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habharata and the issues of the Gita itself, but are especially valuable in the way they summarize and compare Aurobindo's understanding of the Gita with that of Shankara and Ramanuja.

J. Bruce Long's analysis of *The Synthesis of Yoga* comes closest to offering outright criticism of Aurobindo. In a concluding section, he raises serious questions as to why Aurobindo did not incorporate aspects of Buddhist, Jain, and Indian Muslim thought into his integral vision. Long also raises thought-provoking questions with regard to Aurobindo's real stance towards Vedanta, his failure to deal concretely with evil, and the problem of his perhaps too facile universalism. Long's is also the only essay that provides a topical index to the text under discussion, a resource that could prove useful to anyone wishing to make a thorough study of the yoga volume.

Anyone as interested in comparative religious studies as I am will find Eugene Fontinell's chapter on *The Human Cycle* by far the most provocative essay. Rather than merely reporting or summarizing the teachings, as do some of the other writers, Fontinell enters into "dialogue" with Aurobindo, using the perspective of the pragmatic philosophies of John Dewey and William James as the basis for developing his comparison. While there are many points at which scholars might disagree with Fontinell's approach, the essay's overall scheme, following the original book itself, is dynamically presented in a most thought-provoking manner. Fontinell's conception of continuing dialogue with the material, rather than scholarly abstraction about it or critical judgmentalism, stresses an important methodological tool for the scholar of Asian religious life, the kind of tool that opens up understanding among spokespersons for living faiths.

As in his Radhakrishnan anthology, editor McDermott has again provided an excellent annotated bibliography, including a list of contents of each volume of the Birth-Centenary Library and numerous secondary works on Sri Aurobindo as well. If there are objections to this otherwise excellent introduction to the work of Aurobindo Ghose, it is first, the lack of any summarized biographical information on the subject, and second, the listed price. A paperback of fewer than two hundred pages, however excellent, ought to be listed at no more than \$4.50 (\$3.50 mail discount). Nonetheless, the book is worth reading and purchasing as supplementary reading for any course that discusses Aurobindo.

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Gods in Early Buddhism: A Study in Their Social and Mythological Milieu as Depicted in the Nikāyas of the Pāli Canon.

By M. M. J. MARASINGHE. Kelaniya: University of Sri Lanka, Vidyalandara Campus, 1974. xviii, 301 pp. Chart, Bibliography, Index. Library Ed. Rs. 50.00, Popular Ed. Rs. 37.50

As most of the best modern scholarship on early Buddhism is in French or German, ignorance of these languages helps one to approach the subject afresh. Marasinghe has exploited this advantage. His book makes no mention of Joseph Masson's thorough and generally sensible monograph on exactly the same subject, *La Religion populaire dans le canon bouddhique pali* (Louvain, 1942), and has not benefited from it.

This book is in two parts: the first is called "Arguments," the second "Sources." The order is surprising; in fact, the two halves are almost independent. The Sources are arranged mechanically according to provenance: a section for each of the four *Nikāyas*, and a fifth for the *Sutta Nipāta*. The omission of the *Vinaya Piṭaka* and the rest of the *Khuddaka Nikāya* (although these texts are occasionally used in the Arguments) is not justified. There is no synthesis of the five sections. Within each of them, allusions to the gods are arranged under five heads. This classification is not illuminating. It also fails to distribute the material; more than half of this half of the book falls within one of the twenty-five sections.

The book's main value lies in its summaries of texts in which gods and spirits figure. This is interesting material for the ethnographer. However, Marasinghe's exposition cannot be relied on. He begins a detailed discussion of the Pali word *thānaso* by saying that it is an ablative (p. 126). (It resembles no Pali ablative; it is an adverb.) On the previous page he is puzzled that King Vidūḍabha should be asking the Buddha about "gods being driven away by human beings!" Yes, that would be odd. But it is only a misunderstanding of the Pali: in the footnote he has translated the periphrastic future *āgantāro* as a present, and therefore thinks that the question refers to men (who have been bad gods) rather than to bad gods (who will become men). (This point was drawn to my attention by Mr. K. R. Norman.) The Buddha is traditionally held to have left home at twenty-nine, not at thirty-five (p. 36).

