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BAṢU CAṆḌĪDĀSA. *Singing the Glory of Lord Krishna: The Śrīkṛṣṇakīrtana*. Translated and annotated by M. H. Klaiman. American Academy of Religion, Classics in Religious Studies, no. 5. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1984. Xi+331 pp. Appendix, bibliography. Cloth US\$28.85 (Members US\$24.25) ISBN 0-89130-736-2; Paper US\$20.75 (Members US\$16.25) ISBN 0-89130-737-0.

The *Śrīkṛṣṇakīrtana* (*SKK*) of Baṣu Caṇḍīdāsa has been the cornerstone of extensive linguistic and literary research in the history of Early Middle Bengali. Although its date is still under question, the text remains important for its early portrayal of the popular stories of the lord Kṛṣṇa's love for the cowherd girl, Rādhā. The extant *SKK* is a collection of 412 songs divided unevenly into thirteen sections, all of which have been translated in this edition. The manuscript clearly suggests that the songs were meant to be sung, each bearing an appropriate key (*rāga*) and time signature (*tāla*). Internal evidence supports the oral intention by including the author's signature line (*bhaṇitā*), a common lyric convention in Middle Bengali. The translator has chosen to omit the signature lines and musical cues to avoid repetition, a choice certain to disappoint some readers; while the songs have been numbered in the translation, an addition sure to facilitate reference.

Like so many scholars before her, Klaiman has thrown herself into the often vicious debate surrounding the text's authenticity and importance. Looking at the *SKK* as a religious document, Klaiman proposes several intriguing possibilities, not the least of which is her argument that the *SKK* suggests the upwelling of emotional fervor fueled by the advent of Caitanya would have occurred without his presence. Unfortunately, her hypothesis is scantily outlined and lacks any comparison with the pertinent Bengali lyric literature of the early Vaiṣṇava movement. This omission typifies the introductory matter, for Klaiman misses the opportunity to provide the reader with a rounded history of the lively debate centered on the text. Glossing the dating issue, Klaiman makes the important point that dating conclusions can be as much the effect of cultural bias as the logic of linguistics (18-20), although in this reviewer's opinion she fails to prove it. The interested reader will have to find the complete saga of the *SKK* elsewhere; unfortunately the bibliography does not

yield the wealth of literature devoted to the topic, especially the plethora of Bengali sources.

The translation of the text does yield many pleasing moments. The thirteen sections represent the core of the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa legendary cycle, with many variants providing excellent comparative material. The notes provide occasional references to similar motifs in Jayadeva's *Gīta Govinda* or Rūpa Gosvāmin's *Dānakelikaumudī*, but not to the important purāṇic sources or Bengali lyric material. The repetitive nature of the narrative does not always lend itself to scintillating translation, but many passages are good readable verse. For example, *Dāna-khaṇḍa*, Song 56 (83) suggests the playful repartee of the lovers as Rādhā desperately employs every trick she knows—threat, insult, deference, flattery, etc.—to escape Kṛṣṇa's trap to exact a toll. In another well-done passage, *Vṛndāvana-khaṇḍa*, Song 26 (184–85), Kṛṣṇa compares each part of Rādhā's enchanting form to the bountiful flora of the Vṛndā forests. Passages in the *Rādhā-viraha* section nicely portray the poignant agony of Rādhā's separation from her beloved.

The translator notes (163) that Song 29 of the *Vṛndāvana-khaṇḍa* (189) is one of the most beautiful in the collection, and the careful, concise translation successfully captures the mood of lovers declaring their mutual affection. But the measured beauty of this passage reveals two drawbacks: the overall translation is somewhat uneven, but more importantly, many of the passages are over-translated. Klaiman's knowledge of Bengali is obvious and her translations can generally be trusted not to stray far from the original. But in an effort to effect a particular rhythm in English, she has often eliminated the simplicity and directness of the original which is largely responsible for the text's power and appeal. This tendency can mildly distort the meaning. In Song 9 of *Bhāra-khaṇḍa* (145) the opening line is translated, "You're the son of Nanda; you must hear what I am saying." The semi-colon suggests a logical connection, i.e., *because* Kṛṣṇa is the son of Nanda, he must listen. But the Bengali reveals a simple imperative followed by a vocative, "Listen to my words, O Son of Nanda!" (*āhmāra vacana śuna nandera nandana*). This subtle change, not serious in itself, results in the addition of meaning not necessarily intended in the original. Similarly, the translator occasionally chooses to interpret a phrase in place of the literal original, a choice which often eliminates ambiguity, imagery, or playful ribaldry. A good example of this choice is in *Dāna-khaṇḍa*, Song 108 (117, n. 274). The rather bland "I've been devastated" is literally "I've been reduced to a rib-cage," a very effective image, for Kṛṣṇa has stripped Rādhā of her bracelets and jewelry (all banded or circular), leaving her with only the bands of her now exposed ribs as ornaments. Fortunately, such departures are often noted, indicating the literal meaning, the Bengali phrase, and explanations as well.

