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Editors

Siegfried Lienhard, Emeritus Professor of Indology, The University of Stockholm (President).

John Brockington, School of Asian Studies, The University of Edinburgh; Secretary General of the International Association of Sanskrit Studies.

Irma Piovano, Supervisor of the scientific activities and cultural relations of the Cesmeo; Regional Director of the International Association of Sanskrit Studies.

Saverio Sani, Director of the Department of Linguistics, Università degli Studi di Pisa; Member of the Consultative Committee of the International Association of Sanskrit Studies.

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Irma Piovano (President) - Saverio Sani (Vice President) - Victor Agostini (Secretary)

Corso Trento, 13 - 10129 Torino

E-mail irmapiovano@cesmeo.it

C.F. 97651370013 – R.E.A. Torino, n. 1048465 – R.O.C., n. 14802

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manuals explaining the performance and value of some vows observed by common people, others are independent manuals explaining the fundamental system of the *śaivasiddhānta* and some texts illustrate the complexity of ritual pollution. Certainly the work edited by Ganesan is a remarkable attempt to point up the importance of these two prominent teachers and undoubtedly this volume is a good source for those who want to approach the *śaivasiddhānta* religious system.

Giada Franchini

SIEGFRIED LIENHARD, GIULIANO BOCCALI (a cura di), *Poesia indiana classica*, Marsilio, Venezia, 2009

This comprehensive anthology of Indian classical poetry – a substantially revised and expanded version of a text first published in 1994 – is by far the best work available in Italian on the subject: it ties together sophisticated and up-to-date scholarship with remarkable clarity and a step-by-step methodological approach, so as to guide even a beginner into the depths of the bewilderingly complex, fascinating ocean of *kāvya* literature. The authors, S. Lienhard and G. Boccali, are renowned authorities in the field. The text begins with a masterful introduction by Boccali (pp. 9-57) articulated in five sections: *Definition of Classical Literature*; *Chronology*; *Requisites of Classical Literature* (subdivided into *Themes and Motifs*; *Structure of Texts*; *Phonic and Symbolic Evocativeness*; *Lexical Research*; *Nominal Composition*; *Figural Richness*); *Literary Theory*; *Between Code and Magic*. The 143 translated texts are accompanied by a most useful, synthetic commentary (pp. 133-213). Along with an essential bibliography (pp. 215-222) is an informative note on the languages of the selected poems (Vedic Sanskrit, Sanskrit, Pāli, Maharaṣṭrī, Apabhraṃśa, Avadhi, Brajbhāṣā) and their authors, dates of composition, and editions utilised (pp. 223-232). A set of three indexes relative to authors, works, literary themes and technical

terms closes the volume (pp. 235-250).

Following a consolidated tradition the anthology is a ‘garland’ (*mālā*) of single, independent stanzas (*muktaka*) identified as the origin and actual ‘soul’ of ornate poetry, whose quintessence is defined from its inception as the conjunction i.e. coherence of meaning and sound (*śabdārthau sahītau kāvyam*), of “ornaments/figures of sound” (*śabda-alaṅkāra*) and “ornaments/figures of meaning” (*artha-alaṅkāra*). To be sure, in India the favourite form of poetry has always been the anthology or *kośa* (lit. “treasure”) of single stanzas. In chronological order, the book sets off by offering a few *R̥g Veda* and *Atharva Veda* hymns and the first ‘experiments’ of classical poetry as mirrored in the *Theragāthā* and *Therīgāthā* stanzas of the Buddhist Pāli canon (circa 4th century BCE), and ends up with a selection of poems developed at the Mughal court by authors such as Malik Muhammad Jayasi and Bihārī Lāl in the 16th and 17th centuries. The anthology thus spans over a period of more than two millennia of multiform poetical genius (pp. 63-132), presenting selected ‘gems’ by master *kavis* such as Aśvaghōṣa (1st century), Hāla (1st-2nd century), Kālidāsa (4th-5th century), Bhārthari (5th century), Bhāravi (6th century), Amaruka (7th century), Māgha (*ante* 9th century), Bilha‘a (11th-12th century), Jayadeva (12th century) and others.

In the introduction Boccali observes how the literary conventions which structure Indian poetry at all levels – thematically, rhetorically, metrically, stylistically, in its reneled vocabulary etc. – are in fact almost completely constituted from the very beginning (pp. 14, 28) as testified by the *Theragāthā* and *Therīgāthā* ‘precursory’ poems. This technical repertory remains substantially fixed over the centuries. A non secondary merit of the book is that it covers all major, traditional motifs and *rasas* (lit. “sap”, “taste”), “ltering individual experience through the impersonality of the human condition and human feelings” (p. 20) i.e. always giving prominence to the objective and universal rather than to the subjective and particular: the reader is thus invited to relish *muktakas* which offer the subtle description and contemplation of nature (oceans, rivers, mountains, clouds, birds, animals, the four seasons, etc.), the appreciation for the various dimensions of passionate love, the depiction of daily

life activities as well as of ascetic practice, the representation of the main myths of Hinduism and its principal deities. The translations into Italian, all but a few done by Boccali, are superb, literally accurate and at the same time 'empathic.' Though it is impossible to recreate the density and plural meaning of the intricate compounds or the authors' subtle use of alliteration and phonic artifices, Boccali's sensitive rendering captures the gist and underlying inspiration (*pratibhā*) of the original, elevating the reader to an actual 'tasting' of the peculiar *rasa* or aesthetic experience which the poet wished to convey. The power of *kāvya* lies precisely in its capacity of manifesting supplemental meanings which are thought to be hidden in the text, expanding and even transcending its literal expression. Indeed, "poetry is essentially *dhvani*, "resonance", "suggestion," "manifestation" of unexpressed and implicit meanings which would not be otherwise communicable" (p. 46).

Antonio Rigopoulos

G. BÜHNEMANN, *Forms of Gaṇeśa*, Institut für Indologie, Wichtrach, 1989.

This small volume written by Gudrun Bühnemann contains a detailed study of the main forms of God Gaṇeśa/Gaṇapati occurring in the Vidyāṇavantara (VT), a large compilation on *mantraśāstra* attributed to Vidyāraṇya Yati. Starting from this text, the author provides the reader with *mantras*, *yantras* of the special forms of Gaṇeśa, iconographic peculiarities and instructions for the correct application of the *mantras* devoted to the God. As Bühnemann declares in her work, all the information collected in the Vidyāṇavantara has been deeply compared with other Gaṇeśa's presentation in Tantras and in iconography, trying to create a link between the textual proves and the sculptural as well as photographic representation kept in the archives of the Institut français de Indologie in Pondicherry.

In order to deepen the visual aspect of Gaṇeśa's forms as described