

nou, třetí část publikace, která je výbornou syntézou teorie a praxe: ukazuje vysokou odbornost a schopnost autorky propojit získané informace z různých zdrojů a pramenů, stejně jako propojit vlastní výzkum s relevantní literaturou.

Dílo Moniky Šlajerové je výborným odborným materiálem pro všechny, kteří se zabývají problematikou blízkovýchodního křesťanství nebo i církevněpolitickou situací v Izraeli a Palestině. Závěrem bych chtěla vyzdvihnout především terénní výzkum autorky, díky němuž se podařilo v této knize přinést celou řadu nových a zajímavých informací a poodhalit složitou realitu, se kterou jsou místní palestinské církve dnes a denně konfrontovány.

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Philip Clart, Die Religionen Chinas,

Göttingen: Vandenhoeck
& Ruprecht 2009, 224 p.
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Meeting the fundamental professional demands made on those who are eager to find their way through the truly variegated and wide academic field commonly known as Religious Studies (RS) doubtlessly necessitates amongst other things the basic understanding of “East Asian religiousness”. Considerable knowledge about the major tenets and the historical development of East Asian religious traditions such as Buddhism, Daoism or Confucianism is without dispute part of the primary “armamentarium” of RS scholars. Like a physician who is always aware of the axioms of nature the scholarly arsenal of a student of RS needs to rest on sound knowledge of the “big players” in religious history which without doubt include traditions that originated or have developed to a large extent in East Asia.

East Asia – I stay away from examining the semantics of this term at this point – is

definitely more than just China and Japan. Correspondingly, East Asian religion (“religion” here is understood as the sum of manifold diverse religious traditions and schools) evidently consists of a lot more than Chinese or Japanese religion. However, knowing about Chinese religion (due to its tremendous historical impact on the whole region) could arguably set the foundation to further deal with “East Asian religiousness” as a whole.

Introductory studies on Chinese religion have been released vastly in the past, some of them also in German (e.g. Joseph A. Adler, *Chinesische Religionen: Religiöse und ethische Ideale einer großen Kultur*, Freiburg im Breisgau et al.: Herder 2007; Florian C. Reiter, *Religionen in China: Geschichte, Alltag, Kultur*, München: C. H. Beck 2007; Roman Malek, *Das Tao des Himmels: Die religiöse Tradition Chinas*, Freiburg im Breisgau et al.: Herder 1996). Books like the one at hand are important and needed, yet they are only an *aperçu*, a *tour d’horizon* through a religious landscape that reaches back millennia.

Philip Clart (b. 1963) is a well-known German sinologist and currently Professor of Chinese Culture and History at Leipzig University who spent most of his professional life in the United States. His book *Die Religionen Chinas* does not lay claim to be a substantial account covering all aspects of (indigenous and transmigrated) Chinese religion. Like the author emphasizes in his preliminary words, *Die Religionen Chinas* is an introduction comprising a historical overview and a systematic discussion of some key issues of Chinese religion (p. 8), therefore mainly focusing on an audience with no or only a little prior knowledge. Those interested in more detailed and lengthy investigations are requested to consult specialized reading, a bulk of what is listed in the helpful bibliography (p. 209–216).

The study is written in a highly readable language. Romanization – Hànyü Pinyin without tones – of Chinese is impeccable; the author even adds an adjuvant table for the correct pronunciation of Hànyü Pinyin. The bibliography of cited works is extensive

and definitely of great avail, however, it lacks further reading that constantly appears in the footnotes throughout the text that would have been assisting for the sake of clarity. What is more, Clart does not assign any Hànzì, i.e. Chinese characters, neither in the text nor within an auxiliary glossary. A readership with some sinological skills – and I believe that the main clientele of this volume does have a certain proficiency – would indubitably consider Hànzì as a great asset.

The study is divided into two major parts. On the one hand a historical survey (p. 17-154) tersely referring to the cornerstones of Chinese religious history from ancient times (Xià Dynasty) to modern China and Taiwan. Historical accounts alternate with succinct reflections on crucial and underlying doctrinal and behavioral patterns. The author remarkably succeeds in introducing the complexity and variety of Chinese religious history in a comprehensible, stringent and instructive manner. Each chapter briefly highlights eminent features within the religious setting of the respective time frame.

The second part on the other hand contains a short historical sketch of some characteristic traits of the core traditions (Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam) within the boundaries of Chinese religion, and a potpourri of short essays dedicated to the more practical dimension of Chinese religiousness (p. 155-208). The author concisely and plainly discusses Chinese religion in the context of its social struc-

ture (“deities, spirits, ancestors and cosmos”, “family”, “municipality” and “state and religion”), its diverse modes of communication (“sacrifices”, “shamanism” and “divination”) and arts and literature, thereby displaying profound scholarship, wide reading and a “sense of the essential”.

In summary, *Die Religionen Chinas* by Philip Clart is not a voluminous and encyclopedic opus drawing upon an overarching depiction of all aspects of Chinese religion. Of course, a lot of questions will be left unanswered but that is in the nature of things. On the contrary, the small book completely fulfills its objective: being a reader-friendly, thorough, clear and brief disquisition on Chinese religious history with some excursions on religious daily life issues. Apart from the missing Hànzì the study will entirely satisfy its readership. Impressive punditry of one of the leading experts in Chinese religion bundled into a handy and well-balanced introductory volume. I highly recommend *Die Religionen Chinas* by Philip Clart to a German-speaking audience with no or just basic knowledge on Chinese religion. It therefore serves as a good starting point for those who want to explore the religious plurality of East Asia and China in particular. All others will find in it a reliable recapitulation of the main stages and striking features of Chinese religious history packed into one small volume.

LUKAS POKORNY