

**Book Review: Dušan Deák and Daniel Jasper (Eds.), *Rethinking Western India: The Changing Contexts of Culture, Society and Religion*. Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 2014. ISBN: 9788125055822 (Hardcover). 291 Pages. \$65.**

**Reviewed by Jon Keune<sup>1</sup>**

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*Rethinking Western India* is the most recent volume in a line of publications that emerge from the International Conference on Maharashtra—a more or less biennial scholarly gathering that has taken place since 1984. The conference and its ensuing edited books have produced a wealth of scholarship that cuts broadly across fields in the humanities and social sciences. Earlier titles in this informal series include *Marga: Ways of Liberation, Empowerment, and Social Change in Maharashtra* (Manohar, 2008), *Intersections: Socio-Cultural Trends in Maharashtra* (Sangam, 2000), and *House and Home in Maharashtra* (Oxford, 1999). The book herein under review draws from presentations at the 2010 conference, which was held in Bratislava, Slovakia.

In keeping with the multi-disciplinary scope of its predecessors, the book's thirteen essays are very diverse methodologically and topically. The editors organize the essays into three parts. The first focuses on the cultural significance of texts, and the second attends to the mechanics that have produced and maintained social structures over the past three centuries. Essays in the third and smallest group investigate cases that underscore the benefits of trans-regional and comparative analysis, pointing the reader beyond Maharashtra's borders.

The editors begin with a short introduction that situates the book's theme within the larger literature about the value of the region as a meaningfully delimited arena for analysis between the state/nation and

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