

## Towards an Alternate Genealogy of Western Daoist Studies

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Conventionally understood and pursued as a sub-field of Sinology, Western Daoist Studies, and North American Daoist Studies in particular, is known as extremely factional and small, in every sense of the word. This is especially the case with(out) respect to the Strickmannians (via Michel Strickmann 司馬虛 [1942-1994]) and The Sinological Mafia (TSM). The present occasional piece offers an “alternate genealogy” in hopes of an alternate scholarly trajectory, model, and future-past. It may be thought of along the lines of “New Daoist Studies” (NDS), especially as being advanced by the Center for Daoist Studies 道學中心 and the Daoist Translation Committee 道教翻譯學會. This includes as rooted in a Religious Studies sensibility and collaborative ethos.

**Judith Boltz** 鮑菊隱 (Ph.D., Oriental Languages and Literature; University of California, Berkeley; 1947-2013). Second-generation American scholar and Affiliate (untenured) Associate Professor of Asian Language and Literature at the University of Washington. Student of Edward Schafer 薛愛華 (1913-1991). Published pioneering study of the Míng-dynasty *Dào zàng* 道藏 (Daoist Canon) titled *A Survey of Taoist Literature* (1987).

**Suzanne Cahill** 柯素芝 (Ph.D., Oriental Languages and Literature; University of California, Berkeley). Second-generation American scholar and Affiliate (untenured) Professor Emerita of History at the University of California, San Diego. Student of Edward Schafer 薛愛華 (1913-1991). Conducted some of the earliest work on Daoist material culture. Published definitive Western study of Xīwángmǔ 西王母 (Queen Mother of the West) titled *Transcendence and Divine Passion* (1993) and scholarly translation of the *Yōngchéng jíxiān lù* 壙城集仙錄 (Records of Assembled Immortals of the Walled City; DZ 783; ZH 1435) titled *Divine Traces of the Daoist Sisterhood: Records of the Assembled Transcendents of the Fortified Walled City* (2006).

**Catherine Despeux** 戴思博 (Ph.D., Far Eastern Studies; University of Paris VII). Third-generation French scholar and Professor Emerita of Chinese Religion at the Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales (INALCO). Student of Maxime Kaltenmark 康德謨 (1910-2002). Published some of the earliest studies on women and Daoism and important work on Daoist body-maps, including *Taoïsme et corps humain: Le Xiuzhen tu* (1994) and *Women and Daoism* (with Livia Kohn 柯恩; 2004). Also has traced the history of Dǎoyǐn 導引 (Guided Stretching) and Yǎngshēng 養生 (Nourishing Life) practice, as appearing, for example, in her contributions to the edited volume *Taoist Meditation and Longevity Techniques* (1989).

**Norman Girardot** 吉瑞德 (Ph.D., History of Religions; University of Chicago). Second-generation American scholar, outsider artist, and University Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Religious Studies at Lehigh University. Student of Mircea Eliade (1907-1986). One of the few actual “alternative” and “outsider” voices in Daoist Studies. Early on translated and/or supported

translation of the work of Isabelle Robinet 賀碧來 (1932-2000) and Kristofer Schipper 施舟人 (1934-2021), namely, as *Taoist Meditation: The Mao-shan Tradition of Great Purity* (1993) and *The Taoist Body* (1993), respectively. Also one of the few intellectual historians and meta-critics in the field, having published *The Victorian Translation of China: James Legge's Oriental Pilgrimage* (2002). The latter provides important information on the British missionary Sinologist James Legge 理雅格 (1815-1897), including his bifurcated construction of Daoism that continues to influence the popular imagination and non-specialist presentations.

