

Portuguese were dependent on Muslims as trading partners and financiers. Interwoven with commercial networks were religious issues, formed by shared routes, ports, occupations, and service. The legal institutions of Monsoon Islam developed with the movement of scholars. This multi-directional circulation shaped a truly cosmopolitan community of scholars and Sufis. Political networks of patronage, funded by rulers overseas, came to cement economic interests, complementing commercial and religious networks.

*Monsoon Islam* presents an original and convincing account of the formation of Muslim trading communities along the Malabar Coast. Prange's nuanced analysis goes beyond oversimplified concepts of trading diaspora to offer a rich and sophisticated engagement with the world of the Indian Ocean by the side of the Hindu environment of south-west India. Aspects of the work could have been more polished: the framing of the discussion around four spaces feels at times artificial, as not all spaces are treated in the same way, notably the sea; several issues, for example conversion, do not fit easily into their designated space. Furthermore, the case of Malabar could have been tied more firmly to issues of migration and settlement elsewhere. Even a brief comparison with maritime communities along the Swahili Coast or with the migrant communities of the Deccan (self-styled *gharībān*, foreigners, a term parallel to *paradesī*) would have contributed to the broader fields of migration, trade, religious change, and politics in late medieval and early modern times. Nevertheless, *Monsoon Islam* is an engaging book that offers a substantial contribution to the growing literature on maritime circulation and migration around the Indian Ocean.

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MARC TIEFENAUER:

*Les Enfers indiens: Histoire multiple d'un lieu commun.*

(Handbook of Oriental Studies Section Two South Asia.) xxxv, 681 pp.

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*Les Enfers indiens* is an imposing work whose title plays on the double meaning of "common place": a place of sharing and something banal, where the author perhaps had in mind the definition of "common place" according to Montaigne: "passages extracted from various works and applicable to general subjects" (Montaigne, *Essais*, book 3, chapter 12, coll. of the Pléiade, 1185), as hell is a universal literary theme, and as the work comprises a large number of textual testimonies of the representation of the hells in a diversified literature, over a long period of time.

The author examines the description of hell in Avestan and Vedic literatures (pp. 41–87), ancient Buddhism (pp. 89–146), Jainism (pp. 147–72), and the Sanskrit epics (pp. 173–233), and gives a detailed analysis of the hell in the *Dharmasamhitā* of *Varāhapurāṇa*, as an example of infernal representation (pp. 235–371).

This study of hell relies on primary sources mostly translated by the author and always quoted, in footnotes, in the languages and scripts of origin (Sanskrit, Pali, Ardhamāgadhī, Buddhist Chinese, Braj, Avadhī, Sadhukkaṛī, Persian, and Hindi). The translations are rigorous, sometimes accompanied by the critical discussion

of certain technical terms. A systematic effort is made to date each text quoted and to contextualize translated passages, the goal being to give a historical dimension to the representation of hell. The author's methodology involves focusing predominantly on narratives rather than more technical doctrinal and/or theological texts. The book is, therefore, also a plea for the translation and reading of texts.

There is an abundance of unfamiliar and striking information on hells. For example, for Vedism, one learns that the first use of the adjective *naraka*, "infernal", is found in the *Atharvaveda*, that a rudimentary form of eschatological retribution appears only from the *Brāhmaṇa* onwards, and that the first katabasis is found in the *Śatapatha-* and *Jaiminīya-brāhmaṇa*. Much space is devoted to Buddhism, whose descriptions of hells in the early texts are very detailed: terrifying descriptions of torture, geography and organization of hells, with disturbing details, such as the fact that the great hells are square. With regard to the epics, one learns, for example, that there is cohabitation of hell and paradise in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*, but the transmigration is not yet coupled with karmic retribution, this point being found only in Purāṇas.

The examination of the different hells in the Indo-Iranian, Buddhist and epic traditions in the first part of the work lays the groundwork for the study that constitutes its central part and is dedicated to the exemplary hells of the *Varāhapurāṇa*. The author indicates the intertextual relations between the purāṇic hells and the *Dharmaśāstra*, and deals with the links between punishment and sin, emphasizing the curious cohabitation of the damned with the blessed. He shows a representation of the hells on the model of the functioning of the medieval court, and the personalization of the punishments in the purāṇic hells under the appearance of the personage named Citragupta. It is welcome to find the purāṇic literature taken into account to such an extent here, even if more textual and historical criticism would have been desirable for the presentation of the late Purāṇas.

