

A philological analysis of these different written forms may have proved fruitful, for while clearly different graphs, they appear to share similar features.

This study juxtaposes the master–disciple lineage of transmission with the scriptural unification project of the Chinese state, ending on the melancholy note of the shamanistic tradition of *bimo* lineage in the Stone Forest County having been consigned to the past (p. 244). This is because the effort of the Chinese state to unify the script is, perhaps ironically, a process that entails the separation of blood from writing: the imposition of logocentrism onto what was traditionally a non-linear, divine writing. This separation is, in the author’s estimation, an attempt by the Chinese state to uproot local shamanistic power. While this may certainly be true, it is also, as the author notes, the continuation of a process that actually began before Communist Party rule, with the missionary Paul Vial (1855–1917), who taught *bimo* writing at a school to any who would learn it (thus breaking the tradition of patrilineal transmission) in the early twentieth century (p. 210). Perhaps this is also a necessary process, if we accept that the “gradual democratisation of writing is an essential aspect of the passage to modernity” (Martyn Lyons, *Ordinary Writings, Personal Narratives: Writing Practices in 19th and Early 20th-century Europe* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2007), p. 27).

Duncan Poupard

The Chinese University of Hong Kong

BIRGIT KELLNER (ed.):

Buddhism and the Dynamics of Transculturality, New Approaches.

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Buddhism and the Dynamics of Transculturality discusses Buddhism’s involvement in cultural exchange and transfer. It focuses on cultural mobility, the domestication of ideas and practices in new environments, and the consequent production of Buddhist histories. Within this framework, the volume presents a variety of perspectives on what has been termed “transculturality”. This is used as an orienting concept, leaving ample space for discussion and multiple interpretations, as explained in the well-written introduction. All of the contributors make full use of the freedom they have been given, bringing intriguing new facts and theories to the subject. The end result is an interesting array of papers exploring Buddhist practice, discourse, and visual and material culture across a wide range of geographical and temporal contexts.

The first chapter, by Ingo Strauch, addresses the role of trade contacts in the dissemination of Buddhism in the rarely studied Socotra archipelago (modern-day Yemen). This fascinating, beautifully illustrated study is based on a recently discovered cave hoard of drawings and inscriptions in a variety of languages and scripts dating from the second to the fourth or fifth century CE. Alongside brief devotional texts, drawings of *stūpas*, possible markers of worship generating merit, testify to the importance of Buddhism in the archipelago. Due to a lack of local economic support, however, permanent Buddhist settlements were not established there.

Equally intriguing – and just as well illustrated – is Anna Filigenzi’s contribution, which focuses on decidedly non-Buddhist customs in the art of Gandhāra (particularly Swat, ancient Uḍḍiyāna), including scenes of drinking, dancing, and even eroticism. At first glance, such images seem jarringly incongruous, especially as they are often presented in close proximity to Buddhist iconography. However, by exploring both the possible foreign origins of the customs and the local setting, Filigenzi highlights the crucial importance of context and explains that the people of Uḍḍiyāna embraced a wide variety of religious traditions. The visual borrowing of “Dionysiac” scenes is testament to this diversity and provides a tantalizing glimpse into the role of religion in important life events.

The third chapter, by Toru Funayama, shifts the focus to China in order to discuss the ways in which Indic Buddhist terms were rendered into Chinese. As Funayama points out, translators had to find a way to make Buddhist texts comprehensible to a Chinese audience, even though many words and phrases were close to untranslatable on account of profound cultural differences between China and India. In this context, the translators often used words that had broadly similar connotations but did not precisely correspond to the original Indic terms. For instance, *ārya* (“holy one/saint”: that is, one who has attained a higher state of mind) was routinely translated as the culturally loaded term *sheng* (“sage”, in a variety of senses). In his reflections on this approach, Funayama suggests that, although the translators certainly made the texts more accessible, they also increased the risk of widespread misinterpretation of a number of crucial Buddhist concepts.

