
The bibliography introduces and annotates materials pertinent to disability, mental disorders and deafness, in the context of religious belief and practice in the Middle East, South Asia and East Asia.

Disability and Deafness, in the context of Religion, Spirituality, Belief and Morality, in Middle Eastern, South Asian and East Asian Histories and Cultures: annotated bibliography.


Compiled and annotated by M. Miles

ABSTRACT. The bibliography lists and annotates modern and historical materials in translation, sometimes with commentary, relevant to disability, mental disorders and deafness, in the context of religious belief and practice in the Middle East, South Asia and East Asia, together with secondary literature.

KEYWORDS. Bibliography, disabled, deaf, blind, mental, religion, spirituality, history, law, ethics, morality, East Asia, South Asia, Middle East, Muslim, Jewish, Zoroastrian, Hindu, Jain, Sikh, Buddhist, Confucian, Daoist (Taoist).

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1. INTRODUCTORY NOTES

The bibliography is in two parts (a few items appear in both):

MIDDLE EAST & SOUTH ASIA  [c. 341 items]
EAST (& SOUTH EAST) ASIA     [c. 129 items]

Very few of the early Asian and Middle Eastern texts were intentionally focused on disability, and there has been little modern analysis of such texts for disability material, or formulation of the results in a theoretical frame. One has to search for relevant odds and ends and insights amidst a mass of material, so the annotations below serve partly to indicate relevant pages (often omitted or only partially shown in indexes) and may also give some taste of the material. Annotations were made for various purposes over fifteen years, and then revised at different times, so they are not uniform in nature or style.

The annotations are focused on matters of disability, deafness, or abnormality, appearing in a religious or moral context within the given region, broadly understood. In some cases the major contents and thrust of a work may be given a few words only, or are understood to be sufficiently indicated by the title, while the small part pertinent to disability is given more description. No disrespect is intended toward the omitted contents, which are often of great value but are not the immediate present concern. Of course, all mention of disability or deafness should be seen in its context; and in much of the history of the Middle East and Asia, the social context and the religious context may be identical or have a large overlap. Within the annotations, square brackets [ ] around a comment usually indicate some kind of alert, i.e. that the enclosed remark is an explanation or interpolation by the annotator, where this might not otherwise be obvious.

The assistance of such annotations might seem to encourage a lazy, modern kind of cheating, i.e. digging impairments and disabilities out of their corners and crevices without full study of the context. Condemnation of such idleness appeared already in 1910, when the book-length General Index was compiled for 49 volumes of the Sacred Books of the East series. “There was a time when German scholars scouted the idea of writing or using an Index to learned books. It was thought unworthy of a scholar to look to an Index for reference: he had to read the whole book and all the books on any given subject. But nowadays even German scholars have found out that life is short, and not only art, but in an even greater degree, science is getting very long. It has become impossible to get on without some time-saving machinery.” [!] (M. Winternitz, SBE vol. 50, p. xiii) When even German scholars a century ago were being driven to make excuses, perhaps the humble student of disability and religion may now creep past unpunished.

There are some 460 items listed below, ranging from short modern journal papers to the Mahabharata in 2.5 million words of translation. Many entries have been extracted and updated from my longer web bibliographies on disability in Asian and Middle Eastern histories, listed at http://cirrie.buffalo.edu/bibliography/

A few more general items are included on how suffering or affliction has been understood in the major religions and moral teachings; yet it should be kept in mind that very many disabled people prefer to be seen as simply 'living with' their impairment or disability, rather than being in a suffering, afflicted or oppressed state. A few studies are listed on abortion in religious law or ethics, where variations exist from country to country, and one of the grounds for abortion may be
some 'deformity' in the foetus. This is an unhappy branch of law in any country or religious context. Yet because it is often a strongly contested area, it is also one that elicits the expression of conflicting views about the prevailing social attitudes and responses to impairment in infants, and the prospects for living a life with disability, and of the modern and ancient religious teaching that may be summoned or reconstructed to address these issues.

CAUTIONS

It must be emphasised that some modern Buddhist, Christian, Confucian, Daoist, Hindu, Jaina, Jewish, Muslim, Parsi or other apologists might wish to assert that the earlier texts, or the ways they were understood in past ages, do not necessarily represent the full teachings of their faith, in the area of disablement. There are some modern interpretations offering disability messages more palatable to modern views, or that bring out nuances neglected in earlier translations. Further, it should be obvious that the items below are not all of equal weight and validity when it comes to understanding the teachings of the various religions or religious philosophies.

The annotations given here must not be regarded as a substitute for reading the actual works listed! The views of textual commentators cannot substitute for the original texts on which they are commenting! All translations should be regarded with caution!

Omission of material in languages other than English and French (with a few exceptions) is a regrettable result of the compiler's limitations. There are of course many works in other languages that could illuminate the topic. There is also certainly a great deal more in French than is represented here. There are other editions and translations of many of the ancient texts, and new ones appear each year that will be worth consulting, or might become the definitive edition. The present bibliography is a work permanently 'under construction'. It is hard to know where to draw the line, particularly with the growth of inter-religious interest and publications on suffering and on ethical questions that have some disability implications.

While updating the original published bibliography between 2005 and 2007, a little more has been added on historical and modern Jewish thought and practice relating to disability. The Christian representation remains small, but this is not intended in an excluding or politically motivated way. There have indeed been many academic studies and commentaries of Christian texts (embracing also particular Jewish texts) that derive from Middle Eastern history, and in which disability and disabled people have some place. There has also been a very long Christian presence across Asia, and some involvement with disability. A considerable quantity exists of reference works, such as lexicons of ancient Middle Eastern languages, or encyclopedias of culture and religion, which have been developed mainly by European scholars and which incidentally contain detailed studies on particular disability-related words. Indexes, bibliographies and databases already exist for locating most of those items in several European languages. A few items from the Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament and the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (both in translation from German) have been included in this update (see e.g. Clements; Wächter et al; Bertram; Schrage) simply as tokens of this kind of material; and similarly a few items from Egyptian, Syrian, Ethiopian and Asian church histories (see e.g. Askwith; Aubineau; Bailey; Baumann; Godron; Gregory; Hewlett; Life of Takla Haymanot; London Society; Meinardus; Palladius; Psellus; Ragheb & Roy; Schodde; Stirrat; Vitae Patrum; Wilkinson, Younghak). If a full survey of literature were made, it might triple the size of the bibliography, which would become hard to manage in the present format. The point is that this kind of Christian source material is already
known and fairly accessible, to those with an interest in it. (Indeed, some of these scholarly reference tomes have recently become available on CD, making them very rapidly and comprehensively searchable). Equivalent materials from the other major religions and ethical systems of the Middle East and Asia have been much less known, and are less readily accessible. That is why this bibliography principally focuses on them.

Many extracts and some full texts of religious scriptures are now accessible on the internet in English translation, e.g. with a Google search. A few sites have some texts that are very carefully translated, presented, annotated and checked, by modern representatives of the particular religion or faith. Other sites have used older translations that are out of copyright, and the scanning has been 99% accurate. (That 99% figure sounds good, but it sometimes means that a large number of errors are inadvertently included, which is unfortunate in religious text of any sort). In some cases the scholarly annotation has been removed, along with the explanations of why it is hard to know the meaning of particular texts. Readers are again advised to proceed with caution.

**DECLARATION OF FALLIBILITY**

During the past 20 years of reading and thinking about this kind of material, the compiler has often been struck by the peculiarity and improbability of the whole exercise. Impairment and disability, deafness and blindness, infirmity, handicap, deformity and devalued identity, family and social responses, appear mainly in odd corners and footnotes of both ancient and more recent literature of religion, law, moral philosophy, ethics, folklore, anthropology, history, sociology, etc. To locate and understand these little scraps and nuggets in their context seems to require entry to the conceptual worlds of half the human population through four or five thousand years, via whatever remains of the original texts in 50 or more ancient languages. Immediately it becomes clear that one student, acquainted with a handful of Indo-European and Semitic languages, is unlikely to make good sense of all this (even with the invaluable services of Christine Miles, who uses another half dozen languages, and is resigned to occasionally being woken up at 2 a.m. for discussion of some obscure but urgent linguistic problem).

The sole reason for continuing, against such odds, is that parts of the material are fascinating and sometimes illuminating. Even when viewed with the probable distortions of a modern / post-modern western mentality, and jumbling together modern experiences with half-understood ancient communications, these historical texts and the work of translators and other commentators and modern users who have tried to grapple with them, seem to portray something of the everyday realities of human life, suffering, difference, and resilience of the spirit, that speaks also to the chaotic late 20th and early 21st centuries of the Christian calendar. Yet users of this bibliography should understand that if they have a different evaluation of any item, or disagree with the annotation given, their view might be well founded!

**GEOGRAPHICAL DIVISION**

As earlier, the material is divided geographically, with “Middle East & South Asia” appearing first, and some flexibility. The “East Asia (China, Korea & Japan)” section has extended to become “East & South-East Asia and some nearby countries”. The placement of some Buddhist items may be disputable -- certainly, Sri Lanka is in South Asia and shares Theravada Buddhism with much of South-East Asia, while the clearest ongoing influences of Mahayana Buddhism have been in East Asia and North-East Asia. (However, examination of differences between these schools of Buddhism will not be pursued in this bibliography. As with differentiation between Shia
and Sunni Muslims, or Catholic and Protestant Christians, or different schools of Hindu thought, it may need to be mentioned, but accurate explanations are best found in encyclopedias of religion, or books dedicated to these topics).

The rest of Asia, indeed the rest of the world, has no coverage. There is no good reason for this, but merely the brevity of life, the difficulty of the task, and the ignorance of the compiler. It is hoped that others with more knowledge and skills will give attention to similar topics in those regions. (A bibliography of similar items from Africa is in progress, and might appear in 2008).

**CHINA: RELIGION, ETHICS AND MORALITY**
The People's Republic of China poses certain questions, since the formal propagation of religion was closely controlled or discouraged during part of the 20th century, and also in some periods of earlier centuries. An outsider might guess that views on 'religion and disability' would be almost absent from recent history, and recent presentation of earlier history might be uniformly critical. To some extent this may be so, yet Xonzhong Yao (2006) Religious experience in contemporary China. *Modern Believing* 47 (2) 44-61, offers evidence suggesting that, on closer study, the modern Han Chinese are "more religious or spiritual than they initially said, albeit in a subtle and complicated way", engaging in many thoughts and activities that reflect an eclectic personal choice from strands of earlier religious practice. Francesca Bray (1999, p. 190, see below) notes that "Isolating a category of ideas or behaviour that is distinctly 'religious' is extremely difficult in the case of China, nor is it easy to draw clear boundaries between the cosmological, the divine and the supernatural". However, Gloria Zhang Liu (2001, see below), writing on Chinese culture and disability, seems to be in no doubt of the ongoing influences of religions in mainland China. Recent disability studies in China (e.g. Kohrman; Shue; Zhou Xun) show continuing moral and ethical concerns that evoke a quasi-religious response. Some items are included from modern and historical China, and from Japan also, in which the 'religious' aspect may seem primarily to be embedded within moral, ethical and philosophical discussion. In any case, whether difficult or not, the thoughts and practices of this vast and culturally rich Asian civilisation must have some presence here, with renewed apologies and cautions for their possible misrepresentation.

**WEBSITES.** The URLs shown below were checked and functioning in July 2007.

**DIACRITICAL MARKS.** These have in many cases been omitted from titles or names in the bibliography below, because of typographical problems or variable representations on the web or by screen software. Capital letters have sometimes been used, for indicating a macron. Regrets are offered for such omissions or devices.

**FAIR ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.** Fair acknowledgements are not easy to make in this bibliography, reaching back through the great Asian and Middle Eastern civilisations of the past 4000 years. The huge and primary debts are to thousands of authors, translators, lexicographers and linguists, theologians, historians, scholarly editors, humble copying scribes, hard-bitten printers and publishers, and librarians, who laboured to produce, improve, store and transmit more accurate and meaningful texts. Most of them laboured and died in obscurity, their names long forgotten. We build on their bones.

* * * *

**The Sea, The Sea** While I was floating on this sea of books and papers, a friend asked what I
was doing. “Well, I pull up a few buckets out of the sea, and pour them on my feet. I watch which way the water runs off. Then I claim to have understood the sea...”

* * * *

MAIN ABBREVIATIONS
CE Christian Era. (Years are all CE, unless given BC, Before Christ)
c. circa, around, approximately
ed. editor, edited by,
e.g. for example
i.e. that is,
p., pp. page, pages
UP University Press
vol. volume (of a book)

2. MIDDLE EAST & SOUTH ASIA

ABDOLAH, Kader (transl. S Massotty, 2006) My Father's Notebook. Edinburgh: Canongate. This remarkable book by an Iranian emigré is built around a deaf character, Aga Akbar, who was a carpet weaver in a village of Persia, and later moved to the modern world of Teheran. Aga Akbar is the father of the narrator, and together they communicate by 'home sign', which the son interprets to his father's rural world. Reflections on the culture, religion and history of Persia / Iran are cast in the format of a novel about various kinds of communication. The tale is imbued with the Qur'anic verses, Persian poetry and ceremonies of rural Muslim life, in a world that begins to change rapidly under political and religious pressures.

AL-ABDUL-JABBAR, Jawahir & Al-Issa, Ihsan (2002) Psychotherapy in Islamic society. In: I Al-Issa (ed) Al-Junun: mental illness in the Islamic world, 277-293. Madison, CT: Intl Universities Press, Inc. This chapter aims to address issues concerning some different principles and techniques of psychotherapy as practised in Arab-Muslim nations and cultures. Some examples of difference are: the strongly patriarchal nature of such societies; some client resistance toward insight-oriented therapy; the opportunities of integrating specifically Islamic spiritual support and reassurance; the reality that the “basic psychosocial unit is not the individual but the family, the group and the whole community”. Case histories illustrate the difficulty of finding solutions to some relationship problems generated by rapid modernisation of some, but not other, aspects of Arab Muslim societies.

ABRAMS, Judith Z (1998) Judaism and Disability: portrayals in ancient texts from the Tanach through the Bavli. Washington DC: Gallaudet UP. Detailed and well referenced review of disabilities in Jewish texts from c. 1000 BC to the 7th century CE, with insights into how these were understood in their period and how interpretations developed. The material is approached with little trace of dogmatism or of effort retrospectively to 'correct' earlier understandings in the light of modern views. Comparisons with surrounding
societies and cultures (e.g. pp. 104-112) are based on secondary literature.


This book (and journal double-issue) embraces a wide field of scholarly and personal approaches to theology, practical applications, community undertakings, and first-hand accounts, bringing in viewpoints on disability from Orthodox, Conservative and Reformed teaching, with 16 named contributors from four continents, a 'Responsa Committa' of American rabbis, and other group contributions. The various articles have many points of confluence and some of disagreement, as they draw evidence and enter into debate at different moments across 3000 years of slowly evolving social attitudes and religious practices. Some present the highest ideals that Judaism can offer; others are more concerned with the gap between ideal and practice, in the several countries represented.


Introducing the cultural background of Iran's provisions for disabled children and young people, Afrooz discusses in some detail the provision of Islam in this respect, e.g. pp. 94-102, 107-108, and the consequent duties of the state, the local community, the family and the individual Muslim.


Brief article differentiating some views and practices commonly found in Muslim-majority countries, actually based on indigenous traditional beliefs, from the orthodox Islamic teaching based on a few verses in the Qur'an and sayings of the prophet Muhammad.


These essays were written over 20 years by a man who became one of Pakistan's senior psychologists, serving as Federal Education Secretary. Ajmal endured the conflicts of “a man who has been reared in the Western intellectual tradition” and has “owed allegiance to one Western god after another” (p. 1), while becoming aware that the cultural roots and traditions of his own country, and of the historical Islamic world, had many truths and strengths to offer to the psychological understanding of the human condition. That contribution had been largely ignored, or reduced to anecdotes and decorative snippets. Ajmal reflects on what the Muslim savants and Sufi teachers wrote, how their teaching can be understood in the late 20th century, and how far they address universal concerns of continuing relevance to the widespread modern disablement of mind, soul and spirit. Ajmal's professional interest in cognitive development also brought a theme of children's perceptions of life, truth and relationship into several essays.


Gives a succinct description of the sources of authority and methods by which moral and ethical issues are discussed among Muslim jurists and scholars, and a consensus may be reached for legal rulings on new issues. As a professional bioethicist, Aksoy examines the Qur'anic basis, and some hadiths, for understanding the status of the human embryo and fetal development, upon which a number of important ethical decisions rest. Among the most important Qur'anic references are: 32 (as-Sajdah): 8-9; 23 (al-Mu'minun): 13-14. Two reported sayings of the prophet Muhammad, in al-Buhkari's collection, further explain how the embryo is formed and established. The available
texts may suggest either that 'ensoulment' of the embryo takes place 120 days after conception, or between 49 and 55 after conception, with some consequences for issues of stem cell use, and others for questions of abortion.

ALDEEB Abu-Sahlieh SA (1994) *Les Musulmans face aux droits de l'homme*. Bochum: Verlag Dr Dieter Winkler. [Note: Author spells his own name as above in his reference list. The title page gives Abu-Salieh]

Detailed, wide-ranging and well referenced work on historical understandings of human rights in Islam and current interpretations and legal practice across the Arab world. In a chapter on Abortion and Birth Control (pp. 42-52), the classical Jurists are shown to have had different position on abortion, from total prohibition, to permission up to the 40th or the 120th day of pregnancy, or at any time in a special case, e.g. serious risk to the mother. Current Arab laws are mostly prohibitive, but Tunisian law reportedly permits termination in the first trimester. A source states that South Yemen permits abortion when a family with three children has no means to raise further children, or in case of fetal malformation (p. 47). A fatwa of the Academy of Muslim Law, of the World Muslim League, based on legal advice of Muhammad `Ali Al-Bar, issued in 1990, reportedly permits abortion of a deformed fetus in the first 120 days of pregnancy, but no later unless the mother's life is at risk.


Carefully drawn pictures of childhood in village Egypt. Ch. 10 (pp. 202-213) reflects on “Indigenous learning and teaching” and describes daily activities in Islamic village schools of Silwa - where three of the six teachers were blind men. The village teacher, “especially if he is blind, relies a great deal on one or two monitors (`areef)” (p. 208). The curriculum was almost entirely learning the Qur'an, and was under challenge from the compulsory education at government-sponsored schools with a broader and more modern curriculum. Parents often withdrew able-bodied boys to help with agricultural work; however, “Blind boys find in the Kuttab a place where they can absorb themselves in learning the Koran, and it is mostly these blind boys who remain in the Kuttab until they finish memorizing the whole of it” (pp. 212-213). In Appendix XII, on ability testing of village children, a few “mentally deficient” individuals are noted, whom the villagers regard as holy fools.


Often known as the “1001 Nights”, many stories in this collection probably originate in India or Persia, and are associated with the story-teller Scheherazade beguiling Sultan Schahriar in order to save her own life and those of many other young women, possibly in the 9th century. The stories are well embedded in the ethics and morality of Middle Eastern life, with features of Islam prominent, but also a few Jewish and Christian characters. Some disabled people appear incidentally; a few are more noticeable, e.g. the disfigured Amine (pp. 66-80); the Little Hunchback (222-228) leading to tales of people with hands severed, and then to the hunchback Bacbouc, his toothless brother Backbarah, blind brother Babac, and brother Schacabac with a hare lip (229-306); and the blind man, Baba Abdalla (729-736).


From Palamcotta, South India, Miss Askwith reported in 1884 on an Indian blind Christian young woman, Marial, who had earlier “gone out with the Bible-woman teaching and singing to the people”; and that “they listened most attentively to her, and especially the little ones liked her to teach them” (p. 292). Miss Marial seems to have awakened the missionary Askwith to the possibilities of blind people learning and becoming teachers. Later reports, from 1890, show
education for blind adults and girls, partly integrated with sighted children, in schools for which Askwith was responsible.


The legality of abortion, in countries where the Qur'an and the practice of the prophet Muhammad are dominant authorities, varies with the interpretations of religious scholars. Different views are shown (p. 79) on whether a deformity in the fetus, discovered before 120 days of pregnancy, may justify abortion. (This section relies on evidence collected by Rispler-Chaim, 1999, see below). The author classifies current laws in various Muslim states as conservative, lenient or liberal.


The Atharva Veda, perhaps dating from the same period as the Rig Veda (i.e. assembled c. 1500 BC, possibly earlier), collects a large number of charms, incantations, prayers and religious rituals invoking deities and spiritual powers against diseases and affictions. Interpretation of some passages is very difficult and doubtful. See Vol.I, pp. 27-29, (Bk I, Hymns 23 + 24), and I: 62-63, (Bk II, H.24), leprosy [?]. I: 146-47, (Bk IV, H.12), healing of fractured bones. I: 306, (Bk VI, H.111), against some kinds of insanity. I: 358 (Bk VII, H.65), living with a cripple having black teeth and deformed nails (footnote: might portray the devil). I: 403-407 (Bk VIII, H.6), mentions creatures with humpbacks, sightless, with distorted eyes, five-footed, fingerless, four-eyed, double-faced, etc. I: 455-58, (Bk IX, H.8), various infirmities, some making blind, deaf or dumb, and many vividly described symptoms. Vol. II, pp. 61-64, (Bk XI, H.3), taking part in a oblation with improper attitude may bring deafness, blindness, loss of tongue or teeth, and other disorders [?]. II: 84-88 (Bk XI, H.9), some creatures with deformities or mutilations, twisted, deaf [?], appear. II: 317 (Bk XIX, H.6), prayer to avoid various impairments of body and soul. See next, AV transl. Bloomfield; and Zysk (1985 / 1998), below.

[ATHARVA Veda.] Hymns of the Atharva-Veda together with Extracts from the Ritual Books and the Commentaries, transl. Maurice Bloomfield (1897), SBE 42, Oxford: Clarendon. See notes on previous item. Bloomfield omitted many hymns, giving reasons (pp. lxxi-lxxii), but provided specific introductory material and commentary. The detailed notes often underline his own and other scholars' differences and great uncertainties in understanding the ancient texts, and these difficulties include making sense of terms that may be relevant to disability. Hymns are grouped by type or topic (pp. 1-232, numerical key pp. 709-710). The commentaries follow the standard numerical order (pp. 233-692), then a detailed index of subjects (pp. 693-708). All Sanskrit is transliterated to roman script. Among hymns [H.] of disability interest: Bk I, H.22 (transl. pp. 7-8 + commentary 263-266, possibly includes epilepsy). Bk VI, H.80 (p. 13 + 500-501, cure of paralysis, possibly hemiplegia). Bk I, H.23 + H.24 (p. 16 + 266-270, leprosy or leukoderma). Bk. IV, H.12 (p. 19 + 384-389, healing of fracture). Bk VI, H.111 (pp. 32-33 + 417, 518-521, charm against mania). Bk IX, H.8 (pp. 45-47 + 600-608, general immunity charm, effective also against deafness [?], blindness and paralysis). Bk VII, H.65 (p. 72 + 556-557, charm against the outcome of sinfully sitting “with one who has black teeth, or diseased nails, or one who is deformed”). (On the latter, the commentary (p. 556) notes that “Befouling contact with deformed persons is a standard subject in Vedic texts, and in the law-books”, giving various references). Bk I, H.18 (p. 109 + 168, 260, 564, to remove evil bodily characteristics). Bk XI, H.9 (pp. 123-126 + 631-637, various possible mutilations of people or spooks). Bk VI, H.120 (pp. 165-166 + 529-530, hopes for forgiveness and “In that bright world where our pious friends live in joy, having cast aside the ailments of their own bodies, free from lameness, not deformed in limb, there may we behold our parents and our children!”). See also Zysk (1985 / 1998) who gives detailed commentary on many of these texts, with benefit of a further century of scholarly
progress.


This detailed, scholarly study on the martyred saint Zoticos gives a provenance of the sole manuscript (probably 11th century) of his Vita; the available Greek text with French translation; points of philological interest and some detailed textual comparison between the Vita and a later source; and a discussion of the significance of the text in historical and hagiological context. The story begins in the time of Constantine (c. 274-337), whose reign reportedly had one blemish: a decree ordering the banishment and destruction of people with leprosy and those combatting the disease. Zoticos had been given responsibilities in the new capital at Byzantium, and enjoyed Constantine's confidence. To by-pass the leprosy decree, Zoticos obtained gold to buy "precious stones" for the emperor's benefit; but used the gold to ransom leprosy-disabled people who were being taken to their destruction, and to erect a camp where they were cared for. The scheme was denounced by courtiers when Constantine died and his son Constant[ius] (who favoured Arianism) took power; but Zoticos invited the new emperor to come and see the "precious stones". Constant was greeted by a congregation of lepers, including his own daughter, who had been expelled under the decree but was rescued by Zoticos. Unamused by this ploy, Constant had Zoticos tied and dragged by wild mules until his body fell in pieces. Miraculous events followed. Constant repented of his error and founded the "Zoticos Hospital" to continue the saint's work.

This foundation was destroyed and rebuilt several times over the centuries (according to *Synaxarion*, Dec. 30, it was rebuilt, after an earthquake, by Romanus III (1028-1034)). Historicity of the Zoticos vita cannot easily be substantiated, but he is mentioned independently in 472, as one who cared for orphans. A tradition of care for the poor, sick or suffering from leprosy continued to the time of the Emperor Michael IV (1034-41), when the extant manuscript originated. Michael IV (see Psellus, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers*, below) himself suffered from epilepsy; and the Zoticos Vita ends with a celebration of this emperor's personal care for leprosy sufferers. Aubineau speculates on the concepts and writings of Byzantine and earlier hagiographers, tracing back the idea of money given by rulers for building a palace, but actually spent on the poor. Parallels are found as far back as the apostle Thomas and King Gondafor (or Gundaphor and other transliterations) in the apocryphal Acts of the Apostles (Acts of Thomas, Second Act, 17-24; translation available online).

[Aubineau's journal article on Zoticos is correctly titled as shown. That article was drawn to the attention of the 'Disability Studies' world, and commented on in an interesting way, by the philosopher Henri-Jacques Stiker, in *Corps infirmes et sociétés*, 1982, Paris: Aubier Montaigne; revised 1997, Paris: Editions Dunod; English transl. W Sayers, 1997, as *A History of Disability*, Ann Arbor: Univ. Michigan Press. In both Stiker's original notes (pp. 88-91, 229), and the English version of his revised book (pp. 73-76, 215), the title of Aubineau's article appears as "Biographie, vertu et martyre de notre saint Père Zotikos, nourricier des pauvres." That is in fact a free translation (Greek to French) of the heading of the Vita text, given on p. 71 of the *Analecta Bollandia* article (but Aubineau has "vertus", not "vertu"). The Greek can be transliterated: *Bios kai politeia kai marturion, tou en hagiois patros hEmOn ZOtikou tou ptOchotrophou*. The use of vertus for politeia might be an interpretative move. Aubineau comments (p. 86) on the technical term *ptOchotrophos*.]


The author, being a psychologist, director of a training institution for people with intellectual disabilities, and mother of a son with Down's syndrome, reflects on the impact of her son's birth on her life and religious beliefs. She describes frankly a 'modern trajectory' of childhood religion being overtaken by an increasingly assertive rationality, agnostic searching in early adulthood, the one-ness of all being, and the Vedantic teaching that frames her ongoing life and search.

Reviews some features of ancient liturgical practice concerned with healing, in Mesopotamian and Eastern Mediterranean religions, comparing e.g. the locus (home or hospital), and use of animals, icons, drugs or music in the ancient settings, with the mostly different practices in modern American liturgies.


Sketches the roots of psychiatry and mental health from antiquity, in the region later understood as the 'Arab countries', giving a background of Islam, mental health and the Qur'an, psychological approaches, traditional psychotherapeutics, interpretation of dreams, and religious techniques and therapies.


Baghawi's selection of hadiths (11th century) became popular after Tibrizi's 14th century revision. Some mention disabilities and treatments, e.g. Blindness & eye problems (pp. 36, 138, 217, 221, 231, 397-99, 405, 532, 663, 708-709, 745, 878, 889, 935, 945-54, 1035, 1133, 1296-97, 1302, 1342). Leprosy (pp. 98, 397-99, 526, 619, 955-56, 1221, 1379). Epilepsy, Idiocy, Possession (pp. 329, 526, 638, 697, 931, 945-54, 1033, 1220, 1260, 1291). Miscellaneous conditions (pp. 5-6, 36, 313, 508, 582, 664, 689, 763, 925, 934, 945-54, 997, 1274, 1345). These suggest existing social responses and probably helped to shape attitudes.


While visiting many 'leper asylums', Bailey also made notes on a variety of disabled people whom he met, and on other aspects of disability in India. While primarily interested in Christian missionary work among people with leprosy, Bailey also visited and reported with appreciation on leprosy asylums and charitable work started by Parsi philanthropists, and by the Muslim ruler of Oude.


Based on 20 years of service development for disabled children with Hindu and Muslim families in a very poor area of Delhi. The author reflects on and responds to the practical and religious aspects of a collection of papers on “Disability in Asian Cultures and Beliefs” in this journal double issue.


The author reports and interprets discussions on religious issues within a self-help group of mothers having significantly disabled children and meeting monthly over several years, in a very poor area of South Delhi. From teenagers to women in their 50s, these mothers come from different faith backgrounds, and some had reached Delhi from rural areas. Most had received no practical help from representatives of their own religious community, and they had to find their own varied answers to questions of blame, guilt, karma, the will of God, and other religious issues, amidst the pressure of often stigmatising social attitudes.

Brief review. Admits “considerable disagreement” between symbolic, etymological, or literal interpretations of Vedic terminology.

Member of a family of prolific medical authors, Bartholin made some studies specifically on disability. (See next item).

See note on previous item. The present work also appeared in English transl. by J Willis, in an edition published 1994, Copenhagen.

[Not seen. In Dr Rispler-Chaim's "Disability in Islamic Law" (listed below, 2007, see pp. 123-134, plus notes and references pp. 152-153) her English translation of "a portion" from Dr al-Basit's work appears, with permission. This amounts to a wide-ranging essay of above 6000 words, addressing definitions and variety of disability, duties and liabilities of disabled persons, Islamic ways to prevent disability, moral, spiritual and psychological care afforded to disabled persons within Islam, some notable Muslims having disabilities, material provisions for disabled people, and references in the Qur'an, hadiths and other literature.]

BAUMANN E (1886) Deaf and dumb Ellen and how she became a Christian. Indian Female Evangelist 8: 241-244.
Details of the education of a deaf Indian child (later baptised 'Ellen') who was found abandoned in the jungle, in a feral state, and was brought home by the author's father, a missionary at Chupra. Unaware of any standard sign language, Miss Baumann learnt to converse with Ellen by a system of gestures, and reported the slow stages by which she became aware of Ellen's intelligence and progress in religious understanding, matched by radical changes in her personal and social behaviour.

Compares traditional interpretations of relevant texts, with some modern perspective on disability. Examines the meanings of some disability-related words as given in the early 14th century Lisan ul-Arab (Beirut: Dar Ehia al-Tourath al-Arabi) by Ibn Manzur [c. 1230-1311], a massive lexicon compiled on the basis of earlier dictionaries.


Discusses in great detail the Greek word and related terms, variously meaning 'foolish, dull-witted, feeble-minded' in the New Testament and earlier literature, with copious references.

Anugita ch. XXI, Brahma's voice defining darkness and ignorance, including immaturity of intellect, lack of discrimination, stolidity (pp. 317-23). People with such characteristics are evil-doers, destined for rebirth as animals, demons, idiots, deaf and dumb etc.

The author reviews mental illness as described in Indian texts, e.g. the Vedas, the Ayurvedic texts and the epic literature, sketching the conceptual world of religious belief and medical practice in South Asian antiquity. He considers the extent to which earlier diagnostic categories overlap with those now used in India and western countries, and notes that religious belief and practice “is important in the diagnosis and management of many Indian patients, including those living abroad” (p. 182).


The decennial census of India collected information on infirmities, such as blindness, deafness, mental defects, between 1871 and 1931, and reports were made on differences in distribution of infirmities by location, caste, religion, gender etc. Analysis in the 1920s of data on deaf-mutism (among other infirmities) in 9.36 million people of Hindu, Muslim and Sikh affiliation in the 1921 Census of Punjab failed to find a specific relationship between consanguineous marriage and deafness. The present study controlled for major confounding factors, such as the high incidence of iodine deficiency disorders in some localities with very high Hindu population, and found striking differences in the patterns of “deaf-mutism” between the two major religious communities, attributable to the differences in marriage practices.


