

書評 BOOK REVIEWS

Celestial Masters: History and Ritual in Early Daoist Communities, by Terry F. Kleeman. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Asia Center, 2016. xiii, 425 pp. US\$49.95, £39.95, €45.00 (cloth).

Terry Kleeman's magnum opus is his long-awaited survey of Tianshidao 天師道 (the Way of the Celestial Masters) from late Han through medieval China. To begin with the accolade it richly deserves, this book takes its place alongside its complementary counterpart, Stephen Bokenkamp's 1997 *Early Daoist Scriptures*,¹ as an indispensable western-language survey of the origins of Daoism. While parts of Kleeman's new book revisit portions of Bokenkamp's annotated translations of key texts across several scriptural traditions, *Celestial Masters* limits itself to a single tradition, and also differs in a couple other key ways.

One is that Kleeman tells his story twice. The first part of the book tries to triangulate the institutional development of the Celestial Master community through chronological presentations of both insider and outsider accounts. The book's second part is a set of four thematic chapters dedicated to "Ritual Life," "The Daoist Citizen," "The Novice," and "The Libationer." Another difference in emphasis is that while Bokenkamp's engaging introductions to his translations are more concerned with setting up the terminology and the stories that will appear in the upcoming translation, Kleeman's bent is at once more positivist and more sociological. While the former is interested in explaining what the authors of the text *believed*, and in tracing and describing worldviews in which it might have made sense to do so, the latter is more interested in reconstructing the *lived experience* of practitioners. Since it is the second part of *Celestial Masters* that is most concerned with that

¹ Stephen R. Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures*, with a contribution by Peter Nickerson (1997; repr., Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1999).

experience, it ends up being Kleeman's more original and engaging telling of the Celestial Master story.

The first part of *Celestial Masters* is a detailed survey of the sources that treat the early development of the traditions the Celestial Masters identified as their own. Chapters 1 and 2 are dedicated to "external" and "internal" accounts of the founding of the "Celestial Master Church." There are rather substantial disagreements between these accounts, and a considerable secondary literature in Japanese and Chinese that attempts to resolve these disagreements. Kleeman's mastery of this literature is clear and his own interventions are often very convincing, such as his explanation of why Liu Yan's 劉焉 account of the early leadership differed from other sources (36). The two early internal documents that he relies on are the Zhang Pu 張普 stele of 173 CE and the Xiang'er 想爾 commentary to the *Laozi* 老子. One thing I had never seen laid out as clearly is the number of times that the tradition is identified by the phrase *zhengyi mengwei zhi dao* 正一盟威之道, which Kleeman translates as "the Way of the Correct and Unitary Covenant with the Powers." While terms and practices used by the early Celestial Masters appear in other inscriptions, Kleeman is tracing institutional history rather than intellectual filiation or the transmission of techniques.

Chapter 3 looks at "Daoism in the Third Century" by focusing on two texts Kleeman aptly identifies as "encyclicals." *Yangping Parish* (*Yangping zhi* 陽平治) and the *Commands and Precepts for the Great Family of the Dao* (*Da Daojia lingjie* 大道家令戒) are two revealed texts urging moral behavior and threatening consequences for immoral behavior. These exhortations are mined for information about the social organization and the moral teachings of the Celestial Master community. Additionally, Kleeman looks closely at three aspects of the more diverse collection *Demon Statutes of Lady Blue* (*Nüqing guilü* 女青鬼律): its list of prohibitions and taboos, its promotion of the practice "merging the pneumas" (which leads into a more general discussion of *heqi* 合氣 rites), and its systematic demonography. Chapter 4 turns to "church and state" issues, looking at how would-be rulers during the Northern and Southern Dynasties tried to gain authority from the Celestial

Masters, and at the complex interplay between independent communal practices and state control.

Although at times Kleeman gets too deep into the weeds of scholarly debates about minor issues of textual interpretation, the precision of his presentation makes this a useful guide not only to the institutional history of the early Celestial Masters, but also to many of the critical interpretative debates in the secondary sources. Since the first part of *Celestial Masters* is an instance of the established genre of institutional history, it is prey to some of the shortcomings of that genre. One is the insistence on projecting the category and characteristics of religion back to the earliest stages of the tradition's development. At times, the Celestial Masters are described as if they were a "faith" in a secular society. Liu Yan, we are told, intended to interpose a military force "he could disown as religious extremists" (27), while elsewhere a contrast is drawn between "the Daoists and nonbelievers" (98). If sources that are "external" to the Celestial Master tradition are considered "secular," what are we to make of the way the same sources reinforce the importance of imperial power and state sacrifice? If imperial treasures and Daoist sacraments are the same in kind, then the Hanzhong 漢中 theocracy was at most an inversion of the theocracy that surrounded it, and the term "schism" might replace "founding" in its origin myth. My sense is that Kleeman would agree with this objection, and reply that, for instance, his use of the term "church" for the earliest Celestial Master community is a targeted and justifiable translation choice accomplished without importing the entire conceptual frame of the sacred versus the secular. Indeed, compared with many English-language works on this period, Kleeman is much more willing to acknowledge the fact that the early Celestial Master movement was both a political and religious phenomenon—for example, he is not afraid to use the term "theocracy."² *Celestial Masters* is clearly an improvement in this area.

