

the relative validity of the Chinese tradition by finding in it traces of True Religion on a par with that discerned in the Hermetic corpus, which provided a similar type of supposed leavening within the non-Christian classical tradition; both would have been placed in the same category as Judaism as adjuncts to Christianity, but without involving any equivalent to the anti-Semitism that Jews suffered. The Kangxi emperor no doubt did not appreciate all this; as a ruler of a very large empire he was guided by practicalities, and the construction of Chinese antiquity provided by the Jesuits simply did not work, even if their mathematics, astronomy and cartography did.

How the missionaries went about their task is even so not without interest, and the author has done much to bring possible new approaches to their work to our attention. This has plainly not been easy, and she sometimes falters, as with on p. 11 the dictum “Since (既) such texts as the *Shujing* and *Shijing*, together with the rest of ancient literature, are all based on the great *Yi* as to their Way and their learning, the hidden subtleties of their content at the verbal level are for their part (亦) necessarily of a piece with and completely identical with the *Yi*”: the syntactical structures involved cannot be split up into separate sentences, as attempted here. On p. 33 I very much doubt that Zhuangzi ever saw a looking glass, and in many places a precise reference to the Chinese texts quoted would have been appreciated, especially when as on p. 28 a source like the *Cefu Yuangui* gives one a thousand fascicles to search through. But these technical shortcomings can be corrected; given the originality of much of the writing in this slim volume, we look forward to the author’s further work in this area.

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ANDRÉ LALIBERTÉ and STEFANIA TRAVAGNIN (eds):

Concepts and Methods for the Study of Chinese Religions I: State of the Field and Disciplinary Approaches.

(Religion and Society, 77.) xiii, 260 pp. Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2019. €86.95. ISBN 978 3 11 054643 9.

GREGORY ADAM SCOTT and STEFANIA TRAVAGNIN (eds):

Concepts and Methods for the Study of Chinese Religions II: Intellectual History of Key Concepts.

(Religion and Society, 78.) xv, 218 pp. Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2020. €148. ISBN 978 3 11 054644 6.

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The volumes under review form part of a trilogy, together with a third collection that has not reached me, which will be devoted to key concepts in practice. But it is clear from what I have seen so far that all these compilations will come to play an important role in the field that they delineate. It is, furthermore, a field that is both lively and relatively new, just ripe for the very useful type of concerted overview that these volumes provide. One can predict that the ample bibliographies and discussion of current issues will soon form an essential first step beyond the shorter works that

may alert the general reader to the importance of the field, and so move the student beyond the fine array of introductory studies from the reportage of Ian Johnson to the anthropological insights of Adam Yuet Chau towards further researches. The wide range of phenomena covered, from the expected descriptions of contemporary Buddhism, Daoism and so forth to essays on Islam, Christianity, and Tibetan Buddhism in its Chinese environment, commendably encourages a breadth of vision across different areas of religious discourse. True, the theme of interaction between different traditions is only occasionally treated, though the first essay of the second volume, by Yuan-lin Tsai, involves an excellent example of one such case, and the potential for further explorations of this topic are touched upon in several places. The focus throughout is on the “greater China” of the People’s Republic, Taiwan, and Hong Kong: Macao attracts a couple of glancing references, and the wider Chinese diaspora is not within the scope of the project. But one cannot complain about omissions; rather, the trilogy will plainly provide enough food for thought to be getting on with.

This is not, however, to say that additional essays would not have been welcome. Although individual historiographies for the different traditions deemed to make up “Chinese Religions” are well enough covered in the first volume, still some historical treatment of the emergence of a concept of Chinese religion as an academic field would not have gone amiss. The very idea of studying religions as a worthwhile enterprise upon which to expend full academic salaries, rather than as an element in anthropology or a minor addendum to theology is, after all, relatively recent. A former colleague recalls that one of my most distinguished contemporaries dismissed the whole undertaking as “theology lite”, and even those who did help establish the subject in universities in the United Kingdom were perforce obliged to concentrate on those Asian religions represented in the immigrant population, which in the 1960s included some Buddhists as well as Muslims and Hindus, but which did not at that point include more than a handful who practised the types of religious activity treated in these surveys. The literature in Western languages and in Chinese from earlier in the twentieth century often hid that activity under rubrics that now belong to the past, but that might have been delineated at some point. I am thinking of “superstitions”, not as an evaluative terminology, a usage that is indeed treated here, but as the loose label for a ragbag of unclassifiable bits and pieces that did not fit the rather clumsy analysis of the facts then in vogue, as well as terms such as “customs” or *lisu* 礼俗, implying unreflective conduct that had been inherited since time immemorial and that was generally deemed unlikely to survive the twentieth century. There is certainly an excellent piece in the second volume by Ya-pei Kuo on the differing responses to the arrival of the strange new notion of “religion”, *zongjiao* 宗教, in the Chinese language, but this intrusion was but part of a wider picture, and not necessarily a very helpful part either.

