

Beck version

- 1.1 The Way that can be described is not the absolute Way; the name that can be given is not the absolute name.
- 1.2 Nameless it is the source of heaven and earth; named it is the mother of all things.
- 1.3 Whoever is desireless, sees the essence of life. Whoever desires, sees its manifestations.
- 1.4 These two are the same, but what is produced has names.
- 1.5 They both may be called the cosmic mystery: from the cosmic to the mystical is the door to the essence of all life.

- 2.1 When the people of the world all know beauty as beauty, there arises the recognition of ugliness.
- 2.2 When they all know the good as good, there arises the recognition of bad.
- 2.3 Therefore being and non-being produce each other; difficult and easy complete each other; long and short contrast each other;
- 2.4 high and low distinguish each other; sound and voice harmonize with each other; beginning and end follow each other.
- 2.5 Therefore the wise manage affairs without interfering and teach beyond the words.
- 2.6 All things rise, and they do not turn away from them. They give them life, but do not take possession of them. They act, but do not rely on their own ability.
- 2.7 They accomplish, but claim no credit. Because they claim no credit, their accomplishment remains with them.

- 3.1 Do not exalt the worthy, so that people will not compete.
- 3.2 Do not value rare treasure, so that people will not steal.
- 3.3 Do not display objects of desire, so that people's hearts will not be disturbed.
- 3.4 Therefore the wise lead by keeping their hearts pure, their bellies full, their ambitions weak, and their bones strong,
- 3.5 so that the people may be purified of their thoughts and desires; and the cunning ones will not interfere.
- 3.6 By acting without interfering, all may live in peace.

- 4.1 The Way is infinite; its use is never exhausted.
- 4.2 It is bottomless, like the fountainhead of all things.
- 4.3 It smoothes its roughness; it unties its tangles. It softens its light; it calms its turmoil.
- 4.4 Deep and still, ever present.
- 4.5 I do not know its source. It seems to have existed before the Lord.

- 5.1 Nature is not humane. It treats all things like sacrificial objects.
- 5.2 The wise are not humane. They regard people like sacrificial objects.
- 5.3 How the universe is like a bellows! While empty, it is never exhausted. The more it is worked, the more it produces.
- 5.4 Much talk brings exhaustion. It is better to keep to the center.

- 6.1 The spirit of the valley never dies. It is called the mystical female.
- 6.2 The door of the mystical female is the root of heaven and earth.
- 6.3 It seems to be continuously within us. Use it, and it will never fail.

- 7.1 Heaven is eternal, and the earth is very old.
- 7.2 They can be eternal and long lasting, because they do not exist for themselves, and for this reason can long endure.
- 7.3 Therefore the wise put themselves last, but find themselves foremost.
- 7.4 They are indifferent to themselves, and yet they always remain.
- 7.5 Is it not because they do not live for themselves that they find themselves fulfilled?

- 8.1 The best are like water. Water benefits all things and does not compete with them. It flows to the lowest level. In this it comes near to the Way.
- 8.2 In their dwellings, they love the earth. In their hearts, they love what is profound. In their friendship, they love humanity. In their words, they love sincerity.
- 8.3 In government, they love peace. In business, they love ability. In their actions, they love timeliness.
- 8.4 It is because they do not compete that there is no resentment.

- 9.1 Stretch a bow to the very full, and you will wish you had stopped in time.
- 9.2 Temper a sword-edge to its very sharpest, and the edge will not last long.
- 9.3 When gold and jade fill your hall, you will not be able to keep them safe.
- 9.4 To be proud with honor and wealth is to cause one's own downfall.

9.5 Withdraw as soon as your work is done. Such is heaven's way.

10.1 Can you embrace the One with your soul, and never depart from the Way?

10.2 Can you concentrate your vital force to achieve the gentleness of a new-born baby?

10.3 Can you cleanse and purify your mystic vision until it is clear?

10.4 Can you love the people and govern the state without interfering?

10.5 Can you play the role of the female in opening and closing the doors of heaven?

10.6 Can you understand all and penetrate all without using the mind?

10.7 To give birth and to nourish, to give birth without taking possession, to act without obligation, to lead without dominating - this is mystical power.

11.1 Thirty spokes are united around the hub of a wheel, but the usefulness of the wheel depends on the space where nothing exists.

11.2 Clay is molded into a vessel, but the usefulness of the vessel depends on the space where nothing exists.

11.3 Doors and windows are cut out of the walls of a house, and the usefulness of the house depends on the space where nothing exists.

11.4 Therefore take advantage of what exists, and use what does not exist.

12.1 The five colors blind the eyes; the five musical tones deafen the ears; the five flavors dull the taste.

12.2 Racing and hunting madden the mind. Precious goods keep their owners on guard.

12.3 Therefore the wise satisfy the inner self rather than external senses. They accept the one and reject the other.

13.1 Good fortune and misfortune cause apprehension. Regard great trouble as you regard your self.

13.2 What is meant by "Good fortune and misfortune cause apprehension?" Those with good fortune are apprehensive of their gain. Those with misfortune are apprehensive of their loss.

13.3 What is meant by "Regard great trouble as you regard your self?" Great trouble comes from being selfish. Being selfless, what trouble is there?

13.4 Therefore those who value the world as themselves may be entrusted to govern the world. Those who love the world as themselves may be entrusted to care for the world.

14.1 We look at it, and do not see it; it is invisible. We listen to it, and do not hear it; it is inaudible. We touch it, and do not feel it; it is intangible.

14.2 These three elude our inquiries, and hence merge into one.

14.3 Not by its rising, is it bright, nor by its sinking, is it dark. Infinite and eternal, it cannot be defined. It returns to nothingness.

14.4 This is the form of the formless, being in non-being. It is nebulous and elusive. Meet it, and you do not see its beginning.

Follow it, and you do not see its end.

14.5 Stay with the ancient Way in order to master what is present. Knowing the primeval beginning is the essence of the Way.

15.1 The wise have ancient mystic wisdom and profound understanding, too deep to comprehend.

15.2 Because they can not be comprehended, they can only be described by analogy: cautious, like crossing a stream in winter; alert, like one aware of danger on all sides; courteous, like a visiting guest;

15.3 self-effacing, like ice beginning to melt; genuine, like a piece of uncarved wood; open and receptive, like a valley; freely mixing, like muddy water.

15.4 Who can make sense of a muddy world? Let it be still, and it becomes clear. Who can remain calm, and through activity come back to life?

15.5 Those who embrace this Way do not over-extend themselves. Because they do not over-extend themselves, they do not wear out and are not replaced.

16.1 Empty yourself of everything. Maintain a steady serenity.

16.2 All things take shape and become active, but I see them return to their source, like vegetation that grows and flourishes, but returns to the root from which it springs.

16.3 Returning to the source is serenity; it is to realize one's destiny. To realize one's destiny is to know the eternal. To know the eternal is to be enlightened. Not to know the eternal is to act blindly and court disaster.

16.4 Whoever knows the eternal is open to everything. Whoever is open to everything is impartial. To be impartial is to be universal. To be universal is to be in accord with heaven. To be in accord with heaven is to be in accord with the Way.

16.5 To be in accord with the Way is to be eternal and to live free from harm even though the body dies.

17.1 The best leaders the people barely know. The next best they love and praise. The next they fear. And the next they hate.
17.2 Those who lack trust will not be trusted. Then they resort to promises.
17.3 But when they accomplish their task and complete their work, the people say, "We did it ourselves."

18.1 When the great Way is forgotten, the doctrines of humanity and morality arise.
18.2 When knowledge and cleverness appear, there emerges great hypocrisy.
18.3 When family relationships are not in harmony, filial piety and parental love are advocated.
18.4 When a country falls into chaos and disorder, there is praise of loyal patriots.

19.1 Abandon religion and discard cleverness, and people will benefit a hundredfold.
19.2 Abandon humanity and discard morality, and people will rediscover love and duty.
19.3 Abandon skill and discard profit, and there will be no thieves or robbers.
19.4 These three things relate to externals and are inadequate.
19.5 People need what they can depend on: reveal simplicity; embrace the natural; control selfishness; reduce desires.

20.1 Abandon memorizing, and vexations end. How much difference is there between yes and no? How much difference is there between good and evil?
20.2 Is what people fear really to be feared? How very remote the actual occurrence!
20.3 The people of the world make merry as though at a holiday feast or a spring carnival. I alone am inactive and desireless, like a new-born baby who cannot yet smile, unattached, as though homeless.
20.4 The people of the world possess more than enough. I alone seem to have lost all. I must be a fool, so indiscriminate and nebulous.
20.5 Most people seem knowledgeable and bright. I alone am simple and dull. Most people see differences and are sharp. I alone make no distinctions, seeming aimless, drifting as the sea, like the wind blowing about, seemingly without destination.
20.6 People of the world all have a purpose. I alone seem impractical and out of place. I am different from others, and value drawing sustenance from the Mother.

21.1 All-embracing power proceeds only through the Way.
21.2 What is called the Way is elusive and intangible. Intangible and elusive, yet within it are thought-images. Elusive and intangible, yet within it are objects. Deep and obscure, yet within it is the life-force. The life-force is very real, and within it is certainty.
21.3 From the ancient times till now its manifestations have never ceased, by which we may see the beginning of all things.
21.4 How do I know that the beginnings of all things are so? Through this certainty.

22.1 To yield is to preserve unity. To bend is to become straight. To empty oneself is to become full. To wear oneself out is to be renewed. To have little is to be content. To have abundance is to be troubled.
22.2 Therefore the wise embrace the One and become examples for the world.
22.3 They do not display themselves and are therefore illumined. They do not justify themselves and are distinguished. They do not make claims and are therefore given credit. They do not seek glory and therefore are leaders.
22.4 Because they do not compete, the world cannot compete with them.
22.5 Is not the ancient saying true, "To yield is to preserve unity?" for true wholeness comes from turning within.

23.1 Nature says few words. A whirlwind does not last all morning, nor does a rainstorm last a whole day.
23.2 What causes them? Nature. If even Nature's utterances do not last long, how much less should human beings'?
23.3 Those who follow the Way are one with the Way. Those who follow power are one with power. Those who abandon it are one with abandonment.
23.4 Those one with the Way are welcomed by the Way. Those one with power are welcomed by power. Those one with abandonment are welcomed by abandonment.
23.5 Those who lack trust will not be trusted.

24.1 Those who stand on tiptoe are not steady. Those who strain their strides cannot long keep up the pace.
24.2 Those who display themselves do not illuminate. Those who justify themselves are not distinguished.
24.3 Those who make claims are not given credit. Those who seek glory are not leaders.
24.4 According to the Way these are like extra food and waste, which all creatures detest. Therefore followers of the Way avoid them.

25.1 There is something mysterious and whole which existed before heaven and earth, silent, formless, complete, and never changing. Living eternally everywhere in perfection, it is the mother of all things.
25.2 I do not know its name; I call it the Way. If forced to define it, I shall call it supreme.
25.3 Supreme means absolute. Absolute means extending everywhere. Extending everywhere means returning to itself.
25.4 Thus the Way is supreme. Heaven is supreme. Earth is supreme. And the person is supreme. There are four supremes in the universe, and the person is one of them.
25.5 The person reflects the earth. The earth reflects heaven. Heaven reflects the Way. And the Way reflects its own nature.

26.1 Gravity is the foundation of levity. Serenity masters hastiness.
26.2 Therefore the wise travel all day without leaving their baggage. In the midst of honor and glory they remain leisurely and calm.
26.3 How can a leader of a great country behave light-heartedly and frivolously?
26.4 In frivolity, the foundation is lost. In hasty action, self-mastery is lost.

27.1 A good traveler leaves no trace. A good speaker makes no slips. A good accountant uses no devices.
27.2 A good door needs no bolts to remain shut. A good fastener needs no rope to hold its bond.
27.3 Therefore the wise are good at helping people, and consequently no one is rejected. They are good at saving things, and consequently nothing is wasted. This is called using the Light.
27.4 Therefore the good teach the bad, and the bad are lessons for the good.
27.5 Those who neither value the teacher nor care for the lesson are greatly deluded, though they may be learned. Such is the essential mystery.

28.1 Know the male and keep to the female. Become the valley of the world. Being the valley of the world is eternal power and returning to the innocence of a baby.
28.2 Know the bright and keep to the obscure. Become an example for the world. Being an example for the world is eternal power and returning to the infinite.
28.3 Know glory and keep to humility. Become the valley of the world. Being the valley of the world is eternal power and returning to the natural.
28.4 Breaking up the natural makes instruments. The wise use them and become leaders. Therefore a leader does not break.

29.1 Those who take over the world and act upon it, I notice, do not succeed.
29.2 The world is a sacred vessel, not to be tampered with. Those who tamper with it, spoil it. Those who seize it, lose it.
29.3 Some lead, and some follow. Some blow hot, and some blow cold. Some are strong, and some are weak. Some are up, and some are down.
29.4 Therefore the wise avoid excess, extravagance, and pride.

30.1 Whoever advises a leader according to the Way opposes conquest by force of arms. The use of force tends to rebound.
30.2 Where armies march, thorns and brambles grow. Whenever a great army is formed, scarcity and famine follow.
30.3 The skillful achieve their purposes and stop. They dare not rely on force.
30.4 They achieve their purposes, but do not glory in them. They achieve their purposes, but do not celebrate them. They achieve their purposes, but do not take pride in them. They achieve their purposes, but without violence.
30.5 Things reach their prime and then decline. Violence is contrary to the Way. Whatever is contrary to the Way will soon perish.

31.1 Weapons are tools of destruction hated by people. Therefore followers of the Way never use them.
31.2 In peace leaders favor the creative left. In war they favor the destructive right.
31.3
31.4 Weapons are tools of destruction, not used by good leaders. When their use cannot be avoided, the best policy is calm restraint.
31.5 Even in victory there is no glory. Those who celebrate victory delight in slaughter. Those who delight in slaughter will not be successful leaders.
31.6 The killing of many should be mourned with sorrow. A victory should be celebrated with funeral ceremonies.

32.1 The Way is absolute and undefined. Like natural uncarved wood in simplicity, yet none in the world can overcome it.
32.2 If leaders would hold to it, the whole world would serve them spontaneously.
32.3 Heaven and earth join, and gentle rain falls, beyond the command of anyone, evenly upon all.

32.4 When civilization arose, names began. With names, one should know when to stop. Knowing when to stop, frees one from danger.

32.5 The Way in the world is like rivers and streams flowing into the sea.

33.1 Those who know others are wise. Those who know themselves are enlightened.

33.2 Those who overcome others require force. Those who overcome themselves need strength.

33.3 Those who are content are wealthy. Those who persevere have will power.

33.4 Those who do not lose their center endure. Those who die but maintain their power live eternally.

34.1 The great Way flows everywhere, both left and right.

34.2 All things derive their life from it, and it does not turn away from them. It accomplishes its work, but does not take possession. It provides for and nourishes everything, but does not control them.

34.3 Always without desires, it may be considered small.

34.4 The destination of all things, yet claiming nothing, it may be considered great.

34.5 Because it never claims greatness, its greatness is achieved.

35.1 Hold to the great form, and all the world follows, following without meeting harm, in health, peace, and happiness.

35.2 Music and delicacies to eat induce travelers to stay.

35.3 But the Way is mild to the taste. Looked at, it is invisible. Listened to, it is inaudible. Applied, it is inexhaustible.

36.1 In order to contract, it is necessary first to expand. In order to weaken, it is necessary first to strengthen. In order to reduce, it is necessary first to build up. In order to receive, it is necessary first to give.

36.2 This is called the mystic Light. The soft and gentle overcome the hard and strong.

36.3 As fish stay in the deep water, so sharp weapons of the state should not be displayed.

37.1 The Way never interferes, yet through it everything is done.

37.2 If leaders would follow the Way, the world would be reformed of its own accord. When reformed and desiring to act, let them be restrained by what is simply natural. Undefined simplicity is free of desires.

37.3 Being free of desires, it is serene; and the world finds peace of its own accord.

38.1 Superior power does not emphasize its power, and thus is powerful. Inferior power never forgets its power, and thus is powerless.

38.2 Superior power never interferes nor has an ulterior motive. Inferior power interferes and has an ulterior motive.

38.3 Superior humanity takes action but has no ulterior motive. Superior morality takes action and has an ulterior motive.

Superior custom takes action, and finding no response, stretches out arms to force it on them.

38.4 Therefore when the Way is lost, power arises. When power is lost, humanity arises. When humanity is lost, morality arises. When morality is lost, custom arises. Now custom is a superficial expression of loyalty and faithfulness, and the beginning of disorder.

38.5 Foreknowledge is the flowering of the Way and the beginning of folly.

38.6 Therefore the mature dwell in the depth, not in the thin, in the fruit and not in the flowering. They reject one and accept the other.

39.1 The ancients attained oneness. Heaven attained oneness and became clear. Earth attained oneness and became stable. Spirits attained oneness and became divine.

39.2 The valleys attained oneness and became fertile. Creatures attained oneness and lived and grew. Kings and nobles attained oneness and became leaders. What made them so is oneness.

39.3 Without clarity, heaven would crack. Without stability, the earth would quake. Without divinity, spirits would dissipate.

39.4 Without fertility, the valleys would be barren. Without life and growth, creatures would die off. Without leadership, kings and nobles would fall.

39.5 Therefore humility is the basis for nobility, and the low is the basis for the high.

39.6 Thus kings and nobles call themselves orphans, lonely, and unworthy. Do they not depend upon the common people for support?

39.7 Dismantle the parts of a chariot, and there is no chariot.

39.8 Rather than tinkle like jade, rumble like rocks.

40.1 Returning is the movement of the Way. Gentleness is the method of the Way.

40.2 All things in the world come from being, and being comes from non-being.

41.1 When the wise hear the Way, they practice it diligently. When the mediocre hear of the Way, they doubt it.
41.2 When the foolish hear of the Way, they laugh out loud. If it were not laughed at, it would not be the Way.
41.3 Therefore it is said, "The enlightenment of the Way seems like dullness; progression in the Way seem like regression; the even path of the Way seems to go up and down."
41.4 Great power appears like a valley. Great purity appears tarnished. Great character appears insufficient. Solid character appears weak. True integrity appears changeable. Great space has no corners. Great ability takes time to mature. Great music has the subtlest sound. Great form has no shape.
41.5 The Way is hidden and indescribable. Yet the Way alone is adept at providing for all and bringing fulfillment.

42.1 The Way produced the One; the One produced two; two produced three; and three produced all things.
42.2 All things have the receptivity of the female and the activity of the male. Through union with the life force they blend in harmony.
42.3 People hate being orphaned, lonely, and unworthy. Yet kings and nobles call themselves such.
42.4 Often gain can be a loss, and loss can be a gain.
42.5 What others teach, I teach also: "The violent die a violent death." I shall make this primary in my teaching.

43.1 The softest things in the world overcome the hardest. Non-being penetrates even where there is no space. Through this I know the value of non-action.
43.2 Teaching without words and the value of non-action are understood by few in the world.

44.1 Fame or your life, which do you love more? Life or material wealth, which is more valuable? Loss or gain, which is worse?
44.2 Therefore those who desire most spend most. Those who hoard most lose most.
44.3 Those who are contented are not disappointed. Those who know when to stop prevent danger. Thus they can long endure.

45.1 The greatest perfection seems incomplete, but its utility is never impaired. The greatest fullness seems empty, but its use cannot be exhausted. What is most direct seems devious.
45.2 The greatest skill seems awkward. The greatest eloquence seems like stuttering.
45.3 Movement overcomes cold. Stillness overcomes heat. The serene and calm are guides for all.

46.1 When the world lives in accord with the Way, horses work on farms. When the world does not live in accord with the Way, the cavalry practices in the parks.
46.2 The greatest temptation to crime is desire. The greatest curse is discontent. The greatest calamity is greed.
46.3 Whoever is content with contentment is always content.

47.1 One can know the world without going outside. One can see the Way of heaven without looking out the window. The further one goes the less one knows.
47.2 Therefore the wise know without going about, understand without seeing, and accomplish without acting.

48.1 The pursuit of learning is to increase day by day. The practice of the Way is to decrease day by day. Less and less is done until one reaches non-action.
48.2 When nothing is done, nothing is left undone. The world is led by not interfering.
48.3 Those who interfere cannot lead the world.

49.1 The wise have no mind-set. They regard the people's minds as their own.
49.2 They are good to people who are good. They are also good to people who are not good. This is the power of goodness.
49.3 They are honest to those who are honest. They are also honest to those who are dishonest. This is the power of honesty.
49.4 The wise live in the world peacefully and harmoniously. The people share a common heart, and the wise treat them as their own children.

50.1 Coming into life and going out at death,
50.2 the organs of life are thirteen; the organs of death are thirteen; and these thirteen make life vulnerable to death. Why is this so? Because they feed life too grossly.
50.3 It is said that those who preserve life walk the earth without fearing tigers and wild buffalo, and in battle they are not touched by weapons of war.
50.4 The wild buffalo's horns find nothing to gore; the tiger's claws find nothing to tear; and weapons' points find nothing to pierce. Why is this so? Because they have nothing for death to enter.

51.1 The Way produces all things. Power nourishes them. Matter gives them physical form. Environment shapes their abilities. Therefore all things respect the Way and honor power.

51.2 The Way is respected, and power is honored without anyone's order and always naturally. Therefore the Way produces all things, and power nourishes them, caring for them and developing them, sheltering them and comforting them, nurturing them and protecting them,

51.3 producing them but not possessing them, helping them but not obligating them, guiding them but not controlling them. This is mystical power.

52.1 The beginning of the universe is the mother of all things. Those who discover the mother understand the children.

52.2 Understanding the children and returning to the mother, they live always free from harm.

52.3 Close the mouth, shut the doors, and all of life is without strain.

52.4 Open the mouth, meddle with affairs, and all of life is beyond help.

52.5 Seeing the small is insight; to stay with the gentle is strength.

52.6 Use the Light, return to insight, and thereby be preserved from harm. This is practicing the eternal.

53.1 Those with even a scrap of sense walk on the main way and fear only straying from the path.

53.2 The main way is smooth and easy, but people like to be side-tracked.

53.3 While the courts are arrayed in splendor, the fields are full of weeds, and the granaries are empty.

53.4 Yet some wear embroidered clothes, carry sharp swords, over-indulge themselves with food and drink, and have more possessions than they can use. They are leaders in robbery. This is not the Way.

54.1 What is well established cannot be uprooted. What is firmly held cannot slip away. The power of sacrifice continues on from generation to generation.

54.2 Cultivated in the person, power becomes real. Cultivated in the family, power becomes abundant. Cultivated in the community, power endures. Cultivated in the nation, power flourishes. Cultivated in the world, power becomes universal.

54.3 Therefore see the person as a person, the family as a family, the community as a community, the nation as a nation, and the world as universal.

54.4 How do I know that the world is like this? By this.

55.1 Those filled with power are like new-born children. Poisonous insects will not sting them; ferocious beasts will not pounce upon them; predatory birds will not swoop down on them. Their bones are pliable, their muscles tender, but their grip is firm.

55.2 They have never known the union of man and woman, but the organ is fully formed, meaning that the vital essence is strong.

55.3 They may cry all day without getting hoarse, meaning that the harmony is perfect. To know harmony is to be in accord with the eternal. To know the eternal is to be enlightened.

55.4 To try to force life is ominous. To force the vital essence with the mind is violence.

55.5 The prime is past, and decay follows, meaning that it is contrary to the Way. Whatever is contrary to the Way will soon perish.

56.1 Those who know do not speak. Those who speak do not know.

56.2 Close the mouth; shut the doors. Smooth the sharpness; untie the tangles. Dim the glare; calm the turmoil. This is mystical unity.

56.3 Those achieving it are detached from friends and enemies, from benefit and harm, from honor and disgrace. Therefore they are the most valuable people in the world.

57.1 States are governed by justice. Wars are waged by violations. The world is mastered by nonintervention. How do I know this? By this:

57.2 The more restrictions there are, the poorer the people. The more sharp weapons, the more trouble in the state.

57.3 The more clever cunning, the more contrivances. The more rules and regulations, the more thieves and robbers.

57.4 Therefore the wise say, "Do not interfere, and people transform themselves. Love peace, and people do what is right.

57.5 Do not intervene, and people prosper. Have no desires, and people live simply."

58.1 When the government is relaxed, people are happy. When the government is strict, people are anxious.

58.2 Good fortune leans on bad fortune; bad fortune hides behind good fortune.

58.3 Who knows the results of process? Is there no justice? When the just become unjust, goodness becomes evil. People have been deluded for a long time.

58.4 Therefore the wise are square but not cornered, sharp but not cutting, straight but not strained, brilliant but not dazzling.

59.1 In leading people and serving heaven it is best to be frugal.

59.2 Being frugal is to be prepared from the start. Being prepared from the start is to build up power. By building up power nothing is impossible. If nothing is impossible, then there are no limits. Those without limits are capable of leading a country.

59.3 Those with maternal leadership can long endure.

59.4 This is to be deeply rooted in a firm foundation, the way of long life and eternal vision.

60.1 Leading a large country is like cooking a small fish.

60.2 When the world is led in accord with the Way, spirits lose their powers.

60.3 It is not that they lose their powers, but that their powers no longer harm people. Not only do the spirits not harm people, but the wise also do not harm people.

60.4 Not harming each other, spiritual power grows.

61.1 A large country is like low land where rivers flow, a place where everything comes together, the female of all. The female overcomes the male with tranquillity. Tranquillity is underneath.

61.2 A large country wins over a small country by placing itself below the small country. A small country wins over a large country by placing itself below the large country.

61.3 Thus some win by placing themselves below, and others win by being below.

61.4 A large country wants to protect people, and a small country wants to join and serve.

61.5 Thus both get what they want. It is best for the large country to place itself below.

62.1 The Way is sacred to all things. It is treasure for the good and sanctuary for the bad.

62.2 Fine words can buy honor. Good deeds can gain respect. Though there be bad people, why reject them?

62.3 Therefore at the crowning of the emperor or at the installation of the three ministers, instead of sending gifts of jade and a team of four horses, remain still and send the Way.

62.4 Why did the ancients prize this Way? Did they not say, "Seek, and you will find; let go, and you will be forgiven." Therefore the Way is valued by the world.

63.1 Act without interfering. Work without doing. Taste the tasteless.

63.2 Large or small, many or few, repay injury with goodness.

63.3 Handle the difficult while it is still easy. Handle the big while it is still small.

63.4 Difficult tasks begin with what is easy. Great accomplishments begin with what is small.

63.5 Therefore the wise never strive for the great and thus achieve greatness.

63.6 Rash promises inspire little trust. Taking things too lightly results in much difficulty.

63.7 Thus the wise always confront difficulties and therefore have no difficulty.

64.1 What stays still is easy to hold. Without omens it is easy to plan. The brittle is easy to shatter. The minute is easy to scatter.

64.2 Handle things before they appear. Organize things before there is confusion.

64.3 A tree as big as a person's embrace grows from a tiny shoot. A tower nine stories high begins with a mound of earth. A journey of a thousand miles begins under one's feet.

64.4 To act is to fail. To grab is to lose. Therefore the wise do not act and do not fail. They do not grab and do not lose.

64.5 In handling things people usually fail when they are about to succeed. Be as careful at the end as at the beginning, and there will be no failure.

64.6 Therefore the wise desire to have no desires. They do not value rare treasures. They learn what is unknown, returning to what many have missed so that all things may be natural without interference.

65.1 The ancients who ruled skillfully did not try to enlighten people but kept them in the dark.

65.2 People are hard to lead when they are too clever. Those who lead with cleverness rob the country. Those who lead without cleverness bless the country.

65.3 Understanding these two is to know the eternal standard. Knowing the eternal standard is mystical power.

65.4 Mystical power is deep and far-reaching, leading all things to return to perfect harmony.

66.1 Great rivers and seas are lords of all mountain streams, because they are good at staying below them. Therefore they are lords of the streams.

66.2 Thus the wise in watching over the people speak humbly from below the people, and in leading the people get behind them.

66.3 In this way the wise watch over the people but do not oppress them; they lead the people but do not block them. Thus everyone happily goes along without getting tired.

66.4 Because they do not compete, the world cannot compete with them.

67.1 Everyone says the Way is great and beyond comparison. Because it is great, it cannot be compared. If it were compared, it already would have seemed small.

67.2 I have three treasures to be maintained and cherished: the first is love; the second is frugality; the third is not pushing oneself ahead of others.

67.3 From love comes courage; from frugality comes generosity; from not pushing oneself ahead of others comes leadership.

67.4 Now courage without love, generosity without frugality, and leadership by pushing oneself ahead of others are fatal.

67.5 For love wins all battles and is the strongest defense. Heaven gives love to save and protect.

68.1 The best soldier is not violent. The best fighter is not angry.

68.2 The best winner is not contentious. The best employer is humble.

68.3 This is known as the power of not striving, as ability in human relations, and as being in accord with heaven.

69.1 The strategists say, "Do not be the aggressor but the defender. Do not advance an inch, but retreat a foot instead."

69.2 This is movement without moving, stretching the arm without showing it, confronting enemies with the idea there is no enemy, holding in the hand no weapons.

