

—praise of the deity's devotees, the devotee's invulnerability to harm, valuation of devotion over learning, and many others—frequently appear in the works of poets from other bhakti traditions who may or may not share Dhūrjaṭi's sense of disillusionment. Viewed from a distanced perspective, individual thematic elements in these poems may appear to belong to a repertoire which was the common property of many bhakti poets, but it is the particular combination of these elements and their relative emphasis that imparts to Dhūrjaṭi's voice its particular identity.

Also included in this volume is an Afterword by Narayana Rao which deals with the literary-historical context of this 16th century work. Narayana Rao's principal theme is the contrast between the traditional images of "court poet" and "temple poet" and the kinds of compositions associated with each. The tradition of Telugu court poetry, heavily influenced by its Sanskrit counterpart, reached its apogee during the reign of Krishnadevarāya (1509–1525), the most illustrious of the Vijayanager kings. Narayana Rao describes the relationship between court poet and royal patron, and on a smaller scale between poets and patrons of lesser prestige and power, as a kind of *quid pro quo*. The patron provided for the material comforts of the poet and bestowed honors upon him, while the poet, in turn, in a certain sense "created" his patron by presenting him to the world in light of the ideals of rulership, thus legitimizing his claim to power and authority. In sharp contrast, the temple poet is a servant of God and refuses to recognize the sovereignty of any human ruler. The temple poet is also likely to disregard the literary conventions by which the skill of court poets was measured.

Narayana Rao's reconstruction of the contrastive images of court poet and temple poet provides an informative complement to the translations. It illuminates, for instance, the poet's recurrent attacks upon kings and those who serve them. At the same time, as Narayana Rao observes, the paradigm does not neatly explain Dhūrjaṭi. While the *Kālahastīśvara Śatakamu* would appear to share a great deal in sentiment and style with the creations of temple poets, he is also the attributed author of another work, *Kālahasti Mahātmyamu*, which, while it also glorifies the deity of Kālahasti, is far more ornate and "courtly" in style. Further, Dhūrjaṭi is traditionally identified as one of the principle court poets patronized by Krishnadevarāya. Narayana Rao's essay goes a long way in broadening our awareness of the world in which the author of the *Kālahastīśvara Śatakamu* lived and of the way Telugu tradition has constructed images of the principal actors in that world, yet Dhūrjaṭi himself, about whom virtually no "concrete" historical information is available, remains an elusive figure. The voice we hear in the poems is clear enough, but Narayana Rao's tantalizing allusions to a "Dhūrjaṭi" who speaks in a very different voice whets our appetite to know more.

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MEYER, EVELINE. *Aṅkāḷaparamēcvari: A Goddess of Tamilnadu, Her Myths and Cult*. Beiträge zur Südasienforschung 107. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GmbH, 1986. Xii+339 pages. Songs in Tamil, maps, list of abbreviations, list of informants, list of Aṅkāḷammaṅ temples in Tamilnadu, bibliography, index, 25 black and white photographs. Paper DM 56,00, ISBN 3-515-04702-6.

Eveline Meyer has performed difficult field research, travelling to almost all the districts

of Tamilnadu. Despite a poor transportation system, between 1981–1982 she visited over sixty Aṅkāḷamman temples throughout the state out of the some 140 temples listed in the 1961 Census of India, plus a few temples not listed therein (v). The thick volume *Aṅkāḷaparamēcuvāri* is the result of her great efforts, perhaps her sweat and tears. I wish to first acknowledge and praise the author's tremendous endeavor.

*Aṅkāḷaparamēcuvāri* contains five chapters in which the author describes the goddess of the myth (I), temples and iconography of the goddess, and castes of the temple priests and devotees (II), the rituals and myths of the festival (III), relations between the goddess and her devotees (IV), and songs in praise of the goddess for the study of literary tradition (V), with the texts of songs (Appendix). Almost all aspects of the goddess are described and analyzed. This encyclopedia-like study seems to be a preliminary work to eventually answer her "simple" but fundamental question: "How do 'village' goddesses of Tamilnadu differ from each other?" (iv).

