

A Study of *Lao-zi-ba-shi-yi-hua-tu-shuo*
老子八十一化図説 Owned by Otani University

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A book entitled *Dao-de-jing* 道德經 which contains the pictures generally called *Ba-shi-yi-hua-tu-shuo* 八十一化図説 is found in the library of Otani University. The pictures describe the life of Lao Zi 老子 in 81 scenes, based on various legends represented by Hua-tu-shuo.

The pictures were drawn by a Taoist of Quan-zhen-jiao 全真教 in the Xian Zong 憲宗 period of the Yuan Dynasty, and caused a debate between the Buddhists and the Taoists in the Yuan Dynasty. A Taoist of Luan-zhen-jiao named Li Zhi Chang 李志常 played a central role in making the book, and ordered Ling Gu Zhang 令孤璋 and Shi Zhi Jing 史志經 to be its authors. Li Zhi Chang, hoping to have the book read far and wide, tried to spread it among the high officials of the royal court. However, the Buddhists learned of his attempt and the book caused fierce opposition instead.

It is said that, as the Taoists were defeated in several debates before the emperor, the possession of the book was prohibited, and that the printing blocks of the book were all burnt. As a result, the book could not be spread.

Most copies of the *Ba-shi-yi-hua-tu* 八十一化図 were burnt in Yuan Dynasty, but a few of them still exist. In the first chapter, the book owned by Otani University is introduced with a short explanation of some kinds of editions whose existence is reported. Among them, the Otani edition belongs to Tai-qing-gong edition 太清宮本, the same edition owned by Fukui Kōjun 福井康順.

There have been some studies of the relationship between the existing editions, including the Otani one, and the original edition of *Ba-shi-yi-hua-tu*. As the original edition was gone except the lost writing quoted in *Zhi-yua-bian-wei-lu* 至元弁偽錄, however, the studies so far have been limited to the comparison between this lost writing and commentaries of the existing editions. In the next two chapters, I examine the pictures of the existing editions, and pursue the relationship between the commentaries of the original edition and those of the existing editions.

Out of the 81 scenes, I choose the 18th and 45th *hua* and analyze them.

As its title, "The Holy Birthday", shows, the 18th *hua* depicts the scene where Tai-shang Lao-jun 太上老君 commenced the life as Lao Zi in China. Then I compare the commentary above this picture with the one quoted in *Zhi-yuan-bian-wei-lu*. The difference between them is evident, and it is true of the 45th *hua* too. In short, the commentaries of the existing editions do not clearly explain the contents of the pictures. On the other hand, the pictures are mostly consistent with the commentaries quoted in *Zhi-yuan-bian-wei-lu*, therefore retain the form of the original better.

The content of *Ba-shi-yi-tu-hua-shuo*, being derived from *Hua-hu-jing* 化胡經, plagiarizes many auspicious signs from Buddhist scriptures in order to advocate Taoism and to disparage Buddhism. Such a method, however, had been traditionally used, and it is hard to consider that this caused the strong criticism from the Buddhists. The reason why *Ba-shi-yi-tu-hua-shuo* aroused the harsh response lies in its way of expression rather than its content. The pictorial expression can be directly presented even to illiterate people, and bring about a strong impression and a quick understanding. This is what the Buddhists feared, and it gave them proper excuses to criticize the Taoists who acted wrongly in the society then.

Although the Taoists too acknowledged the importance of the effects of pictorial expression in the missionary works, they did not seem to expect strong opposition from the Buddhists. Considering that the book continued to be handed down until today, the fear of the Buddhists was far from groundless.