

the various factors determining what everyday Indians do and do not put on their plates.

Jonathan Dickstein is a PhD candidate in Religious Studies at the University of California-Santa Barbara. His current research focuses on domesticated animals in South Asian religious cosmologies and ethics.



L'Âge d'or du Tibet (XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles)

Katia Buffetrille. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2019. 320 pages. ISBN 9782251449746.

By Patrick Kaplanian

The golden age of Tibet is often considered to be the 17th and 18th centuries. Why the 17th and 18th centuries? Because it was at this time that the system of government was established, which was maintained until the 1950s. The strength of this book lies in its description of this mechanism of governance. After the Mongolian leader Gushri Khan gave power to the 5th Dalai Lama (1642, p. 31), the government of the Dalai Lama, the Ganden Phodrang was established (1642, see p. 32). The Potala was built between 1645 and 1648, at least the part called the White Palace (p. 66, see also p. 237). And the system of government known as Ganden Phodrang is described on p. 97.

The independent states that revolved around this center, such as Tsang, with the Panchen Lama (pp. 30 and 100), the “principality” of Sakya (p. 100), the Lhagyari domain (p. 100), the neighboring kingdoms (Sikkim, Bhutan, Ladakh, Guge, pp. 46–50), the various kingdoms that share Kham (pp. 88–91) and the nomadic populations of Amdo (pp. 91–94) are also described.

If the work covers a relatively limited historical period, it manages to encompass almost all aspects of Tibetan civilization. You can just read the table of contents—it is impressive. The book strives for completeness, and while it is not obvious how to accomplish such an overview in 320 pages, the author is to be congratulated. The bet is successful, however, as she depicts Tibetan civilization in the round, including private life and art, society as well as rituals, architecture and intellectual life, etc. Some points are particularly well developed such as the sections on pilgrimages (pp. 188–194, one of the author’s specialties), festivals (pp. 246–256), and religions (pp. 163–200). The author has managed to give us an overall portrait without falling into excessive simplifications or indigestible scholarship.

Because this book is so wide-ranging, it is impossible to summarize. I can describe a section to show its richness. For example, pages 214 to 228 are devoted to literature. Of course, the author recalls the existence of classics such as *Kagyur* and *Tengyur* (simplified spellings used by the author, p. 215, Wylie is *bka' gyur* and *bstan gyur*), *terma* (*gter ma*, p. 217), royal chronicles (*gyelrab*; *rgyal rabs*, p. 220) like *The Blue Annals*, works of medicine such as the *Quadruple Treaty* (*gyüizhi*; *rguyd bzhi*, p. 223), songs (*lu*; *glu*), mystical songs (p. 225), aphorisms (p. 226), tales,

theater, and finally epics like the famous epic of Gesar de Ling (p. 228).

She also mentions less well-known types of literature, such as the compilation of ancient tantras (*nyingma gyübum*; *nying ma rgyud 'bum*), a collection of Tantric texts that the various compilers had dismissed on the grounds of their lack of authenticity and that the Nyingma school took to themselves (p. 216).

Since the focus is Tibet from the 17th and 18th centuries, the author emphasizes the literary forms which experienced a great expansion at that time, for example, autobiographies and biographies (*rangnam*; *rang rnam* and *namthar*; *rnam thar*). Thus biographies appear of colossal length containing more than 1,000 folios, the record being held by the autobiography of the Fifth Dalai Lama with 2,500 folios grouped in three volumes. The complete works (*sungbum*; *gsung bum*, p. 219) produced by compiling the works of certain masters and adding to them the transcription of their oral teachings made by their disciples also appeared at this time—once again the Fifth Dalai Lama comes out on top with 25 volumes. Particularly important in Tibet of the 17th and 18th centuries are the texts detailing the history of the development of the doctrine (*chöjung*; *chos jung*, p. 221). These texts are distinct from the royal chronicles since they present history in short, albeit under the pretext of religious history. As early as 1608, the great master Taranata composed a *History of Indian Buddhism* and, in 1748, Sumpa Khempo Yeshe Peljor wrote *The Wishful Tree*, a history of Buddhism in India, China, Tibet and Mongolia. Then came the *Crystal Mirror illuminating the Philosophical Positions of Thukwen Lobsang Chökyi Nyima*, enlarging the content of *The Wishful Tree* with a presentation of the doctrines of the different schools.

