

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.

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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

of scholars from England, the USA, China, and Japan—this three-volume set is a truly magnificent achievement of scholarship, well worth the wait of several decades.

The Taoist Canon summarizes and evaluates all of the 1,500 texts in the *Zhengtong Daozang* 正通道藏 [Daoist Canon of the Zhengetong era, dat. 1445], including its supplement, the *Xu Daozang* 續道藏 compiled in 1607. It makes reference variously to materials from Dunhuang 敦煌, buried in the famous Mogao Caves in the early eleventh century, which were part of the Taoist legacy but had been lost by the time the Canon was put together. In addition to superbly compiled textual information, complete with references and Chinese characters, the work contains numerous illustrations and charts and has a veritable treasure trove of indexes in the third volume (1255–1637).

In volume three, the reader will first find biographical notes on frequently mentioned Taoists, which are extremely helpful to get a sense of who was who in the Taoist world. This is followed by an extensive bibliography, first of primary, then of secondary sources, and a detailed account of who the contributors are and which items they wrote. After that, the actual indexes begin. They are:

- a classified title index that lists all works discussed in the book under the section they are described in, providing section numbers and headers, original titles with Chinese characters, and page numbers;
- a work number index that uses the numbering system of the Canon as based on Kristofer Schipper's earlier index (1975) and also adds the classifications of the texts found in the original;
- a pinyin title index which lists all the scriptures by their full titles, providing their Canon number as well as the page number in the current collection;
- a finding list for other *Daozang* editions, including those published by Yiwen yinshu 藝文印書 (Taipei, 1977), Xinwenfeng 新文豐 (Taipei 1977)—both in sixty volumes—and the further reduced edition in thirty-six volumes edited by three publishers on the mainland in 1988 and called Sanjia ben 三家本.
- a general index that gives page numbers for all relevant personal names, geographical names, names of religious schools and sects, as well as technical terms, concepts, and practices, such as, for example, a list of twenty items under “Eight,” including “Eight Calendar Nodes,” “Eight Directions,” “Eight Emperors,” and “Eight Gates of the Mysterious Mother.”

With the third volume creating an exemplary array of access methods to the materials, the other two volumes present the texts of the Canon in chronological order, from the Warring States period to the Ming dynasty. As explained in the “General Introduction” on the history of the Taoist Canon and the unfolding of the “Tao-tsang Project” that led to this publication (1–52), this arrangement steps away from the traditional division into Three Caverns, which were dominant in the middle ages but already outdated by the time the Canon was compiled in the fifteenth century. The Three Caverns match the three major medieval schools of Highest Clarity (Shangqing 上清), Numinous Treasure (Lingbao 靈寶), and Three Sovereigns (Sanhuang 三皇). They are supported by the Four Supplements that provide additional materials from these schools plus the more fundamental works of Orthodox Unity (Zhengyi 正一), i.e., the school of the Heavenly Masters (Tianshi 天師). Instead of following this traditional scheme, the book presents the texts of the Canon according to three major historical periods:

1. Eastern Zhou to Six Dynasties (479 BCE–581 CE), the time of the fundamental roots of the tradition and the unfolding of the major schools.
2. Sui, Tang, and Five Dynasties (581–960), the era of the great medieval ecclesia,

when the Three Caverns dominated the religious landscape.

3. Song, Yuan, and Ming (960–1644), the period of reorganization and the emergence of the modern form of Taoism that still survives today.

Within this chronology, the presentation arranges materials in the two major categories of “Texts in General Circulation” and “Texts in Internal Circulation.” That is to say, it picks up on the traditional Taoist distinction between documents that were written for and accessible to the general population, the state, and anyone interested in Taoist thought, cosmology, or practice; and sacred writings that were either revealed by the gods or created within the strictly defined lineages of the Tao, to be used only by and for adepts who were properly initiated and ordained.

The first group, then, includes all philosophical, cosmological, and mythological presentations (e.g., sacred geography) with their various commentaries as well as works on the more technical practices, such as divination, longevity techniques, and alchemy. It also discusses poetry and literary essays written by Taoists together with encyclopedias and handbooks that were meant to present the teaching to the larger public.

The second group of “Texts in Internal Circulation,” which makes up the bulk of the Canon, on the other hand, deals largely with liturgical and ritual matters. It includes revealed scriptures, litanies, rituals, manuals, and sacred hymns that describe the particulars of Taoist worship and served to provide adepts with the means of fulfilling their formal role as divine representatives of the Tao. Transmitted after extensive study and preparation in formal ordination ceremonies, they were classified according to school and lineage and are presented here in the traditional order of ritual ranks: Zhengyi, Sanhuang, Lingbao, and Shangqing. To these, various subcategories and additional lineages are added, especially in the post-Song period, when the medieval system was revised and supplemented by numerous schools and rites that did not fit the earlier categories.

The first volume (55–629) of the set presents works from the two earlier periods, all the way up to the end of the Tang and Five Dynasties in the tenth century. The second volume (633–1253) focuses on materials from the Song through Ming periods. Each entry gives the full title of the text, its length in *juan* or scrolls, its period and author (if known), its number and location in the Canon, as well as an English translation of the title. Except for the latter, this part is largely identical to entries in an earlier Chinese catalog of the Canon, the *Daozang tiyao* 道藏提要 (REN and ZHONG 1991). However, unlike this work, the bulk of each presentation in *The Taoist Canon* does not go into a lengthy summary of contents or lists of section headings, but points out the main thrust of the work, then focuses on placing it in a historical and sectarian context and links it with other works of a similar kind, to which cross-references are included. Rather than a summary, the discussion of each text is a critical historical analysis, allowing readers to see the larger picture and understanding the broader significance of the text. Each entry concludes with the name of its author.

