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Tao Te Ching: The Book Of The Way And Its Virtue



Synopsis

Tao Te Ching - Lao Tzu. A translation into English by A. S. Kline. Illustrated edition. The Tao Te Ching (or Daodejing, in pinyin) is a classic Chinese Taoist text dating from at least the fourth century BC. According to tradition it has its origins even earlier, around the sixth century BC. The title may be translated as Instruction regarding the Way of Virtue. Consisting of eighty-one short sections in a poetic style, the text ranges widely in content, from practical advice to universal wisdom, embracing politics, society and the personal. The emphasis is on the right view and understanding of existence, the Way of the cosmos, and the text sets out to transmit an informed awareness of being that leads to personal harmony. The Taoist inclination to refer to the natural background to human existence when considering the human is widely in evidence. The literary style is terse and often cryptic, so that multiple interpretations of the individual sections are often possible, but the essence of the work is clear, in communicating an approach to life which is in accord with the natural, and so conducive to spiritual tranquillity and resilience. Like the Homeric texts, the Tao Te Ching has been ascribed to a single author and to many. Traditionally the author was one Lao-Tzu (Laozi) which is an honorary title meaning the "Old Master". In the earliest "biographies" it is claimed that he was a contemporary of Confucius (551-479BC) or that he lived during the Warring States period of the fifth or fourth century BC, and in legend he departs for the western borders, to live there as a hermit, after first writing the text of the Way, leaving it behind for the instruction of others. Archaeological evidence continues to move the earliest evidence of the text further back in time, but as yet the claims as to single authorship or an effort of compilation by many writers cannot be resolved. Regardless of authorship, the text remains immensely influential in the later development of Taoist thought and practice. This and other texts available from Poetry in Translation (www.poetryintranslation.com).

Book Information

Paperback: 112 pages

Publisher: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform (December 9, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1505423635

ISBN-13: 978-1505423631

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.3 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 7.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars See all reviews (8 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #507,732 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #49 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Poetry > Regional & Cultural > Asian > Chinese

Customer Reviews

I'm very glad they published this translation that was previously only available online. It is the best one I've seen. The Stephen Mitchell version is good, but it's not particularly musical, and sometimes I feel he takes too many liberties. The Dan Heitkamp version seems to stick close to the original meaning, but it's sort of plain. Although I've never read the original text, it seems that this translation by Kline takes just the right amount of liberty in order to preserve the poetry, but not disrupt the poetic meaning. The book is lovely and well bound. Five stars!

This is the first time I've read the Tao Te Ching, so I'm no expert on the 81 verses. The translation is accessible to the novice. The pictures accented the content nicely. Well worth \$0.99.

Literally a good book. The text is much more traditional compared to modern ones, but it's still easy to comprehend.

a philosophy that you must go over and over and over again to seek understanding.

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