



# Tao Te Ching: Color Illustrated, Formatted for E-Readers (Unabridged Version)

*Laozi*

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## How is this book unique?

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The Tao Te Ching, Daodejing, or Dao De Jing (simplified Chinese: 道德经; traditional Chinese: 道德經; pinyin: Dàodéjīng), also simply referred to as the Laozi (Chinese: 老子; pinyin: Lǎozǐ), is a Chinese classic text. According to tradition, it was written around 6th century BC by the sage Laozi (or Lao Tzu, Chinese: 老聃; pinyin: Lǎodān, literally meaning "Old Master"), a record-keeper at the Zhou dynasty court, by whose name the text is known in China. The text's true authorship and date of composition or compilation are still debated, although the oldest excavated text dates back to the late 4th century BC.

The text, as well as with the Zhuangzi, is a fundamental text for both philosophical and religious Taoism, and strongly influenced other schools, such as Legalism, Confucianism, and Chinese Buddhism, which when first introduced into China was largely interpreted through the use of Daoist words and concepts. Many Chinese artists, including poets, painters, calligraphers, and even gardeners, have used the Daodejing as a source of inspiration. Its influence has also spread widely outside East Asia, and is among the most translated works in world literature.

The Wade–Giles romanization "Tao Te Ching" dates back to early English transliterations in the late 19th century; its influence can be seen in words and phrases that have become well established in English. "Daodejing" is the pinyin romanization.

The received Tao Te Ching is a short text of around 5,000 Chinese characters in 81 brief chapters or sections (?). There is some evidence that the chapter divisions were later additions—for commentary, or as aids to rote memorization—and that the original text was more fluidly organized. It has two parts, the Tao Ching and the Te Ching, which may have been edited together into the received text, possibly reversed from an original "Te Tao Ching." The written style is laconic, has few grammatical particles, and encourages varied, even contradictory interpretations. The ideas are singular; the style poetic. The rhetorical style combines two major strategies: short, declarative statements and intentional contradictions. The first of these strategies creates memorable phrases, while the second forces us to create our own reconciliations of the supposed contradictions.

The Chinese characters in the original versions were probably written in zhuànshù (篆书 seal script), while later versions were written in lìshù (隶书 clerical script) and kǎishù (楷书 regular script) styles. Daoist Chinese Characters contains a good summary of these different calligraphies.

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