

Tao Yuanming And Manuscript Culture

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Explore the intricate relationship between the revered Jin Dynasty poet Tao Yuanming and the dynamic manuscript culture that shaped the transmission of his work in ancient China. Before the advent of widespread printing, classical Chinese poetry, including Tao's influential verses, relied heavily on hand-copied texts for its survival and dissemination. Understanding this literary transmission process is crucial to appreciating how Tao Yuanming's enduring legacy in Chinese literature was preserved and influenced by the practices of his era.

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Tao Yuanming and Manuscript Culture

Winner of a 2006 Choice Magazine Outstanding Academic Title Award As medieval Chinese manuscripts were copied and recopied through the centuries, both mistakes and deliberate editorial changes were introduced, thereby affecting readers' impressions of the author's intent. In *Tao Yuanming and Manuscript Culture*, Xiaofei Tian shows how readers not only experience authors but produce them by shaping texts to their interpretation. Tian examines the mechanics and history of textual transmission in China by focusing on the evolution over the centuries of the reclusive poet Tao Yuanming into a figure of epic stature. Considered emblematic of the national character, Tao Yuanming (also known as Tao Qian, 365?-427 c.e.) is admired for having turned his back on active government service and city life to live a simple rural life of voluntary poverty. The artlessness of his poetic style is held as the highest literary and moral ideal, and literary critics have taken great pains to demonstrate perfect consistency between Tao Yuanming's life and poetry. Earlier work on Tao Yuanming has tended to accept this image, interpreting the poems to confirm the image. *Tao Yuanming and Manuscript Culture* is a study of how this cultural icon was produced and of the elusive traces of another, historical Tao Yuanming behind the icon. By comparing four early biographies of the poet, Tian shows how these are in large measure constructed out of Tao Yuanming's self-image as projected in his poetry and prose. Drawing on work in European medieval literature, she demonstrates the fluidity of the Chinese medieval textual world and how its materials were historically reconfigured for later purposes. Tian finds in Tao's poetic corpus not one essentialized Tao Yuanming, but multiple texts continuously produced long after the author's physical demise. Her provocative look at the influence of manuscript culture on literary perceptions transcends its immediate subject and has special resonance today, when the transition from print to electronic media is shaking the literary world in a way not unlike the transition from handwritten to print media in medieval China.

Dunhuang Manuscript Culture

"Dunhuang Manuscript Culture" explores the world of Chinese manuscripts from ninth-tenth century Dunhuang, an oasis city along the network of pre-modern routes known today collectively as the Silk Roads. The manuscripts have been discovered in 1900 in a sealed-off side-chamber of a Buddhist cave

temple, where they had lain undisturbed for almost nine hundred years. The discovery comprised tens of thousands of texts, written in over twenty different languages and scripts, including Chinese, Tibetan, Old Uighur, Khotanese, Sogdian and Sanskrit. This study centres around four groups of manuscripts from the mid-ninth to the late tenth centuries, a period when the region was an independent kingdom ruled by local families. The central argument is that the manuscripts attest to the unique cultural diversity of the region during this period, exhibiting—alongside obvious Chinese elements—the heavy influence of Central Asian cultures. As a result, it was much less ‘Chinese’ than commonly portrayed in modern scholarship. The book makes a contribution to the study of cultural and linguistic interaction along the Silk Roads.

Early Medieval China

This innovative sourcebook builds a dynamic understanding of China's early medieval period (220–589) through an original selection and arrangement of literary, historical, religious, and critical texts. A tumultuous and formative era, these centuries saw the longest stretch of political fragmentation in China's imperial history, resulting in new ethnic configurations, the rise of powerful clans, and a pervasive divide between north and south. Deploying thematic categories, the editors sketch the period in a novel way for students and, by featuring many texts translated into English for the first time, recast the era for specialists. Thematic topics include regional definitions and tensions, governing mechanisms and social reality, ideas of self and other, relations with the unseen world, everyday life, and cultural concepts. Within each section, the editors and translators introduce the selected texts and provide critical commentary on their historical significance, along with suggestions for further reading and research.

