

if it were a human being: preoccupations with an easy birth; gift giving to neighbors after birth; celebrations on the seventh day after birth, etc. (213). The death of a horse was treated with the same ritual care as if it were a human being (214).

The image of Batō-Kannon, Kyburz explains, dominated the ritual universe consecrated to the horse. "When we look closer, it turns out that this image was composed, as it were, by two ideas that were different, but at the same time merged; on the one hand there was the concept of a tutelary divinity (similar to the one protecting the human community), and on the other hand, the one of a bodhisattva characterized by his compassion and benevolence. If the former seems likely to have risen from an indigenous foundation, the second is certainly a contribution from the outside" (216). Kyburz's account and analysis of the folk religion of Kaida are first and foremost aimed at tracing the extent to which it can be understood as a function of local traditions, how it has grown as if naturally out of the environment and from the patterns of subsistence that the inhabitants of the region have maintained and developed over the centuries. External sources of religious inspiration and the diffusion of Greater Traditions are accordingly relegated to a secondary position.

The book is finally brought to an end with a few partial conclusions that will presumably be further substantiated in the announced volume on individual and family forms of religious life in Kaida.

In this review I have only evoked a few of the multiple sides to traditional religious life in Kaida as described by Kyburz. His work is undoubtedly a welcome contribution to Japanese studies. What we have here is the foundation to a unique attempt to build a solid monograph around the religious aspects of social existence in rural Japan.

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#### CHINA

KÖHN, LIVIA. *Seven Steps to the Tao: Sima Chengzhen's Zuowanglun*. Monumenta Serica Monograph Series XX. Nettetal/Germany: Steyler Verlag Wort und Werk, 1987. 205 pages. Appendix of Chinese texts, bibliography, index. Paper DM 70.—; ISBN 3-8050-0195-9; ISSN 0179-261X.

Livia Köhn has made a major contribution to the study of religious Taoism and Chinese meditational practices. Early research on Taoism centered primarily on the period from its inception in the second century through the sixth century. A secondary focus has been the Sung and Yuan, particularly the Pure and Bright Way of Loyalty and Filial Piety (*Jingming zhongxiao dao* 淨明忠孝道, studied primarily by AKIZUKI Kan'ei) and the Complete Perfection movement (*Quanzhen jiao* 全真教, studied by CHEN Yuan, SUN Kekuan, KUBO Noritada, and others). Tang Taoism has remained a gap in our knowledge, a void broken only by Edward SCHAFER's *Mao Shan in T'ang Times* and Isabelle ROBINET's study of commentaries to the *Laozi*. The present work offers an annotated translation of four major texts in the Taoist meditational tradition.

The centerpiece of the book is a translation of the *Discourse on Sitting in Oblivion* by the eighth-century patriarch of the Supreme Purity sect, Sima Chengzhen. It is preceded by a roughly fifty-page-long analytical essay, which attempts to place the work in the Chinese meditative tradition.

The *Discourse on Sitting in Oblivion*, according to Köhn, presents a seven-step course of self-cultivation which results in a Taoist version of enlightenment. "Respect and Faith," the first step, stresses the need for a reverent faith in the Tao. "Interception of Karma" explains that worldly entanglements must be severed through "non-action" (*wuwei* 無為). "Taming the Mind" gives the most detailed description of the actual meditative practice and its attendant dangers. "Detachment from Affairs" concerns the relationship between career and social obligations and self-cultivation. "True Observation" focuses on the proper attitude toward physical desires, personal health and longevity, one's career, and "the actual structure of the universe." "Intense Concentration" stresses the importance of not using insight once it has been attained. "Realizing the Tao" describes mystical union with the Tao and its corresponding results, longevity and magical powers.

Köhn is candid about the source of her own interpretation, saying that it is "rooted in Fukunaga Mitsuji's vision of Lao-Zhuang philosophy as the source of an indigenous mystical tradition in China" (7). Her analysis stresses the relationship between the *Discourse on Sitting in Oblivion* and other medieval Taoist works on meditation, several of which are translated in this book. She compares specifically the seven-step course of the *Discourse* with other schemes set forth by Sima himself in the *Tianyinzi* 天隱子, by Sun Simiao 孫思邈, and by Zhiyi 智顛, the founder of Tiantai Buddhism. She also attempts to relate these seven stages to modern psychological understandings of the meditative process. These comparisons are all rather superficial, but it is hoped that they will prove a spur to further research. The relationship of Taoist meditative practices to the Buddhist contemplative tradition would seem to merit special attention. Still, this reviewer is led to ask whether the seven sections of the *Discourse* do in fact constitute seven consecutive steps in a program of self-cultivation. They seem rather to be a hodge-podge of comments about Taoist cultivation, with the dominant and oft-repeated theme being how the practitioner is to deal with the demands of career, family, and the physical body. This confusion is evident in Köhn's graphic depiction of the Taoist mystical world view as presented in the *Discourse* (59).

