

Folklore, Public Sphere and Civil Society

Edited by M.D. Muthukumaraswamy and Molly Kaushal

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National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi

The discipline of folklore has always addressed the travel of folklore by consistently paying attention to several versions of the same texts and by offering meticulous sociological accounts for their existence. The philosophical premise of acknowledging versions even when they are contradictory lends itself, by expansion, to a vision of a multitude of public spheres inside a civil society. The emerging vision of society is one of polyphonic concert punctuated by recognisable gestures. What we see is a 'performing society' that generates public opinion not necessarily through rational verbal arguments and dialogues but also through gestures, genres, frames, versions, performances, stories, narratives and codes.

It is precisely in this context that folklore studies reveal how communities break hierarchies, articulate aspirations that are political and otherwise, constitute new identities, establish inter-cultural contacts and undergo changes through cultural borrowings. As identities are constantly created and recreated, what we encounter through folklore is a complex cultural phenomenon not necessarily rational but in alignment with the logic of the cultures concerned. Such processes do create and influence public opinion.

This collection of papers presented in a symposium organised in New Delhi, 2002, aligns three sociological categories folklore, public sphere and civil society in relation to each other in order to capture social and cultural dynamics.

Contributors: Advaitavadini Kaul, Alan Jabbour, Anjali Capila, Daniel Negers, D.R. Purohit, Rakesh Bhat, Eric Miller, Hanne M. de Bruin, Jawaharlal Handoo, Kailash K. Mishra, Lokendra Arambam, Madhu Khanna, Manju Kak, Michael Nijhawan, Molly Kaushal, M.K. Raina, Pankaj Kumar Jha, Pulak Datta, Purushothama Bilimale, Roma Chatterji, Saugata Bhaduri, Susan Wadley, Theodore Baskaran and Y.A. Sudhakar Reddy.

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Folklore as Discourse

Edited by M.D. Muthukumaraswamy



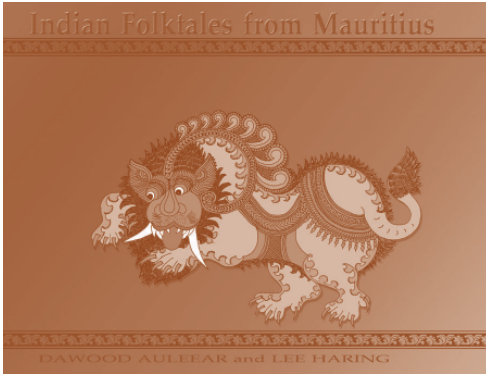
Nineteen seminal papers on various aspects of Indian folklore written by eminent scholars are collected together here in a volume. Exploring the way folklore organizes itself in different societal contexts in India is the focus of the different scholars presented here. Divided into easy sections, this book organizes complex thoughts on Indian folklore in an accessible format useful for students, scholars, and lay public. While Jawaharlal Handoo, Arupjyoti Saikia and Sadhana Naithani examine the relationship between folklore and the historical discourses, Peter Claus and K.M. Chandar analyze how folklore the discipline handles the problems presented by such social history of attitudes and perspectives. Venugopalan Nair, Kishore Bhattacharjee, Lalitluangliana Khiangte, Pulikonda Subbachary, and Guru Rao Bapat as practitioners of the discipline describe the discourses of distinctive folklore genres such as festival, legends, myths and folk theatre. Chandan Kumar Sharma and Desmond Kharmawphlang enquire into the construction of identities aided by language and lore. While Lalita Handoo presents insights into the power and practices of the discourse of gender, Eric Miller writes on the politics of technology and culture involved in the public presentation of folklore. Nirmal Selvamony, Saugata Bhaduri and Raghavan Payyanad take discourse analysis to examine the workings of ideology, religion, and worldview whereas Bharathi Harishankar, and Theodore Baskaran take it to understand the print medium and Cinema. This volume as a whole would prove to be an essential reading for anyone interested in Indian society and culture.

