

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.

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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

few studies in a European language of this type of literature. But he is best known as the editor of a large number of works devoted to Christianity in China, with the publication under review completing a six-volume series on the topic of the “Chinese face of Jesus Christ” that was begun in 2002. The purpose of this final volume is to give a conspectus of the whole project, starting with a seven-page “Introduction” (pp. xii–xix) by Barbara Hoster that provides not only a retrospect but also a sampling of the initial reviews and indications of how criticisms and suggestions have now been met wherever possible. Almost half of the book (pp. 1–174) then provides a “Supplementary anthology” of sources, mainly in German or English, with a handful in French, Latin, or the original Modern Chinese. The “Addenda” that follow provide biographical details for over 50 contributors to the series, and for well over 100 of the authors of the excerpted materials, though for a small number no information has been found. A list of reviews of the first five volumes then follows on pp. 235–7, followed by a reprinting of their five tables of content, and on pp. 255–7 a small number of errata and corrigenda. The rest of the volume is occupied by Roman Malek’s detailed index and glossary to the whole project, compiled with the assistance of Barbara Hoster and Dirk Kuhlmann. The overall outcome of this final volume is to turn the whole series into a miniature encyclopaedia of Christ in China that up to a point can serve also as an encyclopaedia of Chinese Christianity. For all the additional assistance that this project has attracted, especially over its latter years, it is clear that its conception and execution would not have been possible without the vision and initiative of a single individual. There could be no more fitting memorial to Roman Malek’s life of dedicated scholarship.

The volume edited by Lars Laamann and Joseph Lee is not presented as a tribute to Rolf Gerhard “Gary” Tiedemann (1941–2019) other than in a brief “Preface: In permanent gratitude to R.G. Tiedemann” on pp. ix–x, no doubt because all publishers these days prefer to steer well clear of anything that might suggest the heterogeneous contents of the traditional Festschrift of times past, but this scruple has at least permitted the editors to include a typically well-researched contribution on Catholic missions as centres of resistance to rural violence in North China by the master himself (pp. 261–90). This of course means that no formal bibliography of his publications is included to demonstrate for example the scope of the major surveys of source materials that he published after the end of his teaching career, but even a full listing would not show the degree to which his extraordinary erudition supported so much of the research in modern Chinese history that appeared from his department in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, nor hint at the wealth of detail in his doctorate and in as yet unpublished databases such as that acknowledged by Jonathan Spence, *God’s Chinese Son* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996), p. xvi, which I very much hope can be retrieved from his files. The two editors have brought together some excellent studies of the sometimes quite unexpected role of Christian missions over the past 200 years, an entirely worthy tribute to the scholarship of their teacher, and an oblique but powerful witness to the way in which the unseen efforts of one outstanding researcher can lay the groundwork for the success of many others.

Meanwhile it is gratifying to see a new generation of scholars beginning to make visible much that was hitherto hard to discern in the history of Chinese Christianity. The Brethren, despite their impact in the land of their origin and beyond, have not attracted much attention, in part no doubt because by eschewing any form of central organization they have deprived researchers of any easy point from which to begin their studies. The only signs of their collective efforts available for analysis have

been printed materials for circulation within the group, so that “The Little Flock”, the Chinese group that owes the most to Brethren influence, was originally a hymn book, and here, in a stimulating new study by David Woodbridge, the missionary periodical *Echoes of Service* and its associated archive are deployed to open up an exploration of Brethren influence in China. In fact the pattern of local “Assemblies” loosely networked but without any controlling hierarchy, but open to talents emerging from within a collective leadership, made their approach congenial to a land where religious hierarchies have been traditionally imposed only by the state. That their great theorist John Nelson Darby (1800–82) spoke of a “church in ruins” which he sought to replace with autocephalous local churches also allowed Chinese adherents to dissociate themselves from a Protestantism otherwise as tied to outside, non-Chinese interests as their Catholic or Orthodox rivals. By contrast the “primitivism” of the Brethren, what they themselves considered a “scriptural” adherence to the religious values of the New Testament, entailed the adoption of a way of life determined as in the early church by a precarious existence under the shadow of a secular power claiming absolute authority. Darby further offered an eschatology in which the believer was destined to escape the threat of approaching tribulation, again a notion that would have had immediate intelligibility and indeed appeal within traditional Chinese eschatological thought.

