[Review of] Gil RAZ, The Emergence of Daoism : Creation of Tradition. Abingdon (New York) : Routledge, 2012. Pp. 292. (Routledge Studies in Taoism). ISBN 978-0-415-77849-7

Grégoire Espesset

The book also leaves a key question unanswered. If the state did not always have an upper hand in its reform efforts, and was only half-heartedly committed to the secularization project, one then has to ask: how can the drastic shrinkage of religious space in Republican Guangzhou be accounted for? The book itself provides plenty of evidence that the dream of a modern and secular China was shared by some urban dwellers in Guangzhou, who constantly pressured the government to hold true to the secularist objective. Material of this kind indicates that the most significant negotiation over Guangzhou's religious landscape might not have been between the state and society, but between different social forces. The book's failure to allow any consideration of this possibility leads one to wonder whether Poon has applied the dual construct of "state vs. society" too rigidly to her subject matter.

YA-PEI KUO, Independent Scholar

The Emergence of Daoism: Creation of Tradition

GIL RAZ. Routledge Studies in Taoism. Abingdon, New York: Routledge, 2012. 292 pages. ISBN 978-0-415-77849-7. £95.00 hardcover.

This stimulating work on the competition and retroactive construction of Daoist traditions during the first five centuries A.D. is one of the rare Western attempts at describing the complex relationship network formed by Celestial Master (Tianshi 天師) communities, antagonistic lineages within and around it, and the later currents known as Highest or Upper Clarity or Purity (Shangqing 上清, whose translation varies in the book) and Numinous Treasure (Lingbao 靈寶). Raz asks many right questions, some of which he admits cannot be satisfyingly answered for lack of material evidence. His lucidity in dealing with primary sources and his caution towards modern hypotheses are praiseworthy. Reading the core chapters of the book, sophisticated and often allusive, will be a challenge for lay readers as well as undergraduate students.[1] Due to this complexity, this review can merely touch a very few points.

The book partakes in a current trend of reassessment of received Sinological scholarship. Readers should therefore not expect materials hitherto undisclosed, but rather a fresh, critical approach, based on renewed methodology and problematics, to documents and issues debated

[1] Some technical terms would have benefited from explanatory footnotes; e.g., *mingtang* 明堂 and *benming* 本命, translated without further elaboration (p. 148), and missing in the index.

in the past decades, sometimes *ad nauseam*. A case in point is the *daojia* 道家 / *daojiao* 道教 debate, skillfully dealt with by the author, who shows how "the earliest use of *daojiao* indicates distinction, competition and contestation among Daoist lineages," and certainly not "integration" (pp. 13–14). The theme remains prominent throughout the book.

The first part of the Introduction, called a "chapter" at some point, which it really is, discusses definitions ("Part I: the Dao that can be spoken of") then offers an overview of Daoism from the origins to the era under consideration ("Part II: an episodic history of Daoism"). These classic opening pages soon disclose some of the work's main arguments, namely that the label "Daoism" and its retrospective use betray the intrinsic complexity of historical phenomena, an argument I voiced earlier,[2] and that coexisting Daoist lineages should be defined as "communities" advocating different practices claimed to be efficient in "attaining the Dao and restoring harmony" (pp. 4–5). Raz invites the reader to shift her focus from the names, rites, and texts of traditions to their social nature, arguing that early canons did not include several texts later deemed fundamental (see examples on p. 16). Nevertheless, Raz himself remains tempted to define communities on the sole basis of extant texts, for instance the *Scripture of the Transformations of Master Lao* (*Laozi bianhua jing* 老子變化經), whose authorship remains unknown (pp. 26–27).

