

THE PRISTINE DAO

Metaphysics in Early Daoist Discourse



THOMAS MICHAEL



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The Pristine Dao Thomas Michael, 2005-05-26 A new reading of Daoism arguing that it originated in a particular textual tradition distinct from Confucianism and other philosophical traditions of early China *Philosophical Enactment and Bodily Cultivation in Early Daoism* Thomas Michael, 2021-08-12 In *Philosophical Enactment and Bodily Cultivation in Early Daoism* Thomas Michael illuminates the formative early history of the Daodejing and the social political religious and philosophical trends that indelibly marked it This book centers on the matrix of the Daodejing that harbors a penetrating phenomenology of the Dao together with a rigorous system of bodily cultivation It traces the historical journey of the text from its earliest oral circulations to its later transcriptions seen in a growing collection of ancient Chinese excavated manuscripts It examines the ways in which Huang Lao thinkers from the Han Dynasty transformed the original phenomenology of the Daodejing into a metaphysics that reconfigured its original matrix and it explores the success of the Wei Jin Daoist Ge Hong in bringing the matrix back into its original alignment This book is an important contribution to cross cultural studies bringing contemporary Chinese scholarship on Daoism into direct conversation with Western scholarship on Daoism The book also concludes with a discussion of Martin Heidegger's recognition of the position and value of the Daodejing for the future of comparative philosophy *Riding the Wind with Liezi* Ronnie Littlejohn, Jeffrey Dippmann, 2012-01-02 The Liezi is the forgotten classic of Daoism Along with the Laozi Daodejing and the Zhuangzi it's been considered a Daoist masterwork since the mid eighth century yet unlike those well read works the Liezi is little known and receives scant scholarly attention Nevertheless the Liezi is an important text that sheds valuable light on the early history of Daoism particularly the formative period of sectarian Daoism We do not know exactly what shape the original text took but what remains is replete with fantastic characters whimsical tales paradoxical aphorisms and philosophically sophisticated reflection on the nature of the world and humanity's place within it Ultimately the Liezi sees the world as one of change and indeterminacy Arguing for the Liezi's historical philosophical and literary significance the contributors to this volume offer a fresh look at this text using contemporary approaches and providing novel insights The volume is unique in its attention to both philosophical and religious perspectives

God Is Not One Stephen Prothero, 2010-09-20 fascinating guide to religion and its place in the world today In *God Is Not One* bestselling author Stephen Prothero makes a fresh and provocative argument that contrary to popular understanding all religions are not simply different paths to the same God Instead he shows that the differences between the major religions are far greater than we think they each ask different questions tackle different problems and aim at different goals *God Is Not One* highlights the unique aspects of the world's major religions with chapters on Islam Christianity Confucianism Hinduism Buddhism Yoruba religion Judaism Daoism and atheism Lucid and compelling *God Is Not One* offers a new understanding of religion for the twenty first century **Envisioning Eternal Empire** Yuri Pines, 2008-12-19 This ambitious book looks into the reasons for the exceptional durability of the Chinese empire which lasted for more than two

millennia 221 BCE 1911 CE Yuri Pines identifies the roots of the empire's longevity in the activities of thinkers of the Warring States period 475 221 BCE who in their search for solutions to an ongoing political crisis developed ideals values and perceptions that would become essential for the future imperial polity In marked distinction to similar empires worldwide the Chinese empire was envisioned and to a certain extent preplanned long before it came into being As a result it was not only a military and administrative construct but also an intellectual one Pines makes the argument that it was precisely its ideological appeal that allowed the survival and regeneration of the empire after repeated periods of turmoil Envisioning Eternal Empire presents a panoptic survey of philosophical and social conflicts in Warring States political culture By examining the extant corpus of preimperial literature including transmitted texts and manuscripts uncovered at archaeological sites Pines locates the common ideas of competing thinkers that underlie their ideological controversies This bold approach allows him to transcend the once fashionable perspective of competing schools of thought and show that beneath the immense pluralism of Warring States thought one may identify common ideological choices that eventually shaped traditional Chinese political culture The result is a refreshingly novel look at the foundational period in Chinese intellectual history Pines analysis of the political thought of the period focuses on the thinkers perceptions of three main components of the preimperial and imperial polity the ruler the elite and the commoners Regarding each of them he identifies both the common ground and unresolved intrinsic tensions of Warring States discourse Thus while thinkers staunchly supported the idea of the omnipotent universal monarch they were also aware of the mediocrity and ineptitude of acting sovereigns They were committed to a career in government yet feared to compromise their integrity in service of corrupt rulers They declared their dedication to the people yet firmly opposed the lower strata's input in political processes Pines asserts that the persistence of these unresolved tensions eventually became one of the most important assets of China's political culture The ensuing imperial political system was not excessively rigid but sufficiently flexible to adapt itself to a variety of domestic and foreign pressures This remarkable adaptability within the constant ideological framework contributed decisively to the empire's longevity

