

ASIAN FOLKLORE STUDIES

Selected items from Vol. LXI, 2002. Articles on:

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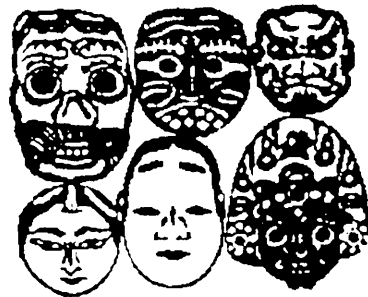
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Humor in Response to Aum Shinrikyo

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Australian Folklore

The Folklore of Terrorism

Songs, Poems and Sketches from a Crazy World



Keith McKenry

The cover of the book of this name is adapted with the permission of the publisher and author from a cartoon by Geoffrey Pryor of Canberra. (See also the review on Pages 262-263).

Australian Folklore

A Yearly Journal of Folklore Studies

An issue exploring folk and more historical memory as captured in story, offering powerful reflections on nature's messages and pondering on the roadside's sacred spaces

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Contributions to *Australian Folklore* and all editorial correspondence should be addressed to the Editor (address below). Books for review should be sent to the Editor.

The Australian Folklore Association exists for the purposes outlined in its Constitution (given in *Australian Folklore* No. 7, 1992 on pp.155-160). Applications for membership, subscriptions to the Association, etc., should be sent to the Secretary (address below).

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Editorial

This volume follows the format of recent issues in its thematic clustering of topics and in our continuing concern to cover a broad range of the folklore work now done in Australia, as well as of that fieldwork and scholarship which may be said to be more narrowly focused on Australian themes, experiences and attitudes. In this connection it is interesting that a record number of Australian universities and departments are represented in the valued and supportive contributors to this issue.

As usual we endeavour to report on the work of individual scholars, collectors, performers and / or writers in our field, and we have, sadly, to record yet again the passing of several towering figures, two of whom in later 2003 were accorded state funerals by the appropriate state governments.

We have not quite included all that was predicted in the Editorial to Number 17 and so will refrain from undue promises for the immediate future, choosing rather to now record the significant themes that seem to us to have emerged since the last annual issue. As with other countries, the discipline of folkloristics in Australia is sometimes quite close to ethnography, to sociology or to anthropology, much as it has long been in the Northern Hemisphere. Further, despite the downward pressure of the 'global' on the traditional identity and culture of smaller countries and regions, it is clear that the folk imagination refuses to be held captive to the merely pathetically present descriptive, urban, pessimistic or distressingly limited in behaviour, story and mores, or the plastic and the shoddy in material culture — something evidenced by the increasing public appetite for folk museums and regional collections of artifacts from earlier periods.

Thus the third major section here, that concerned with 'neglected repositories for folk memory and timeless folk attitudes', illustrates how story and its lore are in no sense inhibited by the dread and even fearful present, but rather prefer to move more often into the fields of 'epic fantasy' or the urban Gothic. (For both of these may be said to have surpassed and even routed the lore of science fiction, so prominent for much of the twentieth century.)

Similarly the directness of quiet nature writing also discussed in this section belies the pressures of the squalid city, of depressing 'greenhouse' effects, of terror and all the tragic consequences of the new economic order. This is, quite simply, a wish to retain the ubiquitous awarenesses of (western) man at the dawn of industrialism and the determination to savour traditional landscape and the wonders of flora and fauna. Of a

related interest here is the closely focussed paper on the 'Once and future [Australian regional] country' which is another act of resistance to the creation of ever larger political units, to the restriction and even annihilation of a sense of regional identity and so of so much personal individuality, with the counter of a preferred inherited experience that makes one different, proud, and resourceful, aware of the forces that have made the person an individual and so much the better to cope with the levelling down pressures on us all.

• *

While we have largely refrained from close analysis of the massive expansion of material in the area of terror, fear and (over-)reaction to this in recent years, it may not be inappropriate to comment on the 11th Asian Media Information and Communication Conference held in Perth, W.A., in late June 2002. We quote from its rationale statement: Terrorism is in everyone's consciousness, evoking a wide range of emotions. It takes new forms and threatens international communities and global security. It raises deep concern about the roots of this phenomenon. It is a basic staple of the nightly TV news, morning newspapers and the Internet. And increasingly conflicts are among groups who differ from one another in terms of culture, race, physical appearance and religion. Ethnic conflicts in Asia in recent times have transformed international relations and governance, and impacted the institutional structures and operational effectiveness of groups engaged in crisis and conflict management.

The conference was concerned with the fostering of balance over bias, communication over confrontation and insight over ignorance. It asked how terrorism should be defined and portrayed, and which stories should be told. There was concern to avoid both sensation and propaganda, and to provide thoughtful and regional communication, for 'the media generate information, symbols, impressions and ideas that are critical in the battle for the minds and hearts of nations and peoples'. Its abiding concern was — and is — to help all governmental, military, academic, social, religious and ethnic bodies to share insights and perspectives in addressing the magnitude and complexity of terrorism and conflicts in our region.

