

that they explore and makes the book appropriate for use in folklore courses. It is also recommended for those interested in South Asian and Southeast Asian civilizations, performance theory, and anthropology.

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RICHMOND, FARLEY P., DARIUS L. SWANN, PHILIPP B. ZARILLI, editors.
Indian Theatre: Traditions of Performance. Honolulu: The University of Hawaii Press, 1990. xiv+487 pages. Maps, plates, tables, glossary, index. Hardcover US\$48.00; ISBN 0-8248-1190-9. Paper US \$24.94.

This book is a gold mine of information for laymen and theater specialists alike. I, who place myself in the former category, found something new and interesting on virtually every page. But I am familiar enough with Indian theater and with theater people in India and America to expect that even they will find a great deal in the book that they didn't already know. India has such a welter of different languages and subcultures, each with a long list of traditional theater forms, that no one, not even an Indian, is likely to be fully acquainted with all of them. I regard this book as indispensable for specialists in Asian theater, for courses on comparative Asian theater, for all university and college library reference shelves, and for Indologists of all disciplines.

Although the editors modestly state that the goal of the book is to introduce Western readers to the many dimensions of Indian theater, it really does much more than that. The book is truly encyclopedic in its coverage. Rather than give a simplified overview, genre by genre, the editors have chosen representative traditions to exemplify the tremendous range of forms Indian theater has assumed over the millennia. Each chapter is written by a specialist in a particular region or realm of tradition, and covers the whole range of topics necessary for an understanding of a particular theater tradition: actor training, scripts, costuming, staging, audience expectations, economics, the social standing and life-style of the artists, and whatever other characteristics distinguish that tradition. The result is a superb coverage of the material, with descriptions that are not only sophisticated but also easily accessible to the nonprofessional. For those who want more, the editors and authors have provided bibliographic guides to the technical literature on each genre.

The book is divided into six sections representing different categories of theater traditions. The book's general introduction does a fine job of identifying those features which all Indian theater traditions share, while the individual sections deal with sets of generic differences. Each section is introduced by one of the editors and provides an overview of a variety of the different genres in a particular category. The editors wisely define the categories by the "organizational impetus"—the primary intention behind how and why the genre is performed.

The first section covers India's classical theater tradition, which can be traced through literary documents back to 200 B.C. It primarily used Sanskrit, the court language of ancient India, but at all times incorporated colloquial languages as well, frequently within a single play. Rooted in the dramaturgical manual, the *nāṭashastra*, the early period of Sanskrit theater is known to us today through a handful of ancient

texts, some of which are still performed in several theater traditions in modern times. By the tenth century Sanskrit theater had waned, but its influence and that of the *nāṭashastra* had by then powerfully affected Indian tastes and aesthetics. Some of the direct descendants of the classical form retain many of its features more or less intact, but virtually all indigenous Indian theater utilizes it in one way or another as a point of departure. Because of this, Farley P. Richmond's excellent chapters, "Origins of Sanskrit Theatre" and "Characteristics of Sanskrit Theatre and Drama," constitute essential background reading for the discussions in other sections. As an illustration of how classical theater must have been as living theater, Richmond gives us a vivid description of *kuṭiyāṭṭam*, a classical tradition which is still alive (but only barely) in the temples of Kerala.

Introducing the second section, "Ritual Traditions," Phillip Zarrilli defines ritual performances as rituals which utilize overtly dramatic, theatrical, and performative elements as a mediating bridge between a community and the supernatural. Although ritual performances use purely religious techniques for this communication—prayer, sacrifice, trance, and possession—they often also entail elaborate costuming and makeup, narrative acting, and dramatization of events in the "lives" of the gods. Traditions such as Kerala's *teyyam* worship, described in a separate chapter by Wayne Ashley and Regina Holloman, usually last from dusk to dawn and often continue over a three- to seven-day festival period. Certain of the genres in this category are accompanied by some of India's most colorful costuming and spectacular folk art forms. *Ayyappan tiyāṭṭa*, for example, described in a separate chapter by Zarrilli, take place around elaborate powder drawings, and *teyyam* performers use incredibly intricate facial makeup and costuming.

In the third section, devotional traditions such as *rās līla* and *rām līla*, both described by coeditor Darius Swann, are regarded as a category separate from ritual traditions. They are distinguished by the attitude of *bhakti*, an adoration of the divine through song and dance that can both begin and end in religious ecstasy. Grounded in the inspired poetic renderings of the stories of the god-heroes Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, *bhakti* inspired numerous dramatic narrative dance genres.

