
EDITOR'S PREFACE

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This new issue of the *Journal of Daesoon Thought and the Religions of East Asia* is the fourth to date, and it has been a privilege to be associated with this ground-breaking Korean journal and to participate in its growth and academic development. That the focus is equally on the Korean new religion of Daesoon Jinrihoe and the contemporary religious climate of East Asia is a particular strength: the richness and diversity of new religions in Asia is often ignored by Western scholars, and *JDTREA*, as an English-language journal, offers a corrective to that.

The first contribution is by Brian Fehler (Texas Women's University, Denton, USA) and is titled "Rhetorical Relationality and The Four Tenets of Daesoon Jinrihoe." This article chronicles developments in the academic field of rhetoric and applies contemporary rhetorical models to texts about the Four Tenets of Daesoon Jinrihoe, in order to open up previously unexamined aspects of these principles.

The second article is by Zhang Rongkun (University of Shanghai for Science and Technology, China) and Jason Greenberger (Daijin University, Korea), and is called "Fasting of the Mind and Quieting of the Mind: A Comparative Analysis of Apophatic Tendencies in Zhuangzi and Cataphatic Tendencies in Daesoon Thought." This study brings the thought of renowned Daoist thinker Zhuangzi into relationship with the doctrines of Daesoon Jinrihoe, investigating what ideas of self-transformation mean in relation to the categories of apophatic and cataphatic.

Next is Donald A. Westbrook (San Jose State University, San Jose, USA) with "Freedom of Religion, *Sangsaeng*, and Symbiosis in the Post-COVID Study of (New) Religions," which brings Daesoon Jinrihoe into conversation with the typology of the late Roy Wallis (1945–1990) which identifies world-rejecting, world-affirming, and world-accommodating new religious movements. Daesoon Jinrihoe is compared with the Church of Scientology in productive ways.

Next is Nguyen Ngoc Tho (Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam) and Phan Thi Thu Hien (Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam) with "Molding the East Asian Dragons: The Creation and Transformation of Various Ecological and Political Discourses." This is a fascinating study of a cultural aspect of East Asian religion, the dragon, which has symbolic value for various social groups, and the argument encompasses issues of aggressive dragons versus friendly dragons, and the extent to which Chinese imperialistic narratives still dominate twenty-first interpretations.

The fifth article is Nguyen Trung Hieu (Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam) and Nguyen Phuoc Tai (FTP University, Vietnam), "Daoist Thought through Symbols Observed in the Architecture of Tu An Hieu Nghia Pagodas and Temples from the Tri Ton District, An Giang Province." This discusses the Four Debts of Gratitude, a

new religion in Vietnam that was originally a branch of Buu Son Ky Huong movement. The article addresses the question of how architectural structures and built complexes express theological ideas associated with these movements.

The final article is by Dinh Hong Hai (Vietnam National University, Hanoi, Vietnam) and is titled “Otherness and Diversity in Vietnamese Confucianism: The Formation of the Symbol of the Ancestral King Lạc Long Quân Based on the Nguyễn Huy Thiệp Complex.” This is an innovative study that applies psychological models to mythological texts concerning the origin of the Vietnamese people.

The journal issue is completed by three reviews supplied by the Review Editor, Professor Holly Folk (Western Washington University, USA). As ever, gratitude is due to Bae Kyuhan, Lee Gyungwon, Jason Greenberger, and Choi Wonhyuk, from Daejin University, and to the authors and referees who made this issue happen. Three years on from the start of the Covid-19 pandemic the world is beginning to awaken again, and we are happy to be at the forefront of global research in religious studies. I hope that many readers will be attracted to and inspired by the excellent research curated in this issue.

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