Book Review

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How did polygyny shape Chinese society? What role did sex play in the Republican-era discourse on eugenics? Why is the penis-size question in China also a question of cultural history? Answers to these and many other questions are provided in the short, but well-rounded volume "Sexuality in China: Histories of Power and Pleasure", edited by Howard Chiang and published in 2018 by the University of Washington Press. Conceived of as a textbook for introducing students to "the major debates, sources, theories, and empirical contours of current historical work on Chinese sexuality, from the ancient times to the present," (4) the volume offers its readers erudite engagements with such diverse topics as polygyny, eugenics, lesbian-on-lesbian crime, genital anxiety and HIV among China's urban male elite, to name just a few. Despite the volume's stronger focus on twentieth century Chinese history, each of the nine chapter take both China's sexual antiquity and modernity into account to explore how sexual experience makes history.

Howard Chiang has made a name for himself as a leading authority on all things sex in China, which his win of the ICAS 2019 book prize for his latest monograph "After Eunuchs: Science, Medicine, and the Transformation of Sex in Modern China" (2018) further cemented. His remarkable grasp of the field shines through in the introduction, where he explains the pitfalls and challenges of doing sex history in a non-Western context and also explores some of the methodological difficulties historians face when exploring the pleasures of the bedroom through the documents of public life. Without negating Foucault's importance to the field, Chiang underscores the need for new historiographic approaches that bring Western constructivist notions of sexuality, marriage, family, and reproduction into a productive conversation with formations of historical experience that set China apart from other places in the world. One important point he makes is that we should neither treat sexuality in Chinese history as a variation on Western modernity nor romanticize China's past as entirely different and more authentic than the modern period, both in China as elsewhere. Such methodological reflections on how the pleasures of the

historian engender research approaches and results don't contradict, but rather strengthen Chiang's spirited plea for new and "sexy, powerful, and pleasurable" approaches to doing Chinese history. (13)

In the first chapter Debby Chih-yen Huang and Paul R. Goldin provide a comprehensive summary of polygynous practices in Chinese history from the Bronze Age to the early twentieth century but focus mostly on Han to Yuan period sources. Although plural marriage was never legal in China, wealthy elite men could until the New Marriage Law took effect in 1950 flaunt their wealth and increase their offspring by taking any number of concubines. The powerful ideology of patriarchy notwithstanding, the authors show that polygyny was not only a form of sexual servitude, but a complicated and evolving practice of family organization that shaped women's experiences for millennia. But whilst the authors usefully explain the many ways women could find greater social and financial security within a household, for instance, through social motherhood or a son, who passes the civil service exams, it would have been interesting to know more on women's experiences of marriage and child-rearing. Although encyclopedic coverage of Chinese sex history would be a tall order to ask of any introductory volume, a follow-up chapter on widowhood or female suicide could have perhaps helped bring female agency within China's marriage system stronger into focus. But historical scholarship necessarily builds on the available sources, from which we frequently learn very little about the everyday life experiences of socially disadvantaged groups. Ping Yao's review chapter of the historiography of sexuality in imperial China thus provides a useful summary of what sources do exist, how they have framed research agendas and what fields might be explored in the future.

Chapter three by Keith McMahon could have also been placed after Huang and Goldin's overview on polygyny, as it discusses the outpouring of sexuality, when the institutions of marriage and family appear no longer to uphold the proper moral and social order. Focusing on the obscure, eighteenth-century pornographic novel *Preposterous Words* (*Guwangyan* 姑妄言) and its place within the vast field of Qing period nostalgia literature that lamented the ending of the Ming dynasty, McMahon's careful analysis of the political and historical meanings of the novel's unabashedly licentious world reveal an unusual, but highly relevant expression of Ming loyalism, which emerged both from the centuries-long association of virility with political strength as well as Daoist theories on the decline of yang energy. The novel also indexes a crisis of masculinity that continued into modernity, where feminist issues further exacerbated Chinese men's fear of losing sexual and political control. This topic is taken up in chapter four by Mirela David. She discusses the reception of Bertrand Russell and Ellen Key in the *Ladies' Journal* (*Funü zazhi* 妇女杂志)

and how Western notions of free love and eugenics shaped the liberal visions of Chinese male feminists seeking to replace the old sexual morality, with the goal of improving the Chinese race. Focusing on the same period, Peter J. Carroll's chapter relates a highly publicized lesbian romance and murder case to Republican-era discussions on changing social mores, the dangers of late marriage, same-sex friendship, female physiology and the new malady of neurasthenia. Howard Chiang's own chapter on two sex-change cases from Shanghai in the 1930s and Taiwan in the 1950s usefully extends Carroll's discussion on the circulation of scientific ideas in Republican-era writings by theorizing the press as an important forum for the formation of public understandings of sexuality.

Just as the Republican period is frequently characterized by its highly heterogeneous cultural industry and intense interest in sexual topics in the public sphere, so is the socialist period often described as its stark contrast – a period, in which aesthetics was fully dictated by politics, and bodies and behaviors were forced to conform to new gender-neutral, desexualized ideals. In chapter seven, Shana Ye contributes to the growing body of scholarship that has in recent years revised this picture by recuperating a queer socialist perspective on the Cultural Revolution. Through "dynamic readings" of *tanbai jiaodai* 坦白交代, a genre of confessional writing from the Cultural Revolution, Ye argues that the neoliberal perspective on Western modernity as the basis of queer liberation is structurally blind to the various ways pleasure and desire is performed and produced within oppressive spaces. Beyond shedding further light on the wealth of sexual expressions during the socialist period, Ye's contribution demonstrates a very innovative and inspired approach to archival work that opens new avenues for further scholarship on queer socialism.

Male experiences are also at the center of the last two chapters. Drawing on various surveys and field work from the 1990s and 2000s, Everett Yuehong Zhang discusses the wide-spread anxiety among Chinese men about the size of their genitals. Zhang argues that feelings of sexual inferiority are not only a result of comparisons to the West during the post-Mao period, when exposure to foreign pornography and a new public shower culture created a competitive environment. The Maoist state's failure to deliver on its utopian promises is according to Zhang also partially to blame for exacerbating a culture of self-doubt and self-questioning. Surprisingly, Elana Uretsky's contribution on HIV among Chinese male elite is the only chapter on sex work, although it revises the term to include not only the work of marginalized women, but also the sexual activities of men that are in some form related to their waged labor. However, public health interventions focus predominantly on the sex work of women, with the result that men's vulnerability to sexually transmitted diseases is dangerously neglected.

Overall, smaller issues such as the romanization of 道 as both *dao* and *tao* in chapter two do not distract from the volume's very engaging and thoughtful scholarship. Although from a specialist's perspective in-text Chinese characters are generally preferred, a glossary at the end of the volume compensates for this. However, apart from Carroll's chapter, women's experiences and voices are given far less weight than men's perspectives. Chiang does not explain this imbalance but does take note of the pioneering work of feminist historians such as Gail Hershatter, Emily Honig and Susan Mann, on which the volume builds. Whilst the addition of two or three more chapters, for instance, on courtesan culture, Chinese widowhood or (both male and female) chastity might have helped create a more balanced overview of sexuality throughout Chinese history, this volume nevertheless succeeds at providing a valuable, and highly enjoyable sampler of the field. Moreover, by opening new avenues for comparative research and demonstrating innovative historiographic methods, this volume will not only be of interest to scholars of China, but also to historians and sociologist who study the changing dynamics of sexuality and knowledge.

Book Review

Marko Geslani (2018): *Rites of the God-King: Śānti and Ritual Change in Early Hinduism* (Oxford Ritual Studies). New York: Oxford University Press, XXII + 314 pp. ISBN 978-0-19-086288-6

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This is a really well-focused volume which deserves more than one reading, because apart from its highly innovative overall theoretical and historical framework, it also provides an incredible wealth of useful philological interpretive details in every paragraph. Therefore, a reader must start by reading the whole book all in one go, so as to appreciate the new reconstructive pattern it proposes. Then, he/she can go through all the chapters once again – including the footnotes where the selection of Sanskrit sources is often entirely cited and made easily readable with the help of the matching translation proposed within the text – paying all due attention to each of the analysed passages, to each reflection devoted to single lexemes or crucial sentences, or to the several references to the recent and less recent relevant secondary literature employed. As a consequence, the last step has to be a careful re-consideration of the specific ancient sources that this book quotes or hints at and the attentive reappraisal of the vast number of already significant research contributions on which it relies.

The pivotal purpose of this volume, which explicitly attributes a crucial role to "royal ritual life" in the history of South Asian Religions, is declared at the beginning of p. 10:

> I will suggest that the late Vedic Atharvan Priesthood, in collaboration with the early Indian astrological tradition, designed a royal ritual regime that would prove pervasive and paradigmatic in the later mainstream tradition.

Indeed, what turned out to be "pervasive and paradigmatic" was the significance of the several rituals of *śānti*, i. e. of "appeasement", which actually came to replace all the other royal ceremonies during the first half of the first millennium CE. Instead of the adoption of complex sacrificial Vedic strategies to bring about a king's legitimation and his reign's inauguration or cyclic empowerment, the post-Vedic royal liturgy is rather officially aimed at neutralizing inauspicious omens and, deep down, at removing sin by means of simple "apotropaic" ritual actions. A king's authority is ritually derived from "his ritually perpetuated state of sinlessness and immunity from inauspiciousness",

which "enables him, as the 'root' of his subjects to ensure the safety (*abhaya*) of the kingdom." (p. 190)

As is well-known, a cognate dramatic change of ritual perspective, i. e. the replacement of complex Vedic sacrifices with mere *dakṣiṇā*s envisioned as *sava*s, had already been enlightened by Jan Gonda, who in 1965 recognized an important breakthrough in the later Atharvaveda literature, namely in the *savayajña*s as they are depicted in the *Kauśikasūtra*. By contrast, the close relationship and substantial merger between the newly fixed taxonomies of auspiciousness vs. inauspiciousness, and purity vs. impurity, and the Atharvan tendency to monopolize the politically fundamental role of *purohita* at the kingly court, had never been yet explained in such an overt and detailed manner until now.

The most important new ritual actions to avert evil are definitely water aspersions, generous donations,[1] expiatory rites, recitations of Atharvan mantras and muttering litanies of divine names. They are all simply performed either on the king's body (or on the "regalised" image of God). The complexity of Vedic sacrifices (plausibly including reciprocity, e. g. between donor and recipient *pātra*) was thus replaced by the mono-directional Atharvan ritual actions, as especially taught in an often-neglected section of the ancillary literature of the Atharvaveda tradition, namely the *Śāntikalpa* (one of the so-called *Atharvaveda Pañcakalpa*s, which also encompass the *Nakṣatrakalpa* and the *Āṅgirasakalpa* and the well-known *Kauśikasūtra* and *Vaitānasūtra*) and the *Atharvaveda Pariśiṣṭa*s.