Ancient and Early Medieval Chinese Literature (vol. 2)

The long-awaited, first Western-language reference guide, this work offers a wealth of information on writers, genres, literary schools and terms of the Chinese literary tradition from earliest times to the seventh century C.E. Indispensable for scholars and students of pre-modern Chinese literature, history, and thought. Part Two contains S to Xi.

Manifest in Words, Written on Paper

This study aims to engage the textual realities of medieval literature by shedding light on the material lives of poems during the Tang, from their initial oral or written instantiation through their often lengthy and twisted paths of circulation. Tang poems exist today in stable written forms assumed to reflect their creators' original intent. Yet Tang poetic culture was based on hand-copied manuscripts and oral performance. We have almost no access to this poetry as it was experienced by contemporaries. This is no trivial matter, the author argues. If we do not understand how Tang people composed, experienced, and transmitted this poetry, we miss something fundamental about the roles of memory and copying in the circulation of poetry as well as readers' dynamic participation in the creation of texts. We learn something different about poems when we examine them, not as literary works transcending any particular physical form, but as objects with distinct physical attributes, visual and sonic. The attitudes of the Tang audience toward the stability of texts matter as well. Understanding Tang poetry requires acknowledging that Tang literary culture accepted the conscious revision of these works by authors, readers, and transmitters. 2012 Joseph Levenson Book Prize, Pre-1900 Category, China and Inner Asia Council of the Association for Asian Studies

China Between Empires

After the collapse of the Han dynasty, China divided along a north-south line. Lewis traces the changes that underlay and resulted from this split in a period that saw China's geographic redefinition, more engagement with the outside world, significant changes to family life, literary and social developments, and the introduction of new religions.

Roaming into the Beyond: Representations of Xian Immortality in Early Medieval Chinese Verse

This book examines representations of Daoist xian immortality in a broad range of versified literature from the Han until the end of the Six Dynasties and explores the complex interaction between poetry and Daoist religion in early medieval China.

Ancient and Early Medieval Chinese Literature (vol. 3 & 4)

The long-awaited, first Western-language reference guide, this work offers a wealth of information on writers, genres, literary schools and terms of the Chinese literary tradition from earliest times to the seventh century C.E. Indispensable for scholars and students of pre-modern Chinese literature, history, and thought. Part Three contains Xia - Y. Part Four contains the Z and an extensive index to the four volumes.

Reading Philosophy, Writing Poetry

"In a formative period of Chinese culture, early medieval writers made extensive use of a diverse set of resources, in which such major philosophical classics as Laozi, Zhuangzi, and Classic of Changes featured prominently. Reading Philosophy, Writing Poetry examines how these writers understood and manipulated a shared intellectual lexicon to produce meaning. Focusing on works by some of the most important and innovative poets of the period, this book explores intertextuality—the transference, adaptation, or rewriting of signs—as a mode of reading and a condition of writing. It illuminates how a text can be seen in its full range of signifying potential within the early medieval constellation of textual connections and cultural signs. If culture is that which connects its members past, present, and future, then the past becomes an inherited and continually replenished repository of cultural patterns and signs with which the literati maintains an organic and constantly negotiated relationship of give and take. Wendy Swartz explores how early medieval writers in China developed a distinctive mosaic of ways to participate in their cultural heritage by weaving textual strands from a shared and expanding store of literary resources into new patterns and configurations."

Daoist Philosophy and Literati Writings in Late Imperial China

This volume first explores the transformation of Chinese Daoism in late imperial period through the writings of prominent intellectuals of the times. In such a cultural context, it then launches an in-depth investigation into the Daoist dimensions of the Chinese narrative masterpiece, *The Story of the Stone*—the inscriptions of Quanzhen Daoism in the infrastructure of its religious framework, the ideological ramifications of the Daoist concepts of chaos, purity, and the natural, as well as the Daoist images of the gourd, fish, and bird. Zhou presents the central position of Daoist philosophy both in the ideological structure of the *Stone*, and the literati culture that engenders it.

