

The Old Master: A Syncretic Reading of the Laozi from the Mawangdui Text A Onward (SUNY series in Chinese Philosophy and Culture)

Hongkyung Kim

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A unique translation of and commentary on the Laozi, based on the oldest edition of the work.

This unique, highly contextualized translation of the Laozi is based on the earliest known edition of the work, Text A of the Mawangdui Laozi, written before 202 BCE. No other editions are comparable to this text in its antiquity. Hongkyung Kim also incorporates the recent archaeological discovery of Laozi-related documents disentombed in 1993 in Guodian, seeing these documents as proto-materials for compilation of the Laozi and revealing clues for disentangling the work from complicated exegetical contentions. Kim makes extensive use of Chinese commentaries on the Laozi and also examines the classic Chinese texts closely associated with the formation of the work to illuminate the intellectual and historical context of Laozi's philosophy.

Kim offers several original and thought-provoking arguments on the Laozi, including that the work was compiled during the Qin, which has traditionally been viewed as typical of Legalist states, and that the Laozi should be recognized as a syncretic text before being labeled a Daoist one.

Hongkyung Kim is Associate Professor of East Asian Thought and Religions at Stony Brook University, State University of New York.



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