

role of the editors has clearly been as important in the careful production of this welcome and significant contribution to *Mahābhārata* studies as it was earlier in the assembling of such a notable group of contributors to the conference.

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K. R. NORMAN:

Elders' Verses II: Therīgāthā. (Second Edition.)

(Pali Text Society Translation Series No. 40.) xci, 242 pp. Lancaster: The Pali Text Society, 2007. £22.50. ISBN 978 086013 436 7.

This revised edition of K. R. Norman's translation and study of *Elders' Verses II: Therīgāthā* (first edition 1971) embodies a reconsideration of the textual problems in the light of fresh evidence, as well as a measure of revision and correction. The introductory study of the text's structure and prosody is reprinted, together with the revised translation and notes, and the indexes.

The anthology of over 500 verses begins with separate stanzas addressed to, or spoken by, individual nuns, and works up to a 75-verse narrative of the conversion, preaching, temptation, enlightenment, and nirvana of a princess, a piquant adaptation of the male equivalent. The stanzas and poems are ostensibly attributed to the hundred or so Buddhist nuns involved: several are said to "give an unmistakable reference to their author, either by naming her or by making a pun upon her name" (p. xxi). It is, however, obvious, and rather more obvious than Norman is willing to concede, that the verses, whether spoken by or addressed to individual nuns, named or unnamed, reveal nothing of their authorship or their transmission. He notes that the text itself discounts any such notion, in appended rubrics that ascribe the second verse "Get free, Muttā" to the Buddha, and the first "Sleep, little Therikā" inevitably to an unidentifiable older woman, a Therī. Clearly these are inferences from the context, rather than historical data. These rubrics, cited but not translated in the notes, are misrepresented in the translation by being reduced to "Muttā" and "A certain unknown bhikkhunī". The initial rubrics, introducing the sets of single verses and distichs, were presumably intended to concede that, while v. 3 *Puñṇe pūrassu*, etc., can be ascribed to the Buddha, v. 1 *supāhi therike*, v. 11 *Sumuttā sādhumuttamhi*, and the like cannot.

Asian editions have further traduced the evidence by prefixing *iti* to the already spurious rubrics *Puñṇā*, *Tissā*, etc., although Pischel's edition makes it clear that the occurrence of *iti* is sporadic. Norman still (p. 60) sees no reason for its distribution, but it is plain that *iti* marks the end of sections, and so has nothing to do with the rubrics. Eight sections were identified thereby, corresponding to the eventual Nipātas 1–2, 3–4, 5–11, 12, 16–20, 30, 40, and Mahā (the five hemistichs of v. 37 f. being apparently treated as the first triad rather than as the last distich). The eventual untidy sixteenfold segmentation is no more rational than this presumably more authentic arrangement.

Of more significance than the rubrics are the stray indications of Prakrit literary antecedents, notably in the collocation of verses concerning Nandā, Aḍḍhakāsī, and Abhayamātā in the Dukaniṣṭhā, reminiscent of the "Śreṇikapurāṇa" cycle in Jain Maharashtra. In *Maṇipaticarita* (ed. R. Williams, RAS, 1959), the tale of King Śreṇika's protégée, the rich courtesan Magadhasenā, is encapsulated within one that involves his Queen Nandā and

her son Prince Abhaya; and this Magadhasenā of Rajgir can be linked, via Jain Sanskrit Māgadhikā and the *Kāśīdesīyaveśyā* Māgadhikā of *Buddhacarita*, with the expensive courtesans Kāsī and Aḍḍhakāsī of Thī-a. (Material relating to this “Miss Benares” is surveyed by Norman, pp. 74 f., and by W. B. Bollée in *Kuṇālaajātakā*, 1970, 110 f.). The Aḍḍhakāsī/Aḍḍhakāsikā of Vinaya and Therīgāthā is explained in Thī-a as a half-price version of a courtesan Kāsī. She might rather be seen as basically the corollary of an “Aḍḍhamāgadhī” based on the geographical term *ardhamāgadhaka*. Her exaggerated earnings in Therīgāthā suggest re-interpretation as “Rḍḍhamāgadhī”, despite the commentator’s hardly relevant recourse to *ardha*. This aspect of the “Śreṇikapurāṇa” may be ancient, since the hugely rich *Aḍḍhakāsī* provides confirmation of a Prakrit etymology for Sanskritized *āḍhyā* “rich” (in *ŚBr.* 9): *āḍhyā* is no doubt rightly identified with *aḍḍha* “rich” in *Pāiasaddamaḥṇavo*. Upārdhakāsīkā in *Mahāvastu* appears to combine the text’s rich Aḍḍhakāsī with the commentators’ half-price Aḍḍhakāsī.

The commentator and translators do not do justice to the verses’ purely literary intent. The verse with *Mutte mucassu* would surely imply “Get free, Miss Pearl”, and this in turn indicates a Prakrit pun in the adjacent verse *Puṇṇe pūrassu* “Be filled, Miss Puṇyā”. If they had already earned the improbable epithets “Miss Freed” and “Miss Filled”, then the exhortations are pointless. This is hardly belied by the fact that *Sumuttā sādhumuttamhi* “I, Sumuktā, am well-free” develops the notion only as an extended alliteration in combination with fresh punning (in *tīhi khujjehi muttiyā*: see my note on the subject in *BSOAS*, 62/3, 1999, 525). In general, the text has more to offer than has as yet been realized. The eighth verse *Mitte mittaratā bhava* is more likely to be recommending *mitraṃ* “compassion” than remotely wishing to suggest that “delight in friends” is the aim of renunciation: this further attestation of neuter abstract *mitraṃ* in Pali is of interest.

Alterations to the translations in the new edition are not always clearly for the better. Former unduly literal renderings of ergatives and gerunds have been excised in favour of normal English idiom; but a questionably literal “awakening” has replaced “enlightenment” for *bodhi*. The rendering “(that same) I” for *sā ahaṃ* has simply been dropped, although the idiom is better retained as “and then I”, “and so I”. Brackets have largely been dropped from essential suppletions: but as a result the rendering “the (evil) notions” for *saññā* (v. 6), has become simply “evil notions”, although no other application of *saññā* in Pali seems to require such qualification. For *dhamme*, the original rendering “things sublime” has given way to “(good) mental states”, although “sound principles” seems more to the point (*PED*: “tenets, practice, observances”). For *Rāhuggah[ā]* (v. 2), the plausible rendering “from the grasp of Rāhu” has been replaced with “from the demon (‘seizer’) Rāhu” (in deference to Monier-Williams?).

The role of the Pali Text Society in updating vital older publications, as well as in keeping others in print and commissioning new research materials, is of inestimable importance. This revised edition of Norman’s *Elders’ Verses II: Therīgāthā*, arriving hot on the heels of that of his companion volume *The Elders’ Verses I: Theragāthā* (first published in 1969), keeps under review a significant and fascinating segment of the ancient literature.

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