What, then, of the Arguments? Gods are virtually irrelevant to Buddhist soteriology. In the words of my colleague Michael Carrithers, they

"tend to be conceived as divine stagehands who shuffle sets around to assist the real drama of moral development and perseverance on the human stage." Marasinghe makes this point, though less felicitously, in Chapter 4, "The Functions of the Gods." Chapter 2 surveys Theravādin cosmology. The other three chapters develop, repetitiously, two theses mainly derived from D. D. Kosambi. (Kosambi outweighs all other Sources; he is cited about eighty times.) The first thesis is that everything important in Indian religion must be indigenous to India. "Not only Buddhism, but also the vast variety of religio-philosophical views that came into limelight in the sixth century B.C. India were a result of the continuity of elements of the Indus-Culture, in some form or other" (p. 25). The spatial distance between the Indus and "Gangetic religious thought" is not mentioned.

The second thesis is "a continuous process of mythologisation of the historical" (p. 70); "there seems to be little doubt that a significant proportion of the gods, spirits, etc., that we meet not only in the vedic texts, but in the general Indian religious traditions as well, did have actual historical beginnings" (p. 71). Kosambi and George Thomson, another Marxist scholar, are quoted in support. Let us briefly examine one instance of this euhemerism: "there is very little room for doubting the historical identity of the Yakkhas as tribal peoples" (p. 75); in "early Buddhism they were not yet mythologised" (p. 78). Yet on p. 89 he himself quotes two places where the canon mentions possession by a *yakkha*. Possession by a tribesman? Marasinghe's comment is: "Apart from such rare references, the early Pāli texts do not show evidence of a general recognition of (possible evil from) malevolent spirits."

Illogic apart, what about the *Āṭānāṭiya Sutta*? Marasinghe has his answer ready: the second part of that *sutta* "seems to fit the age of the emergence of Mahāyāna Buddhism than [sic] that of early Buddhism" (p. 123). So anything inconvenient is late! Again, Buddhists everywhere worship deities at local shrines. But "it is not possible that *cetiya*s were places connected with such non-Buddhistic cults [i.e. worship of *yakkhas*] as we witness at a post-Buddhistic age" (p. 106). Why not? The argument is circular.

Both of Marasinghe's theses are refuted by the *asuras*. Iranian evidence makes it certain that they were not invented in India and, a fortiori, that they were not a mythologized Indian tribe (cf. p. 72).

Marasinghe quotes with approval the dictum of Suniti Kumar Chatterji that "the economic background due to the geographical environment determines material culture," adding "which in turn determines the shape and the character (or the colour) of the spiritual culture" (p. 107). The best to be said for this jejune essay in historical materialism is that the data compiled may be useful to those unable to consult the Pāli texts or their translations, provided that they do not put implicit trust in the author's accuracy or judgment.

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India: An Anthropological Perspective. By STEPHEN A. TYLER. Pacific Palisades, Calif.: Goodyear Publishing, Goodyear Regional Anthropology Series, 1973. 224 pp. Appendixes, Bibliography, Index. \$9.95 (cloth), \$6.95 (paper)

For Tyler, a cognitive anthropologist and a linguist with a strong penchant for French structuralism, Indian philosophical religions represent a corpus of texts to be cognized and reduced to the essential ground of taxonomies composed of classes of oppositions. Thus, Tyler ingeniously extends and completes Louis Dumont's structural contrast between the collectivity and the individual in Hindu thought. For Tyler, Indian culture is "a delicate balance between the religion of the social order and the religion of the individual" (p. 49). For example, the oppositions between the sacrifice of the Ṛg Veda and that of the Sāma Veda are these: the first maintains order in society, the second makes the individual divine; the one is ritualistic, the other is ascetic; one is moralistic, the other is amoral; one fulfills the householder's obligation, the other is an ecstatic's cult; one is embodied in Brāhmaṇa literature, the other is embodied in the Upaniṣads.

Tyler considers some taxonomies to be basic paradigms of Indian culture stretching back to the Ṛg Veda and even earlier—to the Indus Valley civilization. Some have gradually been transformed, as with the Asura myth, which takes different forms in the early Vedas, in the later Vedas, in Jainism, in Buddhism, and in the Sāṃkhya school of philosophy. The details of the transformation, he holds, are vital to the understanding of the stages of development in Indian cognition. Thus, the pantheon of the Ṛg Veda