The book continues with three thematic chapters. In the chapter entitled "Enfers et expiations" (pp. 373–93), the author examines the purifying effect of hell in comparison with the rites of purification, and questions the possibility of applying the Christian notion of "purgatory" to these hells. The examination of the mechanics of damnation supported by numerous extracts from texts concludes with the inefficiency of the Indian hells as regards purification. In the chapter entitled "La mort à l'épreuve de la dévotion" (pp. 395–458), the author considers the extension of the place of hell with regard to devotion (*bhakti*). He shows the confrontation of Yama with the gods as objects of devotion, especially Śiva, whose stake is victory over death. In addition, this chapter includes some valuable passages on the "eschatological body". Finally, the chapter entitled "La fin de la fin" (pp. 459–508) provides an overview of the centuries of devotional literature under Muslim influence in vernacular (Jñānadeva, Kabīr, Sūrādāsa, Tulasīdāsa) and Persian (Badā'unī, Dārā Shukoh, Amānat Rāy) languages. It is surprising to read that in the Persian adaptation of *Rāmāyaṇa* by Badā'unī, Yama is winged, probably because he is likened to the angel of death (*malako 'l-mowt*), that is, the Ezrā'il (Azrael) of Islam.

The book concludes with two chapters that reflect the different patterns of the Indian hells: in "Synopsis des enfers indiens" (pp. 509–29), the author summarizes the major evolutions of the narratives of hell in India; in "Le fin mot de l'histoire" (pp. 531–40), the author, who argues for a hermeneutical use of the hereafter, explains the disdain of Sufism for hell, stresses the importance of the heterodox contribution to the mutations of the representations of hell, and discusses the instrumental, political, and ethical functions of these narratives.

The generous appendices (pp. 541–620), mainly centre on purāṇic material, include the transliterated Sanskrit text of the 20 chapters of the *Dharmasaṃhitā*

of the *Varāhapurāṇa* according to the edition of the Caukhambā Amarabharatī Prakāśan (1982), a glossary (not exhaustive) of the infernal bestiary in the Purāṇas (but this reviewer regrets the absence of a general index of Sanskrit words), the transliterated Sanskrit text of *Mahāmṛtyuñjayastotra*, as well as the reproduction of a page of a *Rāmāyaṇa* in Persian illustrating the fight between Yama and Rāvaṇa accompanied by the text in its original script and transliteration. The book also includes 19 illustrations. It is preceded by a detailed summary in English (pp. xxi–xxxv) that does not do justice to its richness.

In the course of this survey of 3,000 years, the author traces the mutations in the literary history of the character of Yama from the period of the Indo-Iranian tradition of Yama as a descendant of Vivasvat; he points to the persistence of the eerie figure of the dog, and the recurrence of the essential catabase of Naciketas, the cursed child. As is inherent to this kind of long-term study, some topics are discussed too superficially. Food rhetoric, for example, deserves a book to itself. In addition, there is a gap in methodology in dealing with hells in only their narrative expression. The doctrinal implications are undervalued, for example when evoking the notion of experience (*bhoga*), and there is a lack of a more systematic integration of the hells in the philosophical systems that the stories exemplify, as well as of a finer analysis of the discourse on their proselitic nature. The author is not to blame for this, especially since he brings together here for the first time data on the hells, an excellent starting point for more detailed studies.

However, at the narrative level where he is situated, a wider “ideological” contextualization would have allowed the author to grasp hell with a more dynamic vision, which would include, as well as the infernal condition, the embryonic condition, childhood, adulthood, old age and illness (for example, in the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* the description of the embryo/foetus condition displays many similarities with the infernal condition, as is the case, too, in ancient Buddhism).

The fact remains that this is an original and innovative work on Indian hells, which traces the history of the development of the figure of Yama and the conception of hell as a locus.

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MATTHEW CLARK:

*The Tawny One: Soma, Haoma, and Ayahuasca.*

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What is “soma”? In *The Tawny One: Soma, Haoma and Ayahuasca*, Matthew Clark aims to shed new light on the plant called *soma* in Sanskrit and *haoma* in Avestan, whose juice was consumed as a sacrament in Vedic and Zoroastrian ritual. His thesis is bold and refreshing. Soma/haoma, he argues, was not a single plant, but many plants blended as a concoction, with ingredients varying over time and space. Arguing that viable plants for this purpose possessed chemical constituents with psychoactive effects, Clark compares soma/haoma to *ayahuasca*, a brew of multiple plants used to engender psychedelic experiences throughout the Amazonian region. To be clear, Clark does not claim that soma/haoma *was* ayahuasca, or even made from the same plant species;