69.3 No disaster is greater than underestimating the enemy.

69.4 Underestimating the enemy will destroy my treasures. Thus when the battle is joined, it is the kind who will win.

70.1 My ideas are easy to understand and easy to practice. Yet no one understands them or practices them.

70.2 My ideas have a source; my actions have a master. Because people do not understand this, they do not know me. Since few know me, I am very precious.

70.3 Therefore the wise wear coarse clothes and keep the jewel inside.

71.1 To know that you do not know is the best. To think you know when you do not is a disease. Recognizing this disease as a disease is to be free of it.

71.2 The wise are free of disease, because they recognize the disease as a disease. Therefore they are free of disease.

72.1 When people lack a sense of awe, then something awful will happen.

72.2 Do not constrict people's living space. Do not suppress their livelihoods. If you do not harass them, they will not harass you.

72.3 Therefore the wise know themselves but do not display themselves. They love themselves but do not exalt themselves.

They let go of one and accept the other.

73.1 Those brave in killing will be killed. Those brave in not killing will live.

73.2 Of these two, one is good, and one is harmful. Some are not favored by heaven. Who knows why? Even the wise consider it a difficult question.

73.3 The Way of heaven does not strive; yet it wins easily. It does not speak; yet it gets a good response. It does not demand; yet all needs are met. It is not anxious; yet it plans well.

73.4 The net of heaven is vast; its meshes are wide, but nothing slips through.

74.1 People are not afraid to die. So why threaten them with death?

74.2 If people were afraid of death, and lawbreakers could be caught and put to death, who would dare to do so?

74.3 There is the Lord of Death who executes. Trying to do his job is like trying to cut wood for the Master Carpenter. Those who try to cut wood for the Master Carpenter rarely escape injuring their own hands.

75.1 People are hungry, because rulers eat too much tax-grain. That is why people are starving.

75.2 People are hard to govern, because rulers interfere too much. That is why they are hard to govern.

75.3 People do not care about death, because rulers demand too much of life. That is why they do not care about death. Only those who do not interfere with living are best at valuing life.

76.1 When people are born, they are tender and supple. At death they are stiff and hard.

76.2 All things, like plants and trees, are tender and pliant while alive. At death they are dried and withered.

76.3 Therefore the stiff and hard are companions of death. The tender and supple are companions of life.

76.4 Thus strong arms do not win. A stiff tree will break.

76.5 The hard and strong will fall. The tender and supple will rise.

77.1 The Way of heaven is like bending a bow. The high is lowered; the low is raised. The excessive is reduced; the deficient is increased.

77.2 The Way of heaven takes from those who have too much and gives to those who do not have enough. The human way is different. It takes from those who do not have enough and gives to those who have too much.

77.3 Who has more than enough to give to the world? Only the person of the Way.

77.4 Therefore the wise act but do not rely on their own ability. They accomplish the task but claim no credit. They have no desire to seem superior.

78.1 Nothing in the world is softer and weaker than water. Yet nothing is better at attacking the hard and strong. There is no substitute for it.

78.2 The weak overcomes the strong; the soft overcomes the hard. Everyone knows this, but no one puts it into practice.

78.3 Therefore the wise say, "Those who bear the humiliation of the people are able to minister to them. Those who take upon themselves the sins of the society are able to lead the world." Words of truth seem paradoxical.

79.1 Compromising with great hatred surely leaves some hatred. How can this be considered good?

79.2 Therefore the wise keep their part of an agreement and do not blame the other party.

79.3 The good fulfill their obligations; the bad exact obligations from others.

79.4 The Way of heaven is impartial. It always stays with the good.

80.1 In a small country with few people machines that can work ten or a hundred times faster are not needed. People who care about death do not travel far.

80.2 Even if there are ships and carriages, no one takes them. Even if there are armor and weapons, no one displays them.

80.3 People return to knotted rope for records. Food is tasty; clothes are beautiful; home is comfortable; customs are delightful.

80.4 Though neighboring communities see each other and hear each other's cocks crowing and dogs barking, they may grow old and die without going there.

81.1 True words are not beautiful. Beautiful words are not truthful.

81.2 The good do not argue. Those who argue are not good.

81.3 Those who know are not scholarly. The scholarly do not know.

81.4 The wise do not hoard. The more they give to others, the more they have.

81.5 The Way of heaven sharpens but does no harm. The Way of the wise accomplishes without striving.

Blackney version

1.1 There are ways but the Way is uncharted; There are names but not nature in words:

1.2 Nameless indeed is the source of creation But things have a mother and she has a name.

1.3 The secret waits for the insight Of eyes unclouded by longing; Those who are bound by desire See only the outward container.

1.4 These two come paired but distinct By their names.

1.5 Of all things profound, Say that their pairing is deepest, The gate to the root of the world.

2.1 Since the world points up beauty as such, There is ugliness too.

2.2 If goodness is taken as goodness, Wickedness enters as well.

2.3 For is and is-not come together; Hard and easy are complementary; Long and short are relative;

2.4 High and low are comparative; Pitch and sound make harmony; Before and after are a sequence.

2.5 Indeed the Wise Man's office Is to work by being still He teaches not by speech But by accomplishment;

2.6 He does for everything, Neglecting none; Their life he gives to all, Possessing none;

2.7 And what he brings to pass Depends on no one else. As he succeeds, He takes no credit And just because he does not take it, Credit never leaves him.

3.1 If those who are excellent find no preferment, The people will cease to contend for promotion.

3.2 If goods that are hard to obtain are not favoured, The people will cease to turn robbers or bandits.

3.3 If things much desired are kept under cover, Disturbance will cease in the minds of the people.

3.4 The Wise Man's policy, accordingly, Will be to empty people's hearts and minds, To fill their bellies, weaken their ambition, Give them sturdy frames

3.5 and always so, To keep them uninformed, without desire, And knowing ones not venturing to act.

3.6 Be still while you work And keep full control Over all.

4.1 The Way is a void, Used but never filled:

4.2 An abyss it is, From which all things come.

4.3 It blunts sharpness, Resolves tangles; It tempers light, Subdues turmoil.

4.4 A deep pool it is, Never to run dry!

4.5 Whose offspring it may be I do not know: It is like a preface to God.

5.1 Is then the world unkind? And does it treat all things Like straw dogs used in magic rights

5.2 The Wise man too, is he unkind? And does he treat the folk Like straw dogs made to throw away?

5.3 Between the earth and sky The space is like a bellows, Empty but unspent. When moved its gift is copious.

5.4 Much talk means much exhaustion; Better far it is to keep your thoughts!

6.1 The valley spirit is not dead; They say it is the mystic female.

6.2 Her gateway is, they further say, The base of heaven and earth.

6.3 Constantly, and so forever, Use her without labour.

7.1 The sky is everlasting And the earth is very old.

7.2 Why so? Because the world Exists not for itself; It can and will live on.

7.3 The Wise Man chooses to be last And so becomes the first of all;

7.4 Denying self, he too is saved.

7.5 For does he not fulfilment find In being an unselfish man?

8.1 The highest goodness, water-like, Does good to everything and goes Unmurmuring to places men despise; But so, is close in nature to the Way.

8.2 If the good of the house is from land, Or the good of the mind is depth, Or love is the virtue of friendship, Or honesty blesses one's talk,

8.3 Or in government, goodness is order, Or in business, skill is admired, Or the worth of an act lies in timing,

8.4 Then peace is the goal of the Way By which no one ever goes astray.

9.1 To take all you want Is never as good As to stop when you should.

9.2 Scheme and be sharp And you'll not keep it long.
9.3 One can never guard His home when it's full Of jade and fine gold:
9.4 Wealth, power and pride Bequeath their own doom.
9.5 When fame and success Come to you, then retire. This is the ordained Way.

10.1 Can you govern your animal soul, hold to the One and never depart from it?
10.2 Can you throttle your breath, down to the softness of breath in a child?
10.3 Can you purify your mystic vision and wash it until it is spotless?
10.4 Can you love all your people, rule over the land without being known?
10.5 Can you be like a female, and passively open and shut heaven's gates?
10.6 Can you keep clear in your mind the four quarters of earth and not interfere?
10.7 Quicken them, feed them; Quicken but do not possess them. Act and be independent; Be the chief but never the lord: This describes the mystic virtue.

11.1 Thirty spokes will converge In the hub of a wheel; But the use of the cart Will depend on the part Of the hub that is void.
11.2 With a wall all around A clay bowl is molded; But the use of the bowl Will depend on the part Of the bowl that is void.
11.3 Cut out windows and doors In the house as you build; But the use of the house Will depend on the space In the walls that is void.
11.4 So advantage is had From whatever is there; But usefulness rises From whatever is not.

12.1 The five colours darken the eye; The five sounds will deaden the ear; The five flavours weary the taste.
12.2 Chasing the beasts of the field Will drive a man mad. The goods that are hard to procure Are hobbles that slow walking feet.
12.3 So the Wise Man will do What his belly dictates And never the sight of his eyes. Thus he will choose this but not that.

13.1 "Favour, like disgrace Brings trouble with it; High rank, like self, Involves acute distress."
13.2 What does that mean, to say That "favour, like disgrace Brings trouble with it"? When favour is bestowed On one of low degree, Trouble will come with it. The loss of favour too Means trouble for that man. This, then, is what is meant By "favour, like disgrace Brings trouble with it."
13.3 What does it mean, to say That "rank, like self, Involves acute distress"? I suffer most because Of me and selfishness. If I were selfless, then What suffering would I bear?
13.4 In governing the world, Let rule entrusted be To him who treats his rank As if it were his soul; World sovereignty can be Committed to that man Who loves all people As he loves himself.

14.1 They call it elusive, and say That one looks But it never appears. They say that indeed it is rare, Since one listens, But never a sound. Subtle, they call it, and say That one grasps it But never gets hold.
14.2 These three complaints amount To only one, which is Beyond all resolution.
14.3 At rising, it does not illumine; At setting, no darkness ensues; It stretches far back To that nameless estate Which existed before the creation.
14.4 Describe it as form yet unformed; As shape that is still without shape; Or say it is vagueness confused: One meets it and it has no front; One follows and there is no rear.
14.5 If you hold ever fast To that most ancient Way, You may govern today. Call truly that knowledge Of primal beginnings The clue to the Way.

15.1 The excellent masters of old, Subtle, mysterious, mystic, acute, Were much too profound for their times.
15.2 Since they were not then understood, It is better to tell how they looked. Like men crossing streams in the winter, How cautious! As if all around there were danger, How watchful! As if they were guests on every occasion,
15.3 How dignified! Like ice just beginning to melt, Self-effacing! Like a wood-block untouched by a tool, How sincere! Like a valley awaiting a guest, How receptive! Like a torrent that rushes along, And so turbid!
15.4 Who, running dirty, comes clean like still waters? Who, being quiet, moves others to fullness of life?
15.5 It is he who, embracing the Way, is not greedy; Who endures wear and tear without needing renewal

16.1 Touch ultimate emptiness, Hold steady and still.
16.2 All things work together: I have watched them reverting, And have seen how they flourish And return again, each to his roots.
16.3 This, I say, is the stillness: A retreat to one's roots; Or better yet, return To the will of God, Which is, I say, to constancy. The knowledge of constancy I call enlightenment and say That not to know it Is blindness that works evil.

16.4 But when you know What eternally is so, You have stature And stature means righteousness And righteousness is kingly
And kingliness divine And divinity is the Way Which is final.

16.5 Then, though you die, You shall not perish.

17.1 As for him who is highest, The people just know he is there. His deputy's cherished and praised; Of the third, they are
frightened; The fourth, they despise and revile.

17.2 If you trust people less than enough, Some of them never trust you.

17.3 He is aloof, as if his talk Were priced beyond the purchasing; But once his project is contrived, The folk will want to say of it:
"Of course! We did it by ourselves!"

18.1 The mighty Way declined among the folk And then came kindness and morality.

18.2 When wisdom and intelligence appeared, They brought with them a great hypocrisy.

18.2 The six relations were no more at peace, So codes were made to regulate our homes.

18.4 The fatherland grew dark, confused by strife: Official loyalty became the style.

19.1 Get rid of the wise men! Put out the professors! Then people will profit A hundredfold over.

19.2 Away with the kind ones; Those righteous men too! And let people return To the graces of home.

19.3 Root out the artisans; Banish the profiteers! And bandits and robbers Will not come to plunder.

19.4 But if these three prove not enough To satisfy the mind and heart,

19.5 More relevant, then, let there be A visible simplicity of life, Embracing unpretentious ways, And small self-interest And
poverty of coveting.

20.1 Be done with rote learning And its attendant vexations; For is there distinction Of a "yes" from a "yea" Comparable now to
the gulf Between evil and good?

20.2 "What all men fear, I too must fear"- How barren and pointless a thought!

20.3 The reveling of multitudes At the feast of Great Sacrifice, Or up on the terrace At carnival in spring, Leave me, alas,
unmoved, alone, Like a child that has never smiled. Lazily, I drift As though I had no home.

20.4 All others have enough to spare; I am the one left out. I have the mind of a fool, Muddled and confused!

20.5 When common people scintillate I alone make shadows. Vulgar folks are sharp and knowing: Only I am melancholy.
Restless like the ocean, Blown about, I cannot stop.

20.6 Other men can find employment, But I am stubborn; I am mean. Alone I am and different, Because I prize and seek My
sustenance from the Mother!

21.1 The omnipresent Virtue will take shape According only to the Way.

21.2 The Way itself is like some thing Seen in a dream, elusive, evading one. In it are images, elusive, evading one. In it are things
like shadows in twilight. In it are essences, subtle but real, Embedded in truth.

21.3 From of old until now, Under names without end, The First, the Beginning is seen.

21.4 How do I know the beginning of all, What its nature may be? By these!

22.1 The crooked shall be made straight And the rough places plain; The pools shall be filled And the worn renewed; The needy
shall receive And the rich shall be perplexed.

22.2 So the Wise Man cherishes the One, As a standard to the world:

22.3 Not displaying himself, He is famous; Not asserting himself, He is distinguished; Not boasting his powers, He is effective;
Taking no pride in himself, He is chief.

22.4 Because he is no competitor, No one in all the world can compete with him.

22.5 The saying of the men of old Is not in vain: "The crooked shall be made straight - " To be perfect, return to it.

23.1 Sparing indeed is nature of its talk: The whirlwind will not last the morning out; The cloudburst ends before the day is done.

23.2 What is it that behaves itself like this? The earth and sky! And if it be that these Cut short their speech, how much more yet
should man!

23.3 If you work by the Way, You will be of the Way; If you work through its virtue you will be given the virtue; Abandon either
one And both abandon you.

23.4 Gladly then the Way receives Those who choose to walk in it; Gladly too its power upholds Those who choose to use it well;
Gladly will abandon greet Those who to abandon drift.

23.5 Little faith is put in them Whose faith is small.

24.1 On tiptoe your stance is unsteady; Long strides make your progress unsure;
24.2 Show off and you get no attention; Your boasting will mean you have failed;
24.3 Asserting yourself brings no credit; Be proud and you will never lead.
24.4 To persons of the Way, these traits Can only bring distrust; they seem Like extra food for parasites. So those who choose the Way, Will never give them place.

25.1 Something there is, whose veiled creation was Before the earth or sky began to be; So silent, so aloof and so alone, It changes not, nor fails, but touches all: Conceive it as the mother of the world.
25.2 I do not know its name: A name for it is "Way"; Pressed for designation, I call it Great.
25.3 Great means outgoing, Outgoing, far-reaching, Far-reaching, return.
25.4 The Way is great, The sky is great, The earth is great, The king also is great. Within the realm These four are great; The king but stands For one of them.
25.5 Man conforms to the earth; The earth conforms to the sky; The sky conforms to the Way; The Way conforms to its own nature.

26.1 The heavy is foundation for the light; So quietness is master of the deed.
26.2 The Wise Man, though he travel all the day, Will not be separated from his goods. So even if the scene is glorious to view, He keeps his place, at peace, above it all.
26.3 For how can one who rules Ten thousand chariots Give up to lighter moods As all the world may do?
26.4 If he is trivial, His ministers are lost; If he is strenuous, There is no master then.

27.1 A good runner leaves no tracks. A good speech has no flaws to censure. A good computer uses no tallies.
27.2 A good door is well shut without bolts and cannot be opened. A good knot is tied without rope and cannot be loosed.
27.3 The Wise Man is always good at helping people, so that none are cast out; he is always good at saving things, so that none are thrown away. This is called applied intelligence.
27.4 Surely the good man is the bad man's teacher; and the bad man is the good man's business.
27.5 If the one does not respect his teacher, or the other doesn't love his business, his error is very great. This is indeed an important secret.

28.1 Be aware of your masculine nature; But by keeping the feminine way, You shall be to the world like a canyon, Where the Virtue eternal abides, And go back to become as a child.
28.2 Be aware of the white all around you; But remembering the black that is there, You shall be to the world like a tester, Whom the Virtue eternal, unerring, Redirects to the infinite past.
28.3 Be aware of your glory and honour; But in never relinquishing shame, You shall be to the world like a valley, Where Virtue eternal, sufficient, Sends you back to the Virginal Block.
28.4 When the Virginal Block is asunder, And is made into several tools, To the ends of the Wise Man directed, They become then his chief officers: For "The Master himself does not carve."

29.1 As for those who would take the whole world To tinker as they see fit, I observe that they never succeed:
29.2 For the world is a sacred vessel Not made to be altered by man. The tinker will spoil it; Usurpers will lose it.
29.3 For indeed there are things That must move ahead, While others must lag; And some that feel hot, While others feel cold; And some that are strong, While others are weak; And vigorous ones, While others worn out.
29.4 So the Wise Man discards Extreme inclinations To make sweeping judgements, Or to a life of excess.

30.1 To those who would help The ruler of men By means of the Way: Let him not with his militant might Try to conquer the world; This tactic is like to recoil.
30.2 For where armies have marched, There do briars spring up; Where great hosts are impressed, Years of hunger and evil ensue.
30.3 The good man's purpose once attained, He stops at that; He will not press for victory.
30.4 His point once made, he does not boast, Or celebrate the goal he gained, Or proudly indicate the spoils. He won the day because he must: But not by force or violence.
30.5 That things with age decline in strength, You well may say, suits not the Way; And not to suit the Way is early death.

31.1 Weapons at best are tools of bad omen, Loathed and avoided by those of the Way.
31.2 In the usage of men of good breeding, Honour is had at the left; Good omens belong on the left Bad omens belong on the right; And warriors press to the right!

31.3 When the general stands at the right His lieutenant is placed at the left. So the usage of men of great power Follows that of the funeral rite.

31.4 Weapons are tools of bad omen, By gentlemen not to be used; But when it cannot be avoided, They use them with calm and restraint.

31.5 Even in victory's hour These tools are unlovely to see; For those who admire them truly Are men who in murder delight. As for those who delight to do murder, It is certain they never can get From the world what they sought when ambition Urged them to power and rule.

31.6 A multitude slain! - and their death Is a matter for grief and for tears; The victory after a conflict Is a theme for a funeral rite.

32.1 The Way eternal has no name. A block of wood untooled, though small, May still excel the world.

32.2 And if the king and nobles could Retain its potency for good, Then everything would freely give Allegiance to their rule.

32.3 The earth and sky would then conspire To bring the sweet dew down; And evenly it would be given To folk without constraining power.

32.4 Creatures came to be with order's birth, And once they had appeared, Came also knowledge of repose, And with that was security.

32.5 In this world, Compare those of the Way To torrents that flow Into river and sea.

33.1 It is wisdom to know others; It is enlightenment to know one's self.

33.2 The conqueror of men is powerful; The master of himself is strong.

33.3 It is wealth to be content; It is willful to force one's way on others.

33.4 Endurance is to keep one's place; Long life it is to die and not perish.

34.1 O the great Way o'erflows And spreads on every side!

34.2 All beings come from it; No creature is denied. But having called them forth, It calls not one its own. It feeds and clothes them all And will not be their lord.

34.3 Without desire always, It seems of slight import.

34.4 Yet, nonetheless, in this Its greatness still appears: When they return to it, No creature meets a lord.

34.5 The Wise Man, therefore, while he is alive, Will never make a show of being great: And that is how his greatness is achieved.

35.1 Once grasp the great Form without form, And you roam where you will With no evil to fear, Calm, peaceful, at ease.

35.2 At music and viands The wayfarer stops.

35.3 But the Way, when declared, Seems thin and so flavourless! It is nothing to look at And nothing to hear; But used, it will prove Inexhaustible.

36.1 What is to be shrunken Is first stretched out; What is to be weakened Is first made strong; What will be thrown over Is first raised up; What will be withdrawn Is first bestowed.

36.2 This indeed is Subtle Light; The gentle way Will overcome The hard and strong.

36.3 As fish should not Get out of pools, The realm's edged tools Should not be shown To anybody.

37.1 The Way is always still, at rest, And yet does everything that's done.

37.2 If then the king and nobles could Retain its potency for good, The creatures all would be transformed. But if, the change once made in them, They still inclined to do their work, I should restrain them then By means of that unique Original simplicity Found in the Virgin Block,

37.3 Which brings disinterest, With stillness in its train, And so, an ordered world.

38.1 A man of highest virtue Will not display it as his own; His virtue then is real. Low virtue makes one miss no chance To show his virtue off; His virtue then is nought.

38.2 High virtue is at rest; It knows no need to act. Low virtue is a busyness Pretending to accomplishment.

38.3 Compassion at its best Consists in honest deeds; Morality at best Is something done, aforethought; High etiquette, when acted out Without response from others, Constrains a man to bare his arms And make them do their duty!

38.4 Truly, once the Way is lost, There comes then virtue; Virtue lost, comes then compassion; After that morality; And when that's lost, there's etiquette, The husk of all good faith, The rising point of anarchy.

38.5 Foreknowledge is, they say, The Doctrine come to flower; But better yet, it is The starting point of silliness.

38.6 So once full-grown, a man will take The meat and not the husk, The fruit and not the flower. Rejecting one, he takes the other.

39.1 These things in ancient times received the One: The sky obtained it and was clarified; The earth received it and was settled firm; The spirits got it and were energized;
39.2 The valleys had it, filled to overflow; All things, as they partook it came alive; The nobles and the king imbibed the One In order that the realm might upright be; Such things were then accomplished by the One.
39.3 Without its clarity the sky might break; Except it were set firm, the earth might shake; Without their energy the gods would pass;
39.4 Unless kept full, the valleys might go dry; Except for life, all things would pass away; Unless the One did lift and hold them high, The nobles and the king might trip and fall.
39.5 The humble folk support the mighty ones; They are base on which the highest rest.
39.6 The nobles and the king speak of themselves As "orphans," "desolate" and "needy ones." Does this not indicate that they depend Upon the lowly people for support?
39.7 Truly a cart is more than the sum of its parts.
39.8 Better to rumble like rocks Than to tinkle like jade.

40.1 The movement of the Way is a return; In weakness lies its major usefulness.
40.2 From What-is all the world of things was born But What-is sprang in turn from What-is-not.

41.1 On hearing of the Way, the best of men Will earnestly explore its length. The mediocre person learns of it And takes it up and sets it down.
41.2 But vulgar people, when they hear the news, Will laugh out loud, and if they did not laugh, It would not be the Way.
41.3 And so there is a proverb: "When going looks like coming back, The clearest road is mighty dark." Today, the Way that's plain looks rough, And lofty virtue like a chasm; The purest innocence like shame, The broadest power not enough,
41.4 Established goodness knavery, Substantial worth like shifting tides. Great space has no corners; Great powers come late; Great music is soft sound; The great Form no shape.
41.5 The Way is obscure and unnamed; It is a skilled investor, nonetheless, The master of accomplishment.

42.1 The Way begot one, And the one, two; Then the two begot three And three, all else.
42.2 All things bear the shade on their backs And the sun in their arms; By the blending of breath From the sun and the shade, Equilibrium comes to the world.
42.3 Orphaned, or needy, or desolate, these Are conditions much feared and disliked; Yet in public address, the king And the nobles account themselves thus.
42.4 So a loss sometimes benefits one Or a benefit proves to be loss.
42.5 What others have taught I also shall teach: If a violent man does not come To a violent death, I shall choose him to teach me.

43.1 The softest of stuff in the world Penetrates quickly the hardest; Insubstantial, it enters Where no room is. By this I know the benefit Of something done by quiet being;
43.2 In all the world but few can know Accomplishment apart from work, Instruction when no words are used.

44.1 Which is dearer, fame or self? Which is worth more, man or self? Which would hurt more, gain or loss?
44.2 The mean man pays the highest price; The hoarder takes the greatest loss;
44.3 A man content is never shamed, And self-restrained, is not in danger: He will live forever.

45.1 Most perfect, yet it seems Imperfect, incomplete: Its use is not impaired. Filled up, and yet it seems Poured out, an empty void: It never will run dry. The straightest, yet it seems To deviate, to bend;
45.2 The highest skill and yet It looks like clumsiness. The utmost eloquence, It sounds like stammering.
45.3 As movement overcomes The cold, and stillness, heat, The Wise Man, pure and still, Will rectify the world.

46.1 When the Way rules the world, Coach horses fertilize the fields; When the Way does not rule, War horses breed in the parks.
46.2 No sin can exceed Incitement to envy; No calamity's worse Than to be discontented, Nor is there an omen More dreadful than coveting.
46.3 But once be contented, And truly you'll always be so.

47.1 The world may be known Without leaving the house; The Way may be seen Apart from the windows. The further you go,
The less you will know.

47.2 Accordingly, the Wise Man Knows without going, Sees without seeing, Does without doing.

48.1 The student learns by daily increment. The Way is gained by daily loss, Loss upon loss until At last comes rest.

48.2 By letting go, it all gets done; The world is won by those who let it go!

48.3 But when you try and try, The world is then beyond the winning.

49.1 The Wise Man's mind is free But tuned to people's need:

49.2 "Alike to be good and bad I must be good, For Virtue is goodness.

49.3 To honest folk And those dishonest ones Alike, I proffer faith, For Virtue is faithful."

49.4 The Wise Man, when abroad, Impartial to the world, Does not divide or judge. But people everywhere Mark well his ears and eyes; For wise men hear and see As little children do.

50.1 On leaving life, to enter death:

50.2 Thirteen members form a living body; A corpse has thirteen, too: Thirteen spots by which a man may pass From life to death. Why so? Because his way of life Is much too gross.

50.3 As I have heard, the man who knows On land how best to be at peace Will never meet a tiger or a buffalo; In battle, weapons do not touch his skin.

50.4 There is no place the tiger's claws can grip; Or with his horn, the buffalo can jab; Or where the soldier can insert his sword. Why so? In him there is no place of death.

51.1 The Way brings forth, Its virtue fosters them, With matter they take shape, And circumstance perfects them all: That is why all things Do honour the Way And venerate its power.

51.2 The exaltation of the Way, The veneration of its power, Come not by fate or decree; But always just because By nature it is so. So when the Way brings forth, Its power fosters all: They grow, are reared, And fed and housed until They come to ripe maturity.

51.3 You shall give life to things But never possess them; Your work shall depend on none; You shall be chief but never lord. This describes the mystic power.

52.1 It began with a matrix: The world had a mother Whose sons can be known As ever, by her.

52.2 But if you know them, You'll keep close to her As long as you live And suffer no harm.

52.3 Stop up your senses; Close up your doors; Be not exhausted As long as you live.

52.4 Open your senses; Be busier still: To the end of your days There's no help for you.

52.5 You are bright, it is said, If you see what is small; A store of small strengths Makes you strong.

52.6 By the use of its light, Make your eyes again bright From evil to lead you away. This is called "practicing constancy."

53.1 When I am walking on the mighty Way, Let me but know the very least I may, And I shall only fear to leave the road.

53.2 The mighty Way is easy underfoot, But people still prefer the little paths.

53.3 The royal court is dignified, sedate, While farmers' fields are overgrown with weeds; The granaries are empty

53.4 and yet they Are clad in rich-embroidered silken gowns. They have sharp swords suspended at their sides; With gluttonous wealth, they gorge with food and drink. It is, the people say, The boastfulness of brigandage, But surely not the Way!

54.1 Set firm in the Way: none shall uproot you; Cherish it well and none shall estrange you; Your children's children faithful shall serve Your forebears at the altar of your house.

54.2 Cultivate the Way yourself, and your Virtue will be genuine. Cultivate it in the home, and its Virtue will overflow. Cultivate it in the village, and the village will endure. Cultivate it in the realm, and the realm will flourish. Cultivate it in the world, and Virtue will be universal.

54.3 Accordingly, One will be judged by the Man of the Way; Homes will be viewed through the Home of the Way; And the Village shall measure the village; And the Realm, for all realms, shall be standard; And the World, to this world, shall be heaven.

54.4 How do I know the world is like this? By this.

55.1 Rich in virtue, like an infant, Noxious insects will not sting him; Wild beasts will not attack his flesh Nor birds of prey sink claws in him. His bones are soft, his sinews weak, His grip is nonetheless robust;

55.2 Of sexual union unaware, His organs all completely formed, His vital force is at its height.

55.3 He shouts all day, does not get hoarse: His person is a harmony. Harmony experienced is known as constancy; Constancy experienced is called enlightenment;

55.4 Exuberant vitality is ominous, they say; A bent for vehemence is called aggressiveness.

55.5 That things with age decline in strength, You well may say, suits not the Way; And not to suit the Way is early death.

