

thesis regarding economic-cultural types in Tuva; second, they enrich his methodological approach which stresses environment, historical perspective and economic practices. For example, the recurring discussion of the basic nomadic unit *aal* demonstrates how the migratory movement of the *aal* differed according to environmental areas of Tuva, historical periods and economic necessity.

Other theoretical issues which Dr. Vainshtein raises are the existence of agriculture among the nomadic Tuvians and the role of hunting among pasturing Tuvians. But perhaps the most interesting issue is whether Central Asiatic nomadic groups had professional crafts or whether they relied on outside traders or enslaved craftspeople from other peoples. Based largely on archaeological evidence Dr. Vainshtein concludes that there was a tradition of professional craftsmanship among the Tuvians prior to contact with the Russians and the Chinese. As with his separate discussions of *aals* and origins of deer-herding, his presentation of professional crafts allows for interpretive possibilities beyond the question of whether or not nomadic peoples could sustain professional craftsmanship.

The issue of professional craftspeople also relates to the role of the professional religious personality, the shaman, among the peoples of Tuva. Because of personal conversations with Dr. Vainshtein, I am aware of his interest and extensive knowledge in this area. As the relation of the shaman to Tuvian economic practices would seem to be an important consideration for this work, I was puzzled by the absence of any discussion on the role of the shaman. Perhaps the complex nature of this religious personality necessitates a separate treatment.

In summary, then, Dr. Vainshtein's book is an important work not only for its extensive presentation of valuable data about the Tuvian people but also for its original interpretations of such issues as the existence of agriculture prior to Russian immigration, the origins of Eurasian deer-herding in Tuva and the role of the professional craftsman.

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UNBESCHIED, GÜNTER. *Kānpaṭā. Untersuchungen zu Kult, Mythologie und Geschichte śivaitischer Tantriker in Nepal*. Beiträge zur Südasiensforschung, Südasiens Institut Universität Heidelberg, Band 63. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1980. Xxiii+197 pp. Glossary, bibliography, 16 plates, 2 maps. Paper, DM 28.—. ISBN 3-515-03478-1. (English summary)

Unbescheid's study was presented at the University of Heidelberg as a doctoral dissertation in Indology and History of Religions. Thus, from the viewpoint of a folklorist it might seem to be of but limited if any direct value in regard to Nepali or Asian folklore. Nevertheless we think that Unbescheid treats us to an aspect of Nepal's religious culture that is of considerable interest because it makes use of the Great Traditions of Hinduism and Buddhism and also the more local forms of religious expression.

The study focuses on the Yogīs of the Nāth Sect and their main Siddha, Gorakhnāth. After having characterized the sect's centers of worship and especially those in the valley of Kāṭhmāndu, the author describes with some detail a year's ceremonial

cycle and some of the sect's other main ceremonies. He ends with a historical reflection regarding the introduction of the Nāth Sect into Nepal and the appearance and importance of Gorakhnāth, its saint.

Unbescheid bases his findings and conclusions on historical documents and on personal interviews he could conduct during a year of field work in Nepal. He excludes all matters of doctrine and concentrates instead on the historical development and the present activities of a form of religion that blends several traditions. Although more and more students of Asian religions make use of a similar approach we still do not know sufficiently how particular forms of religion came to be and how they actually function within the framework of the culture of which they are part. In this respect, Unbescheid's outlook might be a little bit restricted by his mainly historical interest. On the other side, his standpoint yields insights that are of great value beyond history in the strict sense.

We find his detailed presentation and discussion of the mythology that flourishes around Gorakhnāth and his *guru* Macchendranāth especially appealing. In addition to the accounts found in official chronicles he introduces still living oral traditions that testify to the progressive adaptation of motifs in the stories around Gorakhnāth. Although the facts themselves are in the past, the stories and legends reinterpret them again in the present, enabling us to witness mythology in action. Here, among other things, the author draws our attention to the role such a mythology plays in support of the ruling class, not only that some yogi once is said to have coronated a particular king, even today the members of the sect do in fact still play a role in relation with the rulers, that is very much the same as that which is well known from Indian mythology.

We cannot do justice to this volume by focusing on just one and even on a very specialized aspect of its topic. We wish, however, to draw the attention of our readers not only to the aspects of the present book that deserve to be considered by folklorists, but also to the new material that is presented here within its original and still living framework.

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