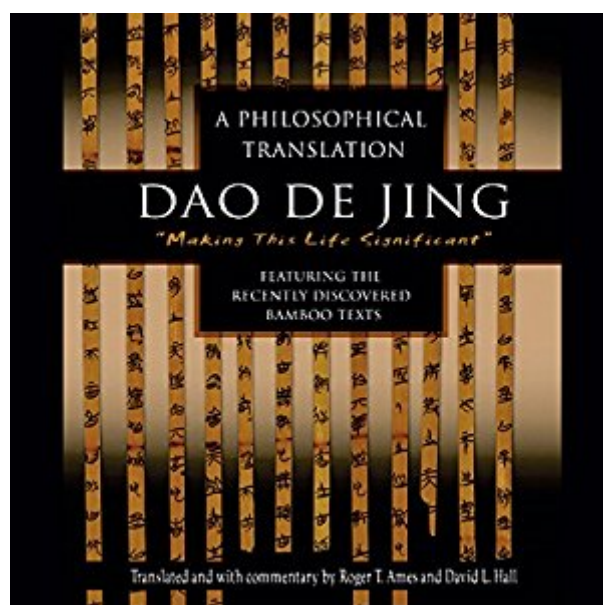


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Dao De Jing



Synopsis

In 1993, archaeologists unearthed a set of ancient bamboo scrolls that contained the earliest known version of the Dao de jing. Composed more than two thousand years ago, this life-changing document offers a regimen of self-cultivation to attain personal excellence and revitalize moral behavior. Now in this luminous new translation, renowned China scholars Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall bring the timeless wisdom of the Dao de jing into our contemporary world. In this elegant volume, Ames and Hall feature the original Chinese texts of the Dao de jing and translate them into crisp, chiseled English that reads like poetry. Each of the eighty-one brief chapters is followed by clear, thought-provoking commentary exploring the layers of meaning in the text. This new version of one of the world's most influential documents will stand as both a compelling introduction to Daoist thought and as the classic modern English translation. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Every translation tells you "what" the translator thinks the book should be saying, but only this one actually tells you "why" those words are presented the way they are. This book stands out as an example of what Ames calls the "self-consciously interpretive" style of commentary. (Hall died before the book was finished. So Ames had the last say in this book.) This style is developed out of the belief that "any pretense to a literal translation is not only naive, but is itself a cultural prejudice of the first order." (Preface, p. xi) To neutralize prejudices, the translation of every chapter is immediately followed by a commentary, which serves as a "meta-translation" to reflect on translation

and editing issues from the social background at the time of the writing of Tao Te Ching, to the tension among ideas from different traditions and across chapters. My experience tells me that one either hates or loves this kind of fragmentary, hoop-jumping, stop-and-go lecturing style. However, to me it is very close to that of the vast majority of annotations in classical Chinese scriptures. I find it quite convenient for referencing verses and ideas. So I am perfectly comfortable with (and even welcome) this format of presentation. Also, the authors' professional training in philosophy gives them the edge in presenting the kinds of problems that the ancient Taoists were trying to deal with and analyzing the flow of ideas. What some people may see as "pedantic" commentaries and footnotes actually challenged me to re-evaluate the aims and strategies of those Taoist projects. For that I thank the authors for their great services. But it does not necessarily mean that this style suits everyone (or every purpose).

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