56.1 Those who know do not talk And talkers do not know.

56.2 Stop your senses, Close the doors; Let sharp things be blunted, Tangles resolved, The light tempered And turmoil subdued; For this is mystic unity

56.3 In which the Wise Man is moved Neither by affection Nor yet by estrangement Or profit or loss Or honour or shame. Accordingly, by all the world, He is held highest.

57.1 "Govern the realm by the right, And battles by stratagem." The world is won by refraining. How do I know this is so? By this:

57.2 As taboos increase, people grow poorer; When weapons abound, the state grows chaotic;

57.3 Where skills multiply, novelties flourish; As statutes increase, more criminals start.

57.4 So the Wise Man will say: As I refrain, the people will reform: Since I like quiet, they will keep order;

57.5 When I forebear, the people will prosper; When I want nothing, they will be honest.

58.1 Listlessly govern: Happy your people; Govern exactly: Restless your people.

58.2 "Bad fortune will Promote the good; Good fortune, too, Gives rise to the bad."

58.3 But who can know to what that leads? For it is wrong and would assign To right the strangest derivations And would mean that goodness Is produced by magic means! Has man thus been so long astray?

58.4 Accordingly, the Wise Man Is square but not sharp, Honest but not malign, Straight but not severe, Bright but not dazzling.

59.1 "For ruling men or serving God, There's nothing else like stores saved up."

59.2 By "stores saved up" is meant forehandedness, Accumulate Virtue, such that nothing Can resist it and its limit None can guess: such infinite resource Allows the jurisdiction of the king;

59.3 Whose kingdom then will long endure If it provides the Mother an abode.

59.4 Indeed it is the deeply rooted base, The firm foundation of the Way To immortality of self and name.

60.1 Rule a large country As small fish are cooked.

60.2 The evil spirits of the world Lose sanction as divinities When government proceeds According to the Way;

60.3 But even if they do not lose Their ghostly countenance and right, The people take no harm from them; And if the spirits cannot hurt the folk, The Wise Man surely does no hurt to them.

60.4 Since then the Wise Man and the people Harm each other not at all, Their several virtues should converge.

61.1 The great land is a place To which the streams descend; It is the concourse and The female of the world: Quiescent, underneath, It overcomes the male.

61.2 By quietness and by humility The great land then puts down the small And gets it for its own; But small lands too absorb the great By their subservience.

61.3 Thus some lie low, designing conquest's ends; While others lowly are, by nature bent To conquer all the rest.

61.4 The great land's foremost need is to increase The number of its folk; The small land needs above all else to find Its folk more room to work.

61.5 That both be served and each attain its goal The great land should attempt humility.

62.1 Like the gods of the shrine in the home, So the Way and its mystery waits In the world of material things: The good man's treasure, The bad man's refuge.

62.2 Fair wordage is ever for sale; Fair manners are worn like a cloak; But why should there be such waste Of the badness in men?

62.3 On the day of the emperor's crowning, When the three noble dukes are appointed, Better than chaplets of jade Drawn by a team of four horses, Bring the Way as your tribute.

62.4 How used the ancients to honour the Way? Didn't they say that the seeker may find it, And that sinners who find are forgiven? So did they lift up the Way and its Virtue Above everything else in the world.

63.1 Act in repose; Be at rest when you work; Relish unflavoured things.

63.2 Great or small, Frequent or rare, Requite anger with virtue.

63.3 Take hard jobs in hand while they are easy And great affairs too while they are small.

63.4 The troubles of the world Cannot be solved except Before they get too hard. The business of the world Cannot be done except While relatively small.

63.5 The wise man, then, throughout his life Does nothing great yet achieves A greatness of his own.

63.6 Again, a promise lightly made Inspires little confidence; Or often trivial, sure that man Will come to grief.

63.7 Choosing hardship, then, the Wise Man Never meets with hardship all his life.

64.1 A thing that is still easy to hold. Given no omen, it is easy to plan. Soft things are easy to melt. Small particles scatter easily.

64.2 The time to take care is before it is done. Establish order before confusion sets in.

64.3 Tree trunks around which you can reach with your arms were at first only minuscule sprouts. A nine-storied terrace began with a clod. A thousand-mile journey began with a foot put down.

64.4 Doing spoils it, grabbing misses it; So the Wise Man refrains from doing and doesn't spoil anything; He grabs at nothing and so never misses.

64.5 People are constantly spoiling a project when it lacks only a step to completion. To avoid making a mess of it, be as careful of the end as you were of the beginning.

64.6 So the Wise Man wants the unwanted; he sets no high value on anything because it is hard to get. He studies what others neglect and restores to the world what multitudes have passed by. His object is to restore everything in its natural course, but he dares take no steps to that end.

65.1 Those ancients who were skilled in the Way Did not enlighten people by their rule But had them ever held in ignorance:

65.2 The more the folk know what is going on The harder it becomes to govern them. For public knowledge of the government Is such a thief that it will spoil the realm; But when good fortune brings good times to all The land is ruled without publicity.

65.3 To know the difference between these two Involves a standard to be sought and found. To know that standard always, everywhere, Is mystic Virtue, justly known as such;

65.4 Which Virtue is so deep and reaching far, It causes a return, things go back To that prime concord which at first all shared.

66.1 How could the rivers and the seas Become like kings to valleys? Because of skill in lowliness They have become the valley's lords.

66.2 So then to be above the folk, You speak as if you were beneath; And if you wish to be out front, Then act as if you were behind.

66.3 The Wise Man so is up above But is no burden to the folk; His station is ahead of them To see they do not come to harm. The world will gladly help along The Wise Man and will bear no grudge.

66.4 Since he contends not for his own The world will not contend with him.

67.1 Everywhere, they say the Way, our doctrine, Is so very like detested folly; But greatness of its own alone explains Why it should be thus held beyond the pale. If it were only orthodox, long since It would have seemed a small and petty thing!

67.2 I have to keep three treasures well secured: The first, compassion; next, frugality; And third, I say that never would I once Presume that I should be the whole world's chief.

67.3 Given compassion, I can take courage; Given frugality, I can abound; If I can be the world's most humble man, Then I can be its highest instrument.

67.4 Bravery today knows no compassion; Abundance is, without frugality, And eminence without humility: This is the death indeed of all our hope.

67.5 In battle, 'tis compassion wins the day; Defending, 'tis compassion that is firm: Compassion arms the people God would save!

68.1 A skillful soldier is not violent; An able fighter does not rage;

68.2 A mighty conqueror does not give battle; A great commander is a humble man.

68.3 You may call this pacific virtue; Or say that it is mastery of men; Or that it is rising to the measure of God, Or to the stature of the ancients.

69.1 The strategists have a saying: "If I cannot be host, Then let me be guest. But if I dare not advance Even an inch, Then let me retire a foot."

69.2 This is what they call A campaign without a march, Sleeves up but no bare arms, Shooting but no enemies, Or arming without weapons.

69.3 Than helpless enemies, nothing is worse: To them I lose my treasures.

69.4 When opposing enemies meet, The compassionate man is the winner!

70.1 My words are easy just to understand: To live by them is very easy too; Yet it appears that none in all the world Can understand or make them come to life.

70.2 My words have ancestors, my works a prince; Since none know this, unknown I too remain. But honour comes to me when least I'm known:

70.3 The Wise Man, with a jewel in his breast, Goes clad in garments made of shoddy stuff.

71.1 To know that you are ignorant is best; To know what you do not, is a disease; But if you recognize the malady Of mind for what it is, then that is health.

71.2 The Wise Man has indeed a healthy mind; He sees an aberration as it is And for that reason never will be ill.

72.1 If people do not dread your majesty, A greater dread will yet descend on them.

72.2 See then you do not cramp their dwelling place, Or immolate their children or their stock, Nor anger them by your own angry ways.

72.3 It is the Wise Man's way to know himself, And never to reveal his inward thoughts; He loves himself but so, is not set up; He chooses this in preference to that.

73.1 A brave man who dares to, will kill; A brave man who dares not, spares life;

73.2 And from them both come good and ill; "God hates some folks, but who knows why?" The Wise Man hesitates there too:

73.3 God's Way is bound to conquer all But not by strife does it proceed. Not by words does God get answers: He calls them not and all things come. Master plans unfold but slowly,

73.4 Like God's wide net enclosing all: Its mesh is coarse but none are lost.

74.1 The people do not fear at all to die; What's gained therefore by threat'ning them with death?

74.2 If you could always make them fear de cease, As if it were a strange event and rare, Who then would dare to take and slaughter them?

74.3 The executioner is always set To slay, but those who substitute for him Are like would-be master carpenters Who try to chop as that skilled craftsman does And nearly always mangle their own hands!

75.1 The people starve because of those Above them, who consume by tax In grain and kind more than their right. For this, the people are in want.

75.2 The people are so hard to rule Because of those who are above them, Whose interference makes distress. For this, they are so hard to rule.

75.3 The people do not fear to die; They too demand to live secure: For this, they do not fear to die. So they, without the means to live, In virtue rise above those men Who value life above its worth.

76.1 Alive, a man is supple, soft; In death, unbending, rigorous.

76.2 All creatures, grass and trees, alive Are plastic but are pliant too, And dead, are friable and dry.

76.3 Unbending rigour is the mate of death, And wielding softness, company of life:

76.4 Unbending soldiers get no victories; The stiffest tree is readiest for the axe.

76.5 The strong and mighty topple from their place; The soft and yielding rise above them all.

77.1 Is not God's Way much like a bow well bent? The upper part has been disturbed, pressed down; The lower part is raised up from its place; The slack is taken up; the slender width Is broader drawn;

77.2 for thus the Way of God Cuts people down when they have had too much, And fills the bowls of those who are in want. But not the way of man will work like this: The people who have not enough are spoiled For tribute to the rich and surfeited.

77.3 Who can benefit the world From stored abundance of his own? He alone who has the Way,

77.4 The Wise Man who can act apart And not depend on others' whims; But not because of his high rank Will he succeed; he does not wish To flaunt superiority.

78.1 Nothing is weaker than water, But when it attacks something hard Or resistant, then nothing withstands it, And nothing will alter its way.

78.2 Everyone knows this, that weakness prevails Over strength and that gentleness conquers The adamant hindrance of men, but that Nobody demonstrates how it is so.

78.3 Because of this the Wise Man says That only one who bears the nations shame Is fit to be its hallowed lord; That only one who takes upon himself The evils of the world may be its king. This is paradox.

79.1 How can you think it is good To settle a grievance too great To ignore, when the settlement Surely evokes other piques?

79.2 The Wise Man therefore will select The left-hand part of contract tallies: He will not put the debt on other men.

79.3 This virtuous man promotes agreement; The vicious man allots the blame.

79.4 "Impartial though the Way of God may be, It always favours good men."

80.1 The ideal land is small Its people very few, Where tools abound Ten times or yet A hundred-fold Beyond their use; Where people die And die again But never emigrate;

80.2 Have boats and carts Which no one rides. Weapons have they And armour too, But none displayed.

80.3 The folk returns To use again The knotted chords. Their meat is sweet; Their clothes adorned, Their homes at peace, Their customs charm.

80.4 And neighbour lands Are juxtaposed So each may hear The barking dogs, The crowing cocks Across the way; Where folks grow old And folks will die And never once Exchange a call.

81.1 As honest words may not sound fine, Fine words may not be honest ones;

81.2 A good man does not argue, and An arguer may not be good!

81.3 The knowers are not learned men And learned men may never know.

81.4 The Wise Man does not hoard his things; Hard-pressed, from serving other men, He has enough and some to spare; But having given all he had, He then is very rich indeed.

81.5 God's Way is gain that works no harm; The Wise Man's way, to do his work Without contending for a crown.

Bynner version

1.1 Existence is beyond the power of words To define: Terms may be used But are none of them absolute.
1.2 In the beginning of heaven and earth there were no words, Words came out of the womb of matter;
1.3 And whether a man dispassionately Sees to the core of life Or passionately Sees the surface,
1.4 The core and the surface Are essentially the same, Words making them seem different Only to express appearance.
1.5 If name be needed, wonder names them both: From wonder into wonder Existence opens.

2.1 People through finding something beautiful Think something else unbeautiful,
2.2 Through finding one man fit Judge another unfit.
2.3 Life and death, though stemming from each other, seem to conflict as stages of change, Difficult and easy as phases of achievement, Long and short as measures of contrast,
2.4 High and low as degrees of relation; But, since the varying to tones gives music to a voice And what is is the was of what shall be,
2.5 The sanest man Sets up no deed, Lays down no law,
2.6 Takes everything that happens as it comes, As something to animate, not to appropriate,
2.7 To earn, not to own, To accept naturally without self-importance: If you never assume importance You never lose it.

3.1 It is better not to make merit a matter of reward Lest people conspire and contend,
3.2 Not to pile up rich belongings Lest they rob,
3.3 Nor to excite by display Lest they covet.
3.4 A sound leader's aim Is to open people's hearts, Fill their stomachs, Calm their wills, Brace their bones
3.5 And so to clarify their thoughts and cleanse their needs That no cunning meddler could touch them:
3.6 Without being forced, without strain or constraint, Good government comes of itself.

4.1 Existence, by nothing bred, Breeds everything
4.2 Parent of the universe,
4.3 It smooths rough edges, Unties hard knots, Tempers the sharp sun, Lays blowing dust,
4.4 Its image in the wellspring never fails.
4.5 But how was it conceived? - this image Of no other sire.

5.1 Nature, immune as to a sacrifice of straw dogs, Faces the decay of its fruits.
5.2 A sound man, immune as to a sacrifice of straw dogs, Faces the passing of human generations.
5.3 The universe, like a bellows, Is always emptying, always full: The more it yields, the more it holds.
5.4 Men come to their wit's end arguing about it And had better meet it at the marrow.

6.1 The breath of life moves through a deathless valley Of mysterious motherhood
6.2 Which conceives and bears the universal seed, The seeming of a world never to end,
6.3 Breath for men to draw from as they will: And the more they take of it, the more remains.

7.1 The universe is deathless,
7.2 Is deathless because, having no finite self, It stays infinite.
7.3 A sound man by not advancing himself Stays the further ahead of himself,
7.4 By not confining himself to himself Sustains himself outside himself:
7.5 By never being an end in himself He endlessly becomes himself.

8.1 Man is at his best, like water, Serves as he goes along: Like water he seeks his own level, The common level of life,
8.2 Loves living close to the earth, Living clear down in his heart, Loves kinship with his neighbours, The pick of words that tell the truth,
8.3 The even tenor of a well-run state, The fair profit of able dealing, The right timing of useful deeds,
8.4 And for blocking no one's way No one blames him.

9.1 Keep stretching a bow You repent of the pull,
9.2 A whetted saw Goes thin and dull,
9.3 Surrounded with treasure Your lie ill at ease,
9.4 Proud beyond measure You come to your knees:

9.5 Do enough, without vying, Be living, not dying.

10.1 Can you hold the door of your tent Wide to the firmament?

10.2 Can you, with the simple stature Of a child, breathing nature, Become, notwithstanding, A man?

10.3

10.4 Can you continue befriending With no prejudice, no ban?

10.5 Can you, mating with heaven, Serve as the female part?

10.6 Can your learned head take leaven From the wisdom in your heart?

10.7 If you can bear issue and nourish its growing. If you can guide without claim or strife, If you can stay in the lead of men without their knowing, You are at the core of life.

11.1 Thirty spokes are made one by holes in a hub By vacancies joining them for a wheel's use.

11.2 The use of clay in moulding pitchers Comes from the hollow of its absence;

11.3 Doors, windows, in a house, Are used for their emptiness:

11.4 Thus we are helped by what is not to use what is.

12.1 The five colours can blind, The five tones deafen, The five tastes cloy.

12.2 The race, the hunt, can drive men mad And their booty leave them no peace.

12.3 Therefore a sensible man Prefers the inner to the outer eye: He has his yes, - he has his no.

13.1 Favour and disfavour have been called equal worries, Success and failure have been called equal ailments.

13.2 How can favour and disfavour be called equal worries? Because winning favour burdens a man With the fear of losing it.

13.3 How can success and failure be called equal ailments? Because a man thinks of the personal body as self. When he no longer thinks of the personal body as self Neither failure nor success can ail him.

13.4 One who knows his lot to be the lot of all other men Is a safe man to guide them, One who recognizes all men as members of his own body Is a sound man to guard them.

14.1 What we look for beyond seeing And call the unseen, Listen for beyond hearing, Grasp for beyond reaching and call the

14.2 Merge beyond understanding In a oneness

14.3 Which does not merely rise and give light, Does not merely set and leave darkness, But forever sends forth a succession of living things as mysterious As the unbegotten existence to which they return.

14.4 That is why men have called them empty phenomena, Meaningless images, In a mirage With no face to meet, No back to follow.

14.5 Yet one who is anciently aware of existence Is master of every moment, Feels no break since time beyond time In the way life flows.

15.1 Long ago the land was ruled with a wisdom Too fine, too deep, to be fully understood

15.2 And, since it was beyond men's full understanding, Only some of it has come down to us, as in these sayings: 'Alert as a winter-farer on an icy stream,' 'Wary as a man in an ambush,' 'Considerate as a welcome guest,'

15.3 'Selfless as melting ice,' 'Green as an uncut tree,' 'Open as a valley,' And this one also, 'Roiled as a torrent.'

15.4 Why roiled as a torrent? Because when a man is in turmoil how shall he find peace Save by staying patient till the stream clears? How can a man's life keep its course If he will not let it flow?

15.5 Those who flow as life flows know They need no other force: They feel no wear, they feel no tear, They need no mending, no repair.

16.1 Be utterly humble And you shall hold to the foundation of peace.

16.2 Be at one with all these living things which, having arisen and flourished, Return to the quiet whence they came, Like a healthy growth of vegetation Falling back upon the root.

16.3 Acceptance of this return to the root has been called 'quietism,' Acceptance of quietism has been condemned as 'fatalism.' But fatalism is acceptance of destiny And to accept destiny is to face life with open eyes, Whereas not to accept destiny is to face death blindfold.

16.4 He who is open-eyed is open-minded, He who is open-minded is open-hearted, He who is open-hearted is kingly, He who is kingly is godly, He who is godly is useful, He who is useful is infinite,

16.5 He who is infinite is immune, He who is immune is immortal.

17.1 A leader is best When the people barely know that he exists, Not so good when people obey and acclaim him, Worst when they despise him.

17.2 'Fail to honour people, They fail to honour you;'

17.3 But of a good leader, who talks little, When his work is done, his aim fulfilled, They will all say, 'We did this ourselves.'

18.1 When people lost sight of the way to live Came codes of love and honesty,

18.2 Learning came, charity came, Hypocrisy took charge;

18.3 When differences weakened family ties Came benevolent fathers and dutiful sons;

18.4 And when lands were disrupted and misgoverned Came ministers commended as loyal.

19.1 Rid of formalized wisdom and learning People would be a hundredfold happier,

19.2 Rid of conventionalized duty and honour People would find their families dear,

19.3 Rid of legalized profiteering People would have no thieves to fear.

19.4 These methods of life have failed, all three,

19.5 Here is the way, it seems to me: Set people free, As deep in their hearts they would like to be, From private greeds And wanton needs.

20.1 Leave off fine learning! End the nuisance Of saying yes to this and perhaps to that, Distinctions with how little difference! Categorical this, categorical that, What slightest use are they!

20.2 If one man leads another must follow, How silly that is and how false!

20.3 Yet conventional men lead an easy life With all their feast-days, A constant spring visit to the Tall Tower, While I am a simpleton, a do-nothing, Not big enough yet to raise a hand, Not grown enough to smile, A homeless, worthless waif.

20.4 Men of the world have a surplus of goods, While I am left out, owning nothing. What a booby I must be Not to know my way round, What a fool!

20.5 The average man is so crisp and so confident That I ought to be miserable Going on and on like the sea, Drifting nowhere.

21.1 The surest test if a man be sane Is if he accepts life whole, as it is,

21.2 Without needing by measure or touch to understand The measureless untouchable source Of its images, The measureless untouchable source Of its substances, The source which, while it appears dark emptiness, Brims with a quick force Farthest away And yet nearest at hand

21.3 From oldest time unto this day, Changing its images with origin:

21.4 What more need I know of the origin Than this?

22.1 "Yield and you need not break:" Bent you can straighten, Emptied you can hold, Torn you can mend; And as want can reward you So wealth can bewilder.

22.2 Aware of this, a wise man has the simple return Which other men seek:

22.3 Without inflaming himself He is kindled, Without explaining himself Is explained, Without taking credit Is accredited, Laying no claim Is acclaimed

22.4 And, because he does not compete, Finds peaceful competence.

22.5 How true is the old saying "Yield and you need not break"! How completely it comes home!

23.1 Nature does not have to insist, Can blow for only half a morning, Rain for only half a day,

23.2 And what are these winds and these rains but natural? If nature does not have to insist, Why should man?

23.3 It is natural too That whoever follows the way of life feels alive, That whoever uses it properly feels well used, Whereas he who loses the way of life feels lost,

23.4 That whoever keeps to the way of life Feels at home, Whoever uses it properly Feels welcome, Whereas he who uses it improperly Feels improperly used:

23.5 'Fail to honour people, They fail to honour you.'

24.1 Standing tiptoe a man loses balance, Walking stride he has no pace,

24.2 Kindling himself he fails to light, Acquitting himself he forfeits his hearers,

24.3 Admiring himself he does so alone. Pride has never brought a man greatness

24.4 But, according to the way of life, Brings the ills that make him unfit, Make him unclean in the eyes of his neighbour, And a sane man will have none of them.

25.1 Before creation a presence existed, Self-contained, complete, Formless, voiceless, mateless, Changeless, Which yet pervaded itself With unending motherhood.

25.2 Though there can be no name for it, I have called it 'the way of life.' Perhaps I should have called it 'the fullness of life,'

25.3 Since fullness implies widening into space, Implies still further widening, Implies widening until the circle is whole.

25.4 In this sense The way of life is fulfilled, Heaven is fulfilled, Earth fulfilled And a fit man also is fulfilled: These are the four amplitudes of the universe And a fit man is one of them:

25.5 Man rounding the way of earth, Earth rounding the way of heaven, Heaven rounding the way of life Till the circle is full.

26.1 Gravity is the root of all grace, The mainstay of all speed.

26.2 A traveler of true means, whatever the days pace, Remembers his provision-van And, however fine prospect be offered, is a man With a calm head.

26.3 What lord of countless chariots would ride them in vain, Would make himself fool of the realm,

26.4 With pace beyond rein, Speed beyond helm?

27.1 One may move so well that a footprint never shows, Speak so well that the tongue never slips, Reckon so well that no counter is needed,

27.2 Seal an entrance so tight, though using no lock, That it cannot be opened, Bind a hold so firm, though using no cord, That it cannot be untied.

27.3 All these are traits not only of a sound man But of many a man thought to be unsound. A sound man is good at salvage, At seeing than nothing is lost. Having what is called insight,

27.4 A good man, before he can help a bad man, Finds in himself the matter with the bad man.

27.5 And whichever teacher Discounts the lesson Is as far off the road as the other, Whatever else he may know. That is the heart of it.

28.1 'One who has a man's wings And a woman's also Is in himself a womb of the world' And, being a womb of the world, Continuously, endlessly, Gives birth;

28.2 One who, preferring light, Prefers darkness also Is in himself an image of the world And, being an image of the world, Is continuously, endlessly The dwelling of creation;

28.3 One who is highest of men And humblest also Is in himself a valley of the world, And, being a valley of the world, Continuously, endlessly Conducts the one source From which vessels may be usefully filled;

28.4 Servants of the state are such vessels, To be filled from an undiminishing supply.

29.1 Those who would take over the earth And shape it to their will Never, I notice, succeed.

29.2 The earth is like a vessel so sacred That at the mere approach of the profane It is marred And when they reach out their fingers it is gone.

29.3 For a time in the world some force themselves ahead And some are left behind, For a time in the world some make a great noise And some are held silent, For a time in the world some are puffed fat And some are kept hungry, For a time in the world some push aboard And some are tipped out:

29.4 At no time in the world will a man who is sane Over-reach himself, Over-spend himself, Over-rate himself.

30.1 One who would guide a leader of men in the uses of life Will warn him against the use of arms for conquest. Weapons often turn upon the wielder,

30.2 An army's harvest is a waste of thorns, Conscripted of a multitude of men Drains the next year dry.

30.3 A good general, daring to march, dares also to halt, Will never press his triumph beyond need.

30.4 What he must do he does but not for glory, What he must do he does but not for show, What he must do he does but not for self; He has done it because it had to be done, Not from a hot head.

30.5 Let life ripen and then fall, Force is not the way at all: Deny the way of life and you are dead.

31.1 Even the finest arms are an instrument of evil, A spread of plague, And the way for a vital man to go is not the way of a soldier.

31.2 But in time of war men civilized in peace Turn from their higher to their lower nature.

31.3 Arms are an instrument of evil, No measure for thoughtful men Until there fail all other choice But sad acceptance of it.

31.4 Triumph is not beautiful. He who thinks triumph beautiful Is one with a will to kill, And one with a will to kill Shall never prevail upon the world.

31.5 It is a good sign when man's higher nature comes forward, When retainers take charge And the master stays back As in the conduct of a funeral.

31.6 The death of a multitude is a cause for mourning: Consider your triumph as a funeral.

32.4 But men of culture came, with their grades and their distinctions; And as soon as such differences had been devised No one knew where to end them, Though the one who does know the end of all such differences Is the sound man:

32.1 Existence is infinite, not to be defined; And, though it seems a bit of wood in your hand, to carve as you please, It is not to be lightly played with and laid down.

32.2 When rulers adhered to the way of life, They were upheld by natural loyalty:

32.3 Heaven and earth were joined and made fertile, Life was a freshness of rain, Subject to none, Free to all.

32.5 Existence Might be likened to the course Of many rivers reaching the one sea.

33.1 Knowledge studies others, Wisdom is self-known;

33.2 Muscle masters brothers, Self mastery is bone;

33.3 Content need never borrow, Ambition wanders blind:

33.4 Vitality cleaves to the marrow Leaving death behind.

34.1 Bountiful life, letting anyone attend, Making no distinction between left or right.

34.2 Feeding everyone, refusing no one, Has not provided this bounty to show how much it owns, Has not fed and clad its guests with any thought of claim;

34.3 And, because it lacks the twist Of mind and body in what it has done, The guile of head or hands, Is not always respected by a guest.

34.4 Others appreciate welcome from the perfect host

34.5 Who, barely appearing to exist, Exists the most.

35.1 If the sign of life is in your face He who responds to it Will feel secure and fit

35.2 As when, in a friendly place, Sure of hearty care, A traveler gladly waits.

35.3 Though it may not taste like food And he may not see the fare Or hear the sound of plates, How endless it is and how good!

36.1 He who feels punctured Must once have been a bubble, He who feels unarmed Must have carried arms, He who feels belittled Must have been consequential, He who feels deprived Must have had privilege,

36.2 Whereas a man with insight Knows that to keep under is to endure.

36.3 What happens to a fish pulled out of a pond? Or to an implement of state pulled out of a scabbard? Unseen, they survive.

37.1 The way to use life is to do nothing through acting, The way to use life is to do everything through being.

37.2 When a leader knows this, His land naturally goes straight. And the world's passion to stray from straightness Is checked at the core By the simple undatable cleanness Through which men cease from coveting,

37.3 And to a land where men cease from coveting Peace comes of course.

38.1 A man of sure fitness, without making a point of his fitness, Stays fit; A man of unsure fitness, assuming an appearance of fitness, Becomes unfit.

38.2 The man of sure fitness never makes an act of it Nor considers what it may profit him; The man of unsure fitness makes an act of it And considers what it may profit him.

38.3 However a man with a kind heart may proceed, He forgets what it may profit him; However a man with a just mind proceed, He remembers what it may profit him; However a man of conventional conduct proceed, if he be not complied with Out goes his fist to enforce compliance.

38.4 Here is what happens: Losing the way of life, men rely first on their fitness; Losing fitness, they turn to kindness; Losing kindness, they turn to justness; Losing justness, they turn to convention.

38.5 Conventions are fealty and honesty gone to waste, They are the entrance of disorder. False teachers of life use flowery words And start nonsense.

38.6 The man of stamina stays with the root Below the tapering. Stays with the fruit Beyond the flowering: He has his no and he has his yes.

39.1 The wholeness of life has, from of old, been made manifest in its parts: Clarity has been made manifest in heaven, Firmness in earth, Purity in the spirit,

39.2 In the valley conception, In the river procreation; And so in a leader are the people made manifest For wholeness of use.

39.3 But for clarity heaven would be veiled, But for firmness earth would have crumbled, But for purity spirit would have fumbled,

39.4 But for conception the valley would have failed, But for procreation the river have run dry; So, save for the people, a leader shall die:

39.5 Always the low carry the high On a root for growing by. What can stand lofty with no low foundation?

39.6 No wonder leaders of a land profess Their stature and their station To be servitude and lowliness!

39.7 If rim and spoke and hub were not, Where would be the chariot?

39.8 Who will prefer the jingle of jade pendants if He once has heard stone growing in a cliff!

40.1 Life on its way returns into a mist, Its quickness is its quietness again:

40.2 Existence of this world of things and men Renews their needing to exist.

41.1 Men of stamina, knowing the way of life, Steadily keep to it; Unstable men, knowing the way of life, Keep to it or not according to occasion;

41.2 Stupid men, knowing the way of life And having once laughed at it, laugh again the louder. If you need to be sure which way is right, you can tell by their laughing at it.

