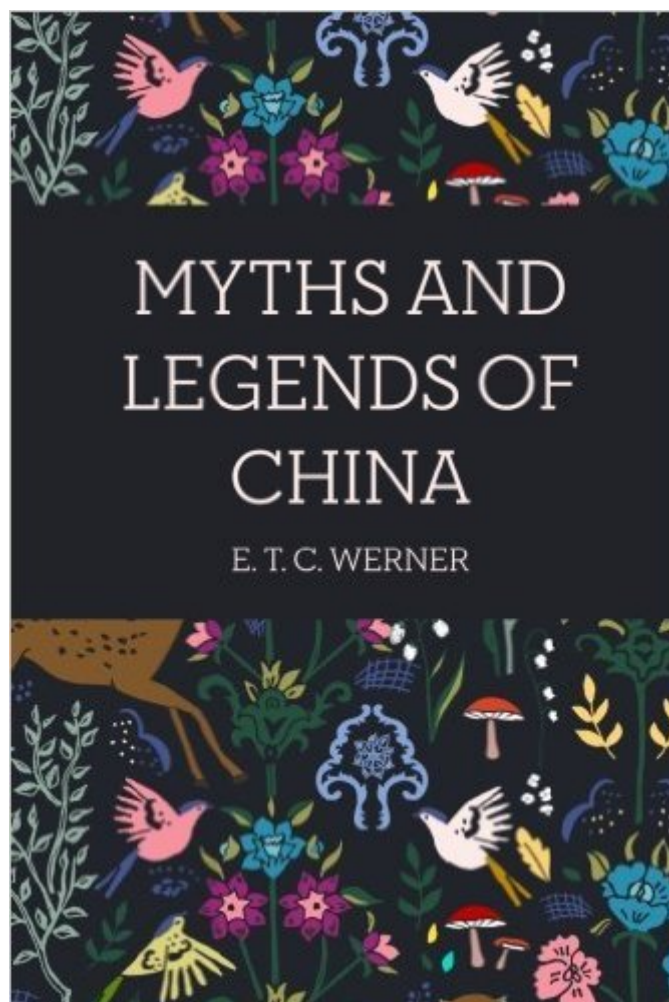


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Myths And Legends Of China



Synopsis

Edward Theodore Chalmers Werner (1864–1954) was a noted British diplomat in Qing Dynasty China and sinologist specialising in superstition, myths and magic in China.

Book Information

Paperback: 212 pages

Publisher: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform (May 12, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1533221812

ISBN-13: 978-1533221810

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.5 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 13.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.1 out of 5 stars – See all reviews (18 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,468,885 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #103 in Books > Literature & Fiction > History & Criticism > Genres & Styles > Fairy Tales, Folk Tales, Legends & Mythology

Customer Reviews

The good thing about this text is the sheer number of mythological stories and folktales which have been translated. Many of the stories are rarely translated and they include a great deal of traditional Chinese folk religion, Taoist, and Confucianist stories. The immortals, and many rare Taoist tales, are represented here--which is remarkable and useful for well-versed scholars of Chinese mythology and Taoism. The (very) bad thing about this text is that most of the volume is taken up by the author's unbridled, negative personal commentary on Chinese religion, beliefs, and culture. I know, it sounds strange, especially since he chose to translate and publish a text on Chinese culture, but nevertheless, I am not the only student of Chinese culture and history who has noticed this about "Myths and Legends of China." I found myself reacting with surprise to many of E.T.C. Werner's snide, offhanded, completely ungrounded observations--many of which are rooted in nothing more than his attempt to discredit Chinese customs and religious beliefs. Even understanding the era in which the book was written, I had to keep swallowing salt to press through the introduction. I teach courses on Chinese Taoism and Chinese Mythology and I always warn my students to take the entire book gently and to let some of the commentary bounce off. Just ignore the commentary and try to press on. It does lead me to wonder how many of the stories have been altered to fit Werner's views... not unlike Bulfinch's "abridgment" of some of the Greek and Roman myths which contained concepts like homosexuality, that he disliked.

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