

consistently answer the queries about prognosis put to him that, as Michael Loewe and others have proposed, he might well have been the author of many of the records.

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NATHAN SIVIN
University of Pennsylvania

PICTURING THE TRUE FORM: DAOIST VISUAL CULTURE IN TRADITIONAL CHINA. By SHIH-SHAN SUSAN HUANG. pp. 497. Harvard University Asia Center, Cambridge, MA, and London, 2012.

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If Daoism is the most elusive of China's philosophical systems, Daoist art is more elusive still. It is therefore perhaps not surprising that the last scholarly study of Daoist art in English, as noted by the author in her introduction, was Stephen Little's pathbreaking exhibition and catalogue of 2000, *Taoism and the Arts of China*. The 150 objects in that exhibition have been central to the study of Daoist art since then. Shih-shan Susan Huang's expansive and erudite investigation of Daoist art presents the subject with a breadth and depth never before achieved under one cover. The book offers a true introduction to the subject and at the same time takes certain topics to the level of research scholars.

Picturing the True Form begins with an image those familiar with Daoism will recognise: paired deities on a stele dated to 527 in the National History Museum in Beijing. It is an excellent focus to frame some of the fundamental issues of Daoist visual culture: several identities for the pair have been proposed but none is universally accepted and the pair suggest immediate parallels with better known paired Buddhist deities whose identities are certain. The goal of understanding Daoist iconography as well as we understand Buddhist iconography is inherent in any study of Daoist art, but different from Buddhist iconography, Huang informs us, Daoist deities are not necessarily what they appear to be, what they seem to be by comparison with Buddhist precedents, or even what a scripture suggests them to be. Inherent to Daoist art is the concept of *zhenxing*, true form, the meaning of Daoist images that assumes meanings underlying or beyond the initial ones, and metamorphosis that gives way to additional understandings after the initial ones are revealed. This concept, a quest to picture the true form, is the source of Huang's title. It is a multifold challenge, for as the author has now explained, a certain amount of aniconism, immateriality, and invisibility also are implicit in Daoist art.

The first half of the book, three chapters, addresses art associated with meditation, visualisation, and breathing. Each of these subjects is interwoven into the specific topics of each chapter. First is a discussion of divinities associated with the human body and its organs. Heavenly bodies, the reader learns, are often recipients of the attention of Daoist deities who take the form of bureaucrats. Sometimes deities emanate from the heads of the Daoist bureaucratic pantheon. Through material presented here, a reader understands familiar images from the Dazu caves in Sichuan and Yongle Daoist Monastery in context. Specific stars, imaginary stars, and deities associated with star groups are discussed next. The book then turns to death-bringers, bizarre and horrific creatures, then to yet more grotesque parasites, and then to bodily control through alchemy. Anatomical bodies and body landscapes are the last subjects. Any reader will be intrigued by the illustrations. Their impact is all the greater because a text and sometimes a practice is behind or associated with each one. Body, cosmos, alchemy, miniaturisation, visualisation, disease, representation, and what is most fundamental about

the fundamental are intertwined through the chapter. In her concluding remarks the author tells us that the complex views of body and cosmos were not obscure in Song and Yuan China. Rather they interfaced with the world beyond Daoism.

Chapter Two, called Mapping the World, is about Daoist cosmography. Like other aspects of Daoism, cosmography has its own narratives and models, the three most common focused on the *Daodejing*, deified Laozi as the creator of the world, and scriptures of the Highest Clarity and Numinous Treasure Schools. The author informs us that transmission of this ideology is a multimedia process that includes auditory, visual, and textual expressions. To navigate the reader through these universes, Huang divides the cosmos into the heavens, both vertical and horizontal, earthly paradises, grotto heavens, and hells and the netherworld. Each section is illustrated by diagrams or charts. Some, such as the vertical heaven, have close correspondences in Buddhist diagrams. On earth, for example, Mount Kunlun may be compared with Mount Sumeru and both Buddhism and Daoism possess sacred peaks and islands. In addition to charts of true forms and sacred peaks found mainly in printed books, several exquisite and famous paintings are shown to have Daoist cosmographical associations: “Goddesses in the Palace Park,” attributed to Ruan Gao of the tenth century, Zhao Boju’s “Streams and Mountains in Autumn Colors,” and Zhao Cangyun’s “Liu Chen and Ruan Zhao in the Tiantai Mountains”. True form charts and comparable depictions of Mount Fengdu and other places in hell are a fascinating subject of this chapter. Often they appear as maps of less foreboding places. Literacy is required to understand the route to salvation. These “rescue maps”, as Huang refers to them, had associated rituals. Her conclusion is that the flexibility and simultaneous ambiguity of Daoist world mapping can be likened to Foucault’s heterotopia where multiple sites may be incompatible and yet can be juxtaposed into a single real place (p.133).