Problems are found in rightly understanding religious terms, e.g. sin, guilt, in ancient Egypt. Bleeker gives examples from “the religion of the poor”, in “texts from the Theban necropole, dating from the 19th dynasty”, displaying an unusual humility and awareness of sin, apparently arising because deities had caused the humans to suffer “darkness by day”, i.e. blindness.


Includes a description in the 17th century of the 'mutes' in the seraglio, the deaf male servants who customarily served the Sultan (and deaf women serving in the harem), whose sign language became a common means of communication in the palace, probably from the middle of the 16th century. Bobovius notes that sign language was taught by older deaf people to the younger, at a specific location, and it was sufficient for communicating matters of any complexity, including the holy texts and the prophets of Islam (pp. 33-34).


While mainly on signing within the historical Arab world, there is some discussion of traditions embodying the finger and hand signs and gestures that were much used by the Prophet Muhammad, with explanations in commentaries.


Problems of suffering as perceived in Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Marxism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Manicheism and Jainism, are given by reference to textual
foundations in each religion or philosophy, and by considering later developments of thought, up to the late 20th century. This summary is partly contradicted by John Bowker's opening statement on 'Hinduism': “To summarise the thought of any religion is difficult, but in the case of Hinduism it is impossible.” (p. 193) Nevertheless, Bowker gives a readable and lucid account of his subject, with many quotations from the literature of each religion. Very little direct reference is made to disability.


Discusses the meanings of legal capacity and legal inhibition (hijir) understood by various early Hanifite sources, mentioning the cases of infants, pre-pubertal children and the safih (prodigal, or person lacking reason in the disposition of his affairs and belongings) for whom guardians were necessary.


Vol. VII contains several hadiths pertinent to disability, e.g. No.s 555 (pp. 376-77, epilepsy); 557 (p. 377, blindness); 582 (p. 395, for every disease, Allah makes treatment available); 608 (pp. 408-409, leprosy). Other major hadith collections contain further examples.


Poem by Sharaf-al-Din Muhammad al-Busiri (1213 - c. 1296), widely recited in time of sickness. It celebrates the prophet Muhammad's powers of healing (e.g. verse 85; see also v. 104). One legend tells that “the Poet was stricken with palsy, and obtained his recovery of God through the Prophet's intercession” (p. 322).


These items from antiquity depict scenes from the life of Christ, with healing of people having severe disabilities. Capps locates them in the iconographic context of Coptic and Alexandrian schools of art, and dates them to the early sixth century CE.


Two chapters discuss “Le droit et le tordu”. The first (pp. 50-71) concerns disability in the Jewish scriptures. The second (72-97) is subtitled “Handicapés et marginaux dans la Mésopotamie des IIe- Ier millénaires”. Apart from the need for constancy in prayer by the king, rewarded by the deity sustaining his non-trembling step and non-twisted tongue, the risk was foreseen (c. 14th century BC) that some rogue might use a mad, deaf, blind or otherwise disabled person as an unwitting agent to perform a sacrilegious act, so that the resultant curse should be diverted from instigator (pp. 81-82, 92; cf D Marcus; and Z Falk, below). Many Akkadian disability terms and possible nuances are discussed (82-91, 96-97). The (apparent) custom is mentioned of placing a simpleton 'substitute' on the throne for a limited period to divert and absorb some curse or threat to the king; the substitute either died, or was killed at the close of the period (94-95).

Reviews various explanations of this curious and difficult passage.


While maintaining a traditional reverence for the Qur'an as the word of Allah for all times and places, the authors suggest that modern scientific knowledge in the health care and rehabilitation fields can facilitate a better understanding of the sacred text and of the hadiths of the prophet Muhammad. They explain how some verses can be matched with modern scientific practice, though this interpretation was not open to earlier ages. For example, the story about the Sleepers, in Surah 18 (The Cave), states that “We turned them [i.e. the Sleepers] on their right and their left sides”. This could now be understood in terms of avoiding pressure sores by regular turning of people with paralysis.


Examines from historical and modern understanding various questions of legal competence or incompetence, according to mental capacities or their absence.


Brief account of positive teaching given in Islam about disability and disabled people.


Discusses one of the Hebrew words for 'lame' or 'crippled', with reference to linguistic and critical literature of Jewish and Christian textual studies. (See also Ceresko; Wächter et al).


Large, rambling account of a western medical anthropologist investigating the older and 'ageing' body and person in Indian (and some western) situations of everyday life and in archives. Neither 'disability' nor 'religion' appears in the index; yet the book is concerned with perceptions and discourses of impairment and difference in mind, body and relationship, by people in families, communities and societies that have been continuously shifting throughout the lives of those who are now old. One of the movements has been from a society in which every aspect of life was dominated by religious belief and practice, toward one of increasing secularisation where religious archetypes continue to be inescapable but have ceded ground to other rising forces. Family composition and logic are changing, with much reduced living space available in urban households and the shifting balance of domestic power as traditional female care roles give place to female wage-earning capacity. The inputs (and costs) of western and ayurvedic medical and psychiatric professionals, to the treatment, care or reconstruction of ageing, are also observed sceptically.


Heavily referenced review of suffering and the supposed part of Allah in it, with occasional mention of disability.

Substantial work covering especially sources from the 10th to 12th century, detailing the hospitals, hospices, establishments for care of orphans, people with leprosy, elderly and infirm people, homes for the poor, blind, epileptic, totally incapacitated, or otherwise disabled people, at Byzantium, the Eastern Mediterranean and other parts of the Empire. See pp. 10, 66, 76, 86, 98, 99, 118, 122, 128-29, 136, 138, 150, 152, 154, 155, 164-167, 179, 233, 235, 242, 244, 259, 263, 264, 275-276, and terms such as 'blind', 'cripple', 'epileptic', 'leprosy' in the index. Motivations and religious beliefs are taken into account. The author was perhaps less sceptical than some historians, but nonetheless reviewed sources carefully. Among the philanthropists, he also noted some whose “humane attitude was blackened by various acts of cruelty” (p. 134).


Zar ceremony in Northern Sudan.


While containing little reference to disability as such (see e.g., pp. 125-126) the explanations of Hindu texts and principles by Crawford demonstrate the kinds of material that have been significant in forming views of disability within Hinduism.


Detailed description of a large mosque and educational centre and the waqf foundation funding it, of which the building operation began in 1774, opposite the site of Al-Azhar, Cairo. Public recitation of the Qur'an continued from early morning to nightfall. Daily and annual disbursements are listed to “5 blind men as muezzins and muballighun”. Among the provisions for utilising any surplus from the wakf, after the original donor and his dependents had died, “two thirds of the surplus from the waqf was to go to the blind residents of al-Azhar and the zAwiya of the blind next to it.” (See also Larrey).


The Epic of Gilgamesh (pp. 39-135), possibly from the 2nd millennium BC, contains in the character of Enkidu an early description of a 'feral child', supposedly primitive, hairy, raised on wild asses' milk (91, 140), eating grass with gazelles and drinking at cattle's water holes (53). After some social education by a hired representative of Eve (55-56), Enkidu joins Gilgamesh in his noble quest. He suffers an episode of paralysis (70, 128), but recovers to support his friend through various battles.


Daniélou's reflections on tamas are scattered through his book. Tamas (dispersion, darkness, inertia; also mental vacuity) is a centrifugal force (pp. 22-28); and “Siva is the embodiment of tamas ... He is pictured as a boundless void, substratum of existence, and is compared to the silence and obscurity that we experience in deep dreamless sleep when all mental activity ceases” (pp. 190-191). Shiva is compared to many things - including the simpleton (Bhola). It is precisely his rejection of conventional well-doing that marks out the divine Simpleton as an advanced model, for “from the point of view of spiritual achievement, where action is the main obstacle, sattva is the lower state, that which binds with the bonds of merit and virtue, tamas is the higher state, that of liberation through nonaction.” (p. 26). See also pp. 118, 124, 136, 138, 196, 201; 214-215; 282; 295; 296; 301; 309; 322-323; 325; 364-65; 382.

Reviews some difficulties experienced by sociologists, among other social scientists, in giving appropriate weight and meaning to the realities of everyday suffering by individuals, and to those people's sense of their own suffering and its religious or other meanings, with examples drawn from Asia and Africa (while considering the theoretical framework of Europeans such as Weber, Clastres, Durkheim, Marx, and more recent views from Ramphele, Levinas, the Kleinmanns, and Diana Eck).


Discussing facial disfigurement (pp. 512-521), a case history is given of a young woman, Mandira, whose marriage took place privately, and was followed by rumours that her suitor had been bewitched by 'dangerous magical rites' so that he failed to notice her disfigurement. Five years later the husband died, and some relatives felt that Mandira and her parents had been suitably punished for their trickery. Yet a cousin's wife understood the matter differently. Rather than the religious practitioner having "cast a veil over the husband's capacity to see and judge, as alleged by others -- perhaps he had lifted a veil and allowed Mandira's husband to see her as she truly was, penetrating the surface appearance, as it were." One of the authors comments, "This was the one occasion on which I found a complex citation of cosmological ideas about beauty and ugliness that mediated the way in which the social norms were articulated. Hindu mythology and iconography are replete with examples in which the capacity to behold beauty truly, to overcome feelings of repulsion and terror at the sight of that which is ugly and terrifying, is the sign of the true devotee."


Revised D.Phil. thesis, heavily referenced, based on iconography and medical and archaeological evidence. Concludes (pp. 246-48) that positive attitudes towards dwarfs in Egypt during c. 3000 years, and a much shorter period in Classical Greece, were followed by adverse views and behaviour in Hellenistic and Roman periods. Influences on attitudes towards dwarfs, deformity and disability in lands 'between' Egypt and Greece may be guessed at, but are not here treated.


Exposition and translation of a Bengali poem, which incidentally contains “valuable information regarding the condition of education in Bengal” probably dating from the 17th century. The poem concerns a hyperactive, attention-disordered prince who is unable to learn anything at school, despite twelve years of efforts to teach him; also the efforts of five princesses to get some education. The situation is resolved, with the aid of Saraswati, goddess of Learning and Wisdom.


An extended introduction and discussion appears, on the main trends and major difficulties in constructing an evidence-based history of Zoroastrianism. Mention is made of the custom of segregating or secluding people having serious diseases or disabilities, such as leprosy, in a specific place or shelter, called the armest-gah (pp. 240-243). There may also have been some disposal of elderly and infirm people, though De Jong is cautious about exaggerations by distant historians (444-445). There is evidence that men serving in the armed forces, and contracting a serious illness or disabling condition, were set apart in an open place, and provided with a stick, water, and a little food. While they had some strength, they could keep off the wild animals with the stick; but unless they returned quickly to health, the dogs would finish them off. Some did survive and returned home, but were feared and shunned until they had been through an exorcism
certainly (232-233, 239-242, 444-446).

DENNIS, James S (1899) Christian Missions and Social Progress. A sociological study of foreign missions. 3 vols. Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier. II: 384-87 surveys a wide range of late 19th century South Asian disability work by 'benevolent natives' as well as by missionaries, with references to articles in missionary periodicals. II: 388-89 briefly reviews work by missionaries for blind people in Persia, Turkey, Syria and Egypt (see also photo, III: opp. 524, and literature for blind people, III: 211-12). II: 433-47 surveys leprosy missions across Asia. Dennis is often heavily patronising, yet gives a useful summation of mission efforts for 'social progress' during that century.


DESSIGANE R, Pattabiramin PZ & Filliozat J (1960) La legende des jeux de Siva à Madurai, d'après les textes et les peintures. 2 vols. Pondichéry: Institut Français d'Indologie. This French version of the Tiruvilaiyatarpuranam describes the 64 'games' of Shiva in Vol. I, based on 16th century Tamil text, with paintings in Vol. II. The story appears in Section 57 (I: pp. 88-92) of how Shiva was enraged when his wife Minakshi failed to pay full attention to his learned lecture on the Vedas, and condemned her to rebirth in a fisher caste. Their two sons, Subrahmanya (Murukan) and Ganesha reacted by throwing Shiva's books into the sea. He promptly cursed Subrahmanya to become "fils d'un marchand et qu'il serait muet" (p. 89) [This would mean that he was mute, but not necessarily deaf.] Later Shiva sets about rehabilitating his family. Sect. 55: 1-14 (I: pp. 85-86) tells of a talent contest among poets, who ask Shiva to be judge. He recommends that the merchant's remarkable son (i.e. Subrahmanya, or Murukan) be the judge. The poets ask how such a judge can give his verdict, since he is mute. "Le Dieu danseur leur dit que le fils du marchand hocherait la tête en signe d'approbation" (p. 86), so the contest goes ahead with the dumb boy judge giving his verdict by nods and signs.

DETTWYLER KA (1991) Can paleopathology provide evidence for "compassion"? American Journal of Physical Anthropology 84: 375-84. Found in Iraq, 'Shanidar I' was a male dating to the Middle Palaeolithic period, who lived 30 to 45 years. Injuries indicate that his right arm was paralysed, and he was probably blind in one eye. The remains of this disabled Neanderthal have stimulated imaginative reconstructions of his supposed life (and the lives of some comparable cases), which Dettwyler suggests are unscientific and probably based on modern misconceptions about disabilities.

DHARMASUTRAS. The Law Codes of Apastamba, Gautama, Baudhayana, and Vasistha, transl. Patrick Olivelle (1999), Oxford UP. New translation of some Ancient Indian law codes, with a useful index. See bald, blind, body, childlessness, deaf, dumb, eunich, hermaphrodite, impotent, insanity (and mental retardation), inheritance of legally incompetent, sick, etc. For example, Apastamba 2.26.10-17 (p. 70): "The following persons are exempt from taxes: vedic scholars, women of all classes, pre-pubescent boys, those who are living in someone's house for the purposes of study, ascetics devoted to the Law, Sudras who are personal servants, people who are blind, dumb, deaf and sick, and those who are excluded from acquiring property." See below: Institutes of Vishnu; Manu; Sacred Laws.

Optics 15: 609-613.
Various curative and welfare provisions were made for blind and other disadvantaged people by the Byzantine State from the 4th century onward.

Based on field notes from 1929 to 1936. Mentions a range of attitudes to social and communal responsibility. Among a Beduin family, Dickson asked about a “very old blind man ... huddled in the corner. 'He is no relation of ours,' the woman said, 'but he has lived with us for four years now. We found him in Kuwait, blind and uncared for, and with no one to look after him, so we brought him out here and have looked after him ever since. He is one of our own tribe and we must do this for the honour of our tribe.'” They had fixed a piece of fishing line from the tent to a peg 80 yards away, “for the old man to follow when he wants to relieve himself at night; we fear he might get lost should we all be asleep and not hear him calling, so now he goes out and comes back safely by himself, holding on to the cord” (p. 289). The blind man played a role as “leader of the family prayers” (p. 30), and other ceremonial occasions (p. 142). Elsewhere, Dixon noted a different “fate of the old and decrepit: the man or woman no longer of use to the master because of physical disability. These poor folk are given their freedom, outwardly no doubt to salve the hypocritical conscience of their master, and to conform to the injunctions of the Prophet, but in actual fact they are no longer worth their keep. They are thus forced to go on the streets and beg for a precarious living. It is true that many decent families, to their great honour, go on clothing and feeding their worn-out slaves until they die, but I think that in the majority of cases, giving slaves their freedom goes hand in hand with stopping their allowance of food and clothing” (p. 500).

http://www.internationalsped.com/documents/02Diken.doc
Thirteen Turkish mothers, each identifying herself as Muslim and having at least one child with mental retardation, participated in the study by semi-structured interview. The children's disability was attributed by them to a mixture of causes or origins. While bio-medical causation was identified by all, “they also constantly highlighted various religious causal agents ... Fate and God were underlined as causal agents by almost half of the mothers.” Evil spirits, spells, and folkloric superstitions were also mentioned. Several had taken advice from religious agents, i.e. local holy men.

The DINKARD. The original Pahlavi text; the same transliterated in Zend characters; translations of the text in Gujerati and English languages; a commentary and a glossary of select terms. [Vol. III, English transl. Ratanshah Erachshah Kohiyar], ed. Peshotan dastur Behramjee Sanjana, 1874-1928, Bombay. 19 vols.
The “Dinkard” (now more often shown as Denkard or Denkart), compiled in 9 books (of which the first two are missing) in the 9th or 10th century CE, a range of practical and ancient knowledge of the Zoroastrian religion. Book 3, chapter 110 (translated in Sanjana edition Vol. III), differentiates people of good or of bad conduct, predicting the joy of paradise for the former and punishment for the latter, also some intermediate positions for those of mixed conduct. Two distinctions are made of capacity for moral responsibility: “Children under eight years of age, and men without intelligence, are harmless and safe (from hell). Every child not being of age and small in proportion, and imbecile men, owing to want of intelligence, do not deserve to be punished, and their souls, in addition to being saved from hell, are destined to return to the Khorschedpaya (paradise).” Book III of the “Denkart” has also been translated to French by Jean de Menasce, 1972.

Blind youths are found studying the Qur'an at Al-Azhar Mosque, Cairo, from as early as the 12th century up to the 20th (pp. 44, 86-87, 101, 165, 206. A special hostel was built for them by Osman Katkhuda in the early 1730s. The sheikh in charge was customarily a blind man. (See Makdisi, below).

DOLS, Michael (1983) The leper in Medieval Islamic society. Speculum 58: 891-916. Detailed scholarly discussion of social aspects of leprosy and other disabilities in the history of Islam. Dols found that although Muslims had ambivalent views and beliefs about leprosy, the Qur'an had nothing comparable to the Levitical separation laws which profoundly affected both Jewish and Christian attitudes towards people with leprosy.


DOLS M (1992) Majnun: The madman in Medieval Islamic society. (ed. DE Immisch). Oxford: Clarendon. Comprehensive and scholarly work on the topic, extensively referenced. Comparatively little specifically about idiocy, but records of 'strange behaviour' were often not differentiated by 'modern' categories. Dols reviews madness from medical, magical/religious, social and legal viewpoints, with great detail, documentation and insight.

DONIGER, Wendy (1999) Splitting the difference. Gender and myth in Ancient Greece and India. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Ranges through a wide spectrum of myth and religious belief, in some of which disability, deformity or mutilation is of importance, or is invested with psychoanalytic significance. See index, e.g. beheading, blindness, eunuchs, feet, kliba, mutilation, etc.

DOUGHTY, Charles (1921) Travels in Arabia Deserta. 2nd edition, 2 vols. Cambridge UP. Detailed account of Syrian/Arabian travels between 1875 & 1878, and of life, survival and death among Bedouin and settled populations. Frequent mention of disease (e.g. I: 254-58, 314-16; 617-18; II: 4-5), for which Doughty sometimes offered treatment; and of people with disabilities, especially visual impairment (e.g. I: 42, 527, 547-48, II: 308, 343, 347-48, 358, 380-81, 383, 408-413, 441) and mental problems (e.g. I: 498; II: 14, 276, 287-88, 293, 298, 384, 437), but also some deaf or physically disabled people (e.g. I: 222; II: 8, 30, 48-49, 67, 82, 302, 328, 358, 410, 466). Not all are listed clearly in the extensive index. [Doughty's views about the people among whom he lived and travelled were sometimes perceptive, sometimes affectionate or compassionate; but could also be coloured by the knowledge that some of the people thought it would be good to kill him, for the sake of religion.]

DURRANI, Muhammad Akhtar (1963) Islamic teachings pertaining to blindness. In: ILD Grant (ed) Handbook for Teachers and Parents of Blind Children in Pakistan. A Seminar Report, 77-80. Lahore: Ilmi Press. Brief text, passionately asserting the right of blind people to take part in ordinary, everyday life, and to receive education and earn their living on the same terms as anyone else. The blind Muslim is required to perform religious duties, no less than anyone. Further, “there is no place for segregation in Islam”, and “absolutely no provision for begging in Islam”. God “creates as He wishes”, and it is not permissible for any Muslim to “find fault with God's creation”. The prophet Muhammad was reminded of that, in the sura on the blind man. Aisha was rebuked by Muhammad when she “passed remarks about the short statured wife of the Prophet”.

Two notable women described here are Khujjutara, Queen Samavati's hunchbacked maid, who became a famous teacher of the Way of the Buddha (pp. 269-70); and Vishaka, who walked slowly to shelter from the rain, while her companions ran; her reason being to avoid the risk of injury, “inasmuch as a grown-up unmarried girl with a broken limb was like a broken water-pot, to be thrown away.” (p. 271)

EBIRED, Rifaat Y (1971) *Bibliography of Medieval Arabic and Jewish Medicine and Allied Sciences*. London: Wellcome Institute for History of Medicine. 150 pp. Bibliography of 1,972 items in Arabic, English, French, German, Hebrew, Hungarian, Italian, Latin, Russian, Spanish, Turkish, and a few other languages. (Arabic and Hebrew titles are given in original language and script, with translation to English; those in Russian, Hungarian, Turkish etc are transliterated, with translation). A few items seem to have direct relevance to disability; many more of them provide useful background. Indexes of authors and subjects, pp. 137-150.


EDHI, Abdul Sattar (as told to Tehmina Durrani) (1996) *A Mirror to the Blind. An autobiography*. Islamabad: Natl Bureau of Publications. 388 pp. Maulana Edhi has been Pakistan's best known front-line social worker, serving and strengthening the poor, the injured, the mentally ill and the downtrodden, while denouncing bureaucrats and resisting attempts by powerful people and organisations to co-opt his work or incorporate him in their empires. As a boy in the 1930s, in a small town near Bombay, he learnt to be charitable toward those who were disabled or destitute, and to defend mentally disturbed people against street bullies (pp. 27-29). One of his ambitions was to “build a village for the handicapped” (p. 34). Years later, living in Karachi, Edhi and his wife Bilquise ran a kind of community asylum for mental distressed or disabled people, among many other activities (pp. 222-28, 237-38). Maulana Edhi takes an enchantingly robust view of Islam. He has bulldozed his way through any 'supposedly Muslim' law, custom or ritual that might be cited against doing the work that clearly needed to be done. If any person or viewpoint was preventing the poor and needy from getting their bread and standing on their own feet, then that person or viewpoint could not be any part of Islam that Edhi would recognise. Naturally he earned the wrath of the puritanical, the image-conscious, the suspicious and the bureaucratic. Edhi has swatted them away as though they were flies on one of the thousands of corpses he personally has retrieved and given burial to.

ELGOOD, Cyril (1951) *A Medical History of Persia and the Eastern Caliphate from the earliest times until the year 1932*. Cambridge UP. This and Elgood's later work (1970) contain many incidents and references pertinent to disabilities, and range much beyond Persian boundaries.


ELWORTHY FT (1912) *Evil Eye*. In: J Hastings (ed) *Encyclopaedia of Religion & Ethics* (1908-
Belief in the Evil Eye and use of protective amulets were common in Arab lands. Connection was also made between the evil eye and hunchbacks or visually impaired people.

ENCYCLOPEDIA of Disability ed. G Albrecht et al (2005). Thousand Oaks: Sage. 5 vols. A significant number of entries concern disability, deafness, religion and belief directly or indirectly, in the Middle East and South Asia, e.g. Cosmologies of Morality and Origin (by KB Selim); Disability in Contemporary India (Anita Ghai); Judaism (AJ Lubet); Religion (W Gaventa & C Newell); South Asian archetypes (KB Selim). Relevant material appears in some brief biographies, e.g. Abu 'l-`Ala al-Ma’arri; William Cruickshanks; Didymus the Blind; `Ata Ibn Abi Rabah; Taha Husseins; Ibn Al-Athir; Ibn Sirin; Ibn Umm Maktum; William Jackson; Khujjuttara; Jane Leupolt; Michael IV; William Moon; Mir Nasiruddin Harawi; Pandita Ramabai; Virjananda Saraswati. Volume 5 entirely comprises source texts (in English translation), some being from historical literature or from the scriptures of the major religions (e.g. the Torah, the Avesta, and Christian texts).

EL EZABI, Shereen (1995) Al-Naysaburi's Wise Madmen: introduction. Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics, No. 14, pp. 192-205. Naysaburi, a well-known theologian and Qur'anic scholar lived at Nishapur, Persia, and died c. 1015. His short book on the 'wise mad' (’Uqala’ al-majanin) first discusses the concept and terminology of madness (jinna), then gives more than 100 reports about mad people. Ezabi translates the first chapter, placing the wise/mad people within the purposes of Allah who has created people with some “contradictory qualities”, linking strengths and weaknesses, sickness and health, and the vicissitudes of life. Prophets who spoke the word of Allah, shaking up the normal ways of human living, have always been considered mad, but Allah has vindicated them. Examples are given from the life of the prophet Muhammad. Real folly is the inability to discern and practice right conduct. The madman is he who “builds for his worldly life and wrecks his life in the hereafter”. From the ‘case histories’, Ezabi gives excerpts on Bahlul, a renowned 'fool', portrayed as something of a simpleton, heedless of self-care and formal knowledge, yet holding to some higher truths.

EVLIYA Efendi [Evliya Celebi] (transl. 1834, reprint 1968) Narrative of Travels in Europe, Asia, and Africa, in the seventeenth century. Transl. from Turkish by Joseph von Hammer. London: Oriental Translation Fund, New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation. (Two vols bound as one). The famous Turkish Muslim traveller Evliya was a deeply religious man, and noted matters of religious interest, throughout his travels in Turkey, Eastern Europe, Asia Minor and North East Africa. He has some notes on simpletons, saint-fools, dwarfs, mutes and freaks at Istanbul and elsewhere; e.g. I (i): 64-65, 114-15, 149, 174-75, 180; I (ii): 21, 25-29, 45, 80-81, 115-19, 240-41; II: 141-42. Thoughts of the father of a boy with huge hydrocephalic head at Shin Kara Hissar in 1647, II: 207-208.


FALK, Ze'ev W (1972, 1978) Introduction to Jewish Law of the Second Commonwealth. 2 vols. Leiden: Brill. Part I has a few passing references, e.g. p. 29 (He who sets fire by the hand of a deaf-mute, an imbecile or a minor...”), i.e. who takes advantage of the legal non-liability of people in these categories); also p. 100; and pp. 123 (inability of “deaf-mutes, lunatics and minors” to testify in
Part II gives a more detailed review of the legal capacities of “Deaf-mutes, Idiots and Minors” (pp. 256-258), and suggests a progressive removal of the legal ‘disability’ under which they suffered. Thus, “A deaf-mute may communicate by signs and be communicated with by signs ... in matters concerned with movable property. (M Gittin V 7)”.


Adult psychiatric patients in public hospitals at Lahore reported their contacts with a variety of traditional healers (Pirs, Aamils, hakims, magicians, palm readers, and others). The healing practices are listed as homeopathy; Unani Tibb (or naturopathy); faith healing (using Islamic prayers, Qur’anic texts, and amulets); sorcery or black magic; and combinations of methods. The religious-cultural background of Pakistan is explained in some detail, with positive commentary on Islamic worship and religious practice as aids to mental health (pp. 402-405). It is admitted that 'modern' psychiatric care is accessible and affordable to a small fraction of those needing it, while the traditional healers offer some help at modest cost to the majority of the population.


Includes extensive “Bibliography of Ancient Hebrew Medicine”, pp. 109-145, listing c. 700 items mostly published since 1600, in German, Latin, French, English, Hebrew, and Italian. Partial annotation indicates specific attention given by some authors to disabling conditions.


While focusing a particular controversy, on the issue whether an author had illegitimately drawn attention to prominent people having physical impairments and exposed them to ridicule, the author usefully sketches and comments on a much wider range of Arabic literature in which people with impairments and disabilities appear for various purposes, e.g. juristic rulings and comic anecdotes, from the 9th century CE onward.


Detailed analysis, making apparent some of the rationale behind the laws.


Based on a listing (not shown) of “some 120 miraculous cures from Coptic texts”, Godron takes a mildly sceptical view, noting that many of the ailments are of a nebulous, possible psychosomatic nature. (See Meinardus, below).


Amidst detailed discussion and comparison of Vedic rites, some concerned with disability appear, e.g. pp. 34, 138, 292 (epilepsy); p. 48 (possibility of sign language); p. 97 (repugnant appearance of amputee); p. 147 (walking stick for elderly or weak person); p. 193 (list of disability categories); p. 195 (exclusions from priestly office); p. 265-266 (disabled or misshapen;
deformities as portents); p. 273 (modified ordeal procedure for “children, the disabled and women”); p. 293 (oblations for making up bodily defects); 366 (footnote); 382; pp. 278-279, 387 (avoiding defective brides); p. 397 (substitute marriage, for disabled people); p. 401-402 (some general comments).


Based on doctoral studies, Granek discusses cases from a wide talmudic literature to indicate: (1) the criteria, the characteristic observable behaviours, by which rabbinic minds found 'la folie' (madness, mental disability) present in persons; with some consideration also of epilepsy, and the comparable situation of children and deaf or deaf-mute people (i.e. persons generally deemed to have a diminished responsibility, maturity, and legal standing). (2) The legal, social and religious implications of madness, e.g. invalidity of financial actions taken by mentally disabled people, responsibilities of the community towards them, participation in marriage, divorce and religious ceremonies.


Eleven cases of hydrocephalus in young children were treated in hospital at Mogadishu by modern medical methods. Interviews were conducted with relatives, and also some traditional doctors. Children showing signs of hydrocephalus were first taken to a religious practitioner for traditional therapy using Qur’anic verses worn as amulets, or where the ink has been dissolved in water; secondly, a traditional Somali doctor used red-hot wooden sticks to produce small burns on the scalp. The aim of both procedures was to drive away the evil spirit believed to be causing the head swelling.


Sermon 14 was written in the context of the construction, 368-372 CE, of a cluster of hospital and care buildings, by Basil, Bishop of Caesarea, possibly the earliest extended Christian establishment for people with leprosy and other serious disabilities (though preceded by a smaller institution built by Eustathios of Sebastea, c. 357). Vinson (p. xv) notes some “rivalry between pagans and Christians over the delivery of social services” at the time. Gregory wrote partly in a spiritualising mode i.e. we are “all poor and needy where divine grace is concerned”, and our “leprosy of the soul” needs healing. Yet he specifically addressed physical conditions and social exclusion. People with leprosy “are deprived of the opportunity to work and help themselves acquire the necessaries of life; and the fear of their illness ever outweighs any hope in their minds for well-being ... Besides poverty, they are afflicted with a second evil, disease, indeed, the most abhorrent and oppressive evil of all and the one that the majority of people are especially ready to label a curse. And third, there is the fact that most people cannot stand to be near them, or even look at them, but avoid them and are nauseated by them, and regard them as abominable, so to speak. It is this that preys on them even more than their ailment: they sense that they are actually hated for their misfortune ... human beings alive yet dead, disfigured in almost every part of their bodies, barely recognizable for who they once were or where they came from; or rather, the pitiful wreckage of what had once been human beings.” (Vinson, transl., pp. 44-45). Gregory described further their exclusion from homes, streets, markets, even from sources of water. He contrasted the comfortable
(but deceptively temporary) life of himself and his hearers, and demanded a compassionate practical response toward the suffering of fellow humans.

15th century treatise on character, including 'An Exposition of Intelligence' pp. 39-68, with tales of No-Wits, Born Boobies, and Boobies by Association.

Apart from discussing leprosy issues and his asylum at Lohardagga, Chota Nagpur, Rev. Hahn (of Gossner's Evangelical Lutheran Mission) wrote that in 1886 he established an asylum “for epileptics, syphilics, and all kinds of people suffering from loathsome and incurable diseases. Only such patients are admitted as have no one to care for them. Most have been picked up in the streets or country roads, and very few have been able to walk there unassisted” (pp. 242-243).
[This seems to be one of the earliest formal welfare activities in India focusing people with epilepsy, a condition associated with spirit possession, and still provoking adverse public reactions.]

Mainly descriptive of current concepts and features of impairment and disability in Egypt. Hagrass points out (pp. 154-55) that the “charitable response to disability”, while it may be questioned by campaigning groups in western countries, is perceived as quite appropriate in Islamic countries where religious belief is a major factor in the social context, the practice of Islam prompts individuals to give regularly on a charitable basis, and for many needy people there is no organised alternative source of welfare provision.

Haj embarked on his studies after working as “an itinerant teacher for the blind in a Galilean Arab community”, helping visually impaired children to enrol in ordinary village schools. He found some blind children already casually integrated in remote schools. This caused him to look further into the cultural roots of this unexpected tolerance. (See next item).

