

Manguean, the language family predominant in Oaxaca, and the difficulty the Spanish had in mastering these languages due to the large structural differences between them and the Indo-European and Semitic languages that Europeans were familiar with. Part II (chs. 4–5) discusses the strategies friars used to learn indigenous languages, including the role of Nahuatl as transitional language for new arrivals. It examines the use of writing, in particular the use of adaptations of the Latin alphabet to Zapotec and Mixtec. Following a description of the transition from native Mesoamerican writing systems based on logo-syllabic principles to the adoption of the Latin alphabet, Farriss considers the development of *artes* “pedagogical grammars” and dictionaries; the lexicographic models used by the friars; and outlines the content and organization of the most influential linguistic works on Zapotec and Mixtec. The pastoral literary traditions in both languages are described in accessible and nontechnical prose, stressing the challenges faced by the authors and the inherent ambiguities of these works. Farriss tackles the gap between norms and actual practice in indigenous language proficiency requirements, and Friars’ actual abilities to preach and confess in Zapotec and Mixtec. Part III (chs. 6–7) introduces the reader to indigenous catechists, their initial recruitment among native elites, and the role they played in the Christianization of indigenous Oaxaca. Also, it elucidates in some detail the problematic nature of authorship in colonial Christian texts in indigenous languages. Farriss describes the content of doctrines, the pedagogy of catechization, and the role that literacy played in it. She considers the cosmologies of Mesoamericans and Europeans, the prejudices of the latter and the confusion and violence that misunderstandings provoked. This section does an excellent job of comparing the content of doctrinal texts, from the more “optimistic” to the more Manichean in approach, contrasting discourse, lexical choices, and their sociopolitical implications. It ends with an interesting analysis of the Devil in Christian apologetics and in Spanish representations of indigenous deities. Part IV (chs. 8–10) addresses the conundrums of meaning and translation from Spanish/Latin into Zapotec/Mixtec, as well as the development of a Christian rhetoric in indigenous languages. Farriss starts with some general background on the role of translation in Christianity, followed by a discussion of Christian translation in Oaxaca as an unequal but collaborative project between Dominicans and indigenous converts. Although primary sources say very little about the actual implementation of this collaboration, Farriss does a good job outlining the issues. She elucidates the strategies of Christian translators to develop Zapotec/Mixtec words to refer to Catholic theological and ritual categories. The problem of equivalence between Spanish/Latin and Oto-Manguean languages is addressed through relevant texts implementing particular solutions, despite a fundamental incongruence and “lexical gaps” that were never satisfactorily resolved. Chapter 9 includes an excellent discussion of

Zapotec terms and idiomatic expressions referring to key theological categories, including “heaven,” “hell,” and “the Devil.” Farriss considers the chasm between desired meanings and the actual denotations and connotations of words and expressions. Friars were, of course, aware of the gap but, other than introduce occasional Spanish loanwords, they could not develop a satisfactory strategy to constrain and regiment meaning and connotation. Farriss’s discussion of the Trinity nicely brings these points home. Chapter 10 focuses on rhetoric and poetics, the appropriation of native poetics to create a persuasive Christian discourse. The book ends bringing the issues from colonial times into the present (ch. 11), and briefly addresses the influence of Christian discourse in contemporary ritual in indigenous languages.

“Tongues of Fire” is largely successful in what it sets out to accomplish, although I would have liked to see an explicit, precise theoretical articulation of text and culture to enable a terser analysis of the articulation of written texts, and their use in oral catechetical discourse. Farriss sometimes seems at a loss as to the actual role of textual artifacts in the reconfiguration of indigenous communicative practices. A discussion of the interrelationship between Christian language, non-Christian colonial ritual texts, and nonreligious discourse in general would have been helpful as well. Scholars of Christian language have recently stressed the need to understand the latter’s role in non-Christian discourse to do justice to the impact of Christianization on the languages and cultures of Mesoamerica (see W. Hanks, *Converting Words. Maya in the Age of the Cross*. Berkeley 2010). Finally, although Farriss cites numerous relevant secondary sources, a text-oriented discussion of the European antecedents of Christian discourse in the vast catechetical and apologetic literature available in 16th century Spain would have been useful to gain a terser understanding of the theological and ideological baggage that Dominicans and Franciscans took to Oaxaca, and its impact on the content, form, and use of catechetical texts (see J. C. Estenssoro Fuchs, *Del paganismo a la santidad. La incorporación de los indios del Perú al catolicismo, 1532–1750*. Lima 2003). But aside from these minor observations, “Tongues of Fire” will be an enduring contribution to the history of indigenous Christianity and indigenous languages.