41.3 They fling the old charges: 'A wick without oil,' 'For every step forward a step or two back,' To such laughers a level road looks steep, Top seems bottom,

41.4 'White appears black,' 'Enough is a lack,' Endurance is a weakness, Simplicity a faded flower.

41.5 But eternity is his who goes straight round the circle, Foundation is his who can feel beyond touch, Harmony is his who can hear beyond sound, Pattern is his who can see beyond shape: Life is his who can tell beyond words Fulfilment of the unfulfilled.

42.1 Life, when it came to be, Bore one, then two, then three Elements of things; And thus the three began - Heaven and earth and man - To balance happenings:

42.2 Cool night behind, warm day ahead, For the living, for the dead.

42.3 Though a commoner be loth to say That he is only common clay, Kings and princes often state How humbly they are leading,

42.4 Because in true succeeding High and low correlate.

42.5 It is an ancient thought, Which men have taught, That he who over-reaches And tries to live by force Shall die thereby of course, And is what my own heart teaches.

43.1 As the soft yield of water cleaves obstinate stone, So to yield with life solves the insoluble: To yield, I have learned, is to come back again.

43.2 but this unworded lesson, This easy example, Is lost upon men.

44.1 Which means more to you, You or your renown? Which brings more to you, You or what you own? And which would cost you more If it were gone?

44.2 The niggard pays, The miser loses.

44.3 The least ashamed of all men Goes back if he chooses: He knows both ways, He starts again.

45.1 A man's work, however finished it seem, Continue as long as he live; A man, however perfect he seem, Is needed as long as he live: As long as truth appears falsity, The seer a fool, The prophet a dumb lout,

45.2 -

45.3 If you want to keep warm keep stirring about, Keep still if you want to keep cool, And in all the world one day no doubt Your way shall be the rule.

46.1 In a land where the way of life is understood Race-horses are led back to serve the field; In a land where the way of life is not understood War-horses are bred on the autumn yield.

46.2 Owning is the entanglement, Wanting is the bewilderment, Taking is the presentiment:

46.3 Only he who contains content Remains content.

47.1 There is no need to run outside For better seeing, Nor to peer from a window. Rather abide At the center of your being; For the more you leave, the less you learn.

47.2 Search your heart and see If he is wise who takes each turn: The way to do is to be.

48.1 A man anxious for knowledge adds more to himself every minute; A man acquiring life loses himself in it, Has less and less to bear in mind, Less and less to do,

48.2 Because life, he finds, is well inclined, Including himself too. Often a man sways the world like a wind But not by deed;

48.3 And if there appear to you to be need Of motion to sway it, it has left you behind.

49.1 A sound man's heart is not shut within itself But is open to other people's hearts:

49.2 I find good people good, And I find bad people good If I am good enough

49.3 I trust men of their word And I trust liars If I am true enough;

49.4 I feel the heart-beats of others Above my own If I am enough of a father, Enough of a son.

50.1 Death might appear to be the issue of life,
50.2 Since for every three out of ten being born Three out of ten are dying. They why Should another three out of ten continue breeding death? Because of sheer madness to multiply.
50.3 But there is one out of ten, so sure of life That tiger and wild bull keep clear of his inland path, Weapons turn from him on the battle-field,
50.4 No bull-horn could tell where to gore him, No tiger-claw where to tear him, No weapon where to enter him And why? Because he has no death to die.

51.1 Existence having born them And fitness bred them, While matter varied their forms And breath empowered them, All created things render, to the existence and fitness they depend on, An obedience
51.2 Not commanded but of course. And since this is the way existence bears issue And fitness raises, attends, Shelters, feeds and protects, Do you likewise:
51.3 Be parent, not possessor, Attendant, not master, Be concerned not with obedience but with benefit, And you are at the core of living.

52.1 The source of life Is as a mother.
52.2 Be fond of both mother and children but know the mother dearer And you outlive death.
52.3 Curb your tongue and senses And you are beyond trouble,
52.4 Let them loose And you are beyond help.
52.5 Discover that nothing is too small for clear vision, Too insignificant for tender strength,
52.6 Use outlook And insight, Use them both And you are immune: For you have witnessed eternity.

53.1 If I had any learning Of a highway wide and fit, Would I lose it at each turning?
53.2 Yet look at people spurning Natural use of it!
53.3 See how fine the palaces And see how poor the farms, How bare the peasants' granaries
53.4 While gentry wear embroideries Hiding sharpened arms, And the more they have the more they seize, How can there be such men as these Who never hunger, never thirst Yet eat and drink until they burst! There are other brigands, but these are the worst Of all the highway's harms.

54.1 'Since true foundation cannot fail But holds as good as new, Many a worshipful son shall hail A father who lived true.'
54.2 Realized in one man, fitness has its rise; Realized in a family, fitness multiplies; Realized in a village, fitness gathers weight; Realized in a country, fitness becomes great; Realized in the world, fitness fills the skies.
54.3 And thus the fitness of one man You find in the family he began, You find in the village that accrued, You find in the country that ensued, You find in the world's whole multitude.
54.4 How do I know this integrity? Because it could all begin in me.

55.1 He whom life fulfills, Though he remains a child, Is immune to the poisonous sting Of insects, to the ravening Of wild beasts or to vultures' bills. He needs no more bone or muscle than a baby's for sure hold.
55.2 Without thought of joined organs, he is gender Which grows firm, unfaltering.
55.3 Though his voice should cry out at full pitch all day, it would not rasp but would stay tender Through the perfect balancing Of a man at endless ease with everything Because of the true life he has led.
55.4 To try for more than this bodes ill. It is said, ' there's a way where there's a will;'
55.5 But let life ripen and then fall. Will is not the way at all: Deny the way of life and you are dead.

56.1 Those who know do not tell, Those who tell do not know.
56.2 Not to set the tongue loose But to curb it, Not to have edges that catch But to remain untangled, Unblinded, Unconfused, Is to find balance,
56.3 And he who holds balance beyond sway of love or hate, Beyond reach of profit or loss, Beyond care of praise or blame, Has attained the highest post in the world.

57.1 A realm is governed by ordinary acts, A battle is governed by extraordinary acts; The world is governed by no acts at all. And how do I know? This is how I know.
57.2 Act after act prohibits Everything but poverty, Weapon after weapon conquers Everything but chaos,
57.3 Business after business provides A craze of waste, Law after law breeds A multitude of thieves.
57.4 Therefore a sensible man says: If I keep from meddling with people, they take care of themselves, If I keep from commanding people, they behave themselves,

57.5 If I keep from preaching at people, they improve themselves, If I keep from imposing on people, they become themselves.

58.1 The less a leader does and says The happier his people, The more a leader struts and brags The sorrier his people.

58.2 Often what appears to be unhappiness is happiness And what appears to be happiness is unhappiness.

58.3 Who can see what leads to What When happiness appears and yet is not, When what should be is nothing but a mask
Disguising what should not be? Who can but ask An end to such a stupid plot!

58.4 Therefore a sound man shall so square the circle And circle the square as not to injure, not to impede: The glow of his life
shall not daze, It shall lead.

59.1 To lead men and serve heaven, weigh the worth Of the one source:

59.2 Use the single force Which doubles the strength of the strong By enabling man to go right, disabling him to go wrong, Be so
charged with the nature of life that you give your people birth,

59.3 That you mother your land, are the fit

59.4 And ever living root of it: The seeing root, whose eye is infinite.

60.1 Handle a large kingdom with as gentle a touch as if you were cooking a small fish.

60.2 If you manage people by letting them alone, Ghosts of the dead shall not haunt you.

60.3 Not that there are no ghosts But that their influence become propitious

60.4 In the sound existence of a living man: There is no difference between the quick and the dead, They are one channel of
vitality.

61.1 A large country is the low level of interflowing rivers. It draws people to the sea-end of a valley As the female draws the
male, Receives it into absorbing depth Because depth always absorbs.

61.2 And so a large country, inasfar as it is deeper than a small country, Absorbs the small - Or a small country, inasfar as it is
deeper than a large country, Absorbs the large.

61.3 Some countries consciously seek depth into which to draw others. Some countries naturally have depth into which to draw
others:

61.4 A large country needs to admit, A small country needs to emit,

61.5 And so each country can naturally have what it needs If the large country submit.

62.1 Existence is sanctuary: It is a good man's purse, It is also a bad man's keep.

62.2 Clever performances come dear or cheap, Goodness comes free; And how shall a man who acts better deny a man who
acts worse This right to be.

62.3 Rather, when an emperor is crowned, let the three Ministers whom he appoints to receive for him fine horses and gifts of
jade Receive for him also the motionless gift of integrity,

62.4 The gift prized as highest by those ancients who said, 'Only pursue an offended to show him the way.' What men in all the
world could have more wealth than they?

63.1 Men knowing the way of life Do without acting, Effect without enforcing, Taste without consuming;

63.2 'Through the many they find the few, Through the humble the great;' They 'respect their foes,'

63.3 They 'face the simple fact before it becomes involved. Solve the small problem before it becomes big.'

63.4 The most involved fact in the world Could have been faced when it was simple, The biggest problem in the world Could
have been solved when it was small.

63.5 The simple fact that he finds no problem big Is the sane man's prime achievement.

63.6 If you say yes too quickly You may have to say no, If you think things are done too easily You may find them hard to do:

63.7 If you face trouble sanely It cannot trouble you.

64.1 Before it move, hold it, Before it go wrong, mould it, Drain off water in winter before it freeze, Before weeds grow, sow
them to the breeze,

64.2 You can deal with what has not happened, can foresee Harmful events and not allow them to be.

64.3 Thought - as naturally as a seed becomes a tree of arm-wide girth -/ There can rise a nine-tiered tower from a man's
handful of earth Or here at your feet a thousand-mile journey have birth,

64.4 Quick action bruises, Quick grasping loses. Therefore a sane man's care is not to exert One move that can miss, one move
that can hurt.

64.5 Most people who miss, after almost winning, Should have 'known the end from the beginning.'

64.6 The cultured might call him heathenish, This man of few words, because his one care Is not to interfere but to let nature
renew The sense of direction men undo.

65.1 Sound old rulers, it is said, Left people to themselves, instead Of wanting to teach everything And start the people arguing.
65.2 With mere instruction in command, So that people understand Less than they know, woe is the land; But happy the land that is ordered so
65.3 That they understand more than they know. For everyone's good this double key Locks and unlocks equally.
65.4 If modern man would use it, he Could find old wisdom in his heart And clear his vision enough to see From start to finish and finish to start The circle rounding perfectly.

66.1 Why are rivers and seas lords of the waters? Because they afford the common level And so become lords of the waters.
66.2 The common people love a sound man Because he does not talk above their level, Because, though he lead them, He follows them,
66.3 He imposes no weight upon them; And they in turn, because he does not impede them, Yield to him, content:
66.4 People never tire of anyone Who is not bent upon comparison.

67.1 Everyone says that my way of life is the way of a simpleton. Being largely the way of a simpleton is what makes it worth while. If it were not the way of a simpleton It would long ago have been worthless,
67.2 These possessions of a simpleton being the three I choose And cherish: To care, To be fair, To be humble.
67.3 When a man cares he is unafraid, When he is fair he leaves enough for others, When he is humble he can grow;
67.4 Whereas if, like men of today, he be bold without caring, Self-indulgent without sharing, Self-important without shame, He is dead.
67.5 The invincible shield Of caring Is a weapon from the sky Against being dead.

68.1 The best captain does not plunge headlong Nor is the best soldier a fellow hot to fight.
68.2 The greatest victor wins without a battle: He who overcomes men understands them.
68.3 There is a quality of quietness Which quickens people by no stress: 'Fellowship with heaven,' as of old, Is fellowship with man and keeps its hold.

69.1 The handbook of the strategist has said: 'Do not invite the fight, accept it instead,' 'Better a foot behind than an inch too far ahead,'
69.2 Which means: Look a man straight in the face and make no move, Roll up your sleeve and clench no fist, Open your hand and show no weapon, Bare your breast and find no foe.
69.3 But as long as there be a foe, value him, respect him, measure him, be humble toward him; Let him not strip from you, however strong he be, Compassion, the one wealth which can afford him.
69.4

70.1 My way is so simple to feel, so easy to apply, That only a few will feel it or apply it.
70.2 If it were not the lasting way, the natural way to try, If it were a passing way, everyone would try it. But however few shall go my way Or feel concerned with me, Some there are and those are they Who witness what they see:
70.3 Sanity is a haircloth sheath With a jewel underneath.

71.1 A man who knows how little he knows is well, A man who knows how much he knows is sick. If, when you see the symptoms, you can tell, Your cure is quick.
71.2 A sound man knows that sickness makes him sick And before he catches it his cure is quick.

72.1 Upon those who defy authority It shall be visited,
72.2 But not behind prison walls Nor through oppression of their kin; Men sanely led Are not led by duress.
72.3 To know yourself and not show yourself, To think well of yourself and not tell of yourself, Be that your no and your yes.

73.1 A man with outward courage dares to die, A man with inward courage dares to live;
73.2 But either of these men Has better and a worse side than the other. And who can tell exactly to which qualities heaven objects?
73.3 Heaven does nothing to win the day, Says nothing - Is echoed, Orders nothing - Is obeyed, Advises nothing - Is right:
73.4 And which of us, seeing that nothing is out side the vast Wide-meshed net of heaven, knows just how it is cast?

74.1 Death is no threat to people Who are not afraid to die;
74.2 But even if these offenders feared death all day, Who would be rash enough To act as executioner?

74.3 Nature is executioner. When man usurps the place, A carpenter's apprentice takes the place of the master: And 'an apprentice hacking with the master's axe May slice his own hand.'

75.1 People starve If taxes eat their grain,

75.2 And the faults of starving people Are the fault of their rulers. That is why people rebel.

75.3 Men who have to fight for their living And are not afraid to die for it Are higher men than those who, stationed high, Are too fat to dare to die.

76.1 Man, born tender and yielding, Stiffens and hardens in death.

76.2 All living growth is pliant, Until death transfixes it.

76.3 Thus men who have hardened are 'kin of death' And men who stay gentle are 'kin of life.'

76.4 Thus a hard-hearted army is doomed to lose. A tree hard-fleshed is cut down:

76.5 Down goes the tough and big, Up comes the tender sprig.

77.1 Is not existence Like a drawn bow? The ends approach, The height shortens, the narrowness widens.

77.2 True living would take from those with too much Enough for those with too little, Whereas man exacts from those with too little Still more for those with too much.

77.3 Now what man shall have wealth enough to share with all men Save one who can freely draw from the common means?

77.4 A sane man needs no better support, no richer reward, Than this common means, Through which he is all men's equal.

78.1 What is more fluid, more yielding than water? Yet it comes back again, wearing down the rigid strength which cannot yield to withstand it.

78.2 So it is that the strong are overcome by the weak, The haughty by the humble. This we know But never learn,

78.3 So that when wise men tell us, 'He who bites the dust Is owner of the earth, He who is scapegoat Is king,' They seem to twist the truth.

79.1 If terms to end a quarrel leave bad feeling, What good are they?

79.2 So a sensible man takes the poor end of the bargain Without quibbling.

79.3 It is sensible to make terms, Foolish to be a stickler:

79.4 Though heaven prefer no man, A sensible man prefers heaven.

80.1 If a land is small and its people are few, With tenfold enough to heave and do, And if no one has schooled them to waste supply In the country for which they live and would die,

80.2 Then not a boat, not a cart Tempts this people to depart, Not a dagger, not a bow Has to be drawn or bent for show,

80.3 People reckon by knots in a cord, Relish plain food on the board, Simple clothing suits them well, And they remain content to dwell In homes their customs can afford.

80.4 Though so close to their own town another town grow They can hear its dogs bark and its roosters crow, Yet glad of life in the village they know, Where else in the world shall they need to go?

81.1 Real words are not vain, Vain words not real;

81.2 And since those who argue prove nothing A sensible man does not argue.

81.3 A sensible man is wiser than he knows, While a fool knows more than is wise.

81.4 Therefore a sensible man does not devise resources: The greater his use to others The greater their use to him, The more he yields to others The more they yield to him.

81.5 The way of life cleaves without cutting: Which, without need to say, Should be man's way.

Byrn version

- 1.1 The tao that can be described is not the eternal Tao. The name that can be spoken is not the eternal Name.
- 1.2 The nameless is the boundary of Heaven and Earth. The named is the mother of creation.
- 1.3 Freed from desire, you can see the hidden mystery. By having desire, you can only see what is visibly real.
- 1.4 Yet mystery and reality emerge from the same source. This source is called darkness.
- 1.5 Darkness born from darkness. The beginning of all understanding.

- 2.1 When people see things as beautiful, ugliness is created.
- 2.2 When people see things as good, evil is created.
- 2.3 Being and non-being produce each other. Difficult and easy complement each other. Long and short define each other.
- 2.4 High and low oppose each other. Fore and aft follow each other.
- 2.5 Therefore the Master can act without doing anything and teach without saying a word.
- 2.6 Things come her way and she does not stop them; things leave and she lets them go.
- 2.7 She has without possessing, and acts without any expectations. When her work is done, she takes no credit. That is why it will last forever.

- 3.1 If you over esteem talented individuals, people will become overly competitive.
- 3.2 If you overvalue possessions, people will begin to steal.
- 3.3 Do not display your treasures or people will become envious.
- 3.4 The Master leads by emptying people's minds, filling their bellies, weakening their ambitions, and making them become strong.
- 3.5 Preferring simplicity and freedom from desires, avoiding the pitfalls of knowledge and wrong action.
- 3.6 For those who practice not-doing, everything will fall into place.

- 4.1 The Tao is like an empty container: it can never be emptied and can never be filled.
- 4.2 Infinitely deep, it is the source of all things.
- 4.3 It dulls the sharp, unties the knotted, shades the lighted, and unites all of creation with dust.
- 4.4 It is hidden but always present.
- 4.5 I don't know who gave birth to it. It is older than the concept of God.

- 5.1 Heaven and Earth are impartial; they treat all of creation as straw dogs.
- 5.2 The Master doesn't take sides; she treats everyone like a straw dog.
- 5.3 The space between Heaven and Earth is like a bellows; it is empty, yet has not lost its power. The more it is used, the more it produces; the more you talk of it, the less you comprehend.
- 5.4 It is better not to speak of things you do not understand.

- 6.1 The spirit of emptiness is immortal. It is called the Great Mother because it gives birth to Heaven and Earth.
- 6.2 -
- 6.3 It is like a vapour, barely seen but always present. Use it effortlessly.

- 7.1 The Tao of Heaven is eternal, and the earth is long enduring. Why are they long enduring?
- 7.2 They do not live for themselves; thus they are present for all beings.
- 7.3 The Master puts herself last; And finds herself in the place of authority.
- 7.4 She detaches herself from all things; Therefore she is united with all things.
- 7.5 She gives no thought to self. She is perfectly fulfilled.

- 8.1 The supreme good is like water, which benefits all of creation without trying to compete with it. It gathers in unpopular places. Thus it is like the Tao.
- 8.2 The location makes the dwelling good. Depth of understanding makes the mind good. A kind heart makes the giving good.
- 8.3 Integrity makes the government good. Accomplishment makes your labors good. Proper timing makes a decision good.
- 8.4 Only when there is no competition will we all live in peace.

- 9.1 It is easier to carry an empty cup than one that is filled to the brim.
- 9.2 The sharper the knife the easier it is to dull.
- 9.3 The more wealth you possess the harder it is to protect.

9.4 Pride brings its own trouble.

9.5 When you have accomplished your goal simply walk away. This is the pathway to Heaven.

10.1 Nurture the darkness of your soul until you become whole. Can you do this and not fail?

10.2 Can you focus your life-breath until you become supple as a newborn child?

10.3 While you cleanse your inner vision will you be found without fault?

10.4 Can you love people and lead them without forcing your will on them?

10.5 When Heaven gives and takes away can you be content with the outcome?

10.6 When you understand all things can you step back from your own understanding?

10.7 Giving birth and nourishing, making without possessing, expecting nothing in return. To grow, yet not to control: This is the mysterious virtue.

11.1 Thirty spokes are joined together in a wheel, but it is the center hole that allows the wheel to function.

11.2 We mold clay into a pot, but it is the emptiness inside that makes the vessel useful.

11.3 We fashion wood for a house, but it is the emptiness inside that makes it livable.

11.4 We work with the substantial, but the emptiness is what we use.

12.1 Five colors blind the eye. Five notes deafen the ear. Five flavours make the palate go stale.

12.2 Too much activity deranges the mind. Too much wealth causes crime.

12.3 The Master acts on what she feels and not what she sees. She shuns the latter, and prefers to seek the former.

13.1 Success is as dangerous as failure, and we are often our own worst enemy.

13.2 What does it mean that success is as dangerous as failure? He who is superior is also someone's subordinate. Receiving favor and losing it both cause alarm. That is what is meant by success is as dangerous as failure.

13.3 What does it mean that we are often our own worst enemy? The reason I have an enemy is because I have "self". If I no longer had a "self", I would no longer have an enemy.

13.4 Love the whole world as if it were your self; then you will truly care for all things.

14.1 Look for it, and it can't be seen. Listen for it, and it can't be heard. Grasp for it, and it can't be caught.

14.2 These three cannot be further described, so we treat them as The One.

14.3 Its highest is not bright. Its depths are not dark. Unending, unnamable, it returns to nothingness.

14.4 Formless forms, and imageless images, subtle, beyond all understanding. Approach it and you will not see a beginning; follow it and there will be no end.

14.5 When we grasp the Tao of the ancient ones, we can use it to direct our life today. To know the ancient origin of Tao: this is the beginning of wisdom.

15.1 The Sages of old were profound and knew the ways of subtlety and discernment.

15.2 Their wisdom is beyond our comprehension. Because their knowledge was so far superior I can only give a poor description. They were careful as someone crossing an frozen stream in winter. Alert as if surrounded on all sides by the enemy. Courteous as a guest.

15.3 Fluid as melting ice. Whole as an uncarved block of wood. Receptive as a valley. Turbid as muddied water.

15.4 Who can be still until their mud settles and the water is cleared by itself? Can you remain tranquil until right action occurs by itself?

15.5 The Master doesn't seek fulfilment. For only those who are not full are able to be used which brings the feeling of completeness.

16.1 If you can empty your mind of all thoughts your heart will embrace the tranquillity of peace.

16.2 Watch the workings of all of creation, but contemplate their return to the source.

16.3 All creatures in the universe return to the point where they began. Returning to the source is tranquillity because we submit to Heavens mandate. Returning to Heavens mandate is called being constant. Knowing the constant is called 'enlightenment'. Not knowing the constant is the source of evil deeds because we have no roots.

16.4 By knowing the constant we can accept things as they are. By accepting things as they are, we become impartial. By being impartial, we become one with Heaven.

16.5 By being one with Heaven, we become one with Tao. Being one with Tao, we are no longer concerned about losing our life because we know the Tao is constant and we are one with Tao.

17.1 The best leaders are those the people hardly know exist. The next best is a leader who is loved and praised. Next comes the one who is feared. The worst one is the leader that is despised.

17.2 If you don't trust the people, they will become untrustworthy.

17.3 The best leaders value their words, and use them sparingly. When she has accomplished her task, the people say, "Amazing: we did it, all by ourselves!"

18.1 When the great Tao is abandoned, charity and righteousness appear.

18.2 When intellectualism arises, hypocrisy is close behind.

18.3 When there is strife in the family unit, people talk about 'brotherly love'.

18.4 When the country falls into chaos, politicians talk about 'patriotism'.

19.1 Forget about knowledge and wisdom, and people will be a hundred times better off.

19.2 Throw away charity and righteousness, and people will return to brotherly love.

19.3 Throw away profit and greed, and there won't be any thieves.

19.4 These three are superficial and aren't enough to keep us at the center of the circle, so we must also:

19.5 Embrace simplicity. Put others first. Desire little.

20.1 Renounce knowledge and your problems will end. What is the difference between yes and no? What is the difference between good and evil?

20.2 Must you fear what others fear? Nonsense, look how far you have missed the mark!

20.3 Other people are joyous, as though they were at a spring festival. I alone am unconcerned and expressionless, like an infant before it has learned to smile.

20.4 Other people have more than they need; I alone seem to possess nothing. I am lost and drift about with no place to go. I am like a fool, my mind is in chaos.

20.5 Ordinary people are bright; I alone am dark. Ordinary people are clever; I alone am dull. Ordinary people seem discriminating; I alone am muddled and confused. I drift on the waves on the ocean, blown at the mercy of the wind.

20.6 Other people have their goals, I alone am dull and uncouth. I am different from ordinary people. I nurse from the Great Mother's breasts.

21.1 The greatest virtue you can have comes from following only the Tao;

21.2 which takes a form that is intangible and evasive. Even though the Tao is intangible and evasive, we are able to know it exists. Intangible and evasive, yet it has a manifestation. Secluded and dark, yet there is a vitality within it. Its vitality is very genuine. Within it we can find order.

21.3 Since the beginning of time, the Tao has always existed. It is beyond existing and not existing.

21.4 How do I know where creation comes from? I look inside myself and see it.

22.1 If you want to become whole, first let yourself become broken. If you want to become straight, first let yourself become twisted. If you want to become full, first let yourself become empty. If you want to become new, first let yourself become old. Those whose desires are few get them, those whose desires are great go astray.

22.2 For this reason the Master embraces the Tao, as an example for the world to follow.

22.3 Because she isn't self centered, people can see the light in her. Because she does not boast of herself, she becomes a shining example. Because she does not glorify herself, she becomes a person of merit.

22.4 Because she wants nothing from the world, the world can not overcome her.

22.5 When the ancient Masters said, "If you want to become whole, then first let yourself be broken," they weren't using empty words. All who do this will be made complete.

23.1 Nature uses few words: when the gale blows, it will not last long; when it rains hard, it lasts but a little while;

23.2 What causes these to happen? Heaven and Earth. Why do we humans go on endlessly about little when nature does much in a little time?

23.3 If you open yourself to the Tao, you and Tao become one. If you open yourself to Virtue, then you can become virtuous. If you open yourself to loss, then you will become lost.

23.4 If you open yourself to the Tao, the Tao will eagerly welcome you. If you open yourself to virtue, virtue will become a part of you. If you open yourself to loss, the lost are glad to see you.

23.5 "When you do not trust people, people will become untrustworthy."

24.1 Those who stand on tiptoes do not stand firmly. Those who rush ahead don't get very far.

24.2 Those who try to outshine others dim their own light. Those who call themselves righteous can't know how wrong they are.

24.3 Those who boast of their accomplishments diminish the things they have done.

24.4 Compared to the Tao, these actions are unworthy. If we are to follow the Tao, we must not do these things.

25.1 Before the universe was born there was something in the chaos of the heavens. It stands alone and empty, solitary and unchanging. It is ever present and secure. It may be regarded as the Mother of the universe.

25.2 Because I do not know its name, I call it the Tao. If forced to give it a name, I would call it 'Great'.

25.3 Because it is Great means it is everywhere. Being everywhere means it is eternal. Being eternal means everything returns to it.

25.4 Tao is great. Heaven is great. Earth is great. Humanity is great. Within the universe, these are the four great things.

25.5 Humanity follows the earth. Earth follows Heaven. Heaven follows the Tao. The Tao follows only itself.

26.1 Heaviness is the basis of lightness. Stillness is the standard of activity.

26.2 Thus the Master travels all day without ever leaving her wagon. Even though she has much to see, she is at peace in her indifference.

26.3 Why should the lord of a thousand chariots be amused at the foolishness of the world? If you abandon yourself to foolishness, you lose touch with your beginnings.

26.4 If you let yourself become distracted, you will lose the basis of your power.

27.1 A good traveller leaves no tracks, and a skilful speaker is well rehearsed. A good bookkeeper has an excellent memory,

27.2 and a well made door is easy to open and needs no locks. A good knot needs no rope and it can not come undone.

27.3 Thus the Master is willing to help everyone, and doesn't know the meaning of rejection. She is there to help all of creation, and doesn't abandon even the smallest creature. This is called embracing the light.

27.4 What is a good person but a bad person's teacher? What is a bad person but raw material for his teacher?

27.5 If you fail to honor your teacher or fail to enjoy your student, you will become deluded no matter how smart you are. It is the secret of prime importance.

28.1 Know the masculine, but keep to the feminine: and become a watershed to the world. If you embrace the world, the Tao will never leave you and you become as a little child.

28.2 Know the white, yet keep to the black: be a model for the world. If you are a model for the world, the Tao inside you will strengthen and you will return whole to your eternal beginning.

28.3 Know the honorable, but do not shun the disgraced: embracing the world as it is. If you embrace the world with compassion, then your virtue will return you to the Uncarved Block.

28.4 The block of wood is carved into utensils by carving void into the wood. The Master uses the utensils, yet prefers to keep to the block because of its limitless possibilities. Great works do not involve discarding substance.

29.1 Do you want to rule the world and control it? I don't think it can ever be done.

29.2 The world is sacred vessel and it can not be controlled. You will only it make it worse if you try. It may slip through your fingers and disappear.