Focus on Islamic Middle East, 632-1258; mostly on blindness, physical disabilities, and their causation. “Just as deafness was hardly ever mentioned in the literature of the period, so it was that mental retardation was neglected in Arabic writings.” (p. 163) Style is more popular and anecdotal than academic. Lists (pp. 177-182) some material from Safadi's dictionary (see below).

Comments, pp. 77, 79, on the letter-prayer of a physically disabled woman, to the goddess Nintinugga, asking for healing. (See next item).

(See previous item). Philological discussion of terms in Sumerian, Akkadian etc, focusing on the proverb “in the city of the lame, the halt is courier” and showing evidence of differentiation between levels of physical disability in the Old Babylonian period.

HAMDY, Sherine F (2005) Blinding ignorance: medical science, diseased eyes, and religious

Discusses literary and biographical evidence on the efforts of reformers in the Islamic world to move from traditional toward scientific approaches to public health and biomedicine in the 19th and 20th centuries, using the example of eye disease and treatment in Egypt.


The convoluted career, in many language versions, of a legend on how Moses got a speech impediment. As an infant he was shown to Pharaoh. Placed on the monarch's lap, he pulled his crown off and threw it down (or maybe pulled Pharaoh's beard). Courtiers, aghast, debated this ominous act. A test was proposed. The babe was shown two basins. One held a glowing coal, the other a jewel. He reached for the jewel, but an angel guided his hand to the hot coal, which stuck to his hand. Putting his hand to his mouth for comfort, lips and tongue were also burnt; hence the speech impediment.


Brief outline of historical disability, and the social roles of disabled women in the modern Middle East.

HEWLETT, Sarah Secunda (1898) *‘They Shall See His Face.’ Stories of God's Grace in work among the blind and others in India*. Oxford: Alden. 183 pp.

This 19th century work of impassioned advocacy for Christian work with blind people in India gives considerable detail of the lives and spiritual progress of many blind children and adults who received training at St Catherine's Hospital, Amritsar between 1886 and 1897, with some photographs. (Hewlett was the hospital manager and leading missionary). It also records the reception of a blind 10-year-old girl into an ordinary school of Lahore, and her education integrated with sighted children, c. 1872. That girl, Asho, grew up to become a Christian convert and the main teacher of other blind people at the Amritsar school (pp. 44-54). Hewlett noted sadly that the evangelistic work in which she herself and fellow missionaries engaged in the zenanas (women's quarters in households) was often thwarted by "the presence of a blind woman-teacher who was exerting that powerful influence over the superstitious Bibis" (p. 12). These blind Indian women had received some training in Islam and had memorised much of the Qur'an (and in other places, the Hindu sacred texts). Their occupation was to give religious teaching to women in their homes, which Hewlett found they had done so effectively that her own teaching of Christianity was strongly resisted. (This is a rare piece of evidence for what was apparently quite a widespread role of Indian blind women, both Muslim and Hindu). [Hewlett wrote in a partisan and sometimes offensive way about major religions other then her own, but was a keen and compassionate observer of blind Indian people.]


Introduction, translation, detailed annotation and extensive discussion of Islam-based criminal law codes from the 15th century and later, together with their administration. Various disabling punishments were prescribed for serious offences; see index: 'mutilation', also 'bodily harm', diyet. People with leprous diseases were to be isolated (pp. 120, 303).
Useful introduction to both ancient and modern Zoroastrian beliefs about health and suffering, though disability as such is hardly mentioned. (Some chapters are listed separately, e.g. Conrad, above; Leslie, Sachedina, Singh, Wujastyk, Bray, below).

Brief review of Zoroastrian charitable work in Islamic Persia and in India, which benefited orphans, widows, disabled people and the poor in general. During the earlier 20th century, the problems of pauperising the poor became more evident, and some efforts were redirected to removing the causes of poverty.

Revised doctoral thesis. A curious and repetitive motif-index of bodily abnormality, deformity or disability referred to in Jewish literature, commentary and legend from antiquity to 12th century, across a wide area of the Middle East.

Hulse reviewed medical, historical and palaeopathological evidence from which it was “clear that biblical 'leprosy' is not modern leprosy” (i.e. not the condition produced by Mycobacterium leprae), whether in the Hebrew or the Greek texts held sacred by the Christian Church. Confusion has arisen from the use of various terms for a range of skin diseases, which may share some (but not other) symptoms with modern leprosy. Several diseases are discussed that might have given rise to the visible manifestations described in the Hebrew book of Leviticus.

Famous autobiography of the earlier years of a blind Arab Muslim who became one of Egypt's outstanding 20th century literary figures and modernisers. After his experiences as a blind child memorising the Qur'an, and later education at modern universities in Cairo and France, his understanding of Islam also underwent some modernisation. (See Malti-Douglas, 1988, below)

A few points about disability occur in this famous work. Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406) listed four agreed conditions for the Caliph. One stated that “Freedom of the senses and limbs from defects or incapacitations such as insanity, blindness, muteness, or deafness, and from any loss of limbs affecting (the imam's) ability to act, such as missing hands, feet, or testicles, is a condition of the imamate, because all such defects affect the (imam's) full ability to act and to fulfil his duties. Even in the case of a defect that merely disfigures the appearance, as, for instance, loss of one limb, the condition of freedom from defects (remains in force as a condition in the sense that it) aims at perfection (in the imam).” (I: 395-396). He noted ironically that people very well acquainted with the charitable requirements of Islam often failed to make any connection with their own personal conduct (III: 39-40). Among his comments on education, he saw the problems of starting children on an inappropriately advanced and restricted curriculum (III: 303-304). Clearly some experiential knowledge of learning abilities, stages and difficulties was in written circulation.

See annotation of previous item. In this abridged edition, the quotation on the fourth necessary condition for the Caliph appears on pp. 158-159. See also p. 86, for a great 14th century Muslim scholar’s appraisal of the spiritual capacity of imbeciles: “Among the adepts of mysticism are fools and imbeciles who are more like insane persons than like rational beings. None the less, they deservedly attain stations of sainthood and the mystical states of the righteous. The persons with mystical experience who learn about them know that such is their condition, although they are not legally responsible. The information they give about the supernatural is remarkable. They are not bound by anything. They speak absolutely freely about it and tell remarkable things. When jurists see they are not legally responsible, they frequently deny that they have attained any mystical station, since sainthood can be obtained only through divine worship. This is an error. The attainment of sainthood is not restricted to the correct performance of divine worship, or anything else. When the human soul is firmly established as existent, God may single it out for whatever gifts of His He wants to give it. The rational souls of such people are not non-existent, nor are they corrupt, as is the case with the insane. They merely lack the intellect that is the basis of legal responsibility.”


13th century collection of 865 biographies of well-known Muslims through six centuries, many also giving incidental information on lesser known persons. Over 100 entries mention some disability, often recorded in a nickname (e.g. II: 3, 10, 'broken-tooth', 'the one-handed', 'the club-footed'). Some became learned men in spite of childhood disabilities; others became disabled in old age. Many entries have anecdotes involving disability, and the Islamic context is omnipresent. See e.g. I: 83-86, Thalab, a deaf scholar who died in a traffic accident; I: 191-92, the proverbially stupid Ijl; I: 633, academic fraud at the expense of a blind scholar; I: 662-667, Abu'l-Aswad Ad-Duwalii could hardly walk but knew he must appear in public or be forgotten; II: 32-36, Sharaf ad-Din ibn Abu Usrun and a debate on whether a judge could continue work after becoming blind (cf IV: xiv, refusal of office to a deaf judge); II: 132, Abu Hashim al-Jubbai's son, a simpleton; II: 203-205, Ata ibn Ali Rabah, a notable black lawyer at Mekka, who could use one eye, one arm and one leg; II: 425-37, al-Faiz al-Obaidi, a child ruler suffering epileptic fits; II: 513-14, Katada ibn Diama al-Sadusi, a learned blind man who “used to go from one end of Basra to the other without a guide”; II: 551-54, Majd Ad-Din ibn al-Athir, who had reasons for wishing to remain disabled; II: 586-89, Muhammad Ibn Sirin, a highly esteemed law lecturer with impaired hearing; III: 269, an early writing prosthesis; III: 459, grief of Muwarrij as-Sadusi on losing his sight; IV: 379-85, Ibn as-Saigh, a teacher known for his patience with slow learners; IV: 416, notes on some Arabic disability terms.

A contemporary of Ibn Khallikan was Muzaffar ad-Din (1154-1233), known as Kukuburi, ruler of Arbela (Iraq) from 1191. Among many welfare institutions, Kukuburi built “four asylums for the blind, and persons with chronic distempers: these were always full, with all things requisite for their wants”. An unusual detail was that “every Monday and Thursday he visited these establishments and entered into all the chambers”, giving gifts, asking how people were, “conversing affably with the inmates and jesting with them so as to soothe their hearts.” (vol. II: 535-43). Ibn Khallikan's own family had received many benefactions from this ruler, but he emphasized that he had witnessed all the humanitarian work of Kukuburi, and “avoided even the slightest exaggeration”.


The blind author, who worked initially as a teacher at the Zeitoun blind school, gave some historical background mentioning blind schools begun at Alexandria in 1896 and at Zeitoun in 1901. It was customary for blind Muslims to earn a living by “reading the Koran in private houses, in shops and in the streets” [by ‘reading’, presumably Ibrahim means ‘reciting from memory’]. Also the blind Copts “have been used to chant in the churches, as chanting is a very old custom in the orthodox churches, especially in Egypt. Very few of these blind Copts, except in the large cities, earned enough in this way to secure a comfortable living.” In 1921, Ibrahim learnt to weave carpets, and then began teaching other blind men to read and write, and some handicraft skills. In 1925, he came in contact with “one of the blind sheikhs at El Azhar University”, and discovered that this man had no knowledge of Braille. Ibrahim then began teaching twelve blind people at the Azhar, and the numbers grew to 90 in 1927. He was now teaching blind Muslims at one place, and blind Christians elsewhere. Some suspicions arose when Ibrahim, himself a Christian, used some Bible material while teaching the sheikhs. However he persevered with work in several blind schools and a training workshop at Cairo, for both Muslims and Copts.


Collection of well-referenced chapters presents motives and practices of philanthropy in various religious traditions, e.g. L Anderson on philanthropy in South Asia (pp. 57-78); AWP Guruge & GD Bond on Theravada Buddhism (79-96); LS Kawamura on Mahayana Buddhism (97-106); SA Arjomand on the Islamic world (109-132); M Juergensmeyer & DM McMahon on Hindu philanthropy (263-278); GC Kozlowski on modern Muslim philanthropy (279-308). Little directly on disability, but many of the more positive social attitudes are implicit in philanthropic practices.


Early compilation of law, having much in common with Manu (see below), with growth and accretions from commentaries over time. The king had a duty to appoint “pious persons for performing acts of piety (such as bestowing gifts on the indigent, and the like)” (p. 15) [[Bk III: 17]; and to “protect the property of minors, of (blind, lame or other) helpless persons (who have no guide), and of women (without a guardian)” (p. 20) [III: 65]. Among penalties for verbal insults, “If a man is blind of one eye, or lame, or defective in any similar way, and another calls him so, he shall be fined two Karshapanas, though he speaks the truth” (p. 28; cf p. 225) [V: 27; LXXI: 2]. Mutilating punishments were prescribed for crimes or injuries deemed serious (e.g. pp. 27, 31-32, 36). Modifications were laid down for people with specified impairments, illness or infirmity, and for women, where a case would be decided by physical ordeal (e.g. pp. 54-57) [IX: 23 to X: 13]. Inheritance law provided that, “Outcasts, eunuchs, persons incurably diseased, or deficient (in organs of sense or actions, such as blind, deaf, dumb, or insane persons, or lepers) do not receive a share. They should be maintained by those who take the inheritance. And their legitimate sons receive a share”, (p. 64) [XV: 28-34]. (By this law, people with disabilities, and their heritors, were
not cut off from the benefit of extended family properties, but were relieved from the duty of managing it as long as they lacked capacity to do so, or were believed to lack capacity).

Men are recommended not to marry a woman with disease or impairment of body or conduct (p. 107; also 222) [XXIV: 12-16; LXIX: 17]. Crimes in a previous life entail punishments, followed by incarnation in the bodies of animals, and then being born as a human being with marks indicating the crime, e.g. “a criminal in the highest degree shall have leprosy ... a stealer of words, dumbness ... a stealer of horses, lameness ... the stealer of a lamp, blindness ... a usurer becomes epileptic” [etc] XLV: 1-33 (pp. 147-49). While on a journey, some sights are auspicious while others are ill omens. One should turn back, on seeing someone “intoxicated, or insane, or deformed ... or dwarf”, etc (p. 201) [LXIII: 34-35].


Al-ISSA, Ihsan (ed) (2000) Al-Junun: mental illness in the Islamic world. Madison, CT: International Universities Press, Inc. xv + 382 pp. Substantial collection of well-referenced modern chapters on mental illness, with contributions on religion and historical topics (Al-Issa, pp. 3-70); Forensic psychiatry and Islamic law (K Chaleby, 71-98); Algeria (Al-Issa, 101-119); Kuwait & Qatar (MF El-Islam, 121-37); Iran (F Mehrabi et al, 139-61); Malaysia (MZ Azhar & SL Varma, 163-86); Pakistan (Mubbashar, 187-203); Saudi Arabia (A Al-Subaie & A Alhamad, 205-233); and various types of illness and their treatments in Arab and Muslim cultures.

Al-ISSA, I (2000) Does the Muslim religion make a difference in psychopathology? In: I Al-Issa (ed) Al-Junun: mental illness in the Islamic world, 315-53. Madison, Conn.: International Universities Press. The author discusses his question at length and in detail, and with a fairly impartial attitude, noting the problems of differentiating causal factors in mental illness or in its remedies. He finds that insufficient research has been reported in Muslim countries for any clear conclusions to be drawn.

JACKSON AVW (1938) The personality of Mani, the founder of Manichaeism. Journal of the American Oriental Society 58: 235-40. Supposed representations of Mani or Manes, c. 216-276 CE, are discussed, with consideration of the tradition noted by al-Nadim (writing c. 987 CE) that Mani was lame in both legs or in his right leg. That tradition would be supported by retranslation of a term in the Pahlavi Denkart (3.200, 1-13) (see Dinkard, above), applying the term 'broken' or 'crippled' to Mani (see below, al-Nadim, Fihrist, pp. 773, 794).

Al-JAHIZ (Abu Othman Amr bin Bahr). Al-Barsan wal-Argan wal-Umyan wal-Hawlan [The Lepers, the Lame, the Blind, and the Squinting], ed. Abdel-Salam Haroun (1998). Cairo. Al-Jahiz (776-868) was a prolific, influential and notably ugly writer with 'goggle eyes' (jahiz), at Basra (now in Iraq), whose work has been much quoted across the Arab world. Here, according to Michael Dols, he discussed “physical infirmities such as skin disorders, lameness, paralysis, and deafness and personal characteristics such as baldness, leanness, and ugliness.” His aim was to show that “physical infirmities and peculiarities do not hinder an individual from being a fully active member of the Muslim community or bar him from important offices. Al-Jahiz maintained that physical ailments are not social stigmas but are what may be called signs of divine blessing or favor.” (M Dols, 1983, The leper in Medieval Islamic society. Speculum 58: 891-916, on p. 901).
Despite his own experience of negative public reactions, al-Jahiz in one of his better-known works, 'The Wonders of Creation', wrote harshly about social aspects of deafness. Apart from the deaf person's loss of music, “People are bored in his company and he is a burden on them. He is unable to listen to any of the people's stories and conversations. Though present it is as though he were absent, and though alive it is as if he were dead.” (quoted by F. Haj, Disability in Antiquity, q.v., p. 159). See next items. Another commentator notes that “Al-Barsan wal-Argan...” is among the most difficult works by Jahiz, and its topic is practically unique in historical Arabic literature. (There does not seem to be an English translation available at present).


From the book of Animals, IV: 404-405. “Theologians say that your dumb man is deaf: his inability to speak is due not to any malformation of the tongue, but to the fact that having never heard sounds, articulated or otherwise, he does not know how to produce them. Not all deaf people are completely dumb, and there are also degrees of deafness.” (p. 164). [Gives examples of loud noises that some deaf people can hear.] “Others can hear words if spoken in their ear, but otherwise they hear nothing, even if the speaker raises his voice; if the speaker positions himself so that the sound goes right into their ear, they understand perfectly, whereas if he speaks just as loudly into the air, the sound of his voice not being concentrated and conducted along a canal into the brain, they do not understand.”


Diseases and treatment, including various disabilities, from Jaina sources (pp. 178-81). People with disabilities, including mental retardation, are excluded from joining religious orders (194). See Tattvartha Sutra, below; also next two items.

[JAINA Texts] Gaina Sutras translated from Prakrit, transl. Hermann Jacobi, 2 vols, (1884 and 1895), SBE 22 & 45, Oxford: Clarendon. [The SBE series used an italicised 'G' in place of 'J', for certain reasons. Here 'Gaina' has been reinserted in the normal alphabetical order for convenience.]
- The Akaranga Sutra (in vol. I), from perhaps the 5th century CE, gave instruction for a holy and harmless life. Impairment and disability appear, e.g. “with the deterioration of the perceptions of the ear, eye, organs of smelling, tasting, touching, a man becomes aware of the decline of life” (vol. I: p. 15) [Bk I (2) 1]. Fruits of wrong acts in earlier lives are: “Boils and leprosy, consumption, falling sickness, blindness and stiffness, lameness and humpbackedness, Dropsy and dumbness, look! apoplexy (?) and eye-disease, trembling and crippledness, elephantiasis and diabetes, These are the sixteen diseases enumerated in due order; besides them many illnesses and wounds occur.” (I: 54) [Bk I (6) 1.] Yet right-minded people should take care to use inoffensive words when meeting anyone with such conditions. They “should not talk of them in this way: 'He has got boils or leprosy, etc [adding the terms shown above]; his hand is cut, or his foot, nose, ear, lip is cut.' For as all such people, spoken to in such language, become angry, hence, considering well, they should not speak to them in such language.” (I: 152-53) [Bk II, (4) 2.]
- The Uttaradhyayana Sutra (in Vol. II) also notes impairment with ageing, “When your body grows old, and your hair turns white, the power of your ears decreases”, similarly for the eyes, nose, tongue, touch [II: p. 44] [chapter X].
- The Sutrakritanga Sutra (in Vol. II) mentions in passing the “blind-born man” (p. 243), and “men who walk on crutches” (p. 269). Monks hangkering after marriage are warned of the dreadful disablement of that situation: being ordered about from dawn till midnight by the wife, and the rest of the night soothing babies and washing their nappies (pp. 275-78). Monks who indulge in sensual pleasures are promised still worse pains after they die; and then they “will be born deaf and dumb, or blind [footnote: either blind by birth, or absolutely stupid or ignorant], or
dumb by birth.” (p. 363; similar on pp. 367, 430) [Bk 2 (2); and 2 (7)].

The detailed ascetic discipline undertaken by dedicated practitioners of the Jaina way, and the less rigorous yet still demanding lay discipline, are described with occasional reference to disability. Initiation to the dedicated religious life is “normally barred to those who are physically or mentally incapacitated” (p. 244). The act of entry involves the “ancient practice...of slowly and painfully pulling the hair from one's head in five handfuls” (pp. 12, 245), signifying acceptance of the rigours of asceticism. The first advance on the ladder of purification is to leave the normal, deluded view of reality, and to obtain a glimpse of the truth: “Such an experience is compared to that of a blind man who is suddenly able to see; although the event is momentary, it involves nothing less than an absolutely undistorted view of reality” (pp. 141-42). At a more advanced stage, the dedicated religious person should reach nirvicikiya, “freedom from disgust”, achieving indifference to the preference for what appears pleasant rather than unpleasant, and feeling “no revulsion at the sight of human sickness, insanity, or ugliness” (p. 152). Yet the practitioner must take the greatest pains to avoid causing harm to other beings, including sentient creatures too small even to be seen: “their torment is compared to that of a blind or mute person, who can neither see who it is that hurts him nor express his pain” (p. 242).

Probably from c. 3rd century BC. Among many tales casually mentioning disability, two Jatakas can be related to special education. Nangalisa-Jataka (No. 123, Vol. 1: 271-72) tells of efforts to teach a slow-learner using activity methods and a practical curriculum. However, the efforts fail: “This dullard will never learn”. In Muga-Pakkha-Jataka, (No. 538, Vol. VI: 1-19), the Bodhisatta appears as a baby prince. Horrified by the harshness of the king, he pretends to be a deaf and dumb cripple. Nurses and courtiers are not convinced, so they try various tests based on established norms and audiological principles. They watch him closely while causing a conch to be blown suddenly under his bed. They shine lights on him suddenly in the night, but by mental concentration the prince keeps still. They tempt him with milk, fruit or toys and try to surprise him with animals, according to the ages at which children normally responded to such stimuli. These assessment practices were recorded over 2,000 years ago.
Many further examples of disabilities and related material can be found, e.g. No. 1, Apannaka-J. (blockhead eaten by goblins); 41, Losaka-J (street child, abandoned and begging); 80, Bhimasena-J (Bodhisatta as crooked dwarf); 107 Salitaka-J (cripple on a little cart); 171, Kalyana-Dhamma-J (misunderstanding through hearing impairment); 184, Giridanta-J (lame horse-trainer, limping horse); 193, Culla-Paduma-J (maimed robber); 202 Keli-Sila-J (cruelty to the elderly); 221, Kasava-J (city charitable organisation); 232, Vina-Thuna-J (silly girl elopes with hunchback); 257, Gamani-Canda-J (learning is easier at some times of day than at others); 346, Kesava-J (alms with love better than alms given for status); 424, Aditta-J (alms to the deserving or undeserving poor?); 499, Sivi-J (beneficent king gives away his eyes); 519, Sambula-J (wife caring for leprosy-stricken prince); 531, Kusa-J (long story in which hunchback maid plays important part); and many more.

Exorcism of jinns by a traditional healer at Nablus.

Introduces the context of al-Tibb al-Nabawi by al-Jawziyya (751-1350) and gives translation with several indexes / glossaries, including all Hadith references. See general index for bonesetter,
elephantiasis, epilepsy, eyes, leprosy, madness, melancholy, mind, ophthalmia, paralysis.

JEFFREYS, David & Tait, John (2000) Disability, madness, and social exclusion in Dynastic Egypt. In: J Hubert (ed) Madness, Disability and Social Exclusion, 87-95. London: Routledge. Brief and suitably cautious review of evidence on social responses to disability and disabled persons in the social and religious context of Egyptian antiquity, for which archaeological sources are “plentiful but often ambivalent”.

“Regulations for the disabled” (pp. 101-134) give a certain school of modern Muslim teaching on disability, disabled people, correct conduct etc, based on modern and earlier Arabic expositions of Qur'anic injunctions and Hadiths. Some reference is made also to the perceived merits and faults in ‘western’ rehabilitation methods.

JONES, Melinda (2004) Judaism, spirituality, and disability: an Australian perspective. Journal of Religion, Disability & Health 8 (1/2) 55-88. Discusses some teachings of Orthodox Judaism, as interpreted by a human rights activist, on the inclusion of disabled children and adults in the normal life of their community, illustrated by events in which the author participated. The interpretation suggests how the prescriptions of traditional Jewish law can be matched with a recent and elevated view of human rights. It is admitted that in actual practice Jewish people in the Australian communities described fall short of implementing the ideals that can be read back into the ancient texts.


The 17th century sufi Mir Nasiruddin Harawi (died 1708) lived most of his life with paralysis of both legs and left arm. With his one good hand he was able to support himself very modestly by writing copies of the Qur'an. Nasiruddin was an influential teacher, independent thinker, and fearless critic of men who exercised power unjustly and trampled on the weak.

This international congress reportedly “enlarged the horizon of the non-Islamic participants as to the interrelation between religion and psychology as well as psychotherapy in Islamic countries”, and individual sections of this paper support the claim, with useful observations on the differences of stance among international participants, towards the topics discussed.


AL-KILANI SF (2005) [Arabic] Measures taken to secure care for persons with special needs in Islamic shariah. *Dirasat* 32 (1) 22-35. Suggests that Islamic texts from the Qur'an and hadiths made extensive provision for all the needs of disabled people to be taken care of.


KHERIE, Al-Haj Khan Bahadur Altaf Ahmad (1979) *A Key to Holy Quran. Index-cum-Concordance for the Holy Quran*, 2nd edition. Karachi: Holy Quran Society, Pakistan. References to “Blindness; Deafness; Dumbness; Lameness; etc”, and to “Weakness”, pp. 922-27. The great majority are used metaphorically, to signify e.g. people's deafness to the law of Allah. See also Kassis; Wensinck.

KINSLEY, David (1974) “Through the looking glass”: divine madness in the Hindu religious tradition. *History of Religions* 13: 270-305. Discusses many episodes of 'madness' or strangeness among the Hindu deities, where frenzied, intoxicated, manic behaviour was exhibited. Similar behaviour also characterised devotees: “it is abundantly clear that one of the traditional marks of a Hindu saint is madness” (p. 286). The devotee of Krishna “plays like a child, behaves like a dolt, and talks like a maniac” (287). Ramakrishna is quoted suggesting that “A perfect knower of God and a perfect idiot have the same outer signs.” (294) Shiva was sometimes portrayed as “surrounded by idiots, epileptics...” and crowds of frightful ghouls. He was also known as “Master Simpleton”. The gods are gods. They are not bound by human conventions.

Copiously referenced overview of such Islamic healers' work in many Muslim countries.

The living tradition of these moral tales, some of which are known in many countries, blends everyday life with the world of gods, spirits, animals, monsters and magic. Disability, folly and deformities are casually woven in, as in the stories of the old blind couple who catch a hungry boy, who in turn finds their eyes for them and turns his enemy into a cretin (pp. 21-26); the blind man, the hunchback and the princess with three breasts (68-71); the dull-witted older brother and his clever younger brother (83-87); the Silly Leopard (89-92); the goat's tail that gains half a kingdom but everything in it has some small defect (109-114); the Ghost with the Water Goiter (115-119); the intelligent Lame Monkey (125-131), the parents who devise a successful behaviour modification scheme for their idle, apathetic son (133-135); the Za spirits who protect the Buddhist teachings and can cause or cure paralysis (102, 196-97).

pp. 21-25, notes on the life of Swami Virjananda Saraswati (1779-1868), a Vedic scholar blinded by smallpox at the age of five, and orphaned at eleven. He persevered with his studies, taught for many years in different places, and eventually became a famous guru at Mathura. Dayananda Saraswati (1824-1883) became his pupil for nearly three years from late 1860, before going on to found the Arya Samaj. Virjananda was an irascible, outspoken and uncompromising opponent of what he considered the degeneration of Hinduism as a result of worthless, sectarian texts, e.g. he denounced the Bhagavata Purana.

First published 1836. Describes in considerable detail the beliefs and practices of Muslims in Egypt, as observed by Lane and discussed with his local teachers and advisors. Numerous mentions of active blind men, e.g. pp. 107, 165, 417-418 476; including description of a college of some 300 blind students and teachers, one of whom became the Sheikh of al-Azhar (pp. 192-93), blind beggars (299, 394, 431); lunatics, idiots and holy fools, who are regarded as being those “whose mind is in heaven, while his grosser part mingles among ordinary mortals” (pp. 208-210, 398, 410) and other men with disabilities (pp. 111, 177, 361, 415), also charms and healing (pp. 233-38). In effect, these urban disabled men seem to have been casually integrated in street life and public religious ceremony, their poverty and disadvantage shared with many non-disabled people, with a few specific religious roles for some blind men. (Disabled women are hardly mentioned - presumably they stayed mostly within family dwellings).

Extract from Baron de Larrey's “Clinique Chirugicale”, notes that real bronchocele, or guttural hernia, or tumours in the upper trachea, larynx or mouth, may occur as a kind of 'occupational disease'. “In Egypt we frequently observed this kind of bronchocele in the blind, who are very numerous there and who are employed by the priests [i.e. the Muslim religious leaders] to chant at the top of the minarets. It generally happens, that after two or three years, such persons become totally unfit for this office, on account of the occurrence and subsequent increase of these tumours.” The other instance given was in European junior officers who had been working as military instructors. (See also Crecelius; Lane, 1890).

LASCARATOS, John & Marketos, Spyros (1992) The penalty of blinding during Byzantine
In 4th century Alexandria, Didymus lost his sight when 4 years old. Later he reportedly “learned the first letters of the alphabet through his sense of touch upon their shapes which were engraved in depth on planks of wood”, becoming a renowned theologian, teacher and writer.

LAW, Bimala Charan (transl. [1923 ?]) Designation of Human Types (Puggala-Pannatti).
Buddhist text giving various categories of people with disabilities, and how they enter or escape the condition (pp. 44-45, 50, 70-71, 90-91, 95).

Compiled through more than 2000 years, these tablets from Mesopotamia and region recorded predictions of good or bad events or national outcomes, signalled by the birth of a human or animal of deformed or anomalous appearance. “Late in the Middle Babylonian period” a systematisation took place, “intended to cover all the possible occurrences of abnormal births.” (p.24) Examples: “If a woman of the palace gives birth to a deaf child - the possessions of the king will be lost.” (p.70) “If a woman of the palace gives birth, and (the child) has six fingers on its left hand - the prince will plunder the land of his enemy.”

Ranges across 'Hindu' thoughts on suffering, karma and the body from antiquity to the present, with brief consideration of disability (pp. 35-37) and extensive references.

Well referenced discussion of the evil eye and how hunchbacks and other persons or images with deformities were thought to avert the evil.


Brief review, of a homiletic nature, of some Biblical characters who were chosen and used, in the purposes of God, not for their strength but for their weakness or disability. The author finds that he too, with his own disability, stands like Moses on holy ground, and can play his part in the divine plan.

Includes some discussion of the depiction of harpers at various dates in Egypt, and the practice of representing them as blind people, pp. 187-88.
LIFE of Takla Háymánôt. III. The Book of the Miracles of our Father, the Holy Man Takla Háymánôt, which was compiled by Abba Peter. Transl. EA Wallis Budge. London. Privately printed for Lady Meux. 1906. 2 vols.

Illustrated hagiography of the revered Takla Háymánôt (c. 1215 - c. 1313), the major religious figure of Ethiopian history. Includes many reports of TH healing people by expelling demons.

Vol. I, pp. 95-101 concerns TH, possibly in his mid-20s, at the mountain of Wifat. Local people worshipped the devils of the mountain, but TH scattered these devils and preached to the people. He told them to bring their sick and diseased, and see the power of God. “...they collected all the sick folk who were with them, and their numbers were thus:- dumb folk, twelve; paralytics, thirteen; epileptics, seven; blind, ten.” (p. 99). As they were coming to TH, the devils that “dwelt in the sick folk saw him while he was afar off”, and began crying that he should not torment them. TH told the people to “Bring them to me quickly”. The devils promptly left the sick ones. “Thus those who had been sick were made whole, and those who had been blind now saw with their eyes.” The bystanders were impressed, and a church was founded there.

In the section specifically detailing “miracles”, Vol. II, [part III], pp. 278-79 concern “Healing of the man with crooked legs”. It tells of “a certain man who was unable to walk with his legs, and he could only move about upon his hands.” He prayed to TH, believed he would be healed, and raised himself up. TH appeared to him, and said “Depart thou, standing upright on thy feet as thou wast formerly” -- he was healed immediately and departed on his feet.

[The scientific mind is usually uncomfortable with miracle reports, and the historian is professionally sceptical of hagiography. No doubt observant Ethiopians in the 13th century could describe accurately a variety of impairments and medical conditions. It is credible that people with various impairments did meet Takla Haymanot, and received his blessing. Further evidence of their bodily condition after the event is not available.]


Consideration of the cognitive capacities of people with intellectual disability is given in the context of practical problems: the immigration to Israel of families who wish to formalise their status by conversion, and other cases of fulfilling religious observations or contracts. Candidates must appear before rabbinical judges and demonstrate a sufficient level of understanding and volition to take such steps validly. The authors find no textual guidance on mental retardation in the earlier Jewish scriptures, so begin with the 12th century views of Maimonides, and then later teachers. Eventually a differentiation was made between different kinds of mental disorder or cognitive weakness. An intermediary position emerged corresponding with the capacity of a child of six years, who can undertake some limited self-care and responsibilities. The historical case of people born deaf or with severe speech difficulties was also used for comparison. The authors find sufficient flexibility, within a wide range of rabbinical opinion, to formulate a view of intellectual disability not dissimilar from that of the American Association for Mental Retardation (AAMR).


