



The Daoist Tradition: An Introduction

By Louis Komjathy



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Using a historical, textual and ethnographic approach, this is the most comprehensive presentation of Daoism to date. In addition to revealing the historical contours and primary concerns of Chinese Daoists and Daoist communities, *The Daoist Tradition* provides an account of key themes and defining characteristics of Daoist religiosity, revealing Daoism to be a living and lived religion. Exploring Daoism from a comparative religious studies perspective, this book gives the reader a deeper understanding of religious traditions more broadly. Beginning with an overview of Daoist history, *The Daoist Tradition* then covers key elements of Daoist worldviews and major Daoist practices. This is followed by a discussion of the importance of place and sacred sites as well as representative examples of material culture in Daoism. The work concludes with an overview of Daoism in the modern world.

The book includes a historical timeline, a map of China, 25 images, a glossary, text boxes, suggested reading and chapter overviews. A companion website provides both student and lecturer resources:

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Editorial Review

Review

Louis Komjathy has composed a comprehensive description of Daoism which combines an abundance of factual information with fresh insights and innovative concepts ... [His] book, based on solid scholarship and personal engagement with the Daoist tradition, is the most comprehensive introduction to Daoism currently available. -- Volker Olles, Humboldt University, Berlin Journal of Chinese Religions

Louis Komjathy has written a masterpiece. It is detailed, insightful and authoritative, and is simply the best guide to Daoism that is available today. -- James Miller, Associate Professor of Chinese Religions at Queen's University, Canada

The Daoist Tradition: an Introduction, by Louis Komjathy, offers a clear, unbiased, and comprehensive description of Daoism (Taoism) from its roots in ancient China up to a plethora of modern interpretations, from within as well as outside of the Chinese cultural context. By using a "thematic" approach, scholarly as well as popular sources are treated with objective balance, without favoritism or bias. The "philosophy" vs. "superstition" dichotomy favored by 19th century missionaries and 20th century agnostics clearly does not represent the Daoist Family inside China.

The contemporary world is deeply influenced by Daoism, both within China, as well as throughout the "West" and modern Asia. Highly recommended for the general reader, as well as dedicated scholars. -- Michael Saso, Professor Emeritus, University of Hawaii, USA

Louis Komjathy has presented us with a comprehensive history of Daoism that demonstrates once and for all that it is a tradition that--while multifarious--contains important themes, ideas, and practices that demonstrate a continuous development from the classical period to the modern world.

Finally, a completely integrated history of Daoism that breaks the half century hegemony of the outmoded scholarly view that this tradition is deeply bifurcated, a religion that completely departs from the texts it claims as its foundations. -- Harold Roth, Professor of Religious Studies at Brown University, USA

Komjathy's book depicts a number of linked but distinct Daoisms, rather than only a single, uniform tradition, by structuring his presentation in terms of both multiple historical periodizations and various overlapping "models of practice and attainment" in which various Daoist practitioners participate across historical periods ... As a first look at a complex and diverse set of traditions, [Komjathy's] book may be the best of its kind and certainly replaces treatments published prior to the twenty-first century. -- Jeffrey L. Richey, Berea College Religious Studies Review

About the Author

Louis Komjathy is Assistant Professor of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of San Diego, USA. He also serves as Founding Co-Chair of the Daoist Studies Group of the American Academy of Religion and as Founding Co-Director of the Center for Daoist Studies.

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Norma Barnes:

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