

lao tsu tao te ching

****Lao Tsu Tao Te Ching: The Timeless Wisdom of the Dao****

lao tsu tao te ching stands as one of the most influential philosophical texts in human history, offering profound insights into the nature of life, leadership, and the universe. Written by the ancient Chinese sage Lao Tsu, the Tao Te Ching (also spelled Dao De Jing) delves into the essence of the Tao—often translated as “The Way”—and guides readers on how to live in harmony with it. It’s a text that transcends time, culture, and religion, still inspiring seekers, thinkers, and spiritual explorers around the world today.

In this article, we’ll explore the origins, teachings, and lasting impact of the Lao Tsu Tao Te Ching. Whether you’re new to Taoism or looking to deepen your understanding, this guide will offer valuable perspectives and practical wisdom.

The Origins and Historical Context of Lao Tsu Tao Te Ching

The Tao Te Ching is attributed to Lao Tsu, a mysterious figure often described as a philosopher, sage, or even a semi-legendary character. According to tradition, Lao Tsu lived during the 6th century BCE, a time of great social and political upheaval in China. The text itself is a collection of poetic verses that reflect Taoist philosophy, emphasizing simplicity, humility, and the subtle power of non-action (wu wei).

Who Was Lao Tsu?

While historical details about Lao Tsu are scarce and debated, he is commonly regarded as the founder of Taoism. Some scholars believe that Lao Tsu may have been a contemporary or predecessor of Confucius, yet his teachings sharply contrast with Confucian ideals, focusing more on naturalness and spontaneity than rigid social structures.

The name “Lao Tsu” literally means “Old Master,” which may be more of an honorific than a personal name. His legacy, however, is immortalized through the Tao Te Ching, which has been studied and revered for over two millennia.

The Tao Te Ching’s Place in Chinese Philosophy

The Tao Te Ching is foundational to Taoism, one of China’s major

philosophical and religious traditions. Alongside Confucianism and Buddhism, Taoism has shaped Chinese culture, ethics, and worldview. The text's verses often explore paradoxes and encourage a way of living that aligns with the natural order rather than opposing it.

Core Themes and Teachings of the Tao Te Ching

At its heart, the Lao Tsu Tao Te Ching invites readers to understand and embody the Tao, an elusive yet all-encompassing principle that underlies everything. Here are some of the key themes woven throughout the text:

The Concept of Tao (The Way)

The Tao is a fundamental concept that defies simple definition. It is the source and pattern behind the universe, the natural flow of existence that cannot be fully grasped by words or intellect. Lao Tsu describes the Tao as "the nameless" and "the origin of heaven and earth." The Tao Te Ching teaches that instead of resisting life's natural currents, we should learn to move with them, fostering harmony and balance.

Wu Wei: Effortless Action

One of the most famous ideas from the Tao Te Ching is wu wei, often translated as "non-action" or "effortless action." This doesn't mean doing nothing, but rather acting in a way that is spontaneous, unforced, and aligned with the natural rhythms of life. Wu wei encourages patience, humility, and the avoidance of unnecessary struggle.

Embracing Simplicity and Humility

Lao Tsu advocates for simplicity in thought and lifestyle. The Tao Te Ching suggests that by reducing desires and ambitions, one can achieve true contentment and wisdom. Humility is also a recurring motif, teaching that those who are modest and self-effacing often possess the greatest strength.

Paradoxes and Contradictions

The Tao Te Ching frequently uses paradoxical statements to challenge conventional thinking. For example, "The softest thing in the world overcomes the hardest thing," highlighting the power of flexibility over rigidity. These paradoxes invite readers to look beyond binary logic and embrace a more

fluid understanding of reality.

How to Interpret and Apply the Lao Tsu Tao Te Ching Today

Given its poetic and often cryptic nature, the Tao Te Ching can be interpreted in many ways. Its wisdom is timeless but requires reflection and openness to fully appreciate.

