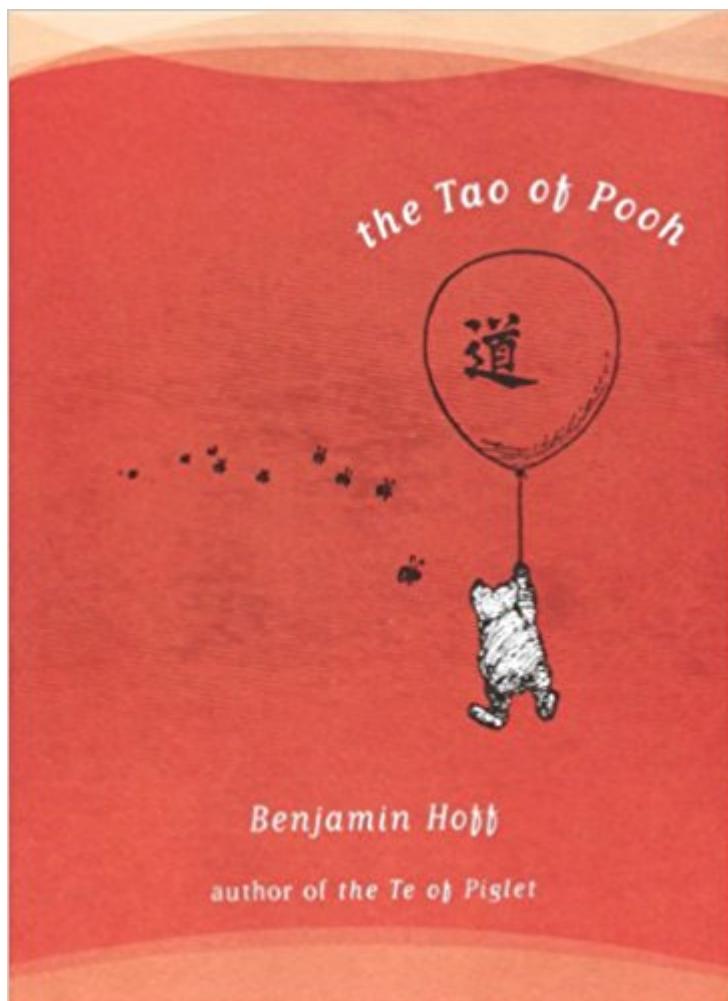


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The Tao Of Pooh (Winnie-the-Pooh)



Synopsis

The how of Pooh? The Tao of who? The Tao of Pooh!?! In which it is revealed that one of the world's great Taoist masters isn't Chinese--or a venerable philosopher--but is in fact none other than that effortlessly calm, still, reflective bear. A. A. Milne's Winnie-the-Pooh! While Eeyore frets, and Piglet hesitates, and Rabbit calculates, and Owl pontificates, Pooh just is. And that's a clue to the secret wisdom of the Taoists.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (565 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

When we were covering Taoism in my World Religions class, I suddenly recalled the Tao of Pooh book my sister-in-law gave me the year I planned to end it all, back in 1995/96. I read it once, was comforted by it, and forgot it all. Years later, after reading Taoism, I instantly felt a light bulb flash in my head... "Oh, so that's what it's all about!" This cute book combines the Taoist philosophy in conjunction with Pooh's interactions with his friends, with Christopher Robin being the kind but serious teacher who tries to teach Pooh about what he represents--Taoism. In contrasting Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism, Confucius is described as a sour-faced man, Buddha as one with a bitter expression, but Lao-Tse being the smiling one. Basically, the laws that govern the heavens are the same one that govern earth and man, and that if we go with the flow, we'll be in harmony. The concepts of wu-wei is also explained. Wu-wei means "not doing" but of doing nothing against the natural flow. Here, it's called the Pooh Way, because Pooh has a "mind that merely sees what's in front of it, and follows the nature of things." In other words, put the round peg in the

round hole, the square peg in the square one. The characters who make up Pooh's friends demonstrate the flaw of knowledge and cleverness, and I was fascinated and sobered by this because their personalities reflect me, and I realize the bad side in knowing too much. Dig this: Owl, the modern equivalent of a Confusionist, Dessicated Scholar, is described as someone who gains Knowledge for Knowledge's sake, or for the sake of appearing wise. A bit harsh because that's me to some extent.

It's all so simple when you reduce it to the level of Pooh. It's often hard to understand the nuances of religions and philosophies other than one's own. For many people, the beliefs and rituals of faraway lands -- or even of the folks next door -- are a jumble of mixed-up oddities. But understanding a people's system of faith is vital to understanding the people. In the case of the Eastern philosophy known as Taoism, Winnie the Pooh is here to help. "The Tao of Pooh" boils the Taoist faith down into simple truths, each using Pooh and his friends to explain them in easy, bite-sized pieces. Some of the examples are original to author Benjamin Hoff's book, while others are lifted directly from the original text by A.A. Milne. Passages from "The House at Pooh Corner" blend surprisingly well with the tenets of Chinese philosophy, including religious maxims and excerpts from the writings of Chuang-tse. The result is a charming explanation of faith that even Pooh -- a notorious bear of little Brain -- can understand, particularly since he exemplifies the Taoist way so perfectly. Those around him -- Owl, Rabbit, Eeyore, Tigger and of course Piglet -- are less serene in their activities in the Hundred Acre Wood. Hoff handily explains why they do not fit the Taoist mold, and how Pooh would have handled similar situations. As he explains on the back cover of the book, "While Eeyore frets, and Piglet hesitates, and Rabbit calculates, and Owl pontificates, Pooh just is." There, a lesson learned and you haven't even opened it yet. You'll learn more when Hoff explains the Taoist concept of P'u, the Uncarved Block, and the many facets of Cottleston Pie. At the same time, Hoff avoids diminishing his message by dumbing it down.

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