, "sharp-tongued" salespeople were not accustomed to treat shoppers with deference. On the contrary, as Hanser observes, the sellers of The Underground "turned negative perceptions of market people on their head, instead characterizing *customers* as dangerous, untrustworthy, and even 'dirty'" (149).

The economic and social transformations precipitated by China's relentless drive toward a capitalist-style market economy have produced greater stratification and inequalities. These developments have proved particularly difficult for China's state sector workers, especially in China's northeastern "rust belt." "The loss of what was expected to be lifetime employment within the secure and defined boundaries of a work unit can produce personal, family, and community crises as well as a profound sense of social loss ... The overall result has been a loss of symbolic capital for China's urban working class and the social spaces with which they are associated" (157). Relying among other things on Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of *habitus* and "the trajectory effect," Hanser has competently applied cultural concepts of inequality to China's increasingly stratified retail sector and the phenomenon of post-socialist distinction work. Thus, she has convincingly demonstrated how the downward trajectory observed in the state-owned Harbin No. X Department Store mirrored the broader decline of China's urban working class.

Some of the consequences of the inexorable pace of change were dramatically revealed when Hanser returned to Harbin in March 2005. The author found that the female salesclerks were, perhaps not surprisingly, all new at the luxury Sunshine Department Store. There had been a significant turnover of personnel in the *geti* market as well. But changes were also afoot at Harbin No. X. Not only were its workers more strictly controlled, the city was also in the process of selling its stake to a state-controlled business conglomerate. Indeed, the store was beginning to shed its socialist past – and will most likely shed its aging female sales force as well. Such discarded middle-aged women workers face an uncertain future in low-wage occupations. Although the "gendered" implications of distinction work are alluded to in earlier chapters and it has been made clear that the salesclerks at the three sites were mostly women, the wider gender issues have not been explicitly discussed in the book under review. While the author has observed these women at close quarters at the sales desk, it would have been helpful to learn something about their daily lives away from the workplace.

Whereas inequality, class entitlements, and distinction work have long been accepted in the capitalist West, Amy Hanser's skilful analysis of the more recent emergence of a culture of differentiated privileges and a new structure of entitlements in a post-socialist society offers valuable insights into the general social transformation and inequality in modern China. What makes this book especially valuable is the fact that it explores these important issues in three radically different, highly visible yet little studied retail environments, including the interaction of salesclerks and shoppers. This detailed, easy-to-read monograph is essential reading for anyone wanting to understand the dramatic changes shaping twenty-first-century China. R. G. Tiedemann

Hausner, Sondra L.: Wandering with Sadhus. Ascetics in the Hindu Himalayas. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007. 247 pp. ISBN 978-0-253-21949-7. Price: $ 9.95

This book, which was awarded the Joseph W. Elder Prize in Indian Social Sciences, and which embodies overall ten years of research, is the result of "deep hanging-out," to borrow Clifford Geertz's phrase, primarily with three Śaiva sadhus (one male of the Nirañjanī Akhāṛā and two females of the Jūnā Akhāṛa, all members of the Daśanāmī Sampradāya), and secondarily with a host of other holy men between 1997 and 2001 in the Nepali capital, Kathmandu, and the Indian states of Uttar Pradesh and after November 2000, Uttaranchal. Its origins could be traced to the childhood experiences of the author, when her father was posted as a United Nations official in Kathmandu. Her mother, a yoga teacher, would take her two daughters along the better to learn yoga from an ash-clad *yogī* whose name, Crazy Bliss, sounds almost American-Indian in the English translation of his name – Pāgalānanda. That seems to have provided what Hindus call the *saṃskāra,* which later fructifies in this study of renunciants.