Contributors: Peter Claus, K.M. Chandar, Jawaharlal Handoo, Arupjyoti Saikia, Sadhana Naithani, Venugopalan Nair, Chandan Kumar Sharma, Desmond L. Kharmawphlang, Kishore Bhattacharjee, Lalitluangliana Khiangte, Pulikonda Subbachary, Lalita Handoo, Guru Rao Bapat, Nirmal Selvamony, Saugata Bhaduri, Raghavan Payyanad, Eric Miller, V. Bharathi Harishankar, Theodore Baskaran.

x + 254 pages, Rs.300 (India) US \$ 15 (Other Countries) ISBN 81-901481-6-8

Indian Folktales from Mauritius

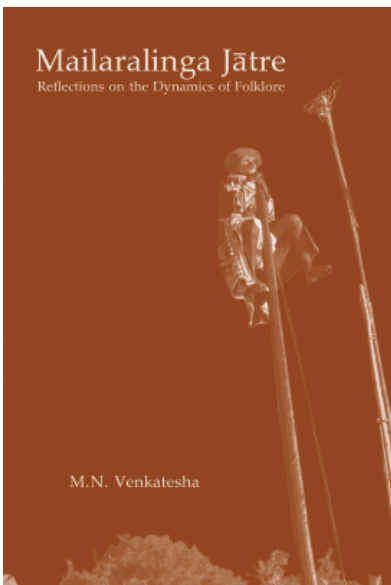
Dawood Auleer and Lee Haring



Eighteen magical, romantic, and comic oral tales, from the island of Mauritius, in the Indian Ocean, are here translated into English for the first time. The stories were taken down literally from the lips of storytellers in the Bhojpuri language. They are not rewritten or redecorated; they are translated literally, and some are given in Bhojpuri.

The ancestors of these villagers were forcibly expatriated from India, a century and a half ago, as indentured laborers. Today, through these tales, they maintain their ancient language and culture. Comparative notes place these Mauritian tales in the context of world folklore.

Illustrations by Kalamkari C. Subramaniam, i-x + 116 pages, Paperback Rs.200 (in India) Rs.200 in Mauritian rupees in Mauritius, US \$ 10.00 in Other Countries) ISBN 81-901481-7-6



Mailaralinga Jātre

Reflections on the Dynamics of Folklore

by M.N. Venkatesha

"...Venkatesha's work, here, documents and verifies many dimensions of personnel and functionaries—tradition bearers—the distinctions they make amongst themselves, the importance of their interpretations of specific traditions, the significance of their activities and practices... All of this attention to rich contextual detail and multiple perspectives, makes Venkatesha's book exceptional within the body of work on Indian folklore done by Indian and western scholars alike" (in his Foreword, Peter Claus).

M.N. Venkatesha, is now Assistant Professor at the Department of Folklore and Tribal Studies at Dravidian University, Kuppam, Andhra Pradesh.

pages xvi + 127 • ISBN 978-81-901481-7-6 • Price Rs.300/-
Other Countries US \$ 15

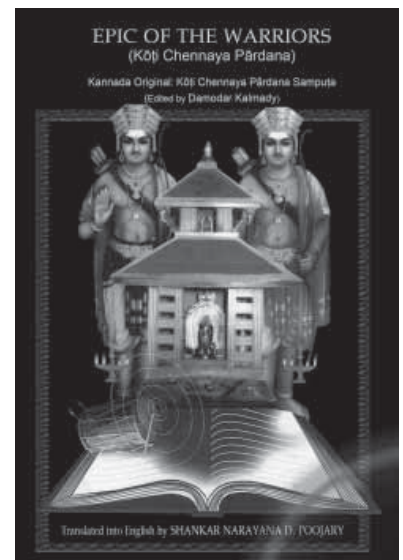
EPIC OF THE WARRIORS

Translated into English

by Shankar Narayana D. Poojary

"...And so it is to this fine lineage of scholarship—little known to the western world—Shankar Narayana Poojary has joined the ranks as a brave and generous contributor... (the translations) are true to the Tulu original and manage to express the feelings and emotions of the singer. The linguistic commentary and cultural explanations he provides in sections bridging the Tulu and English verses should be of great help to the interested reader. And ultimately, his translation should fill a huge gap to scholars of both folklore and linguistics" (in his Foreword, Peter Claus). Shankar Narayan D. Poojary, the translator, hails from Murngi Hosa Mane, Nakre, Karnataka. He retired in 2004 as Faculty, Department of Psychology, MES College of Arts and Commerce, Zuarinagar, Goa. As a Tuḷuva, his fascination for the Tuḷu pardanas culminated in the present translation of the epic Koṭi Chennaya