Where all the editors involved in this project are to be unreservedly congratulated is in eschewing completely the misleading language of “modernity”. Doubtless a good number of the persons whose names find mention on the pages of these two collections will have been troubled by the need to present themselves as modern, and a fair number too have consequently attracted the attention of historians eager to chart the processes of change that rocked the twentieth-century Chinese world. But plainly at least some of them were not thereby discouraged from reaching back in time within the traditions to which they adhered. A twentieth-century Chinese thinker was no more or less reluctant to argue a case on the basis of a medieval Yogacara treatise or even a pre-imperial Chinese text than a mid-twentieth-century French Catholic would have felt it out of place to develop ideas found in Aquinas, or earlier. It is immensely reassuring to see from these publications the abundance of very promising

scholars from a number of countries who have now been attracted to studying this field, with for example Canadian influences as strong as any, and even England for all its insular tendencies proves to have been able to import three experts to cover the growing need to understand this aspect of Chinese civilization. Let us hope that universities in this country see also the need to support scholarship in the weighty heritage that the Chinese past has bequeathed to this lively and complex contemporary milieu, for to attempt to make sense of even what is before our eyes without the perspectives that such scholarship can provide is as pointless as trying to understand contemporary Christianity while ignoring the existence of Bibles.

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YUGEN WANG:

Writing Poetry, Surviving War: The Works of Refugee Scholar-Official Chen Yuyi (1090–1139).

(Cambria Sinophone World Series, 136.) xxix, 339 pp. Amherst, New York: Cambria Press, 2020. \$119.99. ISBN 978 162196546 6. doi:10.1017/S0041977X21000641

After the publication of *Ten Thousand Scrolls* in 2011, Professor Yugen Wang has contributed another important monograph on the studies of Song dynasty poetry. While the previous book centres on the poetics of Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅 (1045–1105) as a medium to examine the inclusive publishing culture of that time, the approach of this book is internalized, discussing the techniques, aesthetics, and interpretation of Chen Yuyi's 陳與義 (1090–1139) poetry.

In modern scholarship, Chen Yuyi is ranked as a vital figure in the history of Song dynasty literature, a model of the “Song style poetry” (*Song ti shi* 宋體詩) which is to be distinguished from his Tang predecessors. Moreover, he experienced a momentous historical event in twelfth-century China, the Jingkang catastrophe, and carefully poetized his reflections. Therefore, his poetry is promoted as a mixture of both historical and literary significance, although it is limited to 565 poems and incomparable to other major figures of the Song dynasty – Chen Yuyi is a committed poet and he is self-conscious about how many poems shall be left for his audience (p. xxiii).

Chen Yuyi's poetry is not easy to understand, as one might casually miss its sophistication and subtlety, let alone the techniques and references, which mark the specialism of Song-style poetry. Through a careful translation and detailed textual analysis, the author mainly explains: 1) what the uniqueness of Chen's poetry was in comparison with other Tang and Song poets; 2) how his poetry changed through his life; and 3) why Chen Yuyi enjoyed a high reputation in Song poetry. Although these questions seem to be “narrow” issues solely centring on Chen Yuyi himself, the ultimate orientation behind these questions is rather “challenging” and yet “common”: there is a Song-style aesthetics in traditional Chinese poetry, and we should probably be more patient and sensitive in appreciating it, while leaving aside the over-emphasized aesthetics of the Tang style. This book is a direct and solid response to the debate over Tang–Song poetic styles, which has been a perpetual topic in academia ever since Yoshikawa Kōjirō laid down its foundation.