Acknowledgements

Australian Folklore wishes to acknowledge with gratitude the support of many cultural organizations and their relevant officers, including: the executive and members of the Australian Folklore Association; the members of our expanded Editorial Board, the Editorial Advisers, and the various referees for submitted contributions both from within Australia and from overseas; the sympathy of the Modern Humanities Research Association, particularly through its bibliographic arm at the University Library, University of Cambridge; the Dean, Faculty of Arts, University

of New England; the Head of the School of English, Communication and Theatre, University of New England, New South Wales; that institution's Printery and Publications Section; and the Dean, Division of Arts, Southern Cross University, NSW; and the Head of the School of Education, Southern Cross University, New South Wales.

In the bibliographic and informational spheres sincere thanks goes to: the reference services of the Mitchell Library, Sydney; the Dixson Library, University of New England, and particularly their Mr Cameron Barnes and Ms Irena Niedzwiecki; the Canadian Folklore Association; the Folk Life Society and its executive officers in the United Kingdom; and to other and organizations overseas for bibliographic and other assistance.

The Members of the Australian Folklore Association and the Editorial team once again wish to thank Mark Moravec, their Secretary, for his unfailing support in many areas, and to the President of the Association, Professor Kamal Puri, for his leadership. Similar appreciation is accorded the various presses supplying review books, and for their willingness to answer the most difficult queries.

In addition to the appreciation which we accord to all our loyal contributors and subscribers, we wish particularly to thank the following persons: Pauline Greenhill, of the Canadian Folklore Association for her assistance with reports from her country and beyond; various colleagues at the Department of Folklore, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St John's, Newfoundland; Emeritus Professor J.D.A. Widdowson, Former Head of the National Centre for the English Cultural Tradition, University of Sheffield, and his successor Dr Joan Beal, for their assistance in related areas; Dr Paul Knecht, editor of *Asian Folklore Studies*, of Nagoya, Japan, for his help in publicizing our journal in East Asia in particular; and all those universities in the United States of America, in Europe and elsewhere who assist our efforts to record both traditional and contemporary culture in this country; June Barnes-Rowley, editor of *Swag of Yarns* and Brian Dunnett, railways historian, for his suggesting that we should feature the momentous past of the Australian Railways and their likely even more nation-shaping future.

However, our appreciation must be accorded Dr Robert James Smith of Southern Cross, University, Lismore, New South Wales, who has been invaluable in the assembling of recent issues, and who plays a steadily increasing role in publicizing the greater field of folkloric work both in Australia and beyond.

*

Contents

Australian Folklore is a peer-reviewed and internationally recognised scholarly journal which is indexed in many places/scholarly reference works, including those from the Modern Language Association; the Modern Humanities Research Association; the APA indices; various national indices of literary and cultural materials in Australia, etc. It works closely with traditional culture bodies and their publications in Great Britain, the U.S.A., Canada, Japan, Indonesia, and elsewhere.

* * *

The Australian Folklore Association Inc.

The history of the Association and of its taking over of the journal, *Australian Folklore*, are set out, together with the Association's Constitution, in *Journal* No.7 (1992), pp.151-160. Apart from its *Newsletters* and the meetings of its Executive, it has gained representation on the Board of the Australian Folk Trust Inc., which is also a co-sponsor of its (inter-) national conferences. More recently it has collaborated with various Australian universities in publication and conference activities, as well as with the Victorian Folklife Association. It has also had much dialogue with folklore scholars and academics worldwide.

The earlier activities of the Association are also given, in outline, in G.B. Davey and G. Seal (eds.), *The Oxford Companion to Australian Folklore* (1993), pp.27-28.

Australian Folklore on the World Wide Web

This journal has its own site on the World Wide Web. The purpose is to broaden knowledge of and access to *Australian Folklore*. As well as containing information regarding the most recent editions of the journal, the webpages offer a list of other related major folklore publications in English. The Internet address is:

<http://www.une.edu.au/arts/FolkloreJournal/AF.htm>

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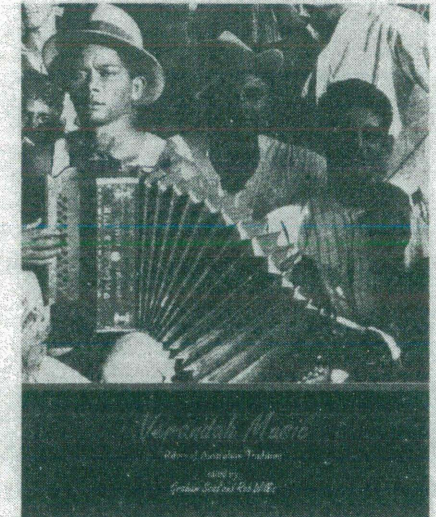
Verandah Music Roots of Australian Tradition

Graham Seal and Rob Willis (editors)

A unique anthology that showcases, for the first time, the wealth and diversity of the roots of traditional Australian music

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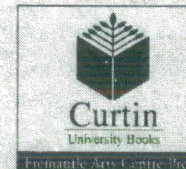
The editors and contributors: Graham Seal, one of Australia's premier folklorists, and Rob Willis, musician and passionate collector of folklore, are joined by 20 contributors from across the country — each with a long involvement in documenting verandah music. They include professional folklorists, performers, collectors and producers, writers, scholars and teachers with close links to many different communities.



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