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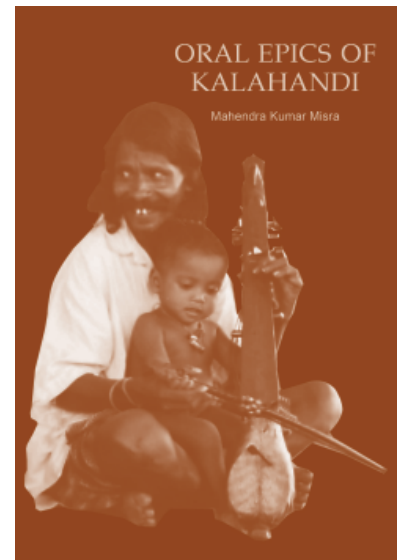


ORAL EPICS OF KALAHANDI

by Mahendra Kumar Mishra

"Oral Epics of Kalahandi" is the result of NFSC fellowship awarded to Mahendra Kumar Mishra and a year long collaborative research and documentation carried out by NFSC in the Kalahandi district of Orissa. Mishra, in this book, offers translations of various oral epics available with Gonds, Sauras, and other tribes of Kalahandi. His translations are interspersed with ethnographic analyses of the singers, and their songs. Through this extraordinary collection of epics and analyses Mishra is able to guide us through voices of people in the famine stricken district of Orissa. This book should be of great interest to scholars and lay public interested in listening to the voices of tribes in the post independence India.

ISBN 978-81-901481-9-2 • Price Rs.600/- Other Countries US \$ 30

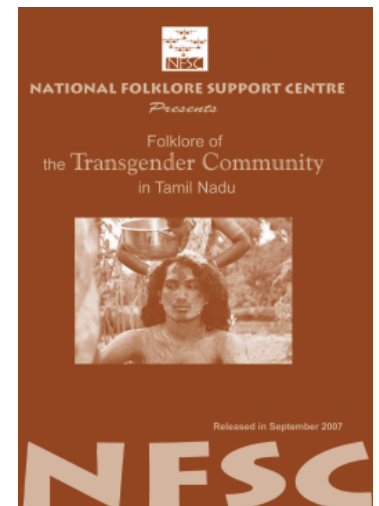


OUR VIDEO DVD, AUDIO CD RELEASES

Folklore of the Transgender Community of Tamilnadu

National Folklore Support Centre (NFSC) announces the release of a video documentary titled "Folklore of the Transgender Community in Tamil Nadu" 39 Minutes: September 2007: DVD Rs.400/- for India and US\$10 for overseas inclusive of postage.

Edited out of a year-long field documentation carried out by NFSC researchers and collaborators from the transgender community, this documentary depicts the life cycle ceremonies of transgendered persons in Tamil Nadu, India. Starting with adoption and initiation in the form of milk-pouring ceremony after the fortieth day of the surgery, the documentary presents the community gathering in Koovagam village, (Vilupuram District, Tamil Nadu) for marriage with the God Aravan, widowhood, and return to the society after his beheading in Mahabharata theatre/ritual/festival. Apart from interviews with the transgendered persons, the documentary includes excerpts from traditional epic singing in praise of God Aravan. To obtain a copy, send demand draft or international money order in the name of **National Folklore Support Centre, payable at Chennai, India.**



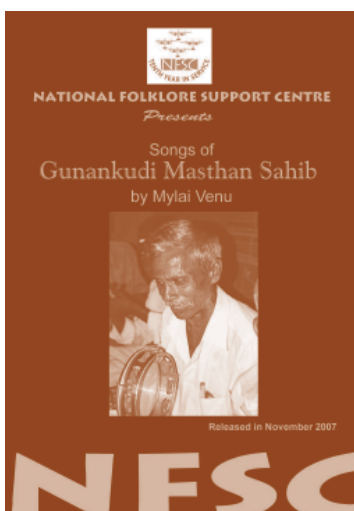
NFSC Folk Music Album: 1. Chennai city folklore Songs of Gunankudi Masthan Sahib from the Streets of Chennai city The Life of Gunankudi Masthan Sahib

