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Wenegit, a Female Counterpart of the God Weneg?

This study focuses on a less significant goddess, Wenegit. Her name is attested, as a component of lists of gods, on three Middle Kingdom stelae originating from Abydos: stela Louvre C 15, stela Turin Cat. No. 1534, stela Munich Glyptothek WAF 35. The paper investigates these objects in general, with special attention being paid to the enumeration of divinities, and to the existence of the female deity in particular. It attempts to challenge questions relating to the existence of a female counterpart of Weneg, the god attested in the Old Kingdom, and proposes two additional possibilities: a) that the male Weneg himself is the intended deity on the stelae, or b) that the inscription might represent a goddess with no relationship to Weneg.

KEYWORDS

ancient Egyptian religion | god | goddess | Weneg | Wenegit | stela | Middle Kingdom

- Damien Ukwandu and Benjamin Obeghare Izu* 249–267
The Ugie Festival Ceremonies as a Demonstration of Ancient Benin Culture in Nigeria

Through the ages, man has recorded his personal life experiences and sojourns in drawings, paintings, artefacts, sculptures, weaving, drama, music, songs, festivals and other forms of art. These expressions form part and parcel of the cultural heritage of mankind, and in many ways help to articulate human history, norms, customs and way of life.

To the *Edo* society, festivals constitute an essential appendage to their accomplishments. These festivals are usually celebrated with music and dance, which provide entertainment throughout the period of the celebrations. Apart from their entertainment value, festivals provide an opportunity for the memories of our forebears to re-assert themselves in the consciousness of the people, with the hope of leaving the world a better place. Festivals also form a part of the heritage of humankind and have traditionally been passed on for posterity. These festivals constantly remind people of their past which is usually compared with the present so as to ascertain whether communities are progressing or not and to document other dynamic changes. Furthermore, festivals enable celebrating communities to devise programmes to improve the areas in their culture where these have been neglected.

The main focus of this study is on the music and associated ceremonies enacted during the royal *Ugie* (festival) of the *Omo N' Oba N' Edo Uku Akpolokpolo*, *Oba* of the Benin

kingdom. There are cycles of *Ugie* rituals held periodically within the confines of the Benin royal palace. Some of these ceremonies are of a private nature, while others are public. During these *Ugie* ceremonies, the palace is always the centre of ritual activities aimed at the well-being and prosperity of the *Omo N' Oba* and the *Edo* people.

KEYWORDS

Benin kingdom | *Edo* people | traditional festivals | rituals | music | culture | *Ugie* festivals | *Igue* festival | *Igue* Dance | *Oba* of Benin kingdom | chiefs

Soumyajyoti Banerjee, Rajni Singh and Amrita Basu

269–290

**The Transcendental Self: Demystifying Pāñcālī
in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Palace of Illusions***

The study concentrates on the story of Pāñcālī, the female protagonist of the Indian epic Mahābhārata. One of the most provocative and mythical characters, Pāñcālī has been subject to numerous interpretations. Chitra Divakaruni demystifies her and renders an authentic female experience without the affliction of canonical tradition. The palaces Pāñcālī inhabits become embodiments of a nationalist culture vitiated with concerns of cognitive dominance. Her efforts to break the shackles of tradition require her to counter such discourse with an entirely new aesthetic of narration and experience, one that is intimately connected to her “self.” Her futile efforts to construct a palace as a retributive symbol and her inadequacy at understanding the strength of the female self finally lead her to a self-sufficient, self-engaged rhetoric of completion. We deviate from standardised models of feminist critiques and employ Edward Said's theory of Orientalism for interrogating the female experience as a whole. The story of Pāñcālī is the story of the woman rising above her destiny; hers is the story of becoming *Kṛṣṇā*.

KEYWORDS

Orientalism | Pāñcālī | *Kṛṣṇā* | demystification | female identity

Charu Gupta

**Allegories of “Love Jihad” and *Ghar Vāpasī*:
Interlocking the Socio-Religious with the Political**

291–316

In modern India, the year 2014 was marked by the ascendancy of Hindu nationalist forces in politics. At a subterranean level, it was also witness to cries of “love jihad” and *ghar vāpasī*. “Love jihad” was alleged to be a movement aimed at forcibly converting vulnerable Hindu women to Islam through trickery and marriage and *ghar vāpasī* was a metaphor deployed by the Hindu Right to prevent religious conversions out of Hinduism and to simultaneously encourage “reconversions.” This essay examines the larger politics behind these aggressive campaigns. It highlights how both these movements were charged with a moral and communal fervor, adopting an unrestrained anti-Christianity and anti-Islam polemic. It argues that such idioms signal the interlocking of the social and the

religious with the political. Furthermore, they also reflect the deep-seated anxieties of Hindu Right politics regarding female free will, the subversive potential of love, pliable and ambiguous religious identities, and syncretic socio-religious practices, all of which continue to exist in different forms.