More Than Discourse Donald A. Crosby, 2014-08-01 Discusses the role of symbols in religion and suggests particular symbols appropriate to religious naturalism Religious life involves more than prosaically stated beliefs It also encompasses attitudes emotions values and practices whose meanings cannot be adequately captured in verbal assertions but require effective expression in forceful images portrayals and enactments of a nonliteral sort Indeed the world's religious traditions are each marked by rich and distinctive symbols In *More Than Discourse* Donald A. Crosby discusses the nature of symbols in religion and investigates symbols appropriate for religious naturalism or what he terms Religion of Nature This is a religious outlook that holds the natural world to be the only world it is sacred but without any supernatural domain or presence underlying it Warning against a too literalistic approach to any religion by either its adherents or its critics Crosby discusses the nature and roles of religious symbols how they work and their particular kinds of

truth or falsity A set of criteria for evaluating the effectiveness and meaning of religious symbols is provided along with explorations of specific symbols Crosby finds to be highly significant for Religion of Nature

Daoism, Meditation, and the Wonders of Serenity Stephen Eskildsen, 2015-11-04 An overview of Daoist texts on passive meditation from the Latter Han through Tang periods Stephen Eskildsen offers an overview of Daoist religious texts from the Latter Han 25-220 through Tang 618-907 periods exploring passive meditation methods and their anticipated effects These methods entailed observing the processes that unfold spontaneously within mind and body rather than actively manipulating them by means common in medieval Daoist religion such as visualization invocations and the swallowing of breath or saliva Through the resulting deep serenity it was claimed one could attain profound insights experience visions feel surges of vital force overcome thirst and hunger be cured of ailments ascend the heavens and gain eternal life While the texts discussed follow the legacy of Warring States period Daoism such as the Laozi to a significant degree they also draw upon medieval immortality methods and Buddhism An understanding of the passive meditation literature provides important insights into the subsequent development of Neidan or Internal Alchemy meditation that emerged from the Song period onward

Philosophies of Happiness Diana Lobel, 2017-11-14 What does it mean to be truly happy In *Philosophies of Happiness* Diana Lobel provides a rich spectrum of arguments for a theory of happiness as flourishing or well being offering a global cross cultural and interdisciplinary perspective on how to create a vital fulfilling and significant life Drawing upon perspectives from a broad range of philosophical traditions Eastern and Western ancient and contemporary the book suggests that just as physical health is the well being of the body happiness is the healthy and flourishing condition of the whole human being and we experience the most complete happiness when we realize our potential through creative engagement Lobel shows that while thick descriptions of happiness differ widely in texture and detail certain themes resonate across texts from different traditions and historical contexts suggesting core features of a happy life attentive awareness effortless action relationship and connection to a larger interconnected community love or devotion and creative engagement Each feature adds meaning significance and value so that we can craft lives of worth and purpose These themes emerge from careful study of philosophical and religious texts and traditions the Greek philosophers Aristotle and Epicurus the Chinese traditions of Confucius Laozi and Zhuangzi the Hindu Bhagavad Gita the Japanese Buddhist tradition of Soto Zen master Dogen and his modern expositor Shunryu Suzuki the Western religious traditions of Augustine and Maimonides the Persian Sufi tale Conference of the Birds and contemporary research on mindfulness and creativity Written in a clear accessible style *Philosophies of Happiness* invites readers of all backgrounds to explore and engage with religious and philosophical conceptions of what makes life meaningful Visit <https://cup.columbia.edu/extras/supplement-philosophies-of-happiness> for additional appendixes and supplemental notes

In the Shadows of the Dao Thomas Michael, 2015-09-25 Thomas Michael's study of the early history of the Daodejing reveals that the work is grounded in a unique tradition of early Daoism one

unrelated to other early Chinese schools of thought and practice The text is associated with a tradition of hermits committed to yangsheng a particular practice of physical cultivation involving techniques of breath circulation in combination with specific bodily movements leading to a physical union with the Dao Michael explores the ways in which the text systematically anchored these techniques to a Dao centered worldview Including a new translation of the Daodejing In the Shadows of the Dao opens new approaches to understanding the early history of one of the world s great religious texts and great religious traditions Transcendence and Non-Naturalism in Early Chinese Thought Alexis McLeod,Joshua R. Brown,2020-09-03 Contemporary scholars of Chinese philosophy often presuppose that early China possessed a naturalistic worldview devoid of any non natural concepts such as transcendence Challenging this presupposition head on Joshua R Brown and Alexis McLeod argue that non naturalism and transcendence have a robust and significant place in early Chinese thought This book reveals that non naturalist positions can be found in early Chinese texts in topics including conceptions of the divine cosmogony and apophatic philosophy Moreover by closely examining a range of early Chinese texts and providing comparative readings of a number of Western texts and thinkers the book offers a way of reading early Chinese Philosophy as consistent with the religious philosophy of the East and West including the Abrahamic and the Brahmanistic religions Co written by a philosopher and theologian this book draws out unique insights into early Chinese thought highlighting in particular new ways to consider a range of Chinese concepts including tian dao li and you wu

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