

previously applied patterns (the metaphor of a mirror, doubling of the protagonists), and the reenactment of the protagonist's quest within a new context. The discussion culminates in a study of self-reflexivity on different planes, of the metaphysical dimension of the novel and of the manipulation of various discourses as a logical outcome of their engagement with Buddhism.

In the Epilogue, the author briefly discusses other longer fictional works of the Ming-Qing period in order to validate his perspective. The result is that there is very little beyond the three novels mentioned above to be subsumed into the newly defined subgenre. This fact, however, does not diminish the value of Li's argument. The interpretive framework of the enlightenment quest he offers to bridge the two masterpieces of the classical Chinese novel is very inspiring and one can only hope to see this approach developed by further research in the field.

Another important section of every book, the index, characterizes the nature of the whole of this monograph – it is, seemingly, rather concise, yet a closer look reveals its being closely knit, well-wrought and very informative.

In his book Li takes another step forward on the formal side when adapting the pinyin system thoroughly to the extent of transforming into it even the older romanization forms in quotations. He is also very consistent in supplying the Chinese titles of Buddhist scriptures in the text with English and Sanskrit equivalents.

The monograph is richly researched and documented with annotations and bibliography reaching one-fourth of the length of the text itself. The author's style is vivid and fluent which makes this theoretical literary treatise enjoyable reading. His command of both the Chinese and Western scholarly tradition is remarkable, however, one cannot but regret that he did not incorporate in his study the fruits of the sinological research in Japan from the recent decades, as well.

As Li Qiancheng concludes, the novels under discussion, especially *Xiyou ji* and *Honglou meng*, comprehensive and all-inclusive as they are, cannot yield to a single interpretation, no matter how sophisticated. There are – and there should be – a number of equally valid, plausible readings. However, using the author's simile, it is obvious that he untied a significant part of the knot and he did it in an elegant, persuasive way.

*Radovan Škultéty*

MUSASHI TACHIKAWA, SHOUN HINO, LALITA DEODHAR: *Pūjā and Saṃskāra*. Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited 2001. 177 pp.

The aim of the book under review is to describe and analyse two Hindu rituals, *pūjā* (offering service) and *saṃskāra* (initiation rituals at important occasions of life) and also “to indicate the place of the ritual in the total structure of religion” (p. IX).

In a short Preface, the author gives his definition of religion as “a form of purposive action performed with consciousness of the distinction between the sacred and the profane” (p. V), and divides religious activities into group activities (where *saṃskāra* belongs) and individual activities (where *pūjā* belongs). He shows how the category of religious activity determines the meaning of the sacred and the profane. Notes on the distinction and dynamic relationship between sacred and profane are further developed in the Introduction to Part I of the book. This part is a revised version of Tachikawa's paper “A Hindu Worship Service in Sixteen Steps, *Shoḍaśa-upacāra-pūjā*, originally pub-

lished in the Bulletin of the National Museum of Ethnology, Vol. 8, No. 1, March 1983, pp. 104 – 186. In the present book it is suitably completed by Part II entitled Sixteen Saṃskāras Handed Down by the Hiraṇyakeśins (pp. 89 – 171).

Thus the book treats two characteristic kinds of Hindu rituals. Besides a common methodology, there is another unifying feature of the two parts – “sixteen steps”, in spite of the fact, that in Part I, the sixteen steps are really individual steps while performing the pūjā and in Part II they are sixteen different saṃskāras. Nevertheless, these can be (and evidently are) comprehended as individual steps in the life of a Hindu.

Perhaps the most characteristic feature of the work is a detailed description of the individual “steps” and also a large number of photographs that should enable those living outside India to understand how these rituals are performed and what the place of the rituals, their participants, utensils and materials used for worshipping and so on look like.

The pūjā ritual described in Part I was performed in the temple of goddess Catuḥśṛṅgī in Poona, India. The book includes a drawing of Catuḥśṛṅgī Temple and then photographs recording every part of it with a short description. The following text describes the worship in two parts, (A) preliminaries performed by the priest (9 steps) and (B) main worship (16 steps). The author quotes important mantras and Vedic texts recited by the priest during the service. The Sanskrit formulas are translated into English, Vedic texts occur only in the English form. The text includes many notes which explain further circumstances of the worship.

Part I is concluded by three appendices. Appendix I treats Śoḍaśa-upacāra-pūjā at Nāgeśvar Temple, Poona, Appendix II illustrates the general procedure of the Śoḍaśa-upacāra-pūjā performed at Pārvatī Nandana Temple, Poona. The author points to differences in the manner of worship in relevant temples. Appendix III presents a map of Poona city.

The next kind of described rituals, saṃskāras, are performed at various stages of the life of Hindus from conception to cremation and can vary in particular regions, families and castes. The author has chosen the procedure followed by the Hiraṇyakeśins treated in the *Hiraṇyakeśibrahmakarmasamuccaya* (HBKSam). This regards also the number and order of saṃskāras. They are Garbhādhāna, Puṃsavana, Sīmantonayana, Jātakarman, Nāmakaraṇa, Annaprāśana, Caula, Upanayana, Vedavratatatuṣṭaya (Prājāpatya), Vedavratatatuṣṭaya (Saumya), Vedavratatatuṣṭaya (Āgneya), Vedavratatatuṣṭaya (Vaiśvadeva), Godāna, Samāvartana, Vivāha, and Antyeṣṭi.

The four preliminary rites of Gaṇapatipūjana, Puṇyāhavācana, Mātrkāpūjana, and Nāndīśrāddha, common to all saṃskāras (with the exception of Antyeṣṭi), are dealt with in the Introduction.

The author divides saṃskāras into three groups on the basis of their importance and occurrence: (1) those which are performed only rarely (Jātakarman and Vedavratatatuṣṭaya), (2) those which are performed briefly (Garbhādhāna, Puṃsavana, Sīmantonayana, Nāmakaraṇa, Annaprāśana, Caula, Godāna, Samāvartana) and (3) those which are important and always performed (Upanayana, Vivāha and Antyeṣṭi).

M. Tachikawa describes all these saṃskāras, but in accordance with his division, the main attention is paid to the rites in the group (3). The author also points to differences in performing particular rites in modern days. The text is completed with Sanskrit mantras (and their English translation) the recitation of which accompanies the rites. Each step of Upanayana and Vivāha is illustrated by a photograph.

This book can be recommended to all students of Hinduism in particular and of the role of ritual in religion in general. Moreover, the description of the meaning of saṃskāras can be useful not only for religionists, but also for ethnologists and for all interested in the life of Hindu society in the past and in modern India.

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