KEYWORDS

conversions | love | desire | Muslims | Hindus

Adina Zemanek

317–347

Daughters of the Motherland and (Wo)men of the World. Global Mobility in *Shishang* (*Trends/Cosmopolitan*), 1993–2008

The present paper undertakes a discourse analysis of *Shishang* (the PRC edition of *Cosmopolitan*) and assesses the extent to which this magazine promotes Western consumerism instead of strengthening a local national character, as Chinese scholars impute. I explore the evolution of *Shishang*'s approach to globalization, as reflected in articles from 1993 to 2008, and focus on global mobility as a dimension of the image of women constructed in the magazine. Throughout this period, *Shishang* seeks to stimulate the imagination of its readers (in Arjun Appadurai's terms) by presenting them with experiences, attitudes and life scenarios that increasingly conform to John Tomlison's concept of cosmopolitanism and Aihwa Ong's idea of flexible citizenship. The PRC's *Cosmo* women "link up with the tracks of the world" by actively pursuing career development and self-fulfillment in a global context while opportunistically employing available resources, a process accompanied by a growing openness to and understanding of other cultures. *Shishang* not only depicts them as women of the world, but also strongly emphasizes their Chineseness, thus doubly complying with the ideological task of the media in the PRC. My study thus proves the above-mentioned criticism to be largely unfounded, but not entirely so – *Shishang*'s recent issues promote a model of lifestyle whose overt rejection of materialism in favor of spiritual values are built upon the consumption of expensive global tourism experiences.

KEYWORDS

Shishang | woman image | global mobility | cosmopolitanism | flexible citizenship | nationalism

Kamila Hladíková

349–380

Shangri-la Deconstructed: Representations of Tibet in the PRC and Pema Tsenden's Films

The aim of this article is to compare the cinematic representations of Tibet in Chinese Tibet-related cinematography with the first three films made by the Tibetan filmmaker Pema Tsenden (Tib. Pad ma Tshe brtan, Ch. Wanma Caidan 万玛才旦) in an attempt to define "Tibetan films" in contrast to "Tibet-related films," which are a broader category

including films made with no direct or only partial Tibetan participation. I argue that Pema Tsenden's first three feature films should be understood as the first cinematic contributions to be made to modern Tibetan identity-discourse. They present the first genuine Tibetan voices to be heard in the PRC cinema, contesting the images of Tibet, its history, its culture and its people, that have appeared in the officially supported media and mainstream popular culture. Pema Tsenden has thus successfully de-constructed the "myth of Shangri-la" that has been misused so many times during recent decades in the name of colonialism and propaganda – both Western and Chinese.

KEYWORDS

Tibet | China | Tibetan film | Tibet-related film | minority film | Chinese cinema | Tibetan cinema | Pema Tsenden | Pad ma Tshe brtan | Wanma Caidan | identity | representation of Tibet

Rostislav Berezkin

381–412

Precious Scroll of the Ten Kings in the Suzhou Area of China: with Changshu Funerary Storytelling as an Example

This paper examines the connections to be found between the cult of the Ten Kings of the underworld and the practice of *baojuan* storytelling ("telling scriptures," or scroll recitation) in the Suzhou area of Jiangsu province. In some places, notably the city of Changshu, the stories devoted to the Ten Kings are recited during funerary services for the dead and are combined with the ritual actions aimed at salvation of the dead soul (i.e., with the object of obtaining a better form of rebirth for the deceased in the next life). These practices and related narratives have local specifics. They have been known since the 19th century, but rarely have been documented in historical sources. This paper is largely based on the results of the author's fieldwork in several areas of Suzhou, where this storytelling has survived until the present, in addition to materials preserved in libraries. It focuses on discussion of the origins, special features, and religious affiliation of these funerary performances, taking the Changshu tradition as an example. The author also analyzes the meaning of this ritualized storytelling in comparison with funerary rites and performances in other areas of China and applies to it universal ritual theory. Funerary *baojuan* performances constitute a part of the complex "ritual event" that involves several groups of religious specialists and texts and rituals of different origins, and that has important social functions in the communities in which they are practiced.

KEYWORDS

baojuan (precious scrolls) | Chinese Buddhism | folk beliefs | storytelling | rituals | folklore

Michael Rudolph

413–443

The Quest for Ethnic Reclassification in Multiculturalist Taiwan: the Case of the Sakizaya

This paper argues that the large-scale ethnic resurgence, as observed in the quest for ethnic reclassification in Taiwan today, is not simply the result of deep-seated feelings of primordial attachment of people in a post-colonial society. As it has been described in the case of Brazil, the phenomenon seems also to be supported by a national and international context that valorises indigenous identities as a means of reasserting political and territorial claims. As we have seen from various undertakings of the aboriginal and *Pingpu* movements, members often try to use the UN for political leverage. Another related reason is the strong elitist influence in the movements seeking ethnic reclassification. Focussing on the example of the Sakizaya, who were recognized as Taiwan's 13th aboriginal group in 2007, I describe how the process of campaigning was dominated by elites who had a thorough understanding of national and international requirements and frameworks. Their visions and ensuing cultural constructions, however, did not always reflect the perspectives of the common people and therefore served as another affirmation of the "elites without people" phenomenon observed in earlier activities of Taiwan's aboriginal revitalization movement. Although the petition with which the Sakizaya successfully gained recognition as a unique ethnic group in 2007 claimed a total of 15,000 members, fewer than 900 Sakizaya had registered by the end of 2015.

KEYWORDS

Taiwan | indigenous peoples | ethnic reclassification | revitalization movements | ethnic elites | Sakizaya

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