

Daoism in China

Written by Wang Yi'e

Translated by Zeng Chuanhui

Edited by Adam Chanzit



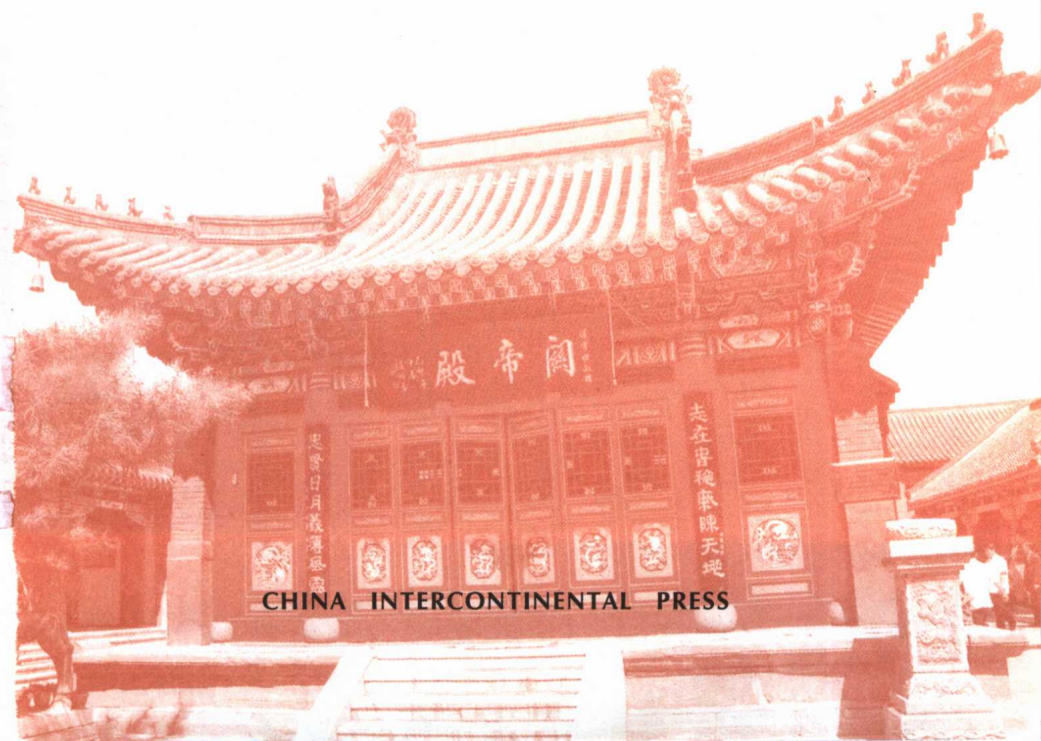
CHINA INTERCONTINENTAL PRESS

Daoism in China

Written by Wang Yi'e

Translated by Zeng Chuanhui

Edited by Adam Chanzit



CHINA INTERCONTINENTAL PRESS

图书在版编目 (CIP) 数据

中国道教 / 王宜峨著; 曾传辉译. —北京: 五洲传播出版社, 2004.10
(中国宗教基本情况丛书)

ISBN 7-5085-0598-0

I. 中... II. ①王... ②曾... III. 道教史—中国—英文 IV. B959.2
中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2004) 第 101766 号

《中国道教》

责任编辑: 荆孝敏

编辑助理: 蔡 程

图片提供: 王宜峨 谢 军 汪传树等

设计承制: 北京紫航文化艺术有限公司

翻 译: 曾传辉

审 校: [美] 程子文

《中国道教》

五洲传播出版社

地址: 中国北京北三环中路 31 号 邮编: 100088

电话: 82008174 网址: www.cicc.org.cn

开本: 140 × 210 1/32 印张: 7.1

2004 年 10 月第一版 印数 1-7000

ISBN 7-5085-0598-0/B · 44

定价: 48.00 元

PREFACE

Daoism is considered by many scholars to be the least understood of the world's major religions. Many people think the term “Daoism” only signifies the philosophical school of Laozi and Zhuangzi. In fact, Daoism is an intellectual, spiritual, and folk tradition that in different times and regions has taken on very different meanings.

Not only has Daoism taken on many different forms over its long history, it also has received the influence of early Chinese spirituality and Confucianism, as well as Buddhism and other religions originally foreign to China, making it difficult to precisely define Daoism as any kind of unified philosophy, religion, or set of folk customs. Understanding general trends of Daoism is no easy task for a Chinese person; it is even more difficult for a non-Chinese person, because the development of Daoism is inseparable from that of Chinese culture. It seems a non-Chinese person must first broaden his or her conceptions of

"philosophy" and "religion" in order to grasp the essentials of Daoism.

