

Editorial

Folk Literature of any kind in any part of the world is the first expression of mankind in the oral or written form of language. It retains the primitive simplicity and candidness of man. The folk tales, songs, ballads, proverbs, riddles and puzzles represent the variety and novelty of folk life and culture. On one hand, each piece of folk literature imbibes the honest emotions and passions of a particular community and expresses its identity, on the other hand, it is also a historical document of each community's struggle against nature and forces of civilization. In a broad sense, it addresses to primary human concerns and needs to which generations of mankind return for inspiration and amusement. Abrona Lee rightly comments, "Our folk beliefs, tales, legends and myths are the avenues through which we can embark upon that wonderful journey back to our roots, back to where we belong." Its expression is often direct and devoid of affectation, hence, it has its own distinct magic of originality that demands a new poetics to appreciate and evaluate it.

This special issue on folk literature contains 13 research articles which present critical studies on Japanese folk culture (Mrudula Lakkaraju), American folklore (Linda Primlyn), folk literature of Lepchas in Sikkim (Abrona Lee), songs of Garo culture in Meghalaya (Sanatombi Sangama), folk literature of the Buksari, Jad, Jaunsari Bawar, Marche, Tharu of Uttarakhand State (H S Randhawa), Magahi folk songs from Bihar (C L Khatri), folk songs of Baiga Community (Priyanka Singh), different types of folk drama in Odisha (Shaheena Tarannum), folktales from different part of India (Shalini Misra), the pictographic cloth - Par of Pabuji from Rajasthan (Karan Singh) and the synthesis of myths, legends and folklores in Tagore's plays (Rashmi Jain) and the folklores of Rajasthan (Manoj Kumar). Over all, the issue presents the amazing variety and originality of folk literature that seems infinite as one probes into the depth and range of various folk forms.

We are extremely grateful to Prof. H S Chandalia who painstakingly did the job of Guest Editor for this issue in making a fair selection of papers. We are also indebted to the Review Editors of this issue, their comments and suggestions have helped improve the quality of the papers.

This special issue on folk literature is dedicated to Mahashweta Devi whose life and literature was dedicated to the service of the 'lok' - the common man. Her demise is a great loss to the folk of all marginalized classes. We pay our glowing tributes to her.

Sudheer Hajela