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**Fleischer, Friederike:** *Soup, Love, and a Helping Hand. Social Relations and Support in Guangzhou, China*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2018. 178 pp. ISBN 978-1-78533-655-3. (Asian Anthropology, 8) Price: \$ 110.00

Friederike Fleischer provides a close ethnographic exploration of emerging forms of social support as evidenced in the vital Chinese metropolis of Guangzhou in 2006–7 and in 2010. The immediate and most apparent topic of the study is that of three domains through which her local interlocutors fashioned ties of current

social support and strove to preserve or create bases for social support to continue in times ahead, presumed to be uncertain in personal aging, health, and family and in a rapidly transforming social world. At the same time, she transcends and deepens her analysis through placing these practices and their meanings within the framework of new directions in the construction of wider socialities and their conceptualizations.

Each of the three ethnographic domains is addressed separately, although they are linked through the interlocking presence of a few interlocutors present across the domains. The first domain, effectively evoked in the title by “soup,” addresses these issues through the connections of family, kin, and neighbors in two slightly connected small clusters. The members of both were official urban residents with access to urban benefits, but living in modest and insecure circumstances, especially in regard to support as aging. The author reports a widespread sense of improved living conditions in immediate consumption terms, but a sense of insecurity in provision for major matters such as support when elderly whether through public or through family channels. Filial piety has long been and continues to be a primary element in Chinese moral discourse and its observation in practice goes to each person’s sense of moral being during successive life stages and roles, and to embodied issues of health and wellbeing when aging. Beyond linking her findings appropriately in the literature, Fleischer astutely brings out the practical enactments – compressed in the language of taking someone a bowl of soup – through which the work of building sociality through care, and especially through the gift of food, is realized.

The “love” of the title is not romantic love but rather the neighborly love referenced by members of a long-standing (since the late 19th century) Protestant church and congregation. It is within the officially permitted ambit, rather than part of the newer and unofficial house church movement, and has an openly operating church building in an older district of the city. It falls well within the volume’s framework of sociality and support as being a nexus of a small community, and as being one that has structured practices of caring for its own members. It also has organized practices of reaching beyond to persons in need, including local elderly and disabled persons and those further away affected by disaster. Compared with the opening section on kin-based sociality, this section allows a more extended treatment of discourses of belief and community, although none was framed or enacted in a manner that was unacceptable in current official terms. It rather occupied a space of community and service that was more open to alternative forms and expressions than had been the case in an earlier period – to benevolence in the form of neighborly love, and to community that was not exclusively official in nature.

The third section, encapsulated in “a helping hand,” goes a step further into new terrain, in examining the work of those, primarily young people, who have joined

China’s recent and rapidly growing volunteer sector. This, too, can be viewed in terms of continuity with earlier ideals of service and the continuing model of Lei Feng’s selfless sacrifice of his life, but is a departure from a period in which service for the public good was exclusively official. This section of the research engaged with two organizations. One was a large quasi-official volunteer placement service run under the Communist Youth League that gave numerous volunteer service opportunities in local communities. The other was a small and targeted organization based and operating in China but registered in Hong Kong. This organization specifically serves remaining communities of people whose older members once suffered from Hansen’s Disease (leprosy) and whose healthy younger generations remain stigmatized. This chapter returns strongly to generational themes of the earlier sections and finds volunteerism more appealing to students and to other young people seeking channels of meaning, self-fulfillment, and autonomy, as well as additional channels for forming social ties and acquiring practical experience.

This triad of investigations of China’s continuing, altering, and emerging social supports exceeds its title in demonstrating an investigation of the transformations of socialities in China more broadly. The ethnography throughout is solidly empirical and also delicately sensitive to multiple nuances of meaning, the myriad of considerations that enter into each act of support, whether in reciprocity or in generalized gift, and the weight of consequences in precarious circumstances. Fleischer’s work is noteworthy in its emphasis and methodological care in viewing all of soup, love, and a helping hand as creations of a fluid structure of networks of relations needing always to be actively managed through a repertoire of obligations, needs, and practices. In this Fleischer connects with current anthropological thinking on relatedness, enriching it with the practical kinship analysis of Fei Xiaotong and of her Guangzhou interlocutors.

The volume is well-written, concise, and readable, valuable for readers in the field and accessible for both informed general readers and university students.

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**Friedrich, Markus, and Alexander Schunka** (eds.): *Reporting Christian Missions in the Eighteenth Century. Communication, Culture of Knowledge, and Regular Publication in a Cross-Confessional Perspective*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2017. 196 pp. ISBN 9783-447-10825-6. (Jabloniana – Quellen und Forschungen zur europäischen Kulturgeschichte der Frühen Neuzeit, 8) Price: € 52,00

The volume consists of nine articles preceded by an introduction written by both editors. A short section with contributors’ biographies and two indices (of persons and geographical names) complete the volume. While the title may indicate an approach to the topic with the focus on the contents of missionary reports, the