Reading the Tao Te Ching: Tips for Modern Readers

- **Take it slow**: The Tao Te Ching is not a book to be rushed. Reading a few verses at a time allows for deeper contemplation.
- **Reflect on metaphors**: The text uses rich imagery and metaphors. Try to connect them to your own life experiences.
- **Avoid literalism**: Taoist philosophy thrives on ambiguity and subtlety. Resist the urge to force rigid interpretations.
- **Practice mindfulness**: Meditating on the verses can help internalize their lessons.

Practical Applications in Daily Life

The teachings of the Tao Te Ching can influence many areas of life—from leadership and decision-making to personal well-being:

- **Leadership with Tao**: The text advises leaders to govern with humility, compassion, and minimal interference, fostering environments where people can thrive naturally.
- **Stress reduction**: Embracing wu wei can help reduce anxiety by encouraging acceptance of situations beyond one's control.
- **Simplified living**: Following Lao Tsu's advice to simplify desires can lead to greater peace and satisfaction.
- **Relationship harmony**: Applying Taoist principles can improve communication and empathy by valuing patience and understanding.

The Enduring Legacy of Lao Tsu Tao Te Ching

The influence of the Tao Te Ching extends far beyond ancient China. It has been translated into hundreds of languages, inspiring poets, philosophers, and spiritual leaders worldwide. Its principles have found resonance in modern mindfulness practices, environmental ethics, and even leadership theories.

Tao Te Ching in Modern Culture

Today, the Lao Tsu Tao Te Ching continues to be a source of inspiration for people seeking balance in a fast-paced world. Its teachings encourage a return to nature, simplicity, and authentic living, values that resonate deeply amid today's complexities.

Different Translations and Interpretations

Because the original text is written in classical Chinese, various translations offer unique perspectives. Some versions emphasize its poetic beauty, while others focus on philosophical clarity. Exploring multiple translations can enrich understanding and reveal new facets of Lao Tsu's wisdom.

Exploring the Lao Tsu Tao Te Ching is like embarking on a lifelong journey—one that invites curiosity, humility, and a deepening connection with the natural flow of life. Its timeless messages continue to guide those who seek to live with grace, balance, and insight in an ever-changing world.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who was Lao Tsu and what is the Tao Te Ching?

Lao Tsu, also spelled Laozi, was an ancient Chinese philosopher and writer, traditionally considered the author of the Tao Te Ching, a foundational text of Taoism that offers wisdom on living harmoniously with the Tao, or the fundamental principle underlying the universe.

What are the main themes of the Tao Te Ching?

The Tao Te Ching explores themes such as simplicity, humility, naturalness, non-action (wu wei), and the importance of harmony with the Tao, encouraging readers to live in accordance with the natural flow of life.

How is the Tao Te Ching relevant in modern times?

The Tao Te Ching remains relevant today as it provides philosophical guidance on mindfulness, balance, leadership, and sustainable living, influencing areas such as personal development, spirituality, and environmental ethics.

How many chapters are there in the Tao Te Ching and how is it structured?

The Tao Te Ching traditionally consists of 81 short chapters, divided into two main sections: the Tao Ching (chapters 1-37), focusing on the Tao (the Way), and the Te Ching (chapters 38-81), focusing on Te (virtue or power).

What is the concept of 'wu wei' in the Tao Te Ching?

Wu wei, often translated as 'non-action' or 'effortless action,' is a central concept in the Tao Te Ching that advocates for aligning with the natural flow of events and acting in a way that is spontaneous, unforced, and harmonious with the Tao.

How has the Tao Te Ching influenced other philosophies and cultures?

The Tao Te Ching has profoundly influenced Chinese philosophy, religion, and culture, and has also impacted Western thinkers, artists, and spiritual movements by introducing ideas of balance, simplicity, and holistic understanding of life and nature.