Behaving Badly in Early and Medieval China

Behaving Badly in Early and Medieval China presents a rogues' gallery of treacherous regicides, impious monks, cutthroat underlings, ill-bred offspring, and disloyal officials. It plumbs the dark matter of the human condition, placing front and center transgressive individuals and groups traditionally demonized by Confucian annalists and largely shunned by modern scholars. The work endeavors to apprehend the actions and motivations of these men and women, whose conduct deviated from normative social, cultural, and religious expectations. Early chapters examine how core Confucian bonds such as those between parents and children, and ruler and minister, were compromised, even severed. The living did not always reverently pay homage to the dead, children did not honor their parents with due filiality, a decorous distance was not necessarily observed between sons and stepmothers, and subjects often pursued their own interests before those of the ruler or the state. The elasticity of ritual and social norms is explored: Chapters on brazen Eastern Han (25–220) mourners and deviant calligraphers, audacious falconers, volatile Tang (618–907) Buddhist monks, and drunken Song (960–1279) literati reveal social norms treated not as universal truths but as debated questions of taste wherein political and social expedience both determined and highlighted individual roles within larger social structures and defined what was and was not aberrant. A Confucian predilection to "valorize [the] civil and disparage the martial" and Buddhist proscriptions on killing led literati and monks alike to condemn the cruelty and chaos of war. The book scrutinizes cultural attitudes toward military action and warfare, including those surrounding the bloody and capricious world of the *Zuo*zhuan (*Chronicle of Zuo*), the relentless violence of the Five Dynasties and Ten States periods (907–979), and the exploits of Tang warrior priests—a series of studies that complicates the rhetoric by situating it within the turbulent realities of the times. By the end of this volume, readers will come away with the understanding that behaving badly in early and medieval China was not about morality but perspective, politics, and power.

The Inscription of Things

Why would an inkstone have a poem inscribed on it? Early modern Chinese writers did not limit themselves to working with brushes and ink, and their texts were not confined to woodblock-printed books or the boundaries of the paper page. Poets carved lines of verse onto cups, ladles, animal horns, seashells, walking sticks, boxes, fans, daggers, teapots, and musical instruments. Calligraphers left messages on the implements ordinarily used for writing on paper. These inscriptions—terse compositions in verse or epigrammatic prose—relate in complex ways to the objects on which they are written. Thomas Kelly develops a new account of the relationship between Chinese literature and material culture by examining inscribed objects from the late Ming and early to mid-Qing dynasties. He considers how the literary qualities of inscriptions interact with the visual and physical properties of the things that bear them. Kelly argues that inscribing an object became a means for authors to grapple with the materiality and technologies of writing. Facing profound social upheavals, from volatility in the marketplace to the violence of dynastic transition, writers turned to inscriptions to reflect on their investments in and dependence on the permanence of the written word. Shedding new light on cultures of writing in early modern China, *The Inscription of Things* broadens understandings of the links between the literary and the material.

The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature

Stephen Owen is James Bryant Conant Professor of Chinese at Harvard University. --Book Jacket.

Powerful Arguments

The essays in *Powerful Arguments* reconstruct the standards of validity underlying argumentative practices in a wide array of late imperial Chinese discourses, ranging from historiography, philosophy, law and religion to natural studies, literature, and the civil examination system.

Dialectics of Spontaneity

In *Dialectics of Spontaneity*, Zhiyi Yang examines the aesthetic and ethical theories of Su Shi, the primary poet, artist, and statesman of Northern Song.

