

three entries are men, and none are non-Chinese. By contrast, of the 100 entries in volume 4, only about one-third are political figures, and there are no military figures. Instead, readers can find information regarding authors, business leaders, filmmakers, musicians, sports figures, and personalities in other interesting fields. Volume 4 also includes a biography of at least one non-ethnic Chinese, Rebiya Kadeer, President of the World Uyghur Congress. It can be debated as to whether or not others, such as Taiwan's Chen Shui-bian, are "ethnically Chinese." Volume 4 also includes several entries for individuals living in Hong Kong, Taiwan, the United States, and other areas beyond the political control of Beijing. Unfortunately, women still only comprise 10 percent of the entries, mostly in the fields of acting (Gong Li, Joan Chen, and Maggie Cheung) and politics (Anson Chan, Wu Yi, Li Xiaolin, and Rebiya Kadeer).

Western readers will find many familiar names among the list of entries, such as Jackie Chan, Deng Xiaoping, and Yao Ming. Some names seem to be included especially for the English-reading audience. For example, Nobel Prize winner Liu Xiaobo is widely respected internationally but virtually unknown within China and has debatably had very little influence on contemporary China. Other entries will be completely unknown to those in the West but are vitally necessary for a volume such as this one. While most Americans have never heard of Terry Gou, his role as founder and chairman of the manufacturing Foxconn Group makes him one of the most important figures in not only Chinese history, but also in the new global economy.

Many of the entries include cutting-edge scholarship. In his entry on the disgraced politician Bo Xilai, John Garnaut analyzes China's ongoing social divide, shedding light on such timely issues as inequality, economic liberalism, and political populism. Similarly, Szu-wei Chen's examination of Taiwanese pop singer Teresa Teng tackles intractable theoretical problems, including transnationalism and the commodification of culture.

Indeed, because the figures in volume 4 are so contemporary, with the majority of them still living, most of the entries represent the latest research in the field. At the same time, however, it is difficult to provide a definitive analysis, given the lack of historical perspective regarding many people included in the volume.

Teachers will find many uses for volume 4 of the dictionary. They can assign their students entries according to their various lesson needs. If, for example, the lesson is on censorship, teachers might select the biographies of singer Teresa Teng, blogger Han Han, activist Wei Jingshen, and journalist Liu Binyan. If the lesson is on economic development, they could choose entrepreneur Ren Zhengfei, gymnast Li Ning, and businessman Huang Guanyu. There are many other such combinations highlighting pop culture, human rights, environmentalism, and several other timely topics. This is one of the many appealing elements of using biography as history. It allows the educator to select individuals based on the narrative he or she is seeking to create. Of course, this is also the challenge and risk of using biography. Nevertheless, volume 4 of the *Berkshire Dictionary of Chinese Biography* is a powerful and insightful resource that teachers will welcome. ■

NOTES

1. Charles W Hayford, "Where's the Omelet? Bad King Deng and the Challenges of Biography and History," *Journal of Asian Studies* 75, no. 1 (2016): 21.
2. Berkshire Publishing Titles, "Berkshire Dictionary of Chinese Biography," accessed March 29, 2016, <http://tinyurl.com/jl8nlov>.

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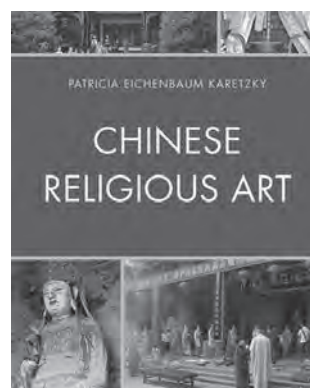
Chinese Religious Art

By PATRICIA EICHENBAUM KARETZKY

LANHAM: LEXINGTON BOOKS (ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD), 2013

394 PAGES, ISBN: 978-0739180594, PAPERBACK

Reviewed by Benita Stambler



It seems hard to believe that there has not been a volume prior to this one devoted to Chinese religious art, but this work by Patricia Eichenbaum Karetzky is the first comprehensive volume on the subject. It thus fills an important gap in literature on Asian art by providing a less-familiar lens for examining dynastic art. In this book, the Tang Dynasty, instead of being characterized by its frequent artistic symbols, tricolor horses and polo-playing women, is analyzed through objects such as Daoist and Buddhist carvings found in caves.

General books on Chinese art have been organized by different principles: dynasty, materials (jade, ceramics), purpose (trade, ritual, domestic), location (tomb, temple), etc. This text is organized first with a section on

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early Chinese art from the Neolithic period through the Shang Dynasty (c. 1600–1050 BCE), ending with the Qin Dynasty (221–210 BCE). At this early time, the three major religious traditions that took hold in China—Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism—were not yet fully formed. It is argued, however, that this period was critical for the development of principles, practices, and iconography that were later incorporated into the major religious canons.