Indeed, the above-mentioned are all sources which in principle have not been ignored, since, on the contrary, they were critically edited quite early on, and published at the beginning of the twentieth century. In particular, the second chapter of the *Śāntikalpa* was edited, translated, and annotated by George Melville Bolling in 1904[2] and the first chapter edited by the same scholar in 1913.[3] The *Atharvaveda Pariśiṣṭa*s were edited by Bolling and by Julius von Negelein in two volumes in 1909–10 for the publishing house Harrassowitz (reprinted by Chaukhamba Orientalia in 1976). The *Śāntikalpa* (together with the *Nakṣatrakalpa*), was significantly already the object of a paper presented by one of the world's leading experts on the Atharvaveda tradition, i. e. Shrikant S. Bahulkar, within the context of the 31st All-India Oriental Conference held in Jaipur and published in 1982.[4] The *Atharvaveda Pariśiṣṭa*s also re-attracted the

1 See already Gonda 1965: 11–13.

2 *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 35: 77–127.

3 *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 33: 265–278.

4 Proceedings edited by the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, pp. 179–184.

attention of Sanskrit Scholars in 1993, when *The Ancillary Literature of the Atharvaveda. A study with special reference to the Pariśiṣṭas* by B.R. Modak was published in New Delhi (by the Rashtriya Veda Vidya Pratishthan). Furthermore, and plausibly at the same time as the present reviewed volume was being written, an important PhD Thesis entitled *A Critical and Comparative Study of the Śāntikalpa of the Atharvaveda* was prepared by Ambarish Vasant Khare, under the guidance of Shrikant S. Bahulkar himself, and submitted to the Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth in Pune in 2017.[5] Among the other things, this Thesis supplies a new critical edition of the *Śāntikalpa* (and also a useful index of mantras).

By contrast, what is unprecedented and successfully presented in this volume by Marko Geslani is the complex argument that these sources, and especially the Atharvan astrological regime depending on them, paired with the newly specialized functions of domestic priests (*purohita*), should not only have provided the whole Indian religious dimension with a new template for the worship of gods' images, but also renovated the use of the solemn gifting ritual to transfer a donor's sin to the recipients.

If we look for the origin of the key notion of such a cultural revolution, i. e. *śānti*, we easily realize – even only by consulting Vishva Bandhu's *Word-Index to the four Vedas*[6] – that this is not a word that took a long time to become popular. Indeed both *śānti-* "appeasement" and *śānta-* "appeased", referring to people or to elements such as earth or fire already occur in the Atharvaveda itself (see e. g. AVŚ 3.21.9; 19.1–5 and AVP matching passages, according to Whitney, Lanman 1905) with a meaning which is not so far from the one later attested in the *Kauśikasūtra* and so on, where *śānti* is precisely the outcome of a ritual action adopted for averting evil, producing calmness of mind and recovering the well-being of the sacrificer, traditionally called *śānti-karman*. Moreover, as Whitney himself noticed in the relevant introductory notes, these passages are re-used by the *Kauśika-(Gṛhya-)Sūtra*, which, let us recall, might have been more ancient than both the *Vaitāna-(Śrauta-)Sūtra* and the *Gopatha-Brāhmaṇa*.[7] Furthermore, they might have constituted, together with the other two mentioned works, a common lore of the Atharvaveda-School, rather than the exclusive property of the Śaunakīya or Paippalāda School.[8] Thus, even on the basis of such simple lexical data, it is self-evident that emphasizing how

5 See https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/handle/10603/198831, accessed on February 24th, 2020.

6 Bandhu 1963, vol. 2: 942 *s.v. śam-*.

7 See Bloomfield 1899: 102, Patyal 1969: XIV–XX, and the bibliography quoted there.

8 See Gonda 1977: 544–545.

these concepts gained increasing success throughout the history of the South Asia does not exclusively mean underlining a prevalence of the late ritual ancillary Atharvaveda literature (possibly contaminated, e. g. with Śivaism) over some other earlier ritual traditions. Instead, it also shows how at least a part of the Atharvaveda tradition – not necessarily a late one – at a certain age supplanted the ritual background that relied on the other Vedic branches and became the mainstream within the historical course of Indian religions.

In other words, it is true that the above-mentioned later Atharvaveda sources developed a number of new ritual forms specifically oriented to the royal office (*rājadharma*) and to the image worship which also determined the rise of a religious organization based on the temple system controlled and administered by kings.[9] It is also undeniable that a crucial step in the new era of ceremonies devoted to royal consecration and of rituals in general was taken by the omen compendium contained in the *Gārgīyajyotiṣa* (probably dating back to "near the turn of the common era") and by the standardization of the scheme for omen classification established in Varāhamihira's *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* in the sixth-century CE (see pp. 65–66). As a consequence, the bipartite structure of the volume – as outlined on p. 17 – is certainly consistent, inasmuch as it helps readers to realize the influence that this later development might also have had on the so-called Hinduism:

> In the first half of the book I take a close look at the development of *śānti* within the ritual texts of the Atharvaveda and in Varāhamihira's most famous text, the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā*. In the second half I apply this ritual and textual history more broadly to the arena of early medieval Hindu praxis with an eye to recent themes in ritual studies.

Nonetheless, it is clear that in such a new historical reconstruction of South Asia religions, the Atharvaveda emerges as a whole alternative Vedic block with respect to the Ṛgveda and Yajurveda, *de facto* superseding the ritual supremacy of the latter which had lasted for several centuries. Geslani's inquiries, in fact, offer further confirmation as regards the new configuration of the sacrificial arena, as clearly explained for the first time by Inden,[10] but there is also a more general consequence on the historical assessment of the Atharvaveda tradition.

As regards as the first point, in particular, it is noteworthy that in such a configuration the Brahmán is no longer selected from the group of the triple Veda as head of the priests involved in the Śrauta version of the sacrifices performed for the king. Furthermore, the Brahmán is not separate and independent from the *purohita*, who previously was devoted to exclusively

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9 See already Geslani 2017 and Geslani/Mak/Yano/Zysk 2017.

10 See Inden 1992: 566; 573.

complying with the ritual exigencies of the king's household. The new schema rather recommends a Brahman who also plays the role of *purohita* and later on, but in the same line of historical development, even prefers an astrologer (*sāmvatsara-/mauhūrtika*) as chief-priest during the ceremonies performed within the boundaries of a temple, where the most important role of the king is the patronage carried out for the temple itself and his commitment to guaranteeing his realm an absolute freedom from all misfortune and anxiety. In this regard, the following two sentences, for example, are extremely telling:

> [...] while the Atharvan priest is called *brahmán* (and also *guru*), it is clear that he is not the same fourth priest of the old *śrauta* regime but in fact the *purohita*, the king's personal "chaplain," who functions as the primary agent of the rituals in the *Appendices*. [i.e. in the *Pariśiṣṭas*] (p. 75).

> [...] in Varāhamihira's "Chapter on Omens," the astrological tradition reconceived of all possible dangers to the state within a comprehensive scheme of omen classification while reiterating the king's responsibility to remove these dangers ritually. (p. 191)

However, as hinted above, apart from these momentous but individual changes, there are some data pointing to the fact that this branch of the Veda acquired an obvious degree of centrality that would previously have been unconceivable in view of the long time it spent marginal to and outside the orthodoxy. First of all, the importance of the Brahman both as the sole officiating priest required by the Gṛhyasūtras and as supervisor of the Śrauta rites cannot be a pure coincidence. Moreover, the label "Brahmaveda" assigned to the Atharvaveda for the first time in just the Ṛgvedic Gṛhyasūtras, namely in the *Śāṅkhāyana-Gṛhyasūtra*[11] should have been a turning point that cannot be underestimated. In line with all this, is also the special claim reserved (e. g. in the Atharvavedic *Gopatha-Brāhmaṇa* 1.2.18 and *Kauśikasūtra* 94.2.4) to priests learned in the Atharvaveda to be the king's *purohita*.

It is fascinating that such a dramatic transformation of the "confessional" and liturgical landscape correlates with another capital phenomenon on which more than one of the most recent and brilliant Indological inquiries seem to have shed light. Bronkhorst defined this transformation as an action of "re-inventing themselves" on the part of Brahmins, when they "had lost, or were losing, their positions as priests in a primary religion, and were re-inventing themselves, mainly by turning inward."[12] The result of such a reshaping of the status, in substance, of the first two social classes, led the Vedic environment straight to the emergence of the Atharvaveda Śākhā – to the detriment of the

11 Bronkhorst 2016: 81.

12 Bronkhorst 2016: 161.

other Vedic branches – and perhaps even more to the re-emergence of the quite ancient Indo-Aryan culture for which the Atharvaveda sources were the official vehicle of very late canonization. For instance, several philological works on the Paippalāda Recension of the Atharvaveda,[13] have proven that Paippalādins were often depicted as needing to present themselves as the most suitable king's *purohita*s. In point of fact, it is clear, as stressed by Bronkhorst, that "the formulas collected in the AV provide opportunities to Brahmins to use their supernatural powers also outside the realm of extensive and expensive solemn rites", because "These kinds of formulas and the associated rites made it possible for Brahmins to exert their powers even in hostile situations, in circumstances where the support of the ruling classes was not guaranteed or worse."[14] Moreover, the new political circumstances might have made these Atharvan opportunities really appealing for the ruling classes for whom the Śrauta rules were not part of their own historical legacy and whose territories were quite vulnerable and subject to internal and external attacks.

Consistent and extremely intriguing is thus also the hypothesis advanced by Geslani (p. 155) about the pattern that the brahmins might have profitably adopted in transforming themselves into "timeless" figures who "having internalized the ascetic's ethic of renunciation, rested permanently beyond society". This seems to perfectly match with the increasing importance of ritual purity and the practical need for separation from human society that the ideal Brahmanical life came to imply, as singled out by Bronkhorst[15] and realistically backdated by the literature on the *āśrama*s, which were isolated from the rest of the world. Almost indirectly Geslani also seems to make us understand that the previous attitude of fighting or boycotting asceticism as a permanent choice of life – documented for example in epic sources – had become nonsensical for *purohita*-to-be brahmins, whose ideal life was notwithstanding influenced by certain exemplary Brahmins in literature and arts.

