

BOOK REVIEWS

BECKER, A. L. and ARAM A. YENGOYAN, editors. *The Imagination of Reality*. Norwood, N. J., Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1979. Hardbound. XVI, 336 pp., author and subject indices. US \$25.

The book contains a collection of sixteen essays in which authors from different disciplines investigate how language and culture form "coherence systems" which interpret human experience. The essays are, in fact, the result of a conference titled "Symbolic Systems in Southeast Asia," held in May of 1974 at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. The organizers attempted to work out a cross-section of thoughts and ideas as they relate to questions of symbolic action and coherence and invited scholars from the disciplines of art history, political science, geography, anthropology, ethnomusicology and linguistics.

We find, therefore, in *Part One—The Separation of Things*, Geoffrey Benjamin, a social anthropologist, discussing "Indigenous Religious Systems of the Malay Peninsula." He compares Malay animism with Temiar and Semang animism and investigates the practice of animism in Malaya, describing soul-loss vs. spirit-invasion and soul-fixing vs. spirit manipulation (as the basis of ritual action), the societal dimensions and the relationships to world religions.—The anthropologist Kirk Endicott introduces the "Batek Negrito Thunder God" as "The Personification of a Natural Force," and Ronald Provencher investigates "Orality as a Pattern of Symbolism in Malay Psychiatry," in looking at "libido and food," "anxiety and social rank," and the "cure."—Robert Harrison poses the question "Where Have All the Rituals Gone?" and sees the "Ritual Presence among the Ranau Dusun of Sabah, Malaysia" in terms of grid and group, social boundaries of a community, family and stratification, authority structure, sense of person, productivity and ritual friendships.—J. S. Lansing applies the "Husserlian Phenomenology to Cultural Symbols" in the "World of the Sea Urchin," a Balinese example.

In *Part Two—Some Motifs in Tellantry* (where with this new word it is attempted to limit the use of the word "literature" to written material), Marie Jeanne Adams looks at the "Crocodile Couple and the Snake Encounter in the Tellantry of East Sumba, Indonesia" and suggests some references and inferences.—Vinson H. Sutlive Jr. analyses "Iban Folk Literature and Socialization: The Fertility of Symbolism" in discussing core values, egalitarianism, respect and responsibility, community and cooperation, and luck.

Part Three—The Coherence of Things is devoted to symbolic analysis. Edward L. Schieffelin discusses very perceptively "Mediators as Metaphors: Moving a Man to Tears in Papua, New Guinea." We learn about the ceremonies of the Kaluli who are swidden cultivators in the tropical forest of the Papuan Plateau on the island of New Guinea. For them the land is the "mediator of identity," food the "mediator of social relationships." Cultural mediators appear in poetic metaphors and the songs follow a strategy familiar to "this simple nonliterate society." "Ceremonial songs outline to the Kaluli their version of 'history' as a remembrance of things past." Three examples of Kaluli songs and three location sketches add to the richness of this

essay.—James J. Fox discusses “The Ceremonial System of Savu” and contrasts modes of ritual orientation (oration and ostension). He adds information on the structure of Savu clans and priesthood, social and religious organization, leading up to the discussion of the “cockfight as ritual confrontation.”—Mary LeCron Foster talks about “Synthesis and Antithesis in Balinese Ritual,” arguing that “ritual integrative mechanisms routinely correct fission and are incorporated into the single symbolic event, rather than occurring as a successive event in one mode countering an earlier event in another.” She agrees with Mary Douglas that social constructions, if regarded as deep structure, are not infinitely varied, although surface variations may indeed be infinite, “even within a single culture such as Bali.”—The ethnomusicologist, Judith Becker, introduces us to “Time and Tune in Java,” and A. L. Becker analyses “Text-Building Epistemology, and Aesthetics in Javanese Shadow Theatre.”—In James L. Peacock’s contribution, “Dahlan and Rasul: Indonesian Muslim Reformers,” the biographies of these two great Muslim reformers are compared. K.H.A. Dahlan, a Javanese, founded Muhammadiyah and H. Abdul Karim Amrullah, also known as Hadji Rasul, a Minangkabau, was perhaps its most charismatic early leader.

