You may not think you need to brush up on Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching to manage in China, but this book reminds us that the much-read Tao (meaning "the road" or "the way") has a lot to say about ancient power relationships as they are understood in modern China. Everyone knows the Chinese market is huge, but not everyone can get a toehold there. Using the Tao as a metaphor for the idea of opposites working together, this book takes a practical and strategic approach to managing effectively in China. Even today, the authors write in Part 1, the Tao's lessons reverberate: "The importance of individuals and ideas derives from functional uses, and not from subjective evaluations of personal worth."

Part 2 describes the roots of Chinese strategies in terms of economics, ethics, history, law, and social networks. Part 3 offers a comparison of Eastern and Western strategic planning, while Part 4 advises on how to unify your model of strategic planning to bring in the most useful of Eastern and Western ideas. Lao Tzu surely would have appreciated the modern businessperson's goals when he wrote, "Lay plans for the accomplishment of the difficult before it becomes difficult; make something big by starting it when small."

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