29.3 Some are meant to lead, and others are meant to follow; Some must always strain, and others have an easy time; Some are naturally big and strong, and others will always be small; Some will be protected and nurtured, and others will meet with destruction.

29.4 The Master accepts things as they are, and out of compassion avoids extravagance, excess and the extremes.

30.1 Those who lead people by following the Tao don't use weapons to enforce their will. Using force always leads to unseen troubles.

30.2 In the places where armies march, thorns and briars bloom and grow. After armies take to war, bad years must always follow.

30.3 The skilful commander strikes a decisive blow then stops.

30.4 When victory is won over the enemy through war it is not a thing of great pride. When the battle is over, arrogance is the new enemy. War can result when no other alternative is given, so the one who overcomes an enemy should not dominate them.

30.5 The strong always weakened with time. This is not the way of the Tao. That which is not of the Tao will soon end.

31.1 Weapons are the bearers of bad news; all people should detest them.

31.2 The wise man values the left side, and in time of war he values the right.

31.3 Weapons are meant for destruction, and thus are avoided by the wise. Only as a last resort will a wise person use a deadly weapon.

31.4 If peace is her true objective how can she rejoice in the victory of war? Those who rejoice in victory delight in the slaughter of humanity. Those who resort to violence will never bring peace to the world.

31.5 The left side is a place of honor on happy occasions. The right side is reserved for mourning at a funeral. When the lieutenants take the left side to prepare for war, the general should be on the right side, because he knows the outcome will be death.

31.6 The death of many should be greeted with great sorrow, and the victory celebration should honor those who have died.

32.1 The Tao is nameless and unchanging. Although it appears insignificant, nothing in the world can contain it.

32.2 If a ruler abides by its principles, then her people will willingly follow.

32.3 Heaven would then reign on earth, like sweet rain falling on paradise. People would have no need for laws, because the law would be written on their hearts.

32.4 Naming is a necessity for order, but naming can not order all things. Naming often makes things impersonal, so we should know when naming should end. Knowing when to stop naming, you can avoid the pitfall it brings.

32.5 All things end in the Tao just as the small streams and the largest rivers flow through valleys to the sea.

33.1 Those who know others are intelligent; those who know themselves are truly wise.

33.2 Those who master others are strong; those who master themselves have true power.

33.3 Those who know they have enough are truly wealthy. Those who persist will reach their goal. Those who keep their course have a strong will.

33.4 Those who embrace death will not perish, but have life everlasting.

34.1 The great Tao flows unobstructed in every direction.

34.2 All things rely on it to conceive and be born, and it does not deny even the smallest of creation. When it has accomplished great wonders, it does not claim them for itself. It nourishes infinite worlds, yet it doesn't seek to master the smallest creature.

34.3 Since it is without wants and desires, it can be considered humble.

34.4 All of creation seeks it for refuge yet it does not seek to master or control.

34.5 Because it does not seek greatness; it is able to accomplish truly great things.

35.1 She who follows the way of the Tao will draw the world to her steps. She can go without fear of being injured, because she has found peace and tranquillity in her heart.

35.2 Where there is music and good food, people will stop to enjoy it.

35.3 But words spoken of the Tao seem to them boring and stale. When looked at, there is nothing for them to see. When listen for, there is nothing for them to hear. Yet if they put it to use, it would never be exhausted.

6.1 If you want something to return to the source, you must first allow it to spread out. If you want something to weaken, you must first allow it to become strong. If you want something to be removed, you must first allow it to flourish. If you want to possess something, you must first give it away.

36.2 This is called the subtle understanding of how things are meant to be. The soft and pliable overcomes the hard and inflexible.

36.3 Just as fish remain hidden in deep waters, it is best to keep weapons out of sight.

37.1 The Tao never acts with force, yet there is nothing that it can not do.

37.2 If rulers could follow the way of the Tao, then all of creation would willingly follow their example. If selfish desires were to arise after their transformation, I would erase them with the power of the Uncarved Block.

37.3 By the power of the Uncarved Block, future generations would lose their selfish desires. By losing their selfish desires, the world would naturally settle into peace.

38.1 The highest good is not to seek to do good, but to allow yourself to become it. The ordinary person seeks to do good things, and finds that they can not do them continually.

38.2 The Master does not force virtue on others, thus she is able to accomplish her task. The ordinary person who uses force, will find that they accomplish nothing.

38.3 The kind person acts from the heart, and accomplishes a multitude of things. The righteous person acts out of pity, yet leaves many things undone. The moral person will act out of duty, and when no one will respond will roll up his sleeves and uses force.

38.4 When the Tao is forgotten, there is righteousness. When righteousness is forgotten, there is morality. When morality is forgotten, there is the law.

38.5 The law is the husk of faith, and trust is the beginning of chaos.

38.6 Our basic understandings are not from the Tao because they come from the depths of our misunderstanding. The master abides in the fruit and not in the husk. She dwells in the Tao, and not with the things that hide it. This is how she increases in wisdom.

39.1 The masters of old attained unity with the Tao. Heaven attained unity and became pure. The earth attained unity and found peace. The spirits attained unity so they could minister.

39.2 The valleys attained unity that they might be full. Humanity attained unity that they might flourish. Their leaders attained unity that they might set the example. This is the power of unity.

39.3 Without unity, the sky becomes filthy. Without unity, the earth becomes unstable. Without unity, the spirits become unresponsive and disappear.

39.4 Without unity, the valleys become dry as a desert. Without unity, human kind can't reproduce and becomes extinct. Without unity, our leaders become corrupt and fall.

39.5 The great view the small as their source, and the high takes the low as their foundation. Their greatest asset becomes their humility.

39.6 They speak of themselves as orphans and widows, thus they truly seek humility.

39.7 -

39.8 Do not shine like the precious gem, but be as dull as a common stone.

40.1 All movement returns to the Tao. Weakness is how the Tao works.

40.2 All of creation is born from substance. Substance is born of nothing-ness.

41.1 When a superior person hears of the Tao, She diligently puts it into practice. When an average person hears of the Tao, he believes half of it, and doubts the other half.

41.2 When a foolish person hears of the Tao, he laughs out loud at the very idea. If he didn't laugh, it wouldn't be the Tao.

41.3 Thus it is said: The brightness of the Tao seems like darkness, the advancement of the Tao seems like retreat, the level path seems rough, the superior path seems empty, the pure seems to be tarnished, and true virtue doesn't seem to be enough.

41.4 The virtue of caution seems like cowardice, the pure seems to be polluted, the true square seems to have no corners, the best vessels take the most time to finish, the greatest sounds cannot be heard, and the greatest image has no form.

41.5 The Tao hides in the unnamed, Yet it alone nourishes and completes all things.

42.1 The Tao gave birth to One. The One gave birth to Two. The Two gave birth to Three. The Three gave birth to all of creation.

42.2 All things carry Yin yet embrace Yang. They blend their life breaths in order to produce harmony.

42.3 People despise being orphaned, widowed and poor. But the noble ones take these as their titles.

42.4 In losing, much is gained, and in gaining, much is lost.

42.5 What others teach I too will teach: "The strong and violent will not die a natural death."

43.1 That which offers no resistance, overcomes the hardest substances. That which offers no resistance can enter where there is no space.

43.2 Few in the world can comprehend the teaching without words, or understand the value of non-action.

44.1 Which is more important, your honor or your life? Which is more valuable, your possessions or your person? Which is more destructive, success or failure?

44.2 Because of this, great love extracts a great cost and true wealth requires greater loss.

44.3 Knowing when you have enough avoids dishonour, and knowing when to stop will keep you from danger and bring you a long, happy life.

45.1 The greatest accomplishments seem imperfect, yet their usefulness is not diminished. The greatest fullness seems empty, yet it will be inexhaustible. The greatest straightness seems crooked.

45.2 The most valued skill seems like clumsiness. The greatest speech seems full of stammers.

45.3 Movement overcomes the cold, and stillness overcomes the heat. That which is pure and still is the universal ideal.

46.1 When the world follows the Tao, horses run free to fertilize the fields. When the world does not follow the Tao, war horses are bred outside the cities.

46.2 There is no greater transgression than condoning peoples selfish desires, no greater disaster than being discontent, and no greater retribution than for greed.

46.3 Whoever knows contentment will be at peace forever.

47.1 Without opening your door, you can know the whole world. Without looking out your window, you can understand the way of the Tao. The more knowledge you seek, the less you will understand.

47.2 The Master understands without leaving, sees clearly without looking, accomplishes much without doing anything.

48.1 One who seeks knowledge learns something new every day. One who seeks the Tao unlearns something new every day.

48.2 Less and less remains until you arrive at non-action. When you arrive at non-action, nothing will be left undone. Mastery of the world is achieved by letting things take their natural course.

48.3 You can not master the world by changing the natural way.

49.1 The Master has no mind of her own. She understands the mind of the people.

49.2 To those who are good she treats as good. To those who aren't good she also treats as good. This is how she attains true goodness.

49.3 She trusts people who are trustworthy. She also trusts people who aren't trustworthy. This is how she gains true trust.

49.4 The Master's mind is shut off from the world. Only for the sake of the people does she muddle her mind. They look to her in anticipation. Yet she treats them all as her children.

50.1 Those who leave the womb at birth and those who enter their source at death,

50.2 of these; three out of ten celebrate life, three out of ten celebrate death, and three out of ten simply go from life to death.

What is the reason for this? Because they are afraid of dying, therefore they can not live.

50.3 I have heard that those who celebrate life walk safely among the wild animals. When they go into battle, they remain unharmed. The animals find no place to attack them and the weapons are unable to harm them.

50.4 Why? Because they can find no place for death in them.

51.1 The Tao gives birth to all of creation. The virtue of Tao in nature nurtures them, and their family gives them their form. Their environment then shapes them into completion. That is why every creature honors the Tao and its virtue.

51.2 No one tells them to honor the Tao and its virtue, it happens all by itself.

51.3 So the Tao gives them birth, and its virtue cultivates them, cares for them, nurtures them, gives them a place of refuge and peace, helps them to grow and shelters them. It gives them life without wanting to possess them, and cares for them expecting nothing in return. It is their master, but it does not seek to dominate them. This is called the dark and mysterious virtue.

52.1 The world had a beginning which we call the Great Mother. Once we have found the Mother, we begin to know what Her children should be.

52.2 When we know we are the Mother's child, we begin to guard the qualities of the Mother in us. She will protect us from all danger even if we lose our life.

52.3 Keep your mouth closed and embrace a simple life, and you will live care-free until the end of your days.

52.4 If you try to talk your way into a better life there will be no end to your trouble.

52.5 To understand the small is called clarity. Knowing how to yield is called strength.

52.6 To use your inner light for understanding regardless of the danger is called depending on the Constant.

53.1 If I understood only one thing, I would want to use it to follow the Tao. My only fear would be one of pride.

53.2 The Tao goes in the level places, but people prefer to take the short cuts.

53.3 If too much time is spent cleaning the house the land will become neglected and full of weeds, and the granaries will soon become empty because there is no one out working the fields.

53.4 To wear fancy clothes and ornaments, to have your fill of food and drink and to waste all of your money buying possessions is called the crime of excess. Oh, how these things go against the way of the Tao!

54.1 That which is well built will never be torn down. That which is well latched can not slip away. Those who do things well will be honored from generation to generation.

54.2 If this idea is cultivated in the individual, then his virtue will become genuine. If this idea is cultivated in your family, then virtue in your family will be great. If this idea is cultivated in your community, then virtue will go a long way. If this idea is cultivated in your country, then virtue will be in many places. If this idea is cultivated in the world, then virtue will be with everyone.

54.3 Then observe the person for what the person does, and observe the family for what it does, and observe the community for what it does, and observe the country for what it does, and observe the world for what it does.

54.4 How do I know this saying is true? I observe these things and see.

55.1 One who is filled with the Tao is like a newborn child. The infant is protected from the stinging insects, wild beasts, and birds of prey. Its bones are soft, its muscles are weak, but its grip is firm and strong.
55.2 It doesn't know about the union of male and female, yet his penis can stand erect, because of the power of life within him.
55.3 It can cry all day and never become hoarse. This is perfect harmony. To understand harmony is to understand the Constant. To know the Constant is to be called 'enlightened'.
55.4 To unnaturally try to extend life is not appropriate. To try and alter the life-breath is unnatural.
55.5 The master understands that when something reaches its prime it will soon begin to decline. Changing the natural is against the way of the Tao. Those who do it will come to an early end.

56.1 Those who know do not talk. Those who talk do not know.
56.2 Stop talking, meditate in silence, blunt your sharpness, release your worries, harmonize your inner light, and become one with the dust. Doing this is called the dark and mysterious identity.
56.3 Those who have achieved the mysterious identity can not be approached, and they can not be alienated. They can not be benefited nor harmed. They can not be made noble nor to suffer disgrace. This makes them the most noble of all under the heavens.

57.1 Govern your country with integrity, Weapons of war can be used with great cunning, but loyalty is only won by not-doing. How do I know the way things are? By these:
57.2 The more prohibitions you make, the poorer people will be. The more weapons you possess, the greater the chaos in your country.
57.3 The more knowledge that is acquired, the stranger the world will become. The more laws that you make, the greater the number of criminals.
57.4 Therefore the Master says: and people become good by themselves. I seek peace, and people take care of their own problems.
57.5 I do not meddle in their personal lives, and the people become prosperous. I let go of all my desires, and the people return to the Uncarved Block.

58.1 If a government is unobtrusive, the people become whole. If a government is repressive, the people become treacherous.
58.2 Good fortune has its roots in disaster, and disaster lurks with good fortune.
58.3 Who knows why these things happen, or when this cycle will end? Good things seem to change into bad, and bad things often turn out for good. These things have always been hard to comprehend.
58.4 Thus the Master makes things change without interfering. She is probing yet causes no harm. Straightforward, yet does not impose her will. Radiant, and easy on the eye.

59.1 There is nothing better than moderation for teaching people or serving Heaven.
59.2 Those who use moderation are already on the path to the Tao. Those who follow the Tao early will have an abundance of virtue. When there is an abundance of virtue, there is nothing that can not be done. Where there is limitless ability, then the kingdom is within your grasp.
59.3 When you know the Mother of the kingdom, then you will be long enduring.
59.4 This is spoken of as the deep root and the firm trunk, the Way to a long life and great spiritual vision.

60.1 Governing a large country is like frying small fish. Too much poking spoils the meat.
60.2 When the Tao is used to govern the world then evil will lose its power to harm the people.
60.3 Not that evil will no longer exist, but only because it has lost its power.
60.4 Just as evil can lose its ability to harm, the Master shuns the use of violence. If you give evil nothing to oppose, then virtue will return by itself.

61.1 A large country should take the low place like a great watershed, which from its low position assumes the female role. The female overcomes the male by the power of her position. Her tranquillity gives rise to her humility.
61.2 If a large country takes the low position, it will be able to influence smaller countries.
61.3 If smaller countries take the lower position, then they can allow themselves to be influenced.
61.4 So both seek to take the lower position in order to influence the other, or be influenced. Large countries should desire to protect and help the people, and small countries should desire to serve others.
61.5 Both large and small countries benefit greatly from humility.

62.1 The Tao is the tabernacle of creation, it is a treasure for those who are good, and a place of refuge for those who are not.
62.2 How can those who are not good be abandoned? Words that are beautiful are worth much, but good behavior can only be learned by example.
62.3 When a new leader takes office, don't give him gifts and offerings. These things are not as valuable as teaching him about the Tao.
62.4 Why was the Tao esteemed by the ancient Masters? Is it not said: "With it we find without looking. With it we find forgiveness for our transgressions." That is why the world can not understand it.

63.1 Act by not acting; do by not doing. Enjoy the plain and simple. Find that greatness in the small.
63.2 Take care of difficult problems while they are still easy;
63.3 Do easy things before they become too hard. Difficult problems are best solved while they are easy.
63.4 Great projects are best started while they are small.
63.5 The Master never takes on more than she can handle, which means that she leaves nothing undone.
63.6 When an affirmation is given too lightly, keep your eyes open for trouble ahead. When something seems too easy, difficulty is hiding in the details.
63.7 The master expects great difficulty, so the task is always easier than planned.

64.1 Things are easier to control while things are quiet. Things are easier to plan far in advance. Things break easier while they are still brittle. Things are easier hid while they are still small.
64.2 Prevent problems before they arise. Take action before things get out of hand.
64.3 The tallest tree begins as a tiny sprout. The tallest building starts with one shovel of dirt. A journey of a thousand miles starts with a single footstep.
64.4 If you rush into action, you will fail. If you hold on too tight, you will lose your grip.
64.5 Therefore the Master lets things take their course and thus never fails. She doesn't hold on to things and never loses them. By pursuing your goals too relentlessly, you let them slip away. If you are as concerned about the outcome as you are about the beginning, then it is hard to do things wrong.
64.6 The master seeks no possessions. She learns by unlearning, thus she is able to understand all things. This gives her the ability to help all of creation.

65.1 The ancient Masters who understood the way of the Tao, did not educate people, but made them forget.
65.2 Smart people are difficult to guide, because they think they are too clever. To use cleverness to rule a country, is to lead the country to ruin. To avoid cleverness in ruling a country, is to lead the country to prosperity.
65.3 Knowing the two alternatives is a pattern. Remaining aware of the pattern is a virtue.
65.4 This dark and mysterious virtue is profound. It is opposite our natural inclination, but leads to harmony with the heavens.

66.1 Rivers and seas are rulers of the streams of hundreds of valleys because of the power of their low position.
66.2 If you want to be the ruler of people, you must speak to them like you are their servant. If you want to lead other people, you must put their interest ahead of your own. The people will not feel burdened, if a wise person is in a position of power.
66.3 The people will not feel like they are being manipulated, if a wise person is in front as their leader. The whole world will ask for her guidance, and will never get tired of her.
66.4 Because she does not like to compete, no one can compete with the things she accomplishes.

67.1 The world talks about honoring the Tao, but you can't tell it from their actions. Because it is thought of as great, the world makes light of it. It seems too easy for anyone to use.
67.2 There are three jewels that I cherish: compassion, moderation, and humility.
67.3 With compassion, you will be able to be brave, With moderation, you will be able to give to others, With humility, you will be able to become a great leader.
67.4 To abandon compassion while seeking to be brave, or abandoning moderation while being benevolent, or abandoning humility while seeking to lead will only lead to greater trouble.
67.5 The compassionate warrior will be the winner, and if compassion is your defense you will be secure. Compassion is the protector of Heaven's salvation.

68.1 The best warriors do not use violence. The best generals do not destroy indiscriminately.
68.2 The best tacticians try to avoid confrontation. The best leaders becomes servants of their people.
68.3 This is called the virtue of non-competition. This is called the power to manage others. This is called attaining harmony with the heavens.

69.1 There is an old saying: "It is better to become the passive in order to see what will happen. It is better to retreat a foot than to advance only an inch."

69.2 This is called being flexible while advancing, pushing back without using force, and destroying the enemy without engaging him.

69.3 There is no greater disaster than underestimating your enemy. Underestimating your enemy means losing your greatest assets.

69.4 When equal forces meet in battle, victory will go to the one that enters with the greatest sorrow.

70.1 My words are easy to understand and easier to put into practice. Yet no one in the world seems to understand them, and are not able to apply what I teach.

70.2 My teachings come from the ancients, the things I do are done for a reason. Because you do not know me, you are not able to understand my teachings

70.3 Because those who know me are few, my teachings become even more precious.

71.1 Knowing you don't know is wholeness. Thinking you know is a disease. Only by recognizing that you have an illness can you move to seek a cure.

71.2 The Master is whole because she sees her illnesses and treats them, and thus is able to remain whole.

72.1 When people become overly bold, then disaster will soon arrive.

72.2 Do not meddle with people's livelihood; by respecting them they will in turn respect you.

72.3 Therefore, the Master knows herself but is not arrogant. She loves herself but also loves others. This is how she is able to make appropriate choices.

73.1 Being overbold and confident is deadly. The wise use of caution will keep you alive.

73.2 One is the way to death, and the other is the way to preserve your life. Who can understand the workings of Heaven?

73.3 The Tao of the universe does not compete, yet wins; does not speak, yet responds; does not command, yet is obeyed; and does act, but is good at directing.

73.4 The nets of Heaven are wide, but nothing escapes its grasp.

74.1 If you do not fear death, then how can it intimidate you? If you aren't afraid of dying, there is nothing you can not do.

74.2 -

74.3 Those who harm others are like inexperienced boys trying to take the place of a great lumberjack. Trying to fill his shoes will only get them seriously hurt.

75.1 When people go hungry, the government's taxes are too high.

75.2 When people become rebellious, the government has become too intrusive.

75.3 When people begin to view death lightly, wealthy people have too much which causes others to starve. Only those who do not cling to their life can save it.

76.1 The living are soft and yielding; the dead are rigid and stiff.

76.2 Living plants are flexible and tender; the dead are brittle and dry.

76.3 Those who are stiff and rigid are the disciples of death. Those who are soft and yielding are the disciples of life.

76.4 -

76.5 The rigid and stiff will be broken. The soft and yielding will overcome.

77.1 The Tao of Heaven works in the world like the drawing of a bow. The top is bent downward; the bottom is bent up. The excess is taken from, and the deficient is given to.

77.2 The Tao works to use the excess, and gives to that which is depleted. The way of people is to take from the depleted, and give to those who already have an excess.

77.3 Who is able to give to the needy from their excess? Only someone who is following the way of the Tao.

77.4 This is why the Master gives expecting nothing in return. She does not dwell on her past accomplishments, and does not glory in any praise.

78.1 Water is the softest and most yielding substance. Yet nothing is better than water, for overcoming the hard and rigid, because nothing can compete with it.

78.2 Everyone knows that the soft and yielding overcomes the rigid and hard, but few can put this knowledge into practice.

78.3 Therefore the Master says: "Only he who is the lowest servant of the kingdom, is worthy to become its ruler. He who is willing to tackle the most unpleasant tasks, is the best ruler in the world." True sayings seem contradictory.

79.1 Difficulties remain, even after solving a problem. How then can we consider that as good?

79.2 Therefore the Master does what she knows is right, and makes no demands of others.

79.3 A virtuous person will do the right thing, and persons with no virtue will take advantage of others.

79.4 The Tao does not choose sides, the good person receives from the Tao because she is on its side.

80.1 Small countries with few people are best. Give them all of the things they want, and they will see that they do not need them. Teach them that death is a serious thing, and to be content to never leave their homes.

80.2 Even though they have plenty of horses, wagons and boats, they won't feel that they need to use them. Even if they have weapons and shields, they will keep them out of sight.

80.3 Let people enjoy the simple technologies, let them enjoy their food, let them make their own clothes, let them be content with their own homes, and delight in the customs that they cherish.

80.4 Although the next country is close enough that they can hear their roosters crowing and dogs barking, they are content never to visit each other all of the days of their life.

81.1 True words do not sound beautiful; beautiful sounding words are not true.

81.2 Wise men don't need to debate; men who need to debate are not wise.

81.3 Wise men are not scholars, and scholars are not wise.

81.4 The Master desires no possessions. Since the things she does is for the people, she has more than she needs. The more she gives to others, the more she has for herself.

81.5 The Tao of Heaven nourishes by not forcing. The Tao of the Wise person acts by not competing.

Chan version

- 1.1 The Tao that can be told of is not the eternal Tao; The name that can be named is not the eternal name.
- 1.2 The Nameless is the origin of Heaven and Earth; The Named is the mother of all things.
- 1.3 Therefore let there always be non-being, so we may see their subtlety, And let there always be being, so we may see their outcome.
- 1.4 The two are the same, But after they are produced, they have different names.
- 1.5 They both may be called deep and profound. Deeper and more profound, The door to all subtleties!

- 2.1 When all the people of the world know beauty as beauty, There arises the recognition of ugliness.
- 2.2 When they all know the good as good, There arises the recognition of evil.
- 2.3 Therefore: Being and non-being produce each other; Difficult and easy complete each other; Long and short contrast each other;
- 2.4 High and low distinguish each other; Sound and voice harmonize each other; Front and behind accompany each other.
- 2.5 Therefore the sage manages affairs without action And spreads doctrines without words.
- 2.6 All things arise, and he does not turn away from them. He produces them but does not take possession of them.
- 2.7 He acts but does not rely on his own ability. He accomplishes his task but does not claim credit for it. It is precisely because he does not claim credit that his accomplishment remains with him.

- 3.1 Do not exalt the worthy, so that the people shall not compete.
- 3.2 Do not value rare treasures, so that the people shall not steal.
- 3.3 Do not display objects of desire, so that the people's hearts shall not be disturbed.
- 3.4 Therefore in the government of the sage, He keeps their hearts vacuous, Fills their bellies, Weakens their ambitions, And strengthens their bones,
- 3.5 He always causes his people to be without knowledge (cunning) or desire, And the crafty to be afraid to act.
- 3.6 By acting without action, all things will be in order.

- 4.1 Tao is empty (like a bowl). It may be used but its capacity is never exhausted
- 4.2 It is bottomless, perhaps the ancestor of all things.
- 4.3 It blunts its sharpness. It unties its tangles. It softens its light. It becomes one with the dusty world.
- 4.4 Deep and still, it appears to exist forever.
- 4.5 I do not know whose son it is. It seems to have existed before the Lord.

- 5.1 Heaven and Earth are not humane. They regard all things a straw dogs.
- 5.2 The sage is not humane. He regards all people as straw dogs.
- 5.3 How Heaven and Earth are like a bellows. While vacuous, it is never exhausted. When active, it produces even more.
- 5.4 Much talk will of course come to a dead end. It is better to keep to the centre.

- 6.1 The spirit of the valley never dies. It is called the subtle and profound female.
- 6.2 The gate of the subtle and profound female Is the root of Heaven and Earth.
- 6.3 It is continuous, and seems to be always existing. Use it and you will never wear it out.

- 7.1 Heaven is eternal and Earth everlasting.
- 7.2 They can be eternal and everlasting because they do not exist for themselves, And for this reason can exist forever.
- 7.3 Therefore the sage places himself in the background but finds himself in the foreground.
- 7.4 He puts himself away, and yet he always remains.
- 7.5 Is it not because he has no personal interests? This is the reason why his personal interests are fulfilled.

- 8.1 The best (man) is like water. Water is good; it benefits all things and does not compete with them. It dwells in (lowly) places that all disdain. This is why it is so near to Tao.
- 8.2 (The best man) in his dwelling loves the earth. In his heart, he loves what is profound. In his associations, he loves humanity. In his words, he loves faithfulness.
- 8.3 In government, he loves order. In handling affairs, he loves competence. In his activities, he loves timeliness.
- 8.4 It is because he does not compete that he is without reproach.

9.1 To hold and fill a cup to overflowing Is not as good as to stop in time.
9.2 Sharpen a sword edge to its very sharpest, And the (edge) will not last long.
9.3 When gold and jade fill your hall, You will not be able to keep them.
9.4 To be proud with honour and wealth Is to cause one's own downfall.
9.5 withdraw as soon as your work is done. Such is Heaven's Way.

10.1 Can you keep the spirit and embrace the One without departing from them?
10.2 Can you concentrate your vital force and achieve the highest degree of weakness like an infant?
10.3 Can you clean and purify your profound insight so it will be spotless?
10.4 Can you love the people and govern the state without knowledge (cunning)?
10.5 Can you play the role of the female in the opening and closing of the gates of Heaven?
10.6 Can you understand all and penetrate all without taking any action?
10.7 To produce things and to rear them, To produce, but not to take possession of them, To act, but not to rely on one's own ability, To lead them, but not to master them - This is called profound and secret virtue.

11.1 Thirty spokes are united around the hub to make a wheel, But it is on its non-being that the utility of the carriage depends.
11.2 Clay is moulded to form a utensil, But it is on its non-being that the utility of the utensil depends.
11.3 Doors and windows are cut out to make a room, But it is on its non-being that the utility of the room depends.
11.4 Therefore turn being into advantage, and turn non-being into utility.

12.1 The five colours cause one's eyes to be blind. The five tones cause one's ears to be deaf. The five flavours cause one's palate to be spoiled.
12.2 Racing and hunting cause one's mind to be mad. Goods that are hard to get injure one's activities.
12.3 For this reason the sage is concerned with the belly and not the eyes, Therefore he rejects the one but accepts the other.

13.1 Be apprehensive when receiving favour or disgrace. Regard great trouble as seriously as you regard your body.
13.2 What is meant by being apprehensive when receiving favour or disgrace? Favour is considered inferior. Be apprehensive when you receive them and also be apprehensive when you lose them. This is what is meant by being apprehensive when receiving favour or disgrace.
13.3 What does it mean to regard great trouble as seriously as you regard your body? The reason why I have great trouble is that I have a body (and am attached to it). If I have no body, What trouble could I have?
13.4 Therefore he who values the world as his body may be entrusted with the empire. He who loves the world as his body may be entrusted with the empire.

14.1 We look at it and do not see it; Its name is The Invisible. We listen to it and do not hear it; Its name is The Inaudible. We touch it and do not find it; Its name is The Subtle (formless).
14.2 These three cannot be further inquired into, And hence merge into one.
14.3 Going up high, it is not bright, and coming down low, it is not dark. Infinite and boundless, it cannot be given any name; It reverts to nothingness.
14.4 This is called shape without shape, Form without objects. It is the Vague and Elusive. Meet it and you will not see its head. Follow it and you will not see its back.
14.5 Hold on to the Tao of old in order to master the things of the present. From this one may know the primeval beginning (of the universe). This is called the bond of Tao.

