



Global Laozegetics: Engaging the Multiplicity of Laozi Interpretations and Translations

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Message from the Guest Editor

The foundation of this Special Issue is the October 23–24, 2021, "International Conference on Global Laozegetics" at Nankai University. It introduces the study of "Global Laozegetics," which offers a novel framework for engaging the Daoist classic Laozi or Daodejing. While previous scholarship has mostly focused on debating the "original" meaning of the Laozi text, we suggest that this might not be the most important topic to research. The study of Global Laozegetics instead prioritizes investigating the 1930 Laozi translations in 94 languages and the 2185 native Chinese commentaries as the keys to understanding the text's place in history. Even if it were possible to determine the original meaning of the text, that conception would only be relevant to a brief moment in time. It cannot explain the varied ways in which the Laozi has been understood and applied across the ages. Therefore, we propose a focus on the complex history of Laozi exegesis in all languages to determine the entirety of its transmission, transformation, and reception to more fully comprehend the impact of the text around the globe.





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