A survey of modern attempts at defining Daoism, from Strickmann in 1981 to Liu Yi 劉屹 in 2005 (pp. 14–17), leads to a "polythetic definition" based on five criteria: (1) preeminence of the Way (*dao* 道), (2) which can be "approached" through rites; (3) secrecy and (4) rejection of other practices, in particular blood sacrifice; and (5) eschatological concerns. Not all five criteria are required simultaneously by this "dynamic" definition, which can in effect "accommodate" a wide array of religious phenomena (p. 18). No doubt this latest definition will attract agreement as well as discontentment. Raz goes on to discuss the very concept of religion (pp. 18–21), whose meaning is generally taken for granted in Sinological publications, if not dismissively defined so as to encompass virtually any human activity. The parallel drawn between the historical development of Christianity and Daoism (while their differences are stressed, pp. 213–15) is a useful reminder that orthodoxy always establishes itself by muffling the voices of diversity. But in the case of Daoist "leaders," they failed to impose lastingly "a binding orthodoxy and orthopraxy, although . . . this was not for lack of trying" (p. 21).

Early Chinese historiographers cared little for religious affiliation when reporting disruptions of public order. Dai Yi 戴異 (d. 166) was executed not because his "talismanic writings" (*fushu* 符書) were of his own fabrication, but because he was a rebel leader and

[2] In the remarks concluding my "Latter Han Religious Mass Movements and the Early Daoist Church," in *Early Chinese Religion, Part One: Shang through Han (1250 BC–220 AD)*, ed. John Lagerwey and Marc Kalinowski (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), 1061–1102.

proclaimed himself Most High August One (*taishang huang* 太上皇, rendered as "Great Superior Luminary," p. 130), a pseudo-imperial title. Similar anecdotes abound throughout Chinese history.[3] This focus on legitimacy is one of the reasons why early religious lineages remain poorly documented, and so hardly appear in the book—those of the Li 李 (briefly alluded to on pp. 74 and 131, n. 9) and of the Bo 帛 clans (pp. 99–100), plus a few "deviant" Daoist groups (p. 238, n. 92). The book centers on Lingbao scriptures and liturgy, whose success soon overshadowed Shangqing revelations,[4] and the Celestial Master church, also known as "Way of the Five Pecks of Rice" (Wudoumi dao 五斗米道)—an exogenous designation, perhaps less depreciative than "rice bandits" (p. 12; Chinese text omitted), but which still may hardly be considered "a better term" to use in reference to the church's early communities (p. 32). As to the recently coined dichotomy of Northern (*bei* 北) and Southern (*nan* 南) Celestial Masters (acknowledged on p. 25), however convenient, it also reflects a tendency towards retrospective simplification.

In the first chapter ("Immortality cults and cults of immortals"), Raz defines four cultic levels—"small cultic association," plus "local," "general," and "universal cultic" centers[5]—exemplified by as many late-Han steles, translated and unequally discussed: these are the well-known Fei Zhi 肥致,[6] Tang Gongfang 唐公房, Wangzi Qiao 王子喬, and Laozi 老子 inscriptions (pp. 48–88). Resolute not to fall for easy over-interpretations, Raz reinstates the steles within their original *Zeitgeist* so as to "[vivify] for us what had hitherto been formulaic literary allusions" (p. 67). In contrast to Campany's focus on personas,[7] Raz argues that the hagiography devoted to immortals (*xian* 仙) and "technicians" or "Masters of Esoterica" (*fangshi* 方士) in fact "reveals less about the individual practitioner than about the changing popularity of practices [and] the proclivities of the authors or compilers of the narratives" (p. 42). Identities, Raz adds, could be freely borrowed to invest practices and lineages with the authority and prestige of antiquity. Even the case of Laozi should be seen within the same "spectrum" as the deification of *fangshi* (p. 89). Daoism, Raz concludes, emerged from

[3] For example, Zhang Lu 張魯, leader of the Hanning 漢寧 (Hanzhong 漢中) area, was not a problem because he was a Daoist or a 'theocrat' or both, but because he refused to espouse the ways of legitimate officialdom even after his local authority was finally recognized by the State; see my "Latter Han religious mass movements and the early Daoist church," pp. 1070–71.