Following this initial part, the book is divided into sections on the art of each of these three major religions, followed by a brief conclusion. There is also a bibliography organized along the same lines. Within the three major parts, the information is organized chronologically, each ending with a chapter on temples, making it possible to easily follow any religious strand from its beginnings through subsequent changes and development.

A somewhat-broad view of what constitutes religious art is included partly because Confucianism in its early years had a limited pantheon, eventually becoming the de facto state ideology across dynasties. The principles of Confucianism produced less in the way of material objects, as its religious and moral ideals, including filial piety, did not initially require much in the way of implements, statues, and deities beyond Confucius himself. Since texts were primary, Confucian art played a more limited role in practice when compared to the other religious traditions, although examples of narratives in stone are provided.

While the concepts of Daoism existed throughout Chinese dynastic history, Karetzky explains that, in certain periods, its expression did not always resemble our preconceptions regarding religious art. During times of upheaval, some Daoist literati removed themselves from the world of politics and retreated to reclusive communities. Included here is an image of a rubbing titled “Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove,” dated from the fifth century but based on third-century individuals illustrating these men living their principles by relaxing under trees, focusing their energies on what we now refer to as “personal development.” This strays from our usual ideas of traditional religious iconography, but is a subject that recurs in Ming Dynasty art—obviously a resonating theme.

When Buddhism arrived in China from India along the Silk Roads, certain aspects had to be adapted in order to appeal to a population steeped in Confucian principles. Karetzky clearly lays out the three stages of the transformation of Buddhist religious art in China from early examples, showing strong foreign influences to much more indigenized styles, then to the incorporation of foreign characteristics, again due to increased interactions across cultures. The chapter on Buddhist art in the Northern Song to Qing Dynasties delineates stylistic differences from the previous Tang Dynasty, with the Northern Song having a more naturalistic approach to portraying deities.

One of the issues with separating information by religious tradition is that it may complicate gaining a clear idea of the ebb and flow of the various religious currents swirling through China, as well as the artistic styles (materials, artistic conventions, aesthetics, etc.) prevalent at any given time. Since there is no overall timeline, the book’s division into periods might be unclear to readers with limited knowledge of China’s dynastic cycles. The periodization of the sections is somewhat inconsistent, making comparisons across religions challenging. For example, chapter 6, in the Confucian section on the medieval period, labels the chapter “Six Dynasties to Song Dynasty (220–1279).” In the Daoist section, the medieval period subtitle is “Tang and Song Dynasties (618–1279),” although more than a third of this chapter is devoted to the pre-Tang period (for a further discussion of the applicability of the term “medieval” to China, see Keith N. Knapp’s “Did the Middle Kingdom Have a Middle Period? The Problem of ‘Medieval’ in China’s History,” *Education About Asia* 12, no. 3 [2007]: 12–17).

In contrast to the periodization for the other religions, the chapter on early Buddhist art encompasses the medieval period (including a portion of the Six Dynasties), from 420 to 750, while the Tang Dynasty (618–907) is considered separately in its own chapter, without reference to any specifically medieval characteristics. This lack of uniformity in the divisions across the three sections, and thus the three religions, does not provide a strong structure for a comparative chronological framework.

For students and others new to this study, it would have been helpful for the author to step back slightly to suggest how to look at Chinese religious art and what to look for. This could include more information on styles that crossed religious boundaries. Generalizations would be preferable to detail about the original locations of objects. For example, in discussing Neolithic cultures to examine the origins of religious practices, Karetzky states, “Jade *bi* were also found in great numbers in Liangzhu graves: for example, Tomb M20 has over forty, and Tomb T23 has nearly three dozen” (19–20). While this type of information could be useful for some scholars, it doesn’t enhance understanding for more general readers. Instead, additional statements regarding the interaction of the streams of religious art would help clarify their connections, similar to this example: “Scholars often acknowledge the influence of Buddhist ideas of universal salvation or Confucian ethical and moral practices on Daoism during this era [early medieval], and such observations attest to the fact that the boundaries between the different ways of thought were often quite fluid” (174).

No matter how well an art book is written, it could be argued that its most enticing aspect is the illustrations. Such an opinion would hamper the appreciation of the finer qualities of this work. Obviously, a lot of scholarship went into this text, but it remains unsupported by its illustrations, which are particularly integral to books on art. The problem is not only that all the illustrations are black and white, but many included here have a somewhat-muddied appearance lacking contrast and clarity. This makes it difficult to see their details and therefore understand their importance. Additionally, there are no references in the text to the illustration numbers (unless the illustration is located in a different chapter), so matching the description of an object with its image may take some effort.

This work provides an admirably broad and deep range of information on Chinese religious art organized into a single volume, with many sources and sites included. Its organizational structure would lend itself to courses arranged to address an artistic tradition of a particular religion, but would be somewhat less easily adaptable for a more general survey class organized according to a straight chronological approach. Additionally, the information provided would need to be supplemented by clear images of illustrative objects. However, this should not be a problem, given the rich availability of imagery from many sources. ■

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