The textual version of renunciation in Hinduism defines it as a break from normal social life and a commitment to a life of the soul (rather than of the body). The anthropological exploration of this claim results in the further realization that although the renouncer cuts himself or herself off from normal society, he or she does not necessarily lead merely a solitary existence but becomes part of another community, and that "instead of being based in one particular place, the community of renouncers inhabits a circuit of sites, a series of pilgrimage places linked through myth and geography. Renouncers do not ask each other, 'Where are you from?' but rather, 'Which place have you come from now?'" (10 f.). And just as "pilgrimage circuits constitute communal conceptions of space for *sādhus*, festival cycles constitute communal conceptions of time" (11) especially festivals such as the Kumbh Melās, which

serve as temporal markers. It is "the overarching argument of this book ... that the experience of renunciation – first a ritual of initiation and then a self-conscious separation from householder society – links *sādhus* together despite varied backgrounds, divergent practices, and dispersed locations" (18). If the act of renunciation consists of moving beyond time, space, and embodiment – the manifestations of material existence, then paradoxically the community of renunciants remanifests these very categories in a transformed manner. This is an important insight, that the attempt to transcend them in one way makes them immanent in the very community it gives rise to. Equally important is the insight that the householder's life serves as a foil to that of the renunciant – an insight in the light of which the author reviews the work of Louis Dumont, Jan Heesterman, Victor Turner, McKim Marriott, and other scholars with critical discernment.

This is an extremely significant exploration of a dimension of renunciation, whose full significance can only be discerned on the larger canvas of religious history. Two types of renunciation are well-known in literature – the eremitic and the cenobitic. Although the "Sutta-Nipāta," generally considered philologically to be the oldest Buddhist text available to us, exhorts the monk to wander alone like "the horn of a rhinoceros," the full exposition of this renunciatory ideal is found in the "Manusmṛti" (VI.33–86, see p. 62 f.). Despite its initial flirtation with this ideal, Buddhism provides (along with Jainism) the major example of cenobitic renunciation par excellence, according to which the monks constituted a community with its own rules. The world of Hindu renunciation explored in this book falls within these two extremes, one of which is textually articulated in the "Manusmṛti" and similar texts, and the other instantiated in practice in Buddhism (and Jainism). This pattern of renunciatory behaviour, less rigorous than the *sannyāsī* model of the "Manusmṛti," and more fluid than the model provided by the Buddhist order, has been credibly identified and delineated in this perspicuously readable work.

A more philosophical issue is posed by the question of embodiment – along with that of space and time (133) in this new context. Although "a split between body and soul is precisely the metaphor Hindu renouncers use to articulate their *social* separateness" (204, emphasis added), it is clear that existentially they continue to possess a body. Although it might be claimed of a *jīvanmukta* that "an accomplished renouncer still has a body which others perceive, but s/he no longer experiences it as such" (188, also see p. 185), it is clear that most *sādhus* are in search of liberation (despite the chosen few of whom it may be claimed that they have achieved living liberation). This renders the question of embodiment particularly tricky and no wonder such renunciants move "back and forth between concepts of the body as a burdensome trap of illusion, on the one hand, and concepts of body as a divine tool of experience, on the other" (30). This tool can be manipulated like any other, as the yogic feats sometimes associated with *sādhus* testify (170 f.), but it is the philosophical resonance of the brute fact that is after all the body which "is uniquely capable of attaining religious knowledge" (163) which is striking in both Hindu and Buddhist monasticism, both of whom share this ambivalence towards the body that it can serve either as an obstacle or a stepping stone so far as spiritual knowledge is concerned. In Buddhism, one is said to touch *nirvāṇa* with the body, once the mind is snuffed out as it were, and this book contains the following illuminating passage of a Hindu Vedantic perspective on the issue: "I asked Vedānta scholar Svāmī Rādhā Raman Ācāryajī why human bodies come to exist if the point is to dissolve again. First he chastised me for asking such a query, saying, 'That question is not asked.' But then he agreed to answer: 'The human body is valuable because we can find its root. This is what the body is for: to go back to the Self. And this is why the human body is so wonderful, because it has the ability to find the Self. In truth we can say there isn't any creation, but the snakes are still biting us. Like in a dream you're still screaming. You have to wake up before it's okay. So that's the way out. And if it's not here at all – if it's just a collective illusion – well, then, that's fine too'" (164). The point then is that the textual and anthropological approaches need not necessarily be at odds, they can be reciprocally illuminating. Another example of this is provided by the discussion of *tapas,* whose association with heat has perhaps been taken too literally by philologists, for "more than heat or even power broadly stated, *tapas* means living unhampered by the emotions and distractions of worldly existence" (177), as when we are studying really hard for a crucial examination.

