Daoist perspectives on knowing the future

Selections from the Scripture on Great Peace (Taiping jing)

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DESCRIPTION:
In China, in the first centuries of the Common Era, prognostication was a widely used tool of political decision making, of cultural and ideological expression and, increasingly, also of popular resistance. The Scripture on Great Peace originated in this environment. It contains warnings of a universal cataclysm and suggests a radical social and religious reorientation as means of salvation. Thereby, it connects insights and ideas of the empire's academic establishment to experiences and concerns of the population at large. It belongs to the earliest textual sources for Daoism, that is, for China's indigenous religion that took shape when the imperial government and with it the empire fell apart in the second century CE.

The present volume documents the Scripture's doctrinal and stylistic diversity. The selected materials stem from different parts of the long text. Some focus on eschatological scenarios, others, in contrast, on utopian hopes for the reform of humankind and its future under the auspices of "Great Peace". Still others design schemes for personal immortality. In this study, these materials are translated into a Western language for the first time. The translations are accompanied by extensive explanatory annotations.