

obvious message of a dream, and any interpretation makes sense only when it is read against the dreamer's present circumstances. The woman in the Honolulu clinic, mentioned above, had transformed the auspicious fertility symbols, dates and chestnuts, into a nightmare anticipation of an unwanted pregnancy. The divination manual, by contrast, promises a mechanical and precise guide to interpretation. As a validation of the predictive value of common dream symbols, Seligson correlates forty-five common motifs against the gender and character attributes of the children whose births the dreams foretold. The author offers no speculation upon the retrospective quality of much of his material. He has not recorded dreams so much as stories told about dreams, often years later, to confirm the inevitability of a grown child's, or even a historical figure's, destiny.

As a work of scholarship, *Oriental Birth Dreams* fails. As a treasure box of the Korean imagination, it sometimes manages to transcend the limitations of its divination-manual genre. Seligson asked his numerous students to provide him with accounts of birth dreams, and they responded not only with prophecies of their own or their children's births, but with stories of siblings, cousins, other kin, and even neighbors. While this may not be Seligson's intention, his methodology reveals the importance of dream texts as part of a shared history, a group autobiography. His dreamers also show a playful capacity for incorporating new material, including visions of Christian churches, past Korean presidents, and Santa Claus. Seligson is a good writer who does justice to the power and beauty of the dreams he records. He shares a romantic account of his own first encounter with Korea and makes it seem utterly comprehensible that his own dreams should follow upon a Korean logic of dreaming.

Laurel KENDALL

American Museum of Natural History  
New York

#### CHINA

GOODRICH, ANNE S. *Peking Paper Gods: A Look at Home Worship*. Monumenta Serica Monograph Series Vol. 23. Roman Malik, general editor. Nettetal, Germany: Steyler Verlag, 1991. 427 pages. Illustrations not numbered, 8 appendices, bibliography, index. Hardcover DM 112.—; ISBN 3-8050-0284-X; ISSN 0179-261X.

This book on popular religion and paper gods contains two introductory essays followed by sixteen chapters, each devoted to a particular deity. The wealth of information in the volume—gathered primarily during the author's pre-World War II stay in Beijing—relates to the illustrations on the cheaply printed, sometimes hand-colored keepsakes of deities for home use. The representations include gods of medicine, wealth, and childbirth; sky deities; and Buddhist and Taoist deities and saints. The purpose of these divine figures is to provide assistance in the various circumstances of daily life—relief during illness, good fortune in marriage, wisdom in business—and to secure the influence of the sun and moon in family affairs.

There is nothing doctrinaire in these images. They invoke all manner of spiritual powers, whether of ancient Chinese myth, local folk tradition, physical entities (like a river with its capacity to flood), or the Buddhist or Taoist heavens. The latter two are peacefully arranged next to each other in the pantheons illustrated in chapter 18. There does not seem to be any hierarchy among these powers: they gain privilege of

position from their supposed efficacy in solving the problems for which they are invoked.

The identity of the deities fluctuates over time and is often bound to local interpretation. An example is the figure of P'u-hsien P'u-sa, a deity who evolved in Tantric Buddhism in the sixth and seventh centuries and who is variously depicted as the patron of students of the *Lotus Sutra*; as a resident of Mount Omei riding an elephant (as he is shown in an engraving on a Buddhist stele dated 551 at the Art Institute of Chicago); as a female deity who helps people to be equanimous, intelligent, and diligent during their studies; as the teacher of Confucius; as a king's daughter and Taoist *chen-yen* named Miao-yin (the sister of Miao-shan, who became Kuan-yin); and as the sister of Miao-ch'ing, the deity Wen Shu P'u-sa. Given such a mix of traditions, it would be helpful if there were some critical evaluation of the deities.

The information is gathered from standard sources of Chinese lore and adjusted on the basis of a number of more detailed and specialized Western studies. This information is then used as catalogue entries for the illustrations, although not all entries are illustrated. No distinction is made between information from literary sources, local informants, and the author's teacher. The tales are entered as heard or as found in books, and the way the material is collected is as straightforward and unquestioned as the meaning of the lore itself.

No theories regarding the significance of the materials are presented. Nevertheless, the book is full of information, and the lore takes on a convincing character of its own as a religion outside of the Confucian, Taoist, and Buddhist institutions. The lore is linked to so many old stories, historical and mythical rulers and heroes, and anthropomorphized Buddhist and Taoist deities that the volume carries conviction even though no attempt at intellectual interpretation is made.

The illustrations themselves are equally plain and direct. Most figures are frontal and arranged symmetrically with an emphasis on the face and a clear distinction between male and female. When they represent Chinese gods they tend to be portrayed as Chinese civil or military officials. The Buddhist deities follow Buddhist pictorial traditions. All of these images are executed as religious icons and in many cases are so similar that they can be identified only by their inscriptions. The few that are not of this frontal symmetrical arrangement are narrative in content. It is surprising to see that the images of these prints are so clearly reminiscent of similar deities known from early Chinese paintings and representations dating back to the Later Han (A. D. 25-220). By repeating ancient ways of representation, the prints lend conviction to the age and lore of the stories themselves.

Some minor rough spots in the stories could have been avoided. Certain images are out of place, such as that of Tzu-sun Niang-niang, illustrated on page 116 but described on page 111. Ch'üan-shen, on page 71, is not mentioned in the index and is not described at the place where the illustration appears; Ts'ai-yüan Mao-sheng, on page 102, is not mentioned in either the text or the index. Jan-teng fo, on page 326, should be Janteng Ku-fo. The Szu-ta T'ien-wang are never door guardians, as suggested in footnote 458. The print of the Buddha on page 352 is lost. The abbreviations in the bibliography do not mention DNG. That the prints are not numbered causes difficulties in reading and in making references.

The book is easily read and is rich in information. The information would have been much more valuable, however, if it had been critically evaluated.

HARRIE VANDERSTAPPEN  
University of Chicago  
Chicago