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Review

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Review by: Nicholas Allen

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excessive theorising as to a possible sub-meaning lying beneath the overt statements of the epic". One sees his point, but it is obvious that some sort of religious doctrine is being propounded when the text tells us that the divine progenitor of the righteous king Yudhiṣṭhira is the god Dharma. The divide between didactic and narrative, between overt and implicit teachings, could never be sharp.

Most readers will think of other topics they would have liked to see recognised or treated more systematically – for instance, in my case, the four puruṣārthas as a set, the theory of debts, the Lokapālas, the institution of pilgrimage, the notion of the ṛṣi. But it would be wrong to end on a negative note: the book already covers an impressive amount, and requests for further coverage are more a recognition of the scale of the epic than a criticism of what is on offer here. On the subjects that are selected, many students of Hindu ideology and religion, including those unmoved by the prospect of a global theology, will find it extremely useful to have materials from the whole epic so carefully assembled and compared.

NICHOLAS ALLEN

COMPOSING A TRADITION: CONCEPTS, TECHNIQUES AND RELATIONSHIPS, edited by MARY BROCKINGTON and PETER SCHREINER (Proceedings of the First Dubrovnik International Conference on the Sanskrit Epics and Purāṇas, August 1997), General Editor Radoslav Katičić. pp. viii, 351. Zagreb, Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 1999.

This well-produced conference volume assembles eighteen articles on the Sanskrit epics and purāṇas. Impressively international, the contributors come from a dozen different countries, though as it happens none is from India itself (or from France). The *Mahābhārata* receives most attention, the *Harivaṃśa* less than its fair share, as the Introduction notes. For the most part the discourse is conventionally Indological (which is not a criticism), but contemporary literary theory appears in a couple of papers, as does the computer. Apart from the Contents page, the only overview provided consists of the thirty pages of summaries in Croatian.

Among the papers primarily on the Great Epic, two focus on the BhagavadGītā and on single words. With his characteristic attention to detail, Minoru Hara takes Śāṅkara's commentary on that text and examines the glosses provided for the word *ātman*. Contrary to what might be expected (given the famous *brahman-ātman* equation), he finds that Śāṅkara typically links the word not to the highest spiritual principle but to the senses or to the body. In the same text, Francis Brassard (Montreal) briefly examines the term *buddhi*, very roughly "understanding, intellect". Some of the contributors focus on a single episode. An important section of Book 2 in the epic describes the first dice game that leads up to the exile of the Pāṇḍava heroes, but the narrative line is unclear. Renate Söhnen-Thieme tries to resolve the puzzles by calling on the theory of Mary Carroll Smith, who argued that stretches of text written in non-standard metre, especially *triṣṭubh*, represent an older recension. In doing so, Söhnen-Thieme rejects van Buitenen's view that the whole of Book 2 is a dramatisation of the Vedic royal ritual of *rājasūya*. Danielle Feller Jatavallabhula, from Lausanne, gives a stimulating analysis of Garuḍa's theft of *amṛta* (ambrosia) from the gods, as told in the *Āstīkaparvan* (Book 1). She reviews the versions found in earlier texts, starting from the theft of *soma* by an eagle in the Vedic hymns, and proposes an explicitly Eliadean analysis in terms of an opposition between light and dark, eagle and snake, sun and moon, fire and water. However, it is not obvious that such binary structuralism is adequate to the analytical task: a student approaching the same material with different theoretical tools might note that in some versions the mediator between heaven and earth is an eagle form taken on by the metre Gāyatrī, who succeeds after her two sister metres have failed – in other words, the basic structure of the myth may be pentadic.

Four contributors address the Great Epic holistically. Georg von Simson from Oslo assembles references to the annual calendar within the text and relates them cautiously to his theory about the naturalistic basis of the whole plot, and more particularly to his bold hypothesis about the symbolic year. The idea is that, whatever the surface references to time (twelve plus one years of exile, eighteen days of battle, etc.), at a deeper level of organisation the annual cycle, reflecting the northward and southward movement of the sun's course, recurs just five times. Although this reviewer remains unconvinced, von Simson's revival of the nineteenth century approach merits careful consideration. Alf Hildebeutel attacks the theory proposed by Sukthankar and others that the epic underwent a recension by Bhārgava brahmans. Moving on from some of his own excellent earlier work, he now advocates a more synchronic and literary approach, claiming that "arguments for prior *oral* epic behind these written texts have made far greater claims than the evidence allows". Thirdly, Iwona Milewska (Cracow) compares the Indian television version of the epic with the film version of Peter Brook's play, and explores the cross-cultural reactions to the two versions. Finally, from St Petersburg, Yaroslav Vassilkov examines the overt doctrines about time (*kālavāda*), its role in creating, governing and destroying the world, the associated imagery (wheel, river, wind), Time's relation to fate, and its role in the narrative. The main thrust is towards a notion of "heroic didactics". We have too often assumed that the original epic was a purely heroic narrative, which only secondarily became infiltrated by brahmanical didacticism; but Vassilkov argues, with an agreeable freshness of vision, that quasi-philosophical doctrines about time may have informed the deeds and deaths of the warriors from very early times.