This otherwise excellent study, however, contains some inaccuracies or infelicities, although they do not detract from the logic of the argument. Allahabad is not called *prayāga* "referring to its site at the confluence of rivers" (130, 146) but because it is the site where numerous rituals (*yāgas*) were performed. Similarly, when the body of the dead Satī was dismembered, her "secret part," it is claimed, fell in Kathmaṇḍu (16). It is perhaps worth noting that in the more familiar version it falls in Assam, hence the fame of Kāmākhyā (Gavin Flood, An Introduction to Hinduism. Cambridge 1996; p. 193). Similarly, the single-minded and repeated description of the Śiva-*liṅga* as phallus (16, 153) must be revisited. It is a delicate point inasmuch as in a sense it is not wrong but it is correct only in a way in which Jesus Christ may be described as a felon, creating a situation in which a fact becomes the enemy of truth. Scholars have taken pains to point out that in the main Puranic account, the *liṅga* stands for a pillar of light and not a phallus and that the word is used in this sense only a limited number of times in terms of its overall usage. Hence the mechanical lexical translation of the Śiva-*liṅga* as phallus comes close to being a "phallacy." It could be that its "anthropological" use in this sense is more frequent than the "textual," but how many Hindus think they are worshiping Śiva's

phallus, and not Śiva himself, when they bow down in worship? Mahatma Gandhi noted in *Young India* (15-9-1927): "It was in a missionary book that I first learnt that *Shivalingam* had any obscene significance at all." Whether one considers it "obscene" may be a matter of personal moral preference, but the point is that its description as a phallus, when it literally means a "sign" (154) involves a double semantic jeopardy: This is not what it actually means literally and this is not how it is viewed by the believers phenomenologically. If such a description is a missionary legacy, then it is best discarded in serious anthropology.

Arvind Sharma

Headrick, Annabeth: The Teotihuacan Trinity. The Sociopolitical Structure of an Ancient Mesoamerican City. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007. 210 pp., fig., illus. ISBN 978-0-292-71665-0. Price: £ 30.00

Der Titel ist Programm; es geht der Autorin um die Dreiheit der Institutionen und deren Vertreter, die ihrer Meinung nach in der altmexikanischen Metropole des 1. Jahrtausends im zentralmexikanischen Hochland um Herrschaft und Macht rangen: die althergebrachten Lineages, der König und die Kriegerelite, organisiert in verschiedenen Kriegerorden. Der Untertitel verspricht, die soziopolitische Struktur der Stadt darzustellen. Jedoch lässt die Autorin die in vorherigen Jahrzehnten besonders betonte Rolle der Priesterschaft bis auf eine kurze Bemerkung in den Schlussbetrachtungen, dass sie wohl eine weiterführende Untersuchung wert seien, unberücksichtigt. Ebenso vernachlässigt sie die Bedeutung der Schicht der Händler und Fernhändler.

Hatte man vor einem halben Jahrhundert noch von dem Charakter der Teotihuacan-Gesellschaft als einer Theokratie gesprochen, weil man sie als vorstaatliche, friedliche Gesellschaft betrachtete, so sind nun mit der vorliegenden Darstellung die Aussagen in ihr Gegenteil verkehrt. Die Gesellschaft von Teotihuacan wird schon seit längerem als eine Staatsgesellschaft angesprochen; in der vorliegenden Beschreibung jedoch als unter einem König stehend und mit einer differenzierten, aber auf jeden Fall aggressiven Kriegerelite aufgefasst. Man ist noch vor Jahren der Meinung gewesen, dass sich die Teotihuacan-Gesellschaft von den anderen sogenannten klassischen Gesellschaften Altmexikos offenbar dadurch unterschied, dass keine Herrscherdynastien in den Kunstäußerungen und historischen Monumenten wie vergleichsweise in der klassischen Maya-Kultur sichtbar werden. Man schlussfolgerte, dass eine Oligarchie das Gemeinwesen geführt habe. Der Autorin zufolge steht die Existenz eines Königtums jedoch außer Frage.