Fr. Lobo's journey took place in the 1620s. He noted (in Chapter 5) that some years earlier Abyssinia had been largely conquered by Arab and Turkish troops under a Moor "called Mahomet Gragne, or the Lame." [This Muslim warrior is elsewhere known as Ahmed Gragn, the Left-Handed.] At the end of chapter 8, Lobo recounted an improbable tale about the devil, which he had heard from "a religious, who passed, though he was blind, for the most learned person in all that country. He had the whole Scriptures in his memory, but seemed to have been at more pains to retain them than to understand them".


"[E]nquiries made by the agent of the Bengal Military Orphan Institution encourage the hope, that the benefits of the [Lucas reading] system may be extended even to that distant land." (First Report, 1839, p.11) "Bengal Military Orphan Asylum ... stated that the Blind Orphans in that Institution were learning to read upon Lucas's system" (3rd Report, 1841, p.11). "[S]everal ladies, about to leave England for Greece, India, and the Cape, received gratuitous instruction ... so as to be enabled to confer the blessing of teaching such Blind persons to read" (4th Report, 1842, p.11).

"The Bengal Military Orphan Asylum at Calcutta, has also during the past year, ordered of the Society, a further supply of embossed books, for the Blind Children of that Institution." (7th Report, 1845, p.12). "Lucas' system of teaching the Blind to read has been extended ... to Egypt also, where blindness so much prevails" (20th Report, April 1858, p.8). These seem to be the first records of the use of an embossed script system for teaching blind people to read in South Asia and Africa (Egypt and the Cape). The texts in Lucas script were mostly Christian literature, and the people trained to use the embossed material with blind people were mainly missionaries.


Some proverbs suggest folk attitudes to disability, often (not always) of a negative nature. "The mother of the mute understands what he says" (p. 94) could be derisive, or sympathetic, or purely metaphorical. "If you meet a blind man, throw him on the ground and steal his lunch, for you are not more merciful than God" (p. 14), could be dismissive of disabled people's lives. If spoken by a blind man, it would be unanswerable. See also pp. 22, 23 35, 45.


Reflecting divinely sanctioned views from antiquity, Ramakrishna suggested (in the 1880s) that people with physical traits such as bony or dented bodies, heavy elbow joints, hollow, yellow, squinting or crossed eyes, snub nose, thick lips, short stature, etc, have difficulty acquiring faith, or are wicked and deceitful (e.g. pp. 234, 597, 766, 783).


India's vast compendium of ancient knowledge. A few examples:

* In a catechism of kingly duties: "...cherishest thou like a father, the blind, the dumb, the lame, the deformed, the friendless, and ascetics that have no homes." Sabha Parva, V.

* The advice is given to King Yudhishthira that "If they that are to be employed in Sraddhas happen to be dumb, blind, or deaf, care should be taken to employ them along with Brahmans conversant with the Vedas". Vana Parva, CLXLIX.

* In Bhishma's extended deathbed discourse, the desirable condition of dispassionateness is illustrated by example of disabled people, since "the blind, the deaf, and they that are destitute of reason, are perfectly consoled for the loss of their senses". Santi Parva (ii), CCLXII. Possibly the
idea is that 'what you've never had, you don't miss'; but Ganguli's footnote gives the disabled people as “Devairapihita-dwarah”, meaning “persons whose doors (senses) have been closed by the deities, i.e. men with senses that are defective or lost.”

See many extracts in: Miles (1997) “References .. Mahabharata” (below), taken from:
* Adi Parva chapters 1, 3, 42, 49, 63, 67, 72, 76, 79, 83-84 (Yayati), 95, 98, 104 (Dirghatamas), 106 (birth of blind Dhritarashtra), 109, 110 (Gandhari), 134, 136, 143, 147 (pot-head Gatotkacha), 225 (industrial disability from smoke).
* Sabha P., ch. 5, 10, 17 (Jarasandha), 23, 30, 42 (Sisupala), 50, 51, 55, 63, 72, 80.
* Vana P., ch. 2 (mental illness), 49, 70 (Vahuka), 107, 112 (Rishyasringa), 116 (sons of Jamadagni), 119, 122 (Chyavana), 124-125, 132-134 (Ashtavakra), 136-137, 149, 199, 206 (rottenness in society leads to birth defects), 208, 211, 229 (madness), 231 (how to control husbands), 238, 270 (Vishnu as dwarf), 274 (hunchback Manthara), 292-296 (Savitri and Dyumatsena).
* Virata P., ch. 2 (Arjuna as eunuch), 4, 11, 18, 70.
* Udyoga P., ch. 12, 22, 30 (Yudhishtira greets all the disabled people at court), 31, 33, 34, 44, 51, 55, 64, 69 (blind leading blind), 71, 92, 130, 147, 149, 163, 169, 195 (spies disguised as disabled people)
* Bhishma P., ch. 3, 122.
* Drona P., ch. 51, 142, 182, 202 (deformed retinue of Mahadeva).
* Karna P., ch. 4.
* Salya P., ch. 58 (breaking Duryodhana's thighs).
* Sautpita P., ch. 6 (exemption from fighting)
* Stree P., ch. 4 (growth of fetus), 12, 24 (roving arm now cut off).
* Anusasana P., ch. 17, 23, 24, 26, 38, 40 (Sakra may appear as an idiot), 49, 59, 85, 90, 99, 104 (don't mock disabled people), 124 (lucky dwarfs), 145, 146.
* Aswamedha P., ch. 7, 36, 59, 90.
* Asramavasika P., ch. 5, 15, 35.


[Annotation based on remarks by John Racy, see below.] The distinguished Sudanese psychiatrist and WHO regional advisor, Dr El-Mahi, wrote many papers (see Racy, 1970, pp. 133-138) illustrative of the inner life, personal relations and mental stresses of people in the Arab region. He was not afraid to make observations about the practice of Islam and its teachings in the rapidly changing Arab countries. In this paper, El-Mahi shows social aspects of Islam evolving to meet changed situations. (In another paper, El-Mahi, making a point about addiction, personality and perception, used an old tale that also applies well to some aspects of religious belief: An alcoholic, an opium eater and a hashish user reached Isfahan one evening to find the gate already closed. The alcoholic proposed that they batter the gate down, and so gain admittance. The opium eater thought it better to sleep where they were until morning, when the gate would be opened. The hashish user suggested that they should all enter through the key hole.)

Detailed history of the development of Madrasas and of European colleges, and of the waqf or charitable trust, and other legal frameworks for continuing financial support. Brief mention appears of disabled people, mostly blind. A person could not be appointed mutawalli, to administer a waqf, if insane, incompetent or untrustworthy; but equal consideration could be given to “males
and females, the blind and those with eyesight” (p. 45). Some blind men became notable teachers, learning by heart the legal, grammatical and religious books they would teach to others: the jurisconsult Abu'l Hasan at-Tamimi (died 918) was one such; and also Ibn al-Muna (d. 1187), who “went blind at the age of forty and was hard of hearing” (pp. 99-101). A Qur'anic scholar at Baghdad, Abu Mansur al-Khaya't (d. 1106), who was imam of the masjid of Ibn Jarada, had a very long life teaching the Qur'an to blind students (p. 180). The total of these students, said to be 70,000, is an end-note issue (p. 331), with a possible reading of 700 being suggested. Another source explained that al-Khaya't's students also taught many more blind people, greatly multiplying the total. There was clearly an established and significant practice of educating blind youths in this way in 11th century Baghdad, and onward. (See Dodge, above)

Study of dreams in as-Safadi's (q.v.) biographical dictionary of famous blind Muslims in the East.

In a critical examination of Taha Husayn's autobiography, Malti-Douglas reviews various aspects of blindness in the current and historical Arab world. Husayn's education initially aimed toward the traditional blind male skills of memorising the Qur'an and teaching it with an orthodox approach and exegesis. He studied further at Al-Azhar, where there had long been a school for blind students of Islam, then moved to the new, modernising University of Cairo where he wrote his thesis on the blind freethinker Abu 'l-`Ala al-Ma’arri. Advanced studies and travel in Europe brought further challenges and secularisation of Husayn's thoughts. His first book was controversial, using source criticism on pre-Islamic poetry and seeming to suggest a possibly heretical view of the Qur'an. In this, and at other points in his life, Husayn may have been influenced by his literary predecessor al-Ma’arri.

With some discussion of historiographical approaches, Malti-Douglas attempts “the identification of the principal roles of blindness and the blind in Mamluk mentalities”, based on as-Safadi's biographical dictionary of some 310 distinguished blind Arabs. The identified roles are compared favourably with some of the roles of blind people in modern 'western' countries.

Saint Eustratius was associated with miraculous healing of a “deaf and dumb child” at the monastery of St Abercius, now in Turkey. The shrine has since been a place of pilgrimage for families with deaf children, of whatever religion.

Detailed and informative work in popularising style, on a growing field of knowledge. Refers to blind musicians and some wearing a blindfold, pp. 89-90, 94-95; chapter on “The blind harpist and his songs, 97-107. Music was often performed in religious ritual. Some performers undoubtedly were physically blind, others were so represented in situations where they performed in the presence of deities, who were not to be gazed at by humans.

Doniger's introduction, being both informative and readable by non-specialists, repays careful consideration. The development of Manu scholarship, of translations, and Doniger's own somewhat heretical approach, are a necessary background to understanding this central work of law, philosophy and religion. Disability and other marginalising conditions are commented on in p. li; and appear in Manu, Chapter II: 110; III: 34, 141, 155, 161, 165, 177, 242; IV: 67, 197; V: 147-148; VII: 149; VIII: 66-67, 93-95, 148, 163, 205, 274, 279-84, 394; IX: 79, 201, 230, 247; XI: 49-54, 119. (See some elaboration, in notes on next two items).

MANU. The Ordinances of Manu translated from the Sanskrit, transl. AC Burnell, ed. EW Hopkins (1884), reprint 1995, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal. Among many earlier translation, Hopkins & Burnell is one of the few recommended by Doniger & Smith. They provide copious notes from early Sanskrit commentators on Manu. See: Chapter VII: 149 (p. 166) “At deliberation-time he [the king] should expel the foolish, dumb, blind, and deaf; the aged; women; the impure, diseased and deformed.”

VIII: 270-72, 277 (pp. 221, 222) Punishments for verbal abuse of superiors could result in excision of tongue, or having the mouth and ear burnt with hot iron or oil.

IX: 201-202 (p. 281) “An impotent man and one degraded are without share (in an inheritance); so also those born blind or deaf, those (who are) crazy, idiotic, or dumb, and all who are without manly strength. But the rule is for a sensible man to give to each one of these, according to (his) ability, both food and clothes without end [footnote: (meaning:) As long as he lives - (commentators)]; for should he not give (these) he would be degraded.”

XI: 48, 51, 53-54 (p. 331) “48. Men of evil manners receive an alteration of form, some through the evil (deeds) committed (by them) in this life, some also through (acts) formerly committed. ... 51. One who takes food [receives] dyspepsia; a thief of the voice, dumbness; a thief of clothes, leprosy; a horse-thief, lameness; ... 53-54. Thus, according to the difference in their acts, (men who are) blamed by the good are born dull, dumb, blind, and deformed in appearance. Regularly, then, penance should be practised for purification, since those whose sins have not (thus) been done away with are (re)-born with (these) disgraceful marks attached.”


Technical paper on linguistics; discussion reflects a variety of interesting points about attitudes to blind and other disabled people in the ancient Middle East. (Mentions the practice whereby someone causes a blind or otherwise disabled person to move a boundary stone or damage a monument, to avoid the penalty or curse that would otherwise fall on the instigator. See Cassin, above; also Falk).

AL-MARGHINANI. The Hedaya or Guide. A commentary on the Mussulman laws. 2nd edition. transl. C Hamilton, ed. S Grady (1870), reprint 1975, Lahore: Premier Book. Translation of a highly influential commentary by 12th century lawyer, taking account of the major legal schools of Islam, used over centuries in Middle East & South Asia. See index entries: Blind; Child, Children; Divorce (Ch.I, of a dumb person; Ch.IX, of expiation, slaves with defects; Ch.XI, husband leprous, scrophulous or insane; Ch.XV, maintenance to other relations, a father & mother); Dumb, Dumb person; Foundlings; Guardian (disposition of a lunatic woman) Infants; Idiot, Idiotism; Inhibition (operates upon infants, slaves, & lunatics; Ch.II, from weakness of mind); Lunacy, Lunatic; Maniacs; Property (destruction of an infant or lunatic); Punishment
(Ch.II, whoredom committed by infant or idiot; or who goes blind); Safeeya; Sale (Ch.III, inspection of a blind person, defects incident to children; lunacy operates as a perpetual defect; Ch.X, fine incurred by maiming); Wills (Ch.IV, or to the orphans, blind lame); Zabbah (provided he be ... infant or idiot); Zakat (not due from infants or maniacs); etc. These indicate varied applications of law to disabled persons, e.g. entitlement to some protections & exemption from taxes or punishments, incapacities as witnesses or in transaction of business, etc. (These are discussed in great detail in many Arabic legal texts).

MARX, Tzvi C (2002) Disability in Jewish Law. London & New York: Routledge. xii + 260 pp. Marx surveys in detail the rabbinical debates on Jewish law (halakha) as applied to people with various categories of disability during the past two millennia. The aim is to expose and suggest ways of reducing some of the mutually contradictory interpretations within Jewish legal practice, and the dissonance between Jewish law and modern euro-american secular beliefs and ideologies around disability.

MASSON, Jeffrey M (1980) The Oceanic Feeling. The origins of religious sentiment in Ancient India. Dordrecht: Reidel. pp. 110-24, “Notes on Kubja the Hunchback and Krishna, with some observations on perversions.” Translates and speculates on accounts of a meeting between Krishna and a hunchback woman (Kubja) in which Krishna straightens her body and either makes fun of her, or flirts with her, or makes love to her, or all of these activities, in different versions. (See also Noel Sheth, 1981, The impeccable Krishna, Indica 18: 1-6; and Sheth, 1983, The justification for Krishna's affair with the hunchbacked woman, Purana 25: 225-34.)

MASSON JM (1981) Hanuman as an imaginary companion. Journal of the American Oriental Society 101: 355-361. Masson, who was a Sanskritist and then practised psychoanalysis, argues that the universe of the Ramayana is a children's universe. The marvellous divine monkey Hanuman, a child's imaginary companion, is both illegitimate and deformed.

MAS'UDI. The Meadows of Gold. The Abbasids. Transl. & ed. P Lunde & C Stone (1989) London: Kegan Paul International. Al-Mas'udi (c. 896-956) gave more everyday life and humour than most historians, including stories of disabled people. The Caliph Mansur and a blind poet (pp. 21-23); the ugly, crippled and sharp-witted Ahnaf ibn Qais (61); a madman known as 'Sheep's Head' (68); a bonesetter works on Caliph Amin's hand (142); history illustrated by verses of the blind poet of Baghdad, Ali ibn Abi Talib (146, 151-53, 156-65); inhabitants of Kufa choose a deaf man to plead their case before Caliph Ma'mun, which he does with subtle wit (193-94); Caliph Mu'tasim disobeys doctor's orders (224-25); traffic accidents involving infirm or blind people in Baghdad (228); Caliph Wathiq and medical science (233-35); ugliness of Jahiz causes his rejection as tutor to the sons of Caliph Mutawakkil (249); ailments and death of Jahiz (309-11); wit and self-preservation of the blind Abu al-Ayna (322-34); former-Caliph Qahir's revenge for losing his eyes (409-410); Caliph Muttaqi has his eyes gouged out (415); the warrior Utrush 'The Deaf' (425).

AL-MATRODI, Abdurrehman Sulayman (1991) “The Disadvantaged in Islamic Society.” Unpublished PhD thesis, Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Glasgow University. 281 pp. [Seen on microfilm.] The thesis reviews Islamic teaching on 'Man and Society'; 'Disability' (definitions and types; responses within Muslim communities (pp. 83-88); 'Poverty' (and responses within Islam to relieve poverty, including the provision of Zakat); and 'Other Islamic Resources', with regard to human efforts for a healthy and balanced society. Implementation of these teachings in Saudi Arabia is presented as an example of modern practice. Qur'anic verses cited, and Saudi rules on Zakat, appear in Arabic appendices. Bibliography lists 91 items in Arabic, and 42 in
A summary of the “principles underlying the Islamic attitude towards disability” is given (pp. 83-84), comprising: (1) Recognition that “the human being consists of body, mind and soul, and that a disability affecting any one of these involves concomitant effects on the others.” (2) There are limits on everyone’s “ability, to perform even his duty”, so Islam does not “require anyone to act beyond his ability”. (3) Islam takes into account the maturity, or lack of it, in anyone’s body, mind and soul, so “performance of any Islamic duty can be required only from those in whom this threefold maturity is present.” (4) Even when these mature capacities are present, a person’s “obligations are waived if he is temporarily incapacitated.” (5) Acting under compulsion or duress “is also counted as a disability in Islam; the person compelled is thus absolved from responsibility.” Examples are given of these features, “to illustrate Islamic concern for the disabled, the weak and the oppressed” (p. 87).

A tentative definition of disability in Islamic terms is suggested: “Disability is a state of failure to produce and perform what a normal person can produce or perform, or failure to control actions or behaviour in a way that a normal person can, and thus to differ from those who constitute the normal categories of society.” (p. 87) The thesis concerns itself with the first part (“failure to produce and perform what a normal person can produce or perform”). An appropriate role for the Islamic State is illustrated (p. 200) from the Caliphate of Abu Bakr: “the most significant, as both giving the same right to non-Muslims as Muslims alike, and designating particular classes of people as eligible for such relief, is that of the peace treaty agreed between Khalid b. al-Walid and the people of al-Hirah. Khalid reported to Abu Bakr, ‘I have promised them to give financial support to the elderly who can no longer work, to those who have suffered disability and to those who were rich and have become poor; I have exempted these from paying taxes, and they will be paid from the treasury.’ (Abu Yusuf, Kitab al-kharaj, p. 144).”

MEERSMAN, Achille (1971) Notes on the charitable institutions the Portuguese established in India. *Indian Church History Review* 5 (2) 95-105.

Among 16th century hospitals founded in the State of Goa, one existed at Cochin by 1506. One for lepers began 1530-31. There was a regular disbursement to 'paralytics' [entreuados] in 1574 at Damaun.


Provides an historical background of psychiatry in Iran (pp. 140-45), with some references, followed by a broad overview of the present state of epidemiology, characteristics and treatment of mental illness.


A story is told of the saint al-Gharib who had leprosy and then became paralyzed and blind. After a healing ritual at the mosque he was able to walk home, holding his wife's hand. “And at home he asked his wife: 'Who put the books over there?' and he pointed in their direction. His wife said: 'They're not there!' He replied: 'Yes they are!'“ (p. 463) After demanding that he show her a particular book, the wife knew that Gharib really could see again.


The continuation is noted, from antiquity to the present, of a healing ministry within the Coptic Church, wherein people with various physical and mental impairments are reportedly healed by the prayers and actions of holy persons; or by their faith in the efficacy of the saint's relics to evoke the power of God; or via some other theological construction (pp. 97-110).

Translation of an Ottoman law code compiled during the 1870s and apparently presented to the Grand Vizir in 1885, as the “Report of the Mejelle Commission” (p. ix). Some disability and deafness references appear. An early section gives guidance on philosophical and linguistic issues, i.e. the interpretation of evidence, whether spoken or silent.

“70. The well known signs of a dumb man are like an explanation by speech. 71. In every case the word of an interpreter is accepted.” (p. 11). [It is not entirely clear whether 70 and 71 are intended to have a link, or appear in succession without the second relating to the first. There were many spoken languages in the Ottoman Empire, and interpreters were often needed in legal situations.]

“1573. It is a condition that the person who makes the admission should have arrived at years of discretion. Therefore, the admission of an infant, madman or person of unsound mind, male or female, is not good.” (p. 263)

“1586. An admission made by the known signs of a dumb person are held good. But the admission by signs of a person who can speak is not considered. For example -- If someone says to a person who can speak 'Has such a one a claim against you for so many piastres' that person does not admit the claim by bowing his head.” (p. 266).

“About the description of evidence (shehadet). ...

1686. The evidence of the dumb and blind is not admissible.” (p. 294).

[Within the legal framework, provisions 1586 and 1686 need not be mutually contradictory. A (possible) explanation would be that an “admission” could be the simplest kind of Yes or No to propositions put to a mute person, such as “At midday on September 7th you stood by the East gate of town.” [Sign: YES] “You saw this man go out through the East gate.” [Sign: YES] “He was leading a white donkey” [Sign: NO] “He was leading a white horse with one black hind leg.” [Sign: YES]. On the other hand, to give “evidence” could be a much heavier legal responsibility, in which the witness took upon himself to describe the whole story in detail and to draw out the moral point (for example, that he recognised the horse as one belonging to his neighbour, and believed that the man leading it out of town had stolen it).

Muslim lawyers, in different schools of legal tradition, had in fact discussed the validity of mute people's signs for at least one thousand years before the Mejelle. They had accepted signs where they were clearly understood, while admitting that in more complicated situations there could be some doubt. See the Hedaya (Guide) of the 12th century scholar al-Marghinani, transl. Hamilton (1870), pp. 707-709.]


Brief account of Didymus the Blind, theologian and teacher at Alexandria in the 4th century.


This is a sympathetic portrayal of the historical Tabligh movement for deepening people's understanding and practice of Islam in a non-sectarian way, in which small groups would voluntarily itinerate in the community and 'reach out' with the invitation to worship and learn.
movement had a tradition of accepting the contribution of anyone who volunteered, whether great or small, learned or unlettered. The story is cherished, of a village simpleton who accompanied such a wandering group. Wherever they went, he begged people to say the kalima, the core statement of Islam, which he had never been able to memorise. Thus, artlessly, all these people were obliged to repeat the few words that every Muslim knows, to help the poor simpleton, and perhaps to be confronted by their own need to understand more of the faith they professed. Metcalf suggests that “As an educational movement, nothing is more striking in Tabligh than the conviction that anyone can learn, that one learns by doing, and that the lives of ‘ordinary’ people can be profoundly transformed.” (p. 59)


MILES M (1997) References to physical and mental disabilities in the Mahabharata (in English translation). Asia Pacific Disability Rehabilitation Journal 8 (2) Suppl., pp. 2-7. Extracts on disability from Ganguli's translation of the great Hindu epic, Mahabharata, with some comparison with other versions, and brief explanatory notes. [Chapter numbers in Ganguli's original text differ a little from the numbering in the Critical Text established later and normally used by scholars. Ganguli's full text is currently online, open access.]

MILES M (1998) Blind and Sighted Pioneer Teachers in 19th century China and India. ERIC ED414701. Account based on archival missionary material and contemporary journals, of blind teachers in India such as William Cruickshanks and Bibi Aisha, and the developing use of Lucas's and Moon's embossed text by blind learners from the end of the 1830s onwards at mission schools, orphanages and elsewhere. (See entry in East Asia section, for comparable activities in China).

food and shelter to disabled people among many other needy categories. Within families, the burden of care normally fell on female members. Yet some evidence challenges the stereotypes and suggests that disablement historically evoked a wider range of responses and initiative. The practices and motivations of philanthropists, and the worthiness or unworthiness of recipients, were subjected to critical discussion in Hindu, Jaina, Buddhist and Muslim histories.

Reviews some significant texts concerned with disability in the Qur'an, the hadiths, the Hedaya of al-Marghinani, and some early Arabic literature concerned with education.


Lightly annotated bibliography of about 800 items from these two Islamic nations.

Lightly annotated bibliography of about 500 items from this predominantly Islamic region of Africa. (Material on Egypt has been updated from the material contained in the Middle East bibliography, Miles 2002, listed above).

Gives background, context and introduction to a journal issues of South Asian family voices on intellectual disability and behavioural difference, religious belief, and the personal journeys of parents, some from very poor backgrounds, others being also service providers in this field.

MILLER, Timothy S (1985) *The Birth of the Hospital in the Byzantine Empire*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP. Chapter 5 (pp. 68-88 and notes pp. 231-37) on the 4th century, sketches the growing institutionalisation of philanthropy in Asia Minor, with some disabled people as (intended) beneficiaries.


*Narada* (maybe 4th/5th century CE): disability, childhood or legal incapacity appear in Ch. 1: 31; 35; 80; 157-97 (list of people deemed incompetent to act as witnesses, e.g. women, children, a madman, an atheist, one who is sick, deformed or possessed by a demon, a weather forecaster, one with a limb missing, or who practises fellatio, a cripple, a bard, etc); 257; IV: 10; XII: 8-37 (list of bodily defects in man or maid that may be impediments to marriage, e.g. 14 sorts of impotence, deformity, loss of virginity, etc); XIII: 22 (exclusion of disabled people from inheritance, but they must be maintained and their sons may be heritors); XIV: 17; XV/XVI: 11.

*Brihaspati* (c. 1st century): II: 34; IV:7; VIII: 22; IX: 18; XV: 9; XVII: 5-24 (organisations for business, and also for charitable purposes, in antiquity; including relief of people who are idiots, aged, blind etc).
The MISHNAH (1933) transl. Herbert Danby. Oxford UP.
Compilation of Jewish oral law and interpretation, in six major sections, accumulating over centuries and reaching final form late in the 2nd century CE. It was the basis for further interpretative commentary known as the Talmud. Disabilities appear in various restrictions or exceptions to laws, e.g. Terumoth 1: 1-2 (transl. p. 52) states that a certain offering is not valid if presented by a deaf-mute (heresh), an imbecile or a minor. (The index entry for “Deaf-mute, imbecile or minor, Competency” gives 23 other references of this type). Gittin 2: 5-6 (pp. 308-309; see also Menahoth 9: 8, p. 505) concerns the invalidity of a writ of divorce presented by a deaf-mute, imbecile or blind person (unless the disability came temporarily and then cleared up). However, Gittin 5: 7 (p. 313) provides that “A deaf-mute may communicate by signs and be communicated with by signs”, and indeed by movements of the mouth, in matters concerning movable property. Baba Kamma 4: 4 (p. 337; see also 8: 4, p. 343) takes the case of “the ox of a man of sound senses” that harms an ox belonging to a deaf-mute, imbecile or minor, in which case the first owner is liable; but if the disabled person's ox harms someone else's animal, the disabled person is not culpable (but some supervision is required). Financial liability for wounding extends under five heads; “for injury, for pain, for healing, for loss of time, and for indignity inflicted”. Suffering of indignity extended to “a naked man, or a blind man, or a sleeping man” (Baba Kama 8: 1, p. 342), even though perhaps those listed might be considered almost indifferent to maintaining ‘face’.

A longer passage in Bekhoroth 7: 1-6 (pp. 536-39) lists a wide range of physical blemishes that are unacceptable in an animal presented for sacrifice, and are also deemed to render a member of the priestly clan unfit to serve in the Temple. The blemishes include almost any visible abnormality or asymmetry of head, eyes, ears, nose, lips, torso, legs, arms, hands, feet, skin colour, body dimensions, as well as impairment of sight, hearing or intellect. The entire section “Negaim (‘Leprosy-signs’)” (pp. 676-697) concerns the identification of 'leprosy' (or a contagious skin disease or mould) in humans and their clothes or dwellings. Shabbath 6 states what people may or may not legitimately go out wearing or bearing on the Sabbath. A false tooth was permitted by one teacher, forbidden by another. In 6: 8, “A cripple [footnote: whose leg is cut off] may go out with his wooden stump”, according to one teacher; it was forbidden by another. (Note: For all texts, Danby's translation can usefully be compared with that of Neusner, see next item).

While Danby (see previous item) translated into flowing English, Neusner deliberately adheres to the shape and order of the Hebrew text, pointing out that the form and meaning are intimately bound into the context and horizons of the original authors and their communities. He notes (p. xxxiv) that “the Mishnah is separated from us by the whole of western history, philosophy and science”. (The Talmudic scholar Abrams, see above, says it differently, noting on her p. 152, that the Mishnah is an operational manual even if sometimes for hypothetical situations, giving the example of the Star Fleet Technical Manual designed for the Star Trek television series).


Mourad capably reviews the background, variety and ramifications of Arabic physiognomical writings, the major Greek and Arab sources and the ideas involved (pp. 7-66), then introduces and translates al-Razi’s influential kitab al-firasas (69-128) with notes and commentary (129-144) and bibliography (145-153). The Arabic text follows. [To many modern readers, the physiognomical lore might seem like a farrago of absurdities reinforcing popular prejudices about anyone whose physical appearance deviates from the male norm. However, these texts codify observations and judgements that have been influential throughout human history, and probably have some 'modern'
equivalents.] For example, the person supposedly of a cool, humid temper is expected to be slow-
thinking and stupid, the more so if he has a small head, following Galenic notions (96, 102).

Connections are made with the imagined characteristics of various animals and females, e.g.
someone with a thick, swollen nose has low intelligence by analogy with the bull (p. 120); one
with a small face must, like the monkey, be of mischievous disposition (121); a narrow, weak back
signifies moral weakness, by analogy with women [!] (124). Some positive views also appear, e.g.
one whose appearance is like that of an (idealised) child, with bright, cheerful eyes and face, will
live long (119). See also Seyyid Lokman.


http://edf3.gallaudet.edu/diversity/BGG/ISLAM/Deafan-1.htm

Presents six short accounts, from deaf people who had grown up in Muslim families in Kuwait,
England, USA, Iran, and Somalia, discussing their experience of education and the lack of
instruction in Islam, which apparently they did not receive because of their deafness, and the
mistaken idea that deaf children would not be able to understand religious teaching.

Al-NADIM [Abu al-Faraj Muhammad ibn Ishaq ibn Muhammad ibn Ishaq]. The Fihrist of al-
UP. 2 vols.

Based at Baghdad, Al-Nadim (c. 935 - c. 990 CE) is highly informative across a range of literary,
religious and cultural topics, and biographical detail (indexed separately, pp. 931-1135). People
with a 'disability' name, or impairments in lives and literature, are mentioned or implied on pp. 73,
88, 92, 116, 154, 320, 337, 399, 405, 414-415, 463-464, 519, 522, 621, 673-711 (on physicians
and medicine), 773 and 794 (Mani's deformed foot or feet), 784 (deformity of Cain), 963, 978,
1005, (and probably more).

International.

Under 'Dissolution of Marriage', some notes are given on mental or physical defects of husband
or wife, as understood by the Jurists, and in modern Islamic legal systems (pp. 123-28). Under
'Guardianship' there is a review of 'Legal capacity' and 'Interdiction' (Hajr) of people deemed to
have mental disabilities, in modern systems (189-93). Glossary defines relevant terms, e.g. "dhul
ghafila", "hadina, hadini", "matooh", "majnoon", "safeeh" (263-65).

The NATYA Sastra of Bharatamuni, transl. by a Board of Scholars (1989) 2nd edition revised,
Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications.

Different gaits of sick or disabled persons were played up as a humorous item in classical drama,
perhaps reflecting and reinforcing popular perceptions (pp. 77, 184-88). The supposed emotional
states and visible symptoms of people with 'sluggishness' (Jadata, also used for stupidity), epilepsy
or insanity appear (101, 103-104, 106). (This edition has many typographical errors).

The NATYASASTRA (a Treatise on Ancient Indian Dramaturgy and Histrionics) ascribed to
Granthalaya. pp. 228-31, the different gaits (see previous annotation).


This article explains in outline the Buddhist psychotherapeutic approach given in detail in the item listed above, to which reference is made, based on Dr Nissanka's 45 years of practice.


With apologies for the idiosyncrasies of 'personal voice', the author tells of her personal journey as a spiritual seeker, having been born with spinal muscular atrophy and progressing to associate professor in a medical college department of physical medicine and rehabilitation. From a background in Catholic Christianity, Nosek found her spiritual understanding enlightened by study of the Vedanta, the major Hindu scriptures, particularly as interpreted to Western seekers by Shri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and some 20th century gurus. Nosek laments the complete absence, in the rehabilitation services she encountered over many years, of any address to “the most essential aspect of my being -- my spirituality.” (p.180)


Wide range of sources and readable presentation. Good indexing of impairment / disability. See entries for: achondroplasia, ageing, Bes, club foot, crutch, deafness, deformities, dwarf, ear, elephantiasis, eye, harpist, hump-back, hydrocephalus, industrial, kyphosis, neurological, night, physiotherapists, pituary, poliomyelitis, pseudo-hypertrophic, rickets, trachoma, trauma, trephining, etc.