² Compare, for example, Paul Michaud's insistence that the realms of religion and politics are separable in his statement that "it is quite possible that Chang Chüeh (Zhang Jue), perhaps until then entirely religious in his objectives, saw in the political confusion an opportunity to gain for himself great political power." Paul Michaud, "The Yellow Turbans," *Monumenta Serica* 17 (1958), 49.

Another flawed convention in works of Daoist institutional history is the assumption that only Daoist sources are relevant. The tendency in the exegetical passages of *Celestial Masters* to preferentially cite sources from the Daoist Canon begs certain questions. Are legal sources relevant for understanding those texts that pivot on supernatural judgment (see, for example, pp. 154–159, 186–189)? Why aren't Han sources identifying Tianlao 天老 as a supernatural advisor to the Yellow Emperor in Huanglao 黃老-type techniques (see, for example, the *Hanshi waizhuan* 韓詩外傳 and Zhang Heng's 張衡 "Tongsheng ge" 同聲歌) relevant to his appearance in the Zhang Pu stele? Again, this preference for sources in the Daoist Canon is a convention in most works I have read in the genre of Daoist institutional history. I suspect that this is a matter of insider accounts delineating the tradition as both internally consistent and different from whatever came before, and that these conventions have exerted a certain gravity on scholars' ideas of how the texts must be read. Yet while sticking to canon is justified when tracing institutions, such a course is harder to justify when trying to understand terms and practices that can cross sectarian lines more fluidly. If I were to offer one criticism of the first part of *Celestial Masters*, it would be that it doesn't do enough to pull away from the gravity of that insider conceit.

A related dynamic that likely betrays this reader's ignorance is the issue of what defines a person or a text as being part of the Celestial Master tradition. At one point, Kleeman contrasts it to the Shangqing 上清 and Lingbao 靈寶 traditions as a different "scriptural tradition." Yet those other two traditions center on a corpus that was built around a set of revelations at a particular historical moment. The works he translates appear to be part of an agreed upon lineage of texts that lacks some of the internal markers (or moments of synthesis at the hands of figures like Tao Hongjing 陶弘景) of the other lineages. After reading the book, I still wonder: who decided on membership in the lineage and when?

Turning to the second part of the book, such objections largely do not apply. On the contrary, the change in focus from historical chronology to practice liberates Kleeman to look diachronically at a variety of key ritual events, processes and technologies. The

portrait painted does not actually describe the practice of any single Daoist community at any one particular time, but rather captures the arc of historical practice, which at times even reaches to the present day. Chapter 5, “Ritual Life,” describes the oratory, the parish, and Daoist attire. Here, Kleeman proposes a less historical definition of Celestial Master Daoism: “a method of intervening . . . through the proper employment of a set of ritual formulae by trained [and ordained] officiants” (221). In contrast to the earlier concern with the historical development of Celestial Master institutions, this essentialized definition seeks to crystallize a core ritual dynamic that is true of Celestial Master Daoists across the centuries. How this definition connects to the scriptural basis of the first part of the book, or whether it also applies to other Buddhist and Daoist traditions, is not as important as giving the reader some means to connect the various ritual concerns of the last four chapters of the book. But I do hope that at some point Kleeman will have an occasion to explicitly address the methodological question of how the definitions of the Celestial Master tradition in the two parts of the book are related.

Chapters 6 and 7 are devoted to the “Daoist Citizen” and “Novice,” and cover the lay Daoist’s precepts, daily audience, assemblies, and kitchens, along with the aspiring official’s concern with registers, ordination, and promotion. Additionally, Kleeman includes a section entitled “Gender, Class, and Ethnicity” in chapter 7, and translates a section of the *Body of Precept Texts of the Three Caverns* (*Sandong zhongjie wen* 三洞眾戒文). The section on ethnicity begins with a set of requests for registers keyed to members of different nations found in the *Scripture of Great Peace* (*Taipingjing* 太平經). It is worth noting that the *Scripture of Great Peace* did not play a significant role in part 1 of *Celestial Masters* because it had little demonstrable connection to the historical development of Celestial Master institutions. Part 2, however, is organized more along the lines of classic works by Michel Strickmann or Kristofer Schipper—which also approach the tradition in a diachronic way—and no longer applies the sectarian exclusivity of the first part of the book.

Chapter 8’s examination of the “Libationer” is in many ways

the richest of the entire book. It begins with sections called “The Itinerant Evangelist and the Parish Master” and the “Parish System.” It then looks at the libationer in three different aspects: “Spirit Revelation,” “Judge,” and “Pastor.” Then it examines petitions, the rules for submitting and writing them, and their different types. Finally it treats “How to Draw a Talisman,” “Pledge Offerings,” and “Rituals for the Dead.” Each of these sections contains a clear essay on a vital aspect of the Daoist experience, which, taken as a whole, provides an uncommonly comprehensive picture of Daoist ritual practice, an event comparable to the appearance of John Lagerwey’s *Taoist Ritual in Chinese Society and History* thirty years ago.³

The four hundred pages of *Celestial Masters* are the culmination of a career spent teaching the core texts of the Celestial Master tradition, and the work is notable for the precision of its translations and the comprehensiveness of its descriptions. Its hybrid, two-part character means it is really two different books, each exemplary in its own way. Considering where the English-language scholarship on Daoism was just a few decades ago, the appearance of *Celestial Masters* is genuinely a milestone in the historical and sociological study of the early stages of the Daoist tradition.

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³ John Lagerwey, *Taoist Ritual in Chinese Society and History* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company; London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1987).