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The Legend Of Lao Tzu And The Tao Te Ching



Synopsis

THIS IS THE LEGEND OF LAO TZU, who may or may not have been born; who may or may not have founded Taoism, one of the greatest religions in the world; and who may or may not have written one of the greatest books of wisdom in the world: the Tao Te Ching, or the "Way of Heaven."

This thoughtful and thought-provoking book opens with a biography of Lao Tzu, the mysterious philosopher who is said to have been born at the age of eighty-one with snow-white hair, the ability to walk and talk, and unparalleled wisdom. Many credit him with creating the Tao Te Ching, which was written for the good of all humankind. Twenty of the eighty-one passages of the Tao Te Ching are included here, paired with stunning illustrations by the award-winning artist Demi. On topics ranging from silence to moderation, from governing to the balance of earth and heaven, these passages carry a powerful message and are sure to give each and every reader something new to consider.

Book Information

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Age Range: 7 - 10 years

Grade Level: 1 - 4

Customer Reviews

Grade 5 Up
This is the legend of Lao Tzu, who may or may not have been born; who may or may not have founded Taoism, one of the greatest religions of the world. Demi's elegant picture-book introduction to the legendary Chinese philosopher, often speculated to have been a

contemporary of Confucius, combines nuggets of his purported life with 20 verses from the Tao Te Ching, which he may or may not have written. Allegedly born an old man, Lao Tzu became widely known for his wisdom, to the point of being courted by the emperor. Adult readers will enjoy his response to the emperor's messenger. I wash my ears because even one political word is dangerous. I wash my donkey's ears because donkeys are very political. The sketchy life story and the Tao teachings are vague, ambiguous, and mystical by turns. Demi provides no background explanation, acknowledgment of authority, or reference to other information sources. On the pretty pages, the text is set in gold letters, and the narrative and graceful paintings are contained in a gold circular frame on each parchment shaded page. The gold circles represent Tao, The Way of Heaven, according to the concluding double-page listing of Taoist symbols and their meanings. Adult fans of the artist are the most likely audience, but the book does introduce a significant, lesser-known spiritual leader to children. — Margaret Bush, Simmons College, Boston
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Starred Review This visual stunner is notable for the beauty of its art and design as well as its sensitive textual presentation of the legendary Chinese figure Lao Tzu and the Tao Te Ching, the book of wisdom attributed to him. Nearly half the pages relate the story of Lao Tzu, "who may or may not have been born; who may or may not have founded Taoism, one of the greatest religions in the world." But at the heart of the book are 20 verses from the Tao Te Ching, in which the philosopher offers wisdom to help people understand how to live a virtuous life in accordance with the Way of Heaven. These pithy, sometimes paradoxical verses appear on individual pages. The meaning of the verse affects not only the choices of subject matter, but also artistic choices such as scale, brightness, and the definition of images. Dominating each parchmentlike page is a large circle of shining gold that frames the illustrations and the text. The ink drawings and paintings within are beautifully composed, confidently delineated, and varied in their use of rich patterns, open spaces, and suitable scale. Taoist symbols appear at the book's conclusion. Clear, concise writing, thoughtfully considered design, and striking illustrations come together to make this one of the best of Demi's many fine books on spiritual leaders. Phelan, Carolyn Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

This is a beautifully illustrated book for young readers which offers an insight into the life and times of this noble Chinese man who founded Taoism (which is also known as Daoism). Though modern readers would question the historical authenticity of parts of Lao Tzu's life story, this should not

detract from the wise spiritual teachings he gave which have benefited countless generations and still continue to do so today.

I didn't know it was a book for children but it is beautiful.

I bought this book based on the description. I teach the third grade, so I own several other books by this author. When I got the book, I found it sort of heavy handed in the Taoist department which I know I should have expected from the title, but the problem is that it reads more like history, or basic doctrine rather than a fairy tale or myth which would have been fine. As a fundamentalist Christian, I do not think I would read the book to my class, because I would never be able to do a convincing job of telling the tale. However, those gilded pages are awesome and some of the most beautiful artwork I have ever seen in a picture book. It rounds out the author set, but I believe is intended for a much older audience than my third grade class. If you studying the world's religions in a 6th grade class, it would be perfect.