Section four, "Folk-Popular Traditions," discusses a welter of distinct folk-theater forms found around the country. For coeditor Swann, what distinguishes folk theater from other forms is that it depends on the masses for support and that it is given more to entertainment and the profane than to sacred purposes. Chapter-length descriptions of *Nautanki* (by Swann), a form found widely in the villages of northern India, and *Tamasha* (by Tevia Abrams), found in the central Indian state of Maharashtra, give some idea of the characteristics of the many genres to be found in this category, but they hardly cover the terrain. A number of South Indian popular forms of folk theater—*burrakatha* (Andhra Pradesh), *cavittu nāṭakam* (Kerala) and *veethi nāṭakka* (Tamil Nadu), and various enacted story-telling traditions—get shorter treatment.

"Dance-Dramas and Dramatic Dances," the subject of the fifth section, covers many diverse forms of theater centering on dance. Although many in this category are almost exclusively narrative dance forms (*bharatha nāṭyam*, *mohiniyāṭṭam* and *odissi*) others (Karnataka's *yakshagaṇa*, Tamil Nadu's *terukkuttu*, Andhra's *kuchipuri*, Kerala's *kathakali*) combine dance, dialogue, acting, and sung oral narrative. Both are traditions for which India is justly famous and through which Indian dance and theater are most widely known abroad. Zarrilli's authoritative chapter on *kathakali* and the informative chapter on the several forms of *chau* by Andrew Tsubaki and Farley Richmond give us a good idea of the characteristic features to be found in this category.

The book concludes with a section on modern (meaning Western-inspired) theater in India. Situated mostly in the bigger cities, modern theater can be found in all of India's literary languages and English. Although similar in form to theater in the West, the organization and popularity of modern theater varies considerably from place to place within India. Modern theater abounds on both amateur and professional levels (levels which are defined differently in India than in the West, however), but it can hardly be said to prosper in competition with India's massive cinema industry. Farley Richmond's story of how and why this is so makes for fascinating reading in one of the most interesting chapters of the book.

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THIEL-HORSTMANN, MONIKA, editor. *Rāmāyaṇa and Rāmāyaṇas*. Khoja Series of Modern South Asian Studies, Vol. 3. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1991. x+249 pages. Index. Paper DM 98.—; ISBN 3-447-03116-6.

This volume contains most of the papers read at a conference on the *Rāmāyaṇa* in Sankt Augustin, Germany, in September 1987. The title, *Rāmāyaṇa and Rāmāyaṇas*, is descriptive of the collection's contents, since the articles examine the great epic *Rāmāyaṇa* in various of its numerous versions (hence *Rāmāyaṇas*). This focus on the multiplicity of the epic is in accord with the trend in *Rāmāyaṇa* studies during the past few decades. Most scholars in the field are attempting to take *Rāmāyaṇa* research beyond the classic writings of Vālmīki, Tulsīdās, Bhaṭṭi, and Kampan; hence the recent emphasis upon "diversity," "variety," and "variation" as axioms of research, and the stress upon coordinating scholarly efforts through international meetings and the publication of research findings. These trends are noticeable in three earlier volumes that I know of: RAGHAVAN (1980), SRINIVASA IYENGAR (1983), and SĪNHA and SAHAI (1989). The present volume fits in well with these books, as will, no doubt, a recent work edited by RICHMAN (1991): *Many Rāmāyaṇas: The Diversity of a Narrative Tradition in South Asia*.

The stress on variation in the work of recent scholars is well justified. The geographic range of *Rāmāyaṇa* research is huge, stretching from Japan to Surinam and including many scattered islands with Indian populations. The cultural variations are equally great, placing enormous demands upon *Rāmāyaṇa* scholars. Not only must they know the language of the people whose version of the *Rāmāyaṇa* they are studying, but they must also be familiar with many aspects of the native culture (thought, beliefs, art, etc.). It is a daunting task indeed to keep abreast of all the research. The present volume of studies is devoted to India, past and present, and takes into account both the northern and southern regions of the country. Several authors also venture further afield to highlight similarities with *Rāmāyaṇas* outside of India.

The articles in the collection investigate a number of central issues in *Rāmāyaṇa* research. These include spiritual concepts in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, particularly the relation between dharma and the individual; folklore and the *Rāmāyaṇa*; the *Rāmāyānā* pageants; and the *Rāmāyaṇa* in modern Indian life.

The role of dharma in Vālmīki is analyzed in an article by H. M. Buck, with par-