“Ishaara (A.), 'gesture, sign, indication', has acquired in rhetoric [ ] the technical meaning of 'allusion' but, in its early connotation, a gesture of the hand, a sign of the head, of the elbow, the eyebrows etc., is considered by al-Jahiz (*Bayaan*, i, 80; *Hayawaan*, i, 33), together with speech, writing, *nusba* and computation on the fingers [ ] as one of the five methods by which a man may express his thoughts” ... “In fact the Arabs considered anyone who did not understand the language of gestures and obliged his interlocutor to express his thoughts in words to be a fool”. Nwiya remarks that further research is needed “on the ritual or symbolic gestures, which with the Arabs go back to remote antiquity...”


Detailed description and analysis of incidents of mental illness and abnormal behaviour in the life of a rural Ceylonese woman, and a diagnostic procedure by a Buddhist monk experienced in this field: the patient is put into a hypnotic state in which she answers questions more directly and accurately than she could in normal consciousness. The traditional idiom of demon possession provides a “ready made cognitive structure”, with which the woman can attempt to handle “intolerable psychological conflicts” generated by her familial situation and internalised female roles, while remaining fully situated in the local belief system and therefore availing herself of local acceptance and support.


Two chapters (Rocher; Weiss; see below) discuss material directly linking *karma* and disabilities, from legal and medical directions. Most of the other chapters are also illuminating on this complex and multi-faceted “theory, model, paradigm, metaphor, or metaphysical stance” and its historical development in South Asia and beyond, and the parts it has played in Buddhist, Hindu, Jaina beliefs and philosophy, and in Tamil and Sanskrit literatures.


Dr Ouertani, who lost his sight at the age of six, and left Tunisia for Germany at 17, explores the contrasting situations of native Germans with disabilities, and Muslims with disabilities living in Germany after immigration from North Africa. The disabled German “develops in a socio-political environment in which individualism and independence” are both the expected norm, and are enforced by legal authority (p. 146). Muslim immigrants can see what the expectation is, and how it works; yet it alien to the world in which they have learnt to understand themselves, a world in which the family is paramount, and members of the family expect to sustain one another, with the sanction of their faith: “the Islamic code of social ethics, which is systematically set down in the *Qur’an*. As stipulated by this code, the rights of orphans, the disadvantaged and the disabled are protected. This means that the *Qur’an* is concerned with social groups that require the protection and care of the community. On this basis, the inclusion of the disabled is a necessary and self evident attitude in an Islamic society.” (p. 147). The recent situation in Germany had changed for economic reasons, reducing the opportunities for disabled people to find employment and meet social expectations of independent self-support; yet the modern disabled person “has no communal and familial back-up system to rely on any more.” (p. 151). The merits of the North African system now become rather clearer.

Leviticus Rabba is a detailed commentary on the Jewish book of Leviticus, produced in the 4th or 5th century CE, intended for teaching and spiritual benefit (rather than for expounding the legal details). Ostrer examines how the ancient teachers understood those parts of Leviticus that describe the legal implications of serious, disfiguring, skin diseases (which probably do not correspond with leprosy as caused by *Mycobacterium leprae*; see Hulse, 1975, above, and other pertinent references in Ostrer), and their social outcomes and philosophical interpretation. Anthropological categories of purity, boundaries, and liminality are discussed, in the context of historical interactions between Jewish and Greek medicine and philosophy.

This and further volumes translate surviving theological and legal texts (as known in the 1880s) of Zoroastrianism, presumed to derive from Avestan texts now lost. Translator remarks on many problems and uncertainties of his work. Notes below are very tentative.
_Bundahis (or The Original Creation). _ch. XV: 1-5 (transl. pp. 52-54), creation story, first man and first woman, and a tree “whose fruit was the ten varieties of man” - with note to XV: 31 (pp. 59-60) where footnote 6 discusses ten varieties of 'monsters', recalling legends of strange races in India. Note also racial differentiation in ch. XXIII: 1-2 (p. 87), now grossly offensive. 
_Shayast La-Shayast (or The Proper and Improper). _ch. II: 97, fnt.5 (p. 270), meanings of 'armest'.
including 'lame, crippled, immobility'. V: 1-2 (pp. 290-91) suggests stages of children's responsibility for incorrect chatter during prayer time: up to five years, no blame; from five to seven, may be some blame on father; eight to fifteen, greater level of youth's responsibility. V: 7 (pp. 292-93) excuses deaf and dumb person who cannot make proper response to prayers. VI: 1-2, “The deaf and dumb and helpless’ (armest: footnote 2 gives probable meaning here, “an idiot, or insane person”), though of correct behaviour and disposition, “is incapable of doing good works”. X: 35 (p. 332), a woman is fit for some priestly duties among women; footnote 6 cites Avestan passage in which “any woman who is not feeble-minded” can perform some priestly duties for children.


*Dadistan-i Dinik* (or Religious Opinions of Manuskihar son of Yudan-Yim, Dastur of Pars and Kirman, A.D. 881). ch. LXII: 4, on inheritance, seems to suggest that a son (or his wife) “who is blind in both eyes, or crippled [armest - see previous annotation] in both feet, or maimed in both his hands” receives twice the share of an able-bodied son, a form of positive discrimination presumably on the basis of need.

*Epistles of Manuskihar*. Epistle II, ch. I: 13 (p. 329), ref. to “Zaratust the clubfooted (apafrobd)”. Footnote 2 suggests a recent person named Z., “who had endeavoured to conceal the deformity that disqualified him” from the high priesthood. See also Introduction (p. xxvi).

**Appendix.** III, on the meaning of Khveto-Das, 'next-of-kin marriage'. p. 407 discussing risks of divorce, mentions “vice and fraud and the misery of deformity” as faults which may secretly be attributed to a man.


*Dina-i Mainog-i Khirad* (or Opinions of the Spirit of Wisdom). Ch. XV: 1-6 and footnote 2 (p. 42), refers to “the poorest and most secluded (armestum) person” (see earlier annotation on 'armest') who maintains honesty in thought, word and deed, will have good works imputed to him even though incapable of actually performing such works. Ch. XXVI: 4-6, (p. 56), the blind person who has achieved learning and understanding “is to be considered as sound-eyed”. XXXVII: 36 (p. 75), blessedness of one “who provides lodging accommodation for the sick and secluded ['armest'] and traders”.

*Sikand-Gumanik Vigar* (or the Doubt-Dispelling Explanation). V: 63-64 (p. 144), if an eye, ear, nose, limb etc is disabled, one of the other organ is no substitute. X: 64 (p. 170), mention of “manual gestures” among ways in which Zoroaster preached and convinced King Gustasp. XII: 64-70 (p. 207), blindness figures with darkness, ignorance etc in a list of “demonical peculiarities”.

*Sad Dar of The Hundred Subjects*. Ch. LXIV: 2-5 (pp. 326-27), penalties for theft include amputation of ear and (at third offence) of right hand, as well as a fine and prison sentence.


*Contents of the Nasks as stated in the Eight and Ninth Books of the Dinkard*. Ch.s XVII & XVIII (pp. 39-43), the 'assault code' and 'wound code' detail various injuries and impaired abilities. XX: 111 (p. 68), and XXI: 1-6) (pp. 74-75), punishments on the limbs of sinners. XXII: 2 (p. 77), on children's education and their moral responsibility.


The Preface (p. vii) states that the work here translated was composed by Mar Palladius [365-425],
Bishop of Helenopolis, in Bythinia. Several of the monks whose lives are recounted had disabilities, e.g. Didymus the Blind (pp. 136-138); Paul the Simple (183-189); James the Lame (265-273, though nothing is said about his lameness); the sage who allowed other monks to think he was mad, while in fact he was taking care to remove evil from his mind (388-390).

The author, a French lawyer and “Lauréat de l'Ecole de droit d'Alger”, noted that Algerians continued to live under Islamic personal law after the French captured Algiers in 1830; but some inconveniences arose in relations between the indigenous population and the colonialists who acted under French law. His thesis examines in detail the legal capacities and disabilities of various groups, such as minors, married women, people with mental disabilities (e.g. those considered 'mad', and the 'prodigals' who did not know how to manage their property), and those deemed to be responsible for others (e.g. as fathers, husbands or appointed guardians) under the Muslim legal traditions, compared with those of France, which in many ways differed from them significantly.

Dating back to the 16th century, the tomb of Mira Datar, near Ahmedabad, specialises in mental health problems. Case reports make clear that some mentally retarded people were and are also received, though “More precisely [the shrine] has a reputation for healing those stricken by a bhut” [spirit, ghost] (p. 218).

Much detail on disabilities, e.g. pp. 206-209 & 230-39 (deformities, malformations), 270-80 (eye problems), 289-93 (ear problems), 299-321 (neurological & mental disorders), 402-407 (peri- & post-natal activities), from Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek texts over some two millennia.

In his remarkable Chronographia, Psellus (1018-1096) included a detailed and sensitive account of the Byzantine Emperor Michael IV (regn. 1033-1041) who suffered from epilepsy. This had been known earlier, when Michael was engaged in an affair with Zoe, wife of the previous Emperor, Romanus III. Michael experienced increasingly severe fits during his reign, though courtiers and attendants took care to minimise the public exposure of their ruler's condition. He persevered diligently with his duties even as his health worsened (pp. 78-79; 96-99). See also Aubineau (1975) Zoticos, p.85, recording Michael's personal care of people with leprosy, as an example of his Christian piety.

Hagiographic life of Fr Jackson (1889-1931), blind missionary to Burma [now Myanmar], told by his sister, with Introduction (pp. 7-11) by Bishop R.S. Fyffe. Jackson keenly adopted Burmese language and culture, vigorously promoted the education of blind Burmese children, and was a powerful role model.

Based on MA thesis concerned with domestic relations, legal capacity, disability and insanity in
Islamic law.


See disability references under “[The QUR'AN.] Sacred Writings”, below.

Examples of metaphorical uses of disability reference: Sura 6 (Al An'am), v.39 “Those who reject our Signs / Are deaf and dumb -- / In the midst of darkness / Profound: whom Allah willeth, / He leaveth to wander; / Whom He willeth, he placeth / On the Way that is Straight.” Sura 17 (Al Isra', or Bani Isra'il), v.97: “It is he whom Allah guideth, / That is on true guidance; / But he whom He leaves / Astray - for such wilt thou / Find no protector besides Him. / On the Day of Judgement / We shall gather them together, / Prone on their faces, / Blind, dumb, and deaf: / Their abode will be Hell: / ...” (p. 701).


Translated by a non-Muslim Orientalist, but one having a profound respect and appreciation of the Islamic text. Arberry also had modern English as his mother tongue, as compared with Abdullah Yusuf Ali, and Ahmed Ali, the Muslim translators (in the previous and next items). See disability references in notes under the latter.


Parallel English & Arabic text. Most references to disabilities seem to be metaphorical (see concordances by Kassis; Kherie). Some Suras where the disability reference is probably non-metaphorical: 2. Al-Baqarah, 282 (mentally weak borrower); 3. Al-'Imran 49, & 5. Al-Ma'idah, 110 (Prophet Isa healing blind, lepers etc); 4. An-Nisa, 5-6 (wardship of property of mentally weak person); 16. An-Nahl, 76 (dumb and useless servant); 24. An-Nur, 61 (disabled or sick people may eat in your house); 48. Al-Fath, 17 (disabled or sick people exempt from call to arms); 80. 'Abasa, 1-16 (rebuke for discourtesy to blind man). See also: 5. Al-Ma'idah, 33, 38, 71; 9. At-Taubah, 91; 11. Hud, 24; 12. Yusuf, 84, 96; 17. Bani Isra'il, 72, 97; 20. Ta Ha, 27-28; 30. Ar-Rum, 52-53; 35. Al-Fatir 19-22; 36. Ya Sin, 65-67; 41. Ha Mim As-Sajdah, 5, 17; 43. Az-Zukhruf, 36, 40. Many Qur'anic exhortations to behave with kindness and practical help towards the poor and needy have readily been applied to people with disabilities in Islamic countries from the earliest times. See also the previous two items, The Koran Interpreted; and The Holy Qur'an.


Racy introduces his sources and the geographical, historical, religious and cultural parameters of the Arab world, together with remarks on child rearing and personality (pp. 9-33); then describes psychiatric institutions, practice, teaching and research, and contributions from folklore, magical and religious therapies (35-79). There follows an extensive and critically annotated bibliography (81-171), including notes on Arabic items and “a large number of references in obscure journals, reports of limited circulation, and even some in manuscript” (p. 83), mostly from the 1920 to mid-1960s. Conscious of the very early tradition of “amazingly humane and enlightened treatment of the mentally ill” in the Arab world, Racy considered that the indigenous practitioners in the 20th century continued often to provide good advice for everyday problems of a psychological nature, though approaches to serious mental illness were variable. Of a Sufi shrine near Khartoum, with mosque, Qur'anic school and “facility for the treatment of the insane”, he noted that “neurotics are provided a congenial setting for spontaneous recovery, but that psychotics tend to suffer” (pp. 65-66).


Brief report from a senior Indian psychiatrist and colleagues, recognising that traditional resources for managing mental illness, such as those associated with Hindu temples, are all that is available to most people needing help, and there may be some measurable and beneficial outcome from what takes place in those environments and activities. Psychiatric symptoms were assessed on a standard instrument at the start and end of a three month period of residence at a particular temple, for 31 Hindu subjects with significant psychotic illnesses, and not receiving psychopharmalogical or other somatic interventions. Subjects “attended simple morning prayers (puja) at the shrine for about 15 minutes, and they spent the rest of the day in light maintenance routines of the temple.” Symptoms were significantly reduced in the second assessment. [The British Medical Journal published, on its open website, a number of responses to this article, some of them strongly critical of temple healing practices, others supportive of the effort by Raguram et al to study such resources with an open mind, a standard instrument, and cautious discussion.]


Gives the substance of a lecture series at the University of Calcutta in 1907, by a senior judge. Conditions of the mind or intellect affecting legal capacity (e.g. to act as a witness, or enter a contract), such as idiocy, lunacy, childishness, decrepitude etc, have (mostly very brief) comments on pp. 10, 172-73, 178-79, 189-94, 200-203, 253, 296, 298, 306, 313, 319, 322. Duty to maintain disabled or infirm relatives, pp. 270-271. Blindness, pp. 296, 304.


To worshippers in the Bakhti movement, disability might assist devotion: “Cripple me, father, that I may not go here and there. / Blind me, father, that I may not look at this and that. / Deafen me, father, that I may not hear anything else.” (p. 70) Thus immobile, blind and deaf, the desired inertia is attainable. Thus crippled, the poet could say “The crookedness of the serpent / is straight enough for the snake-hole. / The crookedness of the river / is straight enough for the sea. / And the crookedness of our Lord's men / is straight enough for our Lord!” (77).


Translates the 'original' Sanskrit stories of Rama (of which several versions exist, perhaps from the 4th century BC). The main disabled character, the hunchback maid Manthara, appears strikingly in the Ayodhya section of this modern translation (pp. 94-102 and end-notes), sowing mistrust in Queen Kaikeyi and plotting the exile of Rama. Persuaded by Manthara, Kaikeyi praises her (Sarga 9, 28-39) suggesting that “this huge hump of yours, wide as the hub of a chariot wheel - your clever ideas must be stored in it” (101), and promising to have the hump anointed with liquid gold and to give Manthara her own hunchback maidservants. Later (Sarga 78), while enjoying the reward for her guile, Manthara is badly mauled by Prince Shatrughna, Rama's young brother.

Abbreviates and retells Kambar's Tamil version of the Ramayana. Includes Rama's sober reflection that the hunchback Kooni [Manthara] took revenge because he had mocked her in his youth (pp. 115-16). (See WL Smith below).


This famous 16th century Hindi celebration of Rama's earthly life diverges from Valmiki's Ramayana by addition and omission. No longer merely the epic tale of a great hero and king, it becomes an immense hymn of praise to the divine Rama, incarnation of Vishnu. Rama's infancy ('the infinity of god, cradled in a mother's arms') and childhood (pp. 121-224) depict the childish charm of the toddler and the active young child's pranks (e.g. 126-29, and reprise 675-79). In the later betrayal by Manthara (234-36) Tulsi Das gives no 'revenge' motive; “remembering that the one-eyed, the lame and the hump-backed are ever crooked and vile, more especially if they be women to boot, and slaves” (235; Doha 14), hunchback Manthara is simply wicked (also led astray by an emissary of the lesser gods). The Sequel (625-719) depicts the earthly reign of the divine Rama, in a realm of love and contentment, free of pain, suffering or impairment: “no sickness even, but everyone was comely and sound of body. No one was in poverty, in sorrow or distress;” (642). Its merits were contrasted with an age of woe, where men “were everywhere subject to women and danced to their tune like an acrobat’s monkey” (689) and similar dreadful customs [!] “Teachers and pupils were of no more account than the deaf and blind; the one would not listen, the other had never read.” (690)


The study travels extensively through Indian religious and philosophical texts, some concepts of the human being in historical and modern Hindu thought and belief, the sociology of disability and of devalued identities, and the achievement of salvation as perceived in Hinduism, with a glance at the other religions of India. Attention is then given to modern Indian Christian theologies and their practical outworking in social uplift of oppressed classes, with some critical review of Hindu and Christian soteriologies in the light of India's vast social problems. The author's working life in disability services, and between Indian and European cultures, has provided an unusual breadth of experience in these fields. This publication was Anand Rao's doctoral dissertation at Johann Wolfgang Goethe University, Frankfurt a.M. While mainly in English, Dr Rao's Introduction (pp. 13-20) appears in German, as do some extended quotations from German literature.


Recognising that several millennia of Indian thoughts on life meanings cannot be condensed to a short paper, and making no claim to have reached 'enlightenment', Dr Ram-Prasad still finds he can differentiate some basic positions within Hindu, Buddhist and Jaina schools of thought, e.g. between a 'world-oriented' engagement in life and a 'world-transcending' renunciation and contemplation; and between 'age-neutral' and 'age-specific' ways of relating life stages and the goals of life. He notes some paradoxes arising in various positions. [Some association of ageing with physical and mental impairments may be universal; but views about elderly people's participation in or disengagement from everyday family and social life show radical variation across the world.]


Concerns pillaiyal, “Tamil devotional poetry to an extraordinary deity or person, addressed in the form of a child” (p. ix). One is addressed to the goddess Minatci as a girl washing up the
Crockery and pots (which consist of all the worlds). The task needs daily repetition because her husband Shiva repeatedly messes up the universe, which Minatci must then sort out and clean again. Shiva "wanders through the courtyard of space / destroying your work again and again, / and then comes before you / dancing. // You never get angry. / Every day, / you just pick up the vessels. // Tender young girl / who plays house with the ancient universe, / sway to and fro." (p. 9)

In a few words, Minatci becomes an icon for all who bring up and teach children with challenging behaviour. Themes and activities of early childhood run through the poems. God in the little child is worshipped and protected amidst the toys in the kitchen and back yard (11-14).


Dating from c. 1500 BC, or perhaps some centuries earlier, the major source of classical Indian religion, the Rig Veda mentions people with physical and sensory impairments, and possible leprosy, in the context of healing by the Asvins, semi-divine medical twins, see pp. 72, 78, 79, 79-80, 559 (Bk 1, Hymn 112, 8; Bk 1, H.116, 15 {Vispala and the supposed 'iron leg'}; Bk 1, H.117, 7, 17-19; Bk 1, H.118, 7-8; Bk 10, H.39, 3 {"healers of the blind, the thin and feeble, and the man with broken bones"}); or pp. 450, 528, 547, healing by Soma, the magic potion: "the blind man sees, the cripple walks, (Bk 8, H.68, 2; and Bk 9, H.112, 1; Bk 10, H.25, 11). The implication is that blindness and lameness were familiar misfortunes, not identical with illness, requiring supernatural intervention for any cure. However, some disabled people were highly respected: the blind sage Dirghatamas was credited with composing 25 Vedic hymns, Bk 1, H.140 to H.164 (see note, p. 96). Old age infirmities also appear, pp. 47, 77 (Bk 1 H.71, 10; Bk 1 H.116, 10; Bk 10, H.39, 3-4 & 8), and could have implications for sexual congress (Bk 1, H.179, 1) [Griffith discreetly translates to Latin in an appendix, p. 652]. See further mention of disability, pp. 100, 101, 548 (Bk 1, H.147, 3; Bk 1, H.148, 5; Bk 10, H.27, 5 {"even the deaf will tremble" when Indra roars} and 11 {blind daughter}). Intellectual abilities are compared, with some people having greater learning speed and greater capacity than others, p. 585 (Bk 10. H.71, 7-8). The well-to-do are exhorted to liberal giving, when the needy come begging (p. 626, Bk 10, H.117). See also The Rig Veda (next item); Atharva Veda; and Zysk.

The Rig Veda. An anthology, transl. Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty (1981) London: Penguin. See references under Hymns of the Rigveda. [Note: 8.68.2 in the latter is 8.79.2 (p. 121) in this translation.] The anthology index gives references for blindness and eye, dismemberment, fool, injury, lameness (foot, leg), old age, etc. Translation is more direct and explicit than that of Griffith, with a modern awareness of the ambiguities of 'difference' and the social reactions evoked by it; also more extensive notes. The anthology translates some 10% of the Rig Veda. Once again, Doniger O'Flaherty's introduction (pp. 11-21), and running commentaries to most of the hymns, are unusually readable and also give some sense of both the possible commonalities without which modern westerners could learn nothing about the ancient world, and the undoubtedly vast gulf of concepts and meanings across which the translator projects a tentative, trembling bridge.


Describes arguments for and against the citing of epilepsy, or other disabilities, as grounds for divorce petitions, from the early legal schools through to recent cases. Extensively referenced.

RISPLER-CHAIM V (1999) The right not to be born: abortion of the disadvantaged fetus in contemporary fatwas. The Muslim World 89 (2) 130-143.
Discovery of reliable means to identify genetic or developmental disorders in the fetus at various
stages of pregnancy has raised issues around the possibly conflicting rights of the fetus, the mother, other close relatives, and the wider community. The default position in Islam is that abortion is not permitted without strong reason. Rispler-Chaim presents a variety of legal opinions from Islamic scholars (c. 1980-1999), about the permissibility of aborting a 'deformed' fetus during the first 40, 90 or 120 days of pregnancy (or perhaps even later). Uncertainties arise in estimating the severity of handicap predicted from the anticipated deformity, and in opinions about the ensuing 'quality of life' and problems of child-rearing. Some comparison is made with the disadvantaged fetus in a pregnancy after rape.

RISPLER-CHAIM V (2007) Disability in Islamic Law. Dordrecht: Springer. 184 pp. Extensive and detailed review, based on the works of Muslim Jurists from medieval times to the present, and many years of experience in the modern Middle East. Different perspectives and terminologies of law, religion and medicine are used to describe legal and social responses to disability and people with disability, in a variety of situations that arise in everyday life and the practice of Islam. Chapters are headed (1). People with disabilities and the performance of religious duties; (2). People with disabilities and jihad; (3). People with disabilities and marriage; (4). The Khuntha [hermaphrodite]; (5). Disabilities caused by humans: intentional and unintentional injuries. A useful Appendix (pp. 97-134, plus notes and references pp. 150-153) gives English translation of “Contemporary fatwas on people with disabilities”, by Islamic scholars mostly in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, and a few on the web. The Appendix ends with an excerpt from a book by Dr Musa al-Basit (listed separately above) which considers the rights of disabled people in a broader way than the specific fatwas.

RITTER, Hellmut (1952) Muslim mystics strife with God. Orients 5: 1-15. After discussing schools of Islamic thought on the 'problem of evil' in the realm of an omnipotent deity, the paper considers various tales in which anger is expressed to God by some Muslim 'wise fools', whose sense of intimate relationship put them in a good position to inform God of their complaint (though this was far from the orthodox position of submission to the Will of Allah; and also from the sufi teaching of delight in divine providence). See next item.

RITTER H (1955) Das Meer der Seele. Mensch, Welt und Gott in den geschichten des Fariduddin ′Attar. Leiden: Brill. ix + 781 pp. In this wide-ranging book on the writings of the 13th century Persian poet and mystic Fariduddin Muhammad ′Attar, chapter 10 “Das Hadern Mit Gott - Der Narr” (pp. 159-180) discusses in greater detail the quarrels that some 'wise fools' had with Allah, in the context of Sufi teaching (see previous item). In the analytical index, “narr” has a full page (pp. 742-743) listing many entries apart from that chapter. See also, e.g. Bahlul, blind(er), lahm(er), stummheit, taubheit, and similar older terms in index. [An English translation of Ritter's work has also been published by Brill, Leiden.]


birth. Some have an evident logical link, e.g. a “thief of the word (Veda)” is reborn as a dumb person; one who steals a lamp (which enabled people to see) is himself reborn blind, but one who extinguishes a lamp is reborn one-eyed; one who steals a horse (the means of going faster) is reborn lame; a calumniator is reborn with foul-smelling breath. Rocher discusses some of the difficulties in translation and interpretation.


Blind Indian researcher reviews situation of blind people in India back to about 1500 BC. Suggests that the practical social concern for disabled people in Vedic times was reduced as a result of Upanishadic philosophy that emphasized transcendental values and diminished the importance of the present bodily life.


Discusses women and disability mostly in Morocco. Not very much direct reference to Islam, apart from attribution of disability to fate or Allah.


Suggests some of the diversity of solutions reached by Muslims on questions of health, suffering and divine purpose, with reference to the Qur'an, hadiths, and development of theodicies. (The title word 'unrequited' may be inappropriate. The text suggests that a sense such as ‘purposeless’, ‘unrelieved’, or ‘uncompensated’ is intended).


These collections of legal aphorisms may date from the 5th century BC, and present a common core of legal teaching, with some regional variations and mutual disagreements. (See Olivelle's translation, above, under Dharmasutras; also Manu, and Institutes of Vishnu).

Apostamba: I.1.1 to I.4.14 (pp. 1-51) concern the student's initiation in childhood or youth, engagement in studentship, rules for conduct while studying the Veda, through to graduation. There is even provision, perhaps with some editorial assistance, that “If by chance (through the pupil's stupidity the teaching) is not completed, obedience towards the (teacher is the pupil's only refuge).” (I.4.14.5, p. 51).

Gautama: XXVIII: 43-44 (p. 309), support of the person with mental retardation, and the inheritance rights of that person's son.


Vasishtha: Children as disposable goods. “Man formed of uterine blood and virile seed proceeds from his mother and his father (as an effect) from its cause. (Therefore) the father and the mother have power to give, to sell, and to abandon their (son).” (XV: 1-2, p. 75)

Baudhayana: Studentship (I.2.3 and I.2.4, pp. 149-58). Guardianship of minors' or disabled people's property: “Let them carefully protect the shares of those who are minors, as well as the increments (thereon). Granting food, clothes, (and shelter), they shall support those who are incapable of transacting legal business, (Viz.) the blind, idiots, those immersed in vice, the incurably diseased, and so forth.” (II, 2, 3, 36-38; pp. 230-31).


Faith healers are acknowledged to be a major source of care for people having mental disorders in rural Pakistan, working in the local cultures of belief and social response, within a context of Islam. A majority of the faith healers’ diagnoses, with 139 people having some apparent mental disorder, involved spiritual forces, as against the 'modern, medical' diagnoses that the psychiatric researchers would have given.


Biographies of 313 distinguished blind Arabs of medieval times. (Many of these actually lost their sight late in life).


Doctoral thesis of Université de Paris, 1965. Includes detailed consideration of meanings of “Safih” (prodigal or weak-minded) in classical and modern legal terminology, and similarly “Madjnoun”, “Ma'touh” and “Moghaflal” (mad, mentally disabled), the legal incapacities of people so classified, and provisions for guardianship, in earlier times and in specific modern Middle Eastern countries.


Some of the 'holy fools' described by Safi d-Din in 13th century Egypt and elsewhere were more holy than foolish; others perhaps the reverse.


Briefly reviews ways in which religious phenomena may be associated with mental illness in popular belief, and various 'spiritual healing' activities, locations and procedures. Twenty elderly Egyptian patients known to have had some kind of spiritual healing, and who had had schizophrenic relapses, were compared with 20 who had not relapsed but were not known to have had spiritual healing. Patients were male and female, aged between 60 and 72, Muslim and Christian. (Attempted healings took place at Mosque or Church. Therapy was sometimes by extended reading of Qur'an or Bible). The authors did not differentiate by religion, but noted that four (10%) reported having no religious beliefs, 73% reported 'moderate' and 23% 'deep' beliefs. Results suggested that a positive association might exist between receiving “some form of spiritual healing and the risk of developing an acute relapse” in these patients; yet the authors are cautious when discussing this result, based on a small sample and with some confusing factors. Simply holding religious beliefs, without spiritual healing, did not seem to raise the risk of relapse.


Discusses many defects or obstacles of the intellect, Ch. 46-51 (pp. 146-59), from ignorance, doubt, imperfect senses, illusion, emotion, indifference, etc. Categories multiply rapidly; most of humankind is clearly suffering from substantial intellectual disability.

Press.
This pilot study usefully explores the complex mixture of medical and religious factors, within both traditional and modern belief systems held by parents and professionals involved with disabled children, varying irregularly along a spectrum from rural to urban Nepal.

Reviews Arabic terminology of deafness, medical perceptions and treatment, the legal and religious implications (“Does God hear silent prayers? The mute and religious practice”), and notes some deaf people in the stated place and period.

This sketch was one of the earlier efforts by European scholars to recognise the social responses of Islam toward fools and folly. Dols (*Majnun*, 1992, p. 6) noted that “Schipperges has emphasized the dignity of the insane that was based primarily on a religious interpretation of the irrational. And the notion of unreason, as in the law, is basically neutral; mental incapacity has no moral meaning but entails serious social consequences.”

The so-called “Apostolic Canons” had a somewhat chequered career, being first formulated perhaps in the 2nd century, and varying in number in different regions of the Church. The Ethiopian version has 57 canons, and “like nearly all the Church literature of the Abyssinian Church, is a translation, and in this case from the Coptic.” (The Coptic version may have been translated from the Latin in the 5th or 6th century). Schodde remarks of these Canons that “In the Church of Ethiopia they have had, and theoretically still have, canonical authority.” Canon 37, after prohibiting junior clergy from reviling their seniors, adds that “if one of the priests ridicules a person that is deaf or lame or blind or deformed at his feet, let him be expelled; and thus also in the case of a layman, if he does this.” In Canon 46, a layman who forces a virgin and has cohabited with her, is expelled; “And he shall not marry another, but he shall abide with her whom he has forced, even if she is poor and deformed.” In Canon 52, after various rules for bishops, “He who is one-eyed or lame in his foot and is worthy of episcopal honour, shall be ordained. For a defect of the body does not corrupt him, but a defect of the soul [does]. A deaf and a blind man, however, shall not be ordained as a bishop, not as being unclean, but less [lest?] the property of the church be scattered. He who is possessed of a devil shall not be ordained, and he shall not pray with the believers. And if he is purified, they shall admit him; and if he be worthy, he may be ordained as one of the clergy.”
Impairment and disability are a small, incidental part; yet the principle that an impairment of body did not represent a defect of soul, nor rendered one unfit for ordination, was thus enshrined in Ethiopian church law; while even one who was 'possessed' (perhaps suffering a serious mental illness) could recover and might become an ordinand. Even while excluding the deaf or blind man from the possibility of becoming a bishop, the rules give pragmatism as a reason rather than attributing unworthiness.

SCHRAGE, Wolfgang (1972) [*Greek*] tuphlos. In: G Friedrich (ed) *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, VIII: 270-294, transl. GW Bromiley, Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans. This 'dictionary entry' is a substantial and highly detailed essay on blindness in various senses, as used through many centuries in the Middle East and Mediterranean.

Text and transl. of a 16th century Turkish treatise on physiognomy, following a 700-year Islamic tradition; with detailed lists (pp. 15-20, 32-45) of deviations from 'normal' appearance, linked with character defects. Reinforcement of prejudice about people with impaired or abnormal appearance is implied e.g “Small eyes denote stupidity”; “A long drawn-out head signifies disability and lack of intelligence”; “One whose lips protrude like that of a negro is wicked and stupid”; “Very tall persons are rarely intelligent. Scholars say, 'Short people are very clever, but those of them who are tactless are simpletons. However, though of rare occurrence, there are some among the tall and the short who are intelligent, irrespective of their height.”” (15-20) See Mourad (above).


