

BOOK REVIEW

History of Sindh – A Summary. A Review of “A Monograph on Sindh through the Centuries”

“A Monograph on Sindh through the Centuries”, Muhammad Ali Sheikh, Karachi, SMI University Press, Pages 84, Figures 118, 2013, ISBN: 9789699874017

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A Monograph on Sindh through the Centuries written by Professor Dr. Muhammad Ali Sheikh – Vice Chancellor of Sindh Madressatul Islam University, Karachi – is a brief history of Sindh from the Indus Valley Civilization to the creation of Pakistan. The author is a PhD in Mass Communication from the University of Karachi. Written for the purpose of developing interest in the youth about Sindh’s history and culture, the book is in simple prose using every day English and includes a plethora of modern and ancient pictures of various areas of Sindh.

It is an age where students are not interested in reading and generally find history boring. They do not realize the importance of knowing the roots from which we have come, of the generations before us and the historical episodes that have created the world in which we live today. The migrations of entire civilizations, the development of language as is spoken today, the traditions and folklore prevalent in the regions, all of this could only be understood by reading and developing an interest in history. Furthermore, Sindh, because of its unique geographical location has been since antiquity a central point for trade and commerce and for connecting the subcontinent and the empires that ruled in South East Asia with the rest of the world. Therefore, in order to understand the development of rest of the Indian subcontinent, its connection with the world over the course of human history and the role it has played in the history of mankind, the importance of knowing the history of Sindh cannot be discounted. Thus this book with its colored images and engaging style of writing will serve to develop interest in any young reader to find out more about the evolution of Sindh.

The book is divided into 10 short chapters with each chapter covering a new era or an important development

of an age. An interesting aspect of the book is the arrangement of the chapters in chronological order with each new chapter portraying a new period in the history of Sindh. The logical sequence and the clear connection from one chapter to the next makes this book a good read for those looking for a brief on the historical civilizations and major events that took place in Sindh from the largest urban civilization – Indus Valley Civilisation, Vedic Era, Bhuddist rule, arrival of Islam to the current division of Sindh into Pakistan and India. Further an entire chapter is dedicated to the folklore which has survived to the current day and has been turned into movies and dramas in recent times. While there are many books on the history and culture of Sindh, however they either cater to a particular era or are an encyclopedic read. The monograph, on the other hand, allows a uniformed student of history or even an interested reader to quickly become aware of the various events that have developed the culture and people of Sindh to be what they are today.

The importance of this short book because of its various merits cannot be diminished. However since the book has been written for the youth all over Pakistan and beyond, it is also imperative to highlight that because of being printed on high quality paper depicting high resolution graphics and also being in hardcover has made it rather on the expensive side. It would be better if another low cost edition in paperback and using a bit lower quality paper be published so that the book becomes accessible for the masses and truly serves the purpose stated, “designed for youth as to give them an introduction to the history and culture of Sindh”.

Nevertheless, this is a commendable effort on the part of the writer to make history interesting and intelligible for the multitudes.

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