

[NEW BOOK>KAUL, Hitopadesha by Narayana: A New English Translation](#)

Discussion published by A. Charles Muller on Tuesday, February 7, 2023

[x-posted from H-Asia]

Discussion published by [Shonaleeka Kaul](#) on Tuesday, February 7, 2023

This book was recently published by Aleph Book Company, New Delhi, India, ISBN 978-93-91047-94-8, number of pages 197. It is a new translation with critical introduction by me to the *Hitopadesha* which, like the *Panchatantra*, is among the most widely translated classical texts of India. This new version by me brings with it a cultural-historical perspective and is an idiomatic translation in simple narrative prose and free verse that retains the freshness and wit of the original.

Hitopadesha, which literally means good advice, was composed in Sanskrit sometime between the ninth and tenth centuries CE by Pandit Narayana. Arranged in four fascinating sections—Winning Friends, Losing Friends, Waging War, and Making Peace—the vignettes that comprise the text include tales of anthropomorphized birds and animals who are imbued with all too human qualities and frailties. Using humour, satire, and unconventional methods of narration, the stories in the collection prescribe canny and pragmatic responses to a range of very human situations, ambitions, problems, and dilemmas which I historicise. Not only does the book have advice for the ruler who is too timid or too haughty, but also for the minister who must serve him, as for the innocent husband with the conniving wife, the beautiful wife with the undeserving husband, friends turned enemies, enemies reconciled, clever people, foolish people, the greedy, the distraught, and so on.

For further information see <https://www.alephbookcompany.com/book/hitopadesha-by-narayana-a-new-english-translation/>