In real daily life, it was easy to see just how indispensable the role of the Brahmins had become, especially if it is considered against the new social background, because "It is the king's patronage of this priestly class, rather than his martial prowess, that should guarantee his temporal command" (p. 155). And in such a new balance relying on a strongly modified rulers-priesthood partnership, some quite ancient institutions and rites seem to resurface as part of a valuable and persistent cultural substrate. For instance, the violent military protocol of legitimation which had been the main act in the past as a dramatic overture able to ensure

13 See, e. g. Lelli 2015: 389.

14 Bronkhorst 2016: 225–226.

15 Bronkhorst 2016: 157.

the *rājasūya*, the *aśvamedha* or the *mahābhiṣeka* kingly performances, could be recovered as a miniature *yātrā*, as a ritualized king's stay in the wilderness, followed by his triumph over the enemies and his installation or re-installation on the throne. It could even be upsetting to reflect on the quite material idea that "the ruler's body bears the burden of the sin of the entire kingdom", so that he periodically "must be scrubbed clean of every karmic flaw, and present himself, thus made auspicious to the gaze of his citizens" (p. 195). This conception of sin as intrinsically belonging to whatever kingdom with its insistence on the king's person, so that the king himself is permanently relegated – basically under the direction of the priesthood – to "a position of utmost servitude" (p. 195), is not necessarily a fresh factor in this later formula of royal office. It might rather have been something that emerged from the past with its competitive sacrifices such as the assumedly original *sattra*s which, according to Falk's reconstruction, entailed the self-immolation of the leader, carried out – at least on an ideal plane – as the supreme effort made for the sake of all the members of the brotherhood.[16] Indeed, in the frame of such an ancient Indo-Āryan institution, the leader's observance of several ascetic vows on behalf of the other members of sodality must surely be envisioned as one side in the mutual commitments (*vratá*) established between the group and their leader,[17] and, moreover, all these *vratás* were however presented as divine attributes to be imitated by all.[18] Nonetheless, the special ultra-mundane heroic scope to gain access to heaven (*svarga loka*) as a god, reserved to the leader – as it is often mentioned in the relevant ancient sources – cannot fail to highlight the absence of any apparent material advantage for the leader:

> *Taittirīya-Saṁhitā* 7.4.9.1: *ātmádakṣiṇam vaí sattrám, ātmānam evá dákṣiṇàṃ nītvā́ suvargám lokáṃ yanti*
>
> The *sattra* has the self as its sacrificial gift. After presenting themselves as sacrificial gift, they go to the heavenly world;
>
> *Kauṣītaki-Brāhmaṇa* 15.1.23; 26: *ātmadakṣiṇaṃ vai satram [...] ātmānam evaitat kalyāṇyai kīrtyai svargāyalokāyāmṛtatvāya dakṣiṇāṃ nayāmīti*
>
> The *sattra* has the self as its sacrificial gift. Thus, let me present myself as a sacrificial gift for good fame, for the world of heaven, for immortality.

Analogously, Geslani (p. 264) underlines such asymmetry in the later king-subject relationship where the *darśana* of the king's body is the shaft on which the whole mechanism turns:

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16 Falk 1985; Falk 1986: 37–40.

17 See Proferes 2007: 17; 39.

18 See Lubin 2001, cf. Malinar 1996: 268.

> The royal body is made to be seen. Auspiciousness – perhaps easily (mis)taken for liberation–radiates outward from this body. The king's subject are hardly entitled to individual recognition: they are fortunate to gain sight of him as their blessing. At the very least, between seeing and being seen our texts posit a definite hierarchy, keyed to the monarchy. A king gains little from the sight of his public; the public, everything from the sight of their king.

However, in such a manner the king obtains "public allegiance" and "political obedience" (illuminating terms used by Geslani, p. 264), just as the hero of a brotherhood obtained a loyal support for his expeditions, according to the prototypical relationship illustrated by Prajāpati's myth. The God is "besought for increase of wealth", because through him "one receives the possibility of eating food" according to some Yajurveda Saṁhitā passages also focused on by Gonda.[19] On the other hand, all those who entrust themselves to the God become obliged (*vrátyāḥ*) to him and come to constitute his troops (*vrā́tāḥ*) – cf. *Maitrāyaṇī-Saṁhitā* 2.6.12 and *Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa* 1.7.4.3 in Proferes's[20] and Maggi's[21] interpretation.

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19 Gonda 1986: 55.

20 Proferes 2007: 58–59.

21 Maggi 2019: 64–65.

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Book Review

Scharf, Kurt: *Halt aus in der Nacht bis zum Wein – Gedicht-Anthologie*. Bremen: Sujet-Verlag, 2019. 74, ISBN 978-3-96202-044-6.

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> Literatur ist die angenehmste Art und Weise, das Leben zu ignorieren. (Fernando Pessoa)

In der gegenwärtigen Zeit erlangen diese Worte Pessoas neue Akzente: Man findet überraschend Zeit nachzudenken. Und manche unter uns können aus der Wirklichkeit entkommen, in andere Sphären hineintauchen und die eigenen Wahrnehmungen schärfen und neue hinzugewinnen. Eben hier kann Literatur eine große Rolle spielen, neue Sinnenfreuden schaffen, Balsam für die Seele sein und so die „bleierne Zeit" schadloser vorbeigehen lassen.

Genau das haben die „alten (europäischen) Klassiker" verstanden: In jener Zeit, als die Welt ihnen nicht entsprach, fanden sie in orientalischer bzw. persischer Dichtung eine neue ästhetische Kunstwelt. Goethe beschreibt dies in seinem West-östlichen Divan:

> Und mag die ganze Welt versinken,
> Hafis, mit dir, mit dir allein
> Will ich wetteifern! Lust und Pein
> Sei uns, den Zwillingen, gemein!
> Wie du zu lieben und zu trinken,
> Das soll mein Stolz, mein Leben sein.

Diese Reflektion ihrer persönlichen Wahrnehmung und das Eintauchen in andere Kulturen verleiht ihnen die Fähigkeit, sich als „Brückenbauer" zwischen unterschiedlichen Welten zu positionieren, sodass wir immer auf sie zurückgreifen können.

Die neu erschienene Anthologie *Halt aus in der Nacht bis zum Wein* verdeutlicht genau dies. Kurt Scharf steht wie kein anderer für die Vermittlung persischer Dichtung im deutschen Raum. Schon 1977 war er als Mitarbeiter des Goethe-Instituts in Teheran an der Organisation von Dichterlesungen beteiligt. Im Gedächtnis vieler Iraner*innen sind die damaligen zehn Abende Dichtung ein großes Ereignis, insbesondere in einer Zeit, als durch Zensur und Überwachung iranische Dichter*innen kaum Gelegenheit hatten, direkt mit ihrem Publikum in Dialog zu treten. Niemand ahnte damals, dass etwa 14 Monate später das Schahregime durch eine revolutionäre Masse gestürzt würde.

Scharf kennt das iranische Kulturgut und hat bereits persische Dichtung brillant übersetzt, sowohl klassische als auch moderne. Seine Arbeit ist daher von hoher Qualität. Mit diesem Buch kann die Leserschaft die Entwicklung der modernen persischen Dichtung des 20. Jahrhunderts in großer Breite erkunden. Sie kann Zeuge davon sein, wie Dichtung mit gesellschaftlichen Umbrüchen und Entwicklungen in Wechselwirkung steht.

Scharf stellt in seiner Anthologie eine Auswahl von 32 Dichterinnen und Dichtern aus der zweiten „Blütezeit der modernen persischen Lyrik" vor, von der Abdankung Reza Schahs im Jahre 1941 bis zu der Islamischen Revolution von 1979.

Im Unterschied zur klassischen persischen Dichtung ist die moderne Lyrik Irans nicht den Regeln des Metrums unterworfen, weshalb mannigfaltige Gedichtformen, frei von vorgegeben technischen Zwängen, genutzt werden können. Interessant ist, dass der im Westen bekannte und breit rezipierte Dichter Rumi schon im 13. Jahrhundert klagte, die Einschränkungen durch das Metrum hätten ihn zu Grunde gerichtet.

Neu an den Inhalten der modernen Gedichte ist unter anderem die starke Konzentration auf Themen wie Politik, Gesellschaft und soziale Aspekte und somit eine größere Nähe zur Lebenswirklichkeit der Menschen.

Die Anthologie versammelt weniger bekannte und bekannte Dichter, beginnend bei Nimā Yuschidsch (S. 17–26), der als Vater der modernen persischen Lyrik gilt. Sein Weg war alles andere als einfach, geradezu steinig, da er sich nicht selten mit den in der dichterischen Tradition verhafteten Poeten auseinandersetzen musste.

> Mein Schrei zerbricht, bleibt er im Hals mir stecken
> Und wenn er deutlich zu vernehmen ist
> So wisst
> Um den Weg frei zu machen für euch und mich
> Schreie ich
> Schreie ich (Mein Gesicht ist verzerrt, S. 23)

Es folgt Ahmad Schāmlu (S. 27–58), einer der wichtigsten Poeten der modernen Dichtung Irans. Sein schöpferisches Können umfasste fast alle Genres der persischen Literatur: Erzählungen, Märchen, journalistische Texte, Folklore und Übersetzungen. Er war ein genialer Literat, der mit seiner Feder die Herzen begeisterte wie kein anderer nach ihm, und ein Zauberer der Worte, der mit seinen künstlerischen Wahrnehmungen fast alle ästhetischen Möglichkeiten der Sprache ausschöpfte:

> So ein liebender zog über des Schicksals blutiges Feld
> Mit einer Achillesferse –
> Durch die Welt.
> Ein unverwundbarer
> Und das Geheimnis seines Tods
> War der Kummer der Liebe
> Und der Gram der Einsamkeit. (Das Lied Abrahams im Feuer, S. 38)

Schāmlus meisterhafte Übersetzungen von Rilke, Éluard und Lorca machten die iranischen Leser*innen mit der europäischen Lyrik vertraut. Er war auch einer der ersten, der das System der Islamischen Republik hart kritisierte und prophetisch voraussagte, wie sich die Islamische Revolution entwickeln würde:

> Nun stehen wir an der Schwelle eines unsichtbaren Sturms. Die Windfahnen setzen sich seufzend in Bewegung. Ein pestartiger Dunst ist am Horizont aufgestiegen. Man kann Zuflucht suchen in Höhlen des Schweigens… Jeder Schrei ist ein Weckruf, sodann schreien wir mit unseren blutigen Kehlen und verkünden das Aufkommen des Sturms.
> (Zeitschrift *Ketāb-e Jom'e*, Nr. 1, 1979)

Anders als Schāmlu gibt es Dichter*innen, die ihr Heil in der Islamischen Revolution sahen oder ihr gegenüber zumindest positiv eingestellt waren – obschon sie wahrscheinlich anderer Ansicht waren als die Verfechter der Revolution oder keine allzu großen Vorstellungen von einer islamischen politischen Ordnung hatten. Einige dieser Dichter*innen werden in der Anthologie vorgestellt: Tāhere Saffārzāde (S. 211–214) stand in Diensten des Regimes und schrieb auch ein Lobgedicht für Khomeini. In diese Gruppe gehört auch Ne'mat Mirsāsāde (S. 242–244), der schon in den 1960er Jahren und auch während der Revolution Khomeini pries und in ihm den Messias sah. Er büßt heute im Exil in Paris für seine damalige Fehleinschätzung. Siāwosch Kassrā'i (S. 69–70), ein Dichter der Moskau-orientierten Tude-Partei richtete sich im Jahr 1979 in einem seiner Gedichte an Khomeini:

> ….. Nun, dass die Klinge deines Dolches schneidet,
> schlag zu.

