

cakravartin is well made, based though it may be largely on comparative material and on later sources such as the *Sba bzhed*.

One of Walter's most striking claims is that Buddhism was key to the functioning of the Tibetan Empire from the start, and that this included the belief in the king as an incarnation of Avalokiteśvara. Here Walter finds himself a strange bedfellow with the same "late" Tibetan historical tradition that he dismisses on most other points, e.g. Bon. Walter imagines monks as capable administrators taken exclusively from the nobility, and never occupying a position superior to that of the king. While the latter point is probably fair, the former is little more than an assumption based on Walter's contention that the empire would otherwise have lacked a bureaucracy. In this he shows a remarkable ignorance of imperial Tibet's administrative structures, for which he might have turned to PT 1089 and to Bogoslovskij's work, among many others. On Avalokiteśvara's early association with the Tibetan kings, Walter makes a stronger case. Unfortunately, although he rightly points to the iconography of the Jo khang Temple as crucial to this claim, he does not make adequate use of architectural and art historical material to bolster his claim. In the end, he makes some important points, but fails to convince.

For venturing such an imaginative treatment of the imperial period, Walter is to be applauded, and one hopes that his work will spur on other researchers to confirm or deny his hypotheses.

Brandon Dotson

KURTIS R. SCHAEFFER:

The Culture of the Book in Tibet.

xiii, 244 pp. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009. £31. ISBN 978 0 231 14716 3.

doi:10.1017/S0041977X09990486

Within the field of Tibetology, research into canonical traditions has been evolving rapidly, and scholars are increasingly applying Western models of textual criticism to Tibetan materials. Similarly, methodological advances in the nascent fields of bibliography, codicology and palaeography of Tibetan manuscripts have been gathering momentum. Against this backdrop, I suspect that I was not alone in hoping that a book with the above title would provide an overarching narrative similar to those devoted to book cultures in Greek and Roman societies, replete with a consideration of different book formats and different scripts, the place of libraries in public life, book circulation and book ownership, editorial practices, and of course the cult of the book in a Tibetan Buddhist context. I was disappointed, therefore, to be disabused of my expectations when I read in the preface that Schaeffer is content to leave such a work for the next generation, and offer only "a set of linked case studies highlighting central themes in the study of written culture in Tibet" (p. viii).

Schaeffer undoubtedly succeeds in the task that he has set himself. The six chapters of "case studies" are nearly all derived from published articles, conference papers and lectures, but are unified in that they focus mainly on the place of writing and canon production in the social and cultural life of Tibet, and consistently emphasize methods of textual scholarship as well as the material and symbolic aspects of the book. Chapter 1, "The stuff of books", explores the materials of the book, mostly by summarizing what Tibetan sources say about paper, ink, wood and other ingredients that go into book manufacture. It also focuses on the

advent of blockprinting and the tradition of the *Kangyur* and *Tengyur* canonical collections. Chapter 2, “The editor’s texts”, offers accounts of book production in three separate settings: Zhalu Monastery in the fourteenth century, Drigung Monastery in the early seventeenth century and Labrang Monastery in the early eighteenth century. Chapter 3, “The scholar’s dream”, compares the publishing projects of the great textual scholar Shalu Lotsawa Chökyong Zangpo (1441–1527) and Tsangnyön Heruka (1452–1507), the famous yogin biographer of Milarepa and other *Kagyü* masters. Here Schaeffer focuses particularly on the importance of public and royal reputation to the careers of these two contrasting figures. Chapter 4, “The physician’s lament”, is centred on Desi Sangyé Gyatso (1653–1705) and considers textual scholarship in Tibetan medical traditions, where textual corruption could have an immediate and practical negative effect on diagnosis. Chapter 5, “The king’s canons”, considers the production of a *Kangyur* and *Tengyur* by Situ Panchen Chökyi Jungné (1700–1774) and Shuchen Tsültrim Rinchen (1697–1774), respectively, under the patronage of the kings of Degé. Here Schaeffer also considers the patronage of the Nartang *Kangyur* and the gold *Kangyur* by Polané Miwang Sönam Tobgyé (1689–1747), de facto ruler of the Ganden Potrang government from 1728 until his death. Chapter 6, “The cost of a priceless book”, considers briefly the economy of the book trade, the book’s symbolic value as embodiment of the Buddha’s teachings and the power of books as talismanic objects for the communities that produce them. Three appendixes offer, respectively, a full translation of Butön’s letter to the editors of the *Tengyur* at Shalu Monastery, a summary of the contents of the *Kangyur* and *Tengyur* and a table showing the itemized costs of producing the *Tengyur* at Degé from 1738 to 1774. There are 52 pages of endnotes, making for a ratio of about one page of notes to three pages of text. The bibliography is also comparatively large, taking in a wide array of both original and secondary sources. This is followed by an index comprised mostly of personal and place names.

