

Gloria Goodwin Raheja (“‘Crying When She Was Born and Crying When She Goes Away’: Marriage and the Idiom of the Gift in Pahansu Song Performance”) focuses on women’s songs and patterns of gift-giving to understand the severe strains marriage places upon women in much of the subcontinent. On the one hand, they are pressured by husbands’ kin to minimize relationships and interactions with natal families, particularly with brothers. On the other, they are cautioned not to pull their new husbands away from the husbands’ families: they must not cultivate an exclusive, intense marital intimacy. These patriarchal norms are clearly designed to isolate and control a new bride, and the songs women sing about these dynamics—and the gift-giving relationships the songs reflect—provide a countervailing ethos in which love for brothers and relationships with husbands are encouraged, through not without ambiguity.

This splitting of the woman, in this case by structures imposed by in-laws, appears in a different guise in Ann Gold’s suggestive work, “The ‘Jungli Rani’ and Other Troubled Wives in Rajasthani Oral Traditions.” Women’s narratives, says Gold, demonstrate how women are misperceived as radically bifurcated beings. Either they are kind, gentle, nurturing, motherly, and attractive or they are evil, vicious, of questionable repute; if they are not married, the latter set of attributes is most likely to be attached to them. “What’s a single girl to do?” since even her most religious acts are interpreted as witchcraft. No protecting male in her life means no legitimacy. Stories that Rajasthani women tell serve to expose the injustice of these misperceptions and to reclaim integrity for women fractured by misogynist perspectives.

If there are problems for unattached women, so also are there problems for married women seeking some autonomy and power in the context of a marriage. Mary Hancock (“The Dilemmas of Domesticity: Possession and Devotional Experience Among Urban Smārta Women”) addresses how certain high caste women in Madras become mediators and priestesses for the goddess Māriyamman, claiming special privileges, creating sources of independent income, and laying claim to community prestige.

This is a rich volume, filled with suggestions and insights that show how patriarchal marital strictures can be subverted by claims of religious inspiration and empowerment, by gift-giving customs, by performances of traditional folktales and songs, by *ex post facto* interpretations of ritual events, and by women’s emotional attachments to their brothers and sons. Each essay is solid and very readable. More editors should seize this kind of control.

WILLIAM HARMAN
DePauw University

Devī: Goddesses of India. Edited by JOHN STRATTON HAWLEY and DONNA MARIE WULFF. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996. xiv, 352 pp. \$48.00 (cloth); \$17.95 (paper).

The immediate and widespread popularity of Santoṣī Mā after she “debuted” in a move in 1975 attests to the surge in goddess worship in India today. *Devī: Goddesses of India* participates in the popularity of the goddess and recent surge in scholarship about her by exploring twelve different goddesses. John Stratton Hawley and Donna Marie Wulff edited *The Divine Consort* (Berkeley: Berkeley Religious Studies Series, 1981), the forerunner to this book, more than a decade ago. (Five of the essays in the previous volume have been reprinted here, three of them in altered form.) As the title

suggests, this new book embraces the insights of recent feminist and cross-cultural scholarship in its shift from male-centered consort goddesses to independent and dominant ones, and in its emphasis on the female divine in India as not only Devī, the Great Goddess, but innumerable other incarnations. Through careful but vibrant scholarship, some of which is based on extensive fieldwork, all the writers in this volume present the goddess in particular forms and contexts that resist attempts to essentialize the female divine and the focus on Hinduism as it is lived in India.

In part 1, “Goddess as Supreme and Goddess as Consort,” Thomas Coburn sets the stage with the stories and theology in the *Devī Māhātmya*, the first known Hindu text about the goddess. In the following chapter, Cynthia Ann Humes takes us on a vivid pilgrimage to the temple of Vindhyaśinī, and shows how the *Devī Māhātmya* is being used to emphasize the transcendent qualities of this goddess and to deemphasize her local characteristics in order to appeal to a broader range of pilgrims. The goddess as a unifying force is a central theme in several chapters of the book. David Kinsley’s rich portrait of Kālī in important Sanskrit texts, including the *Devī Māhātmya*, is a solid foundation for her many appearances in this volume. In the last two chapters of this section, Vasudha Narayanan and Donna Wulff foreground notions of gender hierarchy, love, and the accessibility of the divine in the worship of Śrī and Rādhā.

