observation justifies Liu's translating (e.g. p. 230) 假 (cf. Kumārajiva's Chinese translation of stanza 18, T.30.33b12) as "provisional", while the normal meaning is "false".

When speaking of Nāgarjuna I have only referred to the Middle Stanzas. The most recent study on his works mentioned in the book (n. 64) is Lindtner (1982), who excluded three of the four treatises of the Chinese tradition (uncritically mentioned by Liu on p. 27) from a list of 12 works he ascribes to the author of the Middle Stanzas. In the meantime at least six reviews and studies have appeared which cast doubt on the authenticity of some of these 12 works (see Études Asiatiques 46,1, 1992 p. 493).

In spite of these criticisms of details Liu's book is a very useful introduction to a stream of Buddhist thought in China, which he has shown to be of more interest than is sometimes allowed.

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During the last thousand years or so, Chinese conceptions of the afterlife and the ritual practices designed to ensure the soul a safe passage through the Underworld have been dominated by the belief in the Ten Kings and their Courts. The soul of the deceased, it was held, had to appear before ten Underworld courts in succession on specified days—on the seventh day after death; the fourteenth, the twenty-first, and so on, up to the forty-ninth day after death (the seven Sevens); the hundredth day after death; during the thirteenth month after death; and some time during the third year after death. In each court the record of one's good and bad deeds during one's lifetime was examined, and after appearing before the tenth court the soul was either condemned to one of the many Hells or assigned to one of the six paths of rebirth. The treatment of the deceased during this period of transition and the eventual outcome of the judicial process could be influenced by one's own actions during one's lifetime and by the offerings of the surviving relatives. The belief in the Ten Kings was

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closely integrated with a number of ritual practices; it was further sustained by paintings and storytelling.

The belief in the Ten Kings goes back at least as far as the first century of the Tang dynasty. It found its first written expression in the subject of this monograph, *The Scripture of the Ten Kings* (*Shiwang jing*), of which some twenty copies in various recensions (some of them with illustrations), all dating from the tenth century, have been found among the Dunhuang manuscripts. While the text mimics the form of a Buddhist sutra, it does not pretend to be a translation of an Indic original but rather claims to have been transmitted by a certain Zangchuan, a monk from Chengdu. Despite its popularity, ecclesiastical authorities consistently refused to include this text (and other texts like it) in the Buddhist canon. However, it provides a unique focus to study the fusion of filial piety and Buddhist devotion in the local society of late medieval China. Furthermore, many of the manuscript copies contain extensive colophons, thus providing information on the person who commissioned the copying and his or her motivation.

Prof. Teiser’s monograph is divided into three parts. Following an “Introduction” (pp. 1–15), “Part One: Traces of the Ten Kings” starts out with a chapter entitled “Memorial Rites” (pp. 19–31), which discusses the combination of the “seven Sevens”, originating in Buddhism, with the three-year period, deriving from Chinese mortuary practices. The third chapter, “Artistic Representations” (pp. 31–48) is mainly devoted to a discussion of paintings from Dunhuang featuring the Ten Kings. Usually the Ten Kings are depicted together with the bodhisattva Dizang, who occupies the central position of the painting. Chapter four, “Other Manifestations” (pp. 48–62) traces the Ten Kings in other texts and other lands (Central Asia and Japan). Chapter five, “Origin Legends” (pp. 62–75) discusses the available information concerning some of the persons connected with the origin of *The Scripture of the Ten Kings*: the monk Daoming, who visited Purgatory, and established the canonical pictorial representation of Dizang; the monk Zangchuan, who is mentioned in some versions as the author of *The Scripture of the Ten Kings*; and the Taoist magician Zhang Guolao, who is credited with being the creator of the illustrations of the Ten Kings in a thirteenth century source. The final chapter of Part One, “The Making of the Ten Kings” (pp. 76–84), notes the widespread distribution of the cult of the Ten Kings throughout China from an early date.

Like many other sutras, *The Scripture of the Ten Kings* insists on