

form important sites where women recreate their own gender and sexual identities. She argues that scholarship on South Asian society, mythology, and psychology frequently represents the cultural image of Hindu women in terms of an inherent split between dangerous sexuality and nurturing motherhood. In contrast, Gold's investigation of blatantly bawdy songs performed by women reveals the celebration of a simultaneously erotic *and* procreative female sexuality. In her final two chapters (chapters 5 and 6), Gold directly addresses the fluid relationships and permeable boundaries between speech genres, such as folk song and folk-tale, and the lives of village women. She relates a tale about the *jungli rani* who triumphs over adversity in her marital home even while she maintains her religious devotion and the feminine roles she is required to perform in her family: daughter, sister, wife. Gold then turns to look at the life of the woman who narrated the story, raising thought-provoking questions about narrative realities and the relationship between tale and teller.

One of the most compelling aspects of the book develops in chapters 3 and 4, where Raheja reconsiders South Asian kinship networks from the perspective of rural women in Uttar Pradesh. Through her analysis of their songs and stories we gain an understanding of how women reimagine ideal patrilineal kinship ideologies. For these women kinship is not a code or structure to which they must conform; rather it represents a powerful set of political negotiations between conjugal and natal bonds. By taking on multiple voices in folk songs, sometimes speaking as sister and sometimes as wife, women place strategic emphasis on different roles and reveal the contradictions and ambiguity apparent within the patrilineal kinship system. Women actively resist the expectation for a wife to subordinate her own desire for intimacy with her husband to his natal kin as well as the expectation that a woman after marriage must redirect affection and fidelity for her natal kin to her conjugal kin.

Listen to the Heron's Words makes an important contribution to literature on women's speech genres and kinship in South Asia. The beautiful translations by the authors (a definite highlight of this book) add opulent layers to an already rich and detailed account. The poetic texts, however, never overshadow powerful analysis, owing to the authors' consistent focus on the situatedness of women's performances within a specific cultural climate. Scholars of South Asian folklore will appreciate abundant translations of songs and stories that preserve the original poetry and artistry of the North Indian women who created them. Those readers who possess a combined interest in gender studies and sociolinguistics will find this book an engaging investigation of women's speech genres situated within the specific sociopolitical context out of which these performances emerge.

Rachel MEYER
University of Texas at Austin
Austin, Texas

CENTRAL ASIA

TAUBE, ERIKA, Collector, Translator (from Tuvan into German), Editor.

Škazki i predanija altajskih tuvincev [Tales and legends from the Tuvan of the Altai Mountains]. Translated from the German manuscript by B. E. Čistova. Moscow: "Vostočnaja Literatura" Russkoj Akademii Nauk, 1994. 388 pages. Hardcover, n. p.; ISBN 5-02-017236-7.

SAMDAN, Z. B. and A. V. KUDIJAROVA, Editors, Commentators, and Translators. *Tuvinskie narodnye skazki* [Tuvan folktales]. Editing of Tuvan

texts by D. A. Manguš; musicological chapter and musical notation by Z. K. Kyrgys and E. E. Alekseeva; photos by V. T. Novikova. Novosibirsk: Nauka (Siberian Branch), 1994. Hardcover, n. p.; ISBN 5-02-030229-5.

Little is known in the West about the Turkic people known as the Tuva. Hidden in the Siberian East among many other Turkic and Mongolian peoples, the Tuva developed a rich oral literature. Some of it has been recorded and published, partly in the native language and partly in Russian translation, but otherwise little material is available. In the long list of folk-tale collections in West European languages included in Taube's book one looks in vain for translations of Tuva stories, other than one collection published by TAUBE herself (1978).