**Livia Kohn** 柯恩 (Ph.D., Asian Studies; Bonn University). Second-generation German-American scholar and Professor Emerita of Religious Studies at Boston University. Indirect student of Edward Schafer 薛愛華 (1913-1991). Long-time Vipassanā practitioner in the S.N. Goenka (1924-2013) line. Prior to her early retirement from mainstream academia in 2006 and turn towards popular publication from 2012 onward, one of the leading Western authorities on Daoism and translators of Daoist literature. Published important early work on Daoist meditation and mysticism, including *Seven Steps to the Tao: Sima Chengzhen's Zuowanglun* (1987), the edited volume *Taoist Meditation and Longevity Techniques* (1989), and *Early Chinese Mysticism: Philosophy and Soteriology in the Taoist Tradition* (1991). Also published *The Taoist Experience: An Anthology* (1993), still the best theme-based Daoist sourcebook, and edited the *Daoism Handbook* (2000), one of the three primary reference works of Western Daoist Studies. Also founding editor and publisher of Three Pines Press.

**Louis Komjathy** 康思奇 (Ph.D., Religious Studies; Boston University). Third-generation American Daoist scholar-practitioner and Director, Chóngxuán 重玄 Chair, and Distinguished Scholar-in-Residence at the Center for Daoist Studies 道學中心. Earned his Ph.D. under Livia Kohn 柯恩 in 2005. One of the leading Western authorities on Daoism. Worked as a professional academic and eventual tenured professor of Chinese Religions and Religious Studies from 2004-2019, a position that he formally renounced in 2019 due to systemic corruption and hypocrisy. Now an “outsider-scholar.” Established the Daoist Studies Unit in the American Academy of Religion, for which he served as Co-chair from 2004-2010, and the Daoist Translation Committee 道教翻譯學會, for which he serves as project manager and editor-in-chief. Also the founding co-editor, with Kate Townsend 唐鄉恩, of Square Inch Press 方寸書社. Has published widely on Daoism, including the definitive *Cultivating Perfection: Mysticism and Self-transformation in Early Quanzhen Daoism* (Brill, 2007), *The Way of Complete Perfection: A Quanzhen Daoist Anthology* (State University of New York Press, 2013), and *The Daoist Tradition: An Introduction* (2013). Also primary representative advancing “New Daoist Studies” (NDS), which emphasizes engagement with Religious Studies and includes a scholar-practitioner approach (SPA) and critical adherent discourse (CAD). The first person to write from an explicit Daoist scholar-practitioner perspective and to emphasize Daoism as a global and lived/living tradition characterized by multiculturalism, multiethnicity, multilingualism, and transnationalism. Includes a critique of what Komjathy has labelled Popular Western Taoism (PWT), a new religious movement (NRM) with little to no connection to Daoism as such.

**Michael LaFargue** 勞法歌 (Th.D., Divinity School; Harvard University). Second-generation American scholar as well as retired Senior Lecturer of Philosophy and Director of East Asian Studies at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. While not a scholar of Daoism per se,

published the important *The Tao of the Tao Te Ching* (1992) and the co-edited volume (with Livia Kohn 柯恩) *Lao-tzu and the Tao-te-ching* (1998). One of the first scholars to discuss the *Dàodé jīng* 道德經 (Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power) as an anthology, specifically as comprised of “sayings collages.”

**Isabelle Robinet** 賀碧來 (Ph.D., Far Eastern Studies; University of Paris VII; 1932-2000). Third-generation French scholar and former Professor of Chinese History and Civilization at Université de Provence Aix-Marseille I. Student of Maxime Kaltenmark 康德謨 (1910-2002) and daughter of General Diego Brosset (1898-1944). Leading Western authority on the Shàngqīng 上清 (Highest Clarity) movement and one of the few to research Daoist commentaries on the *Dàodé jīng* 道德經 (Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power). Mainly published in French, but one of her key books was translated into English as *Taoist Meditation: The Mao-shan Tradition of Great Purity* (1993). Robinet’s memory and affiliation have been coopted by the Italian Fabrizio Pregadio 玄英, who included a variety of posthumously-attributed entries in *The Encyclopedia of Taoism* (2008) and published the posthumously-attributed collection *The World Upside Down: Essays on Taoist Internal Alchemy* (2011).