Es gibt jedoch auch Dichter*innen, die später ihre Fehler einsahen. Essmā'il Cho'i (S. 215–234) bat die Hinterbliebenen des Schahs öffentlich um Verzeihung.

Forough Farrokhzād (S. 171–194) war eine Dichterin, die sich rebellisch in einer von Männern dominierten Dichterwelt behauptete und mit ihrem poetischen Potential, schonungslosen Worten und kompromissloser Einstellung die Konventionen ins Wanken brachte. Ihre zarten, jedoch zugleich nüchternen Worte nehmen die Leserschaft in imaginäre und vielschichtige Sphären mit. Begleitet von einer latenten Melancholie wecken Farrokhzāds Gedichte geliebte Erinnerungen:

> Mein Teil ist ein trauriger Spaziergang im Garten der Erinnerungen
> Und um Kummer einer Stimme den Geist aufzugeben,
> die zu mir sagt:
> „Ich liebe deine Hände" (Eine Wiedergeburt, S. 190)

Sohrāb Sepehri (S. 92–121) war ein Dichter und Maler aus Kashan, einer Oasenstadt am Rande der Wüste. So erklingen auch die Melodien seiner Gedichte: naturnah, still und von Einsamkeit erfüllt. Ihn kann man als mystischen Poeten bezeichnen, der mit buddhistischen und fernöstlichen Weltansichten vertraut war. Sepehri

wollte „im Zauber der Rose schwimmen“ und „nicht die Geheimnisse der Rose ergründen“ (S. 108). Er sehnte sich nach fernen Orten:

> Hinter den Meeren ist eine Stadt
> In der die Sonne leuchtet wie die Augen derer, die früh aufstehen
> Dort sind die Dichter Erben der Vernunft, des Wassers und des Lichtes.
> Hinter den Meeren ist eine Stadt!
> Ein Boot müsste man bauen. (Hinter den Meeren, S. 113)

In der Anthologie folgen weitere herausragende Dichterinnen und Dichter, die im Gedächtnis der poesieliebenden Iraner*innen tiefe Spuren hinterlassen haben, und andere, die bloss vorübergehend auf der dichterischen Bühne ihren Platz fanden. Abgerundet wird der Band mit einem ausführlichen Glossar und biographischen Angaben zu den vorgestellten Dichterinnen und Dichtern. Einzig was die Transkription der persischen Namen angeht, würde sich die Leser*innenschaft eine leichter lesbare Umschrift wünschen, etwa Sohrāb Sepehri anstatt Ssohrāb Ssepehri.

Zweifelsohne wird die interessierte Leser*in bei der Lektüre dieses Buches, dessen Gedichte so meisterhaft und vorbildlich in die deutsche Sprache übertragen sind, manchen heiteren, aber auch tiefsinnigen Worten und einzigartigen Metaphern begegnen und zuweilen voller Wonne und versonnen in eine andere Welt eintauchen.

Die Zusammenschau der ausgewählten Dichterinnen und Dichter in der Anthologie kann als Abbild einer Umbruchzeit gesehen werden; aber dies bedingt auch einen Blick auf die gegenwärtige politische Landschaft Irans:

Vier Jahrzehnte nach der Islamischen Revolution ist das Resultat prekär. Politisch, wirtschaftlich und gesellschaftlich ist das Regime in einer tiefen Krise. Wollte man heute eine Bilanz ziehen, wären hierfür auch die iranischen Literaten in die Pflicht zu nehmen. Denn sie tragen eine moralische Verantwortung für ihre Versäumnisse und für ihr Unvermögen, die Geistlichkeit und die religiösen Akteure der Revolution zu entzaubern. Da gilt wohl immerfort, wie schon Molière feststellte: „Wir sind nicht nur verantwortlich für das, was wir tun, sondern auch für das, was wir nicht tun!“

Book Review

Sugahara, Yumi / van der Molen, Willem (eds): *Transformation of religions as reflected in Javanese texts*. (Javanese Studies Series: Contributions to the Study of Javanese Literature, Culture and History; 5). Tokyo: Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, 2018, lx + 179 pp. ISBN: 9784863372580.

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The book under review is the first publication stemming from a three-year research project entitled "Transformation of religions as reflected in Javanese texts" started in 2013 at the Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa (ILCAA), Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, under the coordination of Yumi Sugahara. Willem van der Molen, one of the project's collaborators and co-editor of the present book, in his short Introduction explains that "the project aims at clarifying how the originally foreign religions of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam have been interpreted and transformed in Java from the ninth to the nineteenth century" (p. viii). The editor further elaborates:

> What makes the project special is that it does so by analyzing and comparing Javanese and Old Javanese texts. Studies on Javanese religion often emphasize the so-called "pre-Islamic" elements still found in modern Javanese society and religion. However, pre-modern, let alone pre-Islamic, Javanese texts are seldom analyzed for the purpose of this discussion. The history of these texts covers a period which is simply too long to be merely summarized as "pre-modern" or "pre-Islamic". If we seriously wish to elucidate religious, and also linguistic and cultural transformation, it is necessary to analyze and compare Javanese texts of the entire period. (p. viii)

Van der Molen rightly identifies in the analysis and comparison of Old and Modern Javanese texts an urgent scholarly desideratum, which could enable us to individuate continuities and changes over the long period of time going from the beginning of Old Javanese literature (ca. Eighth century) to the nineteenth century and even down to the present. This project in general, and the publication under review in particular, are therefore valuable and much needed contributions to our understanding of Javanese religion and literature in the longue durée.

I do have some qualms about the statement that "Studies on Javanese religion often emphasize the so-called 'pre-Islamic' elements still found in modern Javanese society and religion", for modern scholarship has often

emphasized Islamic elements, as an attempt to counterbalance the colonial scholarly legacy privileging the "Hindu-Buddhist" past of Java. Albeit legitimate, this attempt has often resulted in losing sight of the continuities between the pre- and post-1500 religious, cultural, and literary "divide" (however thin or artificial this may be) in Javanese history. This lack of a longue durée approach is precisely the intellectual problem lamented by van der Molen. It would have been helpful to elaborate on this issue in the Introduction by at least providing the reader with some historiographical and bibliographic information, as well as some theoretical grounding, to better contextualize and understand the framework of the discussion.

A contentious statement by van der Molen is that "the number of people still actively involved in this type of research [i. e. Old Javanese philology] has drastically fallen and continues to decrease, while the results of their research [i. e. of Dutch scholars and Indonesian and other researchers trained in the Dutch tradition] are hardly referred to any more in modern scholarship" (p. vii). While it is true that Old Javanese is no longer taught in the Netherlands in a curricular way, a not insignificant and slowly but steadily increasing number of scholars or teams of scholars of different backgrounds based in many parts of the world – for instance France, Germany, Israel, Australia, the USA, Canada, Japan, and of course Indonesia – are actively involved in researching and teaching not only Old Javanese language and its philology, but also aspects of the cultures, histories, religions, and literatures of Java and Bali. A series of Old Javanese summer courses held over the past 5 years, to which van der Molen himself contributed, have not only promoted the formation of a new generation of students of Old Javanese both in Indonesia and overseas, but also contributed to "de-provincialise" the study of premodern Java by drawing a significant number of students and scholars from different disciplinary backgrounds. Give this situation, it is hard to speak of a decline; on the contrary, I think we are witnessing a sort of "renaissance" of Old Javanese Studies, not only in terms of quantity but also of quality, involving as it does a cross-contamination between once tightly compartmentalized disciplines.

As a matter of fact, this academic and intellectual cross-contamination and de-compartmentalization is still far from being universally accepted in the field. Van der Molen laments this state of affairs:

> Scholars tend to concentrate on single periods and genres and sometimes on single texts, each from their own disciplinary background, without much discussion across disciplinary boundaries, even when using the same texts. Few efforts have been made to compare developments belonging to different periods, while the data made available through philological spadework have not been exploited to the full by students of anthropology and history. However, it is only through full-scale, interdisciplinary exploration of the

available data that we can gain full insight into the character of change and the causes underlying it.

In spite of this very apt manifesto, one may say that the volume under review still preserves to a significant extent the customary disciplinary and intellectual compartmentalisations that have characterized the field of Javanese Studies thus far. For instance, contributions reflect a chronological order, and observe a rather tight divide between the Pre-Islamic and Islamic periods. There are few if any attempts to seriously engage in comparative work or investigate religious continuities and changes over a long period, for instance from Hindu and Buddhist religiosity to Islamic mysticism. This looks like a missed opportunity. While the essays reflect the perspectives of various disciplines (yet mainly philology), only those by Aoyama, Yamasaki, and Ricci engage (to barely sufficient degrees, save for the study by Ricci) with materials beyond Java.

The first chapter, by Stuart Robson, is a philological essay discussing some religious concepts found in *kakavin*s from various ages in the Old Javanese period. Robson carries out a "terminological" analysis by comparing a corpus of 7 sources from the eleventh century to the Keḍiri and Majapahit periods, leaving out the Old Javanese *Rāmāyaṇa* "because it dates from a considerably earlier period, the second half of the ninth and early part of the tenth century" (p. 5). I wonder why the author has chosen to limit his scope in a volume that programmatically deals with the issue of change over the longue durée. Robson discusses a series of ideas, such as issues of authorship, political statements, the supreme, etc. In the section "The Supreme", the author lists and briefly discusses the names of gods, like Śiva, Viṣṇu, etc., and such expressions as *Saṅ hyaṅ jagatkāraṇa*, *Utpattisthitilīna niṅ dadi*, *Saṅ saṅkan para niṅ sarāt*, *Vidhi*, etc., and concludes that "with these terms we seem to have moved from the conception of a particular deity, with a personal name, to a more philosophical plane, where the adherence to a certain school or devotion to a particular cult may not have been so crucial" (p. 12). Although there is some truth in this statement, especially concerning the blurred allegiance to, and boundaries between, specific cults/schools in later Old Javanese texts, Robson's conclusion is not entirely supported by the textual evidence, as many of these expressions are actually found in demonstrably early sources (being indeed ultimately derived from prototypical Sanskrit texts from the Indian Subcontinent), and have simply been carried over and further expanded in the later sources, especially in Middle Javanese texts. In his conclusion (p. 14), Robson states: "certain terms, in the area of religious experience, seem to prefigure ideas to be found in the 'mystical' movements (*aliran kebatinan*) of contemporary Java or in the traditions of Javanism (*Kejawen*)". As this is undoubtedly the case

according to the present reviewer, it would have been interesting, especially in the cadre of this volume, to at least mention and elaborate on some of those ideas.

