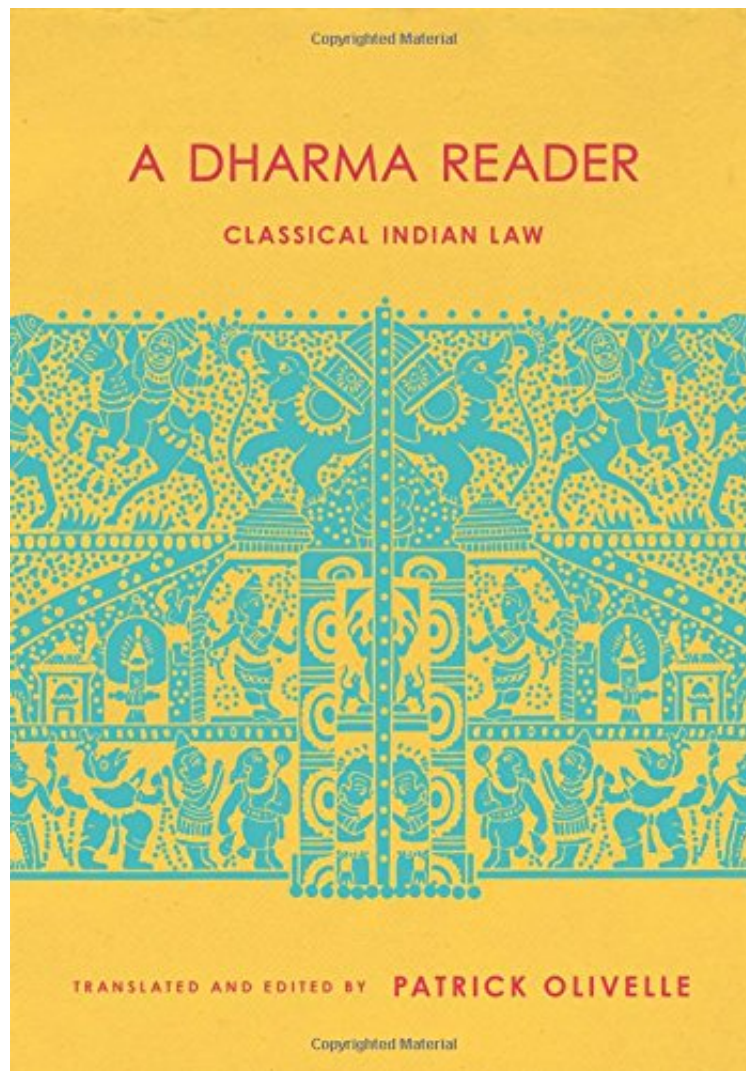


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A Dharma Reader: Classical Indian Law (Historical Sourcebooks in Classical Indian Thought)

Patrick Olivelle

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Patrick Olivelle : A Dharma Reader: Classical Indian Law (Historical Sourcebooks in Classical Indian Thought) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Dharma Reader: Classical Indian Law (Historical Sourcebooks in Classical Indian Thought):

Whether defined by family, lineage, caste, professional or religious association, village, or region, India's diverse groups did settle on a concept of law in classical times. How did they reach this consensus? Was it based on religious grounds or a transcendent source of knowledge? Did it depend on time and place? And what apparatus did communities develop to ensure justice was done, verdicts were fair, and the guilty were punished? Addressing these questions and more, *A Dharma Reader* traces the definition, epistemology, procedure, and process of Indian law from the third century B.C.E. to the middle ages. Its breadth captures the centuries-long struggle by Indian thinkers to theorize law in a multiethnic and pluralist society. The volume includes new and accessible translations of key texts, notes that explain the significance and chronology of selections, and a comprehensive introduction that summarizes the development of various disciplines in intellectual-historical terms. It reconstructs the principal disputes of a given discipline, which not only clarifies the arguments but also relays the dynamism of the fight. For those seeking a richer understanding of the political and intellectual origins of a major twenty-first-century power, along with unique insight into the legal interactions among its many groups, this book offers exceptional detail, historical precision, and expository illumination.

Only Patrick Olivelle's unparalleled erudition could have assembled such an amazing range of dharma texts and commentaries, ranging from the most basic to the most esoteric. The translations are clear and vivid, and the more obscure points are illuminated by full and explicit introductions and notes. Particularly valuable is the attention paid to the legal aspect of dharma and to its history in Indian law. A perfect complement to Olivelle's definitive translations of the major dharma texts, this will be an essential volume in the library of every Sanskritist or student of Indian religion or law. (Wendy Doniger, author of *The Implied Spider: Politics and Theology in Myth*) *A Dharma Reader* is an outstanding and innovative work from the world's leading authority on the history of Indian dharma. (Dominik Wujastyk, University of Alberta) *A Dharma Reader* is peerless because it presents more than just basic texts in the tradition. It provides nuance and depth that reveal the sophistication and cogency of India's intellectual history in ways that no previous work has done. (Donald R. Davis, University of Texas at Austin) For students of Indian law, religion, ethics, politics, and social propriety, the matter of dharma is everywhere. Now, at last, one does not have to go everywhere to ascertain its many meanings or the intricate textures of its theorization over time. This volume is a massive contribution to a field in which Olivelle's reputation is no less massive. (Jack Hawley, author of *A Storm of Songs: India and the Idea of the Bhakti Movement*) With his characteristic lucidity and verve, Olivelle leads us through nearly two millennia of lively scholastic debates in multiple genres on central issues of Classical Indian law, from the most abstract and sweeping the sources of law: what makes law law to the most minute and practical legal procedure and the conduct of courts. His detailed introduction and his illuminating headnotes to the source types and to individual texts deftly guide even the neophyte through complex intellectual tangles and have much to teach even the expert. (Stephanie W. Jamison, Distinguished Professor of Asian Languages and Cultures and of Indo-European Studies, University of California, Los Angeles) About the Author Patrick Olivelle is professor emeritus of Sanskrit and Indian religions at the University of Texas at Austin. He is the author and editor of a number of books, including *King, Governance, and Law in Ancient India* (2013); *Visnu's Code of Law: A Critical Edition and Translation of the Vaisnava Dharmasastra* (2009); *Dharma: Studies in Its Semantic, Cultural, and Religious History* (2009); *Manu's Code of Law: A Critical Edition and Translation of the Manava-Dharmasastra* (2005); and *Dharmasutras: The Law Codes of Ancient India* (1999).