**ABSTRACT:** An Exploration of the Queen Mother of the West from the Perspective of Comparative Mythology

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Constant interactions among cultures make it possible to conduct cross-cultural studies on the myth of the Queen Mother of the West 西王母. Since the original manuscript of the Classic of Mountains and Seas [Shanhaijing 山海經] served as the expository writing of the now lost Map of Mountains and Seas [Shanhaitu 山海圖], there is reason to believe that it contains information on early depictions of the goddess. By revealing the symbolism at work in those descriptions and by consulting a wide range of ethnographic data, it becomes possible to reconstruct her primeval form. The Queen Mother of the West, once regarded as the Chinese version of the prehistoric Great Mother, was seen as the goddess embodying both death and regeneration. However, after the rise of the patriarchal system, the original Queen Mother of the West slowly fell into obscurity and was ultimately relegated to the subordinate status of a spouse for the Jade Emperor [yuhuang 玉皇].