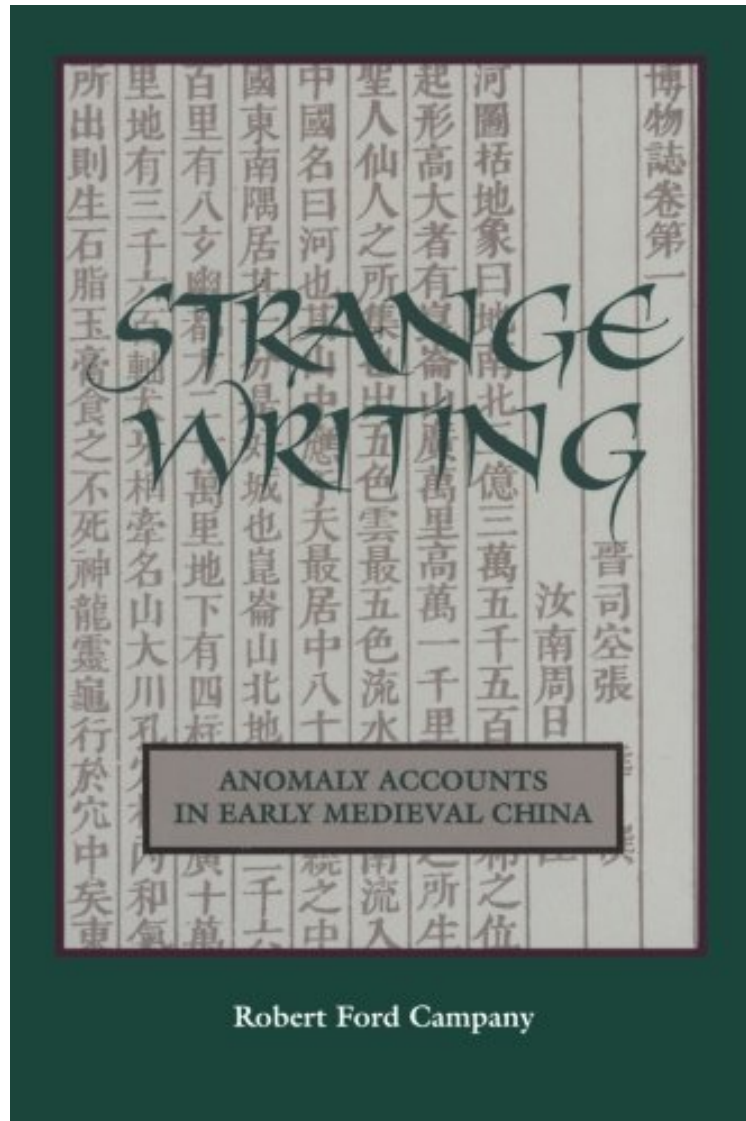


[Ebook pdf] Strange Writing: Anomaly Accounts in Early Medieval China (SUNY series in Chinese Philosophy and Culture)

Strange Writing: Anomaly Accounts in Early Medieval China (SUNY series in Chinese Philosophy and Culture)

Robert Ford Company

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Robert Ford Company : Strange Writing: Anomaly Accounts in Early Medieval China (SUNY series in Chinese Philosophy and Culture) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Strange Writing: Anomaly Accounts in Early Medieval China (SUNY series in Chinese Philosophy and

Culture):

This is the first comprehensive, Western-language study of the important Chinese genre of writing known as "accounts of the anomalies" (zhiguai) in its formative period. The book sets forth a new view of the nature and origins of the genre. Between the Han dynasty, founded in 206 B.C.E., and the Sui, which ended in 618 C.E., Chinese authors wrote many thousands of short textual items, each of which narrated or described some phenomenon deemed "strange." Most items told of encounters between humans and various denizens of the spirit-world, or of the miraculous feats of masters of esoteric arts; some described the wonders of exotic lands, or transmitted fragments of ancient mythology. This genre of writing came to be known as zhiguai ("accounts of anomalies"). Who were the authors of these books, and why did they write of these "strange" matters? Why was such writing seen as a compelling thing to do? In this book, the first comprehensive study in a Western language of the zhiguai genre in its formative period, Company sets forth a new view of the nature of the genre and the reasons for its emergence. He shows that contemporaries portrayed it as an extension of old royal and imperial traditions in which strange reports from the periphery were collected in the capital as a way of ordering the world. He illuminates how authors writing from most of the religious and cultural perspectives of the times--including Daoists, Buddhists, Confucians, and others--used the genre differently for their own persuasive purposes, in the process fundamentally altering the old traditions of anomaly-collecting. Analyzing the "accounts of anomalies" both in the context of Chinese religious and cultural history and as examples of a cross-culturally attested type of discourse, Company combines in-depth Sinological research with broad-ranging comparative thinking in his approach to these puzzling, rich texts "This is a thorough, highly readable, and interesting description of zhiguai texts. It is a first-rate book, insightful and well-written--a book that is a pleasure to read straight through and to consult for specific points of information and interpretation in the future." -- John S. Major, author of *Heaven and Earth in Early Han Thought* "This is a brilliantly strange work. I say 'strange' in that it is a splendidly unconventional and provocative work that is not about just this or that. The book has, in fact, the potential for moving some of the current stolid theoretical discourse concerning Chinese studies and the history of religions in new and creative directions." --Girardot, Lehigh University

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Language Notes
Text: English, Chinese
From the Back Cover
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