

XIAO Dengfu, *Han-Wei-Liu Chao fo dao liangjiao zhi tiantang diyu shuo. Daojiao yanjiu shu*. Taiwan Xuesheng Shuju, Taipei, 1989. 677 pages. NT \$500.

The present work is the sixth volume in a new series of scholarly monographs on Daoist studies published in Taiwan by the Students Book Co., with previous volumes presenting topics such as Daoism during the Ming Dynasty, the masters of the Chuanzhen School and their relationship with the Mongol emperors, an index to all the waidan material in the *Daozang* etc.

The present work, *Han-Wei-Liu Chao fo dao liangjiao zhi tiantang diyu shuo* [Statements on Heaven and Hell by Buddhism and Daoism during the Han, Wei, and Six Dynasties], is a monumental study dealing with a hitherto little studied area of Chinese religion, namely the concepts of the heavens and the hells as held by Buddhism and Daoism respectively during the Eastern Han and up through the Nan-Bei Chao period.

First of all the author is to be congratulated for having taken up an important, but nevertheless neglected, theme which is of major importance to our understanding of both Daoism and Buddhism. A large number of doctrinal works of both traditions centre around the celestial abodes as well as the netherworld, especially in relation to the various concepts of death, immortality and rebirth, which constitute some of the most central issues in any religion. Hence, the present work is a most welcome attempt towards the disclosure of these important topics, which it treats thematically.

The book is divided into two separate parts, which are devoted to Buddhism and Daoism respectively.

Chapter One of the Buddhist section discusses the concepts of the “heavenly abodes” from the point of view of their names and divisions, rebirth in the heavens, their locations, as well as the sizes and lifespan of the gods in the Threefold Worlds. Chapter Two discusses the Buddhist concepts related to the netherworlds and the hells, including their locations, their names and numbers, King Yama and the other lords of the courts of the netherworlds, and finally a discussion of the kinds of suffering one receives there. Chapter Three contains a schematic presentation of relevant passages from the canonical material on the heavens and the netherworlds.

Following this comes Chapter One of the Daoist section, beginning with a presentation of the Three Heavens and the Nine Heavens. Chapter Two discusses the information of the heavens and their gods based on information as contained in the Daoist Canon. Chapter Three is devoted to a presentation to the Daoist spirits in the heavens and their names. Chapter Four discusses immortality and the various powers attributed to the Immortals (*shenxian*). Chapter Five contains a detailed presentation of the Daoist netherworld, including Tai Shan, its rivers, and the sufferings to which the sinners are subjected. Chapter Six discusses the Nine Planets and the Thirty-Six Stars. Chapter Seven is devoted entirely to a discussion of Fengdu, the “City of the

Dead”, and its temple the Liutian Gong. Chapter Eight contains the primary sources culled from the Daoist canonical material.

As indicated by the chapters large parts of the book are devoted to tables in which passages on the heavens and the hells have been set out. These tables are highly useful, as they allow the reader to compare how Buddhism and Daoism treated these respective realms, and in which ways their concepts differ. Furthermore it also allows for comparison between the ideas and concepts of texts from the same religion.

While the section on Buddhism is somewhat superficial, betraying the author’s general lack of expertise in this field, the Daoist section is at times both illuminating and interesting. For some reason the chapters on Tai Shan and Fengdu are the most interesting, since they provide a glimpse of how the Daoist beliefs in the netherworlds have worked in practice.

One of the minor drawbacks of this study is its slight sectarian trend in the direction of Daoism. This is both evident in the organization of the material, two thirds of which belongs to that religion, and in the over-all argument, which tends to favour Daoism.

One of the main points of criticism is that there is too much focus on scriptural information taken from strict canonical material, and too little attempt at relating the topics of the study to the historical sources, such as the dynastic histories, religious compendia, etc. For the Buddhist side the majority of sources consist of passages taken from *sūtras* and *śāstras* such as the *Dousha jing* (T. 280), *Pusa benye jing* (T. 281), *Tathāgatamahākaraṇā-nirdeśa* (T. 398), *Sanfa du lun* (T. 1506), *Subāhupariṣccha* (T. 310.26), *Abhidharmakośa śāstra* (T. 1559), etc., many of which are Hīnayāna in their standpoint. However, just because we encounter descriptions of the various heavens according to the *sanjie* (“Three Worlds”) scheme, i.e. the world of desire, the world of form, and the formless world, in varying degrees of complexity in these scriptures (which indeed were translated into Chinese relatively early), it is no indication that these concepts had taken root in Chinese thought and religion. The same holds true for the author’s use of references to the Buddhist hells. Consequently we would have been better served had he given clear examples—to the extent to which they can be had—of actual cases in which the basic Indian Buddhist concepts of the heavens and the hells had been accepted and assimilated into a Chinese cultural context during the period in question.

