

A Dharma Reader: Classical Indian Law. Translated and edited by PATRICK OLIVELLE. Historical Sourcebooks in Classical Indian Thought. New York: COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2017. Pp. xiv + 410. \$80.

No one is better qualified to write a *summa* on Dharmasāstra than Patrick Olivelle, whose many works include a critical edition and translation of Manu, translations of the Dharma sūtras of Āpastamba, Gautama, Baudhāyana, and Vasiṣṭha, the smṛti of Viṣṇu, and the Arthasāstra of Kauṭilya, and the editing of a volume of papers by many scholars on the range and semantic history of the concept of *dharma*, among other things.

This magisterial overview of Dharmasāstra takes the form of a reader, owing to Sheldon Pollack, who solicited it for his new series of Historical Sourcebooks in Classical Indian Thought (the inaugural volume of which is his own contribution, a book on aesthetic theory, *A Rasa Reader*). The purpose of the series is to give comparativists and general readers, as well as advanced students and specialist scholars, access to the principal intellectual debates in the different disciplines, and to convey “the dynamism that marked classical thought.” The focus upon theory and debate is especially welcome. Possibly non-specialist readers given assisted entree to the Indian theorists of earlier times through this series will find ancient concepts of present use, in fields such as literary criticism and law. Such a consummation depends upon the writing of books of the kind and caliber of this one.

The hoped-for readership of both specialists and non-specialists has consequences for the form and argument of the book. To begin with it is situated in the overlap between dharma and law, understood as indigenous and modern quasi-counterparts of one another, giving the book a dual focus. It is even made singular through the expression “dharma/law.”

The consequences of writing at this particular intersection are made clear by the way in which Olivelle locates his book in relation to others. He frames it by using a well-known current work, that of H. L. A. Hart (*The Concept of Law*, 1994). Hart distinguished primary rules of law, which is to say the substance of law, the rules governing behavior and social life, from secondary rules, by which primary rules are recognized, changed, and adjudicated. Olivelle has chosen not to deal with primary law in Dharmasāstra at all. Accordingly, as he explains, this sourcebook is not a history of Dharmasāstra like the well-known works of P. V. Kane, J. Duncan M. Derrett, and Robert Lingat. Its matter is rather Dharmasāstra equivalents of Hart’s secondary rules of recognition, change, and adjudication.

This is a bold move, in a couple of ways.

By excluding primary rules, Olivelle brings to the fore debates that are epistemological and procedural in nature, corresponding to the two large parts into which he has divided his book, “Nature and epistemology of law,” treating of Hart’s secondary rules of recognition and change, and “Courts of law and legal procedure” (on which the Dharmasāstra has much to say), dealing with Hart’s rules of adjudication. The result of this foregrounding is to make the book more intellectual-historical than social-historical. By taking Hart as a contemporary jumping-off point that will be comfortable for non-specialist readers, Olivelle frames the body of dharma/law in the terms of a theory assuming a very different ground, that of “the Queen in Parliament.” Using Hart in this interesting way is not confined to the introductory framing; Hart’s scheme does some analytic work later in the book, but perhaps might have been used even more. In the absence of a parliament, for example, secondary rules of change are left to the theorists, who come up with the concept of Vedic injunctions observed in the past but forbidden in the Kali age. This is very different from the “repeal and replace” of modern legislatures, but the difference is not developed. There is one highly interesting passage on the king’s edict, but it is brief and solitary. Royal edict in India is compelling in the moment, but has a lightness of being in the long run. Comparativist readers will wish he had written further about that.