How to Read Chinese Poetry

In this "guided" anthology, experts lead students through the major genres and eras of Chinese poetry from antiquity to the modern time. The volume is divided into 6 chronological sections and features more than 140 examples of the best shi, sao, fu, ci, and qu poems. A comprehensive introduction and extensive thematic table of contents highlight the thematic, formal, and prosodic features of Chinese poetry, and each chapter is written by a scholar who specializes in a particular period or genre. Poems are presented in Chinese and English and are accompanied by a tone-marked romanized version, an explanation of Chinese linguistic and poetic conventions, and recommended reading strategies. Sound recordings of the poems are available online free of charge. These unique features facilitate an intense engagement with Chinese poetical texts and help the reader derive aesthetic pleasure and insight from these works as one could from the original. The companion volume *How to Read Chinese Poetry Workbook* presents 100 famous poems (56 are new selections) in Chinese, English, and romanization, accompanied by prose translation, textual notes, commentaries, and recordings. Contributors: Robert Ashmore (Univ. of California, Berkeley); Zong-qi Cai; Charles Egan (San Francisco State); Ronald Egan (Univ. of California, Santa Barbara); Grace Fong (McGill); David R. Knechtges (Univ. of Washington); Xinda Lian (Denison); Shuen-fu Lin (Univ. of Michigan); William H. Nienhauser Jr. (Univ. of Wisconsin); Maija Bell Samei; Jui-lung Su (National Univ. of Singapore); Wendy Swartz (Columbia); Xiaofei Tian (Harvard); Paula Varsano (Univ. of California, Berkeley); Fusheng Wu (Univ. of Utah)

The Age of Courtly Writing

This book, through detailed analysis of the writings of the Liang Crown Prince Xiao Tong and his circle, will deepen and redefine our view of the court culture and literature of the Liang, a crucial period in Chinese literary history.

Tracing Manuscripts in Time and Space through Paratexts

As records of the link between a manuscript and the texts it contains, paratexts document many aspects of a manuscript's life: production, transmission, usage, and reception. Comprehensive studies

of paratexts are still rare in the field of manuscript studies, and the universal categories of time and space are used to create a common frame for research and comparisons. Contributions in this volume span over three continents and one millennium.

Signs from the Unseen Realm

In early medieval China hundreds of Buddhist miracle texts were circulated, inaugurating a trend that would continue for centuries. Each tale recounted extraordinary events involving Chinese persons and places—events seen as verifying claims made in Buddhist scriptures, demonstrating the reality of karmic retribution, or confirming the efficacy of Buddhist devotional practices. Robert Ford Campany, one of North America's preeminent scholars of Chinese religion, presents in this volume the first complete, annotated translation, with in-depth commentary, of the largest extant collection of miracle tales from the early medieval period, Wang Yan's *Records of Signs from the Unseen Realm*, compiled around 490 C.E. In addition to the translation, Campany provides a substantial study of the text and its author in their historical and religious settings. He shows how these lively tales helped integrate Buddhism into Chinese society at the same time that they served as platforms for religious contestation and persuasion. Campany offers a nuanced, clear methodological discussion of how such narratives, being products of social memory, may be read as valuable evidence for the history of religion and culture. Readers interested in Buddhism; historians of Chinese religions, culture, society, and literature; scholars of comparative religion: All will find *Signs from the Unseen Realm* a stimulating and rich contribution to scholarship.

Visionary Journeys

This book explores the parallel and yet profoundly different ways of seeing the outside world and engaging with the foreign at two important moments of dislocation in Chinese history, namely, the early medieval period commonly known as the Northern and Southern Dynasties (317–589 CE), and the nineteenth century. Xiaofei Tian juxtaposes literary, historical, and religious materials from these two periods in comparative study, bringing them together in their unprecedentedly large-scale interactions, and their intense fascination, with foreign cultures. By examining various cultural forms of representation from the two periods, Tian attempts to sort out modes of seeing the world that inform these writings. These modes, Tian argues, were established in early medieval times and resurfaced, in permutations and metamorphoses, in nineteenth-century writings on encountering the Other. This book is for readers who are interested not only in early medieval or nineteenth-century China but also in issues of representation, travel, visualization, and modernity.

