

Thus Pingree's transmission histories have varying degrees of probability built into the form of their argument. Since his death, some of Pingree's more circumstantial reconstructions have been pushed back against both by those more cautious and those more under the sway of geo-linguistic disciplinarity. This volume reminds us that Pingree's transmission-oriented vision of, for example, the history of astronomy in India as part of a worldwide history of science, the most comprehensive and integrative such history yet attempted, is supported by a dossier of evidence drawn from many sources, including sources from outside India: from the Pahlavi *Bundahishn*, for example, or from what survives of the work of the 'Abbāsid astronomer, Ya'qūb ibn Tāriq. Pingree's argument would be that the cultural nativist or nationalist version of a history of science cannot simply ignore the dossier of fragments that are dispersed in many literary corpora in many languages, for, in the end, a good explanation is replaced only by a better one.

Despite his emphasis on a global vision and on transmission between cultures, Pingree did write synthetic essays on the culture of science in particular language ecumenes. Three such essays appear in *Pathways*: the early "Hellenophilia Versus the History of Science" (pp. 3–12) and two about the Indian culture of science (pp. 217–23, where a page is omitted, and pp. 261–69). The emphasis in all is on a scientific pluralism, an anti-teleological idea of science as pursuing different aims and offering different conditions of possibility. As a collection, *Pathways* is, then, representative of Pingree's main ideas and of his method. Students will find different parts of the book difficult, depending on their background.

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*Religion and Identity in South Asia and Beyond: Essays in Honor of Patrick Olivelle*. Edited by STEVEN E. LINDQUIST. Cultural, Historical and Textual Studies of South Asian Religions. London.: ANTHEM PRESS, 2011. Pp. 392.

This Festschrift in honor of Patrick Olivelle contains an impressive range of contributions, many by more junior scholars, and reflects the extent of Olivelle's research, teaching, and generous advising. The editor Steven Lindquist's introduction contains a short account and discussion of Olivelle's extensive body of scholarship, emphasizing the great variety of scholarship produced by his former students, especially studies with a focus on social history and religious identity. Thus the essays in the volume deal with historical periods from the *Rg Veda* to the present, and religious traditions from Hinduism to Manichaeism. With such a varied selection

of high quality contributions, this book, like all the best Festschriften, will long remain a repository of important scholarship on a number of topics as well as a source of intellectual pleasure.

The chapters are arranged in four sections and I present here just a small selection of the contents. In the first section dealing with "Word, Text, Context," the authors explore what we can say about the social and historical worlds of ancient texts, proposing some bold theses. Timothy Lubin presents a detailed discussion of the figure known as the "bath graduate" (*snātaka*), a graduate of Veda study. He points out that in several texts the status of married householder and bath graduate are quite distinct. The bath graduate was actually subject to more rigorous rules of conduct. By implication it seems that the householder of classical Indian texts was by no means always a Veda graduate. Jarod Whitaker's theoretically subtle paper tackles what "lengthening life" may have meant in the ritual, social, and political world of the *Rg Veda*. Moving away from a literal interpretation of this concept in terms of some sort of magical thinking, he concludes that when poets prolong the life (*āyus*) of their patrons this "represents then a badge of membership within early Vedic society, as it is tantamount to declaring a commitment to the endless performance of rituals" (64). Brian Black's paper lays out a clear, literary reading of the *Upaniṣads* in terms of a rhetoric of secrecy. He suggests this explicitly esoteric discourse creates a sense that the *Upaniṣads* contain alternative, rare teachings, and that this may reflect attempts to "reframe" Vedic knowledge at a time when ritual itself was waning in importance.

The next section deals with law and intellectual history. Robert Yelle's interesting short paper on "Punishing Puns" compares classical Hindu and more recent British academic theories of etymologizing (e.g., in Max Müller). He concludes that the two methods, though radically opposed in many respects, nevertheless share the goal of articulating a perfect language that corresponds to reality. Donald Davis's important contribution is a case study of Hindu adoption law as it was construed in an early modern legal text from Kerala where some communities had matrilineal kinship. In contrast to some scholarly assumptions, he demonstrates that females could be adopted, and suggests that this example helps us understand how Hindu law was created in practice: "a continuous process of accommodation and translating idealized, yet incomplete Dharmaśāstra rules into a system of positive, practicable laws" (p. 162).

In the next section, on "Buddhist and Jains as Selves and Others," Lisa Owen's chapter is a reflection on the *yakṣas* and *yakṣīs* in the cave temples at Ellora. Following a critique of earlier iconographic studies of these images, she turns to the function and meaning of these images in the caves. Rather than considering all these images together, she turns to the individual nuances of these

relief sculptures, comparing them to a variety of narrative texts, historicizing the images, explaining their appeal to contemporaneous worshippers, and their role in preparing devotees to enter the sacred space of the shrine chamber. Again, attention to detail, particularity, and reflection on social contexts dominate the scholarship of Olivelle's students.

