

of the so-called “village studies.” All 110 songs are found throughout the book in English and in an appendix in Bhojpuri (numbering also in the English translation would help to retrace lines faster, if one wants to shuffle between the two versions). Some representative songs have been given with musical notations, and for each one explanatory remarks on scale/melody and rhythm have been added.

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MILLER, BARBARA STOLER, editor and translator. *Love Song of the Dark Lord: Jayadeva's Gītagovinda*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997. xxii + 125 pages. Paper US\$17.00/£9.95; ISBN 0-231-11097-9.

Composed in the twelfth century in eastern India, the *Gītagovinda* has been popular throughout the Indian subcontinent. The songs of the *Gītagovinda* have been important in the devotional music, temple dance traditions, and literary traditions in geographically diverse sections of India and, according to Miller, are still sung in South Indian temples. The visual images of the poetry have also inspired many paintings, frescoes, and other decorative illustrations which can be found in different manuscripts, temples, and museum collections of Indian art.

Miller's carefully crafted translation first appeared in 1977 following her translations of Sanskrit works by Bhartrhari and Bilhana, who also wrote love poetry. Her translation of the *Gītagovinda* was well received within the scholarly community from the time of its first publication. David Shapiro of Columbia University called it “an essential contribution to Indian study and to poetry in translation in general” (SHAPIRO 1978, 127), and the current republication, on the event of the twentieth anniversary of the first publication, is welcomed by scholars and poets as well as by readers who simply enjoy great poetic expression.

As a result of the popularity of the *Gītagovinda* over the past eight hundred years, it has been translated into most modern Indian languages and into most European languages. The first English translation of the *Gītagovinda* was in 1792. Miller undertook her translation because she felt that “[n]one of the available translations seemed to convey the literary richness or the religious significance of the original” (xiv).

As a result of the vagaries of manuscript preservation and oral transmission in India, there are many extant multiforms of the *Gītagovinda*. Miller's first task was to create a critical text from the multiforms that were available to her both in textual form and in performance. Miller conducted “an extensive study of the traditions associated with the poem at various levels of Indian culture” (xiv) and “studied the theory and practice of both classical Hindusthani and classical Karnatic music” (xvi). In her sixty-six page introduction, she describes the process by which she went about collecting and editing the multiforms. The 1977 hardcover edition contained the critical Sanskrit text, a glossary of Sanskrit words, and the documentation for all of the texts and sources she consulted in her editing.

Although Miller's translation is not annotated, the introduction makes up for this. The introductory text provides a great deal of information in Miller's analysis and discussion of subjects, such as what is known about the life of Jayadeva, the lyrical structure of the poem including information on the meters used, the legends of Krishna, the different epithets used for Vishnu and Krishna throughout the poem, and the background of the character of Radha (it seems that Jayadeva was one of the earliest authors to popularize the figure of Radha). Miller carefully explains the connection of the lyrical poetry to the musical ragas that are designated for each of the twenty-four songs that make up the *Gītagovinda*. She points out that the ragas were not fixed melodic constructs but that each raga was associated with a particular

mood, time, and seasonal setting. Miller also provides a clear discussion of the ways that Jayadeva's lyric presentation manipulates the *rasas*, the dramatic moods, of the reader/audience "to make potentially pornographic subject matter the material of esthetic and religious experience" (15). Sanskrit poetry is marked by the use of descriptive metaphors for even common items and every scene and Miller's translation very effectively captures Jayadeva's descriptive metaphors.

The emotional lyricism of the *Gītagovinda* describes the erotic relationship between Krishna and one of the *gopi* cowherdess maidens, the proud and passionate Radha. In the course of the poem, Radha experiences a whole range of emotions when Krishna goes off to flirt with the other *gopis* following Radha's night of love-making with Krishna. Radha becomes the embodiment of emotions such as envy, jealousy, pride, anger, remorse, and intense longing before she is reunited with her lover. The over-all theme of this relationship is a powerful metaphor for the longing of the human lover for the human or divine beloved. According to Miller, "Jayadeva created the religiously potent atmosphere of the *Gītagovinda* by exploring the poignant mood of separation within the broader play of divine passion in consummation" (14).

## REFERENCE CITED

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RAMASWAMY, SUMATHI. *Passions of the Tongue: Language Devotion in Tamil India, 1891–1970*. Studies on the History of Society and Culture 29. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997. xxiii + 303 pages. B/w photographs, references, index. Cloth US\$50.00; ISBN 0-520-20804-8. Paper US\$20.00; ISBN 0-520-20805-6.

Muttersprache, Mutterlaut,  
wie so wonnesam, so traut,  
erster Ton, der mir erschallet,  
süßes erstes Liebeswort,  
klinget ewig in mir fort.

Mother tongue, Mother's sound,  
how blissful, how dear,  
the first tone I heard,  
the first word of love,  
Will resonate in me forever,

Max von Schenkendorf

The total absence of any polemic note in this early nineteenth-century German poem strikingly contrasts with the passions of the tongue Sumathi Ramaswamy examines in her book, which is partly based on her doctoral dissertation in history. As a Tamil Brahmin who grew up in multilingual surroundings and who formally learned Tamil only as an adult, she is in an ideal position to study her subject with the degree of detachment necessary for a scientific enterprise.

The book is woven around the two concepts of *tamilpparru* (Tamil devotion) and *Tamilutāy* (Mother Tamil). Although the first meaning of *parru* is attachment—for instance