

advocacy of widow marriage. The nature and circumstances of his supposed opposition to reform remain unanalysed, as do his pioneering efforts for female education. Similarly, the opposition to widow marriage of some prominent Hindus who had earlier supported the cause is ascribed to bad faith.

This is more by way of confession and collective criticism.

**Sudhir Chandra**

ANDREA ACRI, HELEN CREESE and ARLO GRIFFITHS (eds):

*From Lan̄ka Eastwards: The Ramayana in the Literature and Visual Arts of Indonesia.* xvi, 259 pp. Leiden: KITLV Press, 2011. €29.90. ISBN 978 90 6718 384 0.

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The book under review results from the shared aim of a number of scholars to revitalize the field of Old Javanese studies, which for some time now has been languishing, to the point of almost disappearing, in academic institutions worldwide. It was agreed to convene an academic workshop on a collaborative basis to seek out ways of promoting the study and continued research into Old Javanese and related fields. The *Rāmāyana* – given its huge importance in the literary heritage of the archipelago and its position as the earliest and most revered of the Old Javanese poetic genre known as *kakawin*, particularly in Bali – was perhaps the obvious choice as central theme. The workshop was held in Jakarta in May 2009 under the auspices of the Australia–Netherlands Research Collaboration and the current volume is a compilation of a number of papers presented.

With their goal firmly set, the editors have certainly made every effort to bring together a selection of essays reflecting the diversity in those papers. The resulting publication displays a range of interesting and important topics, sensibly arranged into two parts: (I) literature; (II) visual arts.

Leading the array in part I is an essay by Stuart Robson examining the inclusion and purpose of “hymns of praise” (*stuti/stotra/stawa*) found within certain of the more notable *kakawin* epics, including the *Rāmāyana*. Given my own interest in the *Sutasoma kakawin*, this paper caught my eye immediately although I was somewhat surprised to read Robson’s assertion (p. 7) that such a hymn does not exist in the *Sutasoma*, when Cantos 53 and 54 (O’Brien, *Sutasoma – The Ancient Tale of a Buddha-Prince*, Bangkok, 2008, 65) clearly contain such a passage bearing precisely the form, content and purpose he describes.

In Wesley Michel’s discussion of poetic conventions found in (Skt.) *kāvya* and OJ *kakawin* literature he well argues the need for comparative studies not only of those conventions that are familiar to both genres, but also those that are different yet clearly raising the same emotions or aesthetic appreciation. While such a task would be an enormous undertaking, current results suggest the potential future outcome of such a formalized, systematic study exciting indeed.

Hunter’s contribution concerns the use of *yamaka* or “figures of repetition” – poetic devices having their origins in Sanskrit *kavya* literature – but whose earliest use in Old Javanese *kakawin* occurs in the *Rāmāyana* and also in the ninth-century *Śiwagr̄ha* inscription. Within the constraints of his brief essay he deftly provides an intriguing overview of *yamaka*, their variety, intricacies and motives for inclusion, often implying the presence of both overt and covert meanings. While Hunter comments (p. 27) that “*yamakas* are rarely found in works later than the KR”, there are

several examples to be found in the *Sutasoma*, and indeed as he notes, some are also present in the *Deśawarnana*. Since both of these works are products of the fourteenth century I would certainly be keen to see this phenomenon explored further. Continuing with the more covert aspects of the *Rāmāyana kakawin*, Andrea Acri explores its use of allegory, particularly in the case of birds whose imagined conversations provide satirical comment on their real-life human alter-egos. Identification of the various species of these avian characters will do much to increase our knowledge of the social and religious milieu at the time of composition of this *kakawin*.

Both Helen Creese and Adrian Vickers take up more modern aspects of the *Rāmāyana* tale as it has developed in all its diversity in Bali, where even today it continues to inspire popular interest and creativity in the fields of literature, art and performance. Creese provides a detailed discussion of the *Rāmāyana* corpus in Bali, throwing valuable light on the many local adaptations, stemming from themes and episodes carried in their prime model, the *Uttarakāṇḍa*. Vickers directs our attention to a twentieth-century painting, which he identifies as having its inspiration in the *Kapiparwa* tale, itself a corpus of works of Balinese origin amplifying the popular character of Hanuman, the monkey hero of the *Rāmāyana*.

Part II deals with the *Rāmāyana* tale as portrayed in the visual arts of Caṅḍi Prambanan and Caṅḍi Panataran and is headed by Arlo Griffiths' reinterpretation of ninth-century inscriptional evidence thereby providing support for his intriguing hypothesis that "Prambanan" is a more recent invention for its original name of "Laṅkapura" and that the latter name as it occurs in the *kakawin* is a direct reference to the temple complex itself.

The *Rāmāyana* bas-reliefs of Prambanan have always been an enigma in as much as sections of the depicted story diverge widely from the *kakawin* where its total inspiration might well be expected to lie. Indeed a number of scenes could only be explained rationally by referral to several texts, themselves with highly diverse origins. To this end, Cecilia Levin focuses on the *Uttarakāṇḍa* to explain more positively a series of reliefs at the finale of the sculptural tale.

Similarly, Roy Jordaan proposes that the *Hikayat Sēri Rama* provides a new and plausible identification for an enigmatic female figure arising from the sea. Her depiction is to be found among the initial reliefs of the Brahmā temple where the narrative flow is resumed after a metaphoric "crossing" of the causeway from the Śiva temple.

Finally, Lydia Kievan takes us to Caṅḍi Panataran where the *Rāmāyana* reliefs can be more easily assigned to the *kakawin* version. Here, she focuses on the selection and placement of its scenes as well as the significance of Hanuman who seems to have been given more prominence in the reliefs than the princely hero, Rama.

All in all, this volume displays great depth of enquiry and research along with the development of new and exciting pathways of investigation. Having personally learned much from it, I am of the opinion that this publication will make a valuable addition to the library of student and scholar alike – indeed for anyone with reasonable knowledge and interest in the *Rāmāyana*.

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