

## Shaping the True Mountains: “*Shanshui tu*”, “*Shanshui hua*”, and Visuality in Daoist Landscape

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### Abstract

This study explores the visual characteristics of Chinese Daoist landscape. It also serves as a preliminary methodological exercise assessing the difference between and interrelationship of *tu* and *hua* — two distinctive but interconnected image types in Chinese visual culture. “*Hua*” refer to paintings. “*Tu*” refer to symbols, charts, diagrams, talismans, illustrations, pictures and maps. Even though “*tu*” have received little art historical attention, they were of signal importance in traditional Chinese visual culture because they often accompanied texts and were used to transmit knowledge. Given this importance they deserve much greater study.

This paper consists of three parts. The first two are devoted to “*shanshui tu*” (landscape graphs and charts), while the third focuses on “*shanshui hua*” (landscape paintings). Part one, “The Mystic Visuality of Daoist True Form Charts,” investigates the unique set of images known as the “True Form Charts”. This discussion highlights four topics: mountain-based cosmology, the interconnectivity of mountains and writings, notions concerning entering a mountain, and the cartographic features underlying the True Form Charts of the Five Sacred Peaks. Part two, “The True Form of *Fengshui*,” analyzes visual features of Tang-Song *fengshui* imagery and evaluates their connection to Daoist True Form Charts. Here, I outline the key features of *fengshui* which are pertinent to this study. I then discuss two concepts which are essential to an understanding of *fengshui* imagery: the dragon versus the lair; and the shape versus the *qi*. In the third section, “The True Form of Landscape Paintings,” I shift focus from “*shanshui tu*” to “*shanshui hua*”. I examine well-known Liao, Song, and Yuan examples that share elements with the “*shanshui tu*” discussed earlier. I highlight three topics: a discussion of the grotto heaven and *fengshui* in a portable landscape

scroll excavated from a Liao tomb, the concept of body and cosmos in Guo Xi's "Early Spring", and Daoist visual characteristics (including references to inner alchemy) in Huang Gongwang's art and writings.

**Keywords:** Daoism, Daoist, True Form Charts, *fengshui* (geomancy), *shanshui tu* (landscape graphs), *shanshui hua* (landscape paintings), *tu*, *hua*, Liao tomb in Yemaotai, Northern Song, Yuan, Guo Xi, Huang Gongwang, inner alchemy (*neidan*), Quanzhen Daoism