

neglected; nor are Tamil Śaivite theology and its parallels in Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition. Her thorough and excellent study leaves little room for criticism, but perhaps the biographical stories of Cēkkiḷār's *Periya Purāṇam* should be treated rather as a consequence of the hymns' veneration than as background material about the poets' lives, which may need to be left in obscurity rather than represented literally by admittedly legendary impressions. Perhaps only after the poets' impact is seen as urging the formation of such legends, can we feel something of their stature as historical figures.

The volume includes a representative map of *Tēvāram* sacred places and a note directing readers to a more detailed map (13 fn 22), which would also include a couple in Śrī Lanka, whose history of *Tēvāram*-inspired *bhakti* is not covered (Peterson did her fieldwork in 1978, when it was perhaps already dangerous to be a Tamil in Śrī Lanka). Appendices list sacred places, scales for the student of music, and sites of Śiva's great acts. Major myths of Śiva presupposed by the poets are summarized and a useful glossary has been provided as well as an index to the poems. Fifteen photographs assist the reader's imagination. The bibliography could flesh out a potential course or program of private study for which the introduction provides both an excellent synthesis of prior scholarship and insightful new material.

Although technical assessment of the translation of the poems is beyond my competency, the English renderings of over 250 selections are at once superlatively readable and reflective of the distinctive sensibilities of the poets. While Peterson's detailed work points scholars to further study, it also enhances an appreciation of the poems at a more introductory level.

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PILLAI-VETSCHERA, TRAUDE, collector and editor. *Indische Märchen. Der Prinz aus der Mangofrucht. Bei Bhil und Mina gesammelt* [Indian folktales: The prince from the mango fruit. Collected from Bhil and Mina]. Das Gesicht der Völker, Dokumentation des Märchens, 55. Kassel/Germany: Erich Röth-Verlag, 1989. 220 pages. Index of tale types, selected bibliography. Hardcover DM24.80; ISBN 3-87680-353-5. (In German)

The book under this strange title is the latest product in the series "Indische Märchen" published by Erich Röth-Verlag in Kassel. It is a collection of fairy tales as they are currently told in the villages of the Bhils and Minas in southern Rajasthan and northwestern Madhya Pradesh. Traude Pillai-Vetschera, an anthropologist doing research in this region, recorded the stories on tape and had them translated and typologically analysed. Since the book has been published for a wider public, she has had to leave out the text in the local language and reduce the typological classification in her notes to a minimum.

This is a pity, for surely linguists and folklorists would have liked to gain more information about the language and cultural relations of the Bhils and Minas to compare them with other peoples. The Bhil storyteller narrated his stories in the little-known Rathvi dialect, while the Mina storytellers spoke in Mewadi-Wagadi, which is a mixture of Rajasthani and Gujarati. Since the original language of the Bhils and Minas has been completely lost, any specimens of written or recorded texts in these dialects would be important, for they might contain traces of the vocabulary, the syntax, or the particular pronunciation of the original Bhil or Mina languages.

The typological analysis had also to be severely restricted. It is also unfortunate that Diether R  th, who himself carried out this classification, used as his motif-index Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson's book *The Types of the Folktale* (FFC 184, Helsinki 1964) instead of *The Oral Tales of India* (by Stith Thompson and Jonas Balys, reprinted in 1976 by Greenwood Press with the permission of the Indiana University Press, Bloomington, USA). Thompson grants that the motif-index of Indian folk literature requires a considerable extension and specification, which has been done in *The Oral Tales of India*, while the earlier book was too exclusively based on north-European culture-types.

A translator of such folktales has two alternatives: either to choose a close and literal translation of the tales, with all their repetitions, deviations, and crudities, even obscenities, in the actual narration, or to present the text in a too purified and bowdlerized version. Pillai-Vetschera has fortunately chosen a middle way that to some extent preserves the quaint specific style of the actual narration, yet renders it into an easy-flowing German.

The reader of this book may wonder why it lacks an introduction and begins straightway with the narration of the fairy tales. But in the end the reader discovers a "Nachwort" of twelve pages providing the desired information about the ethnography of the Bhils and Minas. This information is complemented with twenty-three pages of notes that aptly explain terms and usages in the text that might puzzle the reader unacquainted with Indian lore.

The reader of these fairy tales can easily make out that they are scarcely the exclusive creations of the Bhil and Mina storytellers. The stories contain too many cultural traits that are alien to such primitive tribes as the Bhils and Minas. Examples are stories 7, 8, and 23. These and similar fairy tales are rather the narrative repertoire of storytellers from various communities of the region. These storytellers are often semi-professional and highly appreciated entertainers in rural areas where illiteracy is still widespread. Among these storytellers there exists no copyright; they freely borrow whole stories or parts of them from each other, knit well-known motifs together into ever new combinations, embroider them, enlarge and condense them at will, as sentiment and convenience demand. In modern times, however, when radio and television make their entrance into even the smallest and remotest villages, the old art of storytelling will soon die out and be replaced by passive and sterile listening to commercialized music and singing and by watching a performing art that is mass-produced and highly artificial.

Thus we have to be grateful to Pillai-Vetschera that she has recorded and published these twenty-three fairy tales and preserved them from extinction. And the non-professional reader will be captivated by the exotic charm and the playful imagination of these simple tales.

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