

and hyperventilation), burning of incense, rhythmic drumming, and bell-ringing. These bring about the personality switch and create the peculiar atmosphere that makes trance, and supposedly healing, possible.

Here one reaches the limits of Schenk's approach. While the time preceding the trance is remembered by the healers and is thus well-documented in the interviews, the trance itself, when healing activity occurs, is not subject to verbal explanation. Thus the book cannot really treat the climax of the shamanic performance, the "séance" (which in Schenk's terminology refers to the state of divine possession only). Though the fourth section gives a short account of what happens during this crucial part of the rite (e.g., the "sucking out" of illnesses), the matter is left deliberately undiscussed.

All in all this publication provides useful documentation of the practices of Ladakhi mediums and supplies interesting oral accounts of their life histories and activities. The text's authentic voices and vivid photographs (many in color) will appeal to a wide audience. Although Schenk is not trained as a Tibetologist, she is careful in rendering the major indigenous terms, which are given in broad transcription (though unfortunately they are not typographically distinguished) as well as in standard Tibetan transliteration in the glossary. Nevertheless, the expert will find some shortcomings. Only occasional reference is made to the wider context of Tibetan Buddhism, though this is justified (convincingly or not) by the claim that the work is simply ethnography. More problematic from an anthropological perspective is the fact that the narratives are not systematically analyzed against the background of social and historical processes (e.g., the changing medical system in Ladakh [KÜHN 1988]). By focusing on personal experience the book provides valuable insights on initiation and the techniques of trance; it tells us relatively little, however, about the complexities of oracular diagnosis and healing.

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Martin GAENZLE  
University of Heidelberg  
Heidelberg, Germany

#### INDIA

FREED, RUTH S. and STANLEY A. FREED. *Ghosts: Life and Death in North India*. Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History 72. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994. 396 pages. 32 photographs, tables, bibliography, appendices, index-glossary. Paper US\$40.00; ISBN 0-295-97303-X.

This is the ninth volume in a series of monographs based on the authors' fieldwork in Shanti Nagar, a village in the Union Territory of Delhi, North India. In their earlier monographs the authors discussed social organization, economics, rites of passage, fertility and sterilization, elections, sickness and health, enculturation, and education. The topic of ghosts has been touched upon earlier in the context of an article on women's psychomedical case histories (8).

The authors have done intermittent fieldwork in this village for more than thirty years; the present study represents a compendium of the information on ghosts that the authors have gathered over those years. The very fact that they could publish such a sizeable volume on a subject that is peripheral to their main work is proof of the authors' meticulous ap-

proach.

*Ghosts* contains twenty-five chapters in all. The short introduction is followed by four chapters that describe the site and methodology of the fieldwork. A general explanation of death in India in chapters 5 and 6 is followed by a chapter that briefly discusses the ideas that have influenced the health culture of Shanti Nagar from the Prevedic age, the Vedic age, the Ayurveda, the Islamic period, and the period of Western influence.

At the outset of chapter 8 the authors state their general perception of the topic of their study, saying that "village beliefs about ghosts should not be treated as superstition. To understand ghost beliefs, it is essential to probe the ideology behind them" (54). They explain what they mean by ideology by first introducing Hammond's definition that "ideology is a universal aspect of culture, which focuses on supernaturally based systems of belief and observance and includes secular beliefs, values, and ethical and moral systems," then declaring that "we use ideology instead of religion" (54). They add that the linchpin for understanding ideology in India is the concept of dharma. They identify three religious groups in the village: the followers of Sanatan Dharma, the followers of the Arya Samaj, and the followers of an eclecticism based on Buddhism, Jainism, Islam, and atheism. With this as a basis they interview the villagers (chapter 9) and discuss the problem of karma (chapter 10). In chapter 11 they consider the concept of ghosts in light of ancient traditions and Pan-Indic beliefs, then examine the village terms for ghosts.

In chapters 12 and 13 the authors discuss death and belief in ghosts as reflected in the lineage histories of a Brahman family whose members follow Sanatan Dharma and of a Jat family whose members follow Arya Samaj. They then introduce material about ghosts that originate from the death of children (chapter 14) and from the death of adults (chapter 15). The next three chapters give an account of ghost possession and exorcism, while chapters 19 to 23 are, in the authors' words, "intended to show how stress in family situations is a contributing factor in ghost possession and poltergeist attack" (211). Chapter 24 then takes up ghost possessions in the four stages of the life cycle. The whole volume is rounded up by a conclusion that "highlights the basic themes of the study, summarizes the findings, and suggests directions for future research" (310).