Autism amidst an ultra-orthodox Jewish community is presented as a kind of ultimate disorder contending with a rigidly pursued orderliness. The author (a secular Israeli psychologist) conducted detailed open-ended interviews with members (almost all being mothers) of 30 families with an autistic child, tracing in particular the mothers' efforts to negotiate their autistic child's life and status so as to enhance inclusion and minimise rejection. The children are exempted from religious law, but their disordered behaviour at home constantly interferes with other family members' efforts to conform to the strict Jewish requirements in everyday life. With stimulus derived from the imported technique known as “Facilitated Communication”, some mothers constructed a view of their child as having an advanced form of spiritual life, “sublime souls with direct access to the otherworldly”, and as reincarnations of righteous people. That view found support from some unorthodox legends and variant traditions in Judaism, and might capture some respect for the child. [Notions of transmigration of souls (gilgul neshamot), and the ibbur as a righteous soul transmigrating, do appear in some kabbalistic texts, in the past millennium. See also Ibn Khaldun, above, second annotation, for an Islamic statement of the advanced spiritual potential of people with severe intellectual impairment.]


Sharma reported a study of the expressed beliefs of North Indian Hindu villagers on the origins and causes of suffering and misfortune in their lives. Ancient texts of Hinduism teach about karma, and it is widely believed to be a central doctrine among the variety of Hindu beliefs. Karma did figure in the villagers' beliefs, and was mentioned in some cases of disability. With a youth having a leg deformity, who had problems finding a bride, “his father said that this trouble must have been due to bad karma of both father and son in past lives.” An elderly Brahmin, living with a low caste widow, was disowned by fellow Brahmmins for this misconduct. When he became blind later in life, other Brahmmins explained the affliction as “a punishment for his breach of caste rules”. Sharma compared this with the “widespread belief that lameness may be the result of having kicked either a cow or a Brahmin in some past life.” Another villager was seriously disabled by rheumatism, attributed by neighbours to his having felled a sacred tree on his land. However, the villagers held a repertoire of explanatory models, among which karma was not the most prominent. Their karma concept had reached them as part of “a living folk tradition”, rather than from textual authority. Nor did the repertoire constitute “a tidy and logically coherent system of metaphysics”. Sharma gave a fluent account of karmic doctrine, among the theodosies offered by major religions. She noted possible tensions in applying this to everyday life, while being cautious about imposing any such structure on the villagers' thoughts, or imagining that there is a known 'orthodoxy' from which the rural folk might have 'deviated'.


Describes healing shrines such as the Ziarat at Mazar-i-Sharif, “famous for its power to cure blind and crippled people” (p. 288).

While explaining the origins and development of ideas about suffering in the Adi Granth and teachings of the Gurus, the author uses a European framework for providing a ‘theodical solution’. Disability figures briefly (p. 121): “Although the existence of physical deformity and ugliness in the world is sometimes explained as the result of previous karam, it is intended for a higher divine purpose which is beyond human comprehension.” (By the working of divine grace, it appears that people can overcome the disability). Includes a glossary of Sikh terms.


Fieldwork report from 1984-85 on a temple of the heterodox Hindu Mahanubhav sect, a group which caters for “spiritual afflictions, in particular, those which give rise to mental illness. This particular temple was “renowned for its trance inducing properties and its therapeutic powers.” Lengthy interviews were conducted with 41 families seeking some “spiritual resolution or cure”. Notably, it was the care-giving female relatives who threw themselves into vigorous ritual activities, while the mentally ill patients, who had been brought because of their bizarre behaviour, remained rather detached. Various conflictual explanations were given, for the transactions taking place.


The Pati-Ninda occur in various sorts of Bengali mangal poetry, often during descriptions of weddings. They consist of verbal abuse by married women, targeting visible physical defects in their husbands, e.g. elephantiasis, blindness, scoliosis, lameness, sexual incapacity, ugliness, lack of teeth, and bewailing their misfortune in having to put up with such repulsive men. The public recitation of pati-ninda ran counter to the official Hindu tradition of exhorting wives to treat their husbands as gods. Translations are given of various examples.


“Apologetic Techniques” (pp. 84-91). Discusses traditional creative efforts to fill perceived gaps in the karmic logic of Ramayana versions, or to provide justifications for characters’ moral lapses. Several of these involve disabilities, e.g. Manthara's hump and her reasons for taking revenge on Rama; Dasaratha's accidental killing of a boy who supported aged, blind parents; the blindness of that boy's father had arisen from his revulsion when washing the legs of a sage with elephantiasis; Kaikeyi was cursed for mocking an aged, infirm, hearing-impaired Brahmin. The nuances of various traditions suggest an ongoing editorial awareness of the depressed position of disabled people as a result of their rejection by society.


Sketches some aspects of Hindu religious belief and practice, and several temples and shrines in Tamil Nadu that are well known for cure of sick people, especially those with mental illness. The curative regime entails a full program of activities, hydrotherapy, physical exercise and restricted diet, having beneficial physiological effects and engaging the patients' attention and efforts. The author suggests that faith in the efficacy of the shrine is a powerful factor in helping people rebalance their lives, together with their family members (who also attend the religious place).

Recognises that although Muslims historically have taken seriously their duty to the poor and needy, studies on this topic have been few - charity has been largely an unrecorded, individual exercise rather than an official matter.


Revisiting the topic 25 years after his first paper on it, Stillman used a more sceptical gaze, following the trend for historians to question who actually benefitted from charitable activities. (No specific mention of disabled people, who were subsumed among 'the poor and needy').


Catholicism across the sub-Continent often found a more relaxed interface than Protestantism when it came to ritual and healing practices that were partly associated with Buddhism and Hinduism. This is the only chapter directly concerned with healing in South Asia, but other chapters describe historical situations in Eastern and Western Christendom that resonate with Asian and Middle Eastern practices from other religions.


Scholarly account, based on cuneiform script on clay tablets, of how Babylonians viewed epilepsy: their beliefs, attitudes, diagnostic texts, magical rites, therapeutic efforts, and legal sanctions. Notes beliefs and attitudes towards some other disabilities of a 'sacred' nature, and reviews literature in neighbouring regions through many centuries. A detailed exposition is given of the available and epilepsy-relevant parts of five tablets (XXVI to XXX) of the major Akkadian text known as the 'Diagnostic Handbook' (pp. 55-90), dated to the 11th century BC, with transliteration, literal translation, conjecture of missing or damaged parts, and some discussion. A further, possibly older, fragmentary handbook is similarly presented (pp. 91-98). Stol notes the provisional nature of the translation, and the modest progress that has been made in determining precise meanings of Akkadian medical terminology. Interpretation of the magical-medical-religious treatment or therapy also presents difficulties, some of which are elucidated by comparing treatments prescribed for other diseases and conditions at various periods in the region. The prevailing perceptions and responses of the Babylonians toward people with epilepsy are also unclear, but it was often paired with 'leprosy', and Stol suggests that “Both illnesses evoked uncanny feelings of disgust, a disgust mixed with awe”, and this congruent with the perception of a supernatural origin of these diseases or conditions (p. 146).


15th century compilation of Tibb an-Nabbi. Includes advice for prevention or treatment of disabilities, e.g. pp. 10, 17, 18, 35, 57-59, 70, 91, 101, 106, 109, 140-41. Mentions hidden blind brother of Ayesha (35), & epileptic fit of Umar (162); but see note under Elgood (1962) above.


“Our services for the Deaf are chiefly in the sign language, in which all can join alike, whether learning Tamil, as those do who belong to the Madras Presidency, or English, which is taught to those coming from other parts.” (p. 9) Oralism was strong in all the other existing deaf schools and their staff discouraged signing among the students; so these church worship services for the Deaf at Palamcottah may well have been the first public or semi-public occasions in modern India,
where Sign was the recognised, 'official' medium of communication.


On pp. 216-42 (romanised text and English transl. of Vendidad II.20-43), the exclusion of people with deformities is shown, with alternative transl. in the sense of moral, rather than physical, depravity (223, 237-238). The 'eugenic' lesson is noted by Taraporewala (229). See Zend-Avesta (below).


Detailed, open-minded paper on Islam and mental handicap. Quotes from the Qur'an and hadiths of the prophet Muhammad, suggesting that Islam approves the integration of mentally retarded people in education, and gives them the right to an appropriate level of support in conducting their lives and managing their own affairs.


In this central summary of Jaina doctrines, disability is attributed to “inauspicious body-making karma”. Thus, “Normal physical and mental health are signs of straightforward and harmonious behaviour in past lives. Physical deficiency and mental disability indicate crookedness of thought, word and deed.” [6.21-22 / 22-23] (pp. 160-61). The hunch-back, dwarfish or asymmetrical body is linked with ill deeds (99, 102, 197, 215).


“Prior to 1885, when Burma was a kingdom, the welfare of handicapped people was a part of the monastic system of education. Buddhist monks looked after the handicapped children by providing food, and professional and vocational education (handicraft work, carpentry and clay work). The public contributed money, clothing, etc. for the needs of the monasteries.” (p.109)


Seventeen chapters by Indian and Western authors, covering many aspects of suffering in various Hindu, Jain and Buddhist belief systems in different centuries. Disability appears briefly.


Discusses the idea, expressed in the essay “Kitab al-Bursan etc” by Jahiz (see above) that physical impairment may be a sign of divine favour, or an opportunity for spiritual strengthening, rather than a social stigma. Trembovler finds this unusual in medieval Islamic tradition, and discusses how it would have been accommodated among Muslims, with some parallels or contrasts in Eastern Christianity and Jewish traditions.


In laconic style, Tritton gave referenced notes on the start, practice and administrative problems of registration and pensions in the early centuries of the Muslim world. Disabled recipients are listed under the authority of Mansur (“unmarried women, orphans, and the blind”); Mahdi (“prisoners and lepers”); and Umar II (“the poor ... and the cripples”).

Rather unflattering portrayal of the lives of disabled women in Middle Eastern countries, apparently as measured by West European feminist standards of the 1990s. It is linked with a few texts from the Qur’an and hadiths of the prophet Muhammad, which may have been interpreted as supporting the oppressive treatment of women and disabled people. [This is more of a campaigning article on social issues than a balanced account of disabled women as represented in Islam. However, the author perceives opportunities for substantial positive change through political lobbying by existing pressure groups in the region.]


The remarkable profusion of defect- or disability-related words across the vast region of the Indo-Aryan languages is commented on in Turner's Introduction. Words appear in roman transliteration in the dictionary. Head-words marked with * are constructions by Turner, of possible originals underlying the variants and developments in the actual languages). The descriptive or insulting terms and their elaborations following the head-words listed below, indicate some of the range of disability meanings and associations in several hundred languages:


The Upanishads contain more advanced or esoteric religious teaching of India, dating from between 600 and 300 BC. They abound in philosophical speculations on the nature and essence of being and knowledge. In the 'Contest of the Senses', of which several versions and echoes appear, the disabilities are compared and discussed, e.g. being without mind, without sight, without hearing, in Brhad-aranyaka Upanishad (6.1.7-14), Chandogya Upanishad (5.1.6-15). See also Chandogya (8.10.1), Katha (1.2.2-6). Blindness appears repeatedly as a metaphor for ignorance, e.g. "like blind men led by one who is himself blind" (Katha, 1.2.5; Mundaka, 1.2.8; Maitri, 7.9), apparently a familiar sight and saying then as later. Disabilities were cited in arguments to establish what was essential to life: “One lives with speech gone, for we see the dumb; one lives with eye gone, for we see the blind; one lives with ear gone, for we see the deaf; one lives with mind gone, for we see the childish; one lives with arms cut off, one lives with legs cut off, for thus we see.” [Kausitaki, 3.3] See next, [Upanishads] Olivelle; and Radhakrishnan.
Cf notes on next and previous items. The three translators have some difference of nuance, e.g. in Kausitaki Upanishad 3.3, Olivelle has “A man continues to live after his mind leaves him, for we see people who are imbeciles.” Olivelle's index has terms like deaf, dumb, cripple, lame, which Hume's index omits.

Cf notes to previous two items. On the child nature, Subala Upanishad (13.1) suggests that “one should cultivate the characteristics of a child” i.e. non-attachment and innocence. This appealed to Radhakrishnan (Intro, pp. 100, 111; notes, 222, 608) when he was about to leave his Oxford professorship to become Vice President of India. Brhad-aranyaka Upanishad [3.5.1] urges that “after he has done with learning”, the Brahmin should “desire to live as a child”. However, Katha Upanishad [I.2.2] depicts the choice between the broad and easy path and the straight and narrow path, in which the wise person chooses what is morally right though difficult, and “The simple-minded, for the sake of worldly well-being, prefers the pleasant.” (608). The 'simple-minded' (*mandah*) here chooses what many, perhaps most, children would choose who lack “notions of right and wrong”.

The 15 Hebrew words shown in this dictionary, connected with impairment and disability, are cross-referenced: #522 speechlessness; #1492 hunchbacked; #3024 mutilation; #3094 speechless; #4171 lame, crippled; #4583 blemish; #5425 disfigured; #5783 crippled, smitten; #6422 be blind; #6589 stammering; #7174 lame, crippled; #7519 limping; #7832 defective; #8594 deformed, mutilated; #9319 white spot in eye.

After a brief résumé of his life, most of this article discusses the prolific theological writings of the blind teacher Didymus, which were widely cited, though much of his work has disappeared.

Among the Vitae [Lives] of the Desert Saints, in Egypt, Palestine and Syria of the early centuries of Christianity, there are stories of people with disabilities being healed or cared for. The framework is often modelled on New Testament reports of Jesus healing disabled people by expelling demons; yet the hagiographies have some sharply observed and unexpected features in dialogue and interplay between characters. In Book 1(d), no. 17 (web transl., Life No. 18), the young saint Euphrasia's humility, fasting, battles with the devil, and devotion to serving her religious companions, are standard fare. In ch. XXV-XXVI of Euphrasia's 'Life', families brought sick or disabled children to the monastery for prayer and healing. At the Abbess's command, Euphrasia received one boy of eight years, brought by his mother, paralysed, deaf and dumb. Euphrasia prayed while carrying him to the Abbess, and the boy was healed and started shouting for his mother. Euphrasia dropped him in surprise, and he ran back to the gate. Later, the Abbess sent Euphrasia to feed a “devil-possessed” sister, who had violent fits and was locked up. This one often assaulted whichever person brought her food. She began shrieking and threatening Euphrasia, but the latter commanded her to be quiet or she would fetch the Abbess's cane and give her a terrible thrashing! The madwoman was taken aback by this counter-threat, so Euphrasia...
asked her pleasantly to sit down and eat her food and be calm, which she did. After further spiritual conflict, the woman was healed (Ch. XXVII - XIX).

Another tale is told in two versions (in Book 7, ch. 19, “Tending the sick”, and Book 8, ch. XXVI, “Eulogius and the Cripple”). The scholar Eulogius of Alexandria entered the holy life with a promise to care for a severely disabled man whom he saw in the marketplace. That man was happy to be taken up, fed, washed and maintained in the saint's cell. Yet after 15 years the Cripple got bored with this life and denounced Eulogius as a crafty hypocrite and criminal, who was just using him for his own spiritual advancement. The Cripple demanded to be taken back to the marketplace, where he could see some ordinary scenes of life and meet some normal people, and maybe get some decent food! After ineffectual attempts to sort out the quarrel, Eulogius and the Cripple went for mediation to St Anthony. The holy old monk banged their heads together and told them to go home and live together in peace and harmony...

In Book 9, said to be by Theodoret of Cyrrhus (393-466), the story of saints Thalassius and Limnaeus appears in ch. XXII. This carries one of the earliest traditions of care for disabled people, in a sort of Christian healing shrine or place of pilgrimage. Thalassius built a monastery (or perhaps a hermitage), probably in present-day Syria, and trained the younger man, Limnaeus. The latter continued learning from other holy men, then chose a spot on a mountain about the village Targalla, and lived there within a walled space. People came to Limnaeus to obtain his blessing, or healing. He also built little dwellings for blind people and beggars, around his walled space, and asked his visitors to supply the necessities of life to these neighbours.

**References**


Discusses Hebrew words for 'blind', 'blindness' etc, with reference to linguistic and critical literature of Jewish and Christian textual studies. (See also Ceresko; Clements).


Brief, readable study with well chosen illustrations, noting in conclusion that “one of the great achievements of Sunnite Islam [was] that it enabled countless men and women to lead tolerable lives in conditions of incredible hardship.” (No specific mention of disability).


The Caraka Samhita, one of the major medical texts of Indian history, suggests a medical aetiology for many physical defects in addition to recording the religious explanation of karma.


Indexed by topic (see e.g. sickness, medicine, incantation). The relevant tradition is summarised in a phrase or sentence, and authorities for it are given. See also Al-Bukhari, Kassis, Kheri.


Quotes extensively from Talmudic lore and rabbinic interpretations so as to rebut the idea that negative attitudes towards disabled people were promoted in early Hebrew literature. See Abrams (above).


Traces from Babylonian and classical Greek sources, via medieval muddling, the origins of
European notions of “monsters in India”, and some debates and artistic representations along the way. Suggests a perennial human tendency to find both disgust and attraction in curiously ‘different’ beings at the margins of the known world.

Extended review, with Index (pp. 512-514) of the role of dwarves in ancient Egyptian religious practices.

Detailed, scholarly account of the varied understanding of terms in Latin, Hebrew, Arabic, (and also Greek) for the 'internal senses' as used by thinkers in the classical and medieval Mediterranean and Middle East, ranging from Aristotle through the Church Fathers, the major Arab philosophers and later Medieval Christian theologians. Various systems of classification were used for cognitive processes, with some mutual influence, sometimes hampered by shifts of meaning in translation. [While not directly concerned with disability, the paper has importance, and a cautionary function, for historical studies of the meaning of some impairments and disabilities across the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern regions. Lack or serious diminution of receptive senses such as sight and hearing (and to a lesser extent, touch, taste and smell) is both historically inherent and fairly transparent in ideas of impairment and disability. Absence or diminution of internal processing by the 'cognitive faculties', exhibiting as weaknesses in the development, maturing and practice of thinking, awareness, common sense, intellect, focus, memory, imagination, planning, communication, (and other related terms), seem to be inherent in concepts of 'mental retardation' or 'intellectual impairment'. Yet these have been, and are, considerably less transparent in their meaning, as there is a wide range in both the popular, the educated, and the scientific conceptualisation of these processes.]

The punning title (it is not that justice is misdirected, but mothers miscarry and are then blamed for losing their baby by provoking demonic attack) belies the passion and seriousness of this chapter. Wujastyk, who has translated and made accessible a number of Sanskrit texts of ancient and medieval Indian medicine with due sympathy and respect, here presents some of the more noxious ideas and religious beliefs from those sources. Specific demons “attack children whose mothers or nurses have not behaved properly”, causing a range of serious symptoms, and often the death of the infant or young child. (Disability is little represented, but one of the demons causes epilepsy). Demonic attack may result from a catalogue of female bad behaviour; but even the slightest flaw or failure to guard against close relatives' dust or malign feelings, may invite disaster. The pregnant woman or young mother was thus caught in a web of admonition and blame for any adverse outcome, exacerbating her own feelings of grief and affliction. Wujastyk laments that this toxic heritage still oppresses poor, uneducated women across India today.

[Not seen. Friedenwald, q.v., praises this as “the first systematic and comprehensive modern treatise” on the topic, also having an extensive bibliography.]

A key figure in this study is Shaykh Umar `Abd al-Rahman (pp. 391-393). As a blind young boy (b. 1938) he followed the traditional path of learning the Qur'an by heart. He studied theology at
Al-Azhar in the early 1960s, while President Nasser was attempting fundamental reforms in that
institution. In 1970 'Abd al-Rahman openly criticised Nasser, for which he spent time in jail. He
pursued his studies, and held teaching posts in Egypt and Saudi Arabia. By the 1980s he had
become the spiritual guide to some radical Islamist groups, and was suspected of active militancy,
but apparently his blindness prevented him from being accepted as a leader of armed struggle. Yet
in the 1990s he was convicted of conspiracy in acts of terrorism in the USA. [Whatever may have
been his part in acts of violence, 'Abd al-Rahman seems to have been one among a number of
formidable blind Arab teachers of Islam who were sharply critical of the State and of decadent
religious practices.]

[The term commonly given as 'Vendidad' is more correctly transcribed as 'Videvdat'.] Fargard II,
27-29 (p. 17) pictures a 'paradise' from which disability, disease and behavioural weaknesses are
excluded, apparently by selective breeding. See Taraporewala, above, for an interpretation with
different emphasis. See Kellens & Pirart, for further linguistic discussion.

The ZEND-AVESTA, Part II, The Sirozahs, Yasts and Nyayis, transl. J Darmesteter, SBE 23
Disabled, diseased or wicked people, and women, are banned from drinking the divine libation
(pp. 75-76).

ZVELEBIL, Kamal V (1991) Tamil traditions on Subrahmanya-Murugan. Madras: Institute of
Asian Studies.
Relates the deity Murugan's birth as a dumb child (pp. 20-22). [An inadvertent variation on p. 21
has Murugan as a "numb child".]

Johnson, DL Smith & BD Snider (eds) The Deaf Way. Perspectives from the International
Conference on Deaf Culture [1989], 231-38. Washington DC: Gallaudet UP.
Briefly reviews Jewish textual evidence of deaf people's status, and its effects on European
cultures, with anecdotal evidence of deaf people in the Jewish diaspora.

Veda, with translations and annotations of medical hymns from the Rigveda and the Aharvaveda
“The medicine of the Vedic Indians is inextricably connected with their religion and must not be
considered in isolation from it.” Thus Zysk prefaces this detailed, scholarly study, comprising
introductory material, internal diseases (pp. 12-71, including 'insanity'), external diseases (72-89,
with fractured limbs and skin disorders), and medicines (90-102), found mostly in the Atharva
Veda, Rig Veda, Caraka, Susruta, and many other classical texts and commentaries. A significant
amount of text is translated by Zysk in the first part, and corresponding detailed textual
annotations appear in pp. 104-256, all Sanskrit being transliterated. A critical bibliographic history
and specialised bibliography appear (261-290), plus indexes of Sanskrit text locations, Sanskrit
words, and general index. Disability-related terms can be located e.g. ear disease, epilepsy, foot
problems, fractures, healers, insanity, leprosy, skin disorders, trepanation. Blind and conjectural
'deaf' or 'mute (p.162), and 'mental disorders (p.10), possible hydrocephalus (p.4), and maybe some
other impairments, are not so clearly indexed.

Delhi: Oxford UP.
Lucid account of early Buddhist notions of the body, its defects, and methods of healing in South
Asia during about five centuries BC. The herbal knowledge and practical healing experience of “fraternities of ascetic wanderers” began to be more formally accumulated, refined and institutionalised as the Buddhist monasteries developed, with greater possibilities of transmission to younger practitioners, the use of an enlarged pharmacopoeia, and more awareness of foods and culinary arts beneficial to health. Nursing skills also developed in monastery infirmaries. Case histories of treatment occupy pp. 84-116, 120-127, with notes pp. 158-167. As in the previous listed item, Zysk goes into considerable detail, drawing on a wide range of primary Pali and Sanskrit sources and secondary literature, and providing several indexes, bibliography and other assistance (pp. 168-200).
3. EAST (& SOUTH EAST) ASIA
Disability, Religion, Belief and Morality
in Histories of China, Korea, Japan,
and some nearby countries

Kommentierte Bibliographie zur Tibetischen Medizin (1798/1995).* Ulm: Fabria; Kietikon: Garuda.
Formidable multilingual bibliography of 1,712 items (many transliterated from Russian) with
detailed annotation (English or German) of many items. Medical and spiritual views are often intertwined. Searchable on site at www.uni-ulm.de/klinik/neurologie/jaschoff/tib-med/
e.g. massage, goitre / goiter, deaf, blind, mental, paraly, impair, therap, acupunc, moxib, caut,
epilep, etc. (Search on polio, thyroid, sourd, lathyr, cerebral, boneset, orthot, disab, handicap, idiot,
is negative. Some other French, German or Russian disability terms might give results. Eye or ear find many false positives).

Oxford.
Prince Gautama's encounter with sickness, disability and death seems to be central in the
foundation of Buddhism, as currently understood. In Asvaghosha's account (2nd century CE) of
the life and acts of the Buddha in this incarnation, his childhood and youth were protected from the
sight of suffering. When he wished to go beyond the palace, cleansing measures were first taken:
"Then having removed out of the way with the greatest gentleness all those who had mutilated
limbs or maimed senses, the decrepit and the sick and all squalid beggars, they made the highway
assume its perfect beauty." (p. 27) However, prompted by the gods, the prince's driver disclosed
the facts. The blessed youth saw suffering and death, and was obliged to embrace it and seek its
meaning and discover how one should conduct oneself in such a world.

Inc.
Gives a background of traditional and modern practice in treating mental illness in Malaysia, a
Muslim majority nation. Describes the authors' practice of religious psychotherapy with Muslim
patients. It is emphasized that they do not preach or exhort, but “work together with the patient to
find the patient's values using the Qur'an and Sunnah (prophet tradition) as guidance.” Support of
the patient's own ideals and valued religious practice seemed to generate more insight and
motivation (compared with a control group). During the dialogue, computer access to a Qur'an
translation in the Malay language facilitated discovery of appropriate suras. There was some
success in showing patients how to “know the Islamic coping skills”, so that they could manage
their problems for themselves, whenever they arose.

Allen & Unwin.
pp. 140-63 (+ 337-39 + plate 7) gives an account of blind Japanese female mediums known as
itako, including their painful initiation, their training and practice, from earlier 20th century up to
1960s. Blacker considered that what she witnessed was far from the original shamanistic practice:
“A girl is impelled to become an itako purely and simply because she is blind. ... By becoming a
medium she will become a viable member of her community rather than a burden.” (p. 141) What
these mediums performed for their clients seemed all too clearly a stilted act rather than a genuine
trance. Yet the aura of 'otherness' attached to their blindness seemed sufficient for rural participants to suspend any disbelief and to be greatly moved by what they took to be evidence of communication with the dead.


Padre Luis d'Almeida in 1557 opened a hospital at Oita (Funai) for people with leprosy or syphilis, a pharmacy and an orphanage, attracting many clients. The Jesuits seem to have decided that work with these sufferers gave them a repellent image to Japanese people, so it was later discouraged (pp. 203-204). Brief notes on Franciscan work with disabled people. The Franciscans were undaunted by the prospect of acquiring an image of caring for the unattractive (pp. 233-235).


(See quotation from this article in the Introduction, above, subheading “China, Religion, Ethics, Morality”). Bray sketches something of the “easygoing eclecticism” that was “characteristic of Chinese religious behaviour”, assembled mostly from the “three schools” of Confucian, Taoist and Buddhist teaching, and applying to health beliefs and practice over long periods of Chinese history, with a particular focus on “qi”, breath, vital energy, (sometimes represented as “ch'i” or “chhi”), in the 17th century, bridging the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties, and also a glance at some late 20th century interpretations. [This chapter usefully and credibly indicates a conceptual world in which one fifth of the human population lives and thinks, and with which many common western ways of discussing 'disability' seem to have no connection at all.]


Based on 75 replies from 383 western physicians (40/86 in China, 4/23 in Korea) to a questionnaire survey sent from Hong Kong. Where leprosy was familiar, populations mostly did not consider it contagious. “Few Chinese exclude their relatives from their homes unless leprosy has advanced so far that the leper becomes objectionable, either from the smell emanating from his sores, or from the unsightly appearance of his face or limbs.” (p. 255). (China, Hong Kong, Macau, Formosa and Korea occupy pp. 239-322).


pp. 79-86, The Blind Man's Daughter, self-sacrifice of daughter Chung to save the sight of her blind beggar father Sim. pp. 163-172 The Beggars' Friend, a story of benevolence rewarded. pp. 203-210 The King's Seventh Daughter; involves the dreaded Great Spirit of Smallpox, who visits families and blinds their children.


Folk tales suggest traditional attitudes towards people with disabilities or differences. 'The Old Man with a Wen' had a goitre which “swung like a gourd on its vine”, so people mocked him. He tricked some goblins into buying it (pp. 254-57). 'The Half Man' was “born deformed. He was only half in all the parts of his body, except in his two legs”, and his brother and father thought he should die. Nevertheless he grew up very strong, and won a wife from a wealthy family (258-65).

CHEN, Yaozhen [Eugene Chan] (1980) The courageous and brilliant blind monk Jianzhen,
Buddhist monk Jianzhen, a medical specialist born in China in 688 in the Tang Dynasty, made several efforts to visit Japan against many difficulties. He finally succeeded in 753, after losing his eyesight. He spent 10 years in Japan teaching medicine and pharmacology.

As missionary literature on work with blind children, this booklet is unusual in focusing substantially on the contribution of Chinese Christians, such as Pastor Chang and Mrs Shih the Biblwoman, in the early period, and later Miss Ch'i who became Principal of the Home at Moukden. From 1941 to 1945, when foreigners were interned, Miss Ch'i carried the heavy responsibility of maintaining the Home intact, politely circumventing many demands for policemen or Japanese officials to occupy rooms (at great risk to the girls' safety). As food became scarce, she had to produce reasons why girls who “can be of no use to anybody” should continue to be fed. An official campaign was under way to recycle waste material, and throw nothing away; so Miss Ch'i made use of the slogans, agreeing that some people were “not of much use unless we know how to make use of them. Is it not our duty to teach these girls to be useful members of the State, and thus prevent the most precious of our human waste from being lost?” Her argument was irrefutable; the blind girls’ food supply continued.

See ZHUANGZI, below. Writings edited from 4th to 2nd century BC. Disabled people figure in the Seven Inner Chapters pp. 46-47, 64, 73-81; some are portrayed as being 'advanced on the Way'. Disability appears also in 'Other writings' (138, 200-201) with commentary (4, 17, 24). Everyday examples are given of the “usefulness of being useless”, e.g. the huge, gnarled and twisted tree which survives because carpenters prefer to chop down straight trees for their wood. Chuang-tzu (now often transliterated: Zhuangzi) may have sketched an early 'Social Model' of disability (80-81). He pictures water finding its own level, taking the shape or filling the contours of whatever container it meets; so a powerful spirit might similarly assume a deformed human shape - this outward appearance of deformity reflects the misshapen and defective society in which the powerful spirit is born. (See below, Zhuangzi)

Based on doctoral thesis; various editions and translations have appeared. Detailed introduction to the historical healing arts in Tibetan Buddhism, and other comparable South Asian practices. pp. 129-170 concern traditional concepts and treatments of mental illness. Three psychiatric chapters from the “Gyu-Zhi” are translated with introduction, pp. 171-197.

Regular meeting of 20 blind people at Presbyterian Church, Seoul, and activities of a blind Korean evangelist, Hyun Sang Oh, with some notes on the education and work of various blind people.
Contains hints of attitudes to disabled people in ancient China. Incompetents and simpletons appear, e.g. II: 20 (“Promote those who are worthy, train those who are incompetent”); VII: 8 (Confucius teaches only keen students who can keep up with him); VIII: 9, XI: 17, XVI: 9, XVII: 16 (dismissive comments on the ignorant masses or dull-witted individuals). Confucius's elder brother may have been crippled (Intro, p. 16). Respect shown to blind people, e.g. III: 23, footnote on blind musicians; IX: 9; X: 16; XV: 41. (Translation and interpretation of most of these items may vary widely). As usual with revered texts from antiquity, some later teachers would build a much wider interpretation on an early fragment or hint.

Probably collected in 2nd century BC. Bk III, Sect. V, (pp. 243-44), care of disabled people, e.g. “In cases of parties who were disabled or ill, and where the attendance of others was required to wait upon them, one man was discharged for those duties” ... “The dumb, the deaf, the lame, such as had lost a member, pygmies, and mechanics, [?] were all fed according to what work they were able to do.” Bk VII Sect. IV, (p. 385), “blind musicians and their helpers”; Bk VIII, Sect. II, (p. 407), arrangements were made “for assisting and guiding the steps of the (blind) musicians, showing the extreme degree of kindly (provision).”

Bk XII (pp. 36-37), blind musicians: “the school of Yin, in which the blind were honoured”, (apparently referring to a court existing several centuries BC).

Notes 'blind and leper villages' established from 10th century at Kien-Nang, by ruler Uang Ing-ceng (pp. 112-13). Missionary work with blind people is described (114-27).

A central sacred text of the Buddhist teaching that spread across East Asia over centuries, translated with some explanatory accretions. Indicates the importance in Buddhism of the culture and discipline of the mind into a state of awareness, leaving behind the ignorance and folly natural to children and the ordinary 'mentally childish' adult. See Dhammapada verses 26, 29, 36, 59, 60-75, 136-39, 174, 325; and translation with commentary pp. 114-15, 117, 124, 144-60, 206-208, 236, 346. (See also Jataka, above. These two are shown as representatives of a vast Buddhist literature).


