

Practicing the Tao Te Ching: 81 Steps on the Way

Solala Towler

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For the individual seeker interested in exploring Tao, this work will speak sincerely to the heart and mind.

In *Practicing the Tao Te Ching*, Solala Towler offers a thoughtful and practical guide to the practice of Taoism. Many books have been written about the ancient Chinese text, the Tao Te Ching, but Towler's view is uniquely grounded and accessible.

Towler explores a central theme for each of the eighty-one short verses of the Tao Te Ching and pairs these with experiential exercises in meditation, breathing, or movement—such as Water Meditation, Sitting and Forgetting, or Giving Up the Need to Be Right. In the introduction, he advises the reader to begin by reading the verses sequentially, as each chapter and practice builds on the last.

A widely recognized writer on Taoist meditation and qigong, Towler cites more than twenty-five years of practice and the influence of several noted Taoist teachers who have enriched his interpretation. His ease with these teachings is clear, as his insights build naturally, seemingly effortlessly, from chapter to chapter. Tao is about constant transformation, not doctrine, he notes. And, as Towler gradually unfolds the wisdom of Tao, one's understanding and insights deepen.

Some scholars may quibble with the very personal nature of his interpretations. Towler notes that he is not using direct translations of the eighty-one verses, but instead draws from several leading translations and his own deep practice to determine "the clearest way to present each step, or chapter, as it pertains to self-cultivation." This is definitely not an academic study.

But for the individual seeker interested in exploring Tao, this work will speak sincerely to the heart and mind and provide an outline for deepening methods of practice. Towler explains, "While there are many paths to Tao, at the end, they all lead to the same place—immersion and connection to the divine Source of all, Tao."

In *Practicing the Tao Te Ching*, Towler offers a powerful and quietly profound tool for journeyers who are drawn to this spiritual path.

KRISTEN RABE (Summer 2016)

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