

of the Koches and their migration to the Garo hills' is highly informative. It is very significant to note here that the Koches today form a major population in the Kochbihār region (named after the Koche people) of North Bengal wherein they appear to have migrated from north-east. In this connection a comparative study of this folklore with that of North Bengal is necessary for a proper treatment and analysis. The state of Mizoram is represented by a single study of Mizo folktales. The state of Tripura is peopled by about nineteen tribes and a large number of Bengali population. Of the tribal peoples, the Tipras (Tripuris) form the majority and even the former royal family belonged to this tribe. The Tripuri folktales along with their different motifs have been well treated in this in depth study by the author. In two separate papers, folklores of two important communities of Sikkim, the Bhutias and the Lepchas, have been partially studied. The first one discusses legends about the origin and migration of the Sikkim Bhutias and the second one treats Lepcha folklore refering particularly to the prevailing myths regarding deluge and love, devils and, creation of the world. Lastly, there are three general papers covering aspects of the folklore of the north-eastern region of India. The first article makes a socio-economic evaluation of folk-songs expressing sentiment, life and activities of the peasants. A historical assessment of the folklore of Northeast India has been made in the second paper and the last one deals with weaving as represented in folksongs with the observation that the weavers 'not only weave with yarn but their deep feelings and emotions are also woven in that texture.'

Truely, the volume does not project any wholesome image of the folklore of North-east India. This could not be helped since the book is simply a compilation of seminar papers, and the authors had the liberty of treating their subjects in whatever way they wanted to choose. It appears that no guidelines were provided. Regional characteristics of the folklore of North-east India, if any, have hardly been treated by anybody nor has any comparative or critical study of them been made. It is, however, clear that the folklore of the different states of north-east India is diverse in nature and character, and there is hardly any unity in it. Despite its failings, the volume is undoubtedly a commendable attempt to present at least some gleanings of the folklore of each state of North-east India, which would inspire investigators and students to delve more into the folklore of each state and thence of the whole region of north-east India, bringing forth its regional characteristics, if any.

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#### ISLAM

KAPPERT, JAN. *Islamic Legends, Part I. Histories of the Heroes, Saints and Prophets of Islam.* Nisaba 15/1. Leiden E. J. Brill, 1985. Xi+311 pages. Introduction, illustrations. Paper Gld. 96,—, ISBN 90-04-07488-0. *Islamic Legends, Part II. Histories of the Heroes, Saints and Prophets of Islam.* Nisaba 15/2. Leiden E. J. Brill, 1985. Viii+170 pages. Bibliography. Paper Gld. 56,—, ISBN 90-05-07489-9.

The prolific and admirably versatile Jan Knappert, after many works concerning local traditions on the frontiers of Islam, here tries his hand at the compilation of an inter-Islamic hagiography. The material of his *Islamic legends* is admittedly gathered from

chapbook editions and oral recitals of the *Qışaş al-Anbiyā'* ('Tales of the prophets), martyrologies, tales and romances from Algeria, Egypt, the Sudan, Turkey, Irak, Iran and from East Africa. The aim of this book according to its author is "to provide the student of Islam with a wide variety of legends that illustrate the Islamic cosmology and way of thinking, the Islamic view of mythological history and the Muslims' conception of their own past and future, their purpose in life and their ideals" (18), and also "to provide the student of Islam in non-Islamic countries with a guidebook on Islamic folklore . . ." (20).

The first aim of the book has been fairly fulfilled. Accompanied by a short Preface (ix-xi), a lengthier Introduction (1-22), and bibliography (474-481), the collection is divided into five parts. Part One (23-184) contains the Muslim version of the Genesis (in Knappert's narrative about the Fall the Forbidden Tree is a bread-tree), and the stories of the prophets from Adam to Jesus with the legends of the kings of ancient Egypt and Israel. Part Two (185-311) and Part Three (313-380) form together a sort of Muslim *Acta Sanctorum*; one being the *Vita* of Muhammad and his family, the other consisting of legends about various saints, such as the almost universally venerated Sufi, ʿAbd al-Qādir Gilānī (d. 1166), or the purely legendary Jerjis (St George) of the Mediterranean and the local, often nearly contemporary holy men of North Africa. Part Four, "Tales of heroism and morality" (381-460) includes chivalrous romances of the religious heroes, ʿAli and Hamza, romantic tales, novelettes and trickster-stories. Part Five, "What happens after this life" (461-473) is a mere summary of Islamic eschatological beliefs.