Additional Resources

Lao Tsu Tao Te Ching: An Enduring Philosophical Masterpiece

lao tsu tao te ching has long been recognized as one of the foundational texts of Eastern philosophy, guiding generations in understanding the principles of harmony, balance, and the nature of existence. Attributed to the enigmatic sage Lao Tsu (also spelled Laozi), this ancient Chinese work encapsulates the essence of Taoism and continues to influence not only spiritual discourse but also modern thought in leadership, ethics, and personal development. This article delves into the historical context, thematic depth, and contemporary relevance of the Tao Te Ching, weaving through its philosophical nuances with a critical, investigative lens.

Historical Background and Authorship

The Tao Te Ching, often translated as "The Classic of the Way and Virtue," is believed to have been composed during the 6th century BCE, though some scholars argue for a later compilation date closer to the 4th century BCE. Lao Tsu, whose name means "Old Master," remains a somewhat mythic figure; some sources suggest he was a contemporary of Confucius, while others propose that the text is a synthesis of multiple authors' contributions over time.

The text itself comprises 81 short chapters, written in concise, poetic

verses. Its brevity belies the depth of insight contained within, making it one of the most translated and interpreted works in world literature. The Tao Te Ching emerged during a period of social upheaval in ancient China, offering a counterpoint to the rigid rituals and hierarchical structures promoted by Confucianism. Instead, Lao Tsu's philosophy advocates for simplicity, spontaneity, and alignment with the natural order.

Core Philosophical Concepts of the Tao Te Ching

At the heart of the Tao Te Ching lies the concept of the Tao (道), often rendered as "the Way." This term denotes the underlying natural order of the universe—an elusive, ineffable force that cannot be fully described but can be intuited and followed. The Tao is not a god or deity but rather the fundamental principle behind all existence and change.

Complementing the Tao is the notion of Te (德), which translates to "virtue" or "power." Te represents the manifestation of the Tao in the individual, a way of living that embodies harmony with the natural flow of life rather than resistance or control.

Wu Wei: The Principle of Effortless Action

A pivotal teaching within the Tao Te Ching is wu wei (无为), often interpreted as "non-action" or "effortless action." Rather than advocating passivity, wu wei encourages acting in accordance with the natural rhythms of the world, avoiding forceful or contrived efforts that disrupt harmony. This principle has broad applications—from governance and leadership to personal behavior—promoting a path of least resistance that leads to more effective and sustainable outcomes.

Yin and Yang: The Balance of Opposites

While not explicitly detailed in the Tao Te Ching, the concept of yin and yang permeates Lao Tsu's philosophy. Yin and yang symbolize complementary forces—dark and light, passive and active, feminine and masculine—that interact to create balance in the universe. Lao Tsu's teachings emphasize embracing dualities and understanding that opposites are interconnected and interdependent.

The Tao Te Ching in Comparative Perspective

When compared to other classical texts such as Confucius's Analects or the Buddhist Sutras, the Tao Te Ching offers a distinct approach to ethics and

governance. While Confucianism emphasizes social order, ritual propriety, and hierarchical relationships, Taoism, as presented by Lao Tsu, advocates for naturalness, spontaneity, and humility.

In the realm of leadership, Tao Te Ching's advice contrasts sharply with more assertive models. Lao Tsu suggests that the best leaders are those who govern least, allowing people to thrive by minimizing interference. This idea resonates with modern concepts of servant leadership and decentralized management.

Pros and Cons of Taoist Philosophy in Modern Contexts

- **Pros:**

- Encourages mindfulness and presence, aiding stress reduction and mental well-being.
- Promotes ethical leadership through humility and empathy.
- Supports sustainable living by advocating harmony with nature.

- **Cons:**

- Its abstract language can lead to varied and sometimes conflicting interpretations.
- The principle of wu wei may be misunderstood as passivity or inaction.
- Its non-prescriptive nature can be challenging to apply concretely in complex modern systems.