15.1 Of old those who were the best rulers were subtly mysterious and profoundly penetrating; Too deep to comprehend.
15.2 And because they cannot be comprehended, I can only describe them arbitrarily: Cautious, like crossing a frozen stream in the winter, Being at a loss, like one fearing danger on all sides, Reserved, like one visiting,
15.3 Supple and pliant, like ice about to melt. Genuine, like a piece of uncarved wood, Open and broad, like a valley, Merged and undifferentiated, like muddy water.
15.4 Who can make muddy water gradually clear through tranquillity? Who can make the still gradually come to life through activity?
15.5 He who embraces this Tao does not want to fill himself to overflowing. It is precisely because there is no overflowing that he is beyond wearing out and renewal.

16.1 Attain complete vacuity. Maintain steadfast quietude.
16.2 All things come into being, And I see thereby their return. All things flourish, But each one returns to its root.

16.3 This return to its root means tranquillity. It is called returning to its destiny. To return to destiny is called the eternal (Tao). To know the eternal is called enlightenment. Not to know the eternal is to act blindly to result in disaster.

16.4 He who knows the eternal is all-embracing. Being all-embracing, he is impartial. Being impartial, he is kingly (universal). Being kingly, he is one with Nature. Being one with Nature, he is in accord with Tao.

16.5 Being in accord with Tao, he is everlasting And is free from danger throughout his lifetime.

17.1 The best (rulers) are those whose existence is (merely) known by the people. The next best are those who are loved and praised. The next are those who are feared. And the next are those who are despised.

17.2 It is only when one does not have enough faith in others that others will have no faith in him.

17.3 (The great rulers) value their words highly. They accomplish their task; they complete their work. Nevertheless their people say that they simply follow Nature.

18.1 When the great Tao declined, The doctrine of humanity and righteousness arose.

18.2 When knowledge and wisdom appeared, There emerged great hypocrisy.

18.3 When the six family relationships are not in harmony, There will be the advocacy of filial piety and deep love to children.

18.4 When a country is in disorder, There will be the praise of loyal ministers.

19.1 Abandon sageliness and discard wisdom; Then the people will benefit a hundredfold.

19.2 Abandon humanity and discard righteousness; Then the people will return to filial piety and deep love.

19.3 Abandon skill and discard profit; Then there will be no thieves or robbers.

19.4 However, these three things are ornaments (wen) and are not adequate.

19.5 Therefore let people hold on to these: Manifest plainness, Embrace simplicity, Reduce selfishness, Have few desires.

20.1 Abandon learning and there will be no sorrow. How much difference is there between "Yes, sir," and "Of course not"? How much difference is there between "good" and "evil"?

20.2 What people dread, do not fail to dread. But, alas, how confused, and the end is not yet.

20.3 The multitude are merry, as though feasting on a day of sacrifice. Or like ascending a tower in the springtime. I alone am inert, showing no sign (of desires), Like an infant that has not yet smiled. Wearied, indeed, I seem to be without a home.

20.4 The multitude all possess more than enough. I alone seem to have lost all. Mine is indeed the mind of an ignorant man, Indiscriminate and dull!

20.5 Common folks are indeed brilliant; I alone seem to be in the dark. Common folks see differences and are clear-cut; I alone make no distinctions. I seem drifting as the sea; Like the wind blowing about, seemingly without destination.

20.6 The multitude all have a purpose; I alone seem to be stubborn and rustic. I alone differ from others, And value drawing sustenance from Mother (Tao).

21.1 The all-embracing quality of the great virtue follows alone from the Tao.

21.2 The thing that is called Tao is eluding and vague. Vague and eluding, there is in it the form. Eluding and vague, in it are things. Deep and obscure, in it is the essence. The essence is very real; in it are evidences.

21.3 From the time of old until now, its name (manifestations) ever remains. By which we may see the beginning of all things.

21.4 How do I know that the beginning of all things are so? Through this (Tao).

22.1 To yield is to be preserved whole. To be bent is to become straight. To be empty is to be full. To be worn out is to be renewed. To have little is to possess. To have plenty is to be perplexed.

22.2 Therefore the sage embraces the One And becomes the model of the world.

22.3 He does not justify himself; therefore he becomes prominent. He does not boast of himself; therefore he is given credit. He does not brag; therefore he can endure for long.

22.4 It is precisely because he does not compete that the world cannot compete with him.

22.5 Is the ancient saying, "To yield is to be preserved whole," empty words? Truly he will be preserved and (prominence and credit) will come to him.

23.1 Nature says few words. For the same reason a whirlwind does not last a whole morning. Nor does a rainstorm last a whole day.

23.2 What causes them? It is Heaven and Earth (Nature). If even Heaven and Earth cannot make them last long, How much less can man?

23.3 Therefore he who follows Tao is identified with Tao. He who follows virtue is identified with virtue. He who abandons (Tao) is identified with the abandonment (of Tao). He who is identified with Tao - Tao is also happy to have him.

23.4 He who is identified with virtue - virtue is also happy to have him. And he who is identified with the abandonment (of Tao) - the abandonment (of Tao) is also happy to abandon him.

23.5 Those who lack trust will not be trusted. It is only when one does not have enough faith in others that others will have no faith in him.

24.1 He who stands on tiptoe is not steady. He who strides forward does not go.

24.2 He who shows himself is not luminous. He who justifies himself is not prominent.

24.3 He who boasts of himself is not given credit. He who brags does not endure for long.

24.4 From the point of view of Tao, these are like remnants of food and tumours of action, Which all creatures detest. Therefore those who possess Tao turn away from them.

25.1 There was something undifferentiated and yet complete, Which existed before heaven and earth. Soundless and formless, it depends on nothing and does not change. It operates everywhere and is free from danger. It may be considered the mother of the universe.

25.2 I do not know its name; I call it Tao. If forced to give it a name, I shall call it Great.

25.3 Now being great means functioning everywhere. Functioning everywhere means far-reaching. Being far-reaching means returning to the original point.

25.4 Therefore Tao is great Heaven is great. Earth is great. And the king is also great.

25.5 Man models himself after Earth. Earth models itself after Heaven. Heaven models itself after Tao. And Tao models itself after Nature.

26.1 The heavy is the root of the light. The tranquil is the ruler of the hasty.

26.2 Therefore the sage travels all day Without leaving his baggage. Even at the sight of magnificent scenes He remains leisurely and indifferent.

26.3 How is it that a lord with ten thousand chariots Should behave lightheartedly in his empire?

26.4 If he is lighthearted, the minister will be destroyed. If he is hasty, the ruler is lost.

27.1 A good traveller leaves no track or trace. A good speech leaves no flaws. A good reckoner uses no counters.

27.2 A well-shut door needs no bolts, and yet it cannot be opened. A well-tied knot needs no rope and yet none can untie it.

27.3 Therefore the sage is always good in saving men and consequently no man is rejected. He is always good in saving things and consequently nothing is rejected. This is called following the light (of Nature).

27.4 Therefore the good man is the teacher of the bad, And the bad is the material from which the good may learn.

27.5 He who does not value the teacher, Or greatly care for the material, Is greatly deluded although he may be learned. Such is the essential mystery.

28.1 He who knows the male and keeps to the female Becomes the ravine of the world. Being the ravine of the world, He will never depart from eternal virtue, But returns to a state of infancy.

28.2 He who knows the white and yet keeps to the black Becomes the model for the world. Being the model for the world, He will never deviate from eternal virtue, But returns to the state of the non-ultimate.

28.3 He who knows glory but keeps to humility Becomes the valley of the world, He will be proficient in eternal virtue, And returns to the state of simplicity (uncarved wood).

28.4 When the uncarved wood is broken up, it is turned into concrete things. But when the sage uses it, he becomes the leading official. Therefore the great ruler does not cut up.

29.1 When one desires to take over the empire and act on it (interfere with it), I see that he will not succeed.

29.2 The empire is a spiritual thing, and should not be acted on. He who acts on it harms it. He who holds on to it loses it.

29.3 Among creatures some lead and some follow. Some blow hot and some blow cold. Some are strong and some are weak. Some may break and some may fall.

29.4 Therefore the sage discards the extremes, the extravagant, and the excessive.

30.1 He who assists the ruler with Tao does not dominate the world with force. The use of force usually bring requital.

30.2 Wherever armies are stationed, briars and thorns grow. Great wars are always followed by famines.

30.3 A good (general) achieves his purpose and stops, But dares not seek to dominate the world.

30.4 He achieves his purpose but does not brag about it. He achieves his purpose but does not boast about it. He achieves his purpose but is not proud of it. He achieves his purpose but only as an unavoidable step. He achieves his purpose but does not aim to dominate.

30.5 (For) after things reach their prime, they begin to grow old, Which means being contrary to Tao. Whatever is contrary to Tao will soon perish.

31.1 Fine weapons are instruments of evil. They are hated by men. Therefore those who possess Tao turn away from them.

31.2 The good ruler when at home honours the left. When at war he honours the right.

31.3 Weapons are instruments of evil, not the instruments of a good ruler. When he uses them unavoidably, he regards calm restraint as the best principle.

31.4 Even when he is victorious, he does not regard it as praiseworthy, For to praise victory is to delight in the slaughter of men. He who delights in the slaughter of men will not succeed in the empire.

31.5 In auspicious affairs, the left is honoured. In inauspicious affairs, the right is honoured. The lieutenant general stands on the left. The senior general stands on the right. This is to say that the arrangement follows that of funeral ceremonies.

31.6 For the slaughter of the multitude, let us weep with sorrow and grief. For a victory, let us observe the occasion with funeral ceremonies.

32.1 Tao is eternal and has no name. Though its simplicity seems insignificant, none in the world can master it.

32.2 If kings and barons would hold on to it, all things would submit to the spontaneously.

32.3 Heaven and earth unite to drip sweet dew. Without the command of men, its drips evenly over all.

32.4 As soon as there were regulations and institutions, there were names. As soon as there were names, know that it is time to stop. It is by knowing when to stop that one can be free from danger.

32.5 Analogically, Tao in the world may be compared to rivers and streams running into the sea.

33.1 He who knows others is wise; He who knows himself is enlightened.

33.2 He who conquers others has physical strength. He who conquers himself is strong.

33.3 He who is contented is rich. He who acts with vigour has will.

33.4 He who does not lose his place (with Tao) will endure. He who dies but does not really perish enjoys long life.

34.1 The Great Tao flows everywhere. It may go left or right.

34.2 All things depend on it for life, and it does not turn away from them. It accomplishes its task, but does not claim credit for it. It clothes and feeds all things but does not claim to be master over them.

34.3 Always without desires it may be called the Small.

34.4 All things come to it and it does not master them; it may be called the Great.

34.5 Therefore (the sage) never strives himself for the great, and thereby the great is achieved.

35.1 Hold fast to the great form (Tao), And all the world will come. They come and will encounter no harm; But enjoy comfort, peace, and health.

35.2 When there are music and dainties, Passing strangers will stay.

35.3 But the words uttered by Tao, How insipid and tasteless! We look at it; it is imperceptible. We listen to it; it is inaudible. We use it; it is inexhaustible.

36.1 In order to contract, It is necessary first to expand. In order to weaken, It is necessary first to strengthen. In order to destroy, It is necessary first to promote. In order to grasp, It is necessary first to give.

36.2 This is called subtle light. The weak and the tender overcome the hard and the strong.

36.3 Fish should not be taken away from water. And sharp weapons of state should not be displayed to the people.

37.1 Tao invariably takes no action, and yet there is nothing left undone.

37.2 If kings and barons can keep it, all things will transform spontaneously. If, after transformation, they should desire to be active, I would restrain them with simplicity, which has no name.

37.3 Simplicity, which has no name, is free of desires, Being free of desires, it is tranquil. And the world will be at peace of its own accord.

38.1 The man of superior virtue is not (conscious of) his virtue, And in this way he really possesses virtue. The man of inferior virtue never loses (sight of) his virtue, And in this way he loses his virtue.

38.2 The man of superior virtue takes no action, but has no ulterior motive to do so. The man of inferior virtue takes action, and has an ulterior motive to do so.

38.3 The man of superior humanity takes action, but has no ulterior motive to do so. The man of superior righteousness takes action, and has an ulterior motive to do so. The man of superior propriety takes action, And when people do not respond to it, he will stretch his arms and force it on them.

38.4 Therefore when Tao is lost, only then does the doctrine of virtue arise. When virtue is lost, only then does the doctrine of humanity arise. When humanity is lost, only then does the doctrine of righteousness arise. When righteousness is lost, only then does the doctrine of propriety arise.

38.5 Now, propriety is a superficial expression of loyalty and faithfulness, and the beginning of disorder. Those who are the first to know have the flowers of Tao but are the beginning of ignorance.

38.6 For this reason the great man dwells in the thick, and does not rest with the thin. He dwells in the fruit, and does not rest with the flower. Therefore he rejects the one, and accepts the other.

39.1 Of old those that obtained the One: Heaven obtained the One and became clear. Earth obtained the One and became tranquil. The spiritual beings obtained the One and became divine.

39.2 The valley obtained the One and became full. The myriad things obtained the One and lived and grew. Kings and barons obtained the One and became rulers of the empire. What made them so is the One.

39.3 If heaven had not thus become clear, It would soon crack. If the earth had not thus become tranquil, It would soon be shaken. If the spiritual beings had not thus become divine, They would soon wither away.

39.4 If the valley had not thus become full, It would soon become exhausted. If the myriad things had not thus lived and grown, They would soon become extinct. If kings and barons had not thus become honourable and high in position, They would soon fall.

39.5 Therefore humble station is the basis of honour. The low is the foundation of the high.

39.6 For this reason kings and barons call themselves children without parents, lonely people without spouses, and men without food to eat. Is this not regarding humble station as the basis of honour? Is it not?

39.7 Therefore enumerate all the parts of a chariot as you may, and you still have no chariot.

39.8 Rather than jingle like the jade, Rumble like the rocks.

40.1 Reversion is the action of Tao. Weakness is the function of Tao.

40.2 All things in the world come from being. And being comes from non-being.

41.1 When the highest type of men hear Tao, They diligently practice it. When the average type of men hear Tao, They half believe in it.

41.2 When the lowest type of men hear Tao, They laugh heartily at it. If they did not laugh at it, it would not be Tao.

41.3 Therefore there is the established saying: The Tao which is bright appears to be dark. The Tao which goes forward appears to fall backward. The Tao which is level appears uneven. Great virtue appears like a valley (hollow). Great purity appears like disgrace. Far-reaching virtue appears as if insufficient.

41.4 Solid virtue appears as if unsteady. True substance appears to be changeable. The great square has no corners. The great implement (or talent) is slow to finish (or mature). Great music sounds faint. Great form has no shape.

41.5 Tao is hidden and nameless. Yet it is Tao alone that skillfully provides for all and brings them to perfection.

42.1 Tao produced the One. The One produced the two. The two produced the three. And the three produced the ten thousand things.

42.2 The ten thousand things carry the yin and embrace the yang, and through the blending of the material force they achieve harmony.

42.3 People hate to be children without parents, lonely people without spouses, or men without food to eat, And yet kings and lords call themselves by these names.

42.4 Therefore it is often the case that things gain by losing and lose by gaining.

42.5 What others have taught, I teach also: "Violent and fierce people do not die a natural death." I shall make this the father of my teaching.

43.1 The softest things in the world overcome the hardest things in the world. Non-being penetrates that in which there is no space. Through this I know the advantage of taking no action.

43.2 Few in the world can understand the teaching without words and the advantage of taking no action.

44.1 Which does one love more, fame or one's own life? Which is more valuable, one's own life or wealth? Which is worse, gain or loss?

44.2 Therefore he who has lavish desires will spend extravagantly. He who hoards will lose most heavily.

44.3 He who is contented suffers no disgrace. He who knows when to stop is free from danger. Therefore he can long endure.

45.1 What is most perfect seems to be incomplete; But its utility is unimpaired. What is most full seems to be empty; But its usefulness is inexhaustible. What is most straight seems to be crooked.

45.2 The greatest skill seems to be clumsy. The greatest eloquence seems to stutter.

45.3 Hasty movement overcomes cold, (But) tranquility overcomes heat. By being greatly tranquil, One is qualified to be the ruler of the world.

46.1 When Tao prevails in the world, galloping horses are turned back to fertilize (the fields with the dung). When Tao does not prevail in the world, war horses thrive in the suburbs.

46.2 There is no calamity greater than lavish desires. There is no greater guilt than discontentment. And there is no greater disaster than greed.

46.3 He who is contented with contentment is always contented.

47.1 One may know the world without going out of doors. One may see the Way of Heaven without looking through the windows. The further one goes, the less one knows.

47.2 Therefore the sage knows without going about, Understands without seeing, And accomplishes without any action.

48.1 The pursuit of learning is to increase day after day. The pursuit of Tao is to decrease day after day.

48.2 It is to decrease and further decrease until one reaches the point of taking no action. No action is undertaken, And yet nothing is left undone. An empire is often brought to order by having no activity.

48.3 If one (likes to) undertake activity, he is not qualified to govern the empire.

49.1 The sage has no fixed (personal) ideas. He regards the people's ideas as his own.

49.2 I treat those who are good with goodness. And I also treat those who are not good with goodness. Thus goodness is attained.

49.3 I am honest to those who are honest, And I am also honest to those who are not honest. Thus honesty is attained.

49.4 The sage, in the government of his empire, has no subjective viewpoint. His mind forms a harmonious whole with that of his people. The all lend their eyes and ears, And he treats them all as infants.

50.1 Man comes in to life and goes out to death.

50.2 Three out of ten are companions of life. Three out of ten are companions of death. And three out of ten in their lives lead from activity to death. And for what reason? Because of man's intensive striving after life.

50.3 I have heard that one who is a good preserver of his life will not meet tigers or wild buffaloes, And in fighting will not try to escape from weapons of war.

50.4 The wild buffalo cannot butt its horns against him, The tiger cannot fasten its claws in him, And weapons of war cannot thrust their blades into him. And for what reason? Because in him there is no room for death.

51.1 Tao produces them. Virtue fosters them. Matter gives them physical form. The circumstances and tendencies complete them. Therefore the ten thousand things esteem Tao and honour virtue.

51.2 Tao is esteemed and virtue is honoured without anyone's order! They always come spontaneously. Therefore the Tao produces them and virtue fosters them. They rear them and develop them. They give them security and give them peace. They nurture them and protect them.

51.3 (Tao) produces them but does not take possession of them. It acts, but does not rely on its own ability. It leads them but does not master them. This is called profound and secret virtue.

52.1 There was a beginning of the universe Which may be called the Mother of the Universe.

52.2 He who has found the mother (Tao) And thereby understands her sons (things), And having understood the sons, Still keeps to its mother, Will be free from danger throughout his lifetime.

52.3 Close the mouth. Shut the doors (of cunning and desires). And to the end of life there will be (peace) without toil.

52.4 Open the mouth. Meddle with affairs. And to the end of life there will be no salvation.

52.5 Seeing what is small is called enlightenment. Keeping to weakness is called strength.

52.6 Use the light. Revert to enlightenment. And thereby avoid danger to one's life - This is called practicing the eternal.

53.1 If I had but little knowledge I should, in walking on a broad way, Fear getting off the road.

53.2 Broad ways are extremely even, But people are fond of bypaths.

53.3 The courts are exceedingly splendid, While the fields are exceedingly weedy, And the granaries are exceedingly empty.

53.4 Elegant clothes are worn, Sharp weapons are carried, Food and drinks are enjoyed beyond limit, And wealth and treasures are accumulated in excess. This is robbery and extravagance. This is indeed not Tao (the Way).

54.1 He who is well established (in Tao) cannot be pulled away. He who has a firm grasp (of Tao) cannot be separated from it. Thus from generation to generation his ancestral sacrifice will never be suspended.

54.2 When one cultivates virtue in his person, it becomes genuine virtue. When one cultivates virtue in his family, it becomes overflowing virtue. When one cultivates virtue in his community, it becomes lasting virtue. When one cultivates virtue in his country, it becomes abundant virtue. When one cultivates virtue in the world, it becomes universal.

54.3 Therefore the person should be viewed as a person. The family should be viewed as a family. The community should be viewed as a community. The country should be viewed as a country. And the world should be viewed as the world.

54.4 How do I know this to be the case in the world? Through this.

55.1 He who possesses virtue in abundance May be compared to an infant. Poisonous insects will not sting him. Fierce beasts will not seize him. Birds of prey will not strike him. His bones are weak, his sinews tender, but his grasp is firm.

55.2 He does not yet know the union of male and female, But his organ is aroused, This means that his essence is at its height.

55.3 He may cry all day without becoming hoarse, This means that his (natural) harmony is perfect. To know harmony means to be in accord with the eternal. To be in accord with the eternal means to be enlightened.

55.4 To force the growth of life means ill omen. For the mind to employ the vital force without restraint means violence.

55.5 After all things reach their prime, they begin to grow old, Which means being contrary to Tao. Whatever is contrary to Tao will soon perish.

56.1 He who knows does not speak. He who speaks does not know.

56.2 Close the mouth. Shut the doors. Blunt the sharpness. Untie the tangles. Soften the light. Become one with the dusty world. This is called the profound identification.

56.3 Therefore it is impossible either to be intimate and close to him or to be distant and indifferent to him. It is impossible either to benefit him or to harm him. It is impossible either to honour him or disgrace him. For this reason he is honoured by the world.

57.1 Govern the state with correctness. Operate the army with surprise tactics. Administer the empire by engaging in no activity. How do I know that this should be so? Through this:

57.2 The more taboos and prohibitions there are in the world, The poorer the people will be. The more sharp weapons the people have, The more troubled the state will be.

57.3 The more cunning and skill a man possesses, The more vicious things will appear. The more laws and orders are made prominent, The more thieves and robbers there will be.

57.4 Therefore the sage says: I take no action and the people of themselves are transformed. I love tranquillity and the people of themselves become correct.

57.5 I engage in no activity and the people of themselves become prosperous. I have no desires and the people of themselves become simple.

58.1 When the government is non-discriminative and dull, The people are contented and generous. When the government is searching and discriminative, The people are disappointed and contentious.

58.2 Calamity is that upon which happiness depends; Happiness is that in which calamity is latent.

58.3 Who knows when the limit will be reached? Is there no correctness (used to govern the world)? Then the correct again becomes the perverse. And the good again will become evil. The people have been deluded for a long time.

58.4 Therefore the sage is as pointed as a square but does not pierce. He is as acute as a knife but does not cut. He is as straight as an unbent line but does not extend. He is as bright as light but does not dazzle.

59.1 To rule people and to serve Heaven there is nothing better than to be frugal.

59.2 Only by being frugal can one recover quickly. To recover quickly means to accumulate virtue heavily. By the heavy accumulation of virtue one can overcome everything. If one can overcome everything, then he will acquire a capacity the limit of which is beyond anyone's knowledge. When his capacity is beyond anyone's knowledge, he is fit to rule a state.

59.3 He who possesses the Mother (Tao) of the state will last long.

59.4 This means that the roots are deep and the stalks are firm, which is the way of long life and everlasting vision.

60.1 Ruling a big country is like cooking a small fish.

60.2 If Tao is employed to rule the empire, Spiritual beings will lose their supernatural power.

60.3 Not that they lose their spiritual power, But their spiritual power can no longer harm people. Not only will their supernatural power not harm people, But the sage also will not harm people.

60.4 When both do not harm each other, Virtue will be accumulated in both for the benefit (of the people).

61.1 A big country may be compared to the lower part of a river. It is the converging point of the world; It is the female of the world. The female always overcomes the male by tranquillity, And by tranquillity she is underneath.
61.2 A big state can take over a small state if it places itself below the small state; And the small state can take over a big state if it places itself below the big state.
61.3 Thus some, by placing themselves below, take over (others), And some, by being (naturally) low, take over (other states).
61.4 After all, what a big state wants is but to annex and herd others, And what a small state wants is merely to join and serve others.
61.5 Since both big and small states get what they want, The big state should place itself low.

62.1 Tao is the storehouse of all things. It is the good man's treasure and the bad man's refuge.
62.2 Fine words can buy honour, And fine deeds can gain respect from others. Even if a man is bad, when has (Tao) rejected him?
62.3 Therefore on the occasion of crowning an emperor or installing the three ministers, Rather than present four large pieces of jade preceded by teams of four horses, It is better to kneel and offer this Tao.
62.4 Why did the ancients highly value this Tao? Did they not say, "Those who seek shall have it and those who sin shall be freed"? For this reason it is valued by the world.

63.1 Act without action. Do without ado. Taste without tasting.
63.2 Whether it is big or small, many or few, repay hatred with virtue.
63.3 Prepare for the difficult while it is still easy. Deal with the big while it is still small.
63.4 Difficult undertakings have always started with what is easy. And great undertakings have always started with what is small.
63.5 Therefore the sage never strives for the great, And thereby the great is achieved.
63.6 He who makes rash promises surely lacks faith. He who takes things too easily will surely encounter much difficulty.
63.7 For this reason even the sage regards things as difficult. And therefore he encounters no difficulty.

64.1 What remains still is easy to hold. What is not yet manifest is easy to plan for. What is brittle is easy to crack. What is minute is easy to scatter.
64.2 Deal with things before they appear. Put things in order before disorder arises.
64.3 A tree as big as a man's embrace grows from a tiny shoot. A tower of nine stories begins with a heap of earth. The journey of a thousand li starts from where one stands.
64.4 He who takes action fails. He who grasps things loses them. For this reason the sage takes no action and therefore does not fail. He grasps nothing and therefore does not lose anything;
64.5 A sane man is sane in knowing what things he can spare, In not wishing what most people wish, In not reaching for things that seem rare.
64.6 Therefore the sage desires to have no desire, He does not value rare treasures. He learns to be unlearned, and returns to what the multitude has missed (Tao). Thus he supports all things in their natural state but does not take any action.

65.1 In ancient times those who practiced Tao well Did not seek to enlighten people, but to make them ignorant.
65.2 People are difficult to govern because they have too much knowledge. Therefore he who rules the state through knowledge is a robber of the state; He who rules a state not through knowledge is a blessing to the state.
65.3 One who knows these two things also (knows) the standard. Always to know the standard is called profound and secret virtue.
65.4 Virtue becomes deep and far-reaching, And with it all things return to their original state. Then complete harmony will be reached.

66.1 The great rivers and seas are kings of all mountains streams Because they skillfully stay below them. That is why they can be their kings.
66.2 Therefore, in order to be the superior of the people, One must, in the use of words, place himself below them. And in order to be ahead of the people, One must, in one's own person, follow them.
66.3 Therefore the sage rejoices in praising him without getting tired of it.
66.4 It is precisely because he does not compete that the world cannot compete with him.

67.1 All the world says that my Tao is great and does not seem to resemble (the ordinary). It is precisely because it is great that it does not resemble (the ordinary). If it did resemble, it would have been small for a long time.
67.2 I have three treasures. Guard and keep them: The first is deep love, The second is frugality, And the third is not to dare to be ahead of the world.

67.3 Because of deep love, one is courageous. Because of frugality, one is generous. Because of not daring to be ahead of the world, one becomes the leader of the world.

67.4 Now, to be courageous by forsaking deep love, To be generous by forsaking frugality, And to be ahead of the world by forsaking following behind - This is fatal.

67.5 For deep love helps one to win in the case of attack, And to be firm in the case of defense. When Heaven is to save a person, Heaven will protect him through deep love.

68.1 A skillful leader of troops is not oppressive with his military strength. A skilful fighter does not become angry.

68.2 A skilful conqueror does not compete with people. One who is skilful in using men puts himself below them.

68.3 This is called the virtue of non-competing. This is called the strength to use men. This is called matching Heaven, the highest principle of old.

69.1 The strategists say: "I dare not take the offensive but I take the defensive; I dare not advance an inch but I retreat a foot."

69.2 This means: To march without formation, To stretch one's arm without showing it, To confront enemies without seeming to meet them, To hold weapons without seeming to have them.

69.3 There is no greater disaster than to make light the enemy.

69.4 Therefore when armies are mobilized and issues joined, The man who is sorry over the fact will win.

70.1 My doctrines are easy to understand and very easy to practice, But none in the world can understand or practice them.

70.2 My doctrines have a source (Nature); my deeds have a master (Tao). It is because people do not understand this that they do not understand me. Few people know me, and therefore I am highly valued.

70.3 Therefore the sage wears a coarse cloth on top and carries jade within his bosom.

71.1 To know that you do not know is the best. To pretend to know when you do not know is a disease. Only when one recognizes this disease as a disease can one be free from the disease.

71.2 The sage is free from the disease. Because he recognizes this disease to be disease, he is free from it.

72.1 When the people do not fear what is dreadful, Then what is greatly dreadful will fall upon them.

72.2 Do not reduce the living space of their dwellings. Do not oppress their lives. It is because you do not oppress them that they are not oppressed.

72.3 Therefore the sage knows himself but does not show himself. He loves himself but does not exalt himself. Therefore he rejects the one but accepts the other.

73.1 He who is brave in daring will be killed. He who is brave in not daring will live.

73.2 Of these two, one is advantageous and one is harmful. Who knows why Heaven dislikes what it dislikes? Even the sage considers it a difficult question.

