

does one overcome the obstacles to liberation? . . . How are processes of purification and Yogic enstasis . . . related to liberation? If one can be liberated while living, how does such a person act in the world?" (pp. 3–4). Eight essays then appear in three Parts. Part 1, "Living Liberation in Vedānta Traditions," contains Lance Nelson's "Living Liberation in Śaṅkara and Classical Advaita: Sharing the Holy Waiting of God," Kim Skoog's "Is the Jīvanmukti State Possible? Rāmānuja's Perspective," and Daniel Sheridan's "Direct Knowledge of God and Living Liberation in the Religious Thought of Madhva." Part 2, "Yoga and Renunciation in Living Liberation," has Christopher Chapple's "Living Liberation in Sāṃkhya and Yoga," Andrew Fort's "Liberation While Living in the *Jīvanmuktiviveka*: Vidyāraṇya's 'Yogic Advaita,'" and Mackenzie Brown's "Modes of Perfected Living in the *Mahābhārata* and the Purāṇas: The Different Faces of Śuka the Renouncer." Part 3, "Living Liberation in Śaiva Traditions," contains Paul Muller-Ortega's "Aspects of Jīvanmukti in the Tantric Śaivism of Kashmir" and Chacko Valiaveetil's "Living Liberation in Śaiva Siddhānta." Patricia Mumme's conclusion offers a brief historical summary of *jīvanmukti* as concept and term, a provocative typology of the different views discussed in the essays, and further explores theistic understandings of liberation.

All essays are technically competent, often dazzlingly so, as the authors thread their way through complex philosophical arguments. This reviewer found those by Nelson, Chapple, Brown, and Muller-Ortega to be the most satisfying, in part because of their attention to matters of history and chronology as well as textual exegesis, and in part because they are in implicit conversation with one another. Apart from Mumme's fine conclusion, there are very few cross-references between the essays. One wishes for more. A more serious problem is the absence of extended treatment of Buddhist and Jain points of view. The occasional allusions to such positions are invariably instructive. The volume's aspiration to being a historical overview of *jīvanmukti* discussions, as well as an exegesis of particular points of view, itself highlights this lacuna, since, as Mumme herself notes, "It is likely that the Buddhists were the first to clearly articulate that release from *karma* could be attained in a living state they called *nirvāṇa*" (p. 247), and the impact of Buddhist thought on the development of Advaita Vedānta, in particular, is well-known. The significance of this volume will be further realized when juxtaposed with an examination of non-Hindu and contemporary views of living liberation, which Mumme identifies as desiderata for future study. In the interim, this volume is a fine first step toward a better understanding of a distinctive, complex, puzzling, yet compelling component of South Asian religious life.

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From the Margins of Hindu Marriage: Essays on Gender, Religion, and Culture.
 Edited by LINDSEY HARLAN and PAUL B. COURTRIGHT. New York:
 Oxford University Press, 1995. xiii, 250 pp. \$45.00 (cloth); \$17.95 (paper).

Much has been written about marriage in India, partly because in this part of the world marriage both generates and reflects crucial notions about social order. It touches upon issues of caste and subcaste boundaries, family dynamics, gender-role expectations, and of how deities function (unmarried deities tend to be the exception, and their single state has much to do with the kinds of powers they wield). All these

things are revealed in the preoccupying details of marriage negotiations, arrangements, and wedding symbolism. With so much ink spilled hashing over intricate matters of marriage alliance and hierarchy in India, it comes as a pleasant surprise that this volume is a welcome addition to the literature. It seeks not so much to extract quintessential qualities of South Asian marriage, though by implication certain qualities do emerge. As its title suggests, the book is concerned with describing the extremities of marriage: divorce, infertility, widowhood, the joys and hazards of living single, and women's strategies for claiming power in a male-designed, -controlled, and -defined institution. The emphasis here is less on the textually prescriptive, and far more on the "lived-out" or "lived-in-spite-of" descriptive.

Susan Wadley ("No Longer a Wife: Widows in Rural North India") and Paul Courtright ("*Satī*, Sacrifice, and Marriage: The Modernity of Tradition") illuminate the options women have and—more frequently—lack, as widows. Wadley's vivid life histories make it clear that women are at every level dependent on males for livelihood and support; once their husbands die, they are in dire straits without sons to come to their aid. They normally may neither remarry nor inherit lands; custom prevents it even if law does not. Courtright discusses a creative religious alternative: the life of the *satīmātā*, a woman whose husband has died, who has expressed determination to immolate herself on his funeral pyre, but who has been prevented from doing so. Such women can gain enormous respect by virtue of their devotion to their husbands' memories, and often live spartan, ascetic lives as dispensers of supernatural blessings to those who support and consult them. Another, even rarer strategy for declaring independence is based on the model of the Saint Mīrābāī (about whom Harlan writes in "Abandoning Shame: Mīrā and the Margins of Marriage"). Mīrā forsook all concern for convention and propriety by abandoning herself to the service of her loving deity/husband Kṛṣṇa. Shamelessly she appeared in public to vaunt her devotion and to sing of her love, thus violating the norms for a young widow. Harlan concludes, provocatively, that Mīrā is, at once, a wife, virgin, widow, adulteress, a *bhakta*, and a *satī*—she straddles so many basic categories because she is willing to adhere to none exclusively.

Ralph Nicholas ("The Effectiveness of the Hindu Sacrament [*Samskāra*]: Caste, Marriage, and Divorce in Bengali Culture") analyzes how people deal with the facts of divorce. He notes the prevailing sentiment that the marriage *samskāra* is understood to be an irreversibly transforming experience involving the body of the female. In documenting how marriages, particularly in lower castes, are understood in the event of failure (divorce) he shows that they are perceived to have been ritually defective in the first place: a marriage must not have been accomplished. Proper ritual "work" simply did not get done. The analysis he offers is careful and the essay itself raises fertile questions for observers of India's thoroughgoing ritual orientation to the world.

Articles by Wendy Doniger and Gloria Raheja probe the limits of textual prescription and of customary gift-giving as reflections of limit situations. Doniger ("Begetting on Margin: Adultery and Surrogate Pseudomarrriage in Hinduism") deals with the remarkably frank and frequent occurrences of adultery in the texts, tracing adultery from the Vedic materials through the puranic and epic stories. Desire and necessity seem to excuse not simply adultery, but matters of *niyoga*, in which a worthy surrogate male "stands in" for a presumably infertile husband, and levirate unions, involving a deceased man's brother who provides his brother's wife with offspring. Doniger's talent for distilling enormous amounts of prescriptive and mythic material preclude doing the article full justice here.

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.

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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