In addition to the *Discourse* we are provided with four other translated texts. The first is the "Inscription on *Sitting in Oblivion*," an inscription from 829, attributed to Sima, that summarizes and largely parallels the *Discourse*. Köhn takes her text from an (apparently) unpublished collection of Sima Chengzhen's writings annotated by Wu Shouju 吳受璣 (1981), and has collated this with a version transmitted in *Dao-shu* 道樞 (DZ 1017, "DZ" referring to the serial number of the work in SCHIPPER 1975). The second work is the *Visualization of Spirit and Refinement of Breath* (DZ 834) of Sun Simiao, which presents five mental and seven physical stages in Taoist cultivation. The third is a version of the *Canon on Concentration and Observation* (DZ 400) found appended to the *Discourse*. The fourth is the *Tianyinzi*, a treatise by Sima Chengzhen which Köhn has also translated in an article, "The Teaching of T'ien-yintzu" (1987). In the course of translation Köhn is careful to point out parallels among these texts as well as quotes or paraphrases of other Taoist scriptures.

Since the bulk of the book is translation, something must be said about this aspect of Köhn's work. For the purpose of this review I have reviewed carefully only the translations of the *Discourse* and the "Inscription." The translations are on the whole adequate and, as noted above, well annotated. There are, however, certain lapses. In a commendable attempt to maintain consistent terminology Köhn has sometimes gone too far, translating "no intention to . . ." (*wuxin* 無心) as a philosophical "no-mind" (104). More consistency, however, would have been desirable in the treatment of *liulang* 流浪, "wandering," which is rendered first "grows thicker and wilder,"

then three lines later, "unsteady floating" (88). Taoist terminology is sometimes misinterpreted, as in *zhaozhen* 招真, "summoning the Perfected," translated "harbor truth" (113), or *sangqing* 三清, "Three Pures" (Taoism's highest deities), translated "Three Heavens" (106). Both mistakes are symptomatic of a tendency to downplay the more purely religious or ritualistic aspects of the material. Elsewhere annotation of Taoist and Buddhist terms is inadequate; surely some comment is called for when an explicit quotation from *Zhuangzi* is translated using the term *karma* (101). There are, in addition, several mistakes in punctuation, the collation of variants is slipshod, and parallelism is often ignored. Particularly annoying is the cavalier way in which connectives have been emended or ignored, often losing in the process the logical force of the argument, and the consistent mistranslation of *rijiu* 日久, "after many days," as "daily" (e.g., pp. 88, 109) is sure to mislead anyone trying to understand the progress of the meditative program. All the above considerations could raise problems for a non-specialist attempting to use the translations in a comparative study, and it is hoped that they will be corrected in future editions.

Taoism remains the world religious tradition least accessible to the Western reader. Livia Köhn's translation of four major works represents a significant first step toward remedying this unfortunate state of affairs. The editors deserve a special word of thanks for including the original text of all the material translated. It is hoped that this work will lead both to more detailed studies of the texts presented here and to more translations of core Taoist scriptures.

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### MONGOLIA

HEISSIG, WALTHER, Editor. *Fragen der mongolischen Heldendichtung Teil IV* [Problems of Mongolian epic poetry], Vorträge des 5. Epensymposiums des Sonderforschungsbereichs 12, Bonn 1985, Asiatische Forschungen Band 101. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1987. ix+417 pages. 1 plate. Hardcover DM 172.—; ISSN 0571-320X, ISBN 3-447-02680-4.

This book is a collection of twenty-six essays compiled from the papers read at the fifth symposium on Mongolian epic poetry held in Bonn. Many of the authors address questions concerning the epic about Geser Khan and other Mongolian heroic epics. However, I will not summarize all of the essays but examine the book especially as far as it relates to the folk culture of Yunnan, because this is my own field and because I believe that some of the contributions open up promising views.

Two essays, one by Heissig and another one by Bäcker, deal with Yunnan. Heissig discusses the topics of snakes and bulls in Mongolian epics, and his hypothesis that they can be related to archaeological findings from South China is of great interest. He claims that the bull as it appears in a complex of bull, snake, and child in findings from Mt. Shi-sé in Yunnan, a province of China, is related to the bull in Mongolian epics. However, it remains to be seen whether or not the bull and snake of Yunnan can indeed be identified with the bull and snake of the Yi. The latest documentation available concerning this hypothesis is *Yi yi dongwu yao* [Animal pharmaceuticals of the Yi] by HE Yanchao and LI Gengdong (1986). In any case, his research on snakes and bulls in Mongolian heroic epics offers suggestions which might throw new light on the development of the Nakhi pictorial texts from Yunnan. For example, the snake as a being which obstructs a road, and the relationship of the bull with the moon, are both found also in the pictorial texts of the Nakhi. The image of the death and rebirth of the mangus, which Poppe and Heissig address in this volume, has recently been further pursued by the Mongolian scholar HURLSHA (1989).

Jörg Bäcker discusses three Daghur epics. He takes up the "rebuke of the dragon" as found among the Lisu of Yunnan as an example of the anger and retribution of the gods, comparing it with the Daghur material. Since the Nakhi are also mentioned in Geser Khan, I wished that their tales too (concerning, for instance, the white old man [*der weisse Alte*], the Naga cult, and so forth) would have been discussed.

Bäcker, and Nekljudov in his separate contribution, take up Geser Khan as a code common to both Daghur and Yakut folktales. As for Veit's article on color terms and proverbs in Mongolian epics, it would have been of interest had she also studied the color terms and their relationship to sacred numbers and world picture as they appear in these epics.

Rinčindorji, in an essay concerning the development of subject structures of folktales, discusses the form of three epics. Unfortunately, the footnotes to which we are referred in his essay are missing. Hans-Jörg Uther's valuable contribution on "clas-