73.3 The Way of Heaven does not compete, and yet it skillfully achieves victory. It does not speak, and yet it skillfully responds to things. It comes to you without your invitation. It is not anxious about things and yet it plans well.

73.4 Heaven's net is indeed vast. Though its meshes are wide, it misses nothing.

74.1 The people are not afraid of death. Why, then, threaten them with death?

74.2 Suppose the people are always afraid of death and we can seize those who are vicious and kill them, Who would dare to do so?

74.3 There is always the master executioner (Heaven) who kills. To undertake executions for the master executioner is like hewing wood for the master carpenter. Whoever undertakes hewing wood for the master carpenter rarely escapes injuring his own hands.

75.1 The people starve because the ruler eats too much tax-grain. Therefore they starve.

75.2 They are difficult to rule because their ruler does too many things. Therefore they are difficult to rule.

75.3 The people take death lightly because their ruler strives for life too vigorously. Therefore they take death lightly. It is only those who do not seek after life that excel in making life valuable.

76.1 When man is born, he is tender and weak. At death he is stiff and hard.

76.2 All things, the grass as well as the trees, are tender and supple while alive. When dead, they are withered and dried.

76.3 Therefore the stiff and the hard are companions of death. The tender and the weak are companions of life.

76.4 Therefore, if the army is strong, it will not win. If a tree is stiff, it will break.

76.5 The strong and the great are inferior, while the tender and the weak are superior.

77.1 Heaven's Way is indeed like the bending of a bow. When (the string) is high, bring it down. When it is low, raise it up. When it is excessive, reduce it. When it is insufficient, supplement it.

77.2 The Way of Heaven reduces whatever is excessive and supplements whatever is insufficient. The way of man is different. It reduces the insufficient to offer to the excessive.

77.3 Who is able to have excess to offer to the world? Only the man of Tao.

77.4 Therefore the sage acts, but does not rely on his own ability. He accomplishes his task, but does not claim credit for it. He has no desire to display his excellence.

78.1 There is nothing softer and weaker than water, And yet there is nothing better for attacking hard and strong things. For this reason there is no substitute for it.

78.2 All the world knows that the weak overcomes the strong and the soft overcomes the hard. But none can practice it.

78.3 Therefore the sage says: He who suffers disgrace for his country Is called the lord of the land. He who takes upon himself the country's misfortunes Becomes the king of the empire. Straight words seem to be their opposite.

79.1 To patch up great hatred is surely to leave some hatred behind. How can this be regarded as good?

79.2 Therefore the sage keeps the left-hand portion (obligation) of a contract And does not blame the other party.

79.3 Virtuous people attend to their left-hand portions, While those without virtue attend to other people's mistakes.

79.4 "The Way of Heaven has not favourites. It is always with the good man."

80.1 Let there be a small country with few people. Let there be ten times and a hundred times as many utensils. But let them not be used. Let the people value their lives highly and not migrate far.

80.2 Even if there are ships and carriages, none will ride in them. Even if there are arrows and weapons, none will display them.

80.3 Let the people again knot cords and use them (in place of writing). Let them relish their food, beautify their clothing, be content with their homes, and delight in their customs.

80.4 Though neighbouring communities overlook one another and the crowing of cocks and the barking of dogs can be heard, Yet the people there may grow old and die without ever visiting one another.

81.1 True words are not beautiful; Beautiful words are not true.

81.2 A good man does not argue; He who argues is not a good man.

81.3 A wise man has no extensive knowledge; He who has extensive knowledge is not a wise man.

81.4 The sage does not accumulate for himself. The more he uses for others, the more he possesses of his own.

81.5 The Way of Heaven is to benefit others and not to injure. The Way of the sage is to act but not to compete.

Clear version

- 1.1 A way can be a guide, but not a fixed path; names can be given, but not permanent labels.
- 1.2 Nonbeing is called the beginning of heaven and earth; being is called the mother of all things.
- 1.3 Always passionless, thereby observe the subtle; ever intent, thereby observe the apparent.
- 1.4 These two come from the same source but differ in name;
- 1.5 both are considered mysteries. The mystery of mysteries is the gateway of marvels.

- 2.1 When everyone knows beauty is beauty, this is bad.
- 2.2 When everyone knows good is good, this is not good.
- 2.3 So being and nonbeing produce each other: difficulty and ease complement each other, long and short shape each other,
- 2.4 high and low contrast with each other, voice and echoes conform to each other, before and after go along with each other.
- 2.5 So sages manage effortless service and carry out unspoken guidance.
- 2.6 All beings work, without exception: if they live without possessiveness,
- 2.7 act without presumption, and do not dwell on success, then by this very nondwelling success will not leave.

- 3.1 Not exalting cleverness causes the people not to contend.
- 3.2 Not putting high prices on hard-to-get goods causes the people not to steal.
- 3.3 Not seeing anything to want causes the mind not to be confused.
- 3.4 Therefore the government of sages empties the mind and fills the middle, weakens the ambition and strengthens the bones,
- 3.5 always keeping the people innocent and passionless. It makes the sophisticated not dare to contrive;
- 3.6 action being without contrivance, nothing is disordered.

- 4.1 The Way is unimpeded harmony; its potential may never be fully exploited.
- 4.2 It is as deep as the source of all things;
- 4.3 it blunts the edges, resolves the complications, harmonizes the light, assimilates to the world.
- 4.4 Profoundly still, it seems to be there:
- 4.5 I don't know whose child it is, before the creation of images.

- 5.1 Heaven and earth are not humane; they regard all beings as straw dogs.
- 5.2 Sages are not humane; they see all people as straw dogs..
- 5.3 The space between heaven and earth is like a bellows and pipes, empty yet inexhaustible, producing more with each movement.
- 5.4 The talkative reach their wits' end again and again; that is not as good as keeping centered.

- 6.1 The valley spirit not dying is called the mysterious female.
- 6.2 The opening of the mysterious female is called the root of heaven and earth.
- 6.3 Continuous, on the brink of existence, to put in into practice, don't try to force it.

- 7.1 Heaven is eternal, earth is everlasting.
- 7.2 The reason they can be eternal and everlasting is that they do not foster themselves, that is why they can live forever.
- 7.3 For this reason sages put themselves last, and they were first;
- 7.4 they excluded themselves, and they survived.
- 7.5 Was it not by their very selflessness that they managed to fulfill themselves?

- 8.1 Higher good is like water: the good in water benefits all, and does so without contention. It rests where people dislike to be, so it is close to the Way.
- 8.2 Where it dwells becomes good ground; profound is the good in its heart, benevolent the good it bestows. Goodness in words is trustworthiness,
- 8.3 goodness in government is order; goodness in work is ability, goodness in action is timeliness.
- 8.4 But only by non-contention is there nothing extreme.

- 9.1 To keep on filling is not as good as stopping.
- 9.2 Calculated sharpness cannot be kept for long.
- 9.3 Though gold and jewels fill their house, no one can keep them.

9.4 When the rich upper classes are haughty, their legacy indicts them.
9.5 When one's work is accomplished honorably, to retire is the Way of heaven.

10.1 Carrying vitality and consciousness, embracing them as one, can you keep from parting?
10.2 Concentrating energy, making it supple, can you be like an infant?
10.3 Purifying hidden perception, can you make it flawless?
10.4 Loving the people, governing the nation, can you be uncontrived?
10.5 As the gate of heaven opens and closes, can you be impassive?
10.6 As understanding reaches everywhere, can you be innocent?
10.7 Producing and developing, producing without possessing, growing without domineering: this is called mysterious power.

11.1 Thirty spokes join at a hub: their use for the cart is where they are not.
11.2 When the potter's wheel makes a pot, the use of the pot is precisely where there is nothing.
11.3 When you open the doors and windows for a room, it is where there is nothing that they are useful to the room.
11.4 Therefore being is for benefit, nonbeing is for usefulness.

12.1 Colors blind people's eyes; sounds deafen their ears; flavors spoil people's palates,
12.2 the chase and the hunt craze people's minds; goods hard to obtain make people's actions harmful.
12.3 Therefore sages work for the middle and not the extremes, leaving the latter and taking the former.

13.1 Favor and disgrace seem alarming; high status greatly afflicts your person.
13.2 What are favor and disgrace? Favor is the lower: get it and you're surprised, lose it and you're startled. This means favor and disgrace are alarming.
13.3 Why does high status greatly afflict your person? The reason we have a lot of trouble is that we have selves. If we had no selves what troubles would we have?
13.4 Therefore those who embody nobility to act for the sake of the world seem to be able to draw the world to them, while those who embody love to act for the sake of the world seem to be worthy of the trust of the world.

14.1 What you don't see when you look is called the unobtrusive. What you don't hear when you listen is called the rarefied. What you don't get when you grasp is called the subtle.
14.2 These three cannot be completely fathomed, so they merge into one;
14.3 above is not bright, below is not dark. Continuous, unnameable, it returns again to nothing.
14.4 This is called the stateless state, the image of no thing; this is called mental abstraction. When you face it you do not see its head, and when you follow it you do not see its back.
14.5 Hold to the ancient Way so as to direct present existence: only when you know the ancient can this be called the basic cycle of the Way.

15.1 Skilled warriors of old were subtle, mysteriously powerful, so deep they were unknowable.
15.2 Just because they are unknowable, I will try to describe them. Their wariness was as that of one crossing a river in winter, their caution was as that of one in fear of all around; their gravity was as that of a guest,
15.3 their relaxation was as that of ice at the melting point. Simple as uncarved wood, open as valleys, they were as inscrutable as murky water.
15.4 Who can, in turbidity, use the gradual clarification of stillness? Who can, long at rest, use the gradual enlivening of movement?
15.5 Those who preserve this Way do not want fullness. Just because of not wanting fullness, it is possible to use to the full and not make anew.

16.1 Attain the climax of emptiness, preserve the utmost quiet:
16.2 as myriad things act in concert, I thereby observe the return. Things flourish, then each returns to its root.
16.3 Returning to the root is called stillness; stillness is called return to Life, return to Life is called the constant; knowing the constant is called enlightenment. Acts at random, in ignorance of the constant, bode ill.
16.4 Knowing the constant gives perspective; this perspective is impartial. Impartiality is the highest nobility; the highest nobility is divine, and the divine is the Way.
16.5 This Way is everlasting, not endangered by physical death.

17.1 Very great leaders in their domains are only known to exist. Those next best are loved and praised. The lesser are feared and despised.

17.2 Therefore when faith is insufficient and there is disbelief,
17.3 it is from the high value placed on words. Works are accomplished, tasks are completed, and ordinary folk all say they are acting spontaneously.

18.1 When the Great Way is deserted, then there is humanitarian duty.
18.2 When intelligence comes forth, there is great fabrication.
18.3 When relations are discordant, there is family love.
18.4 When the national polity is benighted and confused, then there are loyal ministers.

19.1 Eliminate sagacity, abandon knowledge, and the people will benefit a hundredfold.
19.2 Eliminate humanitarianism, abandon duty, and the people return to familial love.
19.3 Eliminate craft, abandon profit, and theft will no longer exist.
19.4 These three become insufficient when used for embellishment causing there to be attachments.
19.5 See the basic, embrace the unspoiled, lessen selfishness, diminish desire.

20.1 Detach from learning and you have no worries. How far apart are yes and yeah? How far apart are good and bad?
20.2 The things people fear cannot but be feared. Wild indeed the uncentered!
20.3 Most people celebrate as if they were barbecuing a slaughtered cow, or taking in the springtime vistas; I alone am aloof, showing no sign, like an infant that doesn't yet smile, riding buoyantly as if with nowhere to go.
20.4 Most people have too much; I alone seem to be missing something. Mine is indeed the mind of an ignoramus in its unadulterated simplicity.
20.5 Ordinary people try to shine; I alone seem to be dark. Ordinary people try to be on the alert; I alone am unobtrusive, calm as the ocean depths, buoyant as if anchored nowhere.
20.6 Most people have ways and means; I alone am unsophisticated and simple. I alone am different from people in that I value seeking food from the mother.

21.1 For the countenance of great virtue, only the Way is to be followed.
21.2 As a thing, the Way is abstract and elusive; elusive and abstract, there are images in it; abstract and elusive, there is something there. Recondite, hidden, it has vitality therein: that vitality is very real; it has truth therein.
21.3 From ancient times to now, its name is the undeparting; thereby are seen all beauties.
21.4 How do I know all beauties are thus? By this.

22.1 Be tactful and you remain whole; bend and you remain straight. The hollow is filled, the old is renewed. Economy is gain, excess is confusion..
22.2 Therefore sages embrace unity as model for the world.
22.3 Not seeing themselves, they are therefore clear. Not asserting themselves, they are therefore outstanding. Not congratulating themselves, they are therefore meritorious. Not taking pride in themselves, they last long.
22.4 It is just because they do not contend that no one in the world can contend with them.
22.5 Is it empty talk, the old saying that tact keeps you whole? When truthfulness is complete, it still resorts to this.

23.1 To speak rarely is natural. That is why a gusty wind doesn't last the morning, a downpour of rain doesn't last the day.
23.2 Who does this? Heaven and earth. If heaven and earth cannot go on forever, how much less can human beings!
23.3 Therefore those who follow the Way assimilate to the Way; the virtuous assimilate to virtue, those who have lost assimilate to loss.
23.4 Those who assimilate to the Way are happy to gain it, those who assimilate to virtue too are happy to gain it, and those who assimilate to loss are also happy to gain it.
23.5 When trust is insufficient, there is distrust.

24.1 Those on tiptoe don't stand up, those who take long strides don't walk;
24.2 those who see themselves are not perceptive, those who assert themselves are not illustrious;
24.3 those who glorify themselves have no merit, those who are proud of themselves do not last.
24.4 On the Way, these are called overconsumption and excess activity. Some people disdain them, so those with the Way abstain.

25.1 Something undifferentiated was born before heaven and earth; still and silent, standing alone and unchanging, going through cycles unending, able to be mother to the world.
25.2 I do not know its name; I label it the Way. Imposing on it a name, I call it Great.

25.3 Greatness means it goes; going means reaching afar; reaching afar means return.

25.4 Therefore the Way is great, heaven is great, earth is great, and kingship is also great. Among domains are four greats, of which kingship is one.

25.5 Humanity emulates earth, earth emulates heaven, heaven emulates the Way, the Way emulates nature.

26.1 Gravity is the root of lightness; calm is the master of excitement.

26.2 Thereby do exemplary people travel all day without leaving their equipment. Though they have a look of prosperity, their resting place is transcendent.

26.3 What can be done about heads of state who take the world lightly in their own self-interest?

26.4 Lack of gravity loses servants of state; insanity loses heads of state.

27.1 Good works are trackless, good words are flawless, good planning isn't calculating.

27.2 What is well closed has no bolt locking it, but cannot be opened. What is well bound has no rope confining it, but cannot be untied.

27.3 Therefore sages always consider it good to save people, so that there are no wasted humans; they always consider it good to save beings, so that there are no wasted beings.

27.4 So good people are teachers of people who are not good. People who are not good are students of people who are good.

27.5 Those who do not honor teachers or care for students are greatly deluded, even in knowledgeable. This is called an essential subtlety.

28.1 Know the male, keep to the female; be humble toward the world. Be humble toward the world, and eternal power never leaves, returning again to innocence.

28.2 Knowing the white, keep the black; be an exemplar for the world. Be an exemplar for the world, and eternal power never goes awry, returning again to infinity.

28.3 Knowing thee glorious, keep the ignominious; be open to the world. Be open to the world, and eternal power suffices, returning again to simplicity.

28.4 Simplicity is lost to make instruments, which sages employ as functionaries. Therefore the great fashioner does no splitting.

29.1 Should you want to take the world, and contrive to do so, I see you won't manage to finish.

29.2 The most sublime instrument in the world cannot be contrived. Those who contrive spoil it; those who cling lose it.

29.3 So creatures sometimes go and sometimes follow, sometimes puff and sometimes blow, are sometimes strong and sometimes weak, begin sometime and end sometime;

29.4 Therefore sages remove extremes, remove extravagance, remove arrogance.

30.1 Those who assist human leaders with the Way do not coerce the world with weapons, for these things are apt to backfire.

30.2 Brambles grow where an army has been; there are always bad years after a war.

30.3 Therefore the good are effective, that is all; they do not presume to grab power thereby:

30.4 they are effective but not conceited, effective but not proud, effective but not arrogant. They are effective when they have to be, effective but not coercive.

30.5 If you peak in strength, you then age; this, it is said, is unguided. The unguided soon come to an end.

31.1 Fine weapons are instruments of ill omen: people may despise them, so those with the Way do not dwell with them.

31.2 Therefore the place of honor for the cultured is on the left, while the honored place for the martialist is on the right.

31.3 Weapon, being instruments of ill omen, are not the tools of the cultures, who use them only when unavoidable.

31.4 They consider it best to be aloof; they win without beautifying it. Those who beautify it enjoy killing people. Those who enjoy killing cannot get their will of the world.

31.5 The left is favored for auspicious things, the right for things of ill omen: so the subordinate general is on the left, the top general on the right. That means when you are in ascendancy of power you handle it as you would a mourning.

31.6 When you have killed many people, you weep for them in sorrow. When you win a war, you celebrate by mourning.

32.4 Start fashioning, and there are names; once names also exist, you should know when to stop. By knowing when to stop, you are not endangered.

32.1 The Way is eternally nameless, Though simplicity is small, the world cannot subordinate it.

32.2 If lords and monarchs can keep to it, all beings will naturally resort to them.

32.3 Heaven and earth combine, thus showering sweet dew. No humans command it; it is even by nature.

32.5 The Way is to the world as rivers and oceans to valley streams.

33.1 Those who know others are wise; those who know themselves are enlightened.
33.2 Those who overcome others are powerful; those who overcome themselves are strong.
33.3 Those who are contented are rich; those who act strongly have will.
33.4 Those who do not lose their place endure; those who die without perishing live long.

34.1 The Great Way is universal; it can apply to the left or the right.
34.2 All beings depend on it for life, and it does not refuse. Its accomplishments fulfilled, it does not dwell on them. It lovingly nurtures all beings, but does not act as their ruler.
34.3 As it has no desire, it can be called small.
34.4 All beings take to it, yet it does not act as their ruler, it can be called great.
34.5 Therefore sages never contrive greatness; that is why they can become so great.

35.1 When holding the Great Image, the world goes on and on without harm, peaceful, even, tranquil.
35.2 When there is music and dining, passing travelers stop;
35.3 but the issue of the Way is so plain as to be flavorless. When you look at it, it is invisible; when you listen to it, it is inaudible; when you use it, it cannot be exhausted.

36.1 Should you want to contain something, you must first deliberately let it expand. Should you want to weaken something, you must deliberately let it grow strong. Should you want to eliminate something, you must deliberately allow it to flourish.
36.2 This is called subtle illumination. Flexible and yielding overcome adamant coerciveness.
36.3 Fish shouldn't be taken from the depths; the effective tools of the nation shouldn't be shown to others.

37.1 The Way is always uncontrived, yet there's nothing it doesn't do.
37.2 If lords and monarchs could keep to it, all beings would evolve spontaneously. When they have evolved and want to act, I would stabilize them with nameless simplicity.
37.3 Even nameless simplicity would not be wanted. By not wanting, there is calm, and the world will straighten itself.

38.1 Higher virtue is not ingratiating; that is why it has virtue. Lower virtue does not forget about reward; that is why it is virtueless.
38.2 Higher virtue is uncontrived; and there is no way to contrive it. Lower virtue is created, and there is a way to do it.
38.3 Higher humanity is created, but there is no way to contrive it. Higher duty is done, and there is a way to do it. Higher courtesy is done, but no one responds to it; so there is forced repetition.
38.4 Therefore virtue comes after the loss of the Way; humanity comes after the loss of virtue, duty comes after the loss of humanity, courtesy comes after the loss of duty.
38.5 Manners mean loyalty and trust are thin, and disarray's beginning. Foresight is a flower of the Way, and the beginning of ignorance too.
38.6 Therefore great people dwell in the thick, not the thin. They abide in the substance, not the flower. So they leave the latter and take the former.

39.1 When unity was attained of old, heaven became clear by attaining unity, earth became steady by attaining unity, spirit was quickened by attaining unity,
39.2 valley streams were filled by attaining unity, all beings were born by attaining unity; and by attaining unity lords acted rightly for the sake of the world. What brought this about was unity:
39.3 without means of clarity, heaven may burst; without means of steadiness, earth may erupt; without means of quickening, spirit may be exhausted; without means of filling,
39.4 valley streams may dry up; without means of birth, all beings may perish; without means of acting rightly, lords may stumble.
39.5 Therefore nobility is rooted in humility, loftiness is based on lowliness.
39.6 This is why noble people refer to themselves as alone, lacking, and unworthy. Is this not being rooted in humility? So there is no praise in repeated praise; they don't want to be like jewels or like stones.
39.7 So there is no praise in repeated praise;
39.8 they don't want to be like jewels or like stones.

40.1 Return is the movement of the Way; yielding is the function of the Way.
40.2 All things in the world are born of being; being is born of nonbeing.

41.1 When superior people hear of the Way, they carry it out with diligence. When middling people hear of the way, it sometimes seems to be there, sometimes not.

41.2 When lesser people hear of the Way, they ridicule it greatly. If they didn't laugh at it, it wouldn't be the Way.

41.3 So there are constructive sayings on this: The Way of illumination seems dark, the Way of advancement seems retiring, the Way of equality seems to categorize; higher virtue seems empty, greater purity seems ignominious, broad virtue seems insufficient,

41.4 constructive virtue seems careless. Simple honesty seems changeable, great range has no boundaries, great vessels are finished late; the great sound has a rarefied tone, the great image has no form,

41.5 the Way hides in namelessness. Only the Way can enhance and perfect.

42.1 The Way produces one; one produces two, two produce three, three produce all beings:

42.2 all beings bear yin and embrace yang, with a mellowing energy for harmony.

42.3 The things people dislike are only to be alone, lacking, and unworthy; yet these are what monarchs call themselves.

42.4 Therefore people may gain from loss, and may lose from gain.

42.5 What others teach, I also teach. The strong cannot master their death: I take this to be the father of teachings.

43.1 What is softest in the world drives what is hardest in the world. Nonbeing enters where there is no room; that is how we know noncontrivance enhances.

43.2 Unspoken guidance and uncontrived enhancement are reached by few in the world.

44.1 Which is closer, your name or your body? Which is more, your body or your possessions? Which is more destructive, gain or loss?

44.2 Extreme fondness means great expense, and abundant possessions mean much loss.

44.3 If you know when you have enough, you will not be disgraced. If you know when to stop, you will not be endangered. It is possible thereby to live long.

45.1 Great completeness seems incomplete; its use is never exhausted. Great fullness seems empty; its use is never ended. Great directness seems restrained,

45.2 great skill seems inept, great eloquence seems inarticulate.

45.3 Movement overcomes cold, stillness overcomes heat. Clear stillness is right for the world.

46.1 When the world has the Way, running horses are retired to till the fields. When the world lacks the Way, war-horses are bred in the countryside.

46.2 No crime is greater than discontent, no fault is greater than possessiveness.

46.3 So the satisfaction of contentment is always enough.

47.1 They know the world without even going out the door. They see the sky and its pattern without even looking out the window.

47.2 The further out it goes, the less knowledge is; therefore sages know without going, name without seeing, complete without striving.

48.1 For learning you gain daily; for the Way you lose daily.

48.2 Losing and losing, thus you reach noncontrivance; be uncontrived, and nothing is not done. Taking the world is always done by not making anything of it.

48.3 For when something is made of it, that is not enough to take the world.

49.1 Sages have no fixed mind; they make the minds of the people their mind:

49.2 they improve the good, and also improve those who are not good; that virtue is good.

49.3 They make sure of the true, and they make sure of the untrue too; that virtue is sure.

49.4 The relation of sages to the world is one of concern: they cloud their minds for the world; all people pour into their ears and eye, and sages render them innocent.

50.1 Exiting life, we enter death.

50.2 The followers of life are three out of ten, the followers of death are three out of ten; in the lives of the people, the dying grounds on which they are agitated are also three out of ten. What is the reason? Because of the seriousness with which they take life as life.

50.3 It has been said that those who maintain life well do not meet rhinos or tigers on land and do not arm themselves in war.

50.4 There is no way for rhinos to gore them; there is no way for tigers to claw them; there is no way for weapons to get at them. Why? Because they have no dying ground.

51.1 The Way gives birth, virtue nurtures, things form, momentum completes. Therefore all beings honor the Way and value its Virtue.

51.2 The honor of the Way and the value of Virtue are not granted by anyone, but are always naturally so. So the Way gives birth and nurtures, makes grow and develops, completes and matures, builds up and breaks down.

51.3 It produces but does not possess; it acts without presumption, it fosters growth without ruling. This is called hidden Virtue.

52.1 The world has a beginning that is the mother of the world.

52.2 Once you have found the mother, thereby you know the child. Once you know the child, you return to keep the mother, not perishing though the body may die.

52.3 Close your eyes, shut your doors, and you do not toil all your life.

52.4 Open your eyes, carry out your affair, and you are not saved all your life.

52.5 Seeing the small is called clarity; keeping flexible is called strength.

52.6 Using the shining radiance, you return again to the light, not leaving anything to harm yourself. This is called entering the eternal.

53.1 Causing one flashes of knowledge to travel the Great Way, only its application demands care.

53.2 The Great Way is quite even, yet people prefer byways.

53.3 When courts are extremely fastidious, the fields are seriously neglected, and the granaries are very empty;

53.4 They wear colorful clothing and carry sharp swords, eat and drink their fill and possess more than enough. This is called the vanity of thieves; it is not the Way.

54.1 Good construction does not fall down, a good embrace does not let go; their heirs honor them unceasingly.

54.2 Cultivate it in yourself, and that virtue is real; cultivate it in the home, and that virtue is abundant; cultivate it in the locality, and that virtue lasts; cultivate it in the nation, and that virtue is rich; cultivate it in the world, and that virtue is universal.

54.3 So observe yourself by yourself, observe the home by the home, observe the locality by the locality, observe the nation by the nation, observe the world by the world.

54.4 How do I know the world is as it is? By this.

55.1 The richness of subliminal virtue is comparable to an infant: poisonous creatures do not sting it, wild beasts do not claw it, predatory birds do not grab it. Its tendons are flexible, yet its grip is firm.

55.2 Even while it knows not of the mating of male and female, its genitals get aroused; this is the epitome of vitality.

55.3 It can cry all day without choking or getting hoarse; this is the epitome of harmony. Knowing harmony is called constancy; knowing constancy is called clarity;

55.4 enhancing life is called propitious, the mind mastering energy is called strong.

55.5 When beings climax in power, they wane; this is called being unguided. The unguided die early.

56.1 Those who know do not say; those who say do not know.

56.2 Close the senses, shut the doors; blunt the sharpness, resolve the complications; harmonize the light, assimilate to the world. This is called the mysterious sameness.

56.3 It cannot be made familiar, yet cannot be estranged; it cannot be profited, yet cannot be harmed; it cannot be valued, yet cannot be demeaned. Therefore it is precious for the world.

57.1 Use straightforwardness for civil government, use surprise for military operations; use noninvolvement to take the world. How do I know this?

57.2 The more taboos there are in the world, the poorer the populace is;

57.3 The more crafts the people have, the more exotic things are produced; the more laws are promulgated, the greater the number of thieves.

57.4 Therefore the sage says, I contrive nothing, and the people are naturally civilized; I am fond of tranquility, and the people are naturally upright.

57.5 I have nothing to do, and the people are naturally enriched.; I have no desire, and the people are naturally simple.

58.1 When the government is unobtrusive, the people are pure. When the government is invasive, the people are wanting.

58.2 Calamity is what fortune depends upon; fortune is what calamity subdues.

58.3 Who knows how it will all end? Is there no right and wrong? The orthodox also becomes the unorthodox, the good also becomes ill; people's confusion is indeed long-standing.

58.4 Therefore sages are upright without causing injury, honest without hurting, direct but not tactless, illuminated but not flashy.

59.1 To govern the human and serve the divine, nothing compares to frugality.

59.2 Only frugality brings early recovery; only recovery means buildup of power. Build up virtue, and you master all. When you master all, no one knows your limit. When no one knows your limit, you can maintain a nation.

59.3 When you maintain the matrix of a nation, you can last long.

59.4 This is called making the root deep and the basis firm, the Way of long life and eternal vision.

60.1 Governing a large nation is like cooking a little fish.

60.2 When the world is ruled by the Way, the ghosts are powerless.

60.3 It is not that the ghosts are powerless; their spirits do not harm the people. Not only do the spirits not harm the people; sages do not harm the people either.

60.4 Because the two do not harm each other, their virtues ultimately combine.

61.1 A great nation flows downward into intercourse with the world. The female of the world always prevails over the male by stillness.

61.2 Because stillness is considered lower, by lowering itself to a small nation a great nation takes a small nation; by being lower than a great nation a small nation takes a great nation.

61.3 So one takes by lowering itself, another takes place by being lower.

61.4 A great nation wants no more than to include and nurture people; a small nation wants no more than to admit and serve people.

