

INDIA

MORINIS, E. ALAN. *Pilgrimage in the Hindu Tradition. A Case Study of West Bengal* (Oxford University South Asian Studies Series). Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1984. X+346 pp. Plates, figures, maps, appendices, bibliography and index. Hardcover Rs 150. ISBN 19-561412-7.

The past one and a half decades have witnessed a renewed interest in the study of pilgrimage which is reflected by the ongoing theoretical discussion and numerous case studies written by religious historians, anthropologists and cultural geographers. Written by a religious anthropologist and based on a doctoral thesis submitted to Oxford University, an outcome of this increasing interest is the present book. The author elucidates the ethnography of three pilgrimage sites of the Hindu tradition in West Bengal. His aim is to disclose the pattern underlying and linking the phenomenon of pilgrimage as "... an individual behaviour and as a socio-cultural institution" (p. 2), to probe the relationship of the situation in West Bengal within an overall Indian pattern, and to give a semantic interpretation of the Hindu institution of pilgrimage. Dr. Morinis establishes his points by carefully discussing his own findings and by testing them in the light of earlier studies in related fields of research and, vice versa, by testing earlier theoretical approaches against his own findings.

Fieldwork for this study took place at three pilgrimage sites in West Bengal which are representative of the three major sects of this state. These three places are (1) Tārakeśvar, a Śiva sanctuary, (2) Navadvīp, a sanctuary of prime importance to the Caitanya sect of Vaiṣṇavism, and (3) Tārāpīṭh, a Śakti, or Devī, sanctuary. The method Dr. Morinis followed during his fieldwork was one of observation-cum-interview, whereby he interviewed 1,457 pilgrims. The questionnaire and the statistical results drawn from the interviews appear in the appendices. After tracing in the "Introduction" in a concentrated manner the factual and theoretical implications and the aims of his book, the author provides a historico-cultural introduction to the sacred places of West Bengal, therein treating the history of the three above-mentioned sectarian branches and their sites as well as of the West Bengal Muslim pilgrimage places. He proceeds by tracing in his chapter III "The philosophical roots of the pilgrimage tradition in West Bengal" and treats "... (i) the ideas deriving from supraregional sources which are the foundations of pilgrimage practice in West Bengal, (ii) how these ideas are given form in regional sect patterns, and (iii) the links between the philosophical ideas (in their sectarian form) and actual pilgrim behavior in West Bengal" (p. 48). In terms of the pilgrimage sites, he points out the various connections of the three sects with the basic philosophical concept of *Advaita* (non-dualism) and *Dvaita* (dualism). The author ventures into this discussion in a manner sometimes puzzling the indologist reviewer. The assumption that the Vedas assert "... one unified principle underlying the universe and its parts—the *Brahman*" (p. 52) is untenable. Śaṅkara's philosophy is said to have achieved its "strongest formulation ... in his commentaries on the Upaniṣads" (p. 53). What about his *Brahmasūtrabhāṣyam*? It is misleading to treat all the following systems as cases of a "qualified dualism": Rāmānuja's *Viśiṣṭādvaita*, Vallabhācārya's *Śuddhādvaita*, Nimbārka's *Bhedābheda* and the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas' *Acintya bhedābheda*! It is true that all these systems did not subscribe to the belief that the multifarious reality of phenomena is illusory, but to call them cases of *Dvaita* philosophy sweeps away all the subtle problems connected with the relationship of God on the one hand and the souls and matter on the other which

were raised by the thinkers mentioned.

Chapters IV–VI contain the three case studies of Tārakeśvar, Navadvīp and Tārāpīṭh. M. makes a clear and thorough investigation into the foundation narratives which form the ideational systems which give to the sites their sacred authenticity, into the institutional structures and the (sacred) geography of the tempel/maṭh areas, into the functioning of priests and other (semi-) officials and their interaction with their pilgrim-clients, and into the characteristics of the pilgrims as found in these three places. In addition, the festival calendar of Navadvīp is laid out in the chapter pertinent to that site. The non-specialist reader will, however, find its usefulness rather restricted, owing to M.'s failure to give the correspondent months of the Gregorian calendar along with the festivals according to the Hindu calendar. M. provides detailed information on the economic background of the three sanctuaries and on the economic side of the pilgrims' *pūjā* activities, as well as on the aspirations which impel pilgrims to visit the sacred centres.—Chapter VII contains "A comparison of the three case studies" the results of which are tested with the aim to discern the individual, regional and the general, pan-Indian features. Some characteristics shared by all three sites—and many other Indian places of pilgrimage—are the marginal location of the sites (emphasizing their liminality as well as that of the pilgrim's journey to these places); their location by the water (emphasizing their liminal character as *tīrthas*, "fords"); the alleged existence of the sites as realms of the divine long before their "rediscovery" in historical times; ". . . the role of priest in West Bengali pilgrimage" which "can be summarised as one of formal intercessor between pilgrim and deity according to fixed and orthodox patterns of ritual" (p. 212); the statistically significant rate of pilgrims visiting a site not belonging to their own sectarian affiliation.—The high rating of worldly goals which form the reason for pilgrimage to the Śiva and Śakti sanctuaries contrasts with the fairly high rate of non-worldly purposes which pilgrims to Vaiṣṇava Navadvīp orally expressed, a result the reviewer finds difficult to evaluate as formulated goals need not necessarily reveal the whole gamut of a person's aspirations.

