

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.

JAMES MCHUGH
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

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"),

especially since these measurements are rarely used to indicate a precise length.

The appendices provide useful tools for teaching: a bibliography, an annotated list of the sources used by the editors of *Taiping guangji*, and three tables showing different categorizations of the translated stories: by chronology, by their *Taiping guangji* chapter headings, and by theme and topic. An additional key to the latter approach is provided by the general index.

Record of the Listener is the work of an individual author, Cong Ellen Zhang, which incidentally mirrors the single-authored, if multi-vocal *Yijian zhi*, since Hong Mai, although he presents himself as the title's legendary "listener" and receiver of stories told by others, has clearly shaped their literary form. Cong Ellen Zhang does not group the one hundred stories she selected according to theme but offers them in the order suggested by the Chinese edition of the *Yijian zhi*. Addressing the question of selection, the translator emphasized that she aimed to provide "a representative sample of Hong's work" (p. xiii) while at the same time choosing texts that have not yet been translated by other scholars (p. xxxvi). Relying on the twenty-five page general introduction as a frame of reference, *Record of the Listener* presents the stories, usually one page in length, without individual introductions and only sparingly annotated. The two-page "Thematic Guide," the only appendix to this book apart from a brief bibliography, allows the identification of some of the topics treated in the stories; an index would have helped to make the rich contents of these stories more accessible.

Zhang translates accurately and produces readable enough texts, although she frequently interrupts their flow with additional information in brackets: often short and useful (identifying dates, places, etc.), but sometimes also cumbersome and either superfluous (e.g., "The father was angry [to learn about his daughter's inappropriate behavior] and planned to move the coffin and burn the body") or confusing to anyone not familiar with Chinese ("the Fiscal Commissioner's office of the Liangzhe [Zhe East and Zhe West]," p. 30). The Chinese measurements used throughout the translations also disrupt the reading experience without adding any benefits, e.g., "fifteen *li* [about 7.5 kilometers or 5 miles] away from where he lived" (p. 13) or "between the *chen* [7 a.m. to 9 a.m.] and *si* [9 a.m. to 11 a.m.] hours" (p. 88).

Tales from Tang Dynasty China: Selections from the Taiping Guangji and Record of the Listener: Selected Stories from Hong Mai's Yijian zhi will not only make for immensely useful teaching materials, especially for instructors who want to venture beyond the usual anthology pieces, but hopefully also reach appreciative readers beyond the classroom.

ANTJE RICHTER
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO

Paradise and Hell in Islamic Traditions. By CHRISTIAN LANGE. New York: CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2016. Pp. xvii + 365. \$84.99, £54.99 (cloth); \$29.99, £18.99 (paper); \$24 (ebook).

Christian Lange divides his book—winner of the 2016 British–Kuwait Friendship Society Book Prize—into two almost equal parts. In the first part he examines the textual foundations of Islamic eschatological thinking, while in the second part he moves the attention from textual foundations to the lived reality of Muslim engagement with eschatological and apocalyptic thinking, with particular reference to the twin themes of paradise and hell.

In part one, the first text to be examined for references to paradise and hell is the Quran. Lange points out (p. 37) that "[r]oughly a tenth of the Qur'ān, perhaps more, deals with matters eschatological." He provides precise statistics about the frequency of use of the terms for this world (*dunyā*) and the otherworld (*ākhirā*), making much of this binary divide, which is helpfully presented in two charts. He then reflects on the balance within the Quran between paradise and hell, concluding (p. 46) that "the Qur'ānic landscape of hell is more developed and detailed than that of paradise."

Lange considers the matter of Quranic chronology and observes with circumspection (p. 48) that "whether the actual chronological sequence of suras and verses can be reconstructed, is a matter of controversy among scholars." Notwithstanding that reservation, he proceeds to draw a series of fascinating observations about the developing understanding of the themes of paradise and hell that emerge from a reading of the Quran according to the Nöldeke chronology.

While the decision to begin the discussion of textual foundations with the Quran is understandable, in many ways it represents merely a prolegomenon to the study of eschatological themes in Islamic literature. As Lange observes (p. 71), "as rich as the Qur'ān is in eschatological ideas and images, it only provides the skeleton for the variegated body of texts that form the Islamic tradition of imagining paradise and hell." And just as the Quran pictures paradise and hell in intimately concrete and worldly terms, this is even more the case in the tradition materials. The author proceeds to examine the rich eschatological material in the literature on Islamic tradition writing, from the early formative period, including but not limited to the six core Sunni compilations of hadith, right up to the nineteenth century, taking in the writings of such notable scholars as Ibn Kathīr (d. 1373) and al-Suyūfī (d. 1505).

This study then moves from a consideration of tradition material to a valuable examination of the themes of paradise and hell in popular writings. Particular attention falls on the eschatological thinking of al-Ghazālī in his *Iḥyā'*, but also considered are popular manuals, much needed given the currency of eschatological