was published in 2001, the study does not incorporate the Warring States bamboo slip documents that recently came into the possession of the Shanghai Museum. Some of these documents, especially the one referred to as *Kongzi shilun*, cite large portions from the *Shijing* and, because of their early date, would be extremely valuable for this study. The reason for not including these bamboo manuscripts in the study is simple a matter of timing. The book contains results of a decade's research and was already at the publisher when the new manuscripts were published. The other shortcoming is that the book was originally written in traditional characters but was typeset by the publisher in simplified characters. When the author realised this, he tried to convert back to traditional characters at least in places where he directly quoted from early sources or where he analysed character variants. However, this endeavour was not entirely successful and the simplified characters sometimes still "shine through" the corrections, occasionally confusing the reader.

From a structural point of view, the book is divided into nine chapters. Chapter I is titled "The transmission of *Shijing* in pre-Qin and early Western Han times"; Chapter II, "The separation of the four schools of *Shijing*"; Chapter III, "The canonical text of the three schools"; Chapter IV, "The canonical text of the Mao school"; Chapter V, "Comparison of the texts of the Lu and Mao schools"; Chapter VI, "The disappearance of the three schools and the sole spread of the Mao school"; Chapter VII, "Textual variations of the Mao school during the Southern and Northern Dynasties"; Chapter VIII, "Lu Deming's work on textual variants"; and Chapter IX, "The study of characters during the Tang and the formation of the edited Mao school version".

Although the book often helps the reader to reach a better reading of certain *Shijing* lines, it does not try to reconstruct an "original" version of the *Shijing*. Instead, it merely tries to read the lines and sentences by comparing variant readings. And this is precisely where its value lies – it remains solidly grounded, without attempting to draw major theoretical conclusions. It is a valuable resource for anyone who studies, translates, or just reads the *Shijing*.

Imre Galambos

HAMAR, IMRE: *A Religious Leader in the Tang: Chengguan's Biography.* (Studia Philologica Buddhica. Occasional Paper Series XII) Tokyo, The International Institute for Buddhist Studies of The International College for Advanced Buddhist Studies 2002, 90 pp.

According to tradition, Chengguan (738–839?) was the fourth patriarch of the Huayan school, which flourished under the Tang dynasty. He was a man of great erudition: he not only mastered the Buddhist knowledge of his age, but was also familiar with the works of indigenous Chinese traditions, such as Confucianism and Taoism. Chengguan's activities were manysided: he wrote a monumental *Commentary* and *Subcommentary* on the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra,* which can justly be called the Summa Theologiae of the day; as an outstanding master respected and patronised by emperors, civil and military officials, he took an active part in the religious politics of the day and contributed greatly to the flourishing of Buddhism under the Tang; and he was also said to be an expert on meditation and other religious practices.

It is no wonder that following his death, or even before that, more than one biography of such an influential person was compiled. Though some of the sources on his life are lost, a couple of biographies still exist, and tell us a lot about the activities of Chengguan. However, on certain points these biographies are somewhat different from, or contradict, each other, so for reconstructing the details of Chengguan's life, painstaking philological work is needed. The sources – including monastic and official histories, collections of biographies, etc. – have to be compared and analysed almost line by line, and only the careful weighing of evidence can lead to the compilation of a fairly reliable critical biography of the great patriarch. This is the work the author has undertaken in writing the book.

The volume consists of three parts and two appendices. The first part (pp. 13–30) deals with the sources of Chengguan's life, such as the biographical data in the *Preface* to the *Commentary*, the inscription on Chengguan's stūpa, the biographies included in the *Song gaoseng zhuan* and other Buddhist historiographical works, as well as local gazetteers. A short description of these works, their possible interrelations and sources are given, and an attempt is made to determine their reliability.

The second part (pp. 31–64) contains a critical biography of Chengguan. The main emphasis in the biography falls on the differences and contradictions in the sources, as these have usually been neglected in previous works related to Chengguan. The author goes through the main episodes of the master's life: his monastic and secular education, his possible participation in a translation project of Amoghavajra, his life on the Wutaishan, the writing of the *Commentary*, the translation of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra,* his clerical ranks and titles, association with emperors and officials, and his death. The different sources on these episodes are compared and evaluated with the greatest care, and the author gives an explanation of the contradictions (e.g., personal or sectarian bias). The outcome of the analysis is a new biography of Chengguan, firmly based on the primary sources, which is more reliable and exact than previous works.

The third part (pp. 65–67) deals with the problem of whether one, two, or more Chengguans existed during the Tang period. It is concluded that the existence of two monks called Chengguan is historically attested, one of them was the great Huayan master, and the other was a less significant monk from Sizhou. Most of the information in the sources refer to the Huayan patriarch, but some data on the Chenguan of Sizhou might have mistakenly be incorporated into the biographies of the former, such as the date of his death as given in the *Song gaoseng zhuan*.

The appendices contain the translation of two biographical sources, the inscription on Chengguan's stūpa, and his biography in the *Song gaoseng zhuan.*

Imre Hamar's book is a fine example of modern Buddhist philology, and it sheds light not only on the details of the life of one of the most influential Chinese monks, but also on the nature, transmission, and interrelations of Chinese monastic historiography.

Gergely Salát

QIAN, NANXIU: *Spirit and Self in Medieval China. The* Shih-shuo hsin-yü *and Its Legacy*. Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press 2001, 520 pp.

The so-called Wei-Jin "spirit" as it is exposed in the Shishuo Xinyu (*Shih-shuo hsin-yü*), conventionally translated as *A New Account of Tales of the World*, is the most lively expression of *Self* in the Chinese literary tradition. It represents the outgrowth of new intellectual trends that emerged from the later Han dynasty onward. This text established its own genre, which has never been studied thoroughly so far, despite the growing interest in the Chinese idea of individual identity and human existence or personality between Western scholars. The text contains more than a thousand historical anecdotes about the life of the elite in the later Han (150–220) and Wei-Jin period (220–420). These anecdotes inspire us by their genuine and brilliant understanding of the concept of self and others. Imitations of the Shishuo Xinyu also appeared from the later part of the Tang dynasty (618–907) to the early twentieth century even in Japan.

The Shishuo Xinyu represents a unique genre that was widely misunderstood and labelled pejoratively as xiaohuo (petty talk) by Confucians from the seventh century, showing that its legacy did not measure up to Confucian standards of scholarship and moral attainment. This attitude towards this book and its legacy also negatively influenced our understanding of the Wei-Jin "spirit". In recent times the term xiaoshuo means "fiction" and it further complicates and deepens the gap between our understanding and the assignment of this book in Chi-