Because Olivelle does not fill his sourcebook with primary rules he has scope to bring in material from ancient intellectual disciplines outside but adjacent to Dharmasāstra, namely what he calls Vedic exegesis (Mīmāṃsā), Sanskrit grammar (Vyākaraṇa), and political science (Arthasāstra), with readings from Śbara and Kumārila, Patañjali, and Kauṭilya, respectively. Mīmāṃsā, an interpretive machinery for extracting injunctions and prohibitions from the Veda for the correct performance of the *ritual*, is a natural paring, as it provides Dharmasāstra with technical means for sourcing rules of *dharma* in the

Veda. Vyākaraṇa also provides an analogy, parallel but quite different, finding the standard of correct speech in learned brahmins (śiṣṭas), prompting dharma-experts to find the standard of correct behavior in the same place. Finally, Olivelle's close engagement with Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra proves highly productive. That the extensive section on rājadharmā in Manu's smṛti is an innovation without precedent in the dharmasūtras has long been evident, well before the rediscovery of the Arthaśāstra; and, as Olivelle shows, the Arthaśāstra is the likely source of much of the material in this section (see the formal demonstration of this by Mark McClish in *JAOS* 2014: 241–62), especially its third and fourth books, on the eighteen topics of lawsuits, criminal law, and the procedures of courts of law, including the technical vocabulary through which these things are discussed.

An important finding emerges from this attention to adjacent disciplines. A major theme of the book, carried throughout, is that there is within the Dharmaśāstra a never-ending debate over two contradictory propositions: that dharma comes from the Veda (*vedamūlyatvā*) and shares with it the qualities of being eternal and non-man-made (*apauruṣeya*); and that dharma is unmeasurably plural, being drawn from regions, villages, corporations (e.g., guilds of merchants or artisans), and lineages. The debate never truly ends, as both propositions are indispensable. Olivelle analyses the debate at length and explains it as the result of the great but conflicting influence upon the formation of Dharmaśāstra of the two neighbor disciplines of Mīmāṃsā and Arthaśāstra. This is very convincing. The second is purely pragmatic and its use-value for the state is evident. The first is highly theoretical, but it also has a use-value, not for the state but for the religion; because if dharma is plural and has many sources it would be impossible to exclude the scriptures of Buddhism as authoritative sources of dharma.

Although the treatment is selective, the chronological scope is comprehensive, giving readers a conspectus of about two millennia of debate and text-production. One of the special pleasures of the book, for me, derives from this comprehensiveness. I get from it a greater appreciation of the special importance of the early commentaries, which constitute a kind of golden age for dharma theory, to which Olivelle gives approximate brackets of seventh to tenth centuries CE. Ten major commentaries are known by name, but only four survive, and only in part. Of these he chooses Bhārucci and Medhātithi on Manu, and Viśvarūpa on Yājñavalkya, giving longish passages of each. He considers Medhātithi "perhaps the greatest jurist of ancient India."

It is difficult to overstate the value of this work, for all who seek to connect with the intellectual debates over dharma in ancient India. It is the ripened fruit of a long and distinguished scholarly life and, one might add, an exceptionally productive one. While this work is a culmination of many of his previous works, Patrick Olivelle, we may confidently guess, is even now at work on new writings with which to delight his readers.

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The Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmiki: An Epic of Ancient India. Vol. 6: Yuddhakāṇḍa. Translation and annotation by ROBERT P. GOLDMAN, SALLY J. SUTHERLAND GOLDMAN, and BAREND A. VAN NOOTEN. Introduction by ROBERT P. GOLDMAN and SALLY J. SUTHERLAND GOLDMAN. Princeton Library of Asian Translations. Princeton: PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2009. Pp. 1655 + xviii. \$210 (cloth), \$75 (paper).

The Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmiki: An Epic of Ancient India. Vol. 7: Uttarakāṇḍa. Introduction, translation, and annotation by ROBERT P. GOLDMAN and SALLY J. SUTHERLAND GOLDMAN. Princeton Library of Asian Translations. Princeton: PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2017. Pp. 1522 + xxii. \$175 (cloth).

The two volumes under review culminate a mammoth seven-volume project, whose first volume appeared in 1984. A team of North American scholars, spearheaded by Robert P. Goldman at the University of California, Berkeley, have translated into English the critical edition of Vālmiki's Sanskrit *Rāmāyaṇa* produced by an Indian team of scholars, spearheaded by V. S. Sukthankar at the Bhandarkar