In the next chapter, Lothar Ledderose discusses a stone hymn that served as the colophon to a Buddhist *sūtra* engraved on a granite slab on Mount Tie in Shandong Province in 579 (illustrations are provided). In addition to translating and explaining the content of the hymn, Ledderose provides a brief overview of previous studies that date back to the eighteenth century. This serves as a welcome reminder of how researchers’ focus can shift over time, as the early Chinese scholars were more interested in the calligraphic quality of the inscription, rather than its content.

In chapter 5, we move to the Japanese cultic site of Mount Asama (near present-day Toba), where a number of religious groups’ ritual practices are associated with high-level political narratives and disputes. Anna Andreeva’s rich and detailed contribution explains how, on the one hand, long-term transcultural movements are localized and become crucial aspects of a site’s cultural memory, and, on the other, how religion and (socio)politics engage in perpetual battles over ritual influence and economic resources.

In the next chapter, Fabio Rambelli explores the origins of Buddhism in early modern Japan. As the author explains in his lavishly illustrated chapter, while the Japanese initially relied on Chinese accounts of India, from the seventeenth century onwards much of their information came from European sources, and this change in perspective had a deep impact on the country’s perception of the subcontinent and its traditions.

Davide Torri’s focus is on the dynamics of cultural production in Nepal’s Helambu valley – another highly original topic. His chapter is based on fieldwork conducted with the Hyolmo, a Nepalese minority of Tibetan origin, and their veneration of reincarnated lamas and treasure discoverers. Torri meticulously explains how this is intimately connected to conceptions of the geographical–religious landscape and to the Hyolmo’s identity–construction and position in wider Nepalese society.

The volume concludes with two chapters of more general reflections, each involving Tibet. The first of these, by Markus Viehbeck, discusses the term “Indo-Tibetan Buddhism” from the perspective of Tibetan polemical discourses. This stimulating contribution adroitly explores how and why Tibetan scholastics and contemporary scholars have struggled with the Indo-Tibetan concept, which

has invariably and inevitably played a significant role in the construction of Buddhist identities in Tibet.

Finally, Jonathan Samuels invites readers to revisit the emic perspective within the Tibetan cultural context. Using the distinction between the worldly and the otherworldly as a kind of test case, he warns against oversimplification, artificiality, and even the distortion of cultural features.

Samuels' reflections serve as the perfect conclusion to this rather disparate collection of thought-provoking contributions. No attempt is made to mould all of the papers into a single overarching theory, but that is the book's principal strength as the breadth of approaches and range of topics will undoubtedly inspire future researchers to investigate other currently underexplored aspects of transculturality.

Ann Heirman
Ghent University

ROMAN MALEK, S.V.D. (ed.):

The Chinese Face of Jesus Christ Volume 4b.

(Monumenta Serica Monograph Series L/4b.) xxii, 354 pp. London and New York: Routledge, 2020. £125. ISBN 978 0 367 35697 2.

LARS PETER LAAMAN and JOSEPH TSE-HEI LEE (eds):

The Church as Safe Haven: Christian Governance in China.

(Studies in Christian Mission, 55.) xv, 330 pp. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2018. ISBN 978 90 04 38373 9.

DAVID WOODBRIDGE:

Missionary Primitivism and Chinese Modernity: The Brethren in Twentieth-Century China.

(Studies in Christian Mission, 54.) xi, 173 pp. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2019. ISBN 978 90 04 33675 9.

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What the future may hold for Christianity in China no one can say. But the present reality of the well-established Christian minorities, large or small, that exist in Japan, Korea and Taiwan suggests that, barring some completely unexpected turn of events, the current Chinese presence of the religion is unlikely to dwindle into complete insignificance in the near future, even if fifty or sixty years ago this seemed a more than likely prospect. During the past half century, therefore, increasing attention has been paid to the history of Christianity in China, not simply as an adjunct to mission studies, but as a perhaps unduly neglected element in modern Chinese history signifying more than a mere by-product of Western intrusion. The year 2019 alas marked the passing in Europe of two of the giants who have inspired the development of these new approaches. At the same time new scholars are joining the field, and topics once barely visible are beginning to prompt discussion.

Roman Malek (1951–2019) first established his reputation with a monograph devoted to a Tang-period Daoist compilation which still remains one of the very