

to analyze the music in detail: "Clearly this book is more about the role of the ritual association in village society than about musical analysis," explains the author (253). Both sections are accompanied by quotations, diagrams, and photographs. But while the Gongche symbols are strategically placed in the text, the percussion mnemonics are not included. Eventually they appear in the musical examples (261, 368). This could be a source of frustration to some readers.

In the "Coda," Jones examines more recent threats to the association's survival. A new directive of 2003 has restricted burial in favor of cremation, which, if enforced deprives the music of its fundamental ritual context. But it seems unlikely that this will deter these musicians who, along with their forebears have survived so many challenges in the past.

Painstakingly footnoted and compiled with great care, this study is a welcome addition to the literature on Chinese traditional music. The sixteen page index doubles as a useful glossary. Hymns, preludes, melodies, suites, incantations and three excerpts from Catholic vespers are included in the twenty-six musical examples. These are well chosen and accompanied by descriptive notes. Transcriptions are provided for six of the tracks on the attached CD. The second *sheng-guan* transcription (No. 3) appears to have no corresponding CD track, which is somewhat disappointing. It would be helpful for the teacher if the CD were self contained, since librarians tend to store accompanying sound recordings separately to ensure their safety. Nevertheless, all additional information adds to the book's value as a very useful learning tool.

*Plucking the Winds* may not appeal to those "impatient" ethnomusicologists requiring rigorous musical analyses. Other readers may find this study a humorous and refreshing approach to traditional Chinese music and a valuable means of preserving a unique art form. As the author explains, "it is meant to be read primarily as a story of people's lives" (1). Probably the author's primary intent was to return the information to the musicians of Gaoluo village, to whom he dedicated the book. It should appeal to a wide reading audience.

Hazel HALL

Australian National University  
Canberra

LIVIA KOHN, *Monastic Life in Medieval China: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003. xiv + 300 pages. Illustrations, tables, appendix of sources, glossary, bibliography, index. Cloth, US\$42.00; ISBN 0-8248-2651-5.

In this book, Livia Kohn, who is known as a prolific scholar of Daoism, applies a religious studies approach in placing Daoist monasticism into a cross-cultural context. Accordingly, as the author remarks, the book has two focal points. The first is a description of Daoist monastic institutions, buildings, rules, and behavior in the Chinese middle ages up to the middle of the eighth century. The second aim is to provide a comparative and theoretical framework for interpreting medieval Daoist monasticism. Both aspects are closely interwoven in that most chapters combine information given on Daoism with more or less extensive references to monasticism in Christianity and Buddhism. The first chapter ("Understanding Monasticism") and the conclusion are exclusively devoted to theoretical and comparative considerations, while the rest centers on describing and interpreting Daoist monasticism without neglecting comparative aspects.

The headings of the chapters are: “Origins and History” (2), “The Monastic Vision” (3), “Relation to Society” (4), “Buildings and Compounds” (5), “Daily Discipline” (6), “Implements and Vestments” (7), and “The Liturgy” (8).

The book is impressive for its mastering and quoting an enormous amount of literature of both Daoist sources and secondary literature on monasticism (bibliography, 257–83). The description of medieval Daoist texts (appendix, 203–25), on which the study is based, is very useful and, too, shows the amount of scholarship that has been invested into this work. It would be even more useful if Chinese characters had been inserted into this bibliographical appendix (and in the main text). One wonders why publishers still produce Sinological books that force the reader to look up characters in the glossary while any word processor can insert them. A glossary is of little use if it does not distinguish homophones and has, as in the case of this book, for example, four entries for *qing* (磬, 青, 請, 清).

The strength of this work is in providing detailed information on what the Daoist sources have to say about the ideal forms of monastic life. We learn much about the external forms of Daoist institutions including their buildings, gardens, and economic activities, and about the internal organization of Daoist communities such as daily discipline, hierarchies, hygiene, food, and etiquette. We are equally informed on what kind of vestment and utensils should be used and which rituals the texts recommend to the Daoist monastic. The author explains that many of the rules and regulations have been borrowed from Buddhism, occasionally Daoist sources are clearly modelled after Buddhist texts. On the other hand, the fundamental differences in religious doctrine accounted for a specific Daoist vision of religious life that also left its mark on the practice of Daoist monks and nuns.

