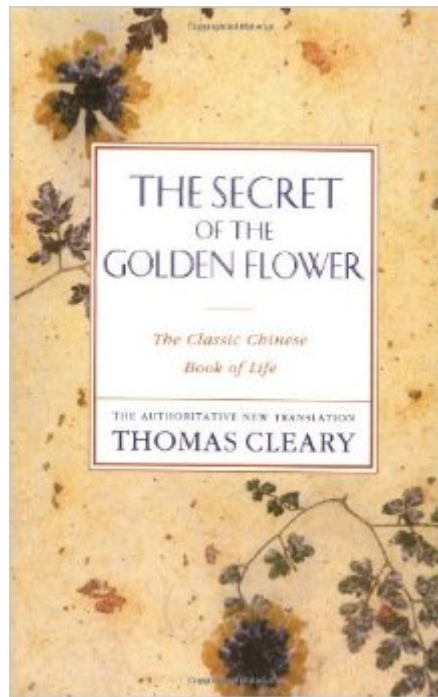


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The Secret Of The Golden Flower



Synopsis

The brilliant new translation of the classic Taoist guide to meditation that Carl Jung made famous. 'Thomas Cleary's translation is like an island of peace in the troubled sea of today's world. His beautifully lucid translation of the classic Chi

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I have been a practitioner in the Tibetan Vajrayana for over thirty years. This short book, which I have put into daily practice has corrected mistakes in my practice to such an extent that I feel I have wasted thirty years. This, of course, is not entirely true. Because of the extensive study during those years I could appreciate the depth of Cleary's translation and commentary as one who has successfully practiced this meditation. With practice, the book gets more and more profound and the practice more refined. It subsumes the whole of the Buddhist canon and that of Taoism and Confucianism and Christianity as well. In particular it brings one to the realization that scriptures, while valuable, have the danger of enmeshing one in words and concepts. On a more personal note, it has helped free me from trying to reproduce past experiences of enlightened mind, which are now just memories and therefore also concepts and ideas. I have waded through Stopping and Seeing, also translated by Mr. Cleary in volume V of his collected translations, and would advise against it. It is very similar to Ashvagosha's Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana, translated by D.T. Suzuki, which I studied at length many years ago. After your practice has reached a certain point, perhaps it might be of value to study such treatises. Another thing that commends Mr. Cleary's

translation is that he puts his commentary at the end so the translated text is presented without distractions. For this I am also grateful. One thing that is not addressed in this or other meditation texts, nor by the meditation instructors I have had, is the basics of sitting meditation.

FYI: You might want to read the Translation Notes at the end of this book before tackling "The Secret..." Some books are better read backward. Another tack would be to read Cleary's "The Essential Tao" before tackling "The Secret...". "The Secret of the Golden Flower" is about a Taoist method of turning our attention from involvement in exterior mental objects to focusing on our interior essence or source of mind. Making our inside the outside, being aware of the projector and not merely the screen. A theme alluded to in the "Matrix" movies, what is real and what is simulation and which is better, choices, choices, choices. The "Secret" is about discovering that we have free will, that we choose our reality, that we are not only observers of but participants in reality. About finding ourself, our true self. We choose to see the glass as half full or half empty, same glass of water, different perceived reality, the power of intention is a great mystery, the mysterious pass. Looking at reality as though it is something completely exterior to us creates separation from reality, separation from ourselves, the Fall into Duality. This is the root cause of much of our World's inhumanity to Man and Nature. We are estranged from our lives. It's only a movie. We are focused on things instead of essence. We have taken the blue pill believing that ignorance is bliss. It is not. Ignorance is the source of pain and suffering for it is ignorance that clings to that which cannot be grasped, the simulacra. Ignorance is being attached to things outside ourselves, temporal things. We, on the otherhand, are eternal. Truth is found within. There is a spark of Divinity within each of us. One way of waking up to the truth is through mind altering drugs, the red pill of "The Matrix".

I had difficulty with this book. As I've stated before, finding English translations on any text is difficult, because Chinese ideograms are themselves sometimes associated with different meanings based on context, and because, especially with regards to religious symbolism and internal alchemy, the symbolism can be quite esoteric. This book is divided into sections. The first is Cleary's direct translation. The second is his commentary for each verse. The last is an afterward regarding the "techniques" espoused in this book relevant to modern life. Personally, I would have found the commentary more useful integrated directly after each verse. The translation is still highly symbolic, and the commentary adds a little to understanding what is trying to be said. As it is, I found myself re-reading the translation verse by verse, at the end of each verse thumbing to the appropriate commentary. I did not find the direct translation so poetic that the interruptions would have destroyed

any aesthetic sense from reading it. At the very least, commentary at the end of each chapter would have been better. To a layperson like me, this book provided illumination in glimpses only. It was hardly direct, clear, or straightforward. A very strong working knowledge in Chan Buddhism or the Completely Real School of Taoism would have served me well, but alas, I don't have that. The symbolic content was frankly overwhelming, and it wasn't until I re-read along with the commentary that I had a sideways understanding of what the goal of "turning the light around" actually meant. In fact, much of this book is written like a dissertation.

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