Part Four—Innovation in Traditional Coherence Systems contains James A. Boon’s contribution on “Balinese Temple Politics and the Religious Revitalization of Caste Ideal” and Philip F. McKean’s “From Purity to Pollution? The Balinese Ketjak (Monkey Dance) as Symbolic Form in Transition,” as well as Robert McKinley’s “Zaman Dan Masa, Eras and Periods: Religious Evolution and the Permanence of Epistemological Ages in Malay Culture” and Aram A. Yengoyan’s afterword “Cultural Forms and a Theory of Constraints.” He closes with the summary,

... the symbolic structures discussed in these essays are critical elements in the articulation of different forms of meaning. In some cases, symbolic constructs are related directly to organic constraints, but even in these cases the symbolic systems operate to provide meaning for human action. Whatever the origins or determinants of symbols, thought itself emanates from symbol and thus, at some level, thought must resolve the contradiction between organic and logical constraints. Understanding these meaning systems involves a learning process through which a culture communicates itself to an outsider, and outsiders themselves communicate across its borders. Our ability to learn these systems requires an analysis from the “inside out,” and it is through this process that we can perceive the actual constraint exercised by these systems upon human beings involved in the rigors of everyday life. In capturing the “inside-out” portrait, we can avoid the overdetermination of human subjects as objects, an unfortunate attitude too frequently characteristic of Western social science.

The approaches used in this collection of essays set an encouraging example for all those who are concerned about the understanding of foreign cultures. It is a promising start and we hope that not only the scholars involved in the production of this book will continue in their work but that others will join them and penetrate the various layers of human consciousness. The authors restrict themselves to the cultural area of Southeast Asia, the book, however, should be of interest to all linguists, ethnomusicologists, anthropologists, sociologists, historians of religion and students of other Asian languages and cultures as well. It is highly recommended for use in colleges and universities. The information contained in each essay is also sufficient and highly stimulating for those who have no knowledge of the areas discussed.

Ruth-Inge Heinze

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YUSUF IBISH and ILEANA MARCULESCU, editors. *Contemplation and Action in World Religions*. Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1979. Paper. 276 pp., US \$4.95.

This volume on mystical religion is based on papers given at a colloquium, "Traditional Modes of Contemplation and Action," at the Rothko Chapel in Houston, Texas. Its authenticity and originality rest on the fact that the contributors are all scholars as well as practising believers of the religious traditions for which they speak. Content: Foreword, by Dominique de Menil; introduction by André Scrima; "The Dual Aspect of Faith," by Shojun Bando; "The Interdependence of Contemplation and Action in Tibetan Buddhism," by Lobsang P. Lhalungpa; "Meditation and Intellection in Japanese Zen Buddhism," by Toshihiko Izutsu; "Vedantic Meditation and Its Relation to Action," by T.M.P. Mahadevan; "Action and Contemplation as Categories of Religious Understanding," by Raimundo Panikkar; "Traditional Methods of Contemplation and Action," by Elémire Zolla "The Hesychastic Tradition: An Orthodox-Christian Way of Contemplation," by André Scrima; "Contemplation and Action in Judaism and Islam," by Leo Schaya; "The Complementarity of Contemplative and Active Lives in Islam," by Seyyed Hossein Masr; "Ibn 'Arabi's Theory of Journeying," by Yusuf Ibish; "Contemplation and Action: the Sufi Way," by Al-Sayyedah Fatimah Al-Yashrutiiyyah; "Yoruba Traditional Religion," by Wande Abimbola; "Contemplation through Actions: North American Indians," by Joseph Epes Brown; "Last-Minute Reflections, by Yusuf Ibish; and an afterword by Ileana Marculescu.

R.-I. H.

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DAS, K. B. and L. K. MAHAPATRA. *Folk Lore of Orissa*. New Delhi: National Book Trust, India, 1979. Paper. 160 pp. Index. Rupees 11.00.

K. B. Das, professor emeritus in Oriya and Sanskrit, and L. K. Mahapatra, a social anthropologist, discuss Orissa and its people, its oral literature, myths, mythology, religion and magic, fairs, festivals and fasts and folk art, music, dances and drama. They see folklore as a medium through which the soul of a people expresses itself and finds artistic fulfilment and entertainment. They tackle well the complexity of their topic. Orissa is divided into four main cultural regions. In the northeastern areas, bordering on Bengal, we find dress, food habits, language, social customs and festivals influenced by Bengali culture and language. The southern parts of Ganjam and Koraput districts have a large Telugu-speaking population which, in language, food habits, dress and marriage customs, is influenced by the Andhra culture and language. The western districts of Sambalput, Bolangir and Kalahandi are a linguistic continuum with Chhatisgarh or Madhya Pradesh where many Oriya-speaking castes still live at present. The fourth region comprises the coastal districts of Balasore, Cuttack and Puri and portions of adjoining districts. The remaining areas from the northern districts of Sundargarh, Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj to the southern tribal areas of Phulbani, Ganja, and Koraput are very heterogeneous. Fifty per cent of the population are tribal people and each tribal community has its own language although their religion may, more or less, have been assimilated to local Hindu cults. However, in dress, food habits, drinks, architecture, village organization, etc., the social, cultural, and economic characteristics differ considerably. A shift from traditional occupation

has been observed among the brahmin, washerman, potter, farmer, weaver, fisherman, blacksmith, and shoemaker castes but not among writers and cattle keepers. In the appendices we find ballads, stories, proverbs, and riddles in English translation to give those not familiar with Oriyan culture a taste of the self-expressions found in Oriyan folklore.