Translations and Interpretations: Challenges and Variations

The Tao Te Ching's poetic and cryptic style presents significant challenges to translators. Each rendition reflects not only linguistic choices but also the interpreter's cultural and philosophical lens. Some versions lean towards

spiritual mysticism, while others emphasize practical wisdom. Notable translators such as Stephen Mitchell, D.C. Lau, and Gia-Fu Feng have each offered distinct readings, contributing to the text's rich and multifaceted legacy.

This multiplicity of versions means that understanding the Tao Te Ching often involves engaging with several translations and commentaries. Scholars advise readers to approach the text with openness, recognizing that its true meaning may unfold gradually through contemplation rather than straightforward comprehension.

Modern Applications of Lao Tsu's Teachings

In recent decades, the principles of the Tao Te Ching have found resonance beyond traditional philosophy, informing areas such as psychology, leadership theory, and environmental ethics. Concepts like wu wei are invoked in discussions about flow states in cognitive science, while the Tao's emphasis on natural balance aligns with sustainability movements.

Moreover, the Tao Te Ching's influence extends into popular culture, from literature and art to mindfulness practices and organizational management. Its timeless wisdom continues to inspire those seeking alternative frameworks to navigate the complexities of modern life.

Conclusion: The Enduring Legacy of Lao Tsu Tao Te Ching

The legacy of the Lao Tsu Tao Te Ching stands as a testament to the enduring human quest for understanding the fundamental nature of existence and the art of living well. Despite its ancient origins, it remains profoundly relevant in a world grappling with imbalance, disconnection, and the search for meaning. By inviting readers to embrace simplicity, humility, and alignment with the natural world, the Tao Te Ching offers a subtle yet powerful guide for personal transformation and societal harmony. Its enigmatic verses continue to challenge and inspire, inviting ongoing interpretation and discovery.

Lao Tsu Tao Te Ching

lao tsu tao te ching: Tao Te Ching Laozi, 1996-05-07 Dating for around 300 BC, this is an early work of the Chinese school of philosophy called Taoism. It offers a complete view of the cosmos and how human beings should respond to it. It has mystical insight into the nature of things and forms a basis for a humane morality and political utopia.

lao tsu tao te ching: *Lao-tzu and the Tao-te-ching* Livia Kohn, Michael LaFargue, 1998-03-19 Examines the traditional and modern Western interpretations of the Tao-te-ching, and its author, Lao-tzu.

lao tsu tao te ching: The New Lao Tzu Ray Grigg, 1995 A new interpretation of the Tao Te Ching, this book is a celebration of the Way of Harmony and Balance. Ray Grigg transforms what has been traditionally called the Tao Te Ching, what he calls the Lao Tzu, from the mysterious to the meaningful. He accomplishes this by abandoning the historical convention of a literal reading of the Chinese texts. The result is a poetic expression of ancient wisdom in a language that readers can approach directly. The wisdom of the Lao Tzu rests in its ability to tease confusion into insight that is beyond the confinement of intellectual understanding. Beautifully illustrated with ink drawings by Bill Gaetz, The New Lao Tzu demonstrates that living the wisdom of the Lao Tzu requires more instinct than reason, more intuition than argument.--BOOK JACKET.Title Summary field provided by Blackwell North America, Inc. All Rights Reserved

lao tsu tao te ching: Tao Te Ching Victor H. Mair, Lao Tzu, 2012-04-11 A landmark translation of one of the most popular works of world literature, this edition of the Tao Te Ching is based on the Ma-wang-tui manuscripts.

