

Research Note: Buddhism in the Writings of Tao Hongjing

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Abstract

This research note presents two bits of evidence that indicate we should reconsider our received idea that Buddhist elements came into Daoist scriptures in a major way only with the early 5th-century Lingbao scriptures. The two examples presented here indicate that ideas of rebirth and an expansive cosmos composed of alternate world-systems not only appeared in the writings of Tao Hongjing, but also with the Shangqing scriptures that he collected and annotated. The bad news for modern researchers is that the examples presented here also show that such traces of Buddhist borrowings were systematically removed from Daoist scripture beginning as early as the late 6th century.

Keywords: Tao Hongjing, Buddhism, Shangqing, textual analysis, Dunhuang

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