



The New Cambridge History of India: Vijayanagara

By Burton Stein

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The Vijayanagara rajas ruled a substantial part of the southern peninsula of India for over three hundred years, beginning in the mid-fourteenth century. During this epoch the region was transformed from its medieval past toward a modern colonial future. Concentrating on the later sixteenth- and seventeenth-century history of Vijayanagara, this book details the pattern of rule established in this important and long-lived Hindu kingdom that was followed by other, often smaller kingdoms of peninsular India until the onset of colonialism. Through an analysis of the politics, society, and economy of Vijayanagara, the author addresses the central question of the extent to which Vijayanagara, as a medieval Hindu kingdom, can be viewed as a prototype of the polities and societies confronted by the British in the late eighteenth century. The book thus presents an understanding and appreciation of one of the great medieval kingdoms of India as well as a more general assessment of the nature of the state, society, and culture on the eve of European colonial rule.

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Review

"Burton Stein's comprehensive survey of the Vijayanagara empire incorporates and further refines many of his earlier and more detailed findings on the medieval history of the south. Indeed, Vijayanagara summarizes a lifetime's research and reflection on South Asian history and it has all the qualities of a single, sustained argument presented in a narrative form but nevertheless informing on and illuminating a whole range of analytical problems." K. N. Chaudhuri, Indian History

"...thanks to his success in interweaving his analysis of 'structural changes' together with a narrative synopsis of political history, the potential audience has been expanded beyond the narrow circle of specialists to include anyone who desires an intelligent overall introduction to the period." Phillip B. Wagoner, Newsletter of the Society for South Indian Studies

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