The notes, however, are a constant frustration. Explanations are generally timely and informative, e.g., the connection of the three folds of skin on the belly and the association with "Bali" (56, n. 41), or the illustration of the *bhāra* or carrier pole (141). But a glossary would have handled many of the notes much more conveniently, e.g., the explanations of the epithets of Kṛṣṇa. An index and glossary would also have eliminated numerous cross-referencing fiascos. For a simple reference to the *Rāmāyaṇa* story in *Dāna-khaṇḍa*, Song 90 (105, n. 229), the reader is sent on a dizzying trail which ultimately covers eight other footnotes, eventually looping back on itself. The end product of this particular odyssey—apart from much wasted time—is simply reference to several key figures in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, clearly the job of a glossary and index. Such profusion clutters the page and distracts the reader from the translation itself, a serious flaw of form on the part of the translator and editor. The

lone appendix of plant names and descriptions, however, is quite valuable, especially to other translators.

In spite of the inconsistencies in style and problems of presentation, Klaiman's *SKK* provides an important, quality translation which should make a significant contribution to the English reader's understanding of popular Middle Bengali literature and religion.

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SADLER, A. W. *In Quest of the Historical Buddha and The White Cranes of Sri Ramakrishna*. Bronxville, NY: The Laughing Buddha Press, 1984. 29 pages.

Professor Sadler has provided us with two literary fragments, the first of which is especially delightful reading. Inasmuch as he offers no introduction or commentary, we can only assume that the fragments are either a literary creation of the author or a set of sources for the folklorist or historian of religions. The limited edition and its format suggest aesthetic motivations.

The first of the two pieces begins as a letter received from an acquaintance, who informs the author of some unusual events of the summer of 1923. The writer of the letter is one George Corrigan, whose father had been a journalist living in Japan during the second and third decades of the present century. The senior Corrigan lived for a time at Denzūin, a Buddhist temple in Tokyo. When he died there was found in his safe deposit box, along with his will, a curious document, which the younger Corrigan assumes is recorded fact.

The document tells of a series of encounters with a mystery woman, whom he followed into the old Botanical Garden near Shimizudanimachi. On each occasion she led him farther into the Gardens before she vanished. Finally she disappeared just at the entrance to a small cave in the hillside. As Corrigan's sight adjusted to the darkness, he confronted the eyes of very large fox. Following the creature on all fours, he came into an ancient library where a scroll lay open, lighted by a single candle, waiting to be read. There were three documents, the first of which was the fragment of a letter with a Sanskrit notation stating that it was the handwriting (in Pali) of 'Lord Buddha.' The fragment tells of the contentiousness that led him to become a forest dweller, to discover transformation, and of his plan to return home.

The second fragment seems to be a letter of a son of the "Buddha," who tells of his father's crotchety ways as an old man. We are told of a man who became embittered of life and love, ceased to be a father, became a recluse, and finally gathered disciples, abandoned his home, and lived as a prince of paupers.

The third document contains the words of an Indian archivist who gives the two above-mentioned manuscripts to a monk who plans to take the Dharma to the north and east. The archivist wishes to have the truth preserved against the time when Buddhism will have died out in India and the later monastic community will have "retold the story to fit their own anemic fancies."

Corrigan had deciphered the ancient manuscripts and was emerging from the cave just as the great earthquake of 1923 began its convulsive devastation. He dashed to safety and spent two days helping the victims. After the terror subsided he returned