

1987 *Counterpoints*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press.

Andrew Duff-Cooper
Keio University,
Tokyo

INDIA

HEIFETZ, HANK and VELCHERU NARAYANA RAO, Transl. *For the Lord of the Animals—Poems from the Telugu. The Kālahastīśvara Śatakamu of Dhūrjaṭi*. With introduction and notes. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987. xi+178 pages. Afterword by Velcheru Narayana Rao. Hardcover US \$25.00; ISBN 0-520-05669-8.

For those familiar with the poetry of bhakti, the strain within Hinduism that emphasizes an intimate personal relationship between devotee and deity, the tone and many of the sentiments expressed in the verses of Dhūrjaṭi's *Kālahastīśvara Śatakamu* will be familiar. As is frequently the case in bhakti poetry, the poet's voice is vividly present in these lyrics addressed to Kālahastīśvara, a local manifestation of Śiva whose temple is located in southern Andhra. But while this beautifully executed and handsomely produced translation of Dhūrjaṭi's poetic offering to Śiva may hold no startling surprise for those familiar with its genre, it is nonetheless an important addition to the growing corpus of bhakti poetry in translation, not least because it is the first English translation of bhakti poetry from Telugu which is likely to find an international audience. The translation represents a collaborative effort between Velcheru Narayana Rao, a versatile scholar who brings to this project an expert's knowledge of Telugu literature and its historical context, and Hank Heifetz, a South Asianist who is also a professional poet and translator.

The collaboration is a happy one. For the most part the translations successfully capture the conversational and often impassioned tone which is a hallmark of bhakti poetry. Rather than embarking upon a detailed textual analysis, the translators confine their introductory remarks to a relatively brief discussion of the text's author, subject, genre, and texture in the original. Otherwise, the poems are left to speak for themselves. Annotations are designed to facilitate readers' comprehension and appreciation of the poems by explaining mythological allusions and other cultural or literary conventions with which the poet's intended audience would have been familiar. The notes are kept brief and do not delve into issues of purely scholarly concern. Explanatory notes on Telugu meter and on the constitution of the text also help to bridge the gap for readers who are unfamiliar with the original.

It is well known that bhakti, far from being monolithic, appears in a number of variants. Thus it has been possible to describe bhakti both as a movement of integration and as a vehemently iconoclastic protest movement. The element of protest is plainly visible in Dhūrjaṭi's poems, but unlike the Kannada *vacanas* of the Viraśaivas which contain scathing condemnations of religious orthodoxy, protest in Dhūrjaṭi's lyrics is directed solely against the values of secular life—family loyalties, physical pleasure, wealth, fame, and political power. Dhūrjaṭi's anti-establishment stance may not be as extreme as that of the Viraśaivas, yet neither is he as open as are some of the Tamil bhakti poets to an appreciative enjoyment of God's presence in all aspects of the manifest world. There is no mistaking the author's disillusionment with the world and the kind of experience it offers. At the same time, other themes evinced in Dhūrjaṭi's text

—praise of the deity's devotees, the devotee's invulnerability to harm, valuation of devotion over learning, and many others—frequently appear in the works of poets from other bhakti traditions who may or may not share Dhūrjaṭi's sense of disillusionment. Viewed from a distanced perspective, individual thematic elements in these poems may appear to belong to a repertoire which was the common property of many bhakti poets, but it is the particular combination of these elements and their relative emphasis that imparts to Dhūrjaṭi's voice its particular identity.

Also included in this volume is an Afterword by Narayana Rao which deals with the literary-historical context of this 16th century work. Narayana Rao's principal theme is the contrast between the traditional images of "court poet" and "temple poet" and the kinds of compositions associated with each. The tradition of Telugu court poetry, heavily influenced by its Sanskrit counterpart, reached its apogee during the reign of Krishnadevarāya (1509–1525), the most illustrious of the Vijayanager kings. Narayana Rao describes the relationship between court poet and royal patron, and on a smaller scale between poets and patrons of lesser prestige and power, as a kind of *quid pro quo*. The patron provided for the material comforts of the poet and bestowed honors upon him, while the poet, in turn, in a certain sense "created" his patron by presenting him to the world in light of the ideals of rulership, thus legitimizing his claim to power and authority. In sharp contrast, the temple poet is a servant of God and refuses to recognize the sovereignty of any human ruler. The temple poet is also likely to disregard the literary conventions by which the skill of court poets was measured.

Narayana Rao's reconstruction of the contrastive images of court poet and temple poet provides an informative complement to the translations. It illuminates, for instance, the poet's recurrent attacks upon kings and those who serve them. At the same time, as Narayana Rao observes, the paradigm does not neatly explain Dhūrjaṭi. While the *Kālahastīśvara Śatakamu* would appear to share a great deal in sentiment and style with the creations of temple poets, he is also the attributed author of another work, *Kālahasti Mahātmyamu*, which, while it also glorifies the deity of Kālahasti, is far more ornate and "courtly" in style. Further, Dhūrjaṭi is traditionally identified as one of the principle court poets patronized by Krishnadevarāya. Narayana Rao's essay goes a long way in broadening our awareness of the world in which the author of the *Kālahastīśvara Śatakamu* lived and of the way Telugu tradition has constructed images of the principal actors in that world, yet Dhūrjaṭi himself, about whom virtually no "concrete" historical information is available, remains an elusive figure. The voice we hear in the poems is clear enough, but Narayana Rao's tantalizing allusions to a "Dhūrjaṭi" who speaks in a very different voice whets our appetite to know more.

Norman Cutler
University of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

MEYER, EVELINE. *Aṅkāḷaparamēcvari: A Goddess of Tamilnadu, Her Myths and Cult*. Beiträge zur Südasienforschung 107. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GmbH, 1986. Xii+339 pages. Songs in Tamil, maps, list of abbreviations, list of informants, list of Aṅkāḷammaṅ temples in Tamilnadu, bibliography, index, 25 black and white photographs. Paper DM 56,00, ISBN 3-515-04702-6.

Eveline Meyer has performed difficult field research, travelling to almost all the districts