



Of Tripod and Palate: Food, Politics, and Religion in Traditional China

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Attitudes toward food and commensality constituted a central fiber in the social, religious, and political fabric of ancient Chinese society. The offering of sacrifices, the banqueting of guests, and the ritual preparation, prohibition or consumption of food and drink were central elements in each of China's three main religious traditions: the Classicist (Confucian) tradition, religious Daoism, and Buddhism. What links late Shang and Zhou bronze vessels to Buddhist dietary codes or Daoist recipes for immortality is a poignant testimony that culinary activity - fasting and feasting - governed not only human relationships but also fermented the communication between humans and the spirit world. In *Of Tripod and Palate* leading scholars examine the relationship between secular and religious food culture in ancient China from various perspectives.

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Review

"This is a highly successful book. In it, we find new insights from a remarkable range of international specialists on the significance of food in religion, political theory, social order, medicine, and human physiology, and how people in pre-modern China made their choices on what to eat and what not to eat."

- Robert Chard, Institute for Chinese Studies, University of Oxford

"If television has been described as the poor man's nirvana, then the medieval Chinese description of food as the Heaven of ordinary people seems even more apt, in the light of this fascinating collection of essays. Here, for the first time, it is possible to see the multifarious links between food and religion in Chinese civilization, so that the scholarship brought together here will surely provide a rich feast not only for historians and anthropologists of China but also for anyone who has ever wondered about the deeper cultural meanings of Chinese food."

- T. H. Barrett, Professor of East Asian History, SOAS, London

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