lao tsu tao te ching: Tao Te Ching Lao Tzu, 2017-02-18 The Tao Te Ching is a classic of Chinese literature and one of the foundation texts of Taoism, a Chinese religious philosophy. It is also known as the Daodejing, Dao De Jing, Daode Jing, or simply as the Laozi. Tao Te Ching is the romanization of the title, which dates back to the late 19th century (AD), when English transliterations first appeared. The date of original publication is still unknown, but the oldest part can be traced back to the latter portion of the 4th century BC. However, modern experts believe it was written or put together after the Zhuangzi, the other seminal text of Daoism, which was published in the 3rd century BC. There are several different translations of the title, but the most common is as follows: Dao or Tao means -way, - but is most often used to mean -the way, - as in the fundamental force driving the universe. De has several meanings, including, perhaps most relevantly, -virtue.- Jing in this context means something like -canon- or -great book.- So, the full title can be understood to mean -The Book of the Way of Virtue.- The book comprises 81 chapters today, but there is evidence that chapter division was a later development for the book. If this is the case, then the original text had a much more free-flowing style. As it stands now, the book is poetic in form, with allowances for broad interpretation of the text. It is written with an interesting rhetorical style: it features bold, declarative statements that are immediately confronted with statements that seem to contradict them. Some experts believe that the purpose of this style is to get the reader thinking to reconcile these contradictions.

lao tsu tao te ching: Tao Te Ching Stephen Mitchell, Lao Tzu, 2009-10-13 The bestselling, widely acclaimed translation from Stephen Mitchell Mitchell's rendition of the Tao Te Ching comes as close to being definitive for our time as any I can imagine. It embodies the virtues its translator credits to the Chinese original: a gemlike lucidity that is radiant with humor, grace, largeheartedness, and deep wisdom. — Huston Smith, author of *The Religions of Man* In eighty-one brief chapters, Lao-tzu's Tao Te Ching, or Book of the Way, provides advice that imparts balance and perspective, a serene and generous spirit, and teaches us how to work for the good with the effortless skill that comes from being in accord with the Tao—the basic principle of the universe.

lao tsu tao te ching: Tao Te Ching Richard Wilhelm, Lao Tzu, 2021-11-03 This book is an English translation of the German book *Tao Te King: Das Buch vom Sinn und Leben* by Richard Wilhelm. That book is, of course, a translation of the Chinese classic *Tao Te Ching* by Lao Tzu. Richard Wilhelm was a highly regarded scholar of ancient Chinese literature. His translation of *I Ching* is still considered one of the best. In 1910 he published his translation of *Tao Te Ching*. He intended it for the general reader, not just academics. With this eBook it is now available to English speaking readers, Comments on Wilhelm's translation: There are several good scriptural translations of the *Tao Te Ching*. I think Wilhelm's is the best. - Arthur Waley Vigorous and scholarly translation, - Gia-Fu Feng Important interpretation - Stefan Stenudd This book reads best as original pages.

lao tsu tao te ching: Lao Tzu: Tao Te Ching Lao Tzu, Ursula K. Le Guin, 2019-05-14 A rich, poetic, and socially relevant version of the great spiritual-philosophical classic of Taoism, the Tao Te Ching—from a legendary literary icon Most people know Ursula K. Le Guin for her extraordinary science fiction and fantasy. Fewer know just how pervasive Taoist themes are to so much of her work. And in Lao Tzu: Tao Te Ching, we are treated to Le Guin's unique take on Taoist philosophy's founding classic. Le Guin presents Lao Tzu's time-honored and astonishingly powerful philosophy like never before. Drawing on a lifetime of contemplation and including extensive personal commentary throughout, she offers an unparalleled window into the text's awe-inspiring, immediately relatable teachings and their inestimable value for our troubled world. Jargon-free but still faithful to the poetic beauty of the original work, Le Guin's unique translation is sure to be welcomed by longtime readers of the Tao Te Ching as well as those discovering the text for the first time.

