

Sun Simiao – life of an immortal : Abstract

This thesis studies the traditional perception on an important Chinese Tang dynasty physician and alchemist Sun Simiao 孫思邈 (581-682), which is examined on his biography from the tenth century Taoist collection of hagiographies *Xuxianzhuan* 續仙傳. The study begins through an analysis of the oldest available sources of the biography of Sun Simiao. This analysis can build upon the work of N. Sivin, summarize it, add some details if needed and approach it with a critical attitude.

The study of Sun's biography focuses on the archetypal categories which were connected to him, such as recluses, masters of methods and immortals. First the structure of his biography is compared with the usual structure of biographies of exemplary officials. Then parts of the biography that correspond to each category are chosen. On their basis the extent to which the biography of Sun Simiao represents only a characterisation of the given category or truly reflects the real his real life, or at least what we know about his life from the available sources. In the end the later development of Sun Simiao's traditional Taoist perception is briefly outlined providing a broader perspective of the main subject.

Keywords: China (Tang dynasty), hagiography, recluses, Taoism, immortals, intellectual life, Chinese thoughts