Qian Qianyi's Reflections on Yellow Mountain

Qian Qianyi's *Reflections on Yellow Mountain* is a close examination of travel writing in seventeenth-century China, presenting an innovative reading of the *youji* genre. Taking the 'Account of My Travels at Yellow Mountain' by the noted poet, official and literary historian Qian Qianyi (1582-1664) as his focus, Stephen McDowall departs from traditional readings of *youji*, by reading the landscape of Qian's essay as the product of a complex representational tradition, rather than as an empirically verifiable space. Drawing from a broad range of materials including personal anecdotes, traditional cosmographical sources, gazetteers, Daoist classics, paintings and woodblock prints, this book explores the fascinating world of late-Ming Jiangnan, highlighting the extent to which this one scholar's depiction of Yellow Mountain is informed, not so much by first-hand observation, as by the layers of meaning left by generations of travelers before him. McDowall includes the first complete English-language translation of Qian Qianyi's account, and presents the first full-length critical study to appear in any language. The ideas explored here make this book essential reading for scholars and students of late imperial Chinese history and literature, and also offer thought-provoking new insights for anyone interested in travel writing, human geography, the sociology of tourism, and visual culture.

Ignorance is Bliss: The Chinese Art of Not Knowing

This book examines the popular, yet puzzling, Chinese saying *Nande hutu* 知不知, to uncover how the ancient Chinese wisdom of not knowing is constructed, interpreted, practiced and valued in contemporary society. Originating in the calligraphy of Qing-dynasty scholar Zheng Banqiao, *Nande hutu* translates literally as: "hard to attain muddle-headedness". Mieke Matthyssen traces the historical development of this saying and related philosophies to reveal a culturally conditioned, multi-layered inclination to different forms of not knowing. In contemporary society, she argues, this inclination forms part of a living

art: in some respects, a passive, evasive strategy for self-preservation; in other respects, a strategy for coping with intrapersonal, interpersonal and social complexities. Drawing on an extensive range of primary sources and original research, the analysis skillfully combines philosophical and socio-historical analysis with theory from Chinese philosophy, philosophical psychology and the relatively new field of indigenous psychology, to provide an in-depth understanding of how Nande hutu has shaped, and continues to shape, the Chinese psyche and behaviour. This book will appeal to all readers looking for fresh insights into Chinese culture, and in particular to students and scholars of Chinese and Asian studies, cultural and social anthropology, and philosophical and indigenous psychology.

The Oxford Handbook of Classical Chinese Literature (1000 BCE-900 CE)

This handbook of Classical Chinese literature from 1000 bce through 900 ce aims to provide a solid introduction to the field, inspire scholars in Chinese Studies to explore innovative conceptual frameworks and pedagogical approaches in the studying and teaching of classical Chinese literature, and facilitate a comparative dialogue with scholars of premodern East Asia and other classical and medieval literary traditions around the world. The handbook integrates issue-oriented, thematic, topical, and cross-cultural approaches to the classical Chinese literary heritage with historical perspectives. It introduces both literature and institutions of literary culture, in particular court culture and manuscript culture, which shaped early and medieval Chinese literary production.