**Harold (“Hal”) Roth** 羅浩 (Ph.D., East Asian Studies; University of Toronto). Second-generation Jewish-Canadian-American scholar and Professor of Religious Studies at Brown University. Intellectual heir of the British Sinologist A.C. Graham 葛瑞漢 (1919-1991) and long-time student of the Rinzai Zen Buddhist teacher Sasaki Jōshū (1907-2014). While primarily a text-critical scholar, Roth has done pioneering research on the inner cultivation lineages of classical Daoism, including as expressed in the important *Original Tao: Inward Training (Nei-yeh) and the Foundations of Taoist Mysticism* (1999). Also established the Contemplative Studies Initiative at Brown University. Early collaborator with Louis Komjathy 康思奇, a relationship that formally ended in 2019 when Komjathy renounced mainstream academia.

**Michael Saso** 蘇海涵 (Ph.D., Anthropology; University of London). Second-generation American scholar and Professor Emeritus of Religion at the University of Hawaii, Manoa. Pioneer in the ethnographic study of modern, lived Daoism, especially the Zhèngyī 正一 (Orthodox Unity) movement. Also an ordained Zhèngyī Daoist priest as well as first-generation Western Daoist priest and scholar-practitioner. Published the important *Teachings of Taoist Master Chuang* (1978). Although the target of a careerist hit-piece (“review”) by the American Francophile Sinologist Michel Strickmann 司馬虛 (Michael Strickman; 1942-1994), and subsequently supplanted by Kristofer Schipper 施舟人 (1934-2021), Saso remains deserving of engagement. Also influenced Western constructions of Daoist identity as centering on lineage and ordination, including as expressed by Liú Míng 劉明 (Charles Belyea; 1947-2015) and Brock Silvers, founders of the now-defunct Orthodox Daoism in America and Taoist Restoration Society, respectively.

**Edward Schafer** 薛愛華 (Ph.D., Oriental Languages and Literature; University of California, Berkeley; 1913-1991). First-generation American scholar and Professor Emeritus of Oriental Languages and Literature at the University of California, Berkeley. Worked as a cryptographer during World War II (1939-1945) and one eighteen faculty members who refused to sign the anti-Communist loyalty oath in 1949. Subsequently trained many of the leading second-generation

American scholar-educators, including Judith Boltz 鮑菊隱, Suzanne Cahill 柯素芝, and Livia Kohn 柯恩. Published pioneering studies of Táng-dynasty (618-907) literature, including articles on the Daoist poetry of Wú Yún 吳筠 (Zōngxuán 宗玄 [Ancestral Mystery]; d. 778). Developed his own distinctive translation vocabulary (e.g., effulgences, pneuma, sylph), which might be thought of as the “Schafer approach.” His most influential books are probably *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand: A Study of T’ang Exotics* (1963) and *Pacing the Void: T’ang Approaches to the Stars* (1977). Schafer’s memory and affiliation have been coopted by the American Strickmannian Stephen Bokenkamp 柏夷.

**Kristofer (“Rik”) Schipper** 施舟人 (Ph.D., Far Eastern Studies; University of Paris VII; 1934-2021). Third-generation Dutch scholar, former Professor of Oriental Studies at Leiden University, and former head of the Institut des Hautes Études Chinoises at the Collège de France. Pioneer in the ethnographic study of modern, lived Daoism, especially the Zhèngyī 正一 (Orthodox Unity) movement, as well as of the *Dàoàng* 道藏 (Daoist Canon), the primary Daoist textual collection. Also an ordained Zhèngyī Daoist priest as well as first-generation Western Daoist priest and scholar-practitioner. Subsequently trained many of the fourth-generation scholars. His most influential independently-authored book is *Le Corps taoïste* (1982), which was translated into English as *The Taoist Body* (1993) with a foreword by Norman Girardot 吉瑞德. Also co-edited (with Franciscus Verellen 傅飛嵐) *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang* (2004), one of the three primary reference works of Western Daoist Studies.

