



Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism: A Reading of the Treasure Store Treatise

By Robert H. Sharf

University of Hawaii Press. Paperback. Condition: New. 416 pages. Dimensions: 8.8in. x 5.9in. x 1.1in. Chinese Buddhism is often portrayed as the product of a protracted encounter between Indian Buddhism and Chinese civilization, an encounter that led to the sinification of Buddhist teachings and practices. In a masterful display of scholarship, Robert Sharf makes a major contribution to the re-evaluation of the encounter. He shows that, although the Chinese were cognizant of the foreign origins of Buddhism, their actual exposure to South Asian clerics and Sanskrit texts was limited throughout medieval times. For the most part, Sharf argues, the Chinese dialogue with Buddhism took place among the Chinese themselves. That being the case, Chinese Buddhism is more properly approached as a product of Sinitic culture, not a distorted reflection of normative Indian Buddhist prototypes. Sharf draws his argument in part from a close analysis of an obscure, nominally Buddhist text, the Treasure Store Treatise (Pao-tsang lun). The book begins with a careful reconstruction of historical and religious provenance of the text. It next turns to an analysis of internal evidence to demonstrate the close affinity between the Treatise and texts associated with Ox-head Chan and Twofold-Mystery Taoism. There follows a fascinating...



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