This book was translated through the cooperation of a Chinese and an American scholar. We are fortunate to have had the opportunity to work together, drawing on each other's knowledge and understanding of our own cultures. A Chinese specialist's knowledge is crucial to understanding the complexities of the classical Chinese of the ancient Daoists, while an English speaker more familiar with an average English reader's knowledge and mindset, can help elucidate these often complex concepts to a non-Chinese audience.

Translating between Chinese (especially classical Chinese) and English is a difficult task and requires much choice on the part of a translator. One choice we were often faced with, for example, concerns translating names of Daoist sects, mountains, temples, and deities. We opted to translate some names directly into English if we thought they might be of interest to a reader; or helpful to his or her understanding; however, sometimes there is no good translation of a mountain or deity, and simply using pinyin at least avoids misleading the reader. For certain critical

concepts without a translation we considered satisfactory, we use the pinyin and add an explanation. On a deeper level, it is important to note that in classical Chinese, one Chinese character often has multiple meanings, allowing for ambiguity crucial to Daoist rhetoric; often when translating these texts into English, the meaning becomes too specific, too narrow. The translator then must find a way to best express the original meaning (or meanings), but when it comes to translating from classical Chinese into English, much is inevitably "lost in translation." Some translation inevitably comes down to choice and taste and we hope the reader will benefit from our good choices and forgive our weaker ones.

It is also important to note that this book was originally written for a Chinese audience, and in the original edition many sections assume cultural and historical knowledge that an average, educated non-Chinese person would not have. Therefore we often added material (and a few times omitted material) in order to clarify points and make the book more readable for a non-Chinese person.

The first three chapters help situate Daoism within the

context of Chinese history and trace its development. This is probably the most crucial section of the text for someone seeking a brief answer to the question: "What is Daoism?" The contents of the fourth chapter regarding Daoist deities cannot be fully retained with one read; hopefully interested readers, however, will develop a sense of the vast Daoist pantheon. The fifth and sixth chapters contain detailed information concerning sacred temples and mountains. While the information may be in too much detail for some readers, it could be of interest to those wishing to travel in China. Visitors to Daoist temples or sacred Daoist mountains might find it a handy guide.

The final three chapters convey a sense of the state of Daoism today. It is important to realize that much of the Daoist intellectual tradition as well as its cultivation techniques are transmitted from master to disciple, while its more popular movements flourish outside of large cities. Therefore knowledge of organizations and their activities does not equate to a complete understanding of the scope of contemporary Daoism. Readers may particularly enjoy the section in the final chapter concerning the influence of Daoism on traditional Chinese festivals.

We hope this book will pique readers' continued interest in Daoism, whether through further reading, climbing the five sacred mountains, or even personal cultivation. As the modern literary giant, Lu Xun, once remarked, "Daoism is the root of Chinese culture. Using the perspective of Daoism, many difficult enigmas can be unravelled in an instant." The study of Daoism is an excellent way to penetrate the depths of Chinese culture, and can broaden our perceptions and aid us in our daily lives.

Zeng Chuanhui and Adam Chanzit

August 3, 2004

World Religions Institute,

Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing, China.

INTRODUCTION

When writing an introduction to Chinese religion, one must first discuss Daoism, because it is the only religion to have adopted the spiritual traditions of early China. China is a multiethnic nation with many religions. Among the five major religions existing in modern times, Daoism, Buddhism, Catholicism, Protestantism, and Islam, only Daoism is indigenous to China. The cosmology of Daoism is consistent with that of ancient Chinese philosophy; its principles, including worship of nature, pursuit of inner purity, and reduction of personal desire, have been important goals for Chinese people for tens of centuries. Daoist images, from paintings to literature of the sublime realms and the immortals inhabiting them, have spread throughout China and have been passed on from generation to generation. The tradition has become so widespread that much of the content of Daoist belief has evolved into common practice and is seen as folk custom. Foreign religions which have come to China, have thus inevitably been influenced by Daoism, even

as they penetrate Chinese culture.

Religious Daoism was officially born in the second century CE. It originally took shape as a revolt by the oppressed peasantry, who longed for an ideal, just society. However, it was later molded by religious reformists such as Gehong, Lu Xiuqing and Wang Chongyang, and had its most prosperous period from the 7th to the 14th centuries CE becoming, along with Confucianism and Buddhism, one of the three ideological pillars of China. After the 15th century, the mutual influence between the three ideologies increased, blurring distinctions between them. Many people believe in both Buddhism and Daoism, and there are also many common practices that incorporate values from both traditions, as well as Confucianism. Temples and worshippers that are purely Daoist have decreased in modern times, yet the influence of Daoism on Chinese culture remains profound. To this day, there are tens of thousands of Daoist monks, clerics and nuns, and around 4500 Daoist temples. Many Daoist temples are not only sacred places of worship, but also tourist attractions with great historical and cultural value, representing essential traits of Chinese civilization.