Womit meint die Autorin diese Aussagen schlüssig begründen zu können? Sie hat sich jahrelang und intensiv mit der Analyse der archäologischen Befunde und künstlerischen Zeugnisse, vor allem des Architekturensembles im Zentrum der Stadt mit den großen Pyramiden und der zentralen Prozessionsstraße ("Avenue of the Dead") sowie den erhaltenen Resten von Wandmalereien in den verschiedenen ausgegrabenen Wohnbezirken befasst. Es steht außer Zweifel, dass Aussagen zur Gesellschaftsstruktur und den dynamischen Machtgruppen nur aus dergleichen Analysen zu gewinnen sind. Jedoch bleibt ohne authentische verbale Berichte über diese Stadtkultur des 1. Jahrtausends und wegen des Fehlens einer lesbaren Schrift jede Interpretation von Kunstäußerungen stark von subjektiven Impressionen geprägt.

Die Autorin liest erstaunliche Details aus den Wandmalereien heraus und suggeriert, dass sich daran alle von ihr dargestellten Zusammenhänge ablesen ließen. Jedoch benutzt sie die Methode des ethnographischen Vergleichs nach Auffassung der Rezensentin in unzulässiger Weise: Sie interpretiert die weitgehend statischen Abbildungen mittels der in Texten überlieferten Berichte aus der klassischen Maya-Kultur einerseits und aus der rund 800 Jahre später sich in Zentralmexiko entwickelnden aztekischen Gesellschaft andererseits. Es stört sie nicht, dass mehr als ein halbes Jahrtausend später und andere Bedingungen die aztekische Berichterstattung über die alte Kultur stark beeinflusst haben müssen und sie in das mythische Zeitalter versetzen. Sie verortet die Darstellung von Ritualen in Teotihuacan als solche eines die Gesellschaft bestimmenden Ursprungsmythos von der Errichtung des Weltenbaums in der irdischen Welt der Teotihuacanos. Dabei kann sie sich eben aber nur vergleichsweise auf die angeführten anderen Gesellschaften stützen, deren Wurzeln und Entwicklung sich jedoch offensichtlich vom Staat von Teotihuacan unterschieden.

Fragen von Jenseitsvorstellungen sieht die Autorin einzig in der Verwandlung sich im Kampf oder auf dem Opferstein hingebenden Kriegern in Schmetterlinge, weil diese in den Wandmalereien so häufig vorkommen. Sie vergleicht den Einsatz der Teotihuacan-Krieger mit dem islamischen Jihad. Für sie sind Beispiele des Fliegerspiels in den Golfküstenkulturen, auch die heutigen Rituale, und alle Zeremonien, bei denen während der aztekischen Jahresfeste Pfähle eine Rolle spielten, in enger inhaltlicher Beziehung zu Riten zu sehen, die in Wandmalereien von Teotihuacan wiedergegeben sind und von ihr mit dem Errichten des Weltenbaums als zentralem Ursprungsmythos verbunden werden. Sie trennt sich zudem explizit von der allgemein verbreiteten Idee, dass die Wandmalerei in dem Stadtteil Tepantitla das jenseitige "Reich des Regengottes" darstelle. Sie holt alle bildlichen Wiedergaben von Personen in entsprechenden Darstellungen in das tägliche Leben der Teotihuacanos zurück und lehnt ihre Interpretation als Darstellungen von Jenseitswelten ab. Ob man der Autorin in dieser Art Interpretation folgen möchte, hängt vom eigenen Ermessen ab. Vieles aus der Lebenswirklichkeit wurde einst gewiss in die Darstellung von Jenseitigem, in die Welt der außermenschlichen Kräfte und Götter und ihre Wirkungssphären übertragen. Dass es aber ausschließlich als Diesseitiges bildliche Darstellung erfahren haben soll, darin vermag man der Autorin nicht zu folgen.

War Teotihuacan das städtische Zentrum eines mächtigen Territorialstaates, der weit über Zentralmexiko hinaus die damalige Welt beherrschte, so waren im