Tracks various strands of belief, attitude, thought and practice concerned with conception and birth defects in China since about 1500, leading to eugenics as constructed by Chinese writers in the 20th century. Views on people with disabilities or deformities seem predominantly negative (e.g. pp. 33, 54, 59, 62, 66-69, 82, 107-108, 112-13). The author notes parallels in Europe and elsewhere. [The negative attitudes must be seen against a continuous background of moral teaching about the social duty to relieve suffering, and family duty to care for disabled members].


Detailed descriptions of everyday life, mostly at Fuhchau, with many illustrations. Note on blind beggars (pp. 11-12); official dole for destitute disabled people (40-41); children and youths (81-103); Tu Kek Sai, the deaf god of swine (213-14); I Kuang Tai Uong, partially deaf god of surgery (216); aspects of education (303-362); ugly, deformed scholar Sang Wi Hang (Sung dynasty) (362); care of foundlings, widows (472-78); Empress Tak-ki with club-feet(?) (489); leprosy camps in Tientsin, and other beggars (524-29); popular farce about priest deceiving blind man (548); vignette of the blind fortune-teller, with picture (574-75).


Some entries concern disability, deafness, religion and belief directly or indirectly, in East Asia, e.g. Cosmologies of Morality and Origin (KB Selim); Disability in Contemporary China (Emma Stone); Experience of disability: China (E Stone); Experience of disability: Japan (Osamu Nagase); Experience of disability: Taiwan (Hsiao-yu Sun); History of disability: Korea (Eunjung Kim); and some biographies, e.g. Confucius; Agnes Gutzlaff; Edward Syle. Volume 5 comprises source texts (in English translation), some being from historical literature and the scriptures of the major religions. (See e.g. Zeami, *Semimaru*, vol. 5, pp. 130-134; Stories from the 'Ebisu Mandara', pp. 160-168).


The major Japanese novelist Endo created a clumsy fool of a foreigner as the leading character of this book. Gaston, a stupid-looking Frenchman, is physically huge but timorous and afflicted with the disability of loving and trusting people. He ambles ludicrously through the neat and superficial lives of an ordinary Japanese family, then wanders off through the backstreets and low life of Yokohama. With the simpleton manners of a large, friendly dog, or a holy fool, Gaston astonishes, infuriates, attracts or disgusts people he meets. Beaten by some, cared for by others, he becomes a mirror in which people notice the moral emptiness of their souls. The author Endo is also darkly reflected here, a Japanese convert to Roman Catholic, depicting the radical strangeness of the Christ figure amidst the 'moral swamp' of Japan in the 1950s.


Dr Fish, an American physician newly in Shanghai, visited the dwelling of two Chinese members of a small Christian church: “A man suffering from fever and rheumatism, and totally blind, lay on a little pallet almost incapable of motion; while his wife, also blind, and very much emaciated, seemed to be suffering from disease of the heart. The house was a mere hovel, of the smallest dimensions, and without a floor; and as I cast my eyes around the desolate-looking apartments, it seemed hardly possible that two human beings, both sick and blind, could inhabit such an abode; yet here they have lived for years, and here they most likely will die.” (Fish wrote of his astonishment at the cheerfulness of this elderly Chinese couple).

FRITSCH, Ingrid (1991) The sociological significance of historically unreliable documents in the


GAMMELTOFT, Tina & NGUYEN, Hanh Thi Thuy (2007) Fetal conditions and fatal decisions: ethical dilemmas in ultrasound screening in Vietnam. Social Science & Medicine 64: 2248-2259. Studies in northern Vietnam in the early 2000s suggest that one outcome of the introduction of obstetrical ultrasound scanning has been a rise in ethical dilemmas concerning observed fetal malformations, among medical personnel and for individual Vietnamese mothers, with recurrent failures of communication between these parties. The doctors often lacked sufficient training and experience to know how seriously the observed malformation might affect future life. The predominant medical view was to guide families toward abortion, while maintaining a semblance of being non-directive. Mothers told the researchers of their need for more information and sympathetic counselling, while in practice mostly having a brief and uninformative contact with a doctor, pitching them into an almost immediate life-or-death decision. Without the new technology, “you simply have to accept your child as it is. But this has pushed us into a world of action. And until the day we die, we will feel tortured over this.” (See also the religious background described by Hunt, 2005, below).

GARLAND SJ (1919) Home teaching of the blind in China, Chinese Recorder 50: 251-56. Problems and successes of a scheme using Mandarin Union Braille, “formed with the object of reaching not only those persons who could be gathered into schools, but ... that by means of home teaching many might learn to read who could not enter regular schools for the blind.” Responses are excerpted from missionaries in eight provinces, obtained by a postal survey among purchasers of Braille books, aiming to discover whether they were successfully used in home teaching.

GOFORTH, Rosalind (1930) Blind Chang: missionary martyr of Manchuria. Grand Rapids: Zondervan. 31 pp. Hagiographical account of a Chinese man who became blind in middle age, embraced Christianity, worked tirelessly as an evangelist in his native Manchuria, and was killed in the Boxer rising in 1900.

GOLAY, Jacqueline (1973) Pathos and farce: Zatô plays of the Kyôgen repertoire. Monumenta Nipponica 28: 139-49. Examines in detail the tragical-comical portrayal of blind people, and others' reactions to them, in several Kyôgen plays, with some remarks on blindness in Japanese history. The Kyôgen style is farcical, yet carries a sharp moral message as the audience watches the murkier sides of human behaviour.

GRAYSON, James H (2002, revised edition) Korea - A Religious History. London: RoutledgeCurzon. xvi + 288 pp. Disability is hardly prominent in this detailed account of Korea's variegated religious history, with its Buddhist, Confucian, Christian, and syncretistic strands. Yet from the early 4th century CE, when an independent and characteristic Korean culture is identifiable (p. 19), there are, from 'Korean Primal Religion' onward, themes or topoi such as the shaman's, monk's or religious
leader's 'professional' crisis, infirmity, or shock-enlightenment (pp. 43-44; 64; 86-87; 98; 185; 187); healing, curing, hypnotism or fortune-telling powers that affirmed the religious mission (pp. 47-48; 64; 65; 72-73; 165) while sometimes leading to low status, a mendicant life or even social disgrace in serving the common people (pp. 122; 130, 137); exorcism, familiarity with the spirit world and amulets, sometimes blind practitioners (p'ansu), and other traditional practices, that recur at intervals and are linked down as far as new religious movements of the past two centuries (pp. 198; 200-201; 207; 208; 210; 212; 217; 218; 219-22 {the p'ansu}; 225; 227). See also Hulbert; Jung Young.


As a rationalist and professor of ethics, Green reviews the positions of some principal contributors in the ongoing debate on abortion in Japan, and Buddhist responses, with some broader consideration of the status of the fetus in various religious teachings.


The opening chapter (pp. 3-19) sketches the history of blind musicians in Japan through more than a thousand years. Early legends suggest that blind itinerant musicians had a repertoire of sacred and secular texts for chanting while playing the *biwa* (a kind of lute). They earned their living by transmitting folklore, news, and fragments of Buddhist and Shinto teaching. Over many centuries there were periodic government efforts to control blind people. The religious element of their role seems slowly to have diminished.


The missionary Gutzlaff, after about 17 years' work in China and a briefer involvement with needy blind Chinese children, noted that, “In this ancient country we have been preceded in all our benevolent plans by some thousand years. There have been foundling hospitals and blind asylums since times immemorial. In the latter, the boys are taught by a blind teacher, who knows a good deal by heart, and the principal study is the art of divination” (p. 21).


Historical notes on disabled people in Japan, from the mythological Hiruko to the present (and future), with many graphic illustrations. Brief biographies of notable Japanese disabled people with some discussion of the occupations traditionally assigned to disabled people. Suggests that the disabled and rejected Hiruko was 'rehabilitated' in popular imagination as the god Ebisu. Text by a well-known poet, himself disabled.


Scholarly study, focusing (pp. 103-218) on Lü K'un (1536-1618), referring to his mother's blindness, his efforts for training of disabled people for self-support (pp. 149, 161-63, 181-82), and many other humanitarian activities, based on his diaries and other writings. Handlin suggests the changes in official thinking about social welfare of communities, exemplified by Lü K'un, with comparison of some other officials. Also noted in some detail are his compulsive self-examination for moral and behavioural blemishes (186-212), and struggles to cultivate in himself the high ideal
of a gentleman, pragmatic philosopher and humane administrator, diligently serving and educating
the people. Aware of flaws in himself, he was unsurprised to find them larger and less controlled
in the masses; but perceived some possibility for ‘so arranging matters that self-interest should
prompt what morality would require’.

HANDLIN-SMITH, Joanna F (1987) Benevolent societies: the reshaping of charity during the late
Describes changes in “the method and spirit of charitable giving” in China, 1580-1750, with new
types of charitable organisations joining the traditional famine relief and local support of poor,
widowed, elderly, orphans and disabled people.

HANDLIN SMITH JF (1998) Chinese philanthropy as seen through a case of famine relief in the
Traditions, 133-168. Bloomington: Indiana UP.
See note on previous item. In the end-notes to the present chapter (pp. 156-168), Handlin Smith
gives useful comments on the rising literature in several languages, concerned with philanthropy in
China's history, including notes on the complex relationship between Buddhism and Chinese
philanthropy, including e.g. the compassionate activities of Buddhist monasteries in “care for
orphans, indigents, the infirm, and the old”.

HARTMANN F (1890) Orphanages, asylums for the blind, deaf and dumb, and other charitable
institutions in China. In: Records of the General Conference of the Protestant Missionaries of
China, held at Shanghai, May 7-20, 1890, pp. 291-302. Shanghai: American Presbyterian Mission
Press.
Detailed essay with special attention to activities and reading systems for blind people. The
Christian missionaries almost invariably gave religious instruction to abandoned or disabled
Chinese children, with the hope that they would eventually commit themselves to the Christian
faith. The Reverend Hartmann, as a member of a Lutheran Protestant mission, nevertheless made
some appreciative comments on Catholic orphanages (“in some of their institutions there is much
well worth seeing, and something well worth imitating”), and also on Chinese charitable work
(“The Chinese have asylums for the blind and for the lepers, showing the compassion they have on
people thus afflicted”). For deaf children there was no organised provision. Hartmann gave an
immediately recognisable description of two 'dumb' (i.e. deaf and mute) Chinese girls casually
integrated in mission institutions, who had been “taught to make themselves understood by
gestures. They can say most things of an outward nature. Our dumb girl very soon finds some
characteristic by which to describe everybody she knows... She was instructed in Bible history,
largely by the use of pictures, and is pious in her way. But I am afraid her religious notions are of a
very vague kind. Much trouble has been taken to instruct her so far, but there was no trained skill
available todo more, and she was not a very young child when she came to the house.” (p. 299)

HAWKINS, Peter W (2004) The Buddhist insight of emptiness as an antidote for the model of
deficient humanness contained within the label 'intellectually disabled'. Journal of Religion,
Disability & Health 8 (1/2) 45-54.
During the 1990s, the author worked as an assistant and advocate for people called “intellectually
disabled”, and also moved from candidacy for ordination as a Christian minister to becoming a
Buddhist monk. He presents the key insights of 'emptiness' (in the well-known “Heart” sutra) and
of 'inter-being', illustrated with a reflective account of his growing friendship and mutual learning,
through 11 years, with a man, Stephen, who had been perceived in society as having weak
intellect, little worth and some nuisance value. Stephen, who participated in the religious
ceremonies of Greek Orthodox Christianity, understood, and was able to teach Peter through their
friendship, something of the interdependence of all being in the universe. Peter also became aware
of many ways in which society's categorisation and devaluation of Stephen rejected the realities of interdependence, and was complicit in Stephen's death, aged 44. [While these are 'modern, western' reflections, they are listed here as potentially casting some light on historical perceptions of people with intellectual disabilities in Buddhist communities.]


HSÜ I-T'ANG (1956) Social relief during the Sung dynasty. In: E-tu Zen Sun & J de Francis (eds & transl.) Chinese Social History, 207-215. Washington DC: American Council of Learned Societies. Discusses the normal relief measures (i.e. not those temporarily used after catastrophes), during the Sung [Song] dynasty, 960-1279 CE, noting the various agencies involved, relief lodging homes, medical relief clinics and public cemeteries. The beneficiaries were “persons who could not support themselves”, elaborated in lists such as “the aged, the infirm, the orphaned and the young who are helpless”, and verified by the appointed officials. Shelter was to be provided, along with basic food and a little cash, and some “medical relief clinics”. Further and better quality rations could be given to the very elderly. There were fluctuations in the sources and extent of state provisions, and in the quality of management and inspection. Some services were placed under the management of monks.


HUNT, Peter C (2005) An introduction to Vietnamese culture for rehabilitation service providers in the United States. In: JH Stone (ed) Culture and Disability. Providing culturally competent services, pp. 203-223. Thousand Oaks, Ca.: Sage. Vietnamese culture is bound up with religion and religious philosophies, with Buddhism predominant, Confucianism strongly influential, and strands of Daoism, Christianity, Islam, animism, and local belief systems (pp. 204-206, 211-212, 214-215). Traditional views have attributed disability to punishment for ancestor's sins, and mental disorders to the malign actions of evil spirits. However, people blind from birth may be credited with being able to 'see' beyond the normal.

IBN BATUTA. Travels of Ibn Batuta in Bengal, China and the Indian Archipelago, ed & transl. by Sir Henry Yule (1916) in: Cathay and the Way Thither. London: Hakluyt Society, new edition revised by H Cordier. Vol.IV, 120-122. The African Muslim traveller reported a visit to 'Sin-Kalan' or 'Sin-ul-Sin', identified by the editors as Canton, China, around 1352 CE. In a very large Buddhist temple, Ibn Batuta saw “a place with rooms for occupation by the blind, the infirm or the crippled. These receive food and clothing from pious foundations attached to the temple. Between the other [city] gates there are similar establishments; there were to be seen (for instance) a hospital for the sick, a kitchen for dressing their food, quarters for the physicians, and others for the servants. I was assured that old folk who
had not strength to work for a livelihood were maintained and clothed there; and that a like
 provision was made for destitute widows and orphans. The temple was built by a King of China,
 who bequeathed this city and the villages and gardens attached, as a pious endowment for this
 establishment."

World's Traditions. Bloomington: Indiana UP.
Collection of well-referenced chapters presenting or suggesting motives and practices of
philanthropy in various religious traditions, e.g. JF Handlin Smith on earlier Chinese philanthropy
(133-168); ME Tucker on Japanese philanthropy (169-193); V Shue on modern Chinese
philanthropy (332-54). Unfortunately, the index does not include disability, nor categories of
impairment, though these do appear in the text, e.g. in Shue's chapter (see below)

Reports interviews with “more than thirty” older Japanese people with disabilities, mostly men
with spinal cord injuries, discussing a variety of topics, with some analysis. While specifically
religious beliefs are not reported, the reflections on ageing with disability often reflect 'life stance'.
A common theme was that interviewees felt they were better prepared for the problems of ageing
than the non-disabled population. They had already had plenty of experience of coping with
physical difficulties, of dependency on others (especially wives), and of facing uncertainty about
the future. A number of interviewees had been close to death and had survived against pessimistic
prediction; they no longer feared death or the future.

IWAMA, Michael K (2005) Situated meaning. An issue of culture, inclusion, and occupational
The Asian author, now working in Canada, examines the “individualistic, autonomous, analytic,
monotheistic, materialistic, and rationalistic tendencies” deeply embedded in [male] Western
assumptions, training, practice and measurement in Occupational Therapy, and notes a sharp
conflict with the cultural and conceptual foundations of the East Asian societies (comprising
roughly half the human population), with Japan as a particular example. He shows
diagrammatically the “East Asian version of the cosmological myth”, in which the animal,
vegetational, human and spiritual entities are a co-existent, inter-active unity. By contrast, the
“Western variation of the cosmological myth”, is portrayed as an hierarchy with one radically
transcendent deity, separated from the individual human self, which is in turn set apart from the
other humans, who collectively attempt to have dominion over the animals and natural
environment. The Western version underpins a notion of 'occupation', as the activity of an
independent self, busily doing, mastering, controlling, gaining victory (...over the others, the
environment, the world, the universe). Such notions may appear meaningless, mad, or seriously
destructive, when viewed by societies that value social dependence and interdependence, and are
“oriented toward a harmonious existence with nature and its circumstances.”

See also Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan (1983) 9 vols, which gives a little more on many items.
Glimpses of educational, social and disability history, especially of blind people, appear in some
articles. See in both encyclopædias (indexed by first word) e.g. acupuncture; amma; biwa, biwa
hoshi; daruma; Ganjin; goze; gunki monogatari; Gunsho ruiju, Hanawa Hokiichi; heikyoku;
hiden’in; koto; medicine, medicine traditional; miko; Physically Handicapped Welfare;
physiognomy; Semimaru; seyakuin; shamanism; shamisen; shiatsu; social problems; social
welfare; special education; terakoya; Yashiro Hirokata; zato; (and many more).

The legal code of China's Qing dynasty (1644-1911) incorporated some humane modifications in dealing with disabled people or their family members. It lightened the penalties to people who were guilty but “seriously disabled (such as those who are blind in one eye or who have one limb disabled)” or who were “critically disabled (as one who is blind in both eyes or who has two limbs that are disabled)” (p. 52), or sometimes to their carers. The categories recurred in various situations, e.g. severe beating instead of imprisonment when a convicted person was solely responsible for caring for elderly or disabled relatives (p. 49); reduction of penalty for one who became seriously disabled during imprisonment (53); beating for household head claiming exemption from compulsory service by pretence that a family member was seriously disabled (104); beating for government official failing to provide support for critically or seriously disabled person having no family to provide for them (112). They recurred in laws of injury, including “maiming or serious disability” (276-77), and a variety of other specified injuries. Where critical disability resulted, the convicted person was punished and was also liable to compensate the injured one (285-89). See also pp. 64, 104, 182, 202, 237, 305, 369. Disabled people were often grouped with children or the elderly for lighter penalties or exemption (e.g. being spared the normal torture during an investigation, p. 376).

JUNG YOUNG LEE (1981) Korean Shamanistic Rituals. The Hague: Mouton. xvi + 249 pp. The P’ansu or male shaman, while peripheral compared with the shamaness (Mudang), is mentioned regularly (pp. 2-4, 9-12, 17, 26, 39, 102, 105-106, 110-111, 120, 130, 144, 153, 155, 175, 180, 211); however, “in a strict sense he is a blind man who specializes in divination and exorcism. He is also called Kyong jaengi” (p. 155). The further name Ch’ambong is given: “There is no clear distinction between P’ansu and Ch’ambong. However, the former does not have to be blind, while the latter is a blind shaman” (p. 105). Blindness appears on pp. 10, 39, 102, 114-116, 188 (ritual for combatting blind spirits, or contagious eye disease), 144, 155, 218 (plate showing the 'pole for the blind spirit'). Hogu, northern deity of smallpox [often a cause of blindness], and treatment of smallpox, are mentioned on pp. xiii, 35, 43, 67, 112, 114, 197. Insanity, psychic trauma, psychoses and neuroses, and treatment efforts, appear on pp. 8, 116-120, 181, 189.

A major tradition within Buddhism seems to put emphasis on achieving mastery by mental concentration and training the mind. Such a process might disadvantage those people with weaker intellectual endowment. An alternative practice is shown here in the Rinzai Zen tradition. A slow-witted student persevered to spiritual enlightenment without ever reaching intellectual heights, in the difficult early Meiji period when Buddhist institutions were under attack.

Brief description of many types of Christian leprosy work in Asian countries, from the 16th century onward.

KENZABURU OË (1969) A Personal Matter, transl. J Nathan. New York: Grove: Weidenfeld. This novel describes the moral and ethical dilemmas confronting an immature young Japanese man who learns that his newborn son has a severe impairment. The fictional experiences parallel those of the Nobel prize recipient Oë, as told in later works (see next, p. 107). The 'tragedy' of the baby is also viewed against the ongoing disaster for survivors of the Hiroshima bombing.
See previous item. The writer makes clear that he is “not someone who believes in any faith” (p.11); yet in the same sentence, and at intervals through the book, refers to aspects of spirituality in the world's faiths and relates them with his observations and experiences of his disabled son Hikari. For example, he sees how, in the difficult moment of making the morally right decision about the brain operation that allowed Hikari to live, he himself had been reborn as a moral being (p.18). He relates the common question, when a series of life's coincidences seem perfectly engineered to change one's life, whether these are really coincidences (which he believes), or evidence of a cosmic designer smiling behind the curtain (p.26). He compares Hikari's unexpected ability to focus intensively on the act of composing music, with Simone Weil's description of prayer as “the directing of all the attention of which the soul is capable toward god” (p.142).

Reviews nearly 2000 years of Korean history, folklore and religious practice, in which disabled people find some mention, with early suggestion of charitable support to those living in poverty, exemptions from onerous tasks, healing activities, or sometimes negative attitudes. Formal service provision in South Korea is described in more detail for the past 50 years.

Designed to inform North American service providers, this chapter includes brief, relevant notes on the “sophisticated mixture of Buddhism, Confucianism, Shamanism and other religions” reflected in traditional Korean cultures and having some impact on beliefs about disability and attitudes toward disabled people.

Useful description and analysis of changing paradigms of health care for elderly people in Japan, in four decades after 1945, starting from a baseline of traditional filial piety and respect. In summary, “The emphasis of the policy for the elderly in Japan has shifted from family care to societal care, to free care, to individual self-care, and now finally to mixed care” (p. 191).

Editor's Introduction (pp. 1-14), and Ch.1 “Dyed silk: Han notions of the moral development of children” (17-56), begin this substantial scholarly overview of childhood in China during 2,200 years. Early calendrical or physiognomical lore could be prejudicial to babies born inauspiciously or with physical abnormalities; the latter could be blamed on the mother, e.g. baby's harelip from mother having eaten hare. There were debates about children's developmental stages, and whether some were born ineradicably wicked. Several contributors mention the stylised treatment of childhood in biographies and graphics.

Useful for understanding the background and context of broader studies and trends of thought in which many of the Japanese items in this section are set.

KLEINMAN A, Wen-Zhi Wang, Shi-Chuo Li, Xue-Ming Cheng, Xiu-Ying Dai, Kun-Tun Li &
Kleinman J (1995) The social course of epilepsy: chronic illness as social experience in interior China. Social Science & Medicine 40 (10) 1319-30. Detailed study of 80 people's lives with epilepsy, by experienced medical anthropologists, neurologists and other health personnel in Shanxi and Ningxia Provinces, PR China, in 1988. (The sample of 40 in Ningxia included 17 Muslims). The financial costs entailed by epilepsy often weighed heavily on families, especially in the poorer regions. “The social welfare net of communalized life is no longer available to prevent the poorest in China from falling into extreme poverty ... The economic constraints on the social course of epilepsy and other chronic illnesses often means the difference between receiving treatment and not, between remission and relapse.” Families are forced into “humiliating and often unavailing negotiations with creditors, who are themselves under financial pressure.” Persisting traditional notions of epilepsy may cause the family as a whole to suffer stigma and loss of status. “Ideas that attribute the cause of epilepsy to bad fate, heredity, negative geomantic forces, and the malign influences of gods, ghosts or ancestors -- all are accusations against the moral status of the family ... Over the long-term delegitimation is routinized, so that patient and family are regarded as morally bankrupt, and capable of bankrupting others.”


KOHRMAN, Matthew (2005) Bodies of Difference: experiences of disability and institutional advocacy in the making of modern China. Berkeley, Ca.: University of California Press. xvii + 285 pp. Based on anthropological fieldwork in the 1990s, Kohrman examines the changing meanings, concepts and experiences of disability in the recent history of People's Republic of China. There is very little overt mention of religion (e.g. 'ancestor-worship' and 'filial piety' are indexed, but not Buddhism, Daoism or 'Confucian values'); yet some evolution of moral and ethical parameters can be seen in the practical details of who notices disabled people and gives help, and who ceases to notice. Kohrman notes the production of disability hagiographies (or “biomythography”, p. 36), and of “speaking bitterness” narratives of suffering. In a period of rapid, almost chaotic modernisation the focus is largely urban, but Kohrman provides some ethnographic observation of disabled people living in great poverty in rural areas. Under Chairman Mao, the old kin-based mutual support system had been replaced by communal production teams, basic health clinics that provided practically free services to local populations, and official encouragement of an ethos of voluntary neighbourly service. As national economic policies changed, the free health services crumbled and the communal ethos was increasingly replaced by competitive individualism, while the old kinship obligations had practically disappeared. Urban disabled people had begun to develop 'identity' groupings to campaign for formal assistance and to benefit from informal mutual support; but this was hardly feasible for the relatively isolated rural disabled, who could find themselves stranded in serious poverty, benefitting from neither the traditional family or communal resources, nor their (temporary) ideological replacement. Kohrman perceives an uneasiness about the perceived “growing field of unmet moral responsibility”, much beyond the needs of disabled people (pp. 211-212). However, he emphasises the huge complexity and variety of practice across the vast nation. [Other sources suggest a continuation or resurgence of religious belief and experience, with possible implications for neighbourly behaviour or 'good deeds'.]

The KOJIKI. Records of Ancient Matters, transl. BH Chamberlain (1883), Suppl. to Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan. Reprinted 1981, Rutland, Vermont & Tokyo: Tuttle. Together with Nihongi (see below), Kojiki is a compilation (completed early in the 8th century CE) of the legends and histories of ancient Japanese origins, the ancestors, emperors, and world of spirits (kami), that underpin Shinto, the traditional Japanese religious practice. Most of the
disability-related material in *Kojiki* also appears in *Nihongi*, which also provides more items and versions of stories, so they are annotated under that book (below). Chamberlain's profuse annotation of *Kojiki*, and references to Japanese scholarly work, indicate some of the textual and cultural difficulties of translation and interpretation. The translator's diffidence about what he considered “shocking obscenity of word and act” [I: lvi], found occasionally in the *Kojiki*, caused him to translate such moments into Latin. The first such item briefly relates the discovery, by the early progenitors Izanami and Izanagi, of how to proceed with sexual intercourse, with the resulting production of a defective child (vol. I, sect. IV, pp. 20-22 and sect. VII, pp. 33-34), followed by more successful efforts. (See Fuminobu Murakami, above, for possible explanation). See also Vol. I, Sect. XII, pp. 50-51; XV-XVII, pp. 61-63, 66; 70; XXVII, pp. 103-104. Vol. II, sect. LXXI-LXXII, pp. 233-239, 242 (birth and upbringing of a mute prince; lame and blind people at the city gates); LXXXIX, pp. 270-72; CVII, pp. 308-310); CLII, pp. 297-298; CLVII, pp. 416-419; CLVIII, pp. 419-420.


Describes a tradition of village 'convalescent inns' near Daian Temple, dating from the 11th century when the Emperor Gosanjo's daughter suffered mental illness.


Modern Korean literature is “conspicuously populated by physically anomalous characters”, some of which are reviewed briefly (pp. 431-32). The author discusses in greater detail a literary picture of the casual violence and humiliations practised on disabled people, in parallel with the humiliations of the Korean nation under Japanese colonial rule, exploring some of the moral and ethical challenges to humanity.


Detailed study of historical and current practices, from infanticide through abortion, and some ways in which these raw events have (to some extent) been domesticated within a context of Japanese Buddhist belief. Disability appears briefly, in the 'origins' story of the 'leech-child' (23-25), and cited remarks on common beliefs associating disability with karma (162). As an American and a Professor of Japanese, Lafleur is impressed by the ways in which Japanese society and religious understanding manages to contain and resolve a seriously bitter and divisive issue, and to maintain a strongly cohesive, successful and remarkably healthy society, in contrast to the strongly adversarial American approach of legal battle and campaigns of partisan hatred, with one side winning, the other side losing, and no reconciliation or mutual recognition (pp. 210-217).


The article begins with the rediscovery of a set of puppets, one being of Ebisu; and 17th century texts, among which was a scroll titled *D0kumb0 Denki*, which “tells the story of the Leech Child [Hiruko], his priest caretaker D0kumb0, and the priest's apprentice HyakudayU”. These items are set in their context, the ritual performances by itinerant puppeteers based on the Japanese island Awaji, having some affiliation with the major Ebisu Shrine complex in Nishinomiya. An account is given of the Ebisu legend and his portrayal as a deity having “an assortment of liminal attributes - obesity, amorphous blob-shaped body, hermaphroditism, leglessness, drunkenness ... and according to popular belief, he is the adult form of the Leech Child of the creation accounts”. The *Kojiki* and *Nihongi* legends are extended beyond the point where the Leech Child Hiruko was pushed out to sea on his little craft, giving some detail of how he fared, and after some years was
picked up by a fisherman. [The article discusses this strand of 'folk religion' and efforts by its practitioners to acquire recognition and religious authority, in some conflict with the shrine authorities.]

LENDERINK, Hendrik Jacob (1902) Kort overzicht der werkzaamheden van het Internationale congres voor verbetering van het lot der blinden, gehouden te Brussel. Amsterdam. HJ Lenderink (b. 1846) engaged in mission work with blind people in Java (probably from the 1890s, using Moon's embossed books in Batta Toba and Batta Mandailing). Presumably he played a part in the start of the Vereeniging tot Verbetering van het Lot der Blinden in Nederlandsch-Indië (Society for Uplift of the Blind in the Netherlands East Indies), which in 1902 opened an Institute for the Blind at Bandung (now in Indonesia).


The authors visited special education classes in ordinary Japanese schools, and reflect critically on their own responses to what they saw and how it sometimes differed from what the teachers were aiming to do. They entered a new plane of awareness of the moral and sociological currents in Japanese society, where the 'group-centred' and homogenizing cultural traditions are in tension with some strongly individual-needs-oriented practice. Citing the work of Kenzaburo Oe, they recognise the complexities in trying to describe various trends towards opening up some traditionally 'closed' and 'excluding' aspects of Japanese society so as to provide appropriate educational opportunities, while also accommodating parental wishes which may favour different routes for disabled people to live in society.


In 1990 Graham updated his introductory remarks (pp. xi-xix, 1-13), with a new generation of scholarly thinking on Daoist philosophy and the Lieh-tzu, from the 3rd or 4th century CE. Some passages directly give instances of disabled people (e.g. 44-45; 72-73; 162-164; 168-169) whose unusual abilities, or experience (e.g. of being castrated or losing their sight) added a new dimension to philosophical discussion and belief. Elsewhere it was an ageing, poor, ragged, drunken or troubled person, or a slave or dreamer (e.g. 27; 32-33; 38; 39-43; 68-71; 162) that was despised, ridiculed or endangered like the cripples or blind, and who then turned out to have embraced 'The Way' that produced startling capacities which their despisers envied but could hardly emulate; or who underwent some other turn of their life suggesting that we do not know if the dream is in our own head, or we are a character in someone else's dream. [Thus (p. 3), 'bodily impairment' in oneself or another is an incidental construction, a superficial circumstance, part of the ebb and flow of life, of no ultimate significance.]

LIN KA (1999) Confucian Welfare Cluster. A cultural interpretation of social welfare. Tampere: University of Tampere. Focuses on the social norms and values within the cultural-historical codes of Confucian welfare ideas and practices, in some contrast with those of the Nordic environment in which the author was living and studying.

LINCK, Gudula (1995) Befähigung anderer Art? Zur Lebenswelt körperlich Behinderten in China. Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus-Verlagsgesellschaft. (Chapter summaries in English, pp. 190-99) Historical section discusses patterns of Chinese social responses to disability, with some acceptance and tolerance by the educated classes and rather more aversion and ridicule among the
masses. Notes the paucity of Chinese historical materials dedicated to disability topics. Nevertheless, in the second section, on disabled people in China c. 1989, respondents did recall some historical figures with disabilities.


A senior advisor at the China Rehabilitation Research Centre gives data on the development of resources for eye surgery, and particularly the major drive to prevent cataract, which blinds up to 400,000 Chinese people every year, particularly in the rural areas. Preventive measures have developed slowly, often with poor results. Most rural workers must pay their own medical and surgical costs. For cataract removal, “the surgical cost alone equals two to four years of their annual income. Not surprisingly they cannot afford to access the service.” The government is trying to address the situation, and needs to find low-cost strategies that are affordable to the rural people. [See annotation to Kohrman (above) and Qiu Renzong (below), for background debate on cost, access, ethical and moral responsibility.]