Toru Aoyama in his chapter marries philology and art history by advancing an iconographic analysis of the concept of *mokṣa* as depicted in one scene from the *Rāmāyaṇa* reliefs at Candi Śiva in Prambanan in the light of Old Javanese and Sanskrit texts that contain the same story. He points at some intriguing discrepancies between the texts belonging to both traditions and the details of some reliefs. While he provides some interesting examples and a fresh interpretation of some key episodes, I am not entirely convinced that all instances of what appear to be just "death" scenes actually reflect an underlying, unitary idea of *mokṣa* (intended as liberation from worldly existence achieved through soteriological means, like yoga) as documented in both the Old Javanese and Sanskrit religious traditions; rather, they could simply represent "theatrical" representations of (often violent) death of demonic characters at the hands of Rāma, which cause the killed beings to assume a different (original, and higher) form. On p. 29, the author writes: "While the written tradition, even when it was disseminated orally still retained its script-oriented, civilized, elitist India-oriented characteristics, the reliefs may have reflected more indigenous ideas about the interaction between the living and spiritual beings". The use of the word "civilized" is unfortunate as it implies an artificial dichotomy between intrinsically cosmopolitan and civilized Indic-influenced elite Javanese tradition and an intrinsically local and "uncivilized" (and prevalently oral) indigenous tradition. As a matter of facts, the features of "cosmopolitan/elite" and "local/indigenous" traditions, especially in premodern Java, as well as the boundaries between them, are often difficult to tease out, for many of the traits we perceive as "indigenous" may be the result of cosmopolitan and circulatory dynamics (including, for instance, "Austronesian" ideas and practices associated with the cult of ancestor gods and other "non-Indic" or spiritual beings), or even the reconfiguration of originally Indic ideas and practices.

The third chapter by Miho Yamasaki investigates religious change as reflected in the imprecations in Old Javanese inscriptions from the ninth and tenth centuries. This is one of the few chapters that consistently and explicitly deal with the issue of religious transformation, albeit still within a narrow timespan within the pre-Islamic period. It is a valuable study insofar that it analyzes the overall structure of imprecations and distinguishes their various elements. The author categorizes the Sanskrit words Baprakeśvara and Haricandana as "indigenous", which is debatable. The author claims that these two words "are Sanskrit words, but they are not known in India as the names of deities. This strongly suggests that these deities to whom invocations

are addressed are indigenous elements". But the fact that these words are not attested in exactly the same form, or with the same meaning, in the Sanskrit and vernacular literatures of the Indian Subcontinent known to us does not imply that they are, strictly speaking, "indigenous". Such Sanskrit(ic) words often denote reconfigurations of Indic deities, like for instance Pātañjala (arguably an appellative of Agastya), which is unattested in India with that meaning. In connection with Pātañjala, the fifth and central member of the five Kuśikas or *pañcarṣi*, the author refers to the Old Javanese *Kuñjarakarṇa*'s equation of the *pañcakuśika*s (the five *ṛṣi*s known in India, as the author acknowledges en passant) with the five Jinas of Mahāyāna/Mantranaya Buddhism (p. 36), but does not mention their occurrence in earlier Old Javanese Śaiva texts (in their turn probably inspired by Sanskrit sources) and their association with the Pāśupata myth of Pātañjala, for instance in the *Dharma Pātañjala*.[1] Again, Yamasaki labels this complex and its appearance in curses an "indigenous element", but in the conclusion argues, to my mind more aptly, that "certain Indic elements, such as *Pañcakuśika*, had altered status in Java" (p. 42). A minor glitch is found on p. 34, where the purported names of the directions in Sanskrit are actually the corresponding Old Javanese forms, such as *neriti* (Skt *nairṛti*), *bayabya* (Skt *vāyavya*) and *airśanya* (Skt *aiśāna/aiśānī*). Perhaps here the author intended to mean "Sanskritic" or "Sanskrit-derived".

The second part of the volume, as it were, takes the reader to the early modern and modern period. Chapter 4 by Koji Miyazaki is a historical and textual analysis of the Javanese myth of time known as the story of Watu Gunung in the light of sources like Modern Javanese *babad* and *kanda* texts. The author notes that the *wuku* names of Javanese calendar attested in the corpus of Old Javanese inscriptions seldom appear in *babad*; on the other hand, the term *pawukon* is not found in Old Javanese works, which attest *wariga* and *sundari* instead, and these terms are still used in present-day Bali.

Chapter 5 by Bernard Arps takes us to the eighteenth and nineteenth century, with a fascinating analysis of Bima's quest for the water of life as documented in the *Bhima Suci*, a mystical text composed at the Surakarta court of Paku Buwana IV on the basis of an earlier Old Javanese source. Arps illustrates how, in the courtly circles of Surakarta, themes contained in Old Javanese poems were morphed into Modern Javanese mystical literature of Islamic persuasion, reflecting the quest for union with the Lord. This carefully researched and engaging piece is one of the best contributions in the volume, and one that actually does full justice to the theme of religious change and textual transformation.

1 See Acri 2014.

Chapter 6 by Edwin Wieringa, the longest of the book (38 pages), discusses the *Sĕrat jiljalaha*, a highly peculiar late nineteenth century text allegedly authored by the devil himself, who – in a reverse-psychology attempt to defend orthodox Islam – instructs the reader to indulge in the infamous five cardinal vices. The author provides a thorough philological and socio-cultural description of the text, as well as a detailed summary of its contents. However, I find that a more explicit interpretation of the association of the pre-Islamic elements with the "religion of the devil" as a critique of "Javanism" would have been in order. For instance, the text explicitly links its ultimate genesis to the milieu of the – obviously pre-Islamic – *paṇḍita* and ascetic (*sang tapa*) Jajal Lanat who resided in Candi Sewu and was visited by devils, ghosts, and humans alike who sought his knowledge (pp. 110–111), and purportedly declares itself to be based on an old book written in the letters of Durgā (*sastra Durga*) and in Ijajil's language (p. 112). Further, it describes "Javanist" customs and characters such as the dancing girls *taledhek* and the dancing-party *tayuban*, as well as the notorious five Ms (*ma lima*, viz. *madat, minum, main, madon, maling*), which represent an inversion of the basic Javanese Islamic ethical codes and which, as the author notes, do also have Sanskrit counterparts (the *pañcamakara*) associated with transgressive and left-handed form of Tantra in the Indian tradition. In my opinion, the Javanese author might have intended to counterpoise Islam to this "left-handed" (*pangiwa*, in the Javanese sense of *buda*/buddhic, i. e. pre-Islamic) heritage. Indeed, the five Ms are also found in the *Suluk Gaṭoloco*, which contains a critique of Islam from the point of view of Javanism. Wieringa instead links the "relative boom in literary texts cautioning against the Ms" in that period with "the factual surge in opium consumption, and must have been especially triggered by the pernicious effects of *madat* or opium smoking which brought in its train a series of other Ms" (p. 125). In my opinion, both the ideological and socio-economic explanation could be simultaneously true.

Chapter 7 by George Quinn explores the ideological continuities between early modern and contemporary Java by focusing on the tales about the late former Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid ("Gus Dur"), which identify him as the tenth *wali*. Quinn shows how these tales reflect motifs found in earlier Javanese literature, especially in mystical texts such as the *Suluk Linglung Sunan Kalijaga (Syeh Malaya)* and the *Dewaruci*. Quinn's argument is convincing, but his contribution may have benefited from a more philologically thorough treatment of the textual history of the *Suluk Linglung*. The author uses what he simply calls a "variant" version originally written in 1884 by Iman Anom of Surakarta, a descendant of Sunan Kalijaga, which was published in 1993 by the Balai Pustaka, and makes no attempt to unravel its complex manuscript history. The Balai Pustaka edition is often metrically incorrect and contain several

corrupted passages, which can often be restored with the help of versions preserved in other manuscripts – for instance, a fragment contained in Tanaya's edition of the *Bhima Suci* published in 1979.[2] This lack of philological concerns notwithstanding, Quinn successfully draws attention to some fascinating parallels between sources of different ages and persuasions, which enlighten us about wider issues of Javanese literary culture. More philological and codicological work on these sources could add more historical depth and open the doors to our understanding of the dynamics of change in Javanese literature, and the role that textual and scribal practices played in it. Both Quinn's and Arps' contributions show how the reuse of texts and other text-building strategies current in Javanese circles reflect a resilient tendency to allegorically match tales (starting from the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa* of the pre-Islamic period) to contemporary socio-political issues and events.

The last chapter by Ronit Ricci stands out in the present collection in that it focuses on a region beyond Java, namely Sri Lanka, and in that it upholds a comparative, trans-regional perspective. It builds on previous work by the same author on the descendants of exiles from the colonial period from various regions of Indonesia and their "Javanese-flavoured" Islamic manuscripts in Malay language.

Taken together, these contributions reflect careful and valuable scholarship illuminating (temporally circumscribed) aspects of religious transition in Java, but only partially succeed in exploring dynamics in the longue durée throughout the period from the ninth century until the present, especially when it comes to the passage from the "Hindu-Buddhist" to the "Islamic" paradigm. In this respect, it appears that the editors have been unwilling to transcend the disciplinary compartmentalisation and parochialisation that has characterized the field of Javanese textual and cultural studies since Post-WWII, which has often focused on "localized" micro-histories and philologies investigating religious dynamics in Java as self-contained phenomena, both in terms of chronology (i. e. the "Hindu-Buddhist" and "Islamic" periods, with scholars of the former rarely if ever taking into account material post-dating the sixteenth century, and vice-versa) and geography (i. e. Java as an area to be understood in its own terms). This, again, reflects the current state of the field of Javanese Studies, which has seldom opened up to the wider Asian context to take into account South Asia-Southeast Asia or Indian Ocean cross-cultural dynamics, intra-Asian connections, etc. Overall, this volume feels like "old school" Area Studies scholarship that, I believe, needs to be transcended in the light of recent intellectual paradigms highlighting more global and circulatory cultural dynamics.

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2 For an example, see Acri 2019: 293.

Another perplexing aspect of the book is the complete, and hard to justify, lack of engagement with the vast and understudied body of Śaiva and Buddhist religious literature in (Sanskrit and) Old Javanese of the *tutur* and *tattva* genre, which tells us a great deal about religion and religious change in Java. In this respect, too, the project's leaders and contributors appear to be still clinging to the established custom in Old Javanese studies to primarily focus on two genres as the main sources of data, namely *kakavin*s and inscriptions. The three contributions on the pre-Islamic period included in the volume epitomize this approach.

It is to be hoped that any future publications stemming from this project and its spin-offs will continue the important and high-quality scholarly investigation kickstarted by the volume under review, and will cover or expand on the aspects that are either missing or only marginally taken into account in it. One more desideratum would be to include contributions from Indonesian scholars, who are not represented in this volume.

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Book Review

Utomo, Franziska. 2019. *Tokyos Aufstieg zur Gourmet-Weltstadt: Eine kulturhistorische Analyse.* München: Iudicium, 273 S., ISBN: 978-3-862-05051-2.

