Abstract

The Record of Venerable Lü Dongbin (呂祖志) is one of the many books in Taoist Canon (道藏). It is a record of Lü Dongbin’s deeds and poetic works on which little research has been done. This honours thesis aims to investigate the contents of the book and compare the legend and cult of Lü Dongbin in the book with other secondary sources.

Chapter one of this thesis briefly traces the history of Taoist Canon and The Record of Venerable Lü Dongbin. Chapter two provides an overall picture of the content in The Record of Venerable Lü Dongbin, which consists of three portraits, the records of his deeds and his poetry. Chapter three examines the similarities and differences of the legends of Lü Dongbin between The Record of Venerable Lü Dongbin and other sources. Chapter four deals with the characteristics and portraits of Lü Dongbin himself. Chapter five discusses the influences of Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, Moism and Nestorian on Lü Dongbin.

The study yields two findings. One is about Lü Dongbin’s character. He has often been regarded as a flirtatious immortal in most sources. But in The Record of Venerable Lü Dongbin, he is a controlled man, having no sexual desires. Secondly, even though Lü Dongbin is a Taoist immortal, his speech and actions are very much influenced by Confucianism and Buddhism. These three religions have always been mutually influencing each other for a long period of time in China. Besides, there are also traces of influence from Moism and Nestorian in Lü Dongbin’s life.