Going to the Countryside

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, modern Chinese intellectuals, reformers, revolutionaries, leftist journalists, and idealistic youth had often crossed the increasing gap between the city and the countryside, which made the act of “going to the countryside” a distinctively modern experience and a continuous practice in China. Such a spatial crossing eventually culminated in the socialist state program of “down to the villages” movements during the 1960s and 1970s. What, then, was the special significance of “going to the countryside” before that era? *Going to the Countryside* deals with the cultural representations and practices of this practice between 1915 and 1965, focusing on individual homecoming, rural reconstruction, revolutionary journeys to Yan’an, the revolutionary “going down to the people” as well as going to the frontiers and rural hometowns for socialist construction. As part of the larger discourses of enlightenment, revolution, and socialist industrialization, “going to the countryside” entailed new ways of looking at the world and ordinary people, brought about new experiences of space and time, initiated new means of human communication and interaction, generated new forms of cultural production, revealed a fundamental epistemic shift in modern China, and ultimately created a new aesthetic, social, and political landscape. As a critical response to the “urban turn” in the past few decades, this book brings the rural back to the central concern of Chinese cultural studies and aims to bridge the city and the countryside as two types of important geographical entities, which have often remained as disparate scholarly subjects of inquiry in the current state of China studies. Chinese modernity has been characterized by a dual process that created problems from the vast gap between the city and the countryside but simultaneously initiated constant efforts to cope with the gap personally, collectively, and institutionally. The process of “crossing” two distinct geographical spaces was often presented as continuous explorations of various ways of establishing the connectivity, interaction, and relationship of these two imagined geographical entities. *Going to the Countryside* argues that this new body of cultural productions did not merely turn the rural into a constantly changing representational space; most importantly, the rural has been constructed as a distinct modern experiential and aesthetic realm characterized by revolutionary changes in human conceptions and sentiments.

Sino-Japanese Reflections

Sino-Japanese Reflections offers ten richly detailed case studies that examine various forms of cultural and literary interaction between Japanese and Chinese intellectuals from the late Ming to the early twentieth century. The authors consider efforts by early modern scholars on each side of the Yellow Sea to understand the language and culture of the other, to draw upon received texts and forms, and to contribute to shared literary practices. Whereas literary and cultural flow within the Sinosphere is sometimes imagined to be an entirely unidirectional process of textual dissemination from China to the periphery, the contributions to this volume reveal a more complex picture: highlighting how literary and cultural engagement was always an opportunity for creative adaptation and negotiation. Examining materials such as Chinese translations of Japanese vernacular poetry, Japanese engagements with Chinese supernatural stories, adaptations of Japanese historical tales into vernacular Chinese, Sinitic

poetry composed in Japan, and Japanese Sinology, the volume brings together recent work by literary scholars and intellectual historians of multiple generations, all of whom have a strong comparative interest in Sino-Japanese studies.

Knowledge and Text Production in an Age of Print: China, 900-1400

"The essays in this volume come mostly out of the conference, 'First Impressions: The Cultural History of Print in Imperial China (8th-14th centuries)', ' that took place at the Fairbank Center for East Asian Research, Harvard University, June 25-27, 2007"--Acknowledgements.

An Introduction to Chinese Poetry

"This innovative textbook for learning classical Chinese poetry moves beyond the traditional anthology of poems translated into English and instead brings readers—including those with no knowledge of Chinese—as close as possible to the texture of the poems in their original language. The first two chapters introduce the features of classical Chinese that are important for poetry and then survey the formal and rhetorical conventions of classical poetry. The core chapters present the major poets and poems of the Chinese poetic tradition from earliest times to the lyrics of the Song Dynasty (960–1279). Each chapter begins with an overview of the historical context for the poetry of a particular period and provides a brief biography for each poet. Each of the poems appears in the original Chinese with a word-by-word translation, followed by Michael A. Fuller's unadorned translation, and a more polished version by modern translators. A question-based study guide highlights the important issues in reading and understanding each particular text. Designed for classroom use and for self-study, the textbook's goal is to help the reader appreciate both the distinctive voices of the major writers in the Chinese poetic tradition and the grand contours of the development of that tradition."

The Chinese Pleasure Book

This book takes up one of the most important themes in Chinese thought: the relation of pleasurable activities to bodily health and to the health of the body politic. Unlike Western theories of pleasure, early Chinese writings contrast pleasure not with pain but with insecurity, assuming that it is right and proper to seek and take pleasure, as well as experience short-term delight. Equally important is the belief that certain long-term relational pleasures are more easily sustained, as well as potentially more satisfying and less damaging. The pleasures that become deeper and more ingrained as the person invests time and effort to their cultivation include friendship and music, sharing with others, developing integrity and greater clarity, reading and classical learning, and going home. Each of these activities is explored through the early sources (mainly fourth century BC to the eleventh century AD), with new translations of both well-known and seldom-cited texts.