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Essen und Ernährung haben sich in den letzten zwanzig Jahren zu einem salonfähigen Forschungsthema in den Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften entwickelt und einen wahren Food Studies Boom ausgelöst. Das gilt auch für die Asienforschung. In den Asian Food Studies nimmt die Beschäftigung mit Essen, Ernährung und Landwirtschaft in Japan eine prominente Rolle ein.[1] Dies verdankt sich auch dem weltweiten Boom japanischer Küche und dem Interesse an japanischer Küche nach der Ernennung von *washoku* zum UNESCO-Weltkulturerbe im Jahr 2013. Und so überrascht es nicht, dass in den letzten Jahren auch mehrere kulturhistorische Publikationen zu vielfältigen Aspekten von Essen und Ernährung in Japan erschienen sind.[2]

In diesem akademischen und gesellschaftlichen Kontext ist auch die 2019 erschienene Monographie (und zugleich Dissertation) *Tokyos Aufstieg zur Gourmet-Weltstadt. Eine kulturhistorische Analyse* von Franziska Utomo zu verorten. Darin zeichnet die Autorin den Diskurs über und die Entwicklung der Gourmetkultur in Japan von der Edo-Zeit (1603–1868) bis zum Ende der Shōwa-Zeit (1926–1989) nach. Sie führt die Leser*innen durch fünf Jahrhunderte kulinarischer Kultur Japans und zeigt Kontinuitäten, Brüche, Wandel und wiederkehrende Muster auf. Der geographische Fokus liegt auf Edo bzw. Tokyo als Japans Hauptstadt während dieser Zeit. Franziska Utomo hat Kochbücher, kulinarische Romane, kulinarische Zeitschriften und Hausfrauenzeitschriften gelesen und sich durch deren Auswertung Erkenntnisse darüber erhofft, "wie es dazu kam, dass Japan heute ein Land voller Gourmets und Foodies ist" (S. 27). In ihrer kulinarischen Kulturgeschichte Japans kommen Gastronomen, Köche, Teemeister, Hobbyfeinschmecker und kulinarische Mäzene ebenso vor wie Publizisten, Schriftsteller und andere Künstler (S. 17).

Das Buch ist chronologisch nach historischen Epochen gegliedert und besteht neben einem theoretischen aus vier inhaltlichen Kapiteln über die

1 Leong-Salobir 2019.

2 Vgl. z.B. Cwiertka und Yasuhara 2020; Rath 2016; Stalker 2018.

Edo-Zeit (1), die Meiji-Zeit (2), die Taishō-Zeit und frühe Shōwa-Zeit (3) sowie über die späte Shōwa-Zeit (4). In der Einleitung führt die Autorin das Thema der japanischen Gourmetkultur ausgehend von Tokyos gegenwärtiger kulinarischer Vielfalt ein und verweist auf die internationale Anerkennung der japanischen Küche. Sie argumentiert, dass der "bürgerliche Gourmetdiskurs" (S. 17) der Edo-Zeit die Grundlage für die gegenwärtige Gourmetkultur Tokyos darstellt. Sie zeigt, dass in Japan für jede Epoche eigene Begrifflichkeiten für den Gourmet bzw. die Gourmetkultur entstanden. In der Edo-Zeit war es der *tsū*, in der Meiji-Zeit der *kuidōraku* und in der Taishō-Zeit wurde über *bishoku* gesprochen, bevor ab den 1970er Jahren die Begriffe *gurume* und *b-kyū gurume* den Diskurs prägten. Die Autorin fragt, inwiefern dieser diskursive Wandel auch einen Wandel hin zu einer Öffnung von der Elite zur "Masse" impliziert und stellt die Hypothese auf, dass heute "so gut wie jede Art des Essens einen Status als Gourmetspeise erlangen" (ebd.) könne und es keine Zugangsbeschränkungen mehr zur Teilnahme am Gourmetdiskurs gibt.

Im Kapitel "Gourmetkultur: Eine theoretische Annährung" bemüht sich Utomo um eine Definition der Begriffe Gourmetkultur und Gourmet, insbesondere soll letzterer vom Begriff des "Foodie", der in den 1980er Jahren aufkam, abgegrenzt werden, was allerdings nicht trennscharf gelingt. Nach einer Auseinandersetzung mit dem Gourmetdiskurs und dessen Begrifflichkeiten in Frankreich, führt die Autorin folgende drei Charakteristika des Gourmetdiskurses ein: 1. Distinktion, 2. Inszenierung und 3. Reflexion. Außerdem stellt sie den Begriff des "kulinarischen Rahmens" vor, der in jedem der folgenden Kapitel für die jeweilige Epoche am Ende des entsprechenden Kapitels beschrieben wird.

Mit diesem begrifflichen Rüstzeug ausgestattet, beginnt im nächsten Kapitel die Reise in die kulinarische Kultur der Edo-Zeit. Diese führt die Leser*innen von den Vergnügungsvierteln in Edo zum Hof des Shōgun und dann zu den in Edo entstehenden (und immer wieder verbotenen) Essensständen und Restaurants. Utomo stellt die Bankette bei Hofe vor, die zwischen luxuriösen mittelalterlichen Festessen (*honzen ryōri*) und den bescheidenen *kaiseki*-Menüs der Teemeister changieren. Sie gibt Einblicke in Kochbücher, Reiseführer mit kulinarischen Empfehlungen und Etikettebücher sowie in kulinarische Vorlieben der Bürger von Edo. Die Autorin erzählt von reichen Kaufleuten, die offiziell verbotene Lebensmittel wie Fleisch konsumierten und eine feine Lebensart in Kennerschaft (*tsū*) und Kultiviertheit (*iki*) anstrebten. Diese war geprägt durch eine gehobene Esskultur, die nicht nur mit Ästhetik, sondern auch mit Vergnügen assoziiert wurde. Utomo argumentiert, dass sich in der Edo-Zeit Elemente der gehobenen Esskultur entwickelten, "auf die in späteren Zeiten gerne zurückgegriffen wurde" (S. 104). Insbesondere bedeutsam sei die Aneignung der gehobenen Küche

der Samurai durch urbane, bürgerliche Feinschmecker gewesen, die neugierig und mutig genug waren, auch Verbote zu übertreten. Insgesamt blieb die Gourmetkultur der Edo-Zeit, so Utomo, aber eine private Angelegenheit, die in Rückzugsräumen stattfand, in denen die feudale Gesellschaftsordnung außer Kraft gesetzt war.

Das Kapitel über die Meiji-Zeit thematisiert die Bedeutung, die die Öffnung des Landes und europäische und amerikanische Einflüsse auf die kulinarische Kultur Japans hatten. Diese war geprägt von der Neugier auf "westliche" Küche. Insbesondere die französische Küche spielte eine prominente Rolle im Gourmetdiskurs, den die Autorin anhand von Gourmetzeitschriften und Romanen darstellt. Anhand des Romans *Kuidōraku* von Murai Gensai (1863–1927) und Kōda Rohans (1867–1947) *Chinsenkai* zeigt sie, dass sich der Begriff des Gourmets und der Gourmetkultur wandelte und an Ernsthaftigkeit gewann. Bei Murai wurde der Schlemmer zum zivilisierten Genießer (auch im Alltag), bei Kōda aber zum elitären, außerfamiliären Genussintellektuellen. Die Deutung der Begriffe *kuidōraku* und *shokudōraku* war umkämpft und wurde auch in den neu gegründeten Gourmetvereinen und Gourmetzeitschriften diskutiert. Die Vitalität der kulinarischen Kultur der Meiji-Zeit zeigt Utomo lebendig am Beispiel von Banketten, Tanzveranstaltungen und Hotelrestaurants. Während bei Staatsbanketten französische Küche serviert wurde, aßen die meisten Japaner zu Hause weiterhin japanische Gerichte. Gleichzeitig entstanden in der Alltagsküche Mischgerichte wie Brot mit roter Bohnenpaste (*anpan*) oder neue Fleischgerichte wie *sukiyaki*. Die kulinarische Kultur bewegte sich zwischen den neuen westlichen Lebensmitteln und Speisen (*yōshoku*) und japanischer Küche (*washoku*).

Das folgende Kapitel behandelt die Zeit von 1912 bis etwa 1930, in der sich, so die Autorin, kulinarische Entwicklungen aus der Meiji-Zeit konsolidierten. Die westliche Küche war in Form japanisch-westlicher Mischgerichte bereits so sehr in die japanische Alltagsküche übernommen worden, dass sie für Gourmets uninteressant wurde. Die Gourmetkultur der Taishō-Zeit sei daher von der Neubewertung der chinesischen Küche und der gleichzeitigen Wiederentdeckung der japanischen Küche – aus den ländlichen Regionen und der Vergangenheit (vor allem aus der Edo-Zeit) – geprägt gewesen. Im Mittelpunkt des Kapitels stehen das literarische Werk *Bishoku kurabu* von Tanizaki Junichirō (1886–1965) und das Wirken von Kitaōji Rosanjin (1883–1959), der als Gourmet, Künstler, Restaurantbesitzer und Autor nicht nur den Gourmetdiskurs der Taishō-Zeit dominierte, sondern bis heute einflussreich ist. *Bishoku* wurde zum Gourmetbegriff der Taishō-Zeit. Rosanjin trug zu dessen intellektueller Reflexion und zur Professionalisierung der Gourmetkultur bei. In dieser Zeit pluralisierte sich der Gourmetdiskurs bereits und Gourmets wandten sich neben der französischen

Küche zunehmend der japanischen und der chinesischen Küche sowie der Küche der Edo-Zeit zu, die wieder fremd und exotisch geworden war.

Dieser kulinarische Pluralismus prägte auch die späte Shōwa-Zeit zwischen 1970 und 1989, der sich das letzte Kapitel des Buches widmet. Etwas überraschend (und leider unkommentiert) wird die Zeit von 1930–1970 ausgespart, so dass dieser kulinarische Pluralismus hier als Kontinuität daherkommt. Das Kapitel beginnt nach dem Ende der Hochwachstumsphase, als sich Kochen als Hobby und das Essen in Restaurants als Zeitvertreib für alle Bevölkerungsschichten etablierten. Die Begriffe *gurume* und *b-kyū gurume* verweisen auf eine Gourmetkultur der Massen in der alles zum Gourmetessen werden kann. Insbesondere die Popularisierung von Gourmetdiskursen über Medien wie das Fernsehen machten die elitäre Abgrenzung über das Essen schwieriger, die Gourmetkultur verlor ihre Ernsthaftigkeit. Wichtiger wurden Spaß und Ungezwungenheit beim Genuss von Essen und neben dem Essen selbst gewann auch die Atmosphäre, in der gegessen wurde, an Bedeutung. Mit der Internationalisierung der Esskultur folgte ein ethnischer Food Boom auf den nächsten und parallel fand eine Wiederentdeckung regionaler Küchen statt. *Fast food* und *slow food* existieren ebenso nebeneinander wie industriell hergestellte und selbstgemachte (*tezukuri*) Gerichte. All diese Foodtrends werden in den zahllosen Kochshows thematisiert, in denen zunehmend auch Frauen als Gourmets und Expertinnen erscheinen, während spezielle Kochsendungen eine "Männerküche" propagieren, die Männer als Freizeitköche ansprechen sollte. In den letzten beiden Jahrzehnten der Shōwa-Zeit wurde Essen zum Ereignis und privaten Vergnügen, das zwischen Exotik, Tradition, dem Eigenen und dem Fremden changierte und nach Bedarf angeeignet werden konnte.