The first impression one gets from this book is that of a random collection of incongruous material. But the authors state in their conclusion that they deliberately chose this manner of presentation since they felt it offered a deeper understanding of the ghost phenomenon. Their intensive holistic fieldwork, they claim, makes it possible to analyze this phenomenon from various different angles. In this sense we can agree that the present monograph demonstrates the advantages of the cultural anthropological approach.

I have reservations on two points, however: one concerns their use of the term *ideology*, and the other their definition of a ghost. When the authors quote Hammond's definition of ideology they disregard the definition's own historical and "ideological" character. To my mind it would have been more appropriate to use the term *worldview* for what they wish to express. The term *ghost* as it is used by the authors corresponds to the Sanskrit terms *bhuta* and *preta*. In chapter 11 the authors explain the term, tracing its development through history, but even this well-intended attempt leaves one dissatisfied. It is not made sufficiently clear how the term relates to the "ideology" of the inhabitants of Shanti Nagar. The authors search Sanskrit and the local languages for ghost concepts that fit their preconceived conceptual framework, thus blurring the outlines of the ghost concept as it actually exists in the villages.

It might be that the authors deliberately used the term *ideology*, in spite of its problematic nature, in order to suggest that ghost beliefs are neither superstitious nor religious. This position seems somewhat outmoded, however, in view of the present status of the discussion on ideology. Moreover, the authors offer no constructive proposals as to how ideology on the Pan-Indian level can be related to ideology on the village level. In many cases they uncritically conflate the villagers' knowledge with the philological knowledge of Indology. In order to minimize the distance between the two, the authors should have paid more attention

to educated villagers' interpretations of Sanskrit concepts. In this sense the book, for better or worse, shows the limitations of the traditional cultural anthropological approach and at the same time reveals the difficulties of doing research on India.

SUGIMOTO Yoshio  
National Museum of Ethnology  
Suita City, Japan

LIDOVA, NATALIA. *Drama and Ritual in Early Hinduism*. Performing Arts Series 4. General Editor, Farley P. Richmond. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1994. xiii + 141 pages. Bibliography, index. Cloth Rs.125. ISBN 81-208-1234-9.

This interesting book, translated from the Russian, explores the origin of classical Sanskrit theater in ritual practice, especially those rituals associated with *pūjā* ceremonies. Based on an extensive analysis of ancient Vedic and Sanskrit texts, in particular the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, the book challenges the previous scholarly hypothesis that the ancient theater was either a direct evolution of Vedic speculative thought and ritual or an outgrowth of outside (Greek) influence. Lidova offers a new and original interpretation in which theater developed as a form of pictorial didacticism or sermon performed alongside the *pūjā* ceremonies. These performances, while situated within the context of the ritual, fostered techniques of acting and theories of dramatic representation that significantly influenced the Sanskrit theater. Furthermore, Lidova argues, the dramatic representation of mythological divine beings within the ritual context of the *pūjā* ceremonies may itself have been the origin of the temple tradition of three-dimensional iconic and sculptural representation.

The *Nāṭyaśāstra* (*nāṭya* is translated as "theater" and *śāstra* as "holy writ dedicated to a particular field of knowledge" [1]) covers such subjects as

ritual and mythology, as connected with the early mysterious performances; the characterisation of the developed literary drama, which posed purely aesthetic, rather than sacred, goals and proceeded from well-elaborated principles of acting; and last but not least, the theory of the drama, which includes a genre typology and an analysis of the formal structure of the Sanskrit drama. (1)

Contemporary Western Indology dates the text to around the first or second century. However, Lidova argues that the *Nāṭyaśāstra* is a multilevel text and that a major part of it may have emerged as early as the mid-first millennium B.C. This more accurate earlier dating suggests that "sophisticated forms of templar ritualism connected with stage performances existed as early as the turn of the millennium" (109), with other evidence pushing the dates back to the mid-first millennium B.C.

Certain texts (e.g., the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*) suggest that in the mid-first millennium B.C. not only a theater existed but even a theory of theater. Lidova suggests that the *Nāṭyaśāstra* precepts of theater construction describe in effect a form of temple construction, and that theaters either preceded or were coeval with actual temples. The usual view is that the theater had not fully emerged at this time and that, though dancing, music, and pantomime existed, acting as such did not. Lidova, however, argues that the term *naṭa* referred not only to dancers but to actors as well, and that *nāṭya* meant a dramatic performance as such.

The mid-first millennium B.C. was the age, according to Lidova, that the ancient canonical Vedic *yajña* rituals, particularly the *śrauta* and *soma* rites, were being replaced by or amalgamated with non-Aryan *pūjā*, temple worship, and iconic cults. The unpopularity of the Vedic ritualism centered on the *śrauta* and *soma* rites is attested to by various developments