



Language, Texts, and Society

Explorations in Ancient Indian Culture and Religion

Patrick Olivelle

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Description

A collection of research papers by Patrick Olivelle, unified in their search for historical context and developments hidden within words and texts.

This collection brings together a series of Patrick Olivelle's research papers, published over a period of about ten years, whose unifying theme is the search for hidden historical context and developments within words and texts. Words (and cultural histories represented by words) that scholars often take for granted as having a continuous and long history are often new – sometimes even being neologisms. They can thus provide important indications of cultural and religious innovations. Olivelle's book on the *āśramas*, as well as the short pieces included in this volume, such as those on *ānanda* and *dharma*, seek to see cultural innovation and historical changes within the changing semantic fields of key terms. Closer examination of numerous Sanskrit terms taken for granted as central to 'Hinduism' provide similar results. Indian texts have often been studied in the past as disincarnate realities providing information on an ahistorical and unchanging culture. *Language, Texts, and Society* is a small contribution towards correcting this method of textual study.

Readership: Students and scholars of ancient India, and to scholars working in comparative culture and religion.

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About the Author

Patrick Olivelle is Professor of Sanskrit and Indian Religions at the University of Texas at Austin, where he served as Chair of the Department of Asian Studies from 1994 to 2007. He previously taught in the Department of Religious Studies at Indiana University, Bloomington from 1974 to 1991, where he was the Department Chair from 1984 to 1990.

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