In ihrem Fazit argumentiert Franziska Utomo, dass die gegenwärtige japanische Gourmetkultur von zwei Phänomenen geprägt sei: dem professionellen Gourmet und dem Foodie. Allerdings seien die Grenzen zwischen beiden fast immer fließend. Diese Tendenz sei bereits seit der Edo-Zeit erkennbar. So ziehe sich beispielsweise das intellektuelle Genießertum, das in Büchern oder Magazinen dokumentiert ist, wie ein roter Faden durch alle Epochen. Insbesondere hebt Utomo die große Offenheit japanischer Gourmets hervor ausländische Küchen aufzunehmen, betont aber, dass diese häufig im Wechsel mit der nostalgischen Rückbesinnung auf die eigene Esskultur einhergegangen sei. Die Bewertung fremder und der eigenen Küche(n) habe sich in den letzten 500 Jahren immer wieder von Faszination zu Ablehnung und zu erneuter Faszination gewandelt. Unverändert und daher eine Konstante in der japanischen Kultur sei aber seit der Edo-Zeit die Leidenschaft für das Essen.

Franziska Utomo erzählt die Genese der gegenwärtigen Gourmetkultur Tokyos seit der Edo-Zeit in interessanter und anschaulicher Weise. Das Buch ist ausgezeichnet geschrieben. Die Autorin hat das bereits vorhandene, aber verstreute Wissen zu Teilaspekten der kulinarischen Kultur Japans zusammengetragen und miteinander in Beziehung gesetzt. Es ist das erste derartige Werk in deutscher Sprache und der Autorin gebührt für das Zusammentragen all dieser Informationen aus fünf Jahrhunderten Respekt. Das gilt insbesondere auch für die Leistung, die japanische Sekundärliteratur einem deutschsprachigen Publikum zugänglich zu machen. Besonders zwei Aspekte möchte ich positiv hervorheben. Erstens werden in jedem Kapitel auch Genderfragen thematisiert: von den Hausfrauen in der Meiji-Zeit über die *modern girls* der Taishō-Zeit bis zu den männlichen Hobbyköchen in der späten Shōwa-Zeit wird deutlich, dass Frauen bis heute als zuständig für die Alltagsküche gelten und erst in der späten Shōwa-Zeit als Gourmets ernster genommen wurden. Zweitens fand ich die Darstellung der Begriffe, mit denen Gourmetküche, Gourmetkultur und Gourmets jeweils bezeichnet wurden, und deren Wandel durch die Epochen hinweg sehr spannend. Gelungen ist es der Autorin dabei auch, immer wieder Bezüge zwischen diesen Begriffen herzustellen und Muster aufzudecken.

Dass mit den Kriegsjahren und der direkten Nachkriegszeit eine wichtige Epoche der japanischen Geschichte in diesem Buch ausgespart wurde, kann sicher auch positiv bewertet werden: So bleibt für all diejenigen, die sich mit den kulinarischen Entwicklungen in dieser Zeit beschäftigen möchten, noch vieles zu entdecken und zu analysieren. Das gilt auch für die nur wenig genutzten Primärquellen, aus denen leider nur selten zitiert wird. Mit Blick auf den großen Zeitraum, der in diesem Buch abgedeckt wird, war das vermutlich auch nicht anders zu bewältigen, denn 500 Jahre zu untersuchen, ist für eine Dissertation ein sehr ehrgeiziges Unterfangen. Der lange Untersuchungszeitraum und die gleichzeitige thematische Vielfalt sind eine Stärke des Buches, gleichzeitig gehen sie aber mitunter zulasten der analytischen Tiefe.

Insgesamt hat Franziska Utomo eine beeindruckende Fülle von Informationen zusammengetragen, die den Leser*innen eine Reise durch mehrere Jahrhunderte japanischer Esskultur ermöglichen. Es ist daher all denjenigen zu empfehlen, die sich für japanische Küche interessieren und schon immer einmal wissen wollten, woher auch heutigen Gourmets vertraute Begriffe wie *kaiseki* oder *ichijū sansai* (eine Suppe, drei Beilagen) kommen. Studierenden und Wissenschaftler*innen vermittelt das Buch einen guten Überblick über kulinarische Themen seit der Edo-Zeit.

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Book Review

Jan Westerhoff: *The Golden Age of Indian Philosophy.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018, xxvi + 326 pp. ISBN: 978-0-19-873266-2.

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The aim of Westerhoff's monograph is to offer a concise history of the development of Buddhist philosophy in its "Golden Age," reaching from the Abhidharmic period at the beginning of the first millennium CE up to the lifetime of the Buddhist logician and epistemologist Dharmakīrti (between the mid-sixth and mid-seventh century), with a few forays into the later period until the decline of Buddhism on the Indian subcontinent. The introduction sets out the book's overall approach (pp. 1–34) as being historical, while in the concluding remarks Westerhoff also highlights the importance of engaging with Indian Buddhist philosophy systematically; he specifies his goal as "doing philosophy with ancient texts" (p. 284). This resonates with John Taber's spirited argument for engaging philosophically with Indian philosophical literature put forward in the pages of this journal in 2013.[1]

The main part of the book is structured rather conventionally and treats the major schools of thought in the chronological sequence of their formation: Abhidharma (pp. 35–83), Madhyamaka (pp. 84–146), Yogācāra (pp. 147–216), and the school of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti (pp. 217–281), i. e., logic and epistemology or simply Pramāṇa. Engagement of Buddhist philosophers with non-Buddhist schools of thought is dealt with through a selective treatment of three sets of debate appended to the chapters on the individual schools: between Madhyamaka and Nyāya (pp. 142–146), Yogācāra and Vedānta (pp. 212–216), and Pramāṇa and Mīmāṃsā (pp. 259–270). Brief concluding remarks are offered (pp. 282–285), followed by a bibliography (pp. 287–307) and an index (pp. 308–327).

Throughout the main chapters dealing with the individual schools, Westerhoff is concerned with identifying factors that influenced the historical development of certain seminal philosophical ideas (pp. 6–8) such as the no-self doctrine, Mahāyānist illusionism, the doctrine of universal momentariness, or the Yogācāra

1 Taber (2013): "On Engaging Philosophically with Indian Philosophical Texts". *Asiatische Studien / Études Asiatiques* 67.1: 125–163.

doctrine of mind-only. In this connection he systematically focuses on three such factors: argument and debate, the interpretation of sacred texts, and meditative practice. Westerhoff moreover discusses key thinkers, texts and concepts, and in the process also draws attention to interrelationships between these schools and difficulties in differentiating them. In providing historical context he also draws on the rich repertoire of "mythographies" (to use Peter Schwieger's felicitous term for Tibetan Buddhist historiography) in order to convey how individual figures or the formation of particular ideas were understood from within tradition. In dealing with such narrative constructions, Westerhoff generally argues in favor of bracketing or suspending naturalist assumptions in order to better understand why such constructions were presented in the way they were (p. 33) instead of dismissing them as mere fanciful embellishments of historical facts. He recommends the same for specific Buddhist views of the past that conflict with present-day historical realism, even though this recommendation in the end seems rather vacuous given that many of the historical accounts in Westerhoff's book are fairly conventional realist pictures. In sum, much more than merely giving an account of the external history of Indian Buddhist philosophy, the book is a philosophical presentation of ideas and arguments that reflects on the forces that drove their historical development and takes inner-traditional perspectives into consideration.

The first chapter dealing with Abhidharma surveys the main factors in the formation of Abhidharma and its literature, highlighting conceptual matrices (*mātṛkā*), the catechetical question-and-answer style and a quest for comprehensive theory as the main features of an Abhidharmic approach. It also summarizes distinctive traits of the main Abhidharmic schools., which are divided into the two major groups of Mahāsāṅghika and Sthaviranikāya, the latter including Theravāda, Pudgalavāda, Sarvāstivāda and Sautrāntika. Chapter 2 on Madhyamaka begins with a discussion of the rise of the Mahāyāna and its relationship to Buddhist philosophy. In this connection, Westerhoff considers Mahāyānist "illusionism" (the idea that the world of appearances as well as the *dharma*s postulated by Abhidharmic theory are a mere illusory reality) to be the best point of connection between the Mahāyānasūtras and the philosophical developments of Madhyamaka and Yogācāra. He then surveys Nāgārjunas' traditional biography and the role of the Perfection of Wisdom (Prajñāpāramitā) within it, thus setting the stage for a discussion of how Nāgārjuna's work philosophically develops prominent topics within Prajñāpāramitā literature: the critique of Abhidharma as a project, the doctrine of illusionism, and the explicit acceptance of contradictions. This is followed by a section on Buddhapālita, Bhāviveka and Candrakīrti, the three major commentators on Nāgārjuna. The eighth-century thinkers Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla are briefly introduced as "great synthesizers," and the chapter concludes with a sketch of the relationship between Madhyamaka and Nyāya. Similar to the other two "debate"

sections later in the book, this is less of an account of actual debates reflected in philosophical literature than a general account of a relationship between thought-systems.

Chapter 3 on Yogācāra lays out a framework of five stages in the development of Yogācāra, represented respectively by (1) earliest Yogācāra ideas in Mahāyānasūtras, (2) the Yogācāra works ascribed to Maitreya, (3) Asaṅga, (4) Vasubandhu, and (5) later developments, first and foremost in the works of the Buddhist logicians and epistemologists Dignāga and Dharmakīrti. The postulation of the first three stages falls behind the current state of research on Yogācāra literature, especially as regards the unquestioned attribution of the authorship of the *Yogācārabhūmi* to Asaṅga which is the basis for Westerhoff's postulation of stage (3). Schmithausen has convincingly demonstrated that in its extant form, this work of massive proportions is doctrinally and philosophically heterogeneous to such a degree that one can only consider it as the outcome of a lengthy compilation process.[2] Westerhoff does not even mention this assessment nor does he treat the heterogeneity of the *Yogācārabhūmi* adequately in the discussions throughout the Yogācāra chapter. This is a clear case where the results of historical and philological research conflict with traditional authorship attributions, and one that demonstrates the limitations of Westerhoff's principle of suspending "naturalist" assumptions.

