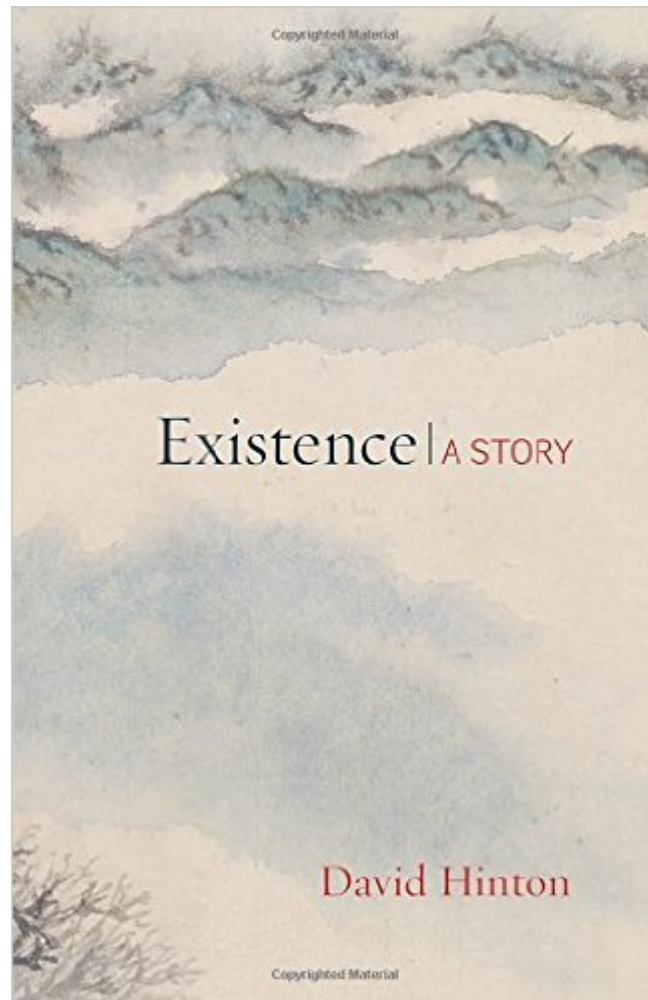


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Existence: A Story



Synopsis

The meaning of life--as expressed in a single Chinese landscape painting: a new work of meditative philosophy by the renowned translator of the Chinese classics and author of *Hunger Mountain*. Join David Hinton on an exploration of the entire nature of reality--an ambitious project for such a compact book, and even more amazing when you see that this cosmic journey happens all within the exploration of a single Chinese landscape painting. The painting called *Peaceful-Distance Pavilion* by Shih-t'ao (1642-1707) is, like other paintings in that genre, mostly space: one tiny figure, accompanied by an attendant, looks out over a vast landscape of mountains and clouds. But start looking into that space and, with the right guidance, what you end up seeing is profound. David Hinton is the perfect guide. He uses his knowledge of Chinese philosophy, poetry, art, language, and writing system to illuminate this painting's message, which is ultimately the story of the glorious dance between nothing and everything, between emptiness and existence. It's an enthralling journey that can change the way you look at the world, a journey for which David is a wise and eloquent guide.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

David Hinton's *Existence: A Story* • a followup to *Hunger Mountain* • continues his exploration of Chinese philosophy via painting, calligraphy, poetry, Taoism, and Chan Buddhism. A tall order, and one he pulls off with finesse. Using an ethereal landscape painting by Shih-t'ao (1642-1707), Hinton manages to travel through the inner workings of the artist's mind and explicate why such artwork provides us an opportunity for awakening in the most profound

sense of the word. Any fan of *Hunger Mountain* will enjoy picking up the author's trek through some of the most profound ideas coursing through the human experience. But what makes *Existence* even more interesting is the sheer exuberance shining through in the new work. There seems to be no question that Hinton has hit his stride, each book pushing the envelope a bit further, probing into the underbelly of what Lao Tzu and the old Chinese masters have been trying to tell us for centuries. And thanks to Hinton, it's possible that the *dark enigma* will now seem a little less shadowy. Good stuff!

This is like reading Zhuangzi in bed with a cold, crisp scotch and soda—effervescent and intoxicating—the fizzy quality of emptiness, its possibilities; all those little moments that make you dance. It seems cosmic when emptiness embraces broad landscapes, and at the same time personal, as a puff of air bounces elemental particles against your face—I do enjoy a breeze. David Hinton is a delight to read, and *Shitao* may be his best and most suitable project. I will bow respectfully toward his whereabouts in the morning, but for now, another page, another sip of emptiness.

very well written...I didn't understand much of it...above my pay grade...

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