Part One and Two are the most coherent, but I would welcome more stories on the *Ṣahāba*, the companions of Muhammad, like Bilāl or Salmān Fārsī. The topic of these two parts are already well studied in the West. Knappert's novelty lies with introducing less known Swahili versions of the famous episodes of Muslim prehistory and history. The remaining chapters show a somewhat random selection and arrangement. It is especially apparent in the Part Three about the saints, where more space ought to be devoted to other prominent Sufi mystics beside ʿAbd al-Qādir. Some stories do not fit well into their respective bracket, like "The Conversion of King Caniah" (336-343), an Iranian legend which rather belongs to the Kerbelā cycle, thus to Part Two. Others seem to be entirely out of place, like two Algerian legends, "The well of Tizza" (359-361), a treasure-seeker's horror story (cf. the motif N 571. Demon as guardian of treasure) and "The Foundation of Tlemcen" (347-349) with its pagan building rite (Mot S 261 Foundation Sacrifice) and Uriah letter motif (K 978). These stories, though interesting on their own right, have little to do with the saints of Islam, just like the trite anecdote of "The Old Man of the Mountain" (344-347), listed here as an Iranian legend. This latter, told actually by the Crusaders and the traveller Marco Polo (cf. B. Lewis, 1968: 2-9), runs quite contrary to Knappert's claim that "in this book the Islamic storyteller is speaking" (Preface, p. xi). Also, sentences and phrases, like "Jābir . . . had a beautiful daughter, Mayāsa, strong and athletic like Brunhilde" (417), or "a super-handsome young man" (about Muhammad, p. 195), are hardly those of a traditional storyteller.

The author's explanatory notes intermingle with the text, which creates a curious motley effect and makes the book slip into the tone of juvenile literature, without the sweet simplicity of an Elsa S. von Kamphoener's storytelling. The bibliography is large, but haphazard. The book lacks critical apparatus; sources are rarely referred to (though occasionally they can be guessed from the bibliography), and often even the country in which the story had originated, remains unmentioned. There are no

data on the storytellers either. All these much curtail the value of the *Islamic Legends* as an intended folklore guidebook, and make it indeed difficult to utilize these books for further research.

It is a pity, since the book contains a wealth of narrative material, which can be useful, if one finally undertakes the task of typologization of Islamic folk-literature, following in the footsteps of the late H. Schwarzbaum, the outstanding expert of the field.

I shall give a few examples as follows: "The ghouls' daughter" from the King Solomon cycle (162-166) is a perfect fairy tale, a mixture of the familiar motives of Z 27.5.1. (Seven brothers and one sister) and K 1911 (The false bride). "The great serpent" (445-447) is a (Swahili?) variant of the AT 670, and "Prophet Isa and the wooden queen" (179-181) is a fusion of AT 653 and 945. "The history of the sultan, master of ten thousand ships" (447-452) is a version of the Polycarp-tale (AT 836). In the legend of the fallen angels, Hārūt and Mārūt (59-62) the central motif is J 485 (Three sins of hermit), in the story of Juraih from Turkey (335-336) it is T 575.1.1.2. (Child in mother's womb reveals adultery), cf. also H 426 (Chastity test of holy men). These are familiar motives from the early Oriental Christian hagiography.

There is also a striking example of diffusion of Iranian motives into the Islamic East Africa in the story of Princess Hasina (386-387) which is a late Swahili version of the ancient Kombabos-story, first recorded in Greek by Lucian in the second century, but better known from Firdausi's *Shahname*.

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#### UNITED STATES

SWIDERSKI, RICHARD M. *Voices: An Anthropologist's Dialogue With an Italian-American Festival*. Culture and Performance Series. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1986. Xii+202 pages. Photos, bibliography, author and subject indexes. Paper US\$8.95.

This is both an interesting and a frustrating book. It is interesting because it details