

The Philosophy of the Daodejing

By Hans-Georg Moeller

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For centuries, the ancient Chinese philosophical text the *Daodejing (Tao Te Ching)* has fascinated and frustrated its readers. While it offers a wealth of rich philosophical insights concerning the cultivation of one's body and attaining one's proper place within nature and the cosmos, its teachings and structure can be enigmatic and obscure.

Hans-Georg Moeller presents a clear and coherent description and analysis of this vaguely understood Chinese classic. He explores the recurring images and ideas that shape the work and offers a variety of useful approaches to understanding and appreciating this canonical text. Moeller expounds on the core philosophical issues addressed in the *Daodejing*, clarifying such crucial concepts as Yin and Yang and Dao and De. He explains its teachings on a variety of subjects, including sexuality, ethics, desire, cosmology, human nature, the emotions, time, death, and the death penalty. The *Daodejing* also offers a distinctive ideal of social order and political leadership and presents a philosophy of war and peace.

An illuminating exploration, The *Daodejing* is an interesting foil to the philosophical outlook of Western humanism and contains surprising parallels between its teachings and nontraditional contemporary philosophies.

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Editorial Review

Review

Intelligent, readable, and relevant... Highly recommended.

(*Choice*)

Moeller has done a commendable job of taking this text seriously and drawing out a range of valuable themes and issues.

(Philip J. Ivanhoe *Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy*)

Intriguing and worthwhile.

(Erica Brindley *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*)

an intriguing rumination upon the 'meaning' of the *Daode jing* (or *Laozi*), and upon how 'we'-that is, the postmodern Western intellectual-ought to approach it.

(Russell Kirkland *Religious Studies Review*)

Review

Hans-Georg Moeller's intelligent and profound exposition of the *Laozi* does admirable justice to the unique imagistic texture of this seminal work in world philosophy. The non-humanistic approach opens up new dimensions of meaning, and his text sparkles with insights on almost every page.

(Graham Parkes, University of Hawaii)

Using a sophisticated comparative approach, Moeller interprets the *Daodejing* in terms immediately accessible to contemporary readers, bringing it to life as an insightful guide to how we might better respond to issues of our own times--emotions and sexuality, cognition and psychology, ethics and morality, politics and war, life and death, eternity and the moment--all are addressed in Moeller's reading of this ancient Chinese classic in ways that both challenge modern Western humanistic discourse and suggest alternative solutions to age-old problems.

(Richard John Lynn, author of *The Classic of Changes: A New Translation of the I Ching As Interpreted By Wang Bi* and *The Classic of the Way and Virtue: A New Translation of the Tao-te ching of Laozi As Interpreted By Wang Bi*)

About the Author

Hans-Georg Moeller is associate professor of philosophy at Brock University in St. Catharines, Canada. He is the author of three other books on Daoism, including *Daoism Explained: From the Dream of the Butterfly*

to the Fishnet Allegory.

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