



Wen-Tzu

Lao Tzu , Thomas Cleary (Translator)

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Lao-tzu, the legendary sage of ancient China, is traditionally considered to be the author of the *Tao Te Ching*, one of the most popular classics of world literature. Now Lao-tzu's further teachings on the Tao, or Way, are presented here in the first English translation of the Chinese text known as the *Wen-tzu*. Although previously ignored by Western scholars, the *Wen-tzu* has long been revered by the Chinese as one of the great classics of ancient Taoism. In it, Lao-tzu shows that the cultivation of simplicity and spontaneity is essential to both the enlightened individual and the wise leader. This timeless work will appeal to a broad audience of contemporary readers who have come to consider Lao-tzu's *Tao Te Ching* a classic on the art of living.

Wen-Tzu Details

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From Reader Review Wen-Tzu for online ebook

Craig Werner says

For anyone interested in Taoism, this is the place to go after the Tao Te Ching (preferably in Stephen Mitchell's translation, although the one by Thomas Cleary, who translated this book, is also solid). Most of the 180-odd sections in Wen-Tzu are attributed to Lao-Tzu, but the name was used to represent the wisdom flowing from a particular source, so it's really an anthology (which accounts for a certain amount of repetition).

More even than the Tao Te Ching or Chuang-tzu, Wen-Tzu reflects the breadth of Taoist thinking, from the intensely introspective (though never solipsistic) to the worlds of politics, the economy and war. The central message is clear and familiar to anyone who's spent any time with Taoism: circumstances change in ways that render rigid rules destructive; correct behavior is likely to become part of the problem unless it flows from deep roots in an acceptance of the Way. Nothing that differs from the Tao Te Ching, but the connections between levels are elaborated at greater length. As a teacher, I found myself frequently reflecting on the connection between a section and classroom practice.

As I reached the end of Wen-Tzu, which I read while on retreat at a hermitage in the Rocky Mountains (Nada, near Crestone, Colorado--if you're in need of withdrawal and rejuvenation and don't mind silence, you can't do better), I found myself thinking of how difficult it would be to realize any of the Taoist vision in the culture we've created for ourselves. Our media, politics, institutions, everything militates against the clarity and dispassion--not to be confused with non-involvement--Wen-Tzu counsels. That situation wouldn't have been unfamiliar to the writers who put the book together; they clearly felt that the world they were living in had lost contact with the Way. That doesn't really change the call to us as we work in the world--it's still a matter of acting in ways that nurture the harmony and balance that feels a million light years away.

First book I've added to the "favorites" shelf in quite a while. I'll revisit regularly.

Apoorv Kulshrestha says

Tao Te Ching is simplest and any attempt to simplify it further, only complicates. This has few attempts but I appreciate that it has few really good chapters in between.

Dana Kohut says

Excellent translation of the writing of Lao Tzu.

Faith Lowery says

I don't have the exact read start and finish dates on many books I have read this year. The dates are approximated, as I have been in & out of the hospital, and on bed rest, and read 2-5 books a day depending on the book & length and my ability to focus. All dates are approximated, by month.

Re-reading this book proved insightful, and humbling.

Jake Maguire says

Not known to be a big seller but this was an excellent read.

Benjamin says

There are plenty of daoist lessons to be learnt from this volume, although its repetitiveness of certain lessons does tire if you're reading the book consistently. Towards the end it becomes somewhat easier reading.

I felt that the translator, Thomas Cleary, may have been a little misguided in enacting the daoist ideal of simplicity in his translation. however. Much of the translation seems unnecessarily wordy, and you may find yourself reaching for a dictionary a number of times.

The Tao Te Ching and Zhuangzi are the essentials for daoist insight, this volume acts more as a complementary read; there is very little in here that cannot be found elsewhere, and put far simpler, in my opinion.

Aras says

<http://electric-pages.livejournal.com...>

Alex Lee says

For those of us who could not get enough of the *Lao Tzu* this is perhaps a more explicit read. The language seems more complete; less of the poetry, as *Wen-Tzu* was written at a later, more developed time in the Chinese vernacular. If we assume this is the same Taoism (which there is no guarantee), we should note the conflation between society and subjectivity, that the ruler stands in for the nation and vis versa. The flow between ruler and nation, subject and environment is one that is best left to its course, for we are caught in the process being a mere part of it and yet able to direct it by being what we are. It is our own attempts at crafting schemes that we are unable to get away from our attempt to enforce a worldview that we become trapped within our own horizons, so that we cannot see the consequences of our actions as they appear to not belong to us. Knowing the essence of what we are and keeping to that without attempting to refine it appears the natural way of sagehood.

This kind of abstraction is perhaps useless but it is maybe the best way of speaking what cannot be spoken and a noting what cannot be noted. This book does get a little repetitive, but there is a rhythm to its enunciation that might be left out simply because it is a translation.

Will Robinson says

Excellent

Jeremy says

Quotes:

The way of developed people is to cultivate the body by calmness and nurture life by frugality... To govern the body and nurture essence, sleep and rest moderately, eat and drink appropriately; harmonize emotions, simplify activities. Those who are inwardly attentive to the self attain this and are immune to perverse energies.

The essential nature of humanity likes peace, but habitual desires damage it.

Those who overcome the lesser by strength come to a standoff when they meet their equals. Those who overcome the greater by flexibility have power that cannot be measured. Therefore when an army is strong it perishes, when a tree is strong it breaks, when leather is strong it rips; the teeth are harder than the tongue, but they are the first to die.

Virtue is in what you give, not in what you get. Therefore when sages want to be valued by others, first they value others; when they want to be respected by others, first they respect others. When they want to overcome others, first they overcome themselves; when they want to humble others, first they humble themselves. So they are both noble and lowly, using the Way to adjust and control this.

There are no fixed judgments of right and wrong in the world. People each judge as right whatever they consider pleasant and judge as wrong whatever they consider unpleasant. Thus the search for right is not search for truth, but search for those who agree with oneself; it is not a departure from wrong, but a departure from those who disagree with one's feelings and ideas.

When the government is noninvasive, the people are pure; when the government is invasive, the people are lacking.

Ryan Christensen says

A nice inspirational read. It is also only 184 pages with 181 verses so its an easy read for someone who doesn't have much time to read or is looking for a book on the side.

AteX says

Me parece que este libro está describiendo las enseñanzas a veces demasiado largo o solo tan mucho para mi leerlo primero.

Así pues, creo que la traducción es un poco superficial y exagerado.

Sin embargo, es asombroso que Lao-Tzu pudo entender estos asuntos en la antigüedad.
Después yo ya había leído dos más de sus obras, podría decir que este hombre fue un sabio real.

Además, las enseñanzas son aplicables en el presente y es una buena perspicacia principalmente en el conocimiento profundo, la virtud y el liderazgo.

Debo leer al menos una vez más para entenderlo en detalle.

Duncan Beech says

This book is deep, the depth of understanding Lao had WOW mind blowing, awe inspiring. He talks about how an unjust leader harms his people, it was as though he was here now writing about some of the current world leaders.

Wisdom is forever timeless. GREAT READ but very slow going.
