

TEISER, STEPHEN F. *The Scripture of the Ten Kings and the Making of Purgatory in Medieval Chinese Buddhism*. Kuroda Institute Studies in East Asian Buddhism 9. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994. xxiii + 340 pages. Illustrations, appendices, glossary, bibliography, subject index, index of manuscripts and cave inscriptions. Cloth US\$46.00; ISBN 0-8248-1587-4.

Buddhism has been linked with death and the dead almost since its appearance in China and subsequently in the rest of East Asia as it continued its migrations. Moreover, there is increasing evidence that Buddhism may well have been particularly associated with funeral practices already during its earlier development in India. Despite this, only a handful of scholars in Buddhist studies have devoted much attention to the cult of the dead, even as such studies of Western developments proliferate. Stephen Teiser's recent book on the making of purgatory and the mortuary rituals centered around one of the central texts of the cult is thus a welcome addition to the field. It is a fitting follow-up to his previous work on the *yulanpen* 盂蘭盆 (ghost festival) in China, in which the traditional Chinese concern for ancestors was synthesized with the potency of Buddhist ritual for contacting the world beyond.

Teiser's book is an integral study of *The Scripture on the Ten Kings*, an apocryphal sutra preserved in over thirty manuscripts from Dunhuang and dating from approximately the early tenth century. His approach is threefold. The first part of the book treats the role of the ten kings in Chinese mortuary ritual during the medieval period (ca. 650–1000 C.E.) and the various media—literary and artistic—by which they shaped Chinese conceptions of the afterlife. Here Teiser draws upon a rich selection of poetry, miracle tales, canonical and noncanonical scriptures, traditional histories, and more. The second part of the book discusses the motivations related to the production of the physical text in the form of both scrolls and booklets. Since *The Scripture on the Ten Kings* never attained canonical status in China, its reproduction in official scribal circles could not be guaranteed. Here Teiser presents a superb analysis of colophons and dedicatory prayers that tie the production of specific manuscripts to a liturgical context of ushering loved ones through the offices of the underworld. The third section is a study of the scripture itself, its language, genre, protagonists, and players, followed by a heavily annotated translation. This combined approach to the study of Chinese purgatory aims at deprivileging textual analysis in favor of what Teiser calls historical ethnography, so as to create a window into Chinese Buddhism as a practiced tradition. Teiser reminds us—and it is amazing how often we need reminding—that “religious life in medieval societies did not revolve around books” (76).

It would be difficult to praise this study too much. Teiser makes significant contributions to at least three fields simultaneously. First, this work adds considerably to our knowledge of Chinese folk religion. Though much of the material comes from Dunhuang, an oasis commandery in the far northwest, it is clear from contemporaneous art and literature that the conception of purgatory (an underworld governed by Indian notions of karmic retribution within a typically Chinese bureaucracy) and the mortuary cult centered around the ten kings had a broad impact throughout China and was enthusiastically followed by thousands of Chinese at all levels of society. Otherwise it would be difficult to account for the vigorous condemnations of such rites by such prominent Confucian literati as Han Yu 韓愈 and Li Ao 李翱.

Secondly, Teiser's work is one of the most thorough studies of a Chinese Buddhist apocryphal text to date. As Buddhist scholars realize that orthodoxy was a fluid rather than fixed notion in medieval China, the field is becoming less preoccupied with canonical and high-brow literary productions. Toward this end Teiser has artfully integrated evidence from both

canonical and apocryphal sutras, folk narratives, colophons, artistic representations, and secular literature. In ways small and large Teiser has forged a model of what it means to contextualize a work within its historical milieu.

In addition, this book is a significant contribution to the by now large and growing field of Dunhuang studies. The large manuscript and art historical cache discovered at Dunhuang at the turn of the century has attracted immense international attention. Drawing from numerous dedicatory colophons to copied scriptures, Teiser creates textured portraits of the religious concerns of several historical individuals from Dunhuang. Thus we get a glimpse of the motivations of an infirm young nun named Miaofu 妙福, of an octogenarian who copied scriptures in his own blood, of the bibliophile monk Daozhen 道真 of the prominent Zhang 張 family, and even of a man who dedicated copies of *The Scripture on the Ten Kings* and the *Diamond Sutra* on behalf of his plowing ox in the hope that his bovine friend would be reborn in the Pure Land. One of the richest collections of dedications comes from the series of ten colophons of Zhai Fengda 翟奉達, who dedicated one scripture for each of the seven weeks following the death of his wife, one for the hundred-day mark, and another for the one- and three-year points respectively. Not only do such colophons reveal the liturgical context of scripture use in medieval China, but the choice of texts copied, including both canonical and apocryphal works, demonstrates that the “real” canon of local Buddhists could differ radically from the one decided upon and preserved by Buddhist literati at the capital.