This concise introduction to Daoism, authored by Professor Wang Yi'e and published by China Intercontinental Press, offers

an overall introduction to the origin, formation, and evolution of Daoism, including information about its doctrines and systems, the compilation of its classics and scriptures, as well as its influence throughout the world. The work not only provides the reader with a basic introduction to Daoism, but also will be helpful in better understanding China and its people.

May many readers enjoy this book!

Zhao Kuangwei

August, 11, 2003

Center for Religious Research, China

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface / 1

Introduction / 7

Chapter 1 Spirituality in Early China / 1

1. Ancestor and Nature Worship in Primitive Society / 3
2. Doctrines of Immortals and Occult Masters in the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Periods / 9
3. Huang-Lao Daoism in the Han Dynasty / 14

Chapter 2 The Establishment of Daoist Organizations and the Lineage of the Celestial Masters / 23

1. The Rise of Early Daoist Organizations / 23
2. The Lineage of the Celestial Masters / 35

SBA 77/02

Chapter 3 The Development of Daoism and the Formation of Sects / 41

1. From the Celestial Masters to Zhengyi Daoism / 41
2. Quanzhen Daoism / 49

Chapter 4 Daoist Deities / 59

1. What are Daoist Deities? / 59
2. Introduction to Daoist Deities / 64

Chapter 5 Daoist Temples and Sacred Places / 93

1. The Development of Daoist Temples and their Management Systems / 93
2. The Sacred Places of Daoism / 99

Chapter 6 Important Daoist Scriptures and the Compilation of the Daoist Canon / 131

1. The Development of Daoist Scriptures / 131
2. Compilations of the Daoist Canon / 135
3. Compilations of the Daoist Canon after 1949 / 143

Chapter 7 The China Taoist Association / 147

1. The Establishment of CTA and its Early Events /149
2. The Events of Daoism in the Era of Chinese Reformation / 154

Chapter 8 The Influence of Daoism / 189

1. The Influence of Daoism on Chinese Traditional Culture / 190
2. The Influence of Daoism on Folk Customs and Minorities / 199
3. The Influence of Daoism on Chinese People Outside of China / 207

CHAPTER 1

SPIRITUALITY IN EARLY CHINA



Among the existing five major religions in China, Buddhism, Daoism, Islam, Catholicism and Protestantism, only Daoism is indigenous to China. Although of these five religions Daoism currently has the least number of temples, its influence on the development of Chinese culture and the daily habits of Chinese people is immense, precisely because it inherited and carried on the earliest spiritual traditions in China. Anywhere in the world where there are Chinese people, one can easily see the influence of Daoism. It is no exaggeration to say that Chinese culture cannot be understood without a proper understanding of Daoism.

The religious Daoist order was formed in the second century during the Late Han Dynasty. However, its doctrines and patterns of thought can be traced back tens of centuries before the Christian era. It is commonly regarded that religious Daoism has three



major origins: 1) Ancestor and nature worship originating in primitive society; 2) The doctrines of immortals, the ancient mystics (fangshi) and their occult techniques (fangshu) emerging in the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Periods (roughly the 8th to 3rd centuries BCE) 3) The Huang-Lao School, which flourished in the Han Dynasties from 202 BCE to 220 CE. Huang signifies Huangdi, the Yellow Emperor, the legendary founder of China, while Lao signifies Laozi, the author of the well-known *Daode Jing* and one of the philosophers later termed "Daoist".



1. Ancestor and Nature Worship in Primitive Society

Daoism is a polytheistic religion, many of whose traditions and doctrines were inherited from the people who lived on the land now called “China”. Ancestor and nature worship is the belief in spirits of nature and the souls of deceased tribal ancestors. According to archaeological data, the earliest religious consciousness appeared in the late Paleolithic age between one hundred to fifty thousand years ago. In 1933 when archaeologists found Upper Cave Man bones at Mount Dragon Bone (the place where “The Peking Man” was originally discovered), they were astonished to notice that all the skulls were placed in the same direction, and that stone spinning wheels and arrowheads were buried with the skeletons. Some red iron ores, which could only be available several kilometers away, were scattered around the tomb. Yet no such funerary objects were found in fossil sites from earlier periods. This indicates that the Upper Cave Man were the first to have concepts of a world beyond death.

Many archaeological excavations and historical records have