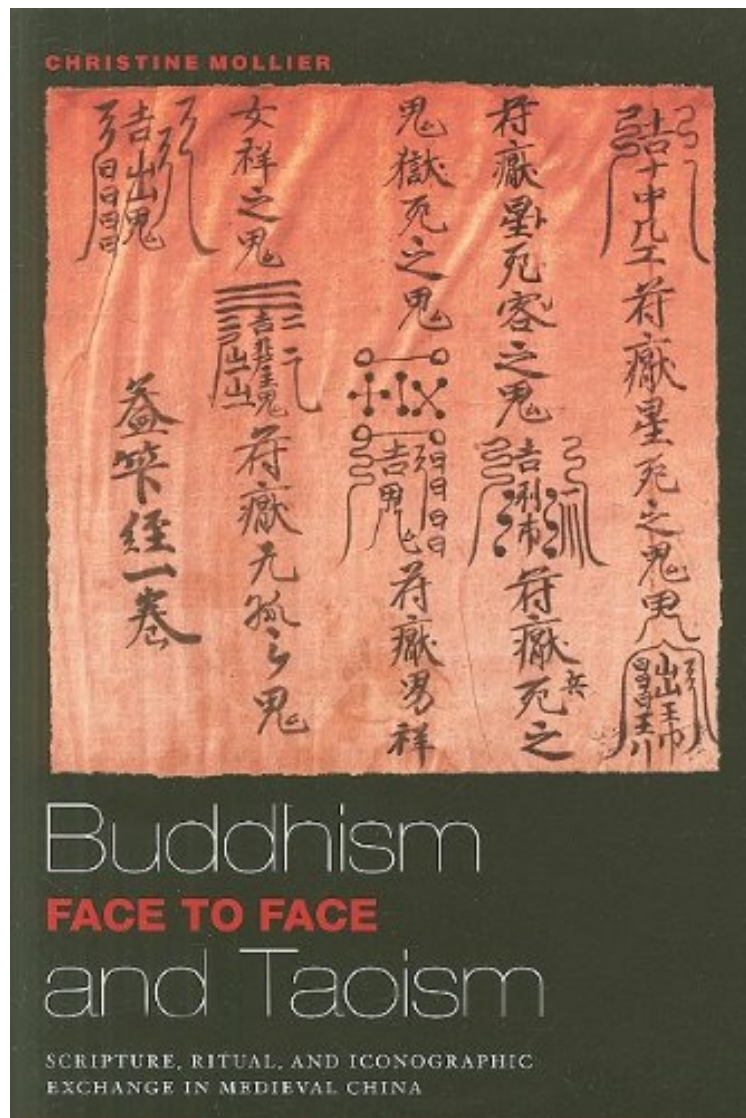


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Buddhism and Taoism Face to Face: Scripture, Ritual, and Iconographic Exchange in Medieval China

Christine Mollier

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Christine Mollier : Buddhism and Taoism Face to Face: Scripture, Ritual, and Iconographic Exchange in Medieval China before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Buddhism and Taoism Face to Face: Scripture, Ritual, and Iconographic Exchange in Medieval China:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Religious WarsBy Farmer JohnThe interaction between Buddhism

and Taoism has always been a subject of great scholarly interest, but it was not until the last two decades that we have seen a major shift in the attitude toward the nature of the relationship between these two religious traditions. As the title of her book suggests, Mollier's agenda is to portray the relationship of Buddhism and Taoism as an adversarial one, in which each tradition uses the popular ideas of its opponent in order to attack and eventually replace it. Mollier's book is an important contribution to the growing field of Buddhio-Taoism for a number of reasons. Not only does she provide accurate and fluent translations of influential sutras and scriptures that have never been studied before in the West, she is also successful in showing the significance of popular religious practices, such as rituals and the use of talismans. Mollier's sensitive analysis of the competition between the two main religious traditions to win the hearts of potential followers reveals to us the various techniques used by religious experts in the daily life of commoners without dismissing them as folk religion. Moreover, she shows the important role played by ritual in the life of the common people who were not exposed on a daily basis to scriptural doctrine. After decades in which most scholarly attention was directed toward the study of canonical texts, books like this, which try to map out the actual religious scene of medieval China, are a welcome and refreshing addition to the field. 0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Not for everyone By Karen Jensen While written from an academic point of view, this book serves the reader well in understanding the dynamics of both schools of thought. This is the most objective viewpoint I have found when discussing the interrelationship of Buddhism and Taoism. This is not written to affirm any belief system but to explain how the past integral growth of the two schools is still with us today. This is not a religious or philosophical text. It made me laugh sometimes when I realized how much I still do not know. 12 of 12 people found the following review helpful. Useful for Laypersons as well as the religious or scholarly By Prokopton Mollier surveys a few of the 40,000-odd manuscripts found in a sealed chamber at Dunhuang, with a particular eye to the relations between Taoism and Buddhism. Against a background of interfaith rivalry (in which Taoists could depict Lao-tzu reincarnating as Buddha to convert the foreigners, whilst Buddhists had Lao-tzu as Buddha's disciple) she unpicks some interesting stuff about similar doctrines appearing in the texts of the two different faiths. Buddhist longevity sutras turn out to have stolen their texts wholesale from Taoist originals; Taoism in return modelled an entire deity upon a Buddhist bodhisattva. There is much local colour for anyone who has an interest in this kind of thing -- descriptions of witchcraft practices (watch out for 'gu'!) and use of the Big Dipper, etc., revealing morsels of practice and belief. Whole texts are translated; the scholarship is very able and at times wry.