lao tsu tao te ching: Tao Te Ching Lao Tzu, 1989-08-28 The most accessible and authoritative modern English translation of this esoteric but infinitely practical bestselling book. No one has done better in conveying Lao Tsu's simple and laconic style of writing, so as to produce an English version almost as suggestive of the many meanings intended. —Alan Watts For nearly two generations, Gia-fu Feng and Jane English's bestselling translation of the Tao Te Ching has been the standard for those seeking access to the wisdom of Taoist thought. Now Jane English and her long-time editor, Toinette Lippe, have revised and refreshed the translation so that it more faithfully reflects the Classical Chinese in which it was first written, taking into account changes in our own language and eliminating any lingering infelicities. They have retained the simple clarity of the original rendering of a sometimes seemingly obtuse spiritual text, a clarity that has made this version a classic in itself, selling over a million copies. Written most probably in the sixth century B.C. by Lao Tsu, this esoteric but infinitely practical book has been translated into English more frequently than any other work except the Bible. Gia-fu Feng and Jane English's superb translation offers the essence of each word and makes Lao Tsu's teaching immediate and alive. This edition includes an introduction and notes by the well-known writer and scholar of philosophy and comparative religion, Jacob Needleman.

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lao tsu tao te ching: lao tzu tao te ching d.c. lau, 1963

lao tsu tao te ching: Tao Te Ching Lao Tzu, 2019-11-12 The original mindfulness book, in a landmark new translation by the award-winning translator of the I Ching and The Art of War A Penguin Classics Deluxe Edition, with flaps and deckle-edged paper The most translated book in the world after the Bible, the Tao Te Ching, or "Book of the Tao," is a guide to cultivating a life of peace, serenity, and compassion. Through aphorisms and parable, it leads readers toward the Tao, or the "Way": harmony with the life force of the universe. Traditionally attributed to Lao-tzu, a Chinese philosopher thought to have been a contemporary of Confucius, it is the essential text of Taoism, one of the three great religions of ancient China. As one of the world's great works of wisdom literature, it still has much to teach us today, offering a practical model based on modesty and self-restraint for living a balanced existence and for opening your mind, freeing your thoughts, and attaining enlightenment and self-awareness. With its emphasis on calm, simplicity, purity, and non-action, it provides a time-tested refuge from the busyness of modern life. This new translation seeks to understand the Tao Te Ching as a guide to everyday living and encourages a slow, meditative reading experience. The Tao Te Ching's eighty-one brief chapters are accompanied by illuminating commentary, interpretation, poems, and testimonials by the likes of Margaret Mead, Ursula K. Le Guin, and Dr. Wayne W. Dyer. Specially commissioned calligraphy for more than two hundred Chinese characters illustrates the book's essential themes.

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classic based on the recently discovered Ma-wang-tui manuscripts

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lao tsu tao te ching: A Translation of Lao-tzu's Tao Te Ching and Wang Pi's Commentary Paul Lin, 1977-01-01 During the Spring-Autumn period (722-420 BCE) and the time of the Warring States (480-222 CE), China was in great turmoil. Intellectuals and social reformers sifted through their wisdom and knowledge of China's experiences up to then, attempting to find a solution to their situation. The Tao Te Ching, one of the foremost products of the era, is a metaphysical book, a source of the highest political thought. Many readers have found in it representations of the highest ideals of human endeavors. Yet given its likely oral origin and the technological limitations of its early textual transmission, the Tao Te Ching raises numerous questions related to authorship, date of origin, internal organization, textual coherence, and editorial history. Of the scores of translations of the Tao Te Ching, the great majority are based on the edition prepared by the third-century scholar Wang Pi. Wang's profound commentary is itself a deeply influential text in the development of Taoist thought. Paul Lin presents the commentary, otherwise unavailable in English, in the form of footnotes accompanying his meticulous rendition of the Taoist classic.

lao tsu tao te ching: Tao Te Ching Lao Tzu, 2013-07-30 The classic Taoist text freshly translated using the original Chinese script from Lao Tzu's time, and beautifully illustrated with seventeenth-century artwork. Renowned translator William Scott Wilson has rendered Lao Tzu's classic in the most authentic way possible, using both the ancient text and the even older Great Seal script used during Lao Tzu's time. The result is a new and nuanced translation, accompanied by gorgeous Chinese ink paintings and fascinating ancillary material. Wilson includes an introduction that tells the story of Lao Tzu, the old man and the keeper of the archives, and wonderful notes to illuminate the text. He also includes two short essays--one explains the relationship between Taoism and Zen, and the other explores the roots that link the spiritual aspects of the Tao with the practice of Chinese and Japanese martial arts. Wilson's version of this ancient classic is wonderfully fresh and readable.