Where Darby’s upper-middle-class Victorian upbringing was less successful was in recreating among the Brethren the emotional environment of the Roman Levant, though other Westerners (as Lars Laamann points out on pp. 34–8) apparently adjusted much more readily to a Chinese religious world more like that of the New Testament than post-Reformation Christendom. The 2012 Manchester dissertation with the same title underlying this published revision quotes quite appositely a passage from the biography of the Little Flock leader Watchman Nee criticizing Darby’s heirs from Angus Kinnear, *Against the Tide: The Story of Watchman Nee* (Eastbourne, Sussex: Victory Press, 1974), pp. 118–9, in which, while commending their doctrines, he remarked pointedly that they would avail them little in China “if when the need arose you could not cast out a demon”. It is perhaps a pity that this quotation could not be included here, where the reference is subsumed in a footnote (p. 59, n. 39).

Given moreover that many Brethren ideas came to influence Nee at an early stage through the originally Anglican missionary Margaret Barber (1866–1930), it is also disappointing to learn (p. 55) that church records at her home base in Norwich show little evidence of her activities, though more materials about her are now appearing online. Possibly, information on the young Nee may be found in CMS records of their mission to Fuzhou sponsored by Trinity College Dublin, since this mission’s own narrative, referred to in n. 21, p. 53, composed by R.M. Gwynn and others, *T.C.D. in China: A History of the Dublin University Fukien Mission 1885–1935* (Dublin: Church of Ireland Print & Publishing Co., 1936), p. 60, contains a clear reference to his high school activities. Most research on Nee, however, is advancing on the basis of Chinese sources, whilst the scope of this book is firmly Anglocentric – even the remarkable Willis family of Brethren from Canada, who produced in Helen Willis the last missionary to leave China (in 1959), are passed over without mention, though here too it is possible to trace their story through online sources. Against this limitation, however, this book provides an excellent contextualization of the best-known Brethren China missionaries from the United Kingdom, especially Geoffrey Bull (1921–99) and George Paterson (1920–2012), particularly since the author was able to interview the latter towards the end of his long life on his continued involvement with the cause of Tibet. Like the other

two works under review here, this publication will no doubt also be seen in future as something of a milestone.

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SHEN ZHONGWEI:

*Phonological History of Chinese.*

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This contribution is a perceptive and informative assessment of the field of Chinese historical phonology that also investigates the linguistic tradition of China going back as far as the Nánběicháo period (386–589) and developed independently of Western linguistic traditions. Within a relatively brief space of 384 pages, Shen Zhongwei (University of Massachusetts) has accomplished the feat of illustrating the phonological history of Chinese from the second millennium BCE to the modern era. This long treatment is a genuine phonological and sinological tour de force, which reveals mastery both of the traditional field of Chinese historical phonology and of the various Western and Chinese applications and trends that have evolved from it over the past century. This book can also be described as a compendium of modern research in Chinese historical phonology, especially from the Chinese side. Indeed, as the author himself reveals in the foreword, he has made use mainly of Chinese scholarship, albeit references to the works of Karlgren, Pulleyblank, Norman, Sagart, Baxter, etc. are also present.

The book consists of an introductory chapter on traditional Chinese phonology (pp. 1–56), followed by sections dedicated to Old Chinese (pp. 57–103), Middle Chinese (pp. 105–94), the formative stages of Mandarin (pp. 195–227), the Old Mandarin of the Yuan epoch (pp. 229–315), and a sixth and final part dedicated to the Modern Mandarin of the Ming–Qing period (pp. 317–84). Whilst many publications on the same subject were concerned primarily with interactions with “minority languages” or non-Trans-Himalayan tongues in southern China (e.g. Hmong-Mien), this book focuses mostly on linguistic interactions with “northern languages”. This is not only original but also extremely useful, because the material written in Khitan, Jurchen and hP’ags-pa scripts may pave the way for our understanding of the early history of Mandarin. The present reviewer was also delighted to see an analysis of the poorly explored area of Persian transcriptions (pp. 294–315). That said, this book also contains some parts that require clarification, and I shall try to provide some more detailed information in the remainder of this review.

The first general objection is that the author never discusses the concepts of “reconstruction” and “sound change”, and seems to accept the methods of reconstruction formalized within a structuralist framework (pp. 55, 87, esp. 120). This approach, although it allows for a sober reassessment of Karlgren’s unbalanced system, is perhaps what led post-Karlgrenian scholars to neglect the role that articulatory details and other perceptual processes may play in determining the course and pathways of sound change. It is true that Karlgren had lost himself into the triviality of reconstructing as many phonetic contrasts as the number of the sound classes of traditional rime tables required but, in retrospect, the segmental approach has led to an equally unsatisfactory result. For instance, scholars have been very active in reconstructing various medials according to different grades, but have paid little attention to the work of important