There are some points where Kohn’s study is not altogether convincing to the reviewer. One is the chapter “Origins and History,” in which she attempts to trace Daoist monastic institutions back to the ascetics and hermits of old, the *fangshi* 方士 and immortals (26–30). Kohn constructs *fangshi* and immortals as two different types of ascetics without taking into account that the characteristics of *xian* 仙 (immortals) are more a product of popular imagination than a historical reality. To describe immortals as “people who have gone beyond the limitations of this world and ascended to a higher level” and who “are closely associated with birds in the lightness of their bodies and their ability to fly” (26) seems to be a rather uncritical use of Daoist sources. It ignores that the same persons who by Confucian historiographers are classified as *fangshi* can be called *xian* in Daoist sources (DE WOSKIN 1983, 83–86, 140, 152). Furthermore, it is questionable whether the *fangshi* of the Han dynasty can be typified as “ascetics.” Kohn’s interpretation seems to be guided by the assumption that the origins of Daoist monasticism must be the same as in Christianity, i.e., ascetic endeavors, eremitic tendencies, renunciation, and millenarianism (25). For that reason she suggests that the movement of the early Celestial Masters was a case of millenarianism (25, 30–35). There is no doubt that Daoism as it developed in the fifth century contained strong millenarian and apocalyptic elements, but their roots were not the Celestial Masters but Zhang Jue’s 張角 Great Peace (Taiping) movement. It seems as if Kohn—like most scholars of Daoism—were reluctant to include Zhang Jue in the history of Daoism because “orthodox” Daoist sources do not include him in their hagiographies.

This brings me to the second point that concerns the use of sources. Kohn’s description of medieval Daoist monasticism relies almost exclusively on Daoist texts. She does not discuss the historical value of these sources, which are taken at face value. However, the sources used are normative texts, i.e., they describe rules of behavior and ideals that do not necessarily correspond to the historical reality. We know from the study of Buddhism that the rules of the Vinaya are one thing and the actual practice of monks quite another, and we may suppose that in Daoism it was similar. Kohn is right in calling chapter 3 “The

Monastic Vision,” for the texts describe ideals envisioned by their authors. To what extent this Daoist monastic vision, which was largely modeled after the Buddhist example, has shaped the actual practice is an open question that certainly cannot be answered on the basis of Daoist sources alone. This is not to deny the great value of studying Daoist sources, but the limitations of this approach should be discussed and made clear.

The third point is closely connected with these methodological considerations. It concerns the cross-cultural perspective. Kohn obviously starts with the assumption that monasticism is a religious phenomenon whose essence can be detected through comparison. She wants to understand the “very essence” of monasticism (6). Such a phenomenological approach certainly is legitimate, however there are some methodological traps. The assumption that monasticism is in essence the same everywhere may lead to violations of historical evidence. As has been mentioned, it is doubtful that the roots of Daoist monasticism can be found in asceticism and millenarianism (I would likewise doubt that Buddhist monasticism has millenarian roots). These concepts are derived from the Christian tradition and it would have been possible to modify them from a comparative perspective that includes Daoism. Thus, “self-cultivation” might be more appropriate as a general term than “asceticism,” and “religious community” more than “millenarianism.” Furthermore, a comparative approach must be aware of what is being compared. In the present case it is the ideals of monasticism, the “monastic visions,” that are in the center and not monasticism as a historical and social phenomenon.

Despite these reservations, Kohn’s book is a fine example of comparative phenomenology that cannot be ignored by any future research on monasticism or medieval Daoism.

#### REFERENCE CITED

DE WOSKIN, Kenneth J.

1983 *Doctors, Diviners, and Magicians in Ancient China: Biographies of Fang-Shih*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Hubert SEIWERT  
Institut für Religionswissenschaft  
Leipzig

SCHIPPER, KRISTOFER, and FRANCISCUS VERELLEN, Editors., *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004. xix + 1637 pages. Illustrations, indices. Set of 3 vols. Cloth US\$150.00. ISBN 0-226-73817-5.

One century ago, Taoism was threatened with death. The society in which it lived and that it informed to a far greater degree than has been generally assumed was rapidly disintegrating. It had, indeed, for the greater part, ceased to exist. Its temples and monasteries had been expropriated or destroyed, its scriptural legacy was on the brink of being irrevocably lost. One hundred years ago, no scholar had yet undertaken any serious study of Taoism’s history and literature. Today, Taoism revives. (51)

Thus begins the introduction to the most comprehensive and most awe-inspiring of Taoist reference works available today, *The Taoist Canon*. Begun in the mid-1970s as a cooperative European project with centers in Paris, Würzburg, and Rome—and with the support