The collections under review are both in Russian. Taube's collection contains seventy-seven tales; Samdan and Kudijarova's contains twenty-seven tales and one work with strong affinities to epics (it is in verse and contains 3,470 lines, but is recited and not sung). Taube's collection presents only the Russian translation of the texts; most of them she tape-recorded during fieldwork in 1966, 1967, 1969, 1982, and 1985. Samdan and Kudijarova's book contains transcriptions of the original Tuva texts (using the Cyrillic alphabet, adapted to Tuva phonology) and the Russian translation, on facing pages. The texts were collected between 1938 and 1977 by various collectors; for texts nos. 15 and 24 no collection date is given. In most cases it is not clear whether the published texts were recorded manually or sound taped; only for text no. 27 is the number of the sound tape given; on page 13 one finds a photo of a manual recording from 1972.

Both collections are amply annotated with information on the place, date, and method of recording; data on the performer and recorder; archive numbers and previous publications of the same text; and data on tale types (according to various indices: AATH, EBERHARD-CHINESE, EB, ERGIS, LÖRINCZ, VSS/SUS). The notes discuss other versions of the story in archives and in print. Samdan's collection contains several photos of performers and drawings of folk implements. The erudition that the editors display in this discussion is impressive.

However, the texts, though published in such a praiseworthy way, are so small in number that they fail to draw a picture of Tuva oral literature, or even of one of the genres of this literature. Let us hope that the tale index that Mrs. Taube is preparing (personal communication) will present a fuller picture of the repertoire of at least some of the Tuva ethnopoetic genres. The Tuva materials are very interesting: together with the oral literature of Mongolian and other Turkic peoples in the region they seem to comprise a special cultural province of oral literature. It is a worthy task to probe more deeply into this province.

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Heda JASON
Jerusalem

MIDDLE EAST

KASSAM, TAZIM R. *Songs of Wisdom and Circles of Dance: Hymns of the Satpanth Ismā'īlī Muslim Saint, Pīr Shams*. McGill Studies in the History of Religions. New York: State University of New York Press, 1995. xviii + 424 pages. Map, illustration, appendices, bibliography, index. Paper US\$16.95; ISBN 0-7914-2592-4.

Very little research has been done on the narrative value of Islamic popular devotional literature. Analyses and translations of such Sunni or Shī'ī texts from the vernacular languages are still rare, as scholarly attention has tended to focus on the musicological and anthropological aspects. Recently, however, Ismā'īlī scholars have devoted increasing attention to religious hymns from the Indian subcontinent.

The Ismā'īlī (or the Shī'ā Imami Ismā'īlī Muslims, to give their full name) presently rank among the most progressive and prosperous of the Muslim groups, despite their relatively small numbers (some fifteen million people) and great geographical dispersion over approximately twenty-five countries, from their original base in the Middle East and Central Asia into South Asia, and in more recent times into East and South Africa, Europe, and North America.

The Ismā'īlī sect has had a long turbulent history. From the ninth to the thirteenth centuries, when their power was destroyed by the Mongols and Mamelukes, they were the most controversial and powerful Shī'ī splinter group; during the Fatimid caliphate they nearly achieved political and intellectual hegemony over the Muslim world. Because of the united efforts of their enemies they were pushed to the marginal regions of the Islamic world, that is, to South Asia and mountainous Central Asia. In the subsequent seven centuries of hiding and obscurity they managed to survive and even gain numerous converts, particularly in the Indian subcontinent, through their vigorous and astute missionary activities under the *Pīrs* and *Dā'īs* (chief propagandists). These figures linked the community with the Imam, who remained in occultation in Iran until the middle of the last century, when the Ismā'īlīs finally reemerged in India from their long *taqīyya* (religious dissimulation). They started their reunification under the spiritual authority of the hereditary Imams and claimed a legitimate place within the Muslim and the world community.

The long centuries of persecution and oppression have resulted in great secrecy concerning the religion, particularly its sacred literature. Their rich medieval intellectual tradition was revealed during the first half of our century by the scholarship of W. Ivanow and H. Corbin, but it was the new generation of Ismā'īlī scholars (Azim Nanji being one of the first) who started paying serious attention to a later development of their literature, the partly neglected, partly concealed heritage of *gināns*, the remnants of their Satpanth (True Path)