"This book exemplifies the best sort of work being done on Chinese religions today. Christine Mollier expertly draws not only on published canonical sources but also on manuscript and visual material, as well as worldwide modern scholarship, to give us the most sophisticated book-length study yet produced on the textual relations between the Buddhist and Taoist traditions. She pushes past the tired, vague, and rather innocent-sounding trope of influence to pinpoint much more complex and fascinating processes of textual repackaging, hybridization, adaptation, appropriation, reframing, pirating, remodeling, and transposing. Throughout, the urgent concerns of medieval Chinese people, life, health, protection, salvation are sensitively and elegantly evoked. Anyone interested in Chinese religions, in the ways in which religious texts are formed, and in cross-religious interactions should want to read this book." Robert Ford Campany, University of Southern California "Since the inception of Taoism and the transplantation of Buddhism in China in the first few centuries of the common era, proponents of Taoism and Buddhism have engaged in shrill debate and sly mimesis. In the 1950s modern scholars began to insist that the two higher religions of China could not be understood except in relation to each other. With *Buddhism and Taoism Face to Face*, Christine Mollier advances the debate and effectively proposes new methods, new sources, and new conclusions. Mollier demonstrates that mutual self-fashioning in the history of religion ought best be understood through the sustained study of the concrete and practical aspects of religious life. Utilizing a dazzling array of sources including medieval manuscripts, liturgies, canonical texts, statues, and hagiography this eloquent intervention sets the standard for many decades to come. Her book alerts us to the existence and sophistication of a third tradition, one plying the shifting boundaries between Taoism and Buddhism." Stephen F. Teiser, Princeton University Christine Mollier reveals in this volume previously unexplored dimensions of the interaction between Buddhism and Taoism in medieval China. While scholars of Chinese religions have long recognized the mutual influences linking the two traditions, Mollier here brings to light their intense contest for hegemony in the domains of scripture and ritual. Drawing on a far-reaching investigation of canonical texts, together with manuscript sources from Dunhuang and the monastic libraries of Japan many of them studied here for the first time she demonstrates the competition and complementarity of the two great Chinese religions in their quest to address personal and collective fears of diverse ills, including sorcery, famine, and untimely death. In this context, Buddhist apocrypha and Taoist scriptures were composed through a process of mutual borrowing, yielding parallel texts, Mollier argues, that closely mirrored one another. Life-extending techniques, astrological observances, talismans, spells, and the use of effigies and icons to resolve the fundamental preoccupations of medieval society were similarly incorporated in both religions. In many cases, as a result, one and the same body of material can be found in both Buddhist and Taoist guises. Among the exorcistic, prophylactic, and therapeutic ritual methods explored here in detail are the "Heavenly Kitchens" that grant divine nutrition to their adepts, incantations that were

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"In Buddhism and Taoism Face to Face, Christine Mollier undertakes five detailed case studies, each one illuminating a different dimension of the ritual, iconographic, and scriptural interactions of Buddhists and Taoists in medieval China. Mollier does not simply assert that these traditions influenced one another; she reveals in breathtaking detail the wide array of techniques used by Buddhists and Taoists as they appropriated and transformed the texts and icons of their rivals.... Mollier's work in this volume is brilliant. She deftly navigates through manuscripts, canonical texts, archaeological remains, and art-historical evidence.... Buddhism and Taoism Face to Face is an exhilarating display of Sinological erudition." -- H. Buddhism

Mollier's work is a fascinating and profound exploration, often of material that has until now received little if any attention from scholars. Her study of sorcery as it was constructed in Daoist and Buddhist traditions, for example which like other chapters makes ample use of vivid pictorial and manuscript evidence is a landmark study.-- "Journal of Chinese Religions"

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