



Tao Te Ching: With Comparative Quotes From Aristotle to Zhuangzi

Lao Tzu, A J Girling

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The Universal Wisdom of the Tao Te Ching is an exploration of the pure hearts of the worlds religions and philosophies, seen through the eyes of a practicing Taoist.

Taoism's classic, the Tao Te Ching, with its concise yet penetrating insights, forms the backbone of the text. Complementary observations from a wide selection of masters, philosophers and thinkers appear throughout the work, which is interspersed with comparative passages from the Bhagavad Gita, the Bible, the Guru Granth Sahib, the Qur'an, as well as other sacred texts

Many common misunderstandings about Taoist philosophy are addressed within its pages, illustrated by simple explanations and information about the original Chinese script. For example, the book begins by saying that Tao cannot be described. In verse forty-three it affirms the value of teaching without words. Almost all English translations incorrectly end that verse by stating that few can understand (Xi ji). Their interpretation is based on the character Xi, depicted in Chinese writing by widely spaced threads. To a Taoist this conveys the silent tranquil space between words, so that instead of reading few understand, xi ji, reads silent understanding, consistent with the theme of the verse.

In verse sixty-one, many translations read something akin to: 'The big country likes to take in the small country, The small country likes to join the big country.' Guo, often translated as country or kingdom, also signifies a state, and implies the great state of infinite inter-being as opposed to the small individual state.

Selected exercises from the Buddha's highly compatible sutra on mindful breathing are included in a supplementary chapter to assist those wishing to integrate these ancient teachings into daily activities.

It was written as a work of love, undertaken with great devotion to nourishing peace and well-being in a time of division and turbulence. As Lao Tzu pointed out, we have all we need to create a good and satisfying life for everyone, only the wandering mind prevents us from living with balance, sufficiency and joy. While we are distracted by the comparative values of mono-theist, poly-theist or non-theist doctrines we miss the pure and beautiful gem that rests at the centre of them all. With tolerance, understanding and compassion we can each be a forerunner for change, not by believing one thing or another, but simply by being fully present to the pure heart in each unfolding moment. The Tao Te Ching offers practical advice on achieving just this: a must read!

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