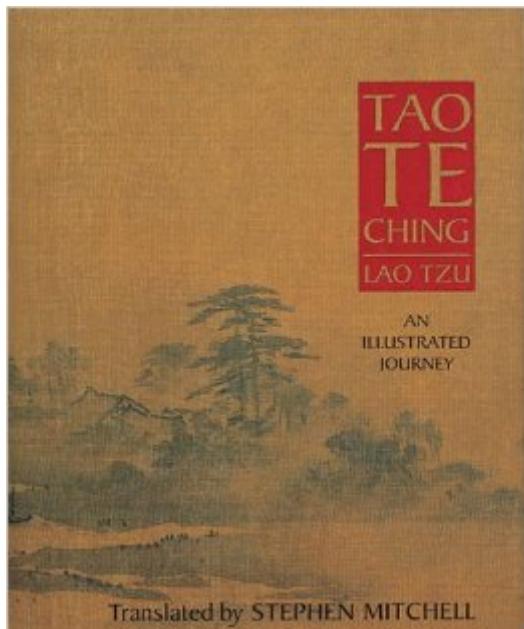


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Tao Te Ching: An Illustrated Journey



Synopsis

Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching (The Book of the Way) is the classic manual on the art of living. In 81 short, poetic chapters, the book looks at the basic predicament of being alive and teaches how to work for the good with the effortless skill that comes from being in accord with the Tao, or the basic principle of the universe. Stephen Mitchell's acclaimed translation is accompanied by ancient Chinese paintings that beautifully reflect Lao Tzu's timeless words.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Tao Te Ching is ancient, now a couple of millenia in print. Stephen Mitchell has not translated this classic, but rather has paraphrased it -- as he admits in the Foreword. But he is a Zen student of a couple of decades and has good insight into the Zen of the Tao (Zen Buddhism is Buddhism heavily dosed with Taoism). Mitchell's version of the Tao Te Ching is very, even extremely, modern.

Perhaps to the point of being "politically correct." However, he does have a way with words and this is a very readable version of the Tao. To show how modern it is, let's take an example and compare his version of the beginning of chapter 46 with two other versions:- Mitchell "When a country is in harmony with the Tao, the factories make trucks and tractors. When a country goes counter to the Tao, warheads are stockpiled outside the cities."- Victor Mair "When the Way prevails under heaven, swift horses are relegated to fertilizing fields. When the Way does not prevail under heaven, war-horses breed in the suburbs."- Addiss & Lombardo "With TAO under heaven Stray horses fertilize the fields. Without TAO under heaven, Warhorses are bred at the frontier." Obviously,

there were no factories, trucks, tractors, or warheads in ancient China. So, Mitchell is providing a modern interpretation of the Tao Te Ching, while Mair as well as Addiss & Lombardo are closer to a literal translation (which is not possible however, because the Chinese language and the English language are so completely different from one another.) None of this is to find fault with Stephen Mitchell. This is just to say that his book cannot be definitive, because it is less literal and not really a translation.

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