[4] To the point that a perhaps embittered Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (456–536) reported seeing devotees flock to Maoshan 茅山 (modern Jiangsu) to attend Lingbao, not Shangqing, ceremonies.

[5] The more common threefold typology of local, regional, and national (here "trans-regional") cults resurfaces in the conclusion of the chapter, p. 88.

[6] The name of Fei Zhi's companion 海上黃淵 is first romanized as "Huang Yuan of Haishang" (p. 51), then as "Huangyuan Haishang" (p. 55) and eventually as "Haishang Huangyuan" (p. 56).

[7] Robert Ford Campany, *Making Transcendents: Ascetics and Social Memory in Early Medieval China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009).

"organic developments" within the *fangshi* lineages, whose "original local lore" came to be lost (p. 90).[8]

One wonders if the Chinese mind of the time would really differentiate "this-worldly" and "other-worldly" lineages (p. 60). Is the distinction necessary, since both "developed [and] continued to coexist in the same groups" and since "there is little difference in the practices advocated by the two types" (p. 61)? Assuming, on the sole basis of name similarity, that practices expounded in Daoist sources must be the same as those alluded to—*sans* practical instructions—in hagiographies (pp. 61, 65) would be difficult to prove, as Daoists may well have borrowed evocative motifs from hagiographies and developed their own practices on this basis. Shamanism (not indexed) makes a furtive appearance in the chapter, but the phenomenology thus hinted at remains unspecified (pp. 56–57).

In chapter 2 ("Blood rites and pure covenants"), Raz shows how, prior to Daoism, lineages were primarily defined by proper textual transmission—ideally from father to son. Whenever such could not be the case, a blood oath (*xuemeng* 血盟) turned the master-disciple relationship into a filial, non-exclusive link (a disciple could have more than one master, and a master many disciples). Daoist lineages progressively rejected blood oath but did not, properly speaking, replace it with the burning of texts, whose interpretation by Schipper as a "sacrifice" Raz convincingly questions (pp. 114–16). The ensuing section IV on "transmission narratives" (pp. 117–25) is excellent. A major difference between technician (and Lingbao) transmission on the one hand, and Celestial Master transmission on the other, should have been pointed out: whereas infrequency ("once in forty years") and secrecy presided over the former, the explicit aim of the latter was to spread the doctrine "without limit" (*wuji* 無極)—opposite strategies (pp. 104, 108). It seems that a newly revealed faith could not be handled exactly as secret methods had hitherto been.

When discussing the symbolic meaning of "the pledge of vermilion and green" (p. 108), or "oath of cinnabar and azure" (p. 111; Chinese text omitted in both cases) in Lingbao sources, Raz mentions an early interpretation (red = blood, green = the hair) but adheres to Seidel's theory that these colors were those of the *River Chart* (*He tu* 河圖) and *Luo Writ* (*Luo shu* 洛書) (p. 109). Further materials could have been used here. In a seventh-century quotation of the *Great Peace Scripture* (*Taiping jing* 太平經)—a text belonging, at least in part, to the period covered, but mentioned only half a dozen times in the book, and not indexed—the orator calls his Way "the faith of cinnabar red and azure" 丹青之信, then goes on to explain the significance of both colors.[9] The same phrase, diversely commented by later exegetes, is attributed to Wang Mang 王莽 (r. 9–23) as well as Emperor Guangwu 光武帝

[8] On p. 103, Raz seems to imply that imperial cults were exclusively addressed to "transformed humans," momentarily forgetting imperial cults to Heaven, Earth, stellar gods, etc.

[9] *Taiping jing*, quoted in *Hou Han shu* 後漢書, 30B.1084, commentary (Zhonghua shuju ed.).

