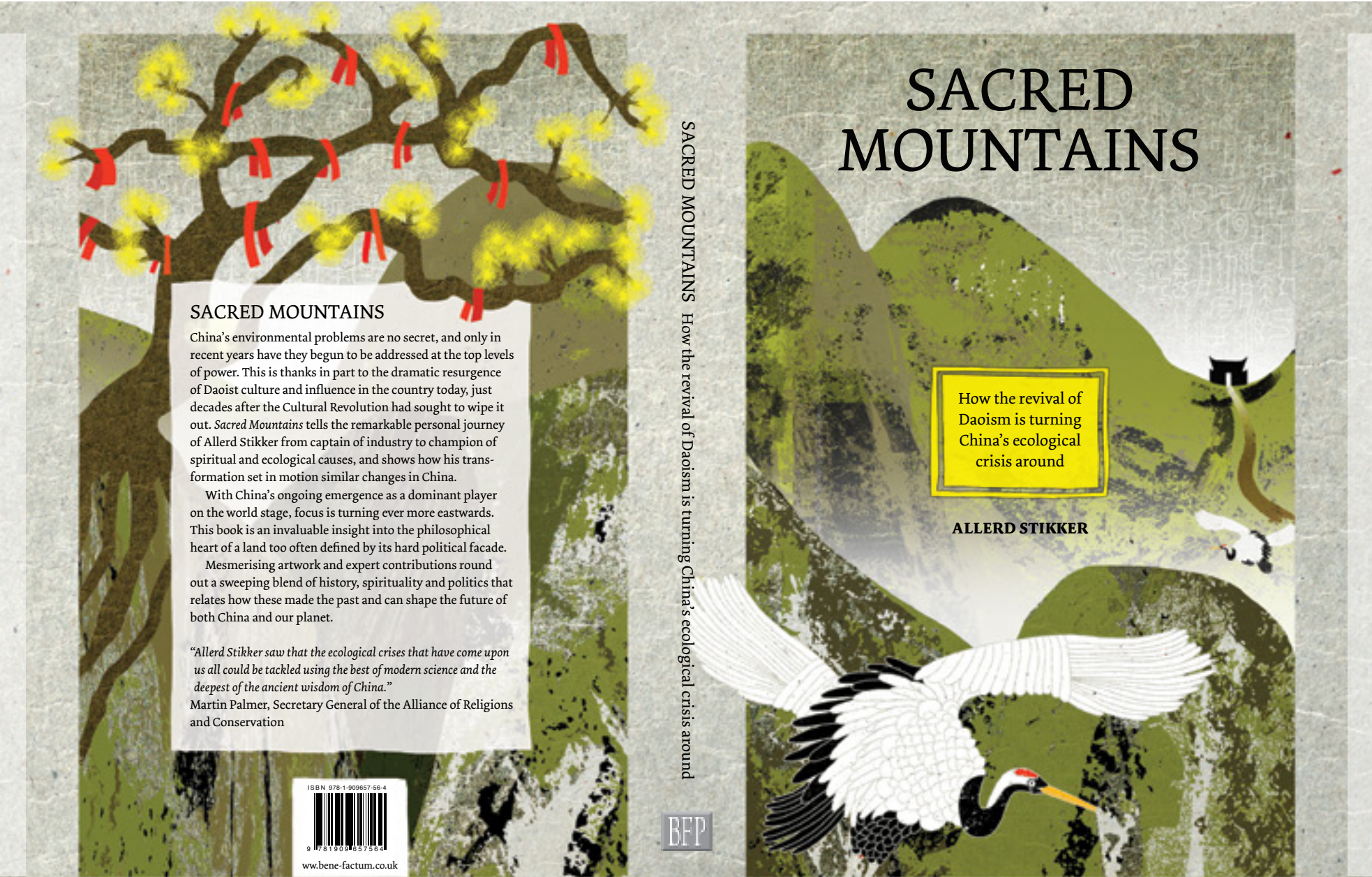


Sacred Mountains

How the revival of Daoism is turning China’s ecological crisis around

2014, uitgeverij Bene Factum Publishing

Illustratie: Rosa Vitalie



Information about the book

Introduction

China’s environmental problems are no secret, and only in recent years have they begun to be addressed at the top levels of power. This is thanks in part to the dramatic resurgence of Daoist culture and influence in the country today, just decades after the Cultural Revolution had sought to wipe it out. *Sacred Mountains* tells the remarkable personal journey of Allerd Stikker from captain of industry to champion of spiritual and ecological causes, and shows how his transformation set in motion similar changes in China. With China’s ongoing emergence as a dominant player on the world stage, focus is turning ever more eastwards. This book is an invaluable insight into the philosophical heart of a land too often defined by its hard political facade. Mesmerising artwork and expert contributions round out a sweeping blend of history, spirituality and politics that relates how these made the past and can shape the future of both China and our planet.

“Allerd Stikker saw that the ecological crises that have come upon us all could be tackled using the best of modern science and the deepest of the ancient wisdom of China.”
- Martin Palmer, Secretary General of the Alliance of Religions and Conservation

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A journey of 1,000 miles begins beneath one’s feet. The words of Chinese philosopher Lao Zi perfectly capture my wonderful journey through the world of Daoism over the past thirty years. What began as a casual acquaintance with Daoism on the island of Taiwan, which I visited on many business trips in the 1980s, has led to a close partnership with the China programme of the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC), a British non-governmental organisation that since 1995 has collaborated with the world’s faiths to protect nature and create ecological awareness. On the way, I discovered how the Daoists’ cosmological view of the world, where humanity and nature are inextricably linked, fits in beautifully with my personal ambition to achieve a better global balance between economy and ecology. And I also discovered how well this ambition dovetailed with the mission pursued by ARC. It’s been a privilege to work with ARC and together contribute to the restoration of a Daoist temple in China and the development of the Daoist Ecology Temple Alliance. It’s been fascinating to see how these achievements have given the Daoists some room for manoeuvre in Chinese society and how Daoism is even openly cited by the political establishment as the answer to the immense ecological and social problems facing modern China. And it’s all the more amazing when you realise that the country is officially atheist with absolute rulers who, in the past century, have tried their very best to wipe Daoism off the map as a ‘backward superstition’. But the cultural and spiritual tradition of Daoism has withstood the storms of history. It has proven to be just as solid and unyielding as the rocks of the sacred mountains, a traditional Daoist symbol of the link between heaven, earth and humanity since time immemorial. These mountains have become a source of inspiration for my journey, for ARC’s journey, for the future of China and for the harmony between ecology and economy worldwide. We have not yet reached our final destination, but every step towards the top of the mountain is another step closer and the views along the way are simply breathtaking.

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