The true form chart (*zhenxing*) that has been discussed to a certain extent already is the subject of Chapter Three. Huang begins with the frequent associations between *zhenxing* and mountains. In discussion of Man-Bird Mountain, she traces man-bird imagery from the Han to Tang dynasties and then turns to bird scripts, showing the relation of the scripts to the flight of birds on the one hand, fish and dragons on another, and magic. Comparing true form charts of the Eastern Sacred Peak Mount Tai, Huang further compares them with the famous stele of 1136, *Yuji tu*. Her investigation of *zhenxing* in comparison to actual maps is valid, but she perhaps gives too much credit to the ability of twelfth-century Chinese cartographers. She is more accurate, it seems, in emphasising the mystic vision of cosmoses depicted in *zhenxing*. The chapter next turns to the importance of writings on *zhenxing* landscapes, here using Li Gonglin’s well known painting, “Mountain Villa”, as evidence of the alliance between script, mountain, landscape, and representation. After a brief summary of *fengshui* charts as *zhenxing*, the chapter concludes with discussion of mountain treasures, including minerals, herbs, and magical mushrooms. The various components of *zhenxing* come together at the very end in a diagram of the year 1445 of an altar for the *jiao* ritual.

The second half of the book deals with the visual, or “outer” as the author refers to them, aspects of Daoist art: materiality, performance, and painting. Materiality is Huang’s term for the architectural space of Daoist ritual: oratories, public altars, layered altars, stages, interiors with altars or tables, and loci of the soul. For each, both textual explanations and visual examples that coincide with them are provided. As in the rest of the book the author incorporates well-known images from sources such as the Yongle Daoist Monastery, Mogao caves, Wu Family Shrines, famous tombs, and murals. These core images of Chinese art are especially important for while most readers may be familiar with them, the Daoist context may not be as familiar. The second half of the chapter explores ritual objects, some of which are found in the same images, others from diagrams. Flags and banners, for instance, appear in murals of the Daoist monastery Yonglegong and in Mogao caves and were suspended from the walls of Mogao caves, as well. We see them now as integral to salvation rituals. Mirrors are explained as part of transmission rituals and visualisation practices and writing utensils return the reader to the relation

between writing and ritual explored in the previous chapter. Writings and paper money are the last subjects in the chapter. The conclusion emphasises the importance of paper in Daoist ritual and ritual clothing is briefly discussed.

The subject of Chapter Five is performance of salvation rituals. Huang goes through each performance and each ritual, and each aspect of both of them, first through texts and then through pictorial evidence. One learns that in the Yellow Register Purgation the aspiring Daoist expels and externalises cosmic forces, next ascends to submit a scroll to the heavenly gate, and then attacks hell. A staff helps him. The Daoist master can then rescue souls. Bathing and feeding are parts of this ritual. Here the author is able to point out another parallel with Buddhism, its Water Land Ritual. For both faiths the purpose is to feed on and cleanse hungry ghosts and send them to salvation. This leads to the conclusion and goal: salvation through refinement. The Daoist master then visualises in a meditative state and finally culminates the ritual by performing at the Bridge of the Divine Law.

Finally we come to painting, the bridge between art and ritual according to Huang. Huang suggests that all Daoist paintings involve ritual, and the process whereby they are made is similar: preparation, sketches, and collaboration between documents and artisans. Huang emphasises the role of Daoist priests at each stage. The author uses the Boston Museum of Fine Arts triptych of heaven, earth, and water officials as evidence of how the process works. Frequently portrayed subjects follow: heavenly descents, earthly excursions including the subjugation of demons, and ocean crossings. These paintings, the author tells us, are portable altars. Following a brief conclusion of nine questions or themes are seventy pages of notes and nearly fifty pages of bibliography.

The complexity, intricacies, and interfaces of Daoist art with other philosophical systems and countless aspects of Chinese visual culture are apparent on every page and in every illustration of this book. Each topic is intrinsically fascinating and each one lends itself to equally significant tangential ones. A book like this could not be attempted without superb organisation, deep understanding to guide in the selection of subjects and extent to which they are covered, and an ability to synthesise and explain complex ideas clearly. These features are all evident. That this study is introductory and synthetic in no way diminishes its value. This book was written to stand the test of time, and it should be expected to do that. *Picturing the True Form* joins *Daoism and the Arts of China* on a very short list of accurate introductions to a fundamental and fundamentally complex subject. Anyone seeking knowledge about Daoist art will want to read it. <nssteinh@sas.upenn.edu>

NANCY SHATZMAN STEINHARDT
University of Pennsylvania

BODHISATVA DER APOLOGETIK: DIE MISSION DES BUDDHISTISCHEN TANG-MÖNCHS FALIN – WITH AN ENGLISH FOREWORD BY BART DESSEIN. By THOMAS JÜLCH. 3 vols. pp. xxvi, 374, 396, 341. München, Herbert Utz Verlag, 2014.

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Who needs translations? The question seems ludicrous in an age of globalisation, but also justified if the target language is not English. Thomas Jülch shows that the art of philological translation into languages other than English is far from dead. Calling this book ambitious would be an understatement. It is a revised and hugely enlarged edition of the author's doctoral dissertation, submitted to the University of Munich in 2011 under the title *Die apologetischen Schriften des buddhistischen Tang-Mönchs Falin*. While