



Taoist Buildings: The Architecture of China's Indigenous Religion (Library of Ancient Chinese Architecture)

Qiao Yun

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In *Taoist Buildings*, Qiao Yun traces the origins and development of Taoism, China's indigenous religion. In the early stages, ascetics mostly lived in solitude, leading a life of self-discipline in isolated mountain retreats. By the time of the Tang Dynasty, Taoism had become so popular that it was revered as the national religion by the imperial court of the Li, and the construction of Taoist temples and monasteries increased rapidly. Further development during the Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties led to Taoist buildings being erected in famous mountain locations and scenic spots throughout China.

Taoist Buildings chronicles the transformation in Taoist architecture throughout ancient China. The founding and development of Taoism led to the construction of buildings for offering sacrifices to the deities, practicing Taoism, and performing ceremonial prayers. Taoism, which had gradually absorbed the theories and sacrificial rites of Buddhism and Confucianism, reached its zenith in Tang and Song times when it enjoyed the full support of the royal family. As time went on, Taoist architecture became grander, evolving into the palatial monastery style.

Taoist Buildings includes 128 color photographs, 18 illustrations and figures, and 2 maps, detailing Taoist temples, monasteries, and palaces. Early Taoist buildings took the form of crude and simple cave dwellings or shacks, to which believers withdrew in order to lead a life of rigid self-discipline. As Taoism became more popular, temples, monasteries, hostels, and other structures were built throughout China. After exploring the tenets of Taoism and its practices, this volume explores Taoism's effect on Chinese architecture, including the layout and construction of the palatial monastery and various other temples and palaces.

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