Throughout these chapters, Schaeffer offers the reader insights into how a Tibetan canon is produced, from the collation of source texts and editorial practices to the astounding materials and labour involved. Besides giving detailed accounts and ample references, Schaeffer is particularly adroit in his portraits of the editors, or “executive producers” as he calls them, of these canons. He captures well, for example, the melancholy of the Buddhist editor who devotes his life to the noble project of preserving and perfecting the Buddhist teachings, but who has scant time to put these very teachings into practice by means of his own contemplation and meditation.

When a monograph is comprised of previously published articles and papers that once stood alone as discrete pieces of research, there is always the question of whether it hangs together as a whole. Insofar as Schaeffer offers the reader a group of “interconnected vignettes”, this is a moot point. There are, however, a few unfortunate consequences of a book’s evolving in this way. On pp. 120–21, for example, the reader will experience a sense of déjà vu when reading a list of types of craftsmen working on the Shalu *Tengyur*, since the same list appears also at pp. 26–7. The two passages are accompanied by the same endnote, found both at p. 175, n. 26 and p. 206, n. 1. There are other errors, but these are few and far between.

It is evident from the preface, introduction, final chapter and many of the endnotes that the author has read fairly widely in the relevant comparative and theoretical literature. Particularly on the topic of textual criticism but also on other matters, Schaeffer’s notes refer interested readers to studies of other book cultures that he feels are suggestive for future research on the culture of the book in Tibet. While

this reviewer was disappointed that the present book was not the result of just such research, it constitutes a solid beginning, and Schaeffer has provided useful signposts for future studies while in the process enhancing our understanding of canon production in medieval Tibet and of book culture in Tibet more generally.

Brandon Dotson

EAST ASIA

NICOLA DI COSMO (ed.):

Military Culture in Imperial China.

x, 445 pp. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2009. £33.95. ISBN 978 0 674 03109 8.

doi:10.1017/S0041977X09990498

Nicola Di Cosmo's (ed.) *Military Culture in Imperial China*, is a valuable addition to the small, but growing, number of books on Chinese military history. As is often true of volumes of this kind, there has been a considerable delay between the original conference (which I attended in 2001) and the publication of the papers, but this in no way detracts from the high quality of the book itself and of its individual chapters, which range in quality from merely good to truly excellent. Indeed, one of the most significant aspects of this book is its demonstration of the breadth of the field of Chinese military history, or perhaps military culture, and the diverse scholarly perspectives available.

In his introduction Di Cosmo directly confronts the question of what "military culture" is, providing some guidance and organization to the otherwise disparate chapters of the book. He offers four definitions:

First, military culture refers to a discrete, bounded system of conduct and behavior to which members of the military are supposed to adhere, made of written and unwritten rules and conventions as well as distinctive beliefs and symbols. Second, military culture can mean strategic culture, which involves a decision-making process that transcends the specific behavior of military people and involves instead the accumulated and transmitted knowledge upon which those involved in making strategic choices, from both the civil and military side, base their arguments, validate their positions, and examine a given situation. Third, military culture can be understood as the set of values that determine a society's inclination for war and military organization . . . Fourth, military culture may refer to the presence of an aesthetic and literary tradition that values military events and raises the status of those who accomplish martial exploits to the level of heroes and demigods in epic cycles and poetry, visual representations, communal celebrations, and state rituals (pp. 3–4).

As this extended quote makes clear, there is currently no single, simple definition of military culture. Di Cosmo's definitions are, to his credit, proposed rather than