their research. It affords the luxury of rarity: it is pleasantly written, something with which researchers may have away an extra few moments. However, the DNB must be read with caution for the natural biases of any scholar, the stated conceptualization of the work, and the problems related to the control of any undertaking of this great size.

Martin Yanuck
Spelman College

South Asian Library Resources in North America: Papers from the Boston Conference, 1974. Edited by Maureen L. P. Patterson and Martin Yanuck. Zug, Switzerland: Inter Documentation Company (Bibliotheca Asiatica 11); Committee on South Asian Libraries and Documentation of the Association for Asian Studies, 1975. xiii, 362 pp. (Dist. by South Asia Books, $24.00)


These volumes commemorate a conference on South Asian Library resources in North America, but the title considerably understates their significance. The Boston Conference of 1974 was a political event from start to finish, and the publication of these volumes is also a political achievement. All scholars and librarians concerned with South Asian studies will find both volumes informative and useful, and the first volume offers a very perceptive analysis of the past and potential development of this field in North America.

The Conference, funded by the South Asia Regional Council of the AAS, was held in response to financial and political crises. One catalyst was the great success of the PL 480 program, the acquisition program begun in 1961/62; by 1971, the quantity of material being received from South Asia was creating problems for program participants. Disagreements arose over proposed cutbacks—what should be cut, and who should make the decisions. Another issue was the role of the non-academic Library of Congress as manager of the program, responsible for selecting acquisitions, and the possible conflict with its other role as a program participant with different needs than some of the participating libraries. Finally, given the then unfavorable political climate in India for American researchers, there was a need to consider the resources of the United States in terms of future research.

The two volumes are complementary, but they can be purchased and used independently; for that reason, an essential note on the Library of Congress South Asia programs has been included in both volumes. Volume I reprints the papers delivered at the Conference. The Prologue, the overviews of research and library developments by Robert Crane and Maureen Patterson respectively, and the note on the Library of Congress South Asia programs provide a fascinating history of the growth and problems of South Asian studies in North America over the last three decades. The next section presents seventeen papers discussing current research issues and resources for Bangladesh, Pakistan, Ceylon, and India's linguistic regions. Most of these faculty contributions (some 30 of the 68 conference participants were faculty members) are incisive and useful. Another section focuses on the acquisition of library materials, another on access to existing collections. It is the interest in access to materials, as well as information about them, which makes these volumes doubly valuable. The first volume ends with comments from Stanley McEllderry of the University of Chicago Library, upon whose holdings American scholars have come increasingly to rely, and from Michael Rogers, Librarian at the University of Sussex, England, who adds a global reminder of the responsibilities of libraries in North America.

The second volume demonstrates what political and sociological skills can achieve with little funding. Undaunted by insufficient money to carry out a long-standing AAS proposal for an on-site investigation of the resources of PL 480 and South Asian Microform Project members, Patterson designed a questionnaire six months prior to the Boston Conference. The AAS sent this to 86 institutions; the 43 responses, published in this book, give in-depth profiles of South Asia holdings ranging from those of the Library of
Congress to those of small colleges. Editor Patterson has largely retained the original wording of the respondents, so that each entry conveys a sense of the institution's unique qualities; the responses have also been effectively summarized in charts. Maps show the distribution of participants in the Library of Congress South Asia programs and the institutions responding to the survey.

While the editors consider the conference proceedings and survey only a preliminary attempt to assess South Asian research and resources in North America, these volumes are in fact invaluable to specialists and beginners alike. As Patterson notes in her overview (vol. 1), three publications describing South Asian holdings in North American libraries did come out in the 1930s, but the PL 480 program has made them hopelessly outdated. A more recent general reference work, Subject Collections (Lee Ash, 4th edition, 1974), lists only nine South Asia collections, not including those at Berkeley or the University of Chicago.

These volumes represent active collaboration between bibliographers, faculty, and publishers that is all too rare. As the Prologue to volume 1 pointedly states: “Committees, conventions and conferences do not exist for their own sakes but as vehicles of communication among groups focused on specific concerns and issues” (p. 15).

The concerns and issues addressed here were, and are, vital to the maintenance of South Asian studies in North America. The Boston Conference was one effort to build cooperation and commitment among faculty and librarians, and we are all indebted to those who have succeeded in publishing the proceedings and survey. The need for such efforts is even more pressing today.

KAREN LEONARD
University of California, Irvine


This volume brings together, under two separate headings, eight recent scholarly essays on aspects of Hindu religious life. The first six have been classified under “Religious Experience and Its Institutionalization”; the remaining two are described as “New Interpretations in Epic Mythology.” At the outset, editor Bardwell Smith reminds the reader of a similar set of essays published a decade ago, Milton Singer’s Krishna: Myths, Rites and Attitudes, which Smith properly describes as “remarkable” and “a landmark both in terms of the topic examined and the variety of disciplinary approaches utilized” (p. 1). The Singer volume, which Smith suggests has inspired the present volume (and which certainly inspired me; it is still required reading in courses on Hinduism taught at Tufts University), engages the reader deeply in many dimensions of Kṛṣṇa bhakti. The present volume, while offering many valuable insights through its essays, does not grasp one in the same sense. Despite Smith’s efforts, one does not feel so strongly the unifying threads that held the Singer book together.

The first four essays treat two major Bengali Vaiṣṇava saints, Chaitanya and Śrī Rāmakrishna. In each case, the first essay deals directly with the life and theological teachings of the saint, while the second examines aspects of the movements that developed as a result of the following each saint had. Several themes bind the essays of Norvin Hein and Joseph O’Connell on Chaitanya and that of Walter Neveel on Śrī Rāmakrishna. There is the overriding theme of bhakti as the way to salvation in the Kali yuga. The second theme is that of līlā, the childlike playfulness one must feel in response to the Lord Kṛṣṇa. The third theme is the religious experience of union with the divine itself—with its vision for the devotee that the world is filled with the Divine.

The essays of O’Connell and Cyrus Pangborn take these dimensions of living faith and relate them to problems of organization and community in Vaiṣṇava bhakti. Mira Binford’s essay “Mixing in the Color of Ram of Ranuja: A Folk Pilgrimage to the Grave of a Rajput Hero-Saint” is especially forceful in demonstrating the relationships of pilgrimage to organization to religious experience. The essay stands out for two reasons. It opens new frontiers for most readers, dealing as it does with the cult of Ramdev, a fifteenth-century military folk hero and saint from Rajasthan who blends aspects of Islamic and Hindu bhakti. Second, the article provides good background reading for an excellent teaching