



and his four marriages and three divorces. How a great scholar was able to handle all these things in his busy life is a mystery to me.

Although I was familiar with Coomaraswamy's work even when I was in Nepal, before reading Pal's monograph, I knew very little about the man. I studied some of his works carefully only when I began to write my dissertation. I found his tiny monograph *Yaksas* more important than his other works. According to him, the difference between the Vedic culture and Hinduism can be understood properly only if we give attention to the difference between the Vedic fire worship and the later *puja*: the requirement of an art object as an image for *puja* and not for fire worship. This explanation was an eye-opener for me. Another important issue that Coomaraswamy raised in his work is about the real meaning of the meandering lotus vine, so ubiquitous in Indian art. Because he found similarities between this art motif and the Vedic description of *apas* "water", he even designated the motif as Vedic "style". I worked on the motif and found that it is actually closely associated not exactly with water but with the Vedic and astrological belief related to the formation of cloud and the pregnancy of cloud. This discovery was one of the main points of my dissertation, which is now revised and published in my book *Frog Hymns and Rain Babies*.

Contemporaneous German scholars were familiar with Coomaraswamy's works. Although now we know for sure that *shimshumara* means killer *shimshu* "a large aquatic animal," (See Gautama V. Vajracharya, "Sculpted Spouts of Nepalese Fountains and Vedic Evidence: Dolphin Deified – A Review Article", *Electronic Journal of Vedic Studies*, volume 25, issue 3, pp.1-23).

Heinrich Lüders, who wrote a detailed article on makara borrowed Coomaraswamy's view that *shimsumara* is derived from *shimsu*-makara without giving any credit to him. There are several other examples of this type. So, I was expecting a discussion in his biography on the difference between western scholars' approach to Indology and Coomaraswamy's works. But I quickly realized that one volume of Coomaraswamy's biography, as Pal has explained recently in an interview on YouTube, cannot be enough to cover his vast erudition and intellectual pursuits.

Nevertheless, I congratulate Dr. Pal for writing this important biography, which further expands our knowledge of both the scholarly and the quotidian life of this outstanding personality since the only other biography published in 1977 by the American scholar, Roger Lipsey.

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