



## The Huainanzi: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Government in Early Han China (Translations from the Asian Classics)

From Columbia University Press

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Compiled by scholars at the court of Liu An, king of Huainan, in the second century B.C.E, *The Huainanzi* is a tightly organized, sophisticated articulation of Western Han philosophy and statecraft. Outlining "all that a modern monarch needs to know," the text emphasizes rigorous self-cultivation and mental discipline, brilliantly synthesizing for readers past and present the full spectrum of early Chinese thought.

*The Huainanzi* locates the key to successful rule in a balance of broad knowledge, diligent application, and the penetrating wisdom of a sage. It is a unique and creative synthesis of Daoist classics, such as the *Laozi* and the *Zhuangzi*; works associated with the Confucian tradition, such as the *Changes*, the *Odes*, and the *Documents*; and a wide range of other foundational philosophical and literary texts from the *Mozzi* to the *Hanfeizi*.

The product of twelve years of scholarship, this remarkable translation preserves *The Huainanzi's* special rhetorical features, such as parallel prose and verse, and showcases a compositional technique that conveys the work's powerful philosophical appeal. This path-breaking volume will have a transformative impact on the field of early Chinese intellectual history and will be of great interest to scholars and students alike.

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## **Editorial Review**

Review

An excellent and richly annotated translation.

(Moss Roberts *Journal of the American Oriental Society*)

Users of this magnificent contribution to the study of Chinese thought will find here almost everything imaginable.

(Russell Kirkland *Religious Studies Review*)

It is a major accomplishment in every sense of the term.

(Mark Csikszentmihalyi *Journal of Chinese Studies*)

In sum, this volume bringing to annotated translation all 21 chapters of the Huainanzi will invaluablely ease and enhance the work of future scholars.

(Benjamin E. Wallacker *Journal of Asian History*)

[An] epochal achievement.... The *Huainanzi* vibrates with the authors' intellectual confidence.... this translation of the *Huainanzi* is a convenient and reassuring shortcut into the heart of traditional China.

(Barbara Hendrischke *Monumenta Serica*)

This English version earns for the Huainanzi the widespread recognition as an epochal classic that it deserves, and at the same time provides a resource for specialists. The translations are carefully thought out but evocative.

(*China Review International*)

Review

Long dismissed as a 'syncretic' or 'miscellaneous' encyclopedia of little intellectual interest, the unjustly neglected *Huainanzi*, composed under the auspices of Liu An, prince of Huainan, has now been translated into English by a dedicated team of experts. The work's 'root' and 'branch' structure; its comprehensive vision that integrates man, Heaven, and Earth; its foundations in Daoist cosmology and the ineffable dao (Way); and its rich poetic language and philosophical innovation have all been brilliantly captured. An extraordinary achievement and a major contribution to the history of early Chinese thought, this book was read with great pleasure and often surprise. I recommend it with the utmost enthusiasm.

(Robin D. S. Yates, author of *Five Lost Classics: Tao, Huang-lao, and Yin-yang in Han China*)

#### About the Author

John S. Major, formerly professor of history at Dartmouth College, is an independent scholar and writer. He is the author of *Heaven and Earth in Early Han Thought: Chapters Three, Four, and Five of the Huainanzi* and the author, coauthor, or editor of almost thirty other books, including *Defining Chu: Image and Reality in Ancient China*.

Sarah A. Queen, professor of history at Connecticut College, is the author of *From Chronicle to Canon: The Hermeneutics of the Spring and Autumn, According to Tung Chung-shu*. Her current work includes a translation and study of the *Luxuriant Gems of the Spring and Autumn* (with John S. Major) and an edited volume, *Liu An's Vision of Empire: New Perspectives on the Huainanzi* (with Michael Puett).

Andrew Seth Meyer, assistant professor of history at Brooklyn College, is the author of several articles, including "The *Sunzi bingfa* as History and Theory." His current projects are *To Rule All Under Heaven*, a history of the Warring States period (481-221 B.C.E.), and a translation of the *Wenzi* (with Harold D. Roth).

Harold D. Roth, professor of religious studies and East Asian studies at Brown University, is the author or editor of four books and more than forty scholarly articles. His books include *The Textual History of the Huai-nan tzu* and *Original Tao: Inward Training and the Foundations of Taoist Mysticism*.

Michael Puett, professor of Chinese history at Harvard University, is the author, most recently, of *Ritual and Its Consequences: An Essay on the Limits of Sincerity*.

Judson Murray, assistant professor of religion at Wright State University, is the author of "A Study of 'Yaolue,' 'A Summary of the Essentials': Understanding the Huainanzi Through the Point of View of the Author of the Postface."

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