In the first two chapters of part 2, “Goddesses Who Mother and Possess,” Diana Eck and Wendy Doniger explore two nurturing “mothers” of humankind, the Goddess Gaṅgā and the ancient Saraṅyū. The next three chapters focus on modes of possession by the goddess. Kathleen Erndl describes two human “mothers” who are possessed by Śērānālī, the Lion Rider, and raises an issue that reverberates throughout the book: “Is it the Mother who possesses, or is it the Mother who is possessed? To answer exclusively one way or another would presuppose a dualistic mind-set that is foreign to Hindu ways of thinking about the Goddess and *śakti*” (p. 192). In a vivid description of the dramatic public rite of *mudiyettu* in which Bhagavati, a form of Kālī, possesses men dressed as women, Sarah Caldwell draws social and psychological factors into her analysis of religious performance in Kerala to show that *mudiyettu* seems to benefit men more than women. Lindsey Harlan tells the story of Śatī Godāvarī, a “good woman” possessed of enough *sat* (virtue) to be faithful to her husband even in death; she shows that in this story a woman’s voice subverts some fundamental Rajasthani notions of gender and caste while affirming others. In the last chapter of this section, Lise McKean provides a detailed description of Bhārat Mātā, Mother India, and her recently completed temple in Hardwar. McKean analyzes the motives of this new goddess’s main patrons, members of the Vishva Hindu Parishad and the Bharatiya Janata Party, to show that she has been constructed as a unifying force in the cause of religious nationalism, her benign expression belying a potentially terrible power.

Many feminists have posited that the worship of goddesses empowers women, but as the contributors to this volume prove, the Hindu picture is far too complicated to make such facile assumptions. In the epilogue of the book, Rachel Fell McDermott provides an excellent introduction (including a terrific bibliography) to Kālī as a goddess of transformation in the contemporary American and European women’s spirituality movement. In her analysis of these Western perceptions of Kālī, McDermott is firm in her conviction that they lack historical foundation, yet supportive of the transcultural reconstruction of the goddess. As this entire volume attests, creative transformation is integral to the goddess. By investigating the ways

in which the goddess transforms herself and her human worshipers, this book makes a profound contribution to the study of the feminine dimension of the divine in India.

ELAINE CRADDOCK
Southwestern University

Gifts of Earth: Terracottas and Clay Sculptures of India. By STEPHEN P. HUYLER. Middletown, N.J.: Grantha, 1996. 232 pp. 203 illustrations. \$75.00 (cloth).

Lavishly illustrated, Stephen Huyler's *Gifts of Earth: Terracottas and Clay Sculptures of India* is a feast for the eyes. India is home to 350,000 potters, the largest number in the world, and this book is a celebratory ode to them. We see sinewy hands and concentrated faces shape the milky, spinning chocolate mud. Squatting legs straddle the potter's wheel, encircling the spinning center. The body, bent at the waist, is stretched to its utmost. Pots are stacked against mud houses. Especially designed with the student of Indian crafts in mind, this book takes its place in the lineage of such books as Stella Kramrisch's *Unknown India: Ritual Art in Tribe and Village* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1968), Pupul Jayakar's *The Earthen Drum: An Introduction to the Ritual Arts of Rural India* (New Delhi: National Museum, 1981), and Haku Shah's *Forms and Many Forms of Mother Clay* (New Delhi: National Crafts Museum, 1985).

Huyler reminds us through an effective combination of photographs and text: "Clay vessels, made of sacred and purified earth, serve as mediums in the rituals that are so basic to every facet of life in traditional India" (p. 27). In her foreword to the book, the doyen Kapila Vatsyayan states, "The life-cycle of the Indian, particularly the Hindu, is punctuated from birth to death, with the ritual and symbolic use of the empty, full and broken pot" (p. 10). Vatsyayan's evocation of the potter's craft defines it not by clay alone, but as "the symbiotic relationship of function and ritual use" and the "complementary categories of the mundane and the 'consecrated'" (p. 10). For more than twenty years Huyler has traveled each year to India to document both potters and the rituals in which pots appear.

The first four chapters, "Kumbhara: Makers of Pots," "Prajapati: Potters Descended from a God," "Puja: Terracottas Used in Worship," and "Mitti Ke Dan: Gifts of Earth," present various rituals, myths, prayers, and festivals to illustrate the contextual diversity of where, why, and how pottery is made. References to types of clay pots abound: *ghata*, *kumbha*, *kalasha*, and *cauri* among others. The shapes of potter's wheels are distinguished regionally: the *sancha* in Madhya Pradesh, spoked wheels with attached pivots in Tamil Nadu, kick wheels in the northwest, among others. Sources of firing materials and origin of colors of the clay are also described. Although Huyler occasionally mentions the effects of contemporary international and national cultural festivals on formal styles and designs, he emphasizes the continuity of traditional pottery techniques and contexts. The ephemeral life cycle of pots and the constant cultural need for new unpolluted pots ensure the survival of the pottery profession. Huyler points out women's direct participation in the making of finished pots, especially their decoration of the pots, once the clay slip is formed and fired. One of the highlights of the book is chapter 4 where Huyler finely articulates the cultural context of giving pots as gifts. Unfortunately, in the first four chapters, many of the most interesting direct quotations are relegated to footnotes. Moreover, there