

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 mysterical 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 millenium" (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

at this time, notably the rise of Buddhism and Jainism (118). Part of this unpopularity may have come from Vedic ritualism's exclusive association with elite "twice-born" Brahmanical culture. Even within the Brahmin *varṇa* only certain classes of priest were allowed to perform the elaborate rituals. Lidova suggests that the non-Vedic *pūjā* was borrowed by the lower strata of the Brahmins who were themselves not part of the elite that performed the *śrauta* rites. This suggests a gradual widening of the central tradition through the agency of large-scale temple ceremonies that eventually came to include women and non-twice-born castes.

The *Nāṭyaśāstra* ritual and mythology are the "earliest traces of an ideology which disseminated the *pūjā* among Aryans" (113). *Nāṭya* performances were, according to Lidova, closely related to *pūjā* ritualism and the emergence of the iconic and templar cult (111). Lidova argues for "a close link between templar construction and the emergence of holy images on the one hand, and the appearance of scenic *pūjā* and stage versions of epic myths" (108). Alongside the performance of the *pūjā* went the stage performance of a myth. These formed a "liturgical sequence" (76) in which the rite was the liturgy proper addressed to the gods, while the drama that followed was a "scenic myth" or "visual sermon" (76).

Lidova is especially concerned to break the link between Vedic ritual and drama and establish a link between *pūjā* and drama. The scholar F. B. J. Kuiper, who tried to find a direct connection between the *Nāṭyaśāstra* rituals and Vedic *yajña* rites, suggested that "the first dramas were scenic representations of the Vedic cosmogony and recreated Indra's struggle with the Asuras" (5). Against this Lidova points out that the rites described in the text are always referred to by the word *pūjā* and never by *yajña* (37). She adds that, despite the similarity of (and interactions between) numerous common components, there existed fundamental differences between *pūjā* and *yajña* in terms of sacrificial structure, symbolism, and theological background (40). She argues, too, that the rites described in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* text fall squarely in the *pūjā* archetype. In this it is similar to the Hindu ritual texts known as *āgamas*, which, though showing sectarian differences, all share the same distinctively *pūjā* ritual pattern and many other features absent from Vedic sacrifice (42). Lidova thus connects the emergence of "scenic rites" with the non-Vedic traditions of *pūjā*, including the iconic element of elaborate pictorial and three-dimensional representations of gods, goddesses, and other mythological beings.

Furthermore, the performers of the scenic rites were originally the priests who performed the rituals. These priests, having performed the rite itself, presumably left the stage, made themselves up, then appeared as gods such as Brahma, Vishnu, and so on. Thus the *pūjā* and the *nāṭya* combined were originally a religious ceremony (78).

It is difficult to understand the actual mechanism linking these ritual ceremonies with the Sanskrit literary drama of the first century A.D. that inherited their structure (93). How was the shift from "sacral" to "secular" theater achieved? What was the ingredient that provided the principle of this transformation? This is an especially evasive problem; the author admits that "the classical theatre is outside this study, aimed to demonstrate the ritual character of the early drama" (93). It is difficult for the reader to know how much weight to place on the author's admission that, in principle, she does not rule out the "direct transformation of the rite into the drama" (53), especially when she later says,

The process of ritual acting brought a wealth of purely theatrical discoveries and unique performing techniques. These were inherited by the Sanskrit literary drama, whose earliest samples, from the 1st centuries A.D., owed their perfect structure to the centuries-old progress of the *Nāṭya* within the framework of ritual ceremonies. Whereas religious spectacles resulted from a collective effort of the priesthood, . . . the literary genres born outside the religious rite proved far freer and more mobile. (92)

What the author appears to be saying here is that the Sanskrit drama did not originate with the *nāṭya* but was born outside it, even though it may have borrowed the latter's dramatic techniques. In that case Lidova has not really explained the origin of the Sanskrit drama but

has only pointed out the way in which it was influenced by theatrical techniques from the ritual context.

Another problem is what Lidova means by saying that the drama was more deeply connected with “non-Aryan *pūjā*” than with Vedic rites. Presumably she has in mind such āgamic elements as the conception of sacred space as a *maṇḍala*, the tradition of hand gestures (*mudrā*), and the use of dancing and singing. Yet on the other hand she argues that the anthropomorphic representation of the gods derived neither from Vedic ritual nor from Dravidian tribal culture, but more likely from the makeup, costumes, characteristic gestures, and so on of the *nāṭya* ritual drama itself (104–105). Thus it is more likely that iconographic representations copied dramatic performances than the other way round.

Lidova seems to be saying that the religious system of temple construction and iconographic imagery did not exist as a Dravidian system, and that what was adopted by the Aryans was only an idea, the basic idea of *pūjā*:

There is no reason to think that Aryans borrowed a whole religious system from Dravidians — a cult whose constituent features included templar construction and liturgical imagery. Such a cult, most probably, never existed at all — it would be more correct to assume that only an idea or, at most, the basic pattern of flower sacrifice was borrowed. (106)

This seems to weaken the significance of the putative special connection between “non-Aryan” culture and the development of the scenic ritual, while at the same time suggesting that much of what developed into medieval Hinduism — in particular the iconic representation of temple culture — was not so much a relection of Dravidian culture as it was a product of the liturgical drama that was itself being performed and developed by Brahmin priests.

Be that as it may, there seems no doubt that Lidova has written a book of immense interest that addresses not only the origin of the Sanskrit drama specifically, but also more generally the beginnings of medieval Hinduism.

Tim FITZGERALD  
Aichi Gakuin University  
Nisshin-shi, Japan

### ARAB WORLD

EL-SHAMY, HASAN, Compiler. *Folk Traditions of the Arab World: A Guide to Motif Classification*, two volumes. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995. Volume 1: xxvi + 462 pages. Appendices, bibliography, archival material. Volume 2 (Alphabetical Index of Motifs): viii + 576 pages. Cloth, two-volume set US\$75.00 (higher prices outside North America); ISBN 0-253-35201-0.

The efforts of Prof. El-Shamy are more than welcome — the publication of a folktale index for Arabic cultures is long overdue. The discipline is grateful to both the Bloomington Folklore Institute and the Indiana University Press for promoting this project.

For some time now folklorists have been speaking of the type index Prof. El-Shamy is working on, and it was thus somewhat of a surprise to be presented with a motif index instead. As explained in the introduction (vol. 1, xiii–xxii), the motif index and the type index are companion works, with the former relisting in a different order the motifs that accompany the type descriptions. An example of a type entry in the introduction (xviii, type AaTh 310) indicates that El-Shamy is following the approach that Stith Thompson used in his second revision of Aarne’s index, listing the motifs relevant to a type following the type’s