

NOTE

1. This title was apparently taken from a line in the chants: "Ah, elder brother, the rulings of the day are mine/the rulings of the night are yours" (II. 10:455–56). This line is presented as an announcement of a king made to the first shaman, Ramma Jumratam, to distinguish their respective fields of competence.

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INDIA

VARGHESE, EARAPLACKAL and PETER PAUL HEMBROM. *Ethnomedical Lore of the Paharias: Applied Ethnomedicine of the Paharias of Santhal Parganas-Bihar*. Mumbai: Centre for Human Ecology, 2000. 232 pages. Illustrations, bibliography, index to local names, general index. Hardcover Rs. 400.00/US\$25.00. (Ravi Kiran, Andheri [W], Mumbai 400053, India)

Ethnomedical Lore of the Paharias: Applied Ethnomedicine of the Paharias of Santhal Parganas-Bihar is a beautifully written book that provides detailed and well-crafted explanations of the culture, society, and ethnobotanical documents of the Paharias, an indigenous tribal people. It is obvious that the immediate concerns of the majority of people throughout the world are survival and the obtainment of basic amenities. Many people, especially in poorer countries, rely on plants that grow in the wild for their shelter, food, medicines, and as sources of cash income, while the richer countries rely on them for their herbal-based medicines and cosmetics. Natural forests are indispensable components in traditional tribal economies; thus traditionally, local communities are extremely knowledgeable about the local plants and other local natural resources on which they are so immediately and intimately dependent. This rich traditional knowledge and the age-old cultures in which this knowledge is preserved are quickly disappearing as the lives of aboriginal rural people are changing as the world develops at ever greater speeds.

The documentation of the Paharias's knowledge, which the authors have done skillfully and comprehensively, will serve to preserve this knowledge as well as to promote and revive the dying wisdom of indigenous tribal knowledge. This book's documentation of endangered ethnobotany lore and indigenous knowledge contributes to the literature on applied ethnobotany that deals with ethnomedical lore. It will no doubt be appreciated by folklorist, ethnobotanist, anthropologist, pharmacologist, medical practitioners, and all people interested in the study of plants. The authors are well experienced and qualified to write about this ethnomedical lore from the perspective of applied ethnobotany. In order to write this book, the authors not only had to make inventories of useful plants but also needed to have a broad-range knowledge of various academic disciplines and to have established relationships within the local communities.

The bulk of the text is given in chapter 4, which lists in total 146 medicinally important plant species used by the Paharias in the Indian states of Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. For each plant species the following information is given: the different ailments the plants are used for; the elaborate ethnomedical information available in published sources; the scientific and the

common English names along with the different vernacular names; and the locations where each plant grows in India and the rest of the world. Descriptions of plants are also given, which are complemented by 80 line drawings and 28 photographs that help the reader become more familiar with the different plant species. The botanical names given are based on the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature (ICBN) and are up-to-date with the latest taxonomic literature. For many of the plant species, details are given about their biological properties and their important chemical components.

In chapter 5, cross-reference formulations of a plant's applications for common diseases are provided. Also provided in this chapter are the relevant remedies, preparations, and dosages used in households and by local medicine men and rural practitioners. Though many of the formulations and prescriptions listed may be widely practiced, the attested efficacy of them needs to be validated through scientific study.

This book will be a handy reference for the general reader and no doubt be useful for teachers, students, researchers, and community health practitioners. The book should stimulate readers to appreciate more the resourcefulness of mankind and should help us sustain life on earth.

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MIDDLE EAST

YASSIF, ELI. *The Hebrew Folktale: History, Genre, Meaning*. Folklore Studies in Translation. Translated by Jacqueline S. Teitelbaum. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999. xvii + 560 pages. Bibliographic references, index. Cloth US\$59.95; ISBN 0-253-33583-3.

The ambitious series "Folklore Studies in Translation" already includes English translations of many important and well-known works that were originally written in German, Lithuanian, Swedish, Finnish, and other languages. Added to this series in the year 1999 was Eli Yassif's *The Hebrew Folktale*, an extraordinary book that chronologically describes the transmission of the folk narrative from the Biblical period to the contemporary period of modern Israel.

Eli Yassif is a professor of Hebrew literature and Jewish folklore at Tel Aviv University. He is the founder of Jewish folklore studies at Ben-Gurion University in Israel and has been a visiting professor at prominent universities and institutions. Among his many books are *Jewish Folklore: An Annotated Bibliography* (New York, 1986) and *Judah (Yudel) Rosenberg—The Golem of Prague and Other Tales of Wonder*, (E. Yassif ed., Jerusalem 1991).

In *The Hebrew Folktale* Eli Yassif fulfills an almost impossible task: to analyze a phenomenon that is ephemeral in its nature, and to follow it throughout the centuries. He is able to do this, as Dan Ben-Amos observed, "by breaking down the dichotomy between orality and literacy." Yassif studies the orality within the written tradition on the basis of a historical method. However, as the author stated, the orientation of the monograph is not historical, but generic because the main goal of the book is "exploring and understanding the social function and cultural meaning of the Hebrew folktale.... [And] it strives to define and emphasize the place of folk creativity in Jewish culture."

The book is divided into two main parts. The first part contains the authentic folkloric