The first chapter (1–69) of *Aṅkāḷaparamēcuvāri* provides the myths, in a somewhat "unorthodox" approach, as the author admits, which were told by two informants at the same village named Mel Malaiyanur in Gingee Taluk of South Arcot District, which is the center of the Aṅkāḷamman cult in Tamilnadu (71). Twelve myths about the history of the goddess are translated and described. The generalization of the goddess's character as reconstructed from many materials cannot but give us "a good portrait of the complex nature of the goddess called Aṅkāḷamman" (1). It is doubtful, however, if "the devotee's" concept can safely be based on the information from two "priests" of a local center of worship (68). In my opinion, there must be some serious differences between the interpretation of the devotees and the priests concerning the character of gods and goddesses in Indian religion.

The second chapter (70–104) gives materials on the image, iconography, and the residence, the temple, of Aṅkāḷamman, and on the castes of temple priests and the families or clans which claim Aṅkāḷamman as their guardian deity (70, 85). The first part is a kind of intermediate chapter between the first and second chapters. It would appear that the description of iconography (II-A1) could profitably be included in the first chapter. Then the part on "temples" (II-A2) and "castes" (II-B) could have been enlarged into a chapter giving more prominence to a sociological point of view.

The third chapter (105–249) dealing with the festival (*tiruvilā*) seems to be the main part, both in terms of content and volume. It describes the typical "core rituals" from twelve regions in Tamilnadu and their variations (III-A), two myths most frequently offered as an explanation for these core rituals (III-B), interpretation of the core rituals (III-C), and of other rituals of the festival (III-D). The term "core rituals" is an analytical concept which refers to the rituals which all Aṅkāḷamman temples have in common and which best characterize the goddess (105). The author displays the variations for the purpose of abstracting the general character of the goddess, instead of analyzing the variations themselves. The fourth and fifth chapters (250–263, 264–280) are brief and appendix-like. Readers, therefore, are led from one general image of the goddess to variations of rituals and back again to only the image of the goddess.

In the third chapter the author, inspired by Geertz's concept of "model for" and "model of," discusses two points: the meaning of particular patterns and the purpose of the rituals. This is the core section of the book. However, the analysis does not offer any particularly new interpretations, but simply presents matters in terms of Geertz's model. Also, as we have seen above, the author expresses an interest in the variations and differences in rituals, but the book itself deals entirely with extracting a unified, generalized image of the meaning of the rituals and the characteristics of the goddess. One is left to wonder why the question "How do 'village' goddesses of Tamil-

nadu differ from each other?' was given such prominence at the beginning of the book, since the author provides no clue to its answer. The structure of the book lacks balance because the connection between succeeding chapters is unclear, and their size uneven. The significance of chapters IV and V, placed after the analysis of ritual in chapter III, is particularly difficult to understand.

It is possible that the author's analysis appears insufficient because she depended too heavily for her information on *pucari* (priests). Taken up with visiting such a large number of temples, she undoubtedly was unable to consider the social context in which each of these temples exist. This is a major drawback to this type of survey. The author ignores a sociological examination of the critical problem of the difference in understanding between the priests and the devotee. Thus the remarks on castes and the fourth chapter, for example, appear as a mere addition and half-baked. It is very unfortunate that the great amount of hard work expended on this project is undermined by the limitations of this kind of survey method. In a historic society such as India, it is necessary to take into account the social and historical background even for the study and analysis of folk religion or "little traditions." It is not enough anymore to limit oneself to the methods of research on religion hitherto used in Cultural Anthropology. After the appearance of eminent works such as Appadurai (1980) and Fuller (1984), though it is admittedly asking for much, I look forward to the publication of materials on folk religion which can stand up to an analysis from a social and historical perspective.

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#### MICRONESIA

LINK, HILDE. *Der Olofat-Zyklus in der Erzähltradition Mikronesiens* [The Olofat cycle in the narrative tradition of Micronesia]. Münchner Ethnologische Abhandlungen, Band 6. München: Minerva-Publikation, 1986. Xi+457 pages. Illustrations, photographs, motif index, bibliography. Paperback DM 52; ISBN 3-597-10605-6.

This monograph deals almost in its entirety with Truk Atoll, those nearby atolls lying north, south, and west of Truk Atoll, plus the high islands of Yap, all in Central and Western Micronesia. The natives of Truk and the surrounding atolls speak various dialects of the same language and have similar cultural patterns. The natives of Yap speak a very different language and have many different cultural patterns. However, these islands as a whole have a long history of interaction through native political systems and trade. Since the early days of Western contact they have been pulled even