In chapter VIII M. reviews the "Theoretical perspectives of pilgrimage." He finds that the hypothesis of a bipartite Great and Little Tradition (the originally Redfieldian model) applies rather poorly to the situation in West Bengal and must be discarded in favor of the acceptance of a multi-stranded tradition which stems from a variety of sources. Furthermore, in West Bengal neither the strong hierarchical division of pilgrimage sites assumed by S. M. Bhardwaj nor the clear-cut division of pilgrimage for gain and pilgrimage for spiritual merit put forth by the same author seem to exist. Regarding function, M. finds that ". . . pilgrimage in West Bengal is not a group ritual. . . . Ritual performances in the pilgrimage centres focus upon the individual in consort with the deity. There are few performances that produce any element of group solidarity" (p. 271). These observations lead to a very prudent handling of V. Turner's *communitas* hypothesis. M. finds that the *communitas* feeling is often part of the institutional performance, say a *kīrtan* in Navadvīp. "Parallel to the emotional bonding of the moment are intellectual and spiritual components that are equally real in the ritual, and perhaps of greater significance than the one factor [reviewer's addition: i.e. *communitas*] arbitrarily elevated by Turner" (p. 274).

M.'s concluding ninth chapter is devoted to "A semantic approach to the analyses of pilgrimage." Here he points out that the Hindu traditional (Sanskrit) literature provides the implicit ideology *vis-à-vis* his field results. The quintessence of M.'s semantic evaluation is: "The explicit meaning of pilgrimage shares with its implicit ideology the central action of the journey to the abode of the divine. These two levels of meaning interpenetrate so that, for a few literate or perhaps mystic pilgrims, the im-

plicit ideology becomes the explicit meaning. These reflective few see in their earthly journey spiritual progress the of the soul . . ." (p. 298), a result not altogether astonishing in the Indian and in a wider context.

In case this well-researched book should see a second edition, its great merits would appear much more clearly if M. removed indological flaws from it.

Monika Thiel-Horstmann
University of Bonn
Bonn, Germany

WADE, BONNIE C., editor. *Performing Arts in India: Essays on Music, Dance and Drama*. Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies Monograph Number 21, University of California, Berkeley. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1983. Xiv+249 pp., illustrations, music and dance notation, bibliography, index. Hardbound, US \$23.50, ISBN 0-8191-2872-4; Paper, US \$9.50, ISBN 0-8191-2873-2.

The seven articles in this volume reflect the diversity of Indian professional musical, dance and dramatic traditions and of contemporary methods applied to their study. It is a fine and provocative sampler, one made coherent by a shared concern for "performance" as the epitomization of cultural values and orientations. The book provides not only a great deal of substantive information about various south Asian performing arts but a range of insights into how performances in any context and traditions might profitably be studied as well. While the book focuses on professional, primarily urban, traditions centered in court, mosque or temple, it is invaluable for the serious student of Indian vernacular traditions also. Several of the articles are quite complex, both methodologically and in terms of the arcane and complicated art forms which they represent, but the rewards are considerable and well worth the occasional struggle with highly technical prose.

Bonnie C. Wade's introduction raises the volume's shared themes quite clearly. It is a highly integrative collection, drawing together text and context, music and dance, performer and audience, professional and patron, individual and tradition. Despite their very different subjects and approaches, most of the contributors successfully deal with most of these themes, an all too infrequent accomplishment in an edited volume. In addition, each essay stands quite well on its own.

Two articles are primarily historical in focus. In "Kathakali dance drama: an historical perspective," Betty True Jones is concerned with the development of the Kerala performance form. In her account she concentrates particularly on the development of the Kathakali repertoire and its melodic and rhythmic resources; she also documents changes in performance style, which encompasses makeup, costume and iconography as well as more straightforwardly "dramatic" elements. Jones's account of the nineteenth-century decline in patronage and therefore in Kathakali performance and of its subsequent renaissance during this century is especially interesting. Her historic narrative compellingly demonstrates the interrelationships of performance style, artistic careers, modes of transmission, i.e., the Kathakali school, the nature of audiences and sources of financial and social support.

The other historical essay, by Reis Flora, is titled "Miniature paintings: important sources for music history." Flora is primarily concerned with miniatures from western India, especially between 1400-1600 A.D. One of the most suggestive kinds of data