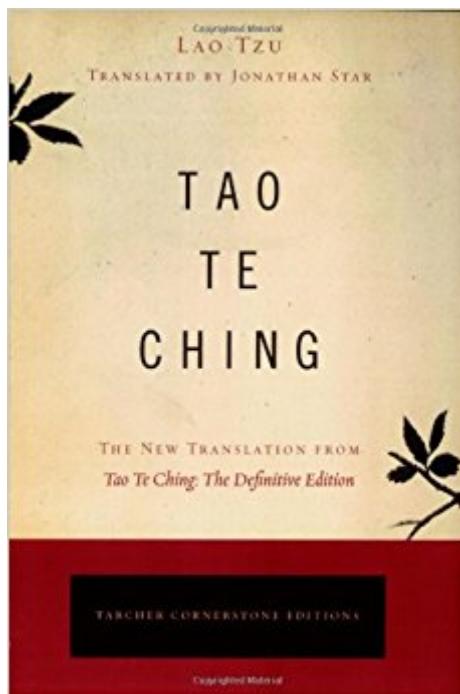


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Tao Te Ching: The New Translation From Tao Te Ching, The Definitive Edition (Tarcher Cornerstone Editions)



Synopsis

In the hands of Jonathan Star, the eighty-one verses of the Tao Te Ching resound with the elegant, simple images and all-penetrating ideas that have made this ancient work a cornerstone of the world's wisdom literature.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I know two things: 1) There is no such thing as a perfect translation of the Tao Te Ching. The Chinese language is so completely different from English, that any translation of the Tao is going to be somewhat flawed, no matter how skillful the translator. 2) All serious spiritual seekers must read the Tao Te Ching. If possible, they should own at least three translations. This translation is excellent and is a personal favorite of mine. I give it "five stars" for integrity. Addiss and Lombardo explain, in their four page Introduction, the philosophy of how they translated the text and why it might be different from previous English translations. Indeed, they begin the Introduction as follows "There are already more than one hundred translations of the Tao Te Ching into English. Why should this text be translated again?" Then they proceed with a very persuasive case for this translation. For example, they have tried to "recreate much of the terse diction and staccato rhythm of the ancient Chinese" while other translations tend to be verbose. Also, they have specifically avoided any use of the gender specific pronouns, "he" and "she." Thus rendering the text neither politically correct nor politically incorrect. Beyond the translation itself, this book is beautifully designed, with extensive use

of Chinese calligraphy, art, and characters. This almost gives the impression of having an original copy of the Tao Te Ching in your hand. If you want to read the Tao Te Ching, this is a great version. Three other good translations include those by Victor Mair, D.C. Lau, and John C. H. Wu. Personally I do not like the popular version by Stephen Mitchell, or the Gia-fu Feng & Jane English translation. They try too hard to be modern -- but who can fault them for trying?

One of the core ideas in Taoism (especially if you read a lot of Chuang-Tzu) is that there are infinite perspectives on anything and everything, and no one is more absolute or "correct" than the others. I think it's safe to say that the Tao Te Ching itself is an excellent example of this principle - just look at how many translations have been done, in various styles, approaching various perspectives on life, society, money, etc. And while there are certainly translations that speak to me far better than others do, I'd have to say that they are not always completely satisfying. If you feel the same way, then Jonathan Star has come to your rescue with *Tao Te Ching: The Definitive Edition*. It starts out with an overview of Lao Tzu's work and the challenges that come with translating it. Then there is a rather good literary translation by the author, which sometimes takes a bit of artistic license - definitely not a bad thing. This is not the meat of the book, however. That part is the "definitive" translation itself - the literal translation. Every character of every chapter is provided, along with multiple possible meanings. Using this, you can compose your own interpretations of your favorite chapters, or the whole book if you wish. The literal translation is extremely well done, and provided in a very accessible format that provides a lot of information in an easy to use manner. If I had to pick something to gripe about, it would be the fact that the literal translation uses Wade-Giles instead of Pinyin (this from a book with a 2001 copyright). I suppose this was to keep things consistent with the similarly old-style spellings "Tao", "Lao-Tzu", etc. This niggle is mitigated a bit by the concordance section of the book, which includes translations from Wade-Giles to Pinyin.

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