to be made by those presented with such a panoply of options. And, when we know that a particular historical actor was required to make choices without full access to the entire range of information now known to us, a sense of foreboding arises without the author having to belabor the point.

Indeed, in adopting this meaty style of history writing—the stolid progression of changes through time marbled with the diversity of quantas of information that complete our positions in a given historical context—the authors have valiantly refused to succumb to the temptation to replace true history-telling with the politically correct but often superficial style, foisted upon historical actors and events by kowtowing to unwieldy categories, such as “gender relations” and “interactions with the other,” which, though perhaps significant to a few people in any historical period, nevertheless many times distort beginning students’ understanding of the past. In other words, the authors of Modern Japan write history in order to provide a window to the past and not a mirror in which to practice commentaries upon themselves and their own time.¹

This reviewer was also relieved to find that the authors of Modern Japan did not indulge in that distinctly anti-American tone that imparts a false seriousness and sense of balance to works that deal with World War II in the Pacific. When the Americans win a battle—as in the authors’ presentation of the Battle of the Coral Sea and Guadalcanal—Hane and Perez resist the urge to undermine these victories by inserting something along the lines of, “but let us not forget that the Americans were guilty of savagery and atrocities elsewhere.” The Pacific War was brutal and pitiless, but, clearly, the Japanese outclassed the Americans in butchery and in contempt for death. As for those who would try to use the atom bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki as trump cards to spread the guilt around evenly—the authors are having none of this tack: the horrors of nuclear war are presented in all of their nightmarish implications, and not forget that the Americans were guilty of savagery and atrocities elsewhere.

The first part of the book is a brief yet solid overview of the simmering tensions that rose to the surface during the latter years of the Indian independence movement, especially the critical years just prior to 1947. Wolpert succinctly recounts the jarring between Jinnah and Nehru as independence approached and the growing communalism and religious extremism that marked the era. He puts Kashmir front and center in his analysis, and in the first two chapters, he describes how the unresolved status of Kashmir during the run up to, and the immediate aftermath of, Partition and independence sabotaged better relations between India and Pakistan. Wolpert effectively explains the competition between Pakistan and India for control of Kashmir and their efforts to gain allies abroad and at home in this struggle. He gives insightful and sometimes amusing anecdotes that illustrate how Pakistani and Indian leaders allowed petty interests to dominate policy or misjudged each other and miscalculated on a grand scale. The most scathing criticism is directed at Zulfikar Bhutto and Indira Gandhi who come off as largely self-serving egotists. The ineptitude and venality of Indian and Pakistani leaders is a stark contrast to the author’s thoughtful and sympathetic portrayal of ordinary people in South Asia, especially the Kashmiris. Wolpert thoughtfully describes how Kashmiris, the unwitting inhabitants of some of the world’s most hypnotic topography, have borne the brunt of the conflict between India and Pakistan as a result of some unfortunate geography. Although Wolpert is careful to place blame on individuals rather than paint Pakistanis, Indians, and Kashmiris with a broad brush, he also notes how mass movements such as Islamic and Hindu extremism have exacerbated the relationship between Pakistan and India, especially by meddling in Kashmir.

Toward the end of the book, Wolpert gives what seems like a blow-by-blow description of the relevant events of the last two decades. While some teachers might find this synopsis of recent history, including the Mumbai attacks of 2008, somewhat tedious or lacking nuance, students will probably find this section helpful since most of them will likely have at best only a cursory grasp of this material. Wolpert does an especially good job of explaining the role of Afghanistan in Pakistani-Indian relations, something American students might find particularly relevant.

Wolpert concludes India and Pakistan: Continued Conflict or Cooperation? by boldly offering an earnest solution to the problems at the heart of the

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Pakistani-Indian relationship. His deep desire to see better relations between Pakistan and India is obvious, and his prescriptions are sensible. They will surely provide a starting point for interesting and productive classroom discussion. I hope readers of India and Pakistan: Continued Conflict or Cooperation? will take Wolpert’s advice to heart and help move the conversation forward equipped with a better understanding of this topic.

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Dharma
BY ALF HILTEBEITEL
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Reviewed by Catherine Benton

Part of the University of Hawai’i series “Dimensions of Asian Spirituality,” Alf Hiltebeitel’s Dharma presents an enlightening discussion of dharma, a fundamental component of Hindu and Buddhist thinking. One of the goals of the “Dimensions of Asian Spirituality” series is to make available “short but comprehensive works [by distinguished scholars] on specific Asian . . . works devoted to the full articulation of a concept central to one or more of Asia’s spiritual traditions.” More specifically, this series aims to present this concept “in historical context for the non-specialist reader” and to create a forum for a scholar to present his or her “own views of [its] contemporary spiritual relevance . . . for global citizens of the twenty-first century.” Hiltebeitel’s Dharma meets these goals, providing an in-depth discussion of dharma using examples from the story literature that illustrate classical Hindu and Buddhist texts.

Integral to Hindu and Buddhist thinking, the word dharma expresses different but related meanings in these two traditions, and conveys a broad range of richly-textured concepts, even within each tradition. Dharmic (virtuous, principled) actions of various sorts can be traced to the Sanskrit root dh, meaning to uphold or support, which the wonderfully poetic and imaginative Sanskrit language flows out in concepts as different as law (that which gives structure or support to order in a society) and an element of reality (that which upholds the component structure of reality).

Hiltebeitel takes on the enormous challenge of unraveling the colorful strands of dharma in several important texts of the South Asian Buddhist and Hindu traditions and presenting their multilayered resonances. Readers familiar with the Rigveda and the Chāndogya, Brhadāranyaka, and Katha Upanishads, or with the two Indian epics, the Ramayana and the Mahābhārata (containing within it the well-known Bhagavad Gītā) will find many stories they recognize. On the Buddhist side, Hiltebeitel unpacks the third-century BCE dharma inscribed on Asoka’s edict pillars, the dharma expounded in the early Buddhist Tripitaka, and the first-century dharma expressed in Asvaghosa’s Buddhacarita.

Throughout dharma is not always easy to grasp for those of us not raised in a dharma-imbedded society, Hiltebeitel’s organization of chapters around stories grounded in particular dharmas is helpful for those interested in this organizing principle as a way to better understand Hindu and Buddhist religious teachings. Because each chapter highlights dharma as a religious or philosophical construct, individual chapters work as discrete discussions that can be digested in any order.

Hiltebeitel explains in his opening chapter that this book is about dharma as a South Asian spirituality. Along with yoga and karma, dharma is one of a few terms that have come to emblematize Indian spirituality not only in the West but throughout Asia (4).

In terms of classroom use, given the richness and central importance of dharma within South Asian religious thinking, Dharma would be an excellent supplementary text for undergraduate courses exploring Hindu or Buddhist traditions. For instructors of these courses or anyone interested in the philosophical complexities of this concept and its relevance to twenty-first century ethical concerns, Dharma is a superb reference guide, intellectually stimulating and enjoyable.

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