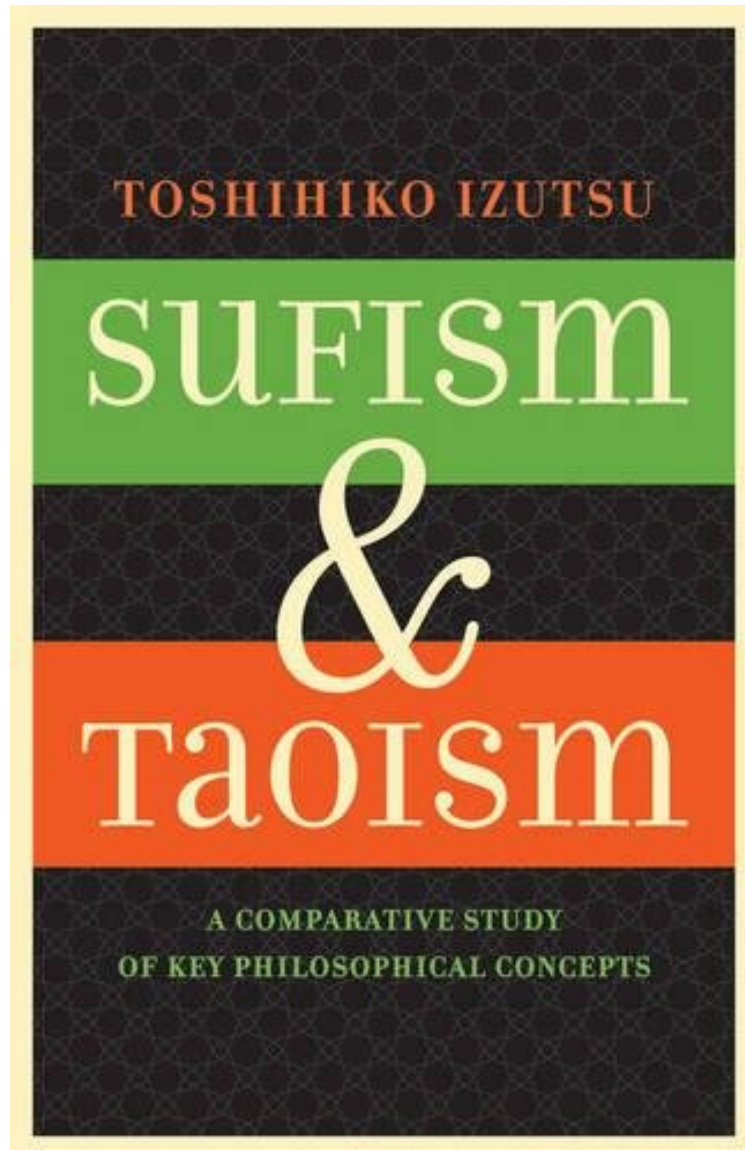


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Sufism and Taoism: A Comparative Study of Key Philosophical Concepts

Toshihiko Izutsu

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Toshihiko Izutsu : Sufism and Taoism: A Comparative Study of Key Philosophical Concepts before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Sufism and Taoism: A Comparative Study of Key Philosophical Concepts:

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addicted to comparative mystical religious studies, and this was truly wonderful. 7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. well worth the price By Taeguk An invaluable resource for Sufis, Daoists, and anybody interested in mysticism and philosophy. Well written and profound. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. a masterpiece of comparative mysticism By P. Nagy Toshihiko Izutsu has written a masterpiece of comparative mysticism. My avocation for years has been reading mystical classics and comparative studies of mysticism. Of the many works that I have read, Toshihiko Izutsu's study stands as a solid introduction to the writings of Ibn Arabi, whose theosophy, 800 years after their composition, still offers astounding insights into the visionary world. Likewise, his introduction to Chuang-tzu and Lao-tzu represents a solid introduction to philosophical Taoism. Toshihiko Izutsu was uniquely qualified for the writings he did on Asian religions and classical Islamic mysticism. Raised as a child in a Zen household, Izutsu was trained in the contemplative arts of meditation which form the basis of experience to understand the subtle nuances in the language of unity. It is true that scholarly conventions have moved on. There are now more substantial studies of Taoism and the Sufism of Ibn Arabi, but Toshihiko Izutsu's writings have a timeless depth and subtlety of insight often lacking in those more recent works. The comparison between these two mystical systems that are not known for their interaction or historical connection helps to bring out the timeless qualities of a universal mysticism. It is true that such an idea of a meta-historical religiosity remains controversial. Toshihiko Izutsu is a consummate representative of such noble efforts and should not be overlooked.

In this deeply learned work, Toshihiko Izutsu compares the metaphysical and mystical thought-systems of Sufism and Taoism and discovers that, although historically unrelated, the two share features and patterns which prove fruitful for a transhistorical dialogue. His original and suggestive approach opens new doors in the study of comparative philosophy and mysticism. Izutsu begins with Ibn 'Arabi, analyzing and isolating the major ontological concepts of this most challenging of Islamic thinkers. Then, in the second part of the book, Izutsu turns his attention to an analysis of parallel concepts of two great Taoist thinkers, Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu. Only after laying bare the fundamental structure of each world view does Izutsu embark, in the final section of the book, upon a comparative analysis. Only thus, he argues, can he be sure to avoid easy and superficial comparisons. Izutsu maintains that both the Sufi and Taoist world views are based on two pivots: the Absolute Man and the Perfect Man, with a whole system of ontological thought being developed between these two pivots. Izutsu discusses similarities in these ontological systems and advances the hypothesis that certain patterns of mystical and metaphysical thought may be shared even by systems with no apparent historical connection. This second edition of *Sufism and Taoism* is the first published in the United States. The original edition, published in English and in Japan, was prized by the few English-speaking scholars who knew of it as a model in the field of comparative philosophy. Making available in English much new material on both sides of its comparison, *Sufism and Taoism* richly fulfills Izutsu's motivating desire "to open a new vista in the domain of comparative philosophy."

From the Inside Flap "Professor Izutsu's work is a pioneering attempt to bring into focus the shareable philosophical concerns of two seemingly unrelated landmarks into religious thought. His method is suggestive, interpretation new and bold, and material used important for further research. His book is useful to students of comparative religion, philosophy of religion, cultural anthropology, Asian thought and religion, and Islamic and Taoist studies." *Tu Weiming* "[This book] carries out a comparison in depth between Islamic and Chinese thought for the first time in modern scholarship. . . . Since this book appeared it has influenced every work on Ibn 'Arabi and metaphysical Sufism...[and] any cursory study of Sufism during the last fifteen years will reveal the extent of Izutsu's influence." Seyyed Hossein Nasr