

religious sentiment, worldly concern and individual artistry. It is also a very suggestive model for scholars working with performances of any type.

Altogether this is a fine volume. It holds together much better than most such collections and is full of information and insight. While focussed upon "cultivated" traditions, it is a very rich resource for folklorists as well.

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MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE. *Our Cultural Fabric. Puppet Theater in India*. Publication No. 1354. New Delhi: Ministry of Education and Culture, Government of India, 1982. 41 pp. Two photographs. India Rs. 7.25 P.; Foreign £0.85 or US \$2.61.

During a recent visit to Cochin, Kerala, South India I chanced to pass a striking display of shadow puppets hanging against the tan crust of a plaster wall full face to the tropic sun. They were shabby relics, their edges tattered, their color just a tint, zigzags of sewn and taped repair making each seem a manuscript of its own history rather than a puppet. The proprietor of the antique store inside the building announced himself and asked me if I would like to see more puppets. He guided me to the back of his shop and clearing a lot of ivory figurines off a cracked teak chest opened the lid and lifted out puppet after puppet. Rama, Hanuman, Ravana, Sita, demons and heroines, all scuffed and ripped, some burned by being played too close to the lamp, all emerged into that dark little space until my lap was covered with shaking armless forlorn puppets. The chest was bottomless. A red horse puppet followed an ithyphallic clown. The dealer said he had purchased these shabby gems from a destitute Tamil puppeteer. He cannot have given the puppeteer anything near the sum he demanded for even one of them. I haggled with him but it was no use: the man had measured in rupees the Euroamerican passion for exotic wallhangings. I walked away treasuring the experience but not a single puppet. I wanted to leave the puppets where they were to face the peaceful death of slow dismemberment by sun and spiders. I wondered what had become of the man who had made them live.

Davi Lal Samar at the outset of the first of the four articles in this Government of India pamphlet, tells a more heartening story, how for 50 rupees he was able to redeem all the puppets belonging to an impoverished Rajasthani showman. The grateful puppeteer's performance inspired Samar to travel about India viewing a variety of puppet shows. His object was to locate traditional puppeteers and learn their techniques, but he gained little due to the puppeteers' "superstition and lack of education." Ultimately he helped arrange two All India Puppet Festivals. Samar's article sounds no call for the ethnological study of puppetry or the preservation of puppet theaters as such. The traditional techniques have great potential for use in education and "healthy entertainment." "The traditional puppeteers should be given proper training by experts and modern plays should be produced in their techniques without undermining their quality." Indian puppetry must help fulfill the social and educational goals of the developing Indian nation.

The next two articles simply describe traditions which exist. Seltmann, who has conducted notable field studies of several South Indian puppet theaters, contributes a piece on the Kerala shadow puppets which is essentially a summary of his fine 1972

article "Schattenspiel in Kerala." Seltmann's material should now be taken in conjunction with the field studies of Chummar Choondal (1978: 39-47).

Seltmann does not mention the diversity of performance styles and texts among Kerala shadow puppeteers. He does call for preservation of the tradition, but does not seem to be aware that Kerala shadow puppetry is being preserved in a most unfortunate way, in the practice of one single puppeteer whose puppetry has assumed the status of a standard and excluded many other obscure bearers of alternative traditions.

Following Seltmann's contribution is an article by another well-known student of Indian puppetry, Mel Helstien, who offers a brief iconographic tour of India's shadow puppet traditions. Helstien is mainly concerned with the shapes and colors of the puppets, not the circumstances of performance. The final article is a puzzling inclusion by Meher Contractor. In her persona as President of UNIMA, the world puppetry organization, she writes on the many kinds of puppetry practiced in the world today. There is only scant mention of India.

It is unfair to criticize a 41 page pamphlet for deficiencies. Yet there are so few works on Indian puppetry either traditional or contemporary that this book should have provided more within its small compass. The title is Puppet Theater in India and the cover illustration shows marionettes but the main subject is shadow puppets. There is all but the slightest mention of rod and string puppets of Karnataka and Rajasthan. There is also no information about idiosyncratic puppetry such as the Pavakathakali of Kerala, in which large dolls are danced to the rhythms of Kathakali dance drama. It is time for the true richness of puppet performances in India to become better known. This pamphlet does little to accomplish that end.

The composition of the pamphlet reveals another regrettable inadequacy which a publication of this sort should at least attempt to remedy. The two articles by Indians deal with the hopes and prospects of puppetry today; the two by a European and an American deal with traditional (and flagging) forms of puppetry. The pamphlet itself is an image of the failure of these two approaches to form a rapprochement. The foreigner has a dilettante's fascination with little dolls; the Indian wonders how these old ignorant ways can be made to serve Gandhi's ideal of an India newly alive to its common heritage. Western precision and thoroughness might join with Indian compassion and purpose to create a better understanding and a stronger refashioning of (at least) Indian puppetry. That this has not come to pass is unfortunate for both. The puppets, and this little pamphlet about them, could help us to know better if only the limits were not so clearly marked.

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BALASSA, IVAN und GYULA ORTUTAY. *Ungarische Volkskunde*¹. Budapest: Corvina Kiadó, 1982. 869 pp., 319 photographs, 21 color plates, bib-