The final section of the volume contains studies of Sufism, of Manichaeism, and of Hindu identity in modern India and the diaspora. Devin DeWeese presents a lengthy and thorough study of "Spiritual Practice and Corporate Identity in Medieval Sufi Communities of Iran, Central Asia, and India." Moving into a comparative mode, Jason BeDuhn's paper discusses the practice and theory of internalized sacrifice in Judaism, Hinduism, and Manichaeism, drawing on a range of texts in the primary and secondary literature. This lucid paper would be an excellent introduction to this idea in teaching religion, even on a undergraduate level. And finally, inspired by Olivelle's work on the *Upaniṣads*, Karlin McLain writes of "Young Śvetaketu in America," considering how the narrative of the figure of Śvetaketu is made available to young Hindus in the diaspora in the form of a comic book version. She concludes that while this comic book format is nowadays a familiar version of the story to many in the diaspora, the increasing availability of good translations of Sanskrit texts—such as those by Professor Olivelle—means that such comic books often share the shelves of the American Hindu temple library with classical versions. Thus, not only does the volume honor the range and depth of Olivelle's writing and teaching, but this tribute highlights the admirable accessibility of so many of his books.

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*Tales from Tang Dynasty China: Selections from the Taiping Guangji.* Edited by ALEXEI KAMRAN DITTER; JESSEY CHOO; and SARAH M. ALLEN. Indianapolis: HACKETT PUBLISHING CO., 2017. Pp. xiv + 162. \$46 (cloth); \$16 (paper).

*Record of the Listener: Selected Stories from Hong Mai's Yijian zhi.* Translated by CONG ELLEN ZHANG. Indianapolis: HACKETT PUBLISHING CO., 2018. Pp. xlv + 116. \$48 (cloth); \$16 (paper).

Hackett has published a considerable number of excellent books in various areas of premodern Chinese Studies. Slim, straightforward, and affordable, especially in paperback form, these books are usually of outstanding scholarly quality and thus perfectly suited for undergraduate teaching. In the last decade, translations from vernacular Chinese literature have formed a particularly interesting part of Hackett's repertoire: among

them several immensely useful volumes edited and/or translated by Wilt L. Idem and collaborators and dedicated to the stories that developed around major literary figures such as Dong Yong, Mulan, and White Snake.

The two books published recently and under review here are splendid additions to this tradition. Both books present fine translations of well-chosen vernacular stories from medieval China along with introductory materials providing historical, literary, religious, and cultural context. *Tales from Tang Dynasty China* offers twenty-two stories from the large, imperially commissioned late tenth-century collection *Taiping guangji* (comprised of ca. 7,000 stories in 500 fascicles); *Record of the Listener* presents one hundred stories from the somewhat smaller *Yijian zhi* (ca. 2,000 stories in 207 surviving fascicles), a collection published serially in the second half of the twelfth century by Hong Mai (1123–1202). The texts gathered in these two collections are difficult to classify according to genre, but most of them record something out of the ordinary, from avenging ghosts to miraculous healings, strange animal behavior, journeys to hell, spirit possession, prophetic dreams, and exemplary filiality—to mention only a few of the typical topics. They are justly famous for the insight they provide into religious culture and everyday life, and deserve to be better known for their narrative finesse, which can be found both in longer, more complex tales and in brief anecdotes. Apart from these similarities, the two books under review differ in certain aspects.

*Tales from Tang Dynasty China* is a collective work. In addition to the translations by the editors—Alexei K. Ditter, Jessej Choo, and Sarah M. Allen (who are also responsible for the volume's general introduction, pp. 1–30)—the book collects translations by five other contributors—Jack W. Chen, Timothy Davis, Linda Feng, Natasha Heller, and Manling Luo—all scholars who have published extensively on medieval literature and culture. The twenty-two stories, fascinating and diverse in subject matter and literary form, are gathered under three headings: "This World," "Between Worlds: Otherworldly Encounters in the Human World," and "Between Worlds: Travel to Other Worlds." Each of the uniformly faithful and often elegant translations (on average three pages long) is preceded by a brief introduction (of one to three pages) and followed by a few reading suggestions; annotations are included with the translation in most cases. This contextual placement of each story—in terms of its historical situation, religious implications, and relevance in Chinese literary history, for instance through the elucidation of literary motifs—is a great strength of *Tales from Tang Dynasty China* in the light of its use as teaching material. The editors and the publisher are also to be commended for the occasional addition of Chinese words and characters for personal names, important concepts, etc., throughout. Given this feature of the book, it would have made sense to translate the words for units of measurement, such as *chi* ("foot") and *cun* ("inch"),