lao tsu tao te ching: Tao Te Ching David Hinton, 2015-06-01 An expert on Chinese poetry and philosophy offers a definitive modern translation of Lao Tzu's Taoist classic--considered the most influential spiritual text in human history. Like all of his translations, Hinton's translation of the Tao Te Ching is mind-opening, presenting startling new dimensions in this widely-influential text. He shows how Lao Tzu's spirituality is structured around the generative life-force and that this system of thought weaves the human into natural process at the deepest levels of being--revealing the Tao Te Ching as an originary text in deep feminist and ecological thought. Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching is not only the single most important text ever composed in China, it is probably the most influential spiritual text in human history. In the past, virtually all translations of this text have been produced either by sinologists having little poetic facility in English, or writers having no ability to read the original Chinese. Hinton's fluency in ancient Chinese and his acclaimed poetic ability provide him the essential qualifications. Together, they allow a breathtaking new translation that reveals how remarkably current and even innovative this text is after 2500 years.

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lao tsu tao te ching: Tao Te Ching Lao Tzu, 2021-02-17 Limited Time Promotional Offer Tao Te Ching - The Classic Book of The Way And Virtue The Tao-Te-Ching is an anti-authoritarian treatise which posits that the way of virtue lies in non-action (Wu Wei) through a recognition of the natural, universal force known as the Tao. The Tao flows without effort and, like water, goes where it will without striving and effects change and growth. To be virtuous, one should emulate the Tao and engage in non-action (not forcing an effect or outcome). Human-made laws, it claims, cannot make one virtuous and cannot contribute to good behavior, inner peace, or empathy with others because they are not in tune with nature. It is only by recognizing the Tao, and one's connection to it and all things, that one may achieve these goals. To recognize the Tao, one must know what it is, and so it is defined in the first chapter: The Tao (The Way) that can be spoken of is not the Constant Tao; The name that can be named is not a Constant Name. Nameless, is the origin of Heaven and Earth; The named is the Mother of all things. Thus, the constant void enables one to observe the true essence. The constant being enables one to see the outward manifestations. These two come paired from the same origin. But when the essence is manifested, it has a different name. This same origin is called The Profound Mystery. As profound the mystery as it can be, It is the Gate to the essence of all life. Lao Tzu: The Old Master Lao Tzu was an ancient Chinese philosopher and poet, well-known for penning the book Tao Te Ching. He was the founder of philosophy of Taoism, a religious and ethical custom of ancient China. He is largely respected as a religious deity in various traditional Chinese religious schools of thought. He is also believed by some to be an older contemporary of the famous philosopher Confucius. The 'Tao Te Ching', literally meaning 'The Way and Its Power' presents the idea of 'Tao' as being the end all and be all of existence. It is extremely powerful, yet down to earth. It is the source of all being in the world. The book intends to guide people on how to return to the laws and ways of nature to maintain the balance of the Tao. Lao Tzu's philosophy was a simple one. He was against putting effort and striving, as he thought struggle is not only futile but also hinders productivity. In his theory of 'wu-wei', he advises to simply do nothing. By this he means not to go against the forces of nature, wait for the gush of events nature brings to you and dive right in. He advised not to struggle to change the natural order of things, but to bring spontaneity to one's actions as one holds on to the nature's way of life. Followers of Taoism believe that striving for nothing will never lead them to failure. The one who has never failed is always successful, thus becoming powerful. Lao Tzu's journey began as he set foot towards the western border of China, currently Tibet. He was saddened by what he saw around him: men being diverted away from nature and the goodness it brings. A guard he met on the border asked Lao to write down his teachings as he went. This is when he wrote the famous Tao Te Ching, a 5,000 character account of his thoughts and philosophical ideas.

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