

## PHILIPPINES

EUGENIO, DAMIANA L. Compiler and Editor. *Philippine Folk Literature: The Myths*. Diliman, Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1993. lvii + 512 pages. Map, index of motifs, index of titles, bibliography. Paper US\$28.00; ISBN 971-542-019-2. (Distributed by the University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu)

This is the second volume in a series of seven. Volumes 1 (*An Anthology*), 4 (*The Folktales*), and 6 (*The Proverbs*) are already in print; volumes 3 (*The Legends*), 5 (*The Riddles*), and 7 (*The Folk Songs*) are in various stages of the publication process (xxi). The author, Damiana Eugenio, has numerous publications in the area of Philippine folklore and was dubbed "Inang Folklor ng Pilipinas" (Mother of Philippine Folklore) in 1986. She has excellent credentials for this series, and if her other volumes are as thoroughly and professionally presented as *The Myths*, then the entire series will be a valuable resource material for scholars both of the Philippines and of comparative folklore.

This text serves as a compendium to promote national and international access to Filipino folklore (xlvi), and so the myths given are all from written sources rather than being newly collected oral variants. While writing in English in an effort to reach a broader audience, the author notes the area and original ethnolinguistic group of each selection. Eugenio intends this book, and her entire series, to foster interest in Filipino folklore; later editions are expected to benefit from future scholarly work and collecting (xlvii).

Eugenio's introduction is a reasonable overview of Filipino myths, and she has done a nice job of annotating and researching her fairly informal commentary. True to her intention to make this collection a resource for others, this introduction is strictly a descriptive overview. Eugenio does not discuss possible interpretations of the cited myths beyond suggesting their etiological purposes. Rather, she takes pains to show how the narratives collected fit the definitions of myth and "mythological legend" (cf. THOMPSON 1946), thus placing these narratives in proper scholarly context and justifying her inclusion of saints' legends in this collection of myths (xxiv).

The myths are arranged in an order similar to THOMPSON's *Motif-Index of Folk Literature* (1955-58). Tale types and motifs are given for the majority of the myths, along with a selection of other known variants, which will definitely assist in the serious study of Filipino mythology. Regional groupings are maintained inside this broad classification scheme, except for the sections on plants and animals, where an alphabetical order is used instead.

The list of sources and references, placed between the introduction and the main body of narratives, is an impressive assortment. Eugenio misses some references I would have expected, such as the bibliographies of folklore by BERNARDO (1972) and MANUEL (1965), but these may have been beyond the purview of this particular volume. This corner of the folklore world has not received the attention that it deserves, and Eugenio's work goes a long way toward correcting this oversight.

While I am interested more in questions of origin and meaning, and a little put off by Eugenio's description of "the folk mind, its childlike curiosity and ingenuity in finding explanations" (xliv), she has created a much-needed collection. Having used Eugenio's fourth volume, *The Folktales* (1989), in my own research, I can attest to the usefulness of her work. The author tackles her subject with obvious affection and capability, and I have made good use of her references.

I would recommend *Philippine Folk Literature: The Myths* to any individual interested in issues of Filipino worldview(s) and value systems, to any scholar investigating myths across

cultures, and to anyone who enjoys the insights that a culture's narratives provide. This series promises to be a welcome addition to the shelves of both personal and institutional libraries.

## REFERENCES CITED

BERNARDO, Gabriel Adriano

1972 *A critical and annotated bibliography of Philippine, Indonesian, and other Malayan folk-lore*. Cagayan de Oro City: Xavier University.

MANUEL, E. Arsenio

1965 *Philippine Folklore Bibliography*. Quezon City: Philippine Folklore Society.

THOMPSON, Stith

1946 *The folktale*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.

1955–58 *Motif-index of folk literature*, 6 vols. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

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## NEPAL

HÖFER, ANDRÁS. *A Recitation of the Tamang Shaman in Nepal*. Nepalica No. 7. Bonn: VGH Wissenschaftsverlag, 1994. 379 pages. Map, photos, figures, tables, appendices, bibliography, indices of subjects and select terms and names. Cloth DM; ISBN 3-88280-044-5.

Nepal has been one of the most productive regions for shamanic studies in recent years, and Höfer has already made a number of significant contributions in this area. The present work is, however, in scale and ambitiousness one of the most substantial items to come yet from the region, and it also aims at a degree of linguistic sophistication lacking in much of the earlier work. The major part (part 2, 51–271) of Höfer's new book consists of a transcription with translation of the text recited, mostly in the Tamang language but partly also in Nepali, of a single ritual performed by a Tamang *bombo* (shaman), along with detailed commentary. Part 1 (15–50) is an extensive introduction, including a discussion of the *bombo* and his ritual techniques; part 3 (273–329) consists of "Notes on the Pragmatic Function of Some Figural Patterns" (i.e., in Tamang ritual language). The work is completed by appendices, an extensive bibliography, photographs, and diagrams. It provides what is certainly the most detailed and comprehensive account I have seen of any shamanic ritual from Nepal.

The ritual in question, a ritual of "looking for the cen" (*cen māiba*), was performed on 12 October 1971 in the village of Bhokteni, west of Trisuli Bajār in Dhāding District, Central Nepal, in connection with a sequence of marital disagreements focussing on the wife's barrenness and menstrual problems. The couple concerned consulted the shaman (Syirjaron Bombo), who undertook the *cen māiba* ritual in the couple's house in order to divine the deity (*cen*) responsible for the trouble. The ritual falls into a series of sections, commencing with invocations of the Māi or "collective mother goddess," including two elaborate ritual journeys (*rirap*), one to Lasya, the Queen of the Witches, the second in search of the *cen*, a divination sequence, the shaman's falling into a state of possession by the gods, and a number of other short ritual episodes. The language is described as highly metaphorical; thus the journey in search of the *cen* is

an impressive effort to interrelate three "worlds," namely the inner one of the patient's organism, the outer one of physical nature, and the hidden one of metaphysical nature.