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Kaplanian on *L'Âge d'or du Tibet (XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles)*

At the same time, there were still other genres of literature such as the treatises of regional history such as the *Annals of Kokonor*, histories of monasteries (*denrab; gdan rabs*, p. 222) and of genealogies (*drungrab: drung rab*, p. 222) like the one composed by the regent Sangye Gyatso for the 5th Dalai Lama. The author also notes that the regent Sangye Gyatso encouraged the publication of treatises of grammar (p. 223). The literature on pilgrimages did not just guide pilgrims; those dedicated to the sacred mountains aimed to install the Buddhist pantheon in the landscape.

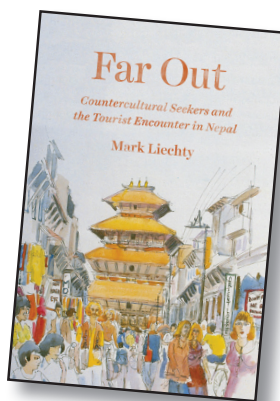
The field of poetry also flourished in 17th and 18th centuries. There was a return to Indian sources with the rediscovery of treatises on poetic composition (p. 226). At the same time, rediscoveries of great texts like the *Ramayana* inspired the writing of novels (p. 227).

If the author has done an excellent job, the same cannot be said of the publisher. The book is crammed with cross-references like « cf Lhasa, ville cosmopolite; chapitre II » (“see Lhasa, cosmopolitan city; chapter II”) instead of “see p. 73” where this subtitle is exactly located, which make the reader lose a lot of time. The publisher, having no cartographic department, did not draw maps suitable for the work. Because of that, the author was forced to gather different maps published in other works. As a result, there is a lack of unity and consistency and, above all, most of the maps are not adapted to the

format of the book and are therefore indistinct.

But these are minor faults. This is a book that should be read by all of those interested in Tibet that will also be a resource for specialists.

Patrick Kaplanian is an independent researcher working on the ethnology of Ladakh since 1975.



Far Out: Countercultural Seekers and the Tourist Encounter in Nepal.

Mark Liechty. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2017. 387 pages. ISBN 9780226428949.

Reviewed by Jolynna Sinanan

In an ideal world, tourists in their guesthouses or in any number of the “free-wi-fi-with-drinks-purchase” bars in Kathmandu would be thumbing through *Mark Liechty’s Far Out: Countercultural Seekers and the Tourist Encounter in Nepal*, rather than Jon Krakauer’s Everest disaster account turned Everest folklore *Into Thin Air*. Not that *Into Thin Air* isn’t a

great read, but its effectiveness is in taking an event we think we know well and turning it into a personal account of the adventure and then disaster that has shaped how we relate to one of the most notorious tourism destinations in Nepal.

The adventure in Liechty’s *Far Out* is the production of the imaginations of Nepal itself. The book takes a historicized perspective, based on over four decades of personal experience—from having spent substantial time in Kathmandu as a child, through his parents’ work with the United Mission to Nepal (UMN), to his long term ethnography as an anthropologist specialising in youth and the emerging urban middle-class (research focused on 75 individuals in the 2010s), and a great deal of reading. It would be impossible to write a good book about Nepal, with its deep associations with adventure and spiritualism—imaginative escapes from the malaise of 20th century capitalism, without being able to tell a good story. Nepal’s narrative in the modern, Western imagination has indeed become myth because of good stories.

The overall structure follows tourism as colonial adventure to neo-liberal commodity, from the 1960s to 1980, and the intergenerational imagination of Nepal that is wider than this timeframe but concentrates on the countercultural tourist encounter of these decades. Departing from a focus on “tourists” or the “locals” impacted by “their” gaze, *Far Out* highlights the encounter