After this introductory survey, Westerhoff discusses proofs of Buddhist doctrines in the Yogācāra school: the proof of rebirth, that of other minds (both chiefly based on Dharmakīrti), and that of momentariness. In the last, he focuses on distinctive Yogācāra arguments from change given by Asaṅga and Vasubandhu, and some of their later versions by the Buddhist epistemologists Dharmakīrti and Ratnakīrti. This is followed by a discussion of key Yogācāra concepts: mind-only (*cittamātra*), the doctrine of the three natures (*trisvabhāva*), the doctrine of reflexive awareness (*svasaṃvedana*), and the conception of the three turnings of the wheel, including the doctrine of buddha-nature (*tathāgatagarbha*). After this Westerhoff discusses how argumentative, textual and meditative factors shaped Yogācāra philosophy, as well as the role of Yogācāra as a philosophical background for tantric rituals. He then turns to the relationship between Yogācāra and other schools of Buddhist philosophy (Abhidharma and Madhyamaka), as well as its relation to Vedānta.

Chapter 4, dealing with the school of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, begins with an account of life narratives from Tibetan historiographies and then introduces the basic elements of these thinkers' epistemology, which is grounded in the

2 Cf. the excellent overview and discussion in Delhey (2013).

principle that there are only two instruments of knowledge, non-conceptual perception and (conceptual) inference. Brief accounts of each of these instruments are followed by a section on metaphysics, which is essentially a brief survey of Dharmakīrti's distinctive proofs of universal momentariness and his rejection of universals, as well as of other principles maintained by brahminical schools: a permanent self (*ātman*), a creator god, and the notion of caste (*jāti*). Separate sections are devoted to the theory of language (i. e., the theory of "exclusion," *apoha*), scriptural authority and yogic perception. Given the brevity of these summary accounts, only a few distinctions are drawn between Dignāga's and Dharmakīrti's arguments. A special section is devoted to the relationship between the philosophy of the logico-epistemological school and that of the three other Buddhist schools treated in the book, with a focus on the hierarchically layered approach to the analysis of reality that some scholars have referred to as "sliding scales of analysis." A further section presents the general relationship between Pramāṇa and the Mīmāṃsā school. Still within the chapter on Pramāṇa, but in fact thematically separate is the concluding section on the end of Buddhist philosophy in India, which adds brief discussions of Śāntideva and Atiśa as two particularly noteworthy figures.

On the whole, Westerhoff's book is well-informed, accessibly written and a remarkable accomplishment in covering a lot of ground on merely 285 pages – a large and heterogeneous body of philosophical literature formed over centuries and fraught with problems of textual transmission and historical contextualization. His maxim of "bracketing" naturalist assumptions and giving traditional mythographical accounts greater weight has the advantage of his managing to convey a greater sense of the significance that particular figures and ideas enjoyed in the self-representation of Buddhist traditions, but this maxim has its limits when it comes to historical research, as becomes especially evident in the Yogācāra chapter (see above). The organization of the book according to schools makes sense historically, to the extent that it generally mirrors the chronological sequence of their formation, but this arrangement has drawbacks for readers interested in tracing the history of individual problems and theories. Someone who wants to know how Buddhist arguments against the existence of a persistent self or in favor of momentariness developed over time would have to piece together individual arguments spread out across the individual chapters on Abhidharma, Yogācāra and Pramāṇa. In addition, the assignment of some theories to particular schools remains problematic despite Westerhoff's generally acute awareness of the difficulties involved in school-differentiation. This is particularly evident in case of two crucial elements of the Buddhist philosophy of mind, reflexive awareness (*svasaṃvedana*) and the theory of "forms" or "aspects" (*ākāra*) in consciousness. These are presented in particularly ahistorical ways in

the Abhidharma and Yogācāra chapters, with a rather strong reliance on secondary literature – in particular, studies by Bhikkhu Dhammajoti – and without a historically informed consideration of textual sources.

In relating philosophical interpretations of particular texts and ideas, of other scholars as well as his own, Westerhoff inevitably has to be selective. The limited space available in such a concise account regrettably prevents a more deliberative approach that would weigh the advantages and disadvantages of different interpretations. For instance, Westerhoff's view that Nāgārjuna was chiefly concerned with the relationship of language and non-linguistic reality, advocated in his 2009 monograph *Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka: A philosophical introduction* (Oxford 2009), was extensively criticized by Claus Oetke; one would have been curious as to what Westerhoff thinks of Oetke's criticism, at least in general terms – Oetke's paper of 81 pages is not even listed in Westerhoff's bibliography.[3]

A particularly intriguing feature of Westerhoff's book is his consistent reflection on how meditative practice influenced the course of Buddhist philosophy. In different ways, scholars such as Edward Conze, Constantin Regamey and Lambert Schmithausen postulated that Buddhist philosophical ideas have a historical origin in meditative practice. Such approaches, in general as well as in particular, were recently reviewed and subjected to criticism by Robert Sharf, Johannes Bronkhorst and Eli Franco.[4] Westerhoff's reflections are to my knowledge the first attempt in a book on Buddhist philosophy to take an "origin" of philosophical ideas in meditative practice seriously on a broader scale, and thus merits special attention. He sets out with the matter-of-fact claim that meditative techniques generated inner experiential states in practitioners, and that to some extent, Indian Buddhist philosophy constitutes a response to the need to account for a phenomenology of such meditative states (p. 8). However, he does not take a second process into consideration, which is arguably of equal significance when it comes to exploring factors that drive the history of ideas: that meditative practice was re-conceptualized on the basis of theoretical considerations, due to changes in the realm of doctrine and philosophy that resulted primarily from theoretical problems. Implicitly at least, Westerhoff thus comes perilously close to taking it for granted that meditative experience produces or even authenticates theory – a position that he explicitly attributes to Buddhist

3 Oetke 2011.

4 Sharf 1995; Bronkhorst 2000: 62–77; Franco 2009. Eli Franco's paper contains detailed references to various earlier advocates of different versions of a "philosophy originates in meditation" position.

thinkers twice, when he explains certain developments as due to these thinkers believing meditation to be qualitatively superior and to enjoy supreme epistemic authority (p. 102, p. 196; cf. below).

Westerhoff variously reproduces or adapts claims of a meditative "origin" of philosophical ideas from earlier scholarship while discussing the no-self theory in Abhidharma (pp. 53–54), the doctrine of momentariness (pp. 78–79) in Abhidharma (including Yogācāra), Mahāyāna illusionism (pp. 87–89), Prajñāpāramitā illusionism (pp. 101–104), and the Yogācāra doctrine of mind-only (pp. 194–198). All of the accounts put forth by Westerhoff are problematic in their own specific ways, but their shared problem is that the underlying model of spiritual practice "influencing" the development of philosophical theory is too unsophisticated to offer the best possible explanation of crucial textual passages. Closer examination of these cases reveal, in fact, a broader spectrum of ways in which philosophy relates to spiritual practice. In some instances, texts reveal primarily prescriptive intentions and the aim to instruct a particular audience in how to interpret meditation experiences generally believed accessible. Such texts arguably form part of a normative discourse about the proper philosophical analysis of meditation, rather than showing how particular ideas have a "foundation" in meditation. A case in point are the passages from the *Pratyutpannabuddhasaṃmukhāvasthitasamādhisūtra* interpreted by Schmithausen as playing a seminal role in the formation of the Yogācāra mind-only doctrine; Westerhoff considers them in connection with Mahāyānist illusionism (pp. 87–89). In other cases, it seems indeed plausible that certain forms of contemplation attested in texts generally impacted the formation of philosophical principles, since these relate to the analysis of contents of contemplation; cases in point are the notion of impermanence, or the idea that the body and mental events are not the self (the doctrine of not-self). But upon closer analysis, the actual formation of more restricted versions of such principles was more likely due to historical processes that also comprised elements of conceptual analysis; in these two cases this concerns the doctrine of universal momentariness as a radicalization of impermanence, and the idea that a permanent unchanging self does not exist – the doctrine of no-self, as opposed to the doctrine of *not*-self. In all these cases, it seems plausible to presume that there was something peculiar about Buddhist philosophy in the broader Indian context, insofar as certain ways of thinking about meditation – or, as Schmithausen prefers to call it: "spiritual practice" – served as vehicles for transformation in the realms of doctrine and philosophy, while conversely some such transformations also changed conceptions of particular meditative practices. This would be a more differentiated way of approaching this relationship, one that I take to be consistent with Schmithausen's rejoinder to critics of

his earlier position on the matter.[5] In considering it in this way, one does not have to assume that individual figures or groups of persons in fact had certain meditative experiences – an assumption which is usually beyond the evidence we have at hand. One only has to accept that the composers or compilers of certain texts took the accessibility of such experiences for granted – which can hardly be denied.

Lastly, let me address the two places where Westerhoff appeals to an alleged supreme epistemic authority of meditative experience in order to explain why certain ideas came about (p. 102, p. 196): Contents of meditative experience became generalized into philosophical principles because they appeared in meditative states *and because such states were regarded as particularly reliable routes to knowledge*. Again, one might point out several specific problems in the individual discussions, but the more fundamental problem is that they fail to take into consideration the context in which meditative experience is placed in normative and theoretical accounts of the path to liberation. This becomes particularly evident when one considers the Dharmakīrtian theory of yogic perception. This theory assumes that the uninterrupted and continuous contemplation (*bhāvanā*) of things as momentary or selfless in a state of concentration leads to a clear and vivid presentation of them in this way. As Westerhoff also hints (p. 249), Dharmakīrti and his followers considered this process to be neutral with respect to the reality status of the objects under consideration – if one contemplates hallucinatory objects long enough, they will eventually appear vividly as if standing in front of one's eyes. In and of itself, this vivid and non-conceptual experience does not have any epistemic authority in the sense that it provides a reliable foundation for concluding the reality of the experienced object. But since soteriologically efficacious contemplation, by definition, has to be about aspects of reality, a practitioner must establish beforehand that their chosen meditation object – selflessness or momentariness – is in fact an aspect of reality; they have to ensure that they are not meditating on an illusion like an *ātman*. This is accomplished through scriptural study and rational reasoning; the model at play here is that of the threefold wisdom or insight (*śruta-/cintā-/bhāvanāmayī prajñā*). If the world must exist in a way that the meditator experiences it (cf. p. 102), this is not due to the exclusive authority of experience, but because the meditator has come to understand that it exists in this way through preceding study of Buddhist doctrine supported by rational analysis. As a reason why a direct experience in meditation is necessary, some texts explicitly refer to its special transformative power, since mere erudition and logical reasoning were regarded as too weak to effect the fundamental transformation of consciousness required on the path.

5 Cf. Schmithausen 2014, especially pp. 599–627.

Now, the existence of this type of approach within Indian Buddhist tradition of course does not preclude that there might not have been *some* advocates of the view that meditative experience has unique epistemic authority. But since many of the elements in the approach I sketched here belong to the mainstream of both conservative and Mahāyāna Buddhism in India, whosoever wants to account for particular developments on the basis of such an epistemic-authority principle must first demonstrate where this principle might have been held, and how it might have been invoked in different doctrinal and philosophical contexts. This is one of several issues where Westerhoff's concise account of Indian Buddhist philosophy in its "Golden Age" does not offer as much demonstration and differentiation as specialists would hope for. It nonetheless remains a remarkable accomplishment especially for its consistent emphasis on a systematic engagement with Buddhist philosophy.

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