



University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

Center for Chinese Studies

Fall 2020 Seminar Series

The public is cordially invited to attend. Free admission.

Wednesday November 4, 12 noon – 1:30 pm, via Zoom

Register in advance for this webinar:

https://hawaii.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_sCxCwe9ET3OSXy4KcsMKLg

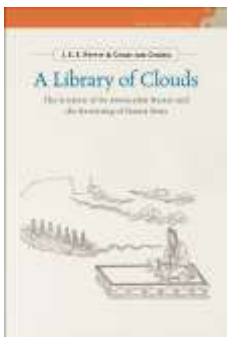
After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

Interdisciplinary Faculty Dialogue: Jonathan Pettit (Religion) in conversation with Edward Davis (History) and Franklin Perkins (Philosophy)
co-sponsored by the UH Departments of Religion, History & Philosophy

“*Library of Clouds*—

A New Book on Daoist Revelation”

From early times, Daoist writers claimed to receive scriptures via revelation from heavenly beings. In numerous cases, these writings were composed over the course of many nights and by different mediums. New revelations were often hastily appended, and the resulting unevenness gave rise to the impression that Daoist texts often appear slapdash and contain contradictions. *A Library of Clouds* focuses on the rewriting of Daoist scriptures in the Upper Clarity (Shangqing) lineage in fourth- and fifth-century China. Scholarship on Upper Clarity Daoism has been dominated by attempts to uncover “original” or “authentic” texts, which has resulted in the neglect of later scriptures—including the work fully translated and annotated here, the *Scripture of the Immaculate Numen*, one of the Three Wonders (*sangqi*) and among the most prized Daoist texts in medieval China. The scripture’s lack of a coherent structure and its different authorial voices have led many to see it not as a unified work but the creation of different editors who shaped and reshaped it over time.



A Library of Clouds, released on Oct 31, 2020, constructs new ways of understanding the complex authorship of texts like the *Scripture of the Immaculate Numen* and their place in early medieval Daoism. It stresses their significance in understanding the ways in which manuscripts were written, received, and distributed in early medieval China. By situating the scripture within its immediate hagiographic and ritual contexts, it suggests that this kind of revelatory literature is best understood as a pastiche of ideas, a process of weaving together previously circulating notions and beliefs into a new scriptural fabric.

Jonathan Pettit is an Assistant Professor of Chinese Religions at UHM, focusing on the production, circulation, and reproduction of early Daoist scriptures. He has held Chiang Ching-kuo, Luce/ACLS, and Fulbright grants in support of his work.

Associate Professor **Edward Davis** (History) is the author of *Society & the Supernatural in Song China* (2001, UH-Press) and Professor **Franklin Perkins** (Philosophy) published *Heaven & Earth are not Humane: The Problem of Evil in Classical Chinese Philosophy* (2014, U-Indiana Press).

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