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The heavenly court: a study on the Iconopraxis of Daoist temple painting

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Stellingen

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The Heavenly Court: A Study on the Iconopraxis of Daoist Temple Painting

door Lennert Gesterkamp

in de Lokhorstkerk te Leiden

om 15:00 uur, 5 Maart 2008

1. Daoist Heavenly Court painting depict a traditional, indigenous Chinese pictorial theme.
2. Daoist Heavenly Court paintings and Daoist liturgy show a parallel development in Chinese history.
3. The imperial representation of Daoist Heavenly Court painting emerged in the eighth and ninth centuries as a result of the merging of the state cult and the Daoist cult, mainly in opposition to the overwhelming presence and wealth of Buddhism and Buddhist art. This merging reached its apex during the Northern Song dynasty (960-1127) with the establishment of a Daoist sacred empire.
4. The Heavenly Court paintings at the Yongle gong of 1325 depict a ritual format imitating that of the heyday of Daoism at the end of the Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), but also comprising some new elements, portraying the Daoist Quanzhen order as the legitimate successor of the Daoist sacred empire of the Northern Song dynasty.
5. Iconography tells which deity is depicted, iconopraxis tells why it is depicted in that particular way.
6. Daoist art is defined by its practices, not by rules laid down in texts.
7. For the correct ritual performance, the iconographic representation of Daoist deities is less important than their proper visualisation.
8. The iconographic representation of Chinese deities, and Daoist deities in particular, is a reflection of the social groups involved in their production.
9. The history of Chinese wall painters is not recorded in texts but in their paintings.
10. The western concept of art is a concept of western art.
11. Even though more funding will not necessarily result in better research, less funding will result in worse research.
12. The world is not a donut.