

dhism (one of the more important Buddhist groups). And shamans that call the spirits of the dead by chanting the Buddhist *Mahāprajñāpāramitā sūtra* (*Hannya shingyō*) are by no means rare. In the Philippines, faith healers perform curing rituals in which they enlist the power of Mary, Mother of God, while American spiritualists and channelers often fall into a state of trance to establish direct contact with the spirits. Modern shamanologists might profit by considering shamanism not as something limited to nonmodern societies but as a spiritual force that strongly influences the religious life of the so-called civilized societies as well.

The symposium in Zagreb became the occasion for the founding of the International Society for Shamanic Studies (ISSS), an organization that has greatly stimulated shamanic studies on a worldwide scale. A second meeting of the ISSS was held in Seoul, Korea, in 1991 under the title "Regional Aspects of Shamanism," and another gathering is scheduled for November of this year (1995) in Nara, Japan. All of us in the field look forward to many interesting developments in shamanic studies.

SASAKI Kōkan
Komazawa University
Tokyo

MAHAPATRA, SITAKANT. *Beyond the Word: The Multiple Gestures of Tradition*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1993. vii + 195 pages. Hardcover Rs. 150.

The twenty essays in this book provide ample demonstration that their author is on the side of the angels. As an anthropologist he has attempted to come to terms with the problem of tradition and modernity, using a threefold approach. First, he notes the dysfunctions that the unrestrained pursuit of modernity has engendered in the West, and consequently in the East. Second, he examines the multiple gestures (as he puts it) that tradition has taken in an attempt to overcome the crisis caused by this pursuit. Third, he adopts a broad and even-handed approach to the tradition-modernity conflict, relying on the Greek concepts of balance and proportionality.

In the first essay, for example, the author points to the sense of dehumanization caused by modernization and the urbanization and industrialization that accompany it, and notes the consequent craving in both individuals and societies for stillness, balance, creativity, and meaning. Turning to tribal art and culture in Orissa, he stresses the need to view them as a continuum (a notion that has engaged the attention of Indians ever since Jawaharlal Nehru sought to dampen communal antagonisms by this means). Then, taking up the questions of art and the primacy of the person, he points out that from the perspective of true spirituality man remains a mystery at his core, that art is the expression of the human soul, and that genuine art has suffered under the strong commercialization and vulgarization in our times.

In another essay he emphasizes that in the process of cultural change, continuity and tradition are as necessary as innovation and progress. He also notes that tradition cannot be bypassed without an upsurge in individual and sociocultural pathology, and that in primitive societies there is no hard-and-fast distinction between art and life. Taking a cue from the Jesuit W. J. Ong on the subject of orality and literacy, Mahapatra deplors the negative consequences that flow from literacy and extols the positive ones associated with orality. In the beginning was the word, he says, adding that oral cultures integrate human beings into compact groups and brotherhoods while literary cultures isolate, separate, and thwart the free flow of the spirit. Since tribal cultures were until recently oral ones, a renewed interest in them will, Mahapatra writes, refocus our gaze on values such as community, instinct, imagination, fraternity, and the like. Such a refocusing is urgently required if we are to

avoid the catastrophe that now faces us as a result of increasing secularization, hedonism, and scientism in the world.

And what of myths and archetypes? In an essay on these subjects Mahapatra states that the images and symbols of modern poetry become desiccated and dead if they do not revitalize themselves at the secret fountains of myth. In keeping with his unwavering interest in poetry and literature, he discounts an overemphasis on art as ideology. He affirms that a commitment to literature can reconcile tradition and freedom and can help overcome the separation of the elite and the masses, and this without imposing any form of bondage. In other essays he tackles such questions as the encounter between the East and the West and the need to reconcile modern science and primitive ritual.

It would be hard to disagree with most of what Mahapatra says on these and other issues. Yet when all is said and done, the book remains severely flawed. First, it is marred from start to finish by misprints, faulty syntax, and idiomatic lapses, so much so that one is tempted to put the book down unread after the first few pages. Next, the author seems unaware of the findings of the cultural-historical method, some of which are now common knowledge. Thus he refers to the Kondhs of Orissa, with their cultivation, human sacrifice, and earth-goddess worship, as the most primitive tribe in India and the world. Surely he is aware that anthropologists regard food-gatherers and hunters as the world's most primitive peoples. Third, laudable as the views in Mahapatra's essays may be, they are mostly derivative and secondhand. This would not have mattered so much if the author had contributed something of his own through in-depth analysis, careful synthesis, or detailed interpretation, but he does not.

There is much more that could be said by way of critical evaluation. But to cut a long story short, whoever already shares the views of the author will, if he has the stamina to make his way through this book, find his opinions fortified and his spirit refreshed

J. V. FERREIRA
Institute of Indian Culture
Bombay

MIEDER, WOLFGANG and STUART A. KINGSBURY, editors. *A Dictionary of Wellerisms*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994. xix + 187 pages. List of sources, bibliography, indexes of speakers and situations. Hardcover US\$24.95; ISBN 0-19-508318-0.

In Charles Dickens's *The Pickwick Papers* (1836-37), a Sancho Panzatype named Sam Weller indirectly instructs the title character in the complexities of society and human nature through his use of witticisms that involve slightly incongruous plays on words. The term Wellerism has been used ever since to describe this relative of the pun. *A Dictionary of Wellerisms*, researched in the U.S. and Canada for the American Dialect Society from the 1940s to the 1970s, brings together the first complete collection of examples in English, drawing on literature, journalism, popular culture, and the Margaret Bryant collection of proverbial speech.

Wellerisms usually follow a triadic structure, consisting of a statement, the identification of the speaker, and an incongruous follow up: "'Ruff,' said the dog as he sat on the cactus." Variations include deletion of the third element ("I'm bored stiff,' said the dead man") and rearrangement of the sections ("As the people said when Lady Godiva rode naked down the streets sidesaddle, 'Hooray for our side!"). Occasionally a short dialogue develops: "I see,' said the blind man. 'You lie,' said the dumb man. 'Quiet,' said the deaf man."

Though the dictionary presents only those Wellerisms found in English, the introduction gives a summary of the genre's long history. The first recorded instance, found in a