Discussion of the Rāmāyaṇa is dominated by the Brockingtons, John and Mary, who offer their own papers as well as reporting on workshops. John concentrates on the use of verbal formulae in the five text-historical stages that he has discriminated in previous work: surprisingly, the shift from oral to written transmission at the end of the second stage brings an increase in the use of formulae, not a decrease, together with increasing similarity of diction to the other epic. Mary Brockington offers a methodologically intriguing model of how Vālmīki's mind might have worked when he was constructing his plot. Opinions will vary, however, on how realistic such a model could conceivably be. Assuming Vālmīki existed, it is, for instance, quite possible that the story he told was already well-established in its general outline.

As for the later texts, we have Petteri Koskikallio from Helsinki examining the Horse Sacrifice in the Padmapurāṇa, and Horst Brinkhaus exploring the essentially post-epic trinity of Creator-Preserver-Destroyer, a concept doubtless more favoured by text-books on Hinduism than by Hindus themselves. The central issue he discusses is how this triad relates to the three states (*avasthā*) that are sometimes taken on by a cosmogonic deity such as Svayambhū. Klara Gönc Moaçanin raises questions about the relationship between epico-purāṇic narratives and Sanskrit theatre, bearing in mind her thesis on comparable relationships in Greece and Japan. Greg Bailey discusses intertextuality within the epico-purāṇic material. Given that "at least ninety percent of the extant Vāmanapurāṇa" occurs elsewhere within this corpus of material, the question is clearly important, but the approach is largely theoretical and programmatic; and at one point there seems to be confusion between "paradigmatic" and "diachronic". A more down-to-earth approach is taken by Peter Schreiner, who neatly classifies intertextual relationships between the Bhāgavatapurāṇa and a nineteenth century hagiographical text of the Swaminarayana movement (the Satsaṅgijīvanam), building on his substantial experience of computerising purāṇic texts.

In short, this work presents a good-quality sample of current Indological research on the texts in question. Comparativists will regret that references to Dumézil are confined to one sentence in Bailey's introduction, one footnote in Vassilkov, and the chapter on the theft of *soma*, which uses Dumézil's first book (from 1924) without noting the author's own reservations about his youthful

productions. Owing to publication dates, only a couple of contributors manage to slip in a reference to John Brockington's magnum opus *The Sanskrit epics*, 1998.

NICHOLAS ALLEN

ABHINAVAGUPTA'S PHILOSOPHY OF REVELATION: AN EDITION AND ANNOTATED TRANSLATION OF MĀLINĪŚLOKAVĀRTTIKA I, 1–399. By JÜRGEN HANNEDER. (Groningen Oriental Studies Volume XIV). pp. viii, 296. Groningen, Egbert Forsten, 1998.¹

This impressive volume is the first of a small crop of editions of works of esoteric Śaivism prepared (at least in part) in Oxford. Two other dissertations completed last year, both produced under the guidance of Professor Alexis Sanderson, deal with the two most important surviving tantras of the Trika: Judit Törzsök's edition of the surviving short recension of the *Siddhayogésvarīmata* and Somdev Vasudeva's edition of (principally) the portions relating to yoga of the *Mālinīvijayottara*, the work on which the present *vārttika* is in some sense a commentary. Hanneder was supervised by Professor Michael Hahn (Marburg), but he spent a year and a half studying in Oxford with Professor Sanderson while preparing his dissertation.

Hanneder's substantial introduction first presents (pp. 3–32) background to what he sees to be the principal focus of the edited portion of text, the Śaiva revelation. It then briefly treats some misconceptions about the nature and extent of the *Mālinīślokovārttika* (pp. 33–37), and concludes (pp. 38–56) with a discussion of the text's transmission and of the principles that have guided Hanneder in his reconstruction and in his presentation of the evidence. Hanneder's clear and thoughtful treatment of issues of text criticism in this section are worth recommending to those concerned with the transmission of Sanskrit literature (a category which should include almost all, if not all, readers of Sanskrit texts, so few of which have been printed with all the evidence on which their reconstruction has been attempted and so many of which have been transmitted in widely diverging sources).

The Sanskrit text is presented in Roman script with a semi-positive apparatus reporting the readings of the edition of the Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies (=KSTS), of the MSS consulted by the edition when their readings happen to have been reported therein, and of two recent paper MSS from Jammu written in Kashmirian Nāgarī which were not used for the KSTS edition. The choice not to give a fully positive apparatus (i.e. one which both reproduces the lemma and reports all the sources that read with the accepted text, followed by the variants found in other sources) was forced upon Hanneder because he was unable to see the MSS used for the first edition. Even though Hanneder had so little in the way of fresh source material, he has frequently been able to better the edition of the KSTS by adopting readings from the previously unconsulted MS or by conjectural emendation: there is no page on which he has not suggested at least some small improvement, and almost every page records a conjecture (most of these are Hanneder's own, but a substantial number are the suggestions of Professors Sanderson and Torella).

The translation, printed conveniently on pages facing the text, is deliberately relatively free, though Hanneder often prints more literal versions of freely rendered phrases in footnotes. This sometimes means that it is perhaps more than necessarily awkward to figure out how it matches the original text: occasionally the reader may even feel that more literal renderings would be no less smooth,² and

¹ I am grateful to Dr. Harunaga Isaacson and Dr. Somdev Vasudeva for their help and suggestions.

² In 227, for example, the translation "[These plantains] are haunted . . ." seems unhelpfully free for *-sevitaibh*, and in 233 Hanneder renders . . . *kaḥ kila deha eṣaḥ/carmāsthimātram* . . . with ". . . the body is nothing but skin and bones . . .", while his footnote gives us the more literal "What is this body? Only skin . . .", a rendering that