Memory in Medieval China: Text, Ritual, and Community

Memory in Medieval China explores memory as performed in various genres of writing, from poetry to anecdotes, from history to tomb epitaphs, thereby illuminating ways in which the memory of persons, events, dynasties, and literary styles was constructed and revised.

The Figurative Works of Chen Hongshou (1599-1652)

Despite the importance of Chen Hongshou (1599-1652) as an artist and scholar of the late Ming period, until now no full length study in English has focused on his work. Author Tamara H. Bentley takes a broadly interdisciplinary approach, treating Chen's oeuvre in relation to literary themes and economic changes, and linking these larger concerns to visual analyses. In so doing, Bentley sheds new light not only on Chen, but also on an important cultural moment in the first half of the seventeenth century, when Chinese scholar artists began to direct their work towards anonymous public markets.

The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics

Rev. ed. of: The Princeton encyclopedia of poetry and poetics / Alex Preminger and T.V.F. Brogan, co-editors; Frank J. Warnke, O.B. Hardison, Jr., and Earl Miner, associate editors. 1993.

Reading Tao Yuanming

Though dismissed as a poet following his death, Tao Yuanming (365?-427) is now considered one of China's greatest writers. This study of the posthumous reputation of a central figure in Chinese literary history illuminates the transformation of literature and culture in premodern China.

A Topsy-Turvy World

Playwriting in many forms flourished during the late Ming and early Qing dynasties. Shorter theatrical genres in particular offered playwrights opportunities for experimentation with both dramatic form and social critique. Despite their originality and wit, these short plays have been overshadowed by the lengthy masterpieces of the southern drama tradition. *A Topsy-Turvy World* presents English translations of shorter sixteenth-to-eighteenth-century plays, spotlighting a lesser-known side of Chinese drama. Satirical and often earthy, these mostly one-act plays depict deceit, dissembling, reversed gender roles, and sudden upending of fortunes. With zest and humor, they portray henpecked husbands, supercilious and lustful monks, all-too-human sage kings, disgruntled officials, and overreaching young scholars. These plays provide a glimpse of Chinese daily life and mores even as they question or subvert the boundaries of social, moral, and political order. Each translation is preceded by a short introduction that describes the play's author, context, formal qualities, and textual history. *A Topsy-Turvy World* offers a new view of a significant period in the development of the Chinese theatrical tradition and provides insight into the role of drama as cultural critique.

The World of a Tiny Insect

"From the cry of a tiny insect, one can hear the sound of a vast world. . . ." So begins Zhang Daye's preface to *The World of a Tiny Insect*, his haunting memoir of war and its aftermath. In 1861, when China's devastating Taiping rebellion began, Zhang was seven years old. The Taiping rebel army occupied Shaoxing, his hometown, and for the next two years, he hid from Taiping soldiers, local bandits, and imperial troops and witnessed gruesome scenes of violence and death. He lost friends and family and nearly died himself from starvation, illness, and encounters with soldiers on a rampage. Written thirty years later, *The World of a Tiny Insect* gives voice to this history. A rare premodern Chinese literary work depicting a child's perspective, Zhang's sophisticated text captures the macabre images, paranoia, and emotional excess that defined his wartime experience and echoed through his adult life. The structure, content, and imagery of *The World of a Tiny Insect* offer a carefully constructed, fragmented narrative that skips in time and probes the relationships between trauma and memory, revealing both history and its psychic impact. Xiaofei Tian's annotated translation includes an introduction that situates *The World of a Tiny Insect* in Chinese history and literature and explores the relevance of the book to the workings of traumatic memory.