Gunankudi Masthan Sahib (born as Sultan Abdul Khader) was born to Nayinar Muhamed and Fathima of Gunankudi village of Ramanathapuram district in Tamilnadu in the late 18th century. He was given the title of 'Aleem' as he recited the Quran in his early years and realized many truths of life. He attained sainthood in 1813. He spent his last days in a small house in Baba Lebbai's garden. It is believed that at night, he sang the songs that he composed himself and walked unto Maqmur mosque in Angappa Nayakar Street, Royapuram, Chennai. He passed away in the year 1838. His compositions are considered to be the source for folk songs genre known as "Gaana songs" sung in the streets of Chennai today. This folk music album is a result of a year-long research and documentation project 'Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Marginalized in Chennai City' carried out by NFSC with the collaboration of V. Ramakrishnan. The studio recording of the songs were done at the L.V. Prasad Recording studio with the famous exponent of the Gunankudi Masthan Sahib tradition Mylai Venu and his team.


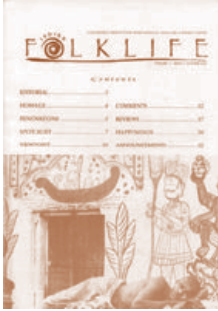
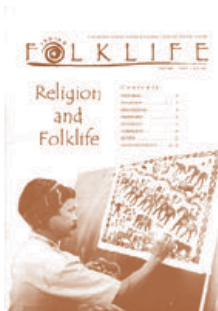






Credits: Singer: Mylai Venu • Keyboard: Sathyaraj • Dholak: 'High court' Mari
• Research collaborator: Dr V. Ramakrishnan • Sound Recording: V.S. Murthy, Divya, and John Henry at L.V. Prasad Television and Film Academy, Chennai

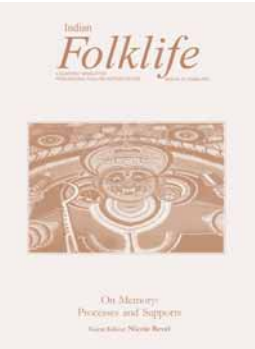
Songs: 1. Manonmaniye... 31:23 2. Aiyayo yen vidi vasam... 14:29
3. Suuthira Pavaiye... 7:13 4. Aandavan Yen Ceyvaano... 10:31
5. Paarkka Palavidama... 26:41

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INDIAN FOLKLIFE
A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FROM NATIONAL FOLKLORE SUPPORT CENTRE

			
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Folk Medicine and Biodiversity April, 2003	Folklore and Biopolitic December, 2003	Chennai Conference Special: Folklore as Discourse March, 2004	Life and works of Padma Bhushan Shri Komal Kothari (1929 to 2004) July, 2004

 <p>Genre, Community, and Event</p>	 <p>Folklore and Media</p>	 <p>Folklore Abroad: On the Diffusion and Revision of Socio-cultural Categories</p>	 <p>Teaching and transmission of Indian Performing Arts</p>	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FROM NATIONAL FOLKLORE SUPPORT CENTRE</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg); font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">INDIAN FOLKLIFE</p>
<p>Genre, Community, and Event October, 2004</p>	<p>Folklore and Media January, 2005</p>	<p>Folklore Abroad: On the Diffusion and Revision of Socio-cultural Categories April, 2005</p>	<p>Teaching and Transmission of Indian Performing Arts July, 2005</p>	
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<p>Folklore and Children's Literature April, 2006</p>	<p>Globalization and Tribes of Northeast India July, 2006</p>	<p>Post-field Positionings August, 2006</p>	<p>On Memory: Process and Supports October, 2006</p>	
 <p>The Legend: Conceptual Issues and Pragmatics of Telling</p>	 <p>Landscapes of Change: Recent Ethnography on the Religious Meanings of Trees and Forests in India</p>	 <p>Oral Poetry</p>	<p>Write to us to get a free copy of our Newsletter</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">"Indian Folklife"</p>	
<p>The Legend: Conceptual Issues and Pragmatics of Telling January, 2007</p>	<p>Landscapes of Changes: Recent Ethnography on the Religious Meanings of Trees and Forests in India July, 2007</p>	<p>Oral Poetry November, 2007</p>		

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