I bought this book because one of my students told me that he was Tao and I thought it was a form of Chinese Buddhism which he fervently denied. He is a beginner in English so I thought it was just a language gap. It was but I was the one in the wrong. I bought this book to share with him and be able to help him communicate his beliefs in English. I also needed to educate myself and this was a good beginning book for me. The story is well told and being a Demi fan already, I appreciate anything the author can share with me about Russian, Chinese, Tibetan and other cultures she writes about. She also shares religious stories such as Jesus, etc. A beautifully written, well crafted book that allows me to communicate further over a language and understanding gap. Beautiful!

China will displace Germany as the world's third largest economy this year, which makes this beautifully brief book very appropriate as an introduction to the thought and religion of at least one of every five people in China. Globalisation means need for the wisdom of this book is unfolding every day because of the vast increases in greenhouse gases produced by China, the smog-ridden new industrial cities, and projects such as the Three Gorges Dam. China's economic boom is based on the human control of nature, which is the basis of contemporary Occidental economics; this book is an intelligent alternative which effectively says, "Wait just a minute!" To quote directly from the book: "Once Lao Tzu was asked how he found the Way of Heaven, and he said, 'I made a great effort: I tried and tried and tried to find it, but I couldn't. Then one day as I was sitting under a tree, a

dry leaf fell, slowly moving with the wind. The wind moved north; the leaf moved north; the wind moved south; the leaf moved south; then the wind stopped -- and the leaf fell down and rested beautifully on the earth. Then again there was some wind, and again the leaf rose high in the sky. "Suddenly I became that dry leaf; and suddenly I understood the Way of Heaven. No longer was I separate from Heaven, but I was a part of Heaven. Wherever Heaven went, I went. "If it changed its mind, I changed my wind. If it stopped, I stopped. If it flowed, I flowed. And that is how I found the Way'." In other words, learn to relax and go with nature. It isn't going to change. In the years ahead, as the environmental impacts of "fighting" nature in everything from autos to massive dams become disasters, the wisdom of Lao Tzu will be increasingly evident and perhaps even heeded, perhaps not too late. Can we change the world before then? Not by arguing for change, says Lao Tzu, who adds, "A good man doesn't prove by arguing, and he who argues isn't good." Life is more of a good example than a good kick in the seat of the pants. Now, having been thus warned, my words conclude that everyone who reads this book will be improved.

This book seemed brand new. Reviews had warned me that it was pretty wordy, and that's true. Not so much a children's book as a book for young people exploring religious viewpoints. A Unitarian class could have many valuable lessons. Art work is amazing. A beautiful book.

I don't understand why anyone would want to read this book to a child. I read very few 'tall tales' to my five children when they were little because I didn't want them to believe untruths and nonsense. When a child reads, hears or watches fantasy or fairy tales, he understands that the story exists in the realm of the imagination and that the magical elements exist solely there -- in the realm of the imagination. But when you take an actual historical figure who the child knows 'really existed' and then tell the child this historical person was born as an 81 year old man and was attended to by flying dragons, you put the child in an untenable position which has no positive outcome: is she supposed to believe that this is what actually happened? If not, does that mean you think it is okay for books to LIE to her? Or is the moral you are teaching her is that actual reality does not matter and it is perfectly acceptable for her to embellish reality whenever she wants with whatever fictional gloss she chooses? As I said, no good outcome. My sons and I checked this book out from the library because we wanted to learn something about the real Lao Tzu. Within a few pages it became obvious that this book could not be trusted to teach us what was real and, thus, was not worth reading. Personally I think it was a waste of time, talent and paper.

This is an incredible book, beautifully presented. It gives the reader an insight of the wonderful teachings of the Tao Te Ching.

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