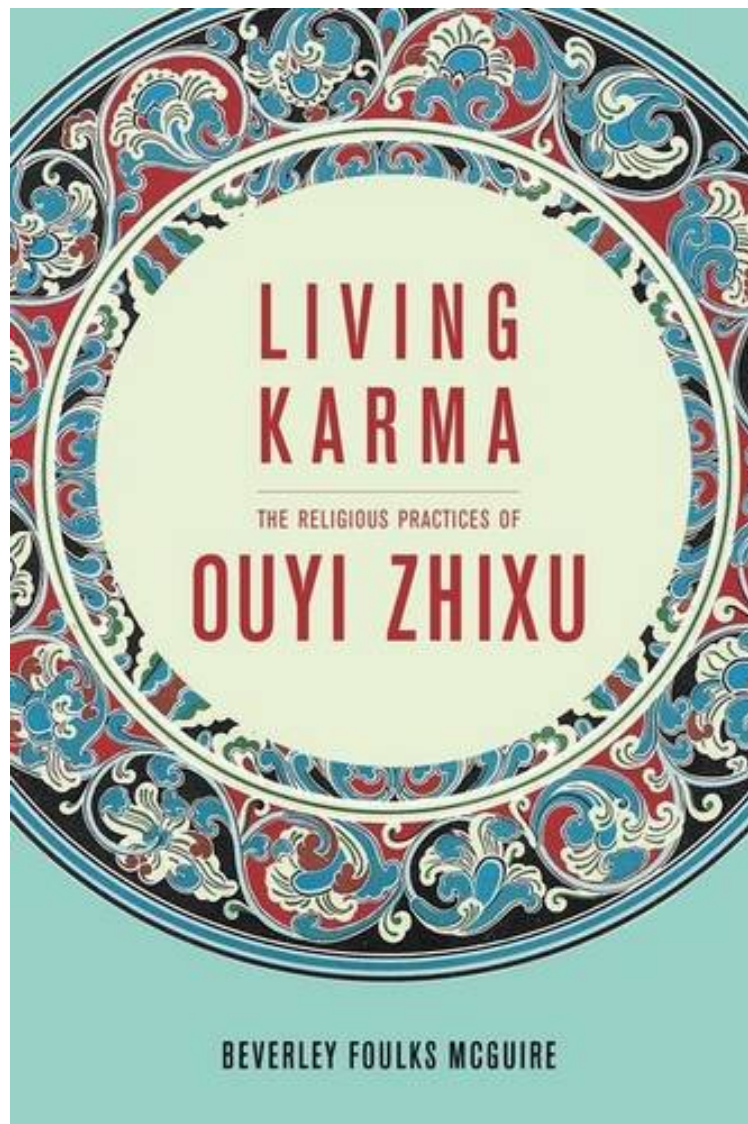


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Living Karma: The Religious Practices of Ouyi Zhixu (The Sheng Yen Series in Chinese Buddhist Studies)

Beverly McGuire

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Beverly McGuire : Living Karma: The Religious Practices of Ouyi Zhixu (The Sheng Yen Series in Chinese Buddhist Studies) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Living Karma: The Religious Practices of Ouyi Zhixu (The Sheng Yen Series in Chinese Buddhist Studies):

Ouyi Zhixu (1599-1655) was an eminent Chinese Buddhist monk who, contrary to his contemporaries, believed karma could be changed. Through vows, divination, repentance rituals, and ascetic acts such as burning and blood writing, he sought to alter what others understood as inevitable and inescapable. Drawing attention to Ouyi's unique reshaping of religious practice, *Living Karma* reasserts the significance of an overlooked individual in the modern development of Chinese Buddhism. While Buddhist studies scholarship tends to privilege textual analysis, *Living Karma* promotes a balanced study of ritual practice and writing, treating Ouyi's texts as ritual objects and his reading and writing as religious acts. Each chapter addresses a specific religious practice: writing, divination, repentance, vows, and bodily ritual. Offering first a diachronic overview of each practice within the history of Chinese Buddhism and then a synchronic analysis of each phenomenon through close readings of Ouyi's work. This book sheds much-needed light on a little-known figure and his representation of karma, which proved to be a seminal innovation in the religious thought of late imperial China.

Living Karma is a study of the way the inner world of a leading Buddhist monk was shaped by his belief in karma, focusing on Ouyi Zhixu, perhaps the most important Chinese monk of the seventeenth century and certainly one of the most interesting, known for his contributions to Buddhist commentary, ritual exegesis, bibliography, and autobiography. (John Kieschnick, Stanford University) An ingeniously conceived and deeply researched study of one of the four great Buddhist masters of the late Ming dynasty. The book reveals Ouyi Zhixu to be a far more interesting and intellectually complex person than we knew. By giving primacy to the theme of karma, McGuire finds a unity to Ouyi's conduct and textual practice that has gone unremarked until now. (Timothy Brook, University of British Columbia) This important new book is doubly valuable. In offering the first Western language monograph devoted to the teachings of Ouyi Zhixu, Beverley Foulks McGuire has employed the best tools of sinology and Buddhist studies to rescue a major Chinese Buddhist teacher not only from the obscurity of scholarly neglect but also from the doldrums of conventional intellectual history. McGuire demonstrates the value of applying to the study of religious ethics the insights and methods of anthropology and the study of religious narrative. This book is 'must reading' for scholars of Chinese religions, especially Buddhism, and deserves serious attention in the wider field of religious studies. (Robert M. Gimello, The University of Notre Dame) In this thoughtful and astute study, McGuire shows how a fundamental Buddhist doctrine--karma--shaped the practice life of a major Chinese Buddhist thinker whose ideas remain significant for the tradition today. Her sensitive readings of Ouyi Zhixu's ritual texts and personal writings provide an intimate perspective on this monk's ideas and his intense bodily practices such as 'filial slicing,' burning of his arms and head, and the writing of texts in his own blood. (James A. Benn, McMaster University) An eminently readable and interesting book. This is a scholarly book based on a great deal of specialised research, but it's surprisingly accessible to anyone with an interest in Buddhism and its development in China. (Asian of Books) *Living Karma* is an invaluable study that not only rescues from scholarly oblivion one of the most influential Buddhist figures of Ming-dynasty China, but also sheds light on the complexity and coherence of his inner world and ritual practices by showing how they were shaped by his understanding of karma. (Daniela Campo H-Buddhism) An important study and contribution to Buddhist studies that should be welcomed by students of Chinese Buddhism and culture. (Journal of Religion and Chinese Society) In admirably concise and lucid writing, McGuire offers us a rare glimpse into the inner life of the great Ming dynasty Buddhist master Ouyi Zhixu. (Journal of Chinese Religion) This is a very strong entry from an emerging scholar in Chinese Buddhism.... I recommend this volume without qualification. It is a well-defined and focused elucidation of an interesting topic. (Charles B. Jones Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies) About the Author: Beverley Foulks McGuire is an assistant professor of East Asian religions at the University of North Carolina, Wilmington. She received her Ph.D. from Harvard University and her M.Div. from Harvard Divinity School. Her academic research focuses on Chinese religions, Buddhism, and comparative religious ethics.