(r. 25–57), the Han restorer, both of whom widely relied on prognostication (*chen* 讖) material.[10]

A basic rhetorical weapon of religious indoctrination includes an effort "to undermine rival teachings by labeling them forgeries" (p. 33) or "false teachings" (p. 186). Again, the *Great Peace Scripture* repeatedly opposes good (*shan* 善), authentic (*zhen* 真), and correct/orthodox (*zheng* 正) utterances to their evil (*e* 惡), fake (*wei* 僞), and perverse/heterodox (*xie* 邪) counterparts, which are believed to outnumber the former in an ongoing process of textual degradation. Primordial humanity had no need of writing, which appeared when trust among people disappeared.[11] Lingbao authors are exactly on the same wavelength when stating that immortality teachings during the primeval age of universal harmony were "without a trace" (p. 151). It is against this background that superhuman writing, most notably the "Five Talismans" (*wufu* 五符) of Lingbao, should be approached (Chapter 3, "Talismans: the power of inscription").

"Talisman" may be an appropriate English rendition at an advanced stage in the evolution of *fu* 符, but it lacks the original import of the Chinese word.[12] Less problematic would be "symbol," which derives from a Greek word denoting a token for identification (like the Latin *tessera*) and conveys most of the senses of *fu*, including in modern usage. The distinction between "talismans" and "units in talismanic script," introduced in passing (p. 129), could have been emphasized. These minor reservations notwithstanding, the analysis of the complex grammar of the production of various sets of writs and of their ritual use, efficiency, and historical evolution is masterly, leading to Lu Xiujing's 陸修靜 (406–77) affirmation of the anteriority of Lingbao celestial script. That *fu* is the "source of all writings" was accepted as "orthodoxy" by the early Tang (pp. 169–76).

Chapter 4 ("The Yellow and the Red: controversies over sexual practice") surveys the history and historiography of the controversial Celestial Master rite. Raz shows how the rite was adapted from pre-imperial bedchamber techniques (*fangzhong shu* 房中術) into (1) an initiation ritual for both male and female adepts and (2) a sexual training "aimed at securing pregnancy and birth" (pp. 187–88). Buddhism, Lingbao, and Shangqing soon criticized abuses. From the fourth century on, despite internal efforts at reforming and internalizing the rite, the Celestial Master church was dubbed "way of the yellow and the red" 黃赤之道 (p. 189) and the rite served as a pretext to reject Celestial Master scriptures and rituals, and to marginalize its adepts. Whereas Shangqing interiorized sexual practices as a mystic union with female

[10] *Han shu* 漢書, 99B.4181 (Zhonghua shuju ed.); *Hou Han shu*, 13.542 and 15.585; etc.

[11] I dealt with these matters in "Revelation Between Orality and Writing in Early Imperial China: The Epistemology of the *Taiping jing*," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities (Östasiatiska museet)* 74 (2002): 66–100.

[12] Robert des Rotours' monograph on "Les insignes en deux parties (fou 符) sous la dynastie des T'ang (618–907)," *T'oung pao* 41.1–3 (1952): 1–148, could have been consulted.

deities (p. 204), the Celestial Master church officially abolished the rite, but probably failed to suppress it in practice.

In a former chapter, stressing that the Western concept of "magic" resulted from "polemical debates about correct religious practice" and, implicitly, about the "appropriate wielding of power," Raz remarked that "magic" has no Chinese equivalent (p. 129)—quite a surprise, considering that correctness of practice (as Raz demonstrates throughout the book) and the exercise of authority were both predominant concerns in China during the period. Now, at the outset of chapter 5 ("Creating orthodoxy"), whose title echoes the subtitle of the book ("Creation of tradition"),[13] Raz opposes the concept of orthodoxy (*zheng* 正) to *xie* 邪, *yin* 淫, and *qu* 曲 (p. 212)—words which, with maybe the addition of *yao* 妖, share a lot with the above definition of "magic."