The last section contains a translation of *The Scripture on the Ten Kings*. Teiser chooses the best manuscript of the long recension of the text (Pelliot 2003) and provides important variants in the notes. One can always quibble with a translation. Though I would have preferred slightly different renderings in a very few places, the translation is throughout competent and well annotated. I could not help but think, however, that this textual study could have greatly benefited from a critical edition of the long recension of *The Scripture on the Ten Kings*. None of the previous editions takes into account the full range of the extant manuscripts, and it is not possible in my opinion to take seriously Teiser’s claim that “the translation establishes a critical edition of the long recension of *The Scripture on the Ten Kings*” (196).

Translations and critical editions are entirely different species of philological enterprises. In fact, more properly, they are on different taxonomic levels of textual analysis. The task of the philologist is to trace the relationship among the extant manuscripts so as to discern the most likely “original” reading, i.e., the highest possible reading on the stemma. It may be that such a reading is in error, but one can responsibly emend a text only after establishing the recension and determining which readings are of equal stemmatical value. This failure to critically edit texts is certainly not Teiser’s shortcoming. The entire field of Sinology—in marked contrast to classics and Indology—has been particularly remiss in establishing its texts. Given that “almost all scrolls of *The Scripture on the Ten Kings* contain evidence of corrections” (91), it is particularly important that we distinguish scribal errors from transmission variants. Since many of the “variants” among the manuscripts—and again, without a critical edition we cannot distinguish variants from errors—are homophonous, it may have been helpful for Teiser to consult South Coblin’s *Studies in Old Northwest Chinese* (Journal of Chinese Linguistics Monograph, series no. 4, 1991). Coblin attempts reconstructed pronunciations from the Dunhuang region that are nearly contemporaneous with the Dunhuang manuscripts of *The Scripture on the Ten Kings*.

Short of a critical edition, it would have been of far greater ease for Sinologists to have the Chinese characters within the text and notes to the translation. Having to flip constantly to the glossary may discourage many scholars from examining the translation as critically as they should. The University of Hawaii Press, a leader in the field of East Asian publications, should give this due consideration in the future.

But we should not be ungracious. Professor Teiser has given us a marvelous study of an important text—a landmark in philological and interpretive excellence. The development of purgatory is now much clearer thanks to his study of *The Scripture on the Ten Kings*. He has navigated through diverse genres and numerous fields in order to bring this slice of the medieval world into clearer focus.

Daniel BOUCHER  
Franklin and Marshall College  
Lancaster, PA

WITZLEBEN, J. LAWRENCE. *"Silk and Bamboo" Music in Shanghai: The Jiangnan Sizhu Instrumental Ensemble Tradition*. Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 1995. xxii + 197 pages. Illustrations, figures, musical examples, appendices, glossary, bibliography, discography, index. Cloth US\$35.00; ISBN 0-87338-499-7.

The study of Chinese music appears to be experiencing an unprecedented boom recently. Important new monographs are appearing almost every year, and journals such as *CHIME* and *CHINOPERL* continue to publish a stream of fieldwork reports, analyses, and ethnographical studies. J. Lawrence Witzleben's account of *Jiangnan sizhu* in Shanghai constitutes another invaluable addition to our growing knowledge of Chinese music. Well written, researched both in the field and in the library, and informed by impeccable scholarship, *"Silk and Bamboo" Music in Shanghai* offers something for almost any reader. Those interested in the history of the genre and its relation to other traditional Chinese musics will find much of use in chapters 1, 4, and 5. Readers who prefer more contemporary, ethnographic types of information will probably wish to turn first to the Prologue and chapters 2 and 8. Music theorists interested in the pieces actually performed will discover many detailed analyses in chapters 3, 5, 6, and 7. The many facets of Witzleben's study complement each other, providing a short yet surprisingly comprehensive account of what the title promises.

*Jiangnan sizhu* means literally "silk and bamboo music from the south bank of the Yangtze" (2). In fact, *Jiangnan sizhu* is a traditional ensemble music, usually performed on *dizi* (transverse bamboo flute), *xiao* (end-blown bamboo flute), *sheng* (mouth organ), *erhu* (two-stringed bowed lute), *sanxian* (three-stringed plucked lute), *qinqin* (two- or three-stringed plucked lute), *yanqin* (struck zither), and several percussion instruments. The repertory of this ensemble centers on the "Eight Great Pieces," but includes over thirty other compositions.

The origins of *Jiangnan sizhu* are tangled, and Witzleben does an excellent job of sorting out the various strands that went into forming what the genre has become today. Most of the "bamboo and silk" instruments listed above have existed since time immemorial, and component parts of *Jiangnan sizhu* can be identified by at least the nineteenth century. By 1911 a *Jiangnan sizhu* organization was meeting in a Shanghai teahouse, and soon other groups began to appear. Despite the turmoil of the war against Japan and the civil war that followed, this music continued to be performed, and its repertory gradually solidified, centering on the "Eight Great Pieces." As recently as the 1950s *Jiangnan sizhu* could be heard throughout Shanghai, but during the period of the Cultural Revolution (1966–76) *Jiangnan sizhu* clubs were forced to disband (some musicians continued to meet in secret). A small resurgence has taken place recently, but *Jiangnan sizhu* does not enjoy great popularity in China today. Nevertheless, it is an important and representative genre, a "viable but somewhat invisible subculture in Shanghai" (3).