

Sunil Sharma is the only author to consider the gardens of Ahmadnagar in Maharashtra. To this end he concentrates on the *Sāqīnāma* by Zuhūrī, a poet at the Nizām Shāhi court towards the end of the sixteenth century. This work includes a detailed account of urban life in Ahmadabad and the special role of gardens in and around the city, which are described in some detail. However, Sharma is not concerned to correlate Zuhūrī's descriptions with actual garden remains, a task that awaits further exploration. However, he does reproduce a garden with fruit-bearing trees arranged in symmetrical plots either side of a water channel emerging from an axial pleasure pavilion. This unique illustration forms part of the British Library manuscript of the *Sāqīnāma* (Plate 8.1), but does not appear to be a "portrait" of an actual garden.

The editors must be congratulated for assembling such a wide range of scholars who successfully communicate their fascination for the subject, while at the same time suggesting directions for future research. The editors include a useful glossary of Indian terms at the beginning, as well as an index at the end; the authors have provided their own bibliographies.

George Michell

ISHVARCHANDRA VIDYASAGAR:

Hindu Widow Marriage. A Complete Translation, with an Introduction and Critical Notes by Brian A. Hatcher.

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The appearance in 1855 of Ishvarchandra Vidyasagar's two tracts advocating the marriage of Hindu widows, we know, was a historic event. Heightening public passions and forcing rival social forces into uncompromising positions, it led within less than a year to the legalization of widow marriage. Those epochal tracts, astonishingly, had not in the intervening hundred and fifty years been available in a complete English translation. Vidyasagar, seeking legislation and realizing the strategic urgency of making his argument available in the rulers' language, had himself promptly translated the tracts under one cover as *Marriage of Hindu Widows*. But his translation, as he explained, was "neither entire nor literal". Believing that the "understanding" of the English readers was different from that "of the native population", he had virtually rewritten and heavily abridged the tracts in the course of "translating" them. (See Ishvarchandra Vidyasagar, *Marriage of Hindu Widows*, with an introduction by Dr. Arabinda Podder, Calcutta: K.P. Bagchi & Company, 1976, p. ii.)

A great deal has since been written and discussed on the subject, for it concerns a vital issue that remains unresolved. A large proportion of that writing, and an even larger proportion of that talk, has not had access to those catalytic texts in their entirety. The appearance of Hatcher's authoritative, unabridged and eruditely annotated translation is, thus, a historiographic event. It is also a literary *tour de force*. Indeed, the translation could not have been a historiographic event without its literary merit.

Hatcher has shown that what some theorists believe to be translation's inherent cannibalism can be overcome. Ironically, it was Vidyasagar who, in his anxiety to make sense to the rulers, had cannibalized his own twin-texts. He succeeded in his aim, and successive generations relied on his abridged English version. Hatcher

saw what they had been losing, and resolved to repair the profound loss. He realized that, apart from their content, the tracts were significant also for mirroring a traditional discursive universe and its deeper cognitive–rhetorical structure. “It is”, Hatcher argues picturesquely, “as if Vidyasagar takes the readers on a guided tour of the classical Hindu tradition, with widow marriage as his organizing theme” (p. xvii).

Following an impulse different from that of Vidyasagar, Hatcher built back in fine detail the body of the twin-tracts, and imbued it with the spirit, breath, tonality, indeed the very being of the original. He revived the discursive universe that had occasioned, and pulsed within, the Bangla tracts.

That is what makes Hatcher’s translation a historiographic event. Scholars seeking to understand the making of modern India will long remember and envy him.

This admirable translation also evokes some unease. Vidyasagar’s purpose was to establish that Hindu widow marriage was in conformity with, not opposition to, the *dharmashastras*. His English translation, accordingly, says that widow marriage is “sanctioned by” or “consonant to the Sastras”. (Cf. Vidyasagar, *Marriage of Hindu Widows*, pp. 1, 8, 10, 16.) Hatcher’s translation, instead, makes Vidyasagar say that widow marriage is a “required sacred performance” (cf. 61, 64, 67). No power, sacred or otherwise, can propose widow marriage as a “required” performance. The practice can only be sanctioned, permitted, at best encouraged.

Common sense, Vidyasagar’s entire argument and his presentation of it in English apart, the Bangla original does not warrant translation as “required sacred performance”. The term Vidyasagar carefully chose was *kartavya karma*. His question was: Is widow marriage a *kartavya karma* according to the *dharmashastras*? *Kartavya*, as an adjective, plainly means “proper” or “desirable”. It is a synonym of *uchita*, the word Vidyasagar had used in the title of his tract, *Vidhavavivah prachalita haoya uchit ki na etadvishayak prastava*. *Kartavya karma* is a proper, not a required, act. A note explaining this crucial – and misleading – departure from Vidyasagar’s translation might have been added.

Also, this translation, one feels, would have resonated more deeply had it retained two key terms – dharma and shastra – repeatedly used in the Bangla original. Words connote more than what they denote. They even become, once in a fascinating while, their own antonyms. But for this semantic profusion and ambiguity, language would be so impoverished. The notorious indeterminacy of dharma and shastra – both comfortably ensconced in the English lexicon – may have induced Hatcher to hunt for English substitutes, and finally settle for “duty” and “authoritative treatise”. Suggesting little of the deeper semantic and cultural profusion of dharma and shastra, the English substitutes barely cover even the superficial meaning of the former.

Finally, a remark regarding the larger meaning of Hatcher’s translation. It reveals the dynamics of change that pervaded the pre-colonial Indian world. Hatcher highlights this in his introduction, and in annotations like the one relating Vidyasagar’s reformist exegesis to the tradition of *mimamsa*. However, the final framework for understanding, explanation and validation comes from the dominant Western discourse of modernity. Vidyasagar, in the end, is analysed with respect to where he is modern – i.e. for reform – and where not. That this happens in spite of Hatcher’s own warning against the dominance of the modernist discourse is a measure of the epistemological difficulty – or impossibility a la *Provincializing Europe* – of being freed from that discourse. We cannot, simply and naturally, see in tradition the sole impulse for reform. (When we do, we present tradition, unmindful of the irony, as “alternative modernity”.)

There is, in the introduction, no getting away from the familiar binary categories and oppositional paradigmatic figures. Predictably, Radhakant Deb is pitted against Rammohan Roy. It is forgotten that Radhakant had honoured Vidyasagar for his

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