Focusing on the fifth century, chapter 5 reviews the Lingbao claim for anteriority over all other revelations; the origins of the concept of Three Caverns (*sandong* 三洞) in Lingbao texts before there existed any Buddhist scriptural catalogue; and the Celestial Master church's reformulation of its own practices so as to include *zhai* 齋 (retreat) rituals and the "Bodhisattva ideal" of universal salvation, both borrowed from Lingbao liturgy. The chapter culminates with Lu Xiujing's "historical, ritual, and canonic project," Raz suggesting that Lu may have perceived the Celestial Master institution as "obsolete" after failing to reform it, and consequently turned to Lingbao ideology to construct his liturgical and cosmological synthesis (p. 255).

The closing "Afterword, in lieu of conclusion" relates how the Celestial Master church defined a broader scriptural canon in seven parts (*qibu* 七部) by adding to Lu Xiujing's Three Caverns the well-known four other corpora, including its own Orthodox or Correct Unity corpus (Zhengyi 正一; both translations alternate in the book). Later canons accepted the addition, albeit under the restrictive nomenclature of Four Supplements (*sifu* 四輔). Contemporaneous debates on the "primacy of practices" between Celestial Master and Lingbao adherents show that "the competition and rivalry between lineages . . . continued into the sixth century and beyond" (p. 264). Raz concludes by adding to his initial definition (chapter 1) the suggestion that what we call Daoism took shape through these "complex debates" between lineages throughout the period. In this process, the strongest drive seems to have been *rejection*—of all manifestations other than those of the Way, of blood oath, of sexual techniques, of minor revelations, of "false" teachings. Indeed, rejection is at the core of the identity definition process of any human group.

[13] The formula seems all the more appropriate to me since I used the phrase "invention of tradition" in reference to the traditional lineage claimed by early Celestial Master leaders in my "Latter Han Religious Mass Movements and the Early Daoist Church," p. 1070.

Regrettably, in its published form, the book is not devoid of minor defects. It is not clear why English translations sometimes include the Chinese original—sometimes in the body text, sometimes in footnotes—and sometimes omit it. The frequency of internal references induces a feeling of repetition. As we have seen, some translation choices are not fixed, and some are questionable.[14] Many footnotes are extremely dense, some of which seem to have been jotted down in haste and left nearly unedited, making their reading not as pleasurable as that of the body text.[15] Finally, the appended index, too selective, does not do justice to the documentary and thematic richness of this superb work.

GRÉGOIRE ESPESSET, Centre de recherche sur les civilisations de l'Asie orientale (CRCAO), Paris

[14] A *pu* 僕 is a servant, not a "slave" (pp. 28, 30). *Xing* 形 designates the perceptible, perishable, "physical" body rather than a vague "form" (p. 29), whereas *shen* 身 refers to the person, not the "body" (pp. 30, 240). "Spirit-luminescence" to render *shenming* 神明 (p. 51) is even less clear than the Chinese compound. From the context it is evident that this 'quality' goes beyond the feat just ascribed to Fei Zhi and belongs to the ensuing depiction of his superhuman condition.

[15] A general feeling of incompleteness is conveyed by an unstable reference format; omissions, misprints, and inconsistency in capitalization, italicization, and Romanization; misspellings, for instance in French ("Taôisme," p. 3, n. 3; "Taoisme," p. 26, n. 80; "le Chine" and "bibliothèque national," p. 52, n. 38) and in Chinese (p. 49, n. 25, "看" should read 刊); partly translated, or not translated at all, Chinese text titles (e.g., the *Xiaojing shoushenqi* [p. 121, n. 79], which should read *Xiaojing yuanshenqi* 孝經援神契, is deprived of both Chinese characters and English translation); and missing punctuation marks. Identical Chinese text following different *pinyin* phrases betrays unfinished copy/paste (pp. 176, n. 151; 177, n. 1). The contents of some footnotes do not match the corresponding body text (e.g. "flying insects" on p. 69 becomes "noxious insects" in n. 99), etc.