



Delhi: Ancient History (Readings in History)

Upinder Singh

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Not many people know that the busy and bustling capital city of Delhi and its surroundings have a long past, going back thousands of years. Prehistoric stone tools have surfaced here and many ancient remains have been found, sometimes accidentally by farmers tilling their fields, and at other times by archaeologists carrying out systematic excavations. A mound one passes everyday or a narrow strip of stream tells a story of ancient times. Centuries of history coexist with metro stations and plush cars. The readings in this book give us glimpses of the lives of people who lived in the Delhi area over the centuries, and how these details have been pieced together by historians. It brings into focus the importance of the historian's method and the sources of information found in ancient texts, archaeology and even legends and folklore, sometimes hanging on the thread of a slender historical fact. The editor of the volume, points to the urgency of further exploration and documentation to fill in the still all-too-meagre details of Delhi's ancient history. However, she ends on a note of caution, bordering on alarm, when she points out that invaluable evidence of the city's past is being extensively destroyed due to quarrying and the construction of new roads and buildings. Such activities are an integral part of the modernization of a living city but the balance between modernization and the preservation of ancient remains is indeed very fragile and needs to be maintained from an informed and realistic perspective. This collection of essays has been put together by a teacher for students of history, but will also be of enormous value to a large number of other interested readers.

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