Not all texts in the Canon correspond to a single scripture or work. There are some major encyclopedias and compendia, some of them hundreds of *juan* long, that include numerous different works and materials from various authors and schools. For these, the editors have created an ingenious solution. They are each described first in general terms, then individual sections or texts contained in them are treated separately. For example, the *Xiuzhen shishu* 修真十書 (Ten Books on the Cultivation of The True Nature, DZ 263) of the thirteenth century is, as the name suggests, a collection of ten books in 60 *juan* that deal with internal and physical cultivation. It is described as a whole under “Handbooks and Anthologies” (946), then each major part is presented separately in a different section of *The Taoist Canon*. For example, the *Jindan dacheng ji* 金丹大成集 (Collected Works on the Great Accomplishment of the Elixir) appears under “Neidan and Yangsheng” or “Inner

Alchemy and Longevity Techniques" (839–40). It is numbered DZ 263.9, indicating that it begins with *juan* 9 of the *Xiuzhen shishu* found in DZ 263, and discussed in terms of author, lineage, and related works.

With all this careful planning and execution, *The Taoist Canon* is a model research tool that will further open the doors of traditional China and encourage more in-depth studies of the Taoist religion by providing systematic guidance to its key sources. However, there are a few things that *The Taoist Canon* does not do. For example, it does not provide an up-to-date bibliography of secondary studies. The original bibliography was extremely limited, since most of the entries were written in the 1970s and 1980s and mainly consisted of works in Chinese and Japanese. It has been updated since but the most recent item in the list of secondary sources still dates only from 1998. That is to say, seven years of fruitful scholarship are not represented in the bibliography. Nevertheless, given the complicated nature of the editing and publication process, the lack of recent bibliographical information is perhaps understandable.

A more serious shortcoming, on the other hand, is that the references and bibliography provided are often not sufficient in themselves. For example, under the *Heshang gong* commentary to the *Daode jing*, only two references are given, one in Chinese and one in Japanese. The pathbreaking study by Alan CHAN (1991), although listed in the bibliography, is not mentioned, nor is the ancient (and outdated) translation by Eduard ERKES (1958). More examples can be given, including translations of works that may not be of the highest scholarly quality but that would provide new students with initial access to the materials, such as, Rolf HOMANN's work on the *Huangting jing* (Yellow Court Scripture) (1971) or the extensive (if rather literal) translations of texts on breathing exercises by HUANG and WURMBRAND (1987).

To remedy this, the Daoist Studies website (<http://rels.queensu.ca/dao>) has instituted a section called "The Taoist Canon: Bibliographic Addenda," where scholars can post and look up bibliographic references and existing translations under the *Daozang* number of any given text. It is hoped that this service will help the academic community to make even better use of an already outstanding research tool.

Another thing that the book does not do is to provide newcomers with a sense of similar texts in the same location. While the overall categories, chronology, and classification, are excellent, it is not clear why certain texts were listed where they are. For example, the cultivation text by Sima Chengzhen, *Fuqi jingyi lun* (The Essential Meaning of Qi-Absorption) of the mid-Tang consists of nine sections but appears in two different texts in the Canon (plus a complete edition in the *Yunji qiqian* encyclopedia). The first two sections are found in DZ 277, while the last seven are contained DZ 830. Spaced apart in the original, it would be an improvement to have them placed together in the catalog. However, they appear separated, on pages 373–74 and 368, respectively, with a note to "see below." This is not practical and makes it harder to use the work.

Similarly, a text by the early Tang master Sun Simiao called *Fushou lun* (On Long Life and Good Fortune, DZ 1426), although clearly part of Sun's work and one that is already listed in early bibliographies and his biography, is not found near Sun's other works or even in the section on the Tang dynasty. As Sun was canonized under Song Huizong in the twelfth century and the full title of the text was changed, it is now put under Song philosophy, a placement that is clearly not accurate and just confuses the reader (743–44). On the contrary, various ancient philosophical works that were also reedited and commented on in the Song dynasty are found in the section on the Eastern Zhou.

Along the same lines, it is not always better to replace the old order with a new one. For example, two texts on precepts in the Lingbao canon which have a rather similar content

and deal with the same kinds of issues and audiences are next to each other in the original Canon (DZ 456 and 457) but appear separated here (230 and 223). Why? It seems that the in-depth historical examination of the texts and their well-planned reorganization could have been taken just one step further to ensure that texts by the same author are placed together and that texts that have a similar nature and content are not separated by materials of other kinds. While it is not impossible to find relevant materials by the same author or of the same nature with the help of the extensive indexes in volume three, beginners beware: just as references to secondary studies are nowhere near complete, even for the period before 1998, texts of a similar ilk have to be searched for and examined with great care.

Despite these shortcomings, *The Taoist Canon* is an invaluable research tool for anyone interested in the major indigenous religion of traditional China. It provides a well-organized, systematic, and superbly executed collection of highly relevant and often overlooked materials, giving scholars access to an enormous treasure trove of information and historical data. Readers can access the materials in a number of different ways and learn a lot of relevant detail on texts and areas of their interest. The book is reliable and accessible, it provides carefully researched and well documented information on all the texts in the Daoist canon, and it gives a good sense of materials compiled in approximately the same period and the same sectarian environment. Taken together with the *Daoism Handbook* (KOHN 2000), the *Encyclopedia of Daoism* (PREGADIO 2005), and the *Title Index to Daoist Collections* (KOMJATHY 2002), it becomes part of a comprehensive research library for Daoist scholars that signals the true coming-of-age of Daoist studies and marks yet another milestone in the continued revival and appreciation of this important religion.

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