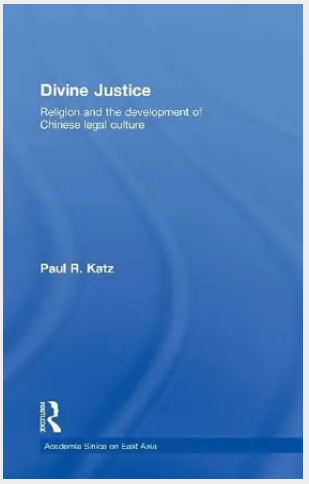
Katz

Divine Justice

Religion And The Development Of Chinese Legal Culture

This book considers the ways in which religious beliefs and practices have contributed to the formation of Chinese legal culture. It does so by describing two forms of overlap between religion and the law: the ideology of justice and the performance of judicial rituals. One of the most important conceptual underpinnings of the Chinese ideology of justice is the belief in the inevitability of retribution. Similar values permeate Chinese religious traditions, all of which contend that justice will prevail despite corruption and incompetence among judicial officials in this world and even the underworld, with all wrongdoers eventually suffering some form of punishment. The second form of overlap between religion and the law may be found in the realm of practice, and involves instances when men and women perform judicial rituals like oaths, chicken-beheadings, and underworld indictments in order to enhance the legitimacy of their positions, deal with cases of perceived injustice, and resolve disputes. These rites coexist with other forms of legal practice, including private mediation and the courts, comprising a wide-ranging spectrum of practices Divine Justice will be of enormous interest to scholars of the Chinese legal system and the development of Chinese culture and society more generally.

This book examines the integral role of religious beliefs and practices in Chinese legal culture.



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