China Review International

Plucking Chrysanthemums is a critical study of the life and works of Narushima Rykhoku (1837–1884): Confucian scholar, world traveler, pioneering journalist, and irrepressible satirist. A major figure on the nineteenth-century Japanese cultural scene, Rykhoku wrote works that were deeply rooted in classical Sinitic literary traditions. Sinitic poetry and prose enjoyed a central and prestigious place in Japan for nearly all of its history, and the act of composing it continued to offer modern Japanese literary figures the chance to incorporate themselves into a written tradition that transcended national borders. Adopting Rykhoku's multifarious invocations of Six Dynasties poet Tao Yuanming as an organizing motif, Matthew Fraleigh traces the disparate ways in which Rykhoku drew upon the Sinitic textual heritage over the course of his career. The classical figure of this famed Chinese poet and the Sinitic tradition as a whole constituted a referential repository to be shaped, shifted, and variously spun to meet the emerging circumstances of the writer as well as his expressive aims. *Plucking Chrysanthemums* is the first book-length study of Rykhoku in a Western language and also one of the first Western-language monographs to examine Sinitic poetry and prose (kanshibun) composition in modern Japan.

Plucking Chrysanthemums

Honorable Mention, Joseph Levenson Prize (pre-1900 category), Association for Asian Studies By the middle of the third century B.C.E. in China there were individuals who sought to become transcendents (xian)—deathless, godlike beings endowed with supernormal powers. This quest for transcendence became a major form of religious expression and helped lay the foundation on which the first Daoist religion was built. Both xian and those who aspired to this exalted status in the centuries leading up to 350 C.E. have traditionally been portrayed as secretive and hermit-like figures. This groundbreaking

study offers a very different view of xian-seekers in late classical and early medieval China. It suggests that transcendence did not involve a withdrawal from society but rather should be seen as a religious role situated among other social roles and conceived in contrast to them. Robert Campany argues that the much-discussed secrecy surrounding ascetic disciplines was actually one important way in which practitioners presented themselves to others. He contends, moreover, that many adepts were not socially isolated at all but were much sought after for their power to heal the sick, divine the future, and narrate their exotic experiences. The book moves from a description of the roles of xian and xian-seekers to an account of how individuals filled these roles, whether by their own agency or by others'—or, often, by both. Campany summarizes the repertoire of features that constituted xian roles and presents a detailed example of what analyses of those cultural repertoires look like. He charts the functions of a basic dialectic in the self-presentations of adepts and examines their narratives and relations with others, including family members and officials. Finally, he looks at hagiographies as attempts to persuade readers as to the identities and reputations of past individuals. His interpretation of these stories allows us to see how reputations were shaped and even co-opted—sometimes quite surprisingly—into the ranks of xian. *Making Transcendents* provides a nuanced discussion that draws on a sophisticated grasp of diverse theoretical sources while being thoroughly grounded in traditional Chinese hagiographical, historiographical, and scriptural texts. The picture it presents of the quest for transcendence as a social phenomenon in early medieval China is original and provocative, as is the paradigm it offers for understanding the roles of holy persons in other societies.

Making Transcendents

The Liang dynasty (502-557) is one of the most brilliant and creative periods in Chinese history and one of the most underestimated and misunderstood. Under the Liang, literary activities, such as writing, editing, anthologizing, and cataloguing, were pursued on an unprecedented scale, yet the works of this era are often dismissed as "decadent" and no more than a shallow prelude to the glories of the Tang. This book is devoted to contextualizing the literary culture of this era—not only the literary works themselves but also the physical process of literary production such as the copying and transmitting of texts; activities such as book collecting, anthologizing, cataloguing, and various forms of literary scholarship; and the intricate interaction of religion, particularly Buddhism, and literature. Its aim is to explore the impact of social and political structure on the literary world.

Beacon Fire and Shooting Star

In *Entombed Epigraphy and Commemorative Culture* Timothy M. Davis explains the social, cultural, and religious significance of early medieval *muzhiming*—one of the most versatile and persistent commemorative forms employed in the elite burials of pre-modern China.

Chinese Literature, Essays, Articles, Reviews

Entombed Epigraphy and Commemorative Culture in Early Medieval China