The author shows no reticence about the ongoing influences of religions in mainland China, noting that Chinese people “value their own culture and religion, but they are open and pragmatic towards the religions and cultures of others” (p. 66) and detailing the “Role of Religion” (pp. 76-78) in this “multi-religious country”, where Buddhism, Christianity and Taoism are practised. The continuing widespread influence of Confucianism is noted (p. 74, 77), while acknowledging that “Confucian thought and religion were banned” (p. 71) after the Communist party took power in 1949. Discussing Chinese concepts of disability (pp. 68-70), mention is made of “punishment for the disabled person's sins in a past life or the sins of the person's parents”, and seeking religious rituals as a solution to disease or disability. Mental illness may, in some cases, also be attributed to “evil spirits or punishment from god(s)”. No data is given for the prevalence of such views.

LONDON Society for Teaching the Blind to Read. Annual Reports (1847-1862). London. (see also annotation in South Asia section above, under 'London Society...') “Your Society has also had the privilege of instructing in its system a lady who has recently sailed for China ... she carries with her a complete set of the embossed Publications.” (9th Report, 1847, p.18). “The remaining Chinese girl, Agnes Gutzlaff, after eleven years instruction, was sent out [to China] last October ... as female teacher” (18th Rpt, 1856, p.7). “The Committee may add that they have recently received intelligence from China. They find that the grant of embossed books, &c., made some time ago to Agnes Gutzlaff, a blind native of China, who was educated in this School, and returned eventually to Ningpo, has not been in vain. She has been engaged in teaching the Blind inhabitants of Ningpo, under the superintendence of the devoted Miss Aldersey.” (22nd Rpt, 1860, p.10). “Agnes [Gutzlaff] had little difficulty in acquiring the language, was able to speak with great facility at the time I was at Ningpo, and it pleased God to bless her labours”. (24th Rpt, 1862, pp. 14-15). ['Agnes Gutzlaff' was adopted by Mrs Mary Gutzlaff, c. 1837, and sent to London in 1842, for her education and training. She was probably the first blind person to be sent by a missionary society to another country, and up to her time almost certainly the most technically competent person ever to go abroad on a mission to blind people.]

MACGILLIVRAY, Donald (1930) A Mandarin-Romanized Dictionary of Chinese, 8th edition. Shanghai. This dictionary is outdated and perhaps flawed, yet it gives access in Roman type to the semantic
fields of some clusters of symbols in which many disability terms occurred, indicating ways in which they have been used in the past, and concepts with which they were associated. A wide range of disability reference can be found, some apparently descriptive, some abusive. Page numbers where one or more appear under the following broad categories are: Fool, Blockhead, Weakminded, etc (1, 22, 83, 103, 117, 127, 130, 163, 193, 201, 233, 235, 277, 320, 365-6, 387, 390, 458, 485, 494, 501, 509, 529, 546, 566, 568, 571, 575, 591, 594, 596, 608, 611, 617, 633, 639, 643, 662-3, 688, 749, 825, 849, 854, 942, 982, 1024, 1026, 1041, 1076); Epilepsy, Fit, etc (168, 234, 259, 916, 1143); Disabled (96, 234, 259, 916, 1143); Lame, Crippled etc (226, 251, 378, 560, 562-3, 638, 710, 860, 898, 934, 1014); Deaf, Stammer, Dumb (98, 193, 231, 463, 469, 574, 648, 663, 909, 983, 1035); Goitre (cretinism?) (70, 277, 956, 1064); Dwarf (3, 950, 1021); Hunchback (214, 506, 917, 1003); Blind (306, 326, 358, 427, 476, 584, 610, 744, 777, 811, 856).

Traces development of the Semimaru legend over centuries, giving insights into the history of Asian people's concepts and portrayals of blindness. Main references to historical blindness are on pp. 19-22, 28-31, 39-46, interwoven with the development of musical instruments and heroic literature used by blind mendicants friars (biwa hoshi), and linked with Indian legends of blind prince Kumala. Literature underlying the legends is introduced critically (55-79). Detailed review and translated excerpts appear from dramatic representations (79-272). Bibliography (273-279) is mostly of works in Japanese. Matisoff attributes the ambivalence of social attitudes toward blind people to a combination of early (and still current) beliefs in the blind person's ability to communicate with the gods, and Buddhist views of disability as retribution for misdeeds (20).

The extant writings of Mencius (Mang-tze, possibly c. 371-288 BC) further develop and formalise Confucian thinking. Most of the text concerns government, ceremony and ethics. A few thoughts refer to childhood, education, poverty and disability. The mother of Mencius reportedly moved house several times, fearing that her young son was vulnerable to influences from a nearby cemetery, then a bazar (Prolog. pp. 18-19). In lists of poor people (text, Bk.1 ii.V and Bk.2 ii.IV; pp. 38, 93) disability does not appear but may be implied in “old and feeble”. Mencius's saying “The great man is he who does not lose his child's-heart” is discussed (Bk.4 ii.XII, p. 198).
Remarks appear on environmental influences on children's morality (Bk.6 i.VII, p. 280). A man with a deformed finger earnestly seeks a cosmetic remedy though it is not troublesome in itself; yet a deformed mind raises little concern (Bk.6 i.XII, pp. 290-91). Mencius bluntly rejects a request to render his teaching more accessible to learners (Bk.7 i.XLI, p.350). See also Lau's translation, next item below. On the father of Shun (Bk.4 i.XXVIII), Legge notes that the name “Koo-sow”, each part meaning “blind”, may refer to mental obstinacy not visual disability (p. 191). [This would now be “Gu Sou” or “Ku Sou”, the Blind Man who was father of the legendary emperor Shun.]

MENCIUS. Mencius Translated with an Introduction (transl. DC Lau, 1970). London: Penguin. See annotation above, to Legge's translation. Lau's introduction and translation benefits from a further century of scholarly work. The teaching of decent conduct, the correct, compassionate and benevolent action of the gentleman, is diffused throughout the work. Disability as such appears infrequently. Some uses of 'blind' and 'cripple' are metaphorical (e.g. pp. 68, 83, 93). Appendix 4, on “Ancient history as understood by Mencius”, brings together the incidents in the life of the legendary Emperor Shun, and Shun's father known as the Blind (Old) Man [Gu Sou, Ku Sou] (pp. 226-27). See also 'Blind Man' references shown in the glossary (p. 265). [Allegorical
interpretations have also been made, in which the 'blindness' of Shun's father was wilful stupidity or perverseness rather than sensory impairment; or, in modern literary criticism, where the attempts of family members to kill Shun are interpreted as some form of creation mythology.] See Shu Ching, below.

Missionary Mary Gutzlaff began the education of blind Chinese girls in 1837 at Macau. Several later were sent to schools in London and the US. One known as 'Agnes Gutzlaff' returned in the 1850s and became a teacher of blind and sighted people at Ningpo and Shanghai. An industrial workshop begun by Edward Syle in 1856 gave employment to some blind adults at Shanghai. Over 30 years of work with and by blind people is documented, before William Murray began his better-known teaching work in the 1870s. Substantially referenced from primary sources. (Similar developments in India are described in the first section of this bibliography).


Examines in detail how the socially marginal position of blind women in rural Japan has been perceived as fitting them for certain religious functions, as a bridge to the spirit world.

Development of work with leprosy sufferers in China, Japan and Korea, 1890-1917, by various organisations, pp. 73-82, 146-168, 188-198, 202-211.

Detailed description and commentary on urban foundling hospitals, leper and blind asylums, almsgiving and benevolent societies, under Chinese government or private auspices (pp. 47-72). Milne wrote partly to rebut the false notion, common in Britain, that Chinese people lacked compassionate concern for poor and needy people (46-47).

Historical overview taking in charity granaries, tax exemptions, Buddhist temple asylums, hospitals, orphanages and poorhouses, with some dating. In times of scarcity, “provisions, clothing and medicine were granted to the helpless, sick and disabled”, from the first millennium CE. Special practices arose for blind people (p. 105). Some suggestions are made on philosophies and strategies of charitable activity and poor laws. More detail appears from the later 19th century of institutional services for people with leprosy and mental illnesses and education for blind or deaf children.


88
Describes some modern 'resistance movements' of disabled or deaf people, protesting against the 'normal' belief in Japanese society that their lives are worthless.

Reviews the legends and relevant historical evidence on the religious background to the roles and activities of blind Japanese women working as spirit mediums in the North East of Japan.

Study of the range and ambiguity in historical and current public attitudes toward leprosy in Thailand, suggesting that before effective medical treatment was available, Buddhist teaching on karma could support stigmatising views, since leprosy was believed to result from sins in an earlier life; yet Buddhist belief also supported an actively compassionate response, by which believers would acquire merit. The first reaction caused many people with the earlier stages of leprosy to disguise their condition or to be concealed by their families. Over time, this led to the public seeing only people begging with severe leprosy deformities, profiting from the second response, i.e. the charitable impulse. Some time after modern drug treatment became available, people with severe deformities were a rare sight, yet a strong folk memory of the disgusting and repulsive beggar continued to reinforce negative attitudes in the rising generation.

Detailed study of religious, cosmological and ordinary everyday factors in the construction of impairment, disability and personhood in Central Borneo, Sarawak, Malaysia, based on anthropological field work over 13 years. [Many factors have resonance with beliefs elsewhere in Asia or Africa, while the nuances and local spin of other factors might be unique.]

(See also Kojiki, above). Nihongi (often: Nihon-Shoki) is one of the two major Japanese historical classics with legends back to the 'Age of the Gods', that are foundational to Shinto. Versions appear of how Izanagi and Izanami made their first child who was somehow defective. After forming the Japanese islands, “Next they produced the leech-child, which even at the age of three years could not stand upright. They therefore placed it in the rock-camphor-wood boat of Heaven, and abandoned it to the winds. Their next child was Sosa no wo no Mikoto.” (Vol. I: 19). The latter is portrayed with serious behavioural abnormality, continual wailing and cruel actions, leading eventually to banishment. Interpretations are many but the significance of these strange offspring remains unclear. Links appear with the deities Ebisu and Sukuna-bikona, the latter supposedly a dwarf (I: 59-63). Other people with physical, mental or social disabilities appear in Nihongi. A one-eyed god is mentioned (I: 81). An active pair of conjoined twins caused some trouble (I: 298), and elsewhere triplets were celebrated (II: 330). Odd or ugly appearance aroused negative reactions (I: 174; II: 144). Dwarf appeared as court entertainers (I: 407; II: 296, 326, 362). One prince with a disabling condition declined to become emperor, but later agreed and finally was cured (I: 312-317). Another apparently suffered severe developmental delay (I: 174-175). Bald or emaciated people were thought unfit to perform rites of worship (I: 152, 177). Adaptations were made for some elderly people who were frail or disabled (I: 386-91; II: 344, 418, 421). In the later period, child-related legislation is noted (II: 202; 331-32). [There are great
difficulties of translating and interpreting these ancient texts, especially as there is no substantial body of disability material with which comparison may be made.

Notes myth of the divine but disabled child Hiruko ('Leech[?]), abandoned to the sea on a small craft (see Nihongi, above). Mentions 20th century cerebral palsied persons acting as Miko (spirit mediums) at Mount Osore. Links Buddhist belief in soul transmigration with negative attitudes towards disabled people, i.e. association with sins of ancestors. [This is not a neutral or scholarly report.] Admits that Japanese Christian churches have also had negative attitudes and practices.

Brief court records, supposedly of the 1st to 108th emperors, compiled c. 1652, translation completed 1807, much amended by Klaproth. Disability and therapy, care or mutilation appear briefly (pp. xiii-xv, 9-10, 26, 30, 31, 64, 80, 110, 155, 400). Mentions diseases of emperors or courtiers, health care and medical practice (e.g. 7, 63, 66, 68, 81, 100, 115, 116, 123-24, 127, 133, 149, 153, 156, 170, 176, 205, 229, 328, 331, 342, 434); epidemics (e.g. 7, 69, 113, 117, 139, 145, 152, 253); periods of famine or acute poverty, for which in later periods public distribution of food was made (e.g. 23, 60, 89, 101, 241, 282, 372). [Historical accuracy of the earlier portions at least, and of dating, may be questioned.]

Among many other features in this scholarly book, Ouwehand discusses Japanese folklorist debates on puzzling relationships, substitutions, oppositions, among various deities and beings depicted with dwarfish, ugly or deformed appearance, e.g. Ebisu, Sukunhikona, Hiruko, the Kappa, tricksters, monkeys, who are sometimes destructive, sometimes benevolent. See pp. 82-96, 133-149, 162-171, 203-207, 222-127, and index.

Studying the texts of Chuang Tzu (see above; now transliterated as Zhuangzi), and Nietzsche's Also Sprach Zarathustra (written in the early 1880s, having nothing to do with the historical Zarathustra or Zoroaster), Parkes finds that differences of context and era are surpassed by a congruence of philosophical goals. Both writers aim to disturb and transform the ordinary mindset, using ironic humour and many images from the natural world, including "images of the pathological, the deformed, and the grotesque." The neat, well-ordered and self-controlled (or repressive) cosmos, whether of Confucian Man or of late Platonic/Christian Europe, was illusory. Reality was fluid, multi-faceted, changing according to perspective. We humans cannot tell if we are awake or asleep, dreaming of a butterfly or existing in a butterfly's dream. Ideas of beauty and health are formed with their opposites, ugliness and sickness. Parkes has some trouble harmonizing Chuang Tzu's cool thoughts of a meandering flow along the Daoist Way, with Nietzsche's hopping fury against the petty, stifling and hypocritical religiosity of a society that would soon accommodate him in the madhouse.


In this and the previous item, Qiu Renzong analyses different approaches to therapeutic medicine (“the art of benevolence”, in Confucian thought) giving a lucid overview of the human values and moral philosophy underpinning health care policies over long periods of Chinese history, and some of the conflicts within or between policies, e.g. privileging particular economic groups, or having an 'equal treatment' policy (which might disadvantage those with greater needs). He notes some contrast of values between the “non-invasive therapy” of traditional, holistic, Chinese medicine, and the recent “mechanistic or reductionistic” Western approach, which “regards the patient as a machine to be mended and has successfully applied modern science and technology to developing many effective therapies” (p. 298). The philosophy behind Chinese government health policy in the 1980s, a curious amalgam of Marxism and traditional notions of human value, was pressurised by economic forces, as efforts to provide free medical and rehabilitative care on a state-run basis, or on a local cooperative basis, had run into difficulties. A new economic policy was being implemented, which should find a way between individual and state responsibilities. However, in the actual situation of economic constraints, and of the one-child family policy, the traditional impulse to have a healthy male heir was greatly enhanced, and the perceived value of low-birth weight infants, those with some impairment, or females, was significantly reduced. The author mentions the perception of an infant growing up “useless to society or a severely handicapped person, a burden to family and society, but this is not the infant's fault” (p. 175). Rather than blaming the infant, society should make better efforts for prevention of impairment. Nevertheless, Qiu Renzong notes that the apparent increase in the number of people surviving with severe disabilities “will become an intolerable burden” to a society lacking resources to provide adequate health care even to many people of normal capacity.


The drama “Terrace of the Leper King” (1969), by the Japanese writer Mishima Yukio (pen-name of Hiraoka Kimitake, 1925-1970), is loosely based on the life of the Cambodian King Jayavarman VII (in the late 12th and early 13th century), his construction of a great Buddhist temple at Angkor Wat, and his supposed concurrent development of leprosy. Raeside pursues different strands of significance, e.g. the 'Leper King'; leprosy as a metaphor of varied meaning; the religious background in Jayavarman's time, and religious archetypes in other times; themes of disability, decay and paradoxical hermeneutics in Mishima's major works, and influences on his thinking; uneasy relations between Japan and its Asian neighbours; and some perceived corruption within the 'body politic' of Japan.


The author expressed, with apparent intelligibility, some basic teaching of Buddhism on life, its sanctity and death, on cause and effect, on the inter-connectedness and transience of all things, and on suffering and its cessation; and made tentative suggestions about their application to some issues of interest to western ethicists and planners in the 1980s. [However, the Buddhist teachings, and their elaboration, do not appear to mesh easily into anglophone concepts and assumptions of 20th century western “health policy, ethics and human values”; indeed, they may challenge some of the post-judaeo-christian philosophical underpinning of international health policies, wrongly assumed to be of global validity.]

The paper reports on 134 Malay patients, all Muslims, who were referred for psychiatric treatment. They were asked to rate the most likely cause of mental illness, among 20 items on a checklist that took into account the prevalent local beliefs about aetiology. Most of the respondents were of lower socio-economic status, and secondary education. A majority (53%) attributed their illness to supernatural agents or magic. Others suggested psychosocial stress (16%), biological or genetic inheritance (13%), problems with family or job (10%). Among supernatural causes, evil spirits and witchcraft were commonly mentioned. Local traditional healers (bomohs) were the major source of information on the subject, supporting the idea of supernatural causes. The authors consider that the view is commonly held among Malays, that 'modern medicine' is “effective in curing physical illnesses but powerless against black magic or supernatural causes of mental illness.” Bomohs have various ways of combating the supernatural forces.


Reports on various mini surveys and sample exercises on Cambodian views concerned with disability and disabled people. The teachings of Theravada Buddhism form the background to traditional beliefs. It is suggested that there is quite a widespread attitude that “All individuals with disabilities are morally at fault” (p. 73), with the impairments attributed to wrongdoing in a previous life. However, the authors are cautious about generalising from their studies, and the religious aspect is not emphasized among the results.


Suggests that the early Japanese Zatô plays involved frank ridicule of blind men, upon whom “coarse pranks” and farcical tricks were practised to amuse the sighted audience (as also in comparable European drama). Later interpreters could not face this “uninhibited derision”, so they introduced moralising elements.


Intimate description of daily life, etiquette, poetry and trivia at the imperial court in Japan's great Heian culture, in the late first millennium CE. Includes some reference to deities, priests and religious practice, with illness being the work of evil spirits, which a skilled Buddhist priest should be able to exorcise by transfer from the afflicted person to a medium [chs. 13; 171; 182] (pp. 26; 41-42; 253-254; 260-261, notes pp. 280; 374). Two Buddhist nuns are mentioned, who come separately to beg from the court ladies [ch. 56] (pp. 99-102, 104, notes pp. 311-313). The first is described with Shônagon's witty contempt for anything not neat and pleasing to her fastidious gaze. This nun, 'Hitachi no Suке', an old woman in filthy clothes, begs vigorously and jokes coarsely until she obtains food, then a robe. For this she performs a ceremonial dance of thanks (which would be the normal response of a person of rank receiving a gift, but by a beggar would be impertinent mimicking, p. 312). To the ladies' disgust, 'Hitachi' returns regularly to beg. The second nun is “a cripple... but with a naturally elegant manner”. For Shônagon, elegance trumps the impairment; the ladies are “truly sorry” for the crippled beggar, and she obtains a fine robe. 'Hitachi' arrives and is annoyed to see this rival leaving. After a sulking absence, Hitachi returns and vents her annoyance in a poem of contempt for the crippled nun. [Cf Younghak, below, with reversed parallels in Korea, a thousand years later.]
In the second of the five great Confucian Classics, *Shu ching* (or *Shujing*, also *Shangshu*), recording legendary times of deep antiquity, the Emperor Yao looked for a man of great wisdom, virtue and humility to take charge of the empire, as his own heir did not come up to this standard. Yao was prepared to elevate someone from any station, high or low. A man called Shun of Yu, of lowly background, was recommended. Of Shun it was said that, “He is the son of a blind man. His father is stupid, his mother is deceitful, his half brother Hsiang is arrogant. Yet he has been able to live in harmony with them and to be splendidly filial. He has controlled himself and has not come to wickedness.” (pp. 8-9) In the Confucian tradition, Shun was held up as a model of ‘governing by personal virtue’ (pp. 32-33; quoting from the *Analects* 94-103), as well as filial piety (*Hsiao*, or *Xiao*). Apparently he had acquired his virtue amidst a disabled and dysfunctional family. [See notes on Mencius, above, Lau's translation. Allegorical interpretation has sometimes been made of the blindness of Shun's father.]


Between 1993 and 1995, Shue interviewed nearly 200 people, mainly in six Chinese coastal cities of large or moderate size, who were involved in charity and welfare work. One aim was to find the balance between earlier notions of comradely service, and “colourful reports confirming the postsocialist transfigurations of social values” (p. 332). Amid many kinds of work reviewed, some served disabled people. The ‘deserving poor’ or ‘honest poor’ (pp. 335, 337) clearly embrace various categories of needy people who lack family members able and willing to care for them, including “mentally and physically disabled people, many of whom may be expected never to succeed in finding a mate, and whose impaired earning abilities and afflictions place an unsustainable burden on their families” (337-38). Activities of the All-China Association of Handicapped People are noted (339). Other voices name “the elderly, orphaned children, sick children, the disabled...” (340), or “the poor, the disabled, and so on” (341), for whom China's new, competitive, market economy may find little room or compassion; or who might receive a handout merely to create a better image for a business company or kudos-seeking individual. Some sceptical views are described (346-48), but also a few exceptional people, with little access to funds, who take the difficult path of personally setting up a service, usually for “mentally handicapped children, orphans, or the elderly on a non-profit basis”, and succeed against the odds (p. 349). Shue finds some continuities of concept, motivation and action, between China's historical heritage of philanthropy and the current reported activities, whether by the state, non-governmental organisations or individuals.


Includes information on involvement of blind people in fortune-telling, divination and shamanistic practices, e.g. pp. 138, 200, 205-206, 230, 317, 331, 347. Underlines influence of physiognomic lore in the Ming and Qing, e.g. pp. 188-200, 213, which reflected adversely on disabled people: “wherever a deformity exists, trouble will strike” (192).


pp. 238-251 tell of Ryokwan (1758-1831), monk and poet who was a kind of saint-fool and eternal child.

Syle, whose son was deaf, was a missionary and scholar in China. Extracts from his journal appeared over many years in the American Episcopalian mission magazine. Syle often mentioned people with disabilities, social responses, and beliefs about them. He reported the start (1856) and early years of his school/workshop for blind people. (Items listed are not exhaustive of Syle's contributions relevant to disability).


Parts of China's first great work of systematic history, written c. 100 BC. Amidst reports of power struggles and treachery are a few striking tales of disabled people. In the middle of the third century BC, a commoner who was lame lived near the nobleman Chao Sheng, Lord Pingyuan. One of Pingyuan's concubines saw this lame [old] man, and "laughed heartily" at him [or at his gait]. The lame man complained of the disgrace, demanding the lady's death. Lord Pingyuan "consented with a smile"; but afterwards ridiculed the idea of killing the lovely lady "because of one laugh!"

As a consequence, "within a year or so, more than half of his protégés and retainers had left one after the other." Pingyuan enquired into the departures, since he did not think he had treated those gentlemen with discourtesy. One of them gave the reason: by failing to satisfy the lame man, Pingyuan had prized female charms and despised worthy men. Lord Pingyuan then had the lady's head cut off, "and himself presented it with apologies to the lame man. After that his protégés gradually returned" (p. 128). [This resolution appears rather stark, but the story is translated without commentary or socio-ethical context. Pingyuan's first reading of the situation might make better sense if he had required his concubine to apologise and offer a gift in compensation. His dismissal of the insult, and false assurance to the lame man, seemed dishonourable to courtiers, and reduced his credibility. Even so, some face-saving diplomacy might have been attempted with the lame man, short of removing the lady's head.] Other disability references include the saying, in the early 2nd century BC, that 'a wise man who keeps silent is less use than a deaf mute who can make gestures' (p. 282); the attempted revenge by a talented musician who was blinded by the King of Chin (pp. 400-401); and the sharp wit of dwarf Chan at court (408-409).


In the context of disability, 'ethics' is often understood to concern discussion of the sanctity of life, the need for benevolence towards fellow creatures, the correct practice of giving alms to those in need (and who will not be damaged by reinforcement in self-harm, e.g. spending the money on drugs or alcohol), the appropriately respectful language and demeanour to maintain the dignity of the one needing assistance, etc. Tachibana's classic review of Buddhist ethics runs through the traditional features of a harmless life of self-restraint, benevolence, liberality and other right conduct, without mentioning disability. Yet in the chapter on Humility, he notes that people entering the religious life should undergo the social adversity normally experienced by the seriously disabled person, reminding themselves that "I have attained the state of (bodily) disfigurement; my life depends upon (the aid of) others; and I ought to attire myself in a different way from others", as indicated in the Pali text *Anguttara-nikaya*. Giving up the pride of good appearance, undertaking a change toward whatever locally looks unattractive, and adopting a life of dependency by meekly begging for daily food, are steps toward humility on the Buddhist way. They suggest a different agenda from the demands of disabled people's organisations in western countries.
Among 1,106 maxims and proverbs at least 25 involve disability, often metaphorically and with pejorative sense, indexed under e.g. Blind (7), Deformed (2), Dumb (4), Ear (deaf), Epileptic, Eye (dim), Harelip, Limb (cripple), Mad, Nonsense, Spectacles, Stupidity, Thief (dumb), Woman (mad) (2). Also various pessimistic maxims about begging, babies and children, poverty, ugliness, and mothers-in-law.


The increase of elderly and very old people in Japan, as in many other countries, has generated a growing need for care related to disabilities, ageing and senility, while concurrent social trends have altered traditional assumptions about women's roles in such care, and state participation in care funding. Based on fieldwork in the 1990s, Traphagan analyses and discusses this complex and evolving field, the concepts of disability, moral discourses, and discontinuities of thought and practice, in modern Japan.


Suggests that, between two sharply opposed Western positions on the moral status of human embryos, a middle contribution can be made from Confucian moral principles, acknowledging the 'gradualist nature' of ethical decision during the course of the growing embryonic life.


Tsu reviewed Buddhism in Japan and China in the 1930s. In Japan, efforts had been made to modernise and to replicate some successful Christian activities, so Buddhist agencies operated many educational and welfare agencies. Following a traditional Buddhist role with neglected children, there were also “20 schools for the blind and deaf”. Nevertheless, while the indirect influence of Buddhism was pervasive in Japan, adherence to formal religious practice seemed to be weakening. In China, while reform was perceived as desirable, Buddhism had modernised less than in Japan. Conservative, liberal and scholastic schools of thought were in some conflict as to the best way forward.


Discussing land grants in China, pp. 3-4, “Old men of over 60 years of age and disabled persons were entitled to 40 mou” (about 5 acres of land). This was less than half the grant to able-bodied men aged 18 to 60, but the elderly or disabled grantees were exempt from taxation. Note 21 (p. 212) gives the administrative listing that distinguishes “partial”, “serious” and “total” degrees of disability. [For an imperial government to enact a specific entitlement to land, for elderly or disabled people, in the 8th century CE, suggests a solidly-rooted ethical perception of those people as deserving some means of support.]


Among paradigms of causal explanation of illness, demonology had some strong points, though modern Westerners find it hard to perceive this.

Disability and deformity in Chinese folklore, e.g. the dwarfish Creator (p. 76); the Deaf-Heaven and Dumb-Earth (82, 109-110, 165, 450); dwarfs at court (169-170); baby born as a lump of flesh, thrown outside the city, later rescued (195); old woman's broken arm healed (202); one-legged bird, three-eyed monster (206-207); writer rejected for great ugliness (250); the Immortal, Li T’ieh-kuai (Li Tieguai), as a lame beggar with a crutch (289-290); dwarfs; giants; headless, armless or punctured people, wild men (386-392).

The author presents some attempted deconstructions of the story of Shun and his father[-in-law], the Blind Man, from the legendary reigns of the three Wise Kings, noting odd points that Mencius and Confucius contributed in the transmission, and the supposed motives of different philosophical schools in changing or promoting the legend. Shun is contrasted with Oedipus, in the received interpretation of the story. He exercised admirable filial piety, despite strong provocation from the Blind Man. However, different accounts appears in the Bamboo Annals. It is suggested that the previous sage-king, Yao, and the Blind Man, were one person, and Shun seized power from this person. Parts of other myths and legends, or geopolitical struggles, may have been involved in the differing accounts. Whalen Lai traces some threads in recent hermeneutics of Chinese legends, but is sceptical of any actual comparison with Oedipus.

Tells the origins in 1899 of Mrs Wilkinson's school. She visited Amoy, and “with the aid of Mr. Cook, a blind missionary, set about the work of adapting the Braille system to the Foochow dialect.” The school began in rented rooms, to local scepticism. By 1910, some of the blind students were winning prizes for the quality of their handiwork. Personal stories are given. The school day is described.

Reviews the history and practice of a healing technique that is claimed to apply the Buddha's universal energy, to “heal everything from nearsightedness to terminal cancer”. A modern Shingon master is quoted, who includes epilepsy, and polio “in its early state”, among conditions that he believes have been greatly benefited during his own practice. Winfield “makes no attempt to substantiate the medical validity of such claims”, but aims to retrieve the neglected history of this hands-on technique.

Chapter 2 (pp. 24-42) discusses “The culture of welfare - the pre-revolutionary legacy”, noting traditional values, mutual obligations and institutional provisions, with some mention of disabled people among those needing assistance. Extensive bibliography of works in English (pp. 215-30).

Writings of the Chinese philosopher Xunzi in 3rd century BC included Bk 5 (I: 196-211, notes pp. 293-299). This debunked the practice of physiognomy, the attempt to judge character and fortune from physical appearance, which was popular in his time. Rejecting it, Xunzi gave examples of people of peculiar or deformed appearance who achieved fame by their character and actions (I: 204, 294-296). Elsewhere (Bk 8, sect. 7) he used an example indicating common public attitudes:
“An unworthy person who is self-deluded into thinking himself worthy is like a hunchback trying to raise himself up high. Those who point to his deformity will be all the more numerous.” (II: 75; see also III: 139). On the appalling behaviour of King Kang of Song, Xunzi reported that “He split open the hump of a hunchback” (II: 148). Among court entertainers, he mentioned “jesters and buffoons ... dwarfs and fools” (II: 168; III: 45).


Points out a number of ways in which traditional religious teaching in Japan has underpinned negative, superstitious and discriminatory beliefs about people with disabilities, and reinforced conformity to social norms that tended to exclude those whose body or mind was made on a different design. Some possible solutions are stated briefly, such as mutual support organisations for disabled people and their family members, use of the mass media, and educating children toward a different point of view.


The Korean Christian theologian Younghak notes his changing perception of crippled beggars. He first saw them as a boy, and enjoyed watching their begging song and dance, which was also an event for mimicking and teasing. He tells the story of a talented dancer, Ms Kong Ok-Jin, who performed a 'cripple's dance'. She grew up in a very poor family, her brother was deaf, and she had learnt to communicate with gesture and mime. She worked as a maid for a Korean dancer, and later worked in a troupe of singers and dancers. Her speciality was to depict “both the pain and the joy of the poor, powerless, estranged and uneducated people as she experienced in her personal life and observed in others.” Once, going home after a performance, she was beaten by a group of crippled beggars, who felt that her art made fun of their plight. Later, she ran a small restaurant, and used to invite crippled beggars, give them food and drink, and “dance with them in order to learn the minutest details of their body movements.” By close attention, entering into the beggars’ world, Ok-Jin finally learnt how to make an audience feel the reality of pain and misery in the dance of the crippled beggars or lepers, and also the spark of joy with which they claimed their common humanity and challenged 'normal' people. Her performance finally became acceptable to the beggars.


The paper mentions a few disability moments in antiquity, with Confucian reference, then broadly sketches movements in public thinking in 20th century China. After 1911, “Confucian knowledge rapidly lost its authority”, and Republican China (or at least, some educated elements in that period) was “characterized by an intense faith in the power of 'science', regarded as a holistic, unified, ultimate and universal truth” (p. 106). Eugenic thinking increasingly appealed to politicians and intellectuals from the 1920s onward, with condemnation of the poorer classes who supposedly were weakening the nation by generating defective, deviant and inferior children. This “class-biased eugenics” was formally rejected under Chairman Mao. By the late 1970s, the government was making some efforts to address “the issue of scarce economic resources for families with disabled individuals”, and to improve conditions for disabled people. Nevertheless, in 1995 “a eugenics law was officially adopted in China”, apparently with the aim of controlling impairments attributable to genetic defects. The rhetoric of “financial burden on the nation” is also current. [Other sources, e.g. Kohrman, above, suggest that a much wider range and balance of viewpoints can be found across the vast nation.]

See CHUANG TSU (above). This startling presentation of the life and philosophy of Zhuangzi, by Taiwanese cartoonist Tsai Chih Chung, offers a graphic rendering (with lettered storyline in English, and also Chinese text) of many stories, word-pictures and debates recounted by the Daoist philosopher and school, including those with disabled characters. An 'Afterword' by Donald Munro (pp. 127-141) introduces Zhuangzi (369? - 286? BC) and his thought, as “a man who broke a lot of the rules and was irreverent toward all the rest”, [and who, presumably, would have been greatly tickled by the idea of his universalization in cartoon strip.]

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