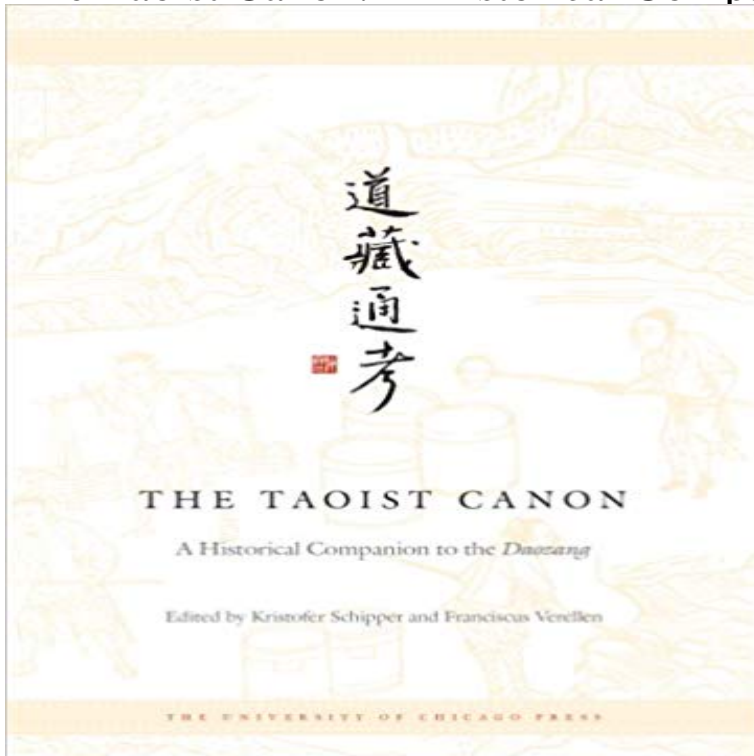


The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang



Taoism remains the only major religion whose canonical texts have not been systematically arranged and made available for study. This long-awaited work, a milestone in Chinese studies, catalogs and describes all existing texts within the Taoist canon. The result will not only make the entire range of existing Taoist texts accessible to scholars of religion, it will open up a crucial resource in the study of the history of China. The vast literature of the Taoist canon, or Daozang, survives in a Ming Dynasty edition of some fifteen hundred different texts. Compiled under imperial auspices and completed in 1445 with a supplement added in 1607, many of the books in the Daozang concern the history, organization, and liturgy of China's indigenous religion. A large number of works deal with medicine, alchemy, and divination. If scholars have long neglected this unique storehouse of China's religious traditions, it is largely because it was so difficult to find one's way within it. Not only was the rationale of its medieval classification system inoperable for the many new texts that later entered the Daozang, but the system itself was no longer understood by the Ming editors; hence the haphazard arrangement of the canon as it has come down to us. This new work sets out the contents of the Daozang chronologically, allowing the reader to follow the long evolution of Taoist literature. Lavishly illustrated, the first volume ranges from antiquity through the Middle Ages, while the second spans the modern period. Within this frame, texts are grouped by theme and subject. Each one is the subject of a historical abstract that identifies the text's contents, date of origin, and author. Throughout the first two volumes, introductions outline the evolution of Taoism and its spiritual heritage. A third volume offering biographical sketches of frequently mentioned Taoists, multiple indexes, and

an extensive bibliography provides critical tools for navigating this guide to one of the fundamental aspects of Chinese culture.

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