R.-I. H.

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ANWARUL KARIM, Dr. *The Bauls of Bangladesh. A Study of an Obscure Religious Cult.* Bangladesh: Lalan Academy Kushtia, 1980. Hard-bound. 203 pp. Bibliography. TK 35.

Dr. Anwarul Karim has lived among the Baul in Kushtia and part of Jessore. He gives a vivid description of this group of mystic devotees who practise a yoga-like breath control and include female companions in their tantric practices. Close to Sufism they left their impact on the socioreligious history of Indo-Bangladesh through their expressions in speech and gesture, sacramental meal and, foremost, song. Karim also discusses previous works on the Bauls as well as Rabindranath Tagore's and Lalan Shah's contribution to draw attention to the mystic expressions of the Baul.

R.-I. H.

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ASHRAFUL AZIZ, K. M. *Kinship in Bangladesh.* Bangladesh: International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Monograph Series No. 1, 1979. Paper. 228 pp. Bibliography, Index.

This careful study of Hindu and Muslim family structure in Bangladesh is especially valuable for its comparisons of kinship terms in Nepali, Oriya, Sindhi, Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu.

R.-I. H.

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Over the years, the Hamburg Museum of Ethnology has published several carefully researched studies in German. In the following we want to draw the attention of our readers to three books which may be of special interest to Asian Folklorists.

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PRUNNER, GERNOT. *Meisterwerke Burmanischer Lackkunst* (Masterpieces of Burmese Lacquer Art). (Wegweiser zur Völkerkunde, No. 9) Hamburg, Hamburgisches Museum für Völkerkunde und Vorgeschichte, 1966. Paper. 64 pp. Bibliography and illustrations.

The book contains a brief history of Burma and the story about the use of lacquer in Burmese art. Prunner discusses also the production of colored lacquer vessels and boxes, their shape and ornaments and their significance for Burmese art. Together with the plates and illustrations, this book offers new insights into a not-so-well-known art.

R.-I. H.

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BEWIG, JUTTA. *Chinesische Papierschnitte* (Chinese Paper Cuts). (Wegweiser zur Völkerkunde, No. 21) Hamburg, Museum für Völkerkunde und Vorgeschichte, 1978. Paper. 115 pp. Bibliography and illustrations.

Jutta Bewig tells us the history of Chinese paper cuts and introduces us to the artists, their techniques, the regionally different stylistic elements, the themes changing with the political developments in China, and the use of paper cuts.

R.-I. H.

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PRUNNER, GERNOT. *Papiergötter aus China* (Chinese Paper Gods). (Wegweiser zur Völkerkunde, No. 14) Hamburg, Hamburgisches Museum für Völkerkunde und Vorgeschichte, 1973. Paper. 85 pp. Bibliography and numerous illustrations and plates.

After a survey of the development of graphic art in China, we are introduced to the pantheon of Chinese folk religion which includes numerous nature gods, gods of settlements and the house, gods of the guilds, gods of wealth, fortune, and longevity, illness deities, heavenly physicians, gods of the underworld, gods who protect against demons. The popular printed graphic (*min-chien pan-hua*) is carved on wooden plates (*k'e-pan yin-shua*). We are also acquainted with how hagiographic depictions of the past are reinterpreted in the People's Republic of China. Door guardians become heroes of the factories or agriculture and lucky sayings become political slogans. The art of the Chinese paper gods seems to be dying out. This makes this documentation of the rich folk art of the past especially valuable.

R.-I. H.

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A. DHAMOTHARAN. *Tamil Dictionaries. A Bibliography*. Beiträge zur Südasiensforschung, Südasiens Institut, Universität Heidelberg, Band 50. Franz Steiner Verlag, Wiesbaden, 1978. 185 pp. Paper, DM 26.—

This bibliography of Tamil dictionaries will certainly be very welcome to Tamil linguists. So far bibliographies of Tamil dictionaries were few and rather incomplete. The author has obviously taken endless trouble to make his bibliography as complete as humanly possible.

Dr. Dhamotharan has divided his 669 listed dictionaries first into language and technical dictionaries. The language dictionaries he subdivided into monolingual and multilingual dictionaries, while the technical dictionaries are arranged according to various subjects. An index of authors at the end makes it easy to find each dictionary listed in the bibliography. Very useful are the short annotations after most of the dictionaries registered.

The author also mentions in his introduction that more than 2000 manuscripts containing lists of Tamil words are scattered in many libraries all over the world, but mainly in Europe. They would be important for the reconstruction of ancient Tamil as some of the manuscripts had been written before printing in Tamil script had been