The Daoist sources, although more plentiful and better treated, include texts such as *Taishang shuo zhongtou dakui baoming miao jing* (DZ 627),¹ *Taishang Lingbao wufu xu* (DZ 388), *Shangqing Taishang kaitian longqiao jing* (DZ 1037), *Dongxuan Lingbao ziran jiutian shengshen chang jing* (DZ 318), *Dongzhen Shangqing kaitian santu qixing yidu jing* (DZ 1317), *Tais-*

¹ The “DZ” number refers to that given in K. M. Schipper, *Concordance du Tao-Tsang, Titres des Ouvrages*, Publications de l’École Française d’Extrême-Orient, Vol. CII, Paris, 1975.

hang dadao Yuqing jing (DZ 1312), etc. However, they suffer from lack of proper historical and chronological discussion. It is not acceptable to refer to scriptures taken from the revised Ming edition of the *Daozang* (Commercial Press Edition, Shanghai, 1924–6) and project them directly into a Six Dynasties cultural and religious framework, although they may originally date from this period, without having first conducted a text-critical appraisal of these sources. For Buddhist material dealing with the topics in question, Xiao ought to have consulted works such as *Hongming ji* (T. 2102), *Gaoseng zhuan* (T. 2059), and *Bianzheng lun* (T. 2110), etc., which contain information on how the concepts and practices related to heaven and the netherworlds worked in Chinese culture during the Nanbei Chao. Although considerably more extensive in his treatment of Daoist sources, it is still felt that he should have looked to works such as the *Baopu zi*, the *Zhoushi ming tongji*, and the *Wei Shu* for relevant information from the same period.

The above problem is directly related to the next point of criticism. For some reason the author does not limit himself to the period indicated by the title of his work in his choice of primary sources, but in fact develops his ideas on the basis of a rather general and loose treatment of the Buddhist and Daoist canonical material he uses. Buddhist scriptures such as the *Qishi jing* (T. 24), the *Daji Piyu wang jing* (T. 422), the *Abhidharmakośa śāstra kārikāvibhaṣya* (T. 1563) and *Jizang pusa benyuan jing* (T. 412) were not current in the Nan-Bei Chao period, at least not in the forms presented here. Furthermore much of the Buddhist material Xiao uses never enjoyed any widespread use beyond a narrow group of scholar monks and specialists. Likewise Daoist works including the *Fahai shizhu* (DZ 1166), the *Wushang huanglu dazhai yijie yi* (DZ 508), the *Lingbao lingjiao jidu jinshu* (DZ 466) and the *Yunji qijian* (DZ 1032) are the products of later periods such as the Tang and Song. All these things cause the plausibility of his general line of argument to falter somewhat.

Unfortunately by the very structure of the book, which divides the Daoist and Buddhist material under discussion into two distinct and seemingly unrelated blocks, the author allows himself to skip the cumbersome, but probably most rewarding, results that a comparative study of the concepts of the heavens and the netherworlds of the two traditions would have yielded. What is worse, it also means that he avoids any attempt at investigating the historical relationship and interchange of ideas between Daoism and Buddhism. This is a very serious defect, and perhaps the most essential problem with this book. Previous studies by Eric Zürcher *et al.* have shown that there is indeed a close relationship between Buddhist and Daoist lore during the Nanbei Chao Period (and later), and it would have greatly enhanced the value of the present study had the author taken the trouble to look in this direction.

Although the book is annotated, the references are very basic (read: traditional) as they do not even provide page numbers of the works cited. It is

also obvious that the author is generally unaware of the continuing research on Buddhist and especially Daoist scriptures and practices in both Japan and the West.

Despite its many technical errors and lop-sided structure, the *Han–Wei–Liu Chao fo dao liangjiao zhi tiantang diyu shuo* is not entirely useless. It does contain a lot of important material and information, and furthermore the long passages containing the source material set out in systematic schemata facilitate the identification of information on the heavens and the hells in selected works from the Buddhist and Daoist Canons. In a sense the greatest benefit of the study is that it may function as a kind of manual presenting passages on the heavens and the hells. Hence, if the reader is aware of its historical and methodological shortcomings as well as the limits of the primary materials employed, it can yield a considerable amount of information on the topics it presumes to treat.

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