61.5 Both get what they want, so the great should be below.

62.1 The Way is the pivot of all things: the treasure of good people, the safeguard of those who are not good.

62.2 Fine words can be sold, honored acts can oppress people; why should people who are not good abandon them.

62.3 Therefore to establish an emperor and set up high officials, one may have a great jewel and drive a team of horses, but that is not as good as advancing calmly on this Way.

62.4 Why did the ancients value this Way? By it one can attain without long seeking and escape from the faults one has; therefore it is valued by the world.

63.1 By nondoing, strive for nonstriving, savor the flavorless,

63.2 regard the small as important, make much of little, repay enmity with virtue;

63.3 plan for difficulty when it is still easy, do the great while it is still small.

63.4 The most difficult things in the world must be done while they are easy; the greatest things in the world must be done when they are small.

63.5 Because of this sages never do great things; that is why they can fulfill their greatness.

63.6 If you agree too easily, you'll be little trusted; if you take it easy a lot, you'll have a lot of problems.

63.7 Therefore it is through difficulty that sages end up without problems.

64.1 What is at rest is easy to hold. What has not shown up is easy to take into account. What is frail is easy to break. What is vague is easy to dispel.

64.2 Do it before it exists; govern it before there's disorder.

64.3 The most massive tree grows from a sprout; the highest building rises from a pile of earth; a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.

64.4 Those who contrive spoil it; those who cling lose it. Thus sages contrive nothing, and so spoil nothing. They cling to nothing, and so lose nothing.

64.5 Therefore people's works are always spoiled on the verge of completion. Be as careful of the end as of the beginning, and nothing will be spoiled.

64.6 Thus sages want to have no wants; they do not value goods hard to get. They learn not learning to recover from people's excesses, thereby to assist the naturalness of all beings, without daring to contrive.

65.1 In ancient times, good practitioners of the Way did not use it to enlighten the people, but to make them unsophisticated.

65.2 When people are unruly, it is because of their sophistication. So to govern a country by cunning is to rob the country. Not using cunning to govern a country is good fortune for the country.

65.3 Too know these two is also a model. Being always aware of the model is called hidden virtue.

65.4 Hidden virtue is deep, far-reaching, in contrast to ordinary people. Only when it is thus does it reach great accord.

66.1 The reason why rivers and seas can be lords of the hundred valleys is that they lower themselves to them all; therefore they can be lords of the hundred valleys.

66.2 So when sages wish to rise above people, they lower themselves to them in their speech. When they want to precede people, they go after them in status.

66.3 So when sages rule, people don't take it gravely. And when sages are in the forefront, people don't attack them. Therefore the world happily backs them and does not tire of them.

66.4 Because they do not contend, no one in the world can contend with them.

67.1 Everyone in the world says my Way is great, but it seems incomparable. It is just because it is great that it seems incomparable: when comparisons are long established it becomes trivialized.

67.2 I have three treasures that I keep and hold: one is mercy, the second is frugality, the third is not presuming to be at the head of the world.

67.3 By reason of mercy, one can be brave. By reason of frugality, one can be broad. By not presuming to be at the head of the world, one can make your potential last.

67.4 Now if one were bold but had no mercy, if one were broad but were not frugal, if one went ahead without deference, one would die.

67.5 Use mercy in war, and you win; use it in defense, and you're secure. Those whom heaven is going to save are those it guards with mercy.

68.1 Good warriors do not arm, good fighters don't get mad,

68.2 good winners don't contend, good employers serve their workers.

68.3 This is called the virtue of noncontention; this is called mating with the supremely natural and pristine.

69.1 There are sayings on the use of arms: "Let us not be aggressors, but defend." "Let us not advance an inch, but retreat a foot."

69.2 This is called carrying out no action, shaking no arm, facing no enemy, wielding no weapon.

69.3 No calamity is greater than underestimating opponents. If you underestimate opponents, you're close to losing your treasure.

69.4 So when opposing armies clash, the compassionate are the ones who win.

70.1 My sayings are easy to recognize, and very easy to apply. But no one in the world can recognize them, and no one can apply them.

70.2 Sayings have a source, events have a leader. It is only through ignorance that I am not known. Those who know me are rare; those who emulate me are noble.

70.3 This is why sages dress plainly, and conceal what is precious.

71.1 To know unconsciously is best. To presume to know what you don't is sick. Only by recognizing the sickness of sickness is it possible to be not sick.

71.2 The sages' freedom from ills was from recognizing the sickness of sickness, so they didn't suffer from sickness.

72.1 When the people are not awed by authority, then great authority is attained.

72.2 Their homes are not small to them, their livelihood not tiresome. Just because they do not tire of it, it is not tiresome to them.

72.3 Therefore sages know themselves but do not see themselves. They take care of themselves but do not exalt themselves. So they take one and leave the other.

73.1 Boldness in daring means killing; boldness in not daring means life.

73.2 These two may help and may harm. Who knows the reason for what heaven dislikes? That is why even sages find it hard for them.

73.3 The Way of heaven wins well without contest, responds well without speech, comes of itself uncalled, relaxed yet very resourceful.

73.4 The net of heaven is vast; the holes are large but don't let slip.

74.1 If people usually don't fear death, how can death be used to scare them?

74.2 If people are made to fear death, and you catch them and kill them when they act oddly, who would dare?
74.3 There are always executioners. And to kill in the place of an executioner is taking the place of a master carver. Those who take the place of a master carver rarely avoid cutting their hands.

75.1 When people are starving, it is because their governments take too much, causing them to starve.
75.2 When people are hard to control, it is because of the contrivances of their governments, which make them hard to control.
75.3 When people slight death, it is because of the earnestness with which they seek life; that makes them slight death. Only those who do not contrive to live are wise in valuing life.

76.1 When people are born they are supple, and when they die they are stiff..
76.2 When trees are born they are tender, and when they die they are brittle.
76.3 Stiffness is thus a companion of death, flexibility a companion of life.
76.4 So when an army is strong it does not prevail. When a tree is strong, it is cut for use.
76.5 So the stiff and strong are below, the supple and yielding on top.

77.1 The Way of heaven is like drawing a bow: the high is lowered, the low is raised; excess is reduced, need is fulfilled.
77.2 The Way of heaven reduces excess and fills need, but the way of humans is not so: they strip the needy to serve those who have too much.
77.3 -
77.4 -

78.1 Nothing in the world is more flexible and yielding than water. Yet when it attacks the firm and the strong, none can withstand it, because they have no way to change it.
78.2 So the flexible overcomes the adamant, the yielding overcomes the forceful. Everyone knows this, but no one can do it.
78.3 This is why the sages say those who can take on the disgrace of nations are leaders of lands; and those who can take on the misfortune of nations are rulers of the world. True sayings seem paradoxical.

79.1 When you harmonize bitter enemies, yet resentment is sure to linger, how can this be called good?
79.2 Therefore sages keep their faith and do not pressure others.
79.3 So the virtuous see to their promises, while the virtueless look after precedents.
79.4 The Way of heaven is impersonal; it is always with good people.

80.1 A small state has few people. It has the people keep arms but not use them. It has them regard death gravely and not go on distant campaigns.
80.2 Even if they have vehicles, they have nowhere to drive them. Even if they have weapons, they have nowhere to use them.
80.3 It has the people go back to simple techniques, relish their food, like their clothes, be comfortable in their ways, and enjoy their work.
80.4 Neighboring states may be so close they can hear each other's dogs and roosters, but they make it so that the people have never gone back and forth.

81.1 True words are not beautiful, beautiful words are not true.
81.2 The good are not argumentative, the argumentative are not good.
81.3 Knowers do not generalize, generalists do not know.
81.4 Sages do not accumulate anything but give everything to others, having more the more they give.
81.5 The Way of heaven helps and does not harm. The Way for humans is to act without contention.

Crowley version

- 1.1 The Dao-Path is not the All-Dao. The Name is not the Thing named.
- 1.2 Unmanifested, it is the Secret Father of Heaven and Earth; manifested, it is their Mother.
- 1.3 To understand this Mystery, one must be fulfilling one's will, and if one is not thus free, one will but gain a smattering of it.
- 1.4 The Dao is one, and the De but a Phase thereof.
- 1.5 The abyss of this Mystery is the Portal of Serpent Wonder.

- 2.1 All men know beauty and ugliness are correlative,
- 2.2 as are skill and clumsiness; one implies and suggests the other.
- 2.3 So also existence and non-existence pose the one and the other; so also it is with ease and difficulty; length and shortness;
- 2.4 height and lowness. Also, Musick exists through harmony of opposites; time and space depend upon contraposition.
- 2.5 By the use of this method the sage can fulfil his will without action, and utter his word without speech.
- 2.6 All things arise without diffidence; they grow, and none interferes; they change according to their natural order, without lust of result.
- 2.7 The work is accomplished; yet continues in its orbit, without goal. This work is done consciously; this is why its energy is indefatigable.

- 3.1 To reward merit is to stir up emulation;
- 3.2 to prize rarities is to encourage robbery;
- 3.3 to display desirable things is to excite the disorder of covetousness.
- 3.4 Therefore the sage governs men by keeping their minds and bodies at rest, contenting the one by emptiness, the other by fullness. He satisfies their desires, thus fulfilling their wills, and making them frictionless; and he makes them strong in body, to a similar end.
- 3.5 He delivers them from the restlessness of knowledge and the craving of discontent. As to those who have knowledge already, he teaches them the way of non-action.
- 3.6 This being assured, there is no disorder in the world.

- 4.1 The Dao resembles the Emptiness of Space; to employ it, we must avoid creating ganglia.
- 4.2 O Dao, how vast are you, the Abyss of Abysses, you Holy and Secret Father of all Fatherhood of Things!
- 4.3 Let us make our sharpness blunt; let us loosen our complexes; let us tone down our brightness to the general obscurity.
- 4.4 Oh Dao, how still you are, how pure, continuous One beyond Heaven!
- 4.5 This Dao has no Father: it is beyond all other conceptions, higher than the highest.

- 5.1 Heaven and Earth produce without motive, but casually, in their order of nature, dealing with all things carelessly, like used talismans.
- 5.2 So also the sages deal with their people, not exercising benevolence, but allowing the nature of all to move without friction.
- 5.3 The space between Heaven and Earth is their breathing apparatus. Exhalation is not exhaustion, but the complement of inhalation, and this equally of that.
- 5.4 Speech exhausts; guard yourself, therefore, maintaining the perfect freedom of your nature.

- 6.1 The De is the immortal energy of the Dao, its feminine aspect..
- 6.2 Heaven and Earth issued from her Gate; this Gate is the root of their World-Sycamore.
- 6.3 Its operation is of pure Joy and Love, and fails never.

- 7.1 Heaven and Earth are mighty in continuance,
- 7.2 because their work is delivered from the lust of result.
- 7.3 Thus also the sage, seeking not any goal, attains all things;
- 7.4 he does not interfere in the affairs of his body, and so that body acts without friction.
- 7.5 It is because he meddles not with personal aims that these come to pass with simplicity.

- 8.1 Admire you the High Way of Water! Is not Water the soul of the life of things, whereby they change? Yet it seeks its level, and abides content in obscurity. So also it resembles the Dao, in this Way thereof!
- 8.2 The virtue of a house is to be well-placed; of the mind, to be at ease in silence as of Space; of societies, to be well-disposed;

8.3 of governments, to maintain quietude; of work, to be skillfully performed; and of motion, to be made at the right time.

8.4 Also it is the virtue of a man to abide in his place without discontent; thus offends he no man.

9.1 Fill not a vessel, lest it spill in carrying.

9.2 Meddle not with a sharpened point by feeling it constantly, or it will soon become blunted.

9.3 Gold and jade endanger the house of their possessor.

9.4 Wealth and honours lead to arrogance and envy, and bring ruin. Is your way famous and your name becoming distinguished?

9.5 Withdraw, your work once done, into obscurity; this is the way of Heaven.

10.1 When soul and body are in the bond of love, they can be kept together.

10.2 By concentration on the breath, it is brought to perfect elasticity, and one becomes as a babe.

10.3 By purifying oneself from Samadhi one becomes whole.

10.4 In his dealing with individuals and with society, let him move without lust of result.

10.5 In the management of his breath, let him be like the mother-bird.

10.6 Let his intelligence comprehend every quarter; but let his knowledge cease.

10.7 Here is the Mystery of Virtue. It creates all and nourishes all; yet it does not adhere to them; it operates all, but knows not of it, nor proclaims it; it directs all, but without conscious control.

11.1 The thirty spokes join in their nave, that is one; yet the wheel depends for use upon the hollow place for the axle.

11.2 Clay is shaped to make vessels; but the contained space is what is useful.

11.3

11.4 Matter is therefore of use only to make the limits of the Space which is the thing of real value.

12.1 The five colours film over Sight; the five sounds make Hearing dull; the five flavours conceal Taste.

12.2 occupation with motion and action bedevil Mind; even as the esteem of rare things begets covetousness and disorder.

12.3 The wise man seeks therefore to content the actual needs of his people, not to excite them by the sight of luxuries. He bans these, and concentrates on those.

13.1 Favour and disgrace are equally to be shunned; honour and calamity to be alike regarded as adhering to the personality.

13.2 What is this which is written concerning favour and disgrace? Disgrace is the fall from favour. He then that has favour has fear, and its loss begets fear yet greater to a further fall.

13.3 What is this which is written concerning honour and calamity? It is this attachment to the body which makes calamity possible; for were one bodiless, what evil could befall him?

13.4 Therefore, let him that regards himself rightly administer also a kingdom; and let him govern it who loves it as another man loves himself.

14.1 We look at it, and see it not, though it is Omnipresent; and we name it the Root-Balance. We listen for it, and hear it not, though it is Omniscient; and we name it the Silence. We feel for it, and touch it not, though it is Omnipotent; and we name it the Concealed.

14.2 These three Virtues has it, yet we cannot describe it as consisting of them; but, mingling them aright, we apprehend the One.

14.3 Above it shines not; below, it is not dark. It moves all continuously, without Expression, returning into Naught.

14.4 It is the Form of That which is beyond Form; it is the Image of the Invisible; it is Change, and Without Limit. We confront it, and see not its Face; we pursue it, and its Back is hidden from us.

14.5 Ah! But apply the Dao as in old Time to the work of the present: Know it as it was known in the beginning; follow fervently the Thread of the Dao.

15.1 The adepts of past ages were subtle and keen to apprehend this Mystery, and their profundity was obscurity unto men.

15.2 Since then they were not known, let me declare their nature. To all seeming, they were fearful as men that cross a torrent in winter flood; they were hesitating like a man in apprehension of them that are about him; they were full of awe like a guest in a great house;

15.3 they were ready to disappear like ice in thaw; they were unassuming like unworked wood; they were empty as a valley; and dull as the waters of a marsh.

15.4 Who can clear muddy water? Stillness will accomplish this. Who can obtain rest? Let motion continue equably, and it will itself be peace.

15.5 The adepts of the Dao, conserving its way, seek not to be actively self-conscious. By their emptiness of Self they have no need to show their youth and perfection; to appear old and imperfect is their privilege.

16.1 Emptiness must be perfect, and Silence made absolute with tireless strength.

16.2 All things pass through the period of action; then they return to repose. They grow, bud, blossom, and fruit; then they return to the root.

16.3 This return to the root is this state which we name Silence; and this Silence is Witness of their Fulfilment. This cycle is the universal law. To know it is the part of intelligence; to ignore it brings folly of action, whereof the end is madness.

16.4 To know it brings understanding and peace; and these lead to the identification of the Self with the Not-Self. This identification makes a man a king; and this kingliness grows unto godhood. That godhood bears fruit in the mastery of the Dao.

16.5 Then the man, the Dao permeating him, endures; and his bodily principles are in harmony, proof against decay, until the hour of his Change.

17.1 In the Age of Gold, the people were not conscious of their rulers; in the Age of Silver, they loved them, with songs; In the Age of Brass, they feared them; in the Age of Iron, they despised them.

17.2 As the rulers lost Confidence, so also did the people lose confidence in them.

17.3 How hesitating did they seem, the Lords of the Age of Gold, speaking with deliberation, aware of the weight of their world! Thus they accomplished all things with success; and the people deemed their well-being to be the natural course of events.

18.1 When men abandoned the Way of Dao, benevolence and justice became necessary.

18.2 Then also was need of wisdom and cunning, and all fell into illusion.

18.3 When harmony ceased to prevail in the six spheres it was needful to govern them by manifesting Sons.

18.4 When the kingdoms and races became confused, loyal ministers had to appear.

19.1 If we forgot our statesmanship and our wisdom, it would be a hundred times better for the people.

19.2 If we forgot our benevolence and our justice, they would become again like sons, folk of good will.

19.3 If we forgot our machines and our business, there would be no knavery.

19.4 These new methods despised the olden Way, inventing fine names to disguise their barrenness.

19.5 But simplicity in the doing of the will of every man would put an end to vain ambitions and desires.

20.1 To forget learning is to end trouble. The smallest difference in words, such as "yes" and "yea", can make endless controversy for the scholar.

20.2 Fearful indeed is death, since all men fear it; but the abyss of questionings shoreless and bottomless, is worse.

20.3 Consider the profane man, how he preens, as if at feast, or gazing upon Spring from a tower! But as for me, I am as one who yawns, without any trace of desire. I am like a babe before its first smile. I appear sad and forlorn, like a man homeless.

20.4 The profane man has his need filled, aye, and more also. For me, I seem to have lost all I had. My mind is, as it were, stupefied; it has no definite shape.

20.5 The profane man looks lively and keen-witted; I alone appear blank in my mind. They seem eagerly critical; I appear careless and without perception. I seem to be as one adrift upon the sea, with no thought of an harbour.

20.6 The profane have each one his definite course of action; I alone appear useless and uncomprehending, like a man from the border. Yea, thus I differ from all other men: but my jewel is the All-Mother.

21.1 The sole source of energy is the Dao.

21.2 Who may declare its nature? It is beyond Sense, yet all form is hidden within it. It is beyond Sense, yet all Perceptibles are hidden within it. This Being excites Perception, and the Word thereof.

21.3 As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, its Name operates continuously, causing all to flow in the cycle of Change, which is Love and Beauty.

21.4 How do I know this? By my comprehension of the Dao.

22.1 The part becomes the whole. The curve becomes straight; the void becomes full; the old becomes new. He who desires little accomplishes his Will with ease; who desires many things becomes distracted.

22.2 Therefore the sage concentrates upon one Will, and it is as light to the whole world.

22.3 Hiding himself, he shines; withdrawing himself, he attracts notice; humbling himself, he is exalted; dissatisfied with himself, he gains force to achieve his Will.

22.4 Because he strives not, no man may contend against him.

22.5 This is no idle say of men of old; 'The part becomes the whole'; it is the Canon of Perfection.

23.1 To keep silent is the mark of one who is acting in full accord with his Will. A fierce wind soon fails; a storm-shower does not last all day.

23.2 Yet Heaven and Earth cause these; and if They fail to make violence continue, how much less can man abide in spasm of passion!

23.3 With him that devotes him to Dao, the devotees of Dao are in accord; so also are the devotees of De; yea, even they who fail in seeking these are in accord.

23.4 So then his brothers in the Dao are joyful, attaining it; and his brothers in the De are joyful, attaining it; and they who fail in seeking these are joyful, partaking of it.

23.5 But if he himself realize not the Dao with calm of confidence, then they also appear lacking in confidence.

24.1 He who stands a-tiptoe stands not firm; he who makes rigid his legs walks ill.

24.2 He who preens himself shines not; he who talks positively is vulgar;

24.3 he who boasts is refused acceptance; he who is wise in his own conceit is thought inferior.

24.4 Such attitudes, to him that has the view given by understanding the Dao, seem like garbage or like cancer, abhorrent to all. They then who follow the Way do not admit them.

25.1 Without Limit and Perfect, there is a Becoming beyond Heaven and Earth. It has nor motion nor Form; it is alone; it changes not; it extends all ways; it has no adversary. It is like the All-Mother.

25.2 I do not know its Name, but I call it the Dao. Moreover, I exert myself, and call it Vastness.

25.3 Vastness, the Becoming! Becoming, it flies afar. Afar, it draws near.

25.4 Vast is this Dao; Heaven also is vast; and the Holy King is vast also. In the Universe are Four Vastnesses, and of these [one] is the Holy King.

25.5 Man follows the formula of Earth; Earth follows that of Heaven, and Heaven that of the Dao. The Formula of the Dao is its own Nature.

26.1 Mass is the fulcrum of mobility; stillness is the father of motion.

26.2 Therefore the sage King, though he travel afar, remains near his supplies. Thought opportunity tempt him, he remains quietly in proper disposition, indifferent.

26.3 Should the master of a host of chariots bear himself frivolously?

26.4 If he attack without support, he loses his base; if he become a raider, he forfeits his throne.

27.1 The experienced traveler conceals his tracks; the clever speaker gives no chance to the critic; the skilled mathematician uses no abacus;

27.2 the ingenious safesmith baffles the burglar without the use of bolts and the cunning binder without ropes and knots.

27.2 So also the sage, skilled in man-emancipation-craft, uses all men; understanding the value of everything, he rejects nothing. This is called the Occult Regimen.

27.3 -

27.4 -

28.1 Balance your male strength with your female weakness and you shall attract all things, as the ocean absorbs all rivers; for you shall formulate the excellence of the Child eternal, simple and perfect.

28.2 Knowing the light, remain in the Dark. Manifest not your Glory, but your obscurity. Clothed in this Child-excellence eternal, you have attained the Return of the First State.

28.3 Knowing splendour of Fame, cling to Obloquy and Infamy; then shall you remain in the Valley to which flow all waters, the lodestone to fascinate all men. Yea, they shall hail in you this Excellence, eternal, simple and perfect, of the Child.

28.4 The raw material, wrought into form, produces vessels. So the sage king formulates his Wholeness in divers Offices; and his Law is without violence or constraint.

29.1 He that, desiring a kingdom, exerts himself to obtain it, will fail.

29.2 A Kingdom is of the nature of spirit, and yields not to activity. He who grasps it, destroys it; he who gains it, loses it.

29.3 The wheel of nature revolves constantly; the last becomes the first, and the first last; hot things grow cold, and cold things hot; weakness overcomes strength; things gained are lost anon.

29.4 Hence the wise man avoids effort, desire, and sloth.

30.1 If a king summon to his aid a Master of the Dao, let him not advise recourse to arms. Such action certainly brings the corresponding reaction.

30.2 Where armies are, are weeds. Bad harvests follow great hosts.

30.3 The good general strikes decisively, once and for all. He does not risk by overboldness.

30.4 He strikes, but does not vaunt his victory. He strikes according to strict law of necessity, not from desire of victory.

30.5 Things become strong and ripe, then age. This is discord with the Dao; and what is not at one with the Dao soon comes to an end.

31.1 Arms, though they may be beautiful, are of ill omen, abominable to all created beings. They who have the Dao love not their use.

31.2 The place of honour is on the right in war time: so thinks the man of distinction.

31.3 Sharp weapons are ill-omened, unworthy of such a man; he uses them only in necessity.

31.4 He values peace and ease, desires not violence of victory. To desire victory is to desire the death of men; and to desire that is to fail to propitiate the people.

31.5 At feasts, the left hand is the high seat; at funerals, the right. The second in command of the arm leads at the left wing, the commander-in-chief, the right wing; it is as if the battle were a rite of Mourning!

31.6 He that has slain most men should weep for them most bitterly; so then the place of the victor is assigned to him with philosophical propriety.

32.4 Dao, in its phase of action, has a name. Then men can comprehend it; when they do this, there is no more risk of wrong or ill-success.

32.1 The All-Dao has no name. It is That Minute Point; yet the whole world dare not contend against him that has it.

32.2 Did a lord or king gain it and guard it, all men would obey him of their own accord.

32.3 Heaven and Earth, combining under its spell, shed forth dew, extending throughout all things of its own accord, without man's interference.

32.5 As the great rivers and the oceans are to the valley streams, so is the Dao to the whole universe.

33.1 He who understands others understands Two; but he who understands himself understands One.

33.2 He who conquers others is strong; but he who conquers himself is stronger yet.

33.3 Contentment is riches; and continuous action is Will.

33.4 He that adapts himself perfectly to his environment, continues for long; he who dies without dying, lives for ever.

34.1 The Dao is immanent; it extends to the right hand as to the left.

34.2 All things derive from it their being; it creates them, and all comply with it. Its work is done, and it proclaims it not. It is the ornament of all things, yet it claims not fief of them;

34.3 there is nothing so small that it inhabits not, and informs it.

34.4 All things return without knowledge of the Cause thereof; there is nothing so great that it inhabits not, and informs it.

34.5 In this manner also may the Sage perform his Works. It is not by thrusting himself forward that he wins to his success.

35.1 The whole world is drawn to him that has the Likeness of the Dao. Men flock unto him, and suffer no ill, but gain repose, find peace, enjoy all ease.

35.2 Sweet sounds and cakes lure the traveler from his way.

35.3 But the Word of the Dao, though it appear harsh and insipid, unworthy to hearken or behold, has this use all inexhaustible.

36.1 In order to draw breath, first empty the lungs; to weaken another, first strengthen him; to overthrow another, first exalt him; to despoil another, first load him with gifts;

36.2 this is called the Occult Regimen. The soft conquers the hard; the weak pulls down the strong.

36.3 The fish that leaves the ocean is lost; the method of government must be concealed from the people.

37.1 The Dao proceeds by its own nature, doing nothing; therefore there is no doing which it comprehends not.

37.2 If Kings and princes were to govern in this manner, all things would operate aright by their own motion. If this transmutation were my object, I should call it Simplicity.

37.3 Simplicity has no name or purpose; silently and at ease all things go well.

38.1 Those who possessed perfectly the powers did not manifest them, and so they preserved them. Those who possessed them imperfectly feared to lose them, and so lost them.

38.2 The former did nothing, no had any need to do. The latter did, and had need to.

38.3 Those who possessed benevolence exercised it, and had need of it; so also was it with them who possessed justice. Those who possessed the conventions displayed them; and when men would not agree, they made ready to fight them.

38.4 Thus when the Dao was lost, the Magick Powers appeared; then, by successive degradations, came Benevolence, Justice, Convention.

38.5 Now, Convention is the shadow of loyalty and good will, and so the herald of disorder. Yea, even Understanding is but a Blossom of the Dao, and foreshadows Stupidity.

38.6 So then the Dao-Man holds to Mass, and avoids Motion; he is attached to the Root, not to the flower. He leaves the one, and cleaves to the other.

39.1 Those things have possessed the Dao from the beginning: Heaven, clear and shining; Earth, steady and easy; Spirits, mighty in Magick;

39.2 Vehicles, overflowing with Joy; all that has life; and the rulers of men. All these derive their essence from the Dao.

39.3 Without the Dao, Heaven would dissolve; Earth disrupt; Spirits become impotent;

39.4 Vehicles empty; living things would perish, and rulers lose their power.

39.5 The root of grandeur is humility, and the strength of exaltation is its base.

39.6 Thus rulers speak of themselves as 'Fatherless', 'Virtueless', 'Unworthy', proclaiming by this that their Glory is their shame.

39.7 So also the virtue of a Chariot is not any of the parts of a Chariot, if they be numbered.

39.8 They do not seek to appear fine like jade, but inconspicuous like common stone.

40.1 The Dao proceeds by correlative curves, and its might is in weakness.

40.2 All things arose from the De, and the De budded from the Dao.

41.1 The best students, learning of the Dao, set to work earnestly to practice the Way. Mediocre students now cherish it, now let it go.

41.2 The best students, learning of the Dao, set to work earnestly to practice the Way. Mediocre students now cherish it, now let it go.

41.3 Thus spoke the makers of Saws: the Dao at its brightest is Obscure. Who advances in that Way, retires. Its smooth Way is rough. Its summit is a valley. Its beauty is ugliness; its wealth is poverty.

41.4 Its virtue is vice. Its stability is change. Its form is without form. Its fulness is vacancy. Its utterance is silence. Its reality is Illusion.

41.5 Nameless and imperceptible is the Dao; but it informs and perfects all things.

42.1 The Dao formulated the One. The One exhaled the Two. The Two were parents of the Three. The Three were parents of all things.

42.2 All things pass from Obscurity to Manifestation, inspired harmoniously by the Breath of the Void.

42.3 Men do not like to be fatherless, virtueless, unworthy; yet rulers describe themselves by these names.

42.4 Thus increase brings decrease to some, and decrease brings increase to others.

42.5 Others have taught thus; I consent to it. Violent men and strong men die not by natural death. This fact is the foundation of my law.

43.1 The Softest substance hunts down the hardest; the unsubstantial penetrates where there is no opening. Here is the Virtue of Inertia.

43.2 Few are they who attain: whose speech is Silence, whose Work is Inertia.

44.1 What shall it profit a man is he gain fame or wealth, And lose his life?

44.2 If a man cling to fame or wealth, he risks that is worth more.

44.3 Be content, not fearing disgrace. Act not, And risk not criticism. Thus live you long, without alarm.

45.1 Despise thy masterpieces; thus renew the vigour of thy creation. Deem your fulness emptiness; thus shall your fulness never be empty. Let the straight appear crooked to thee;

45.2 the Craft clumsiness, your Musick discord.

45.3 -

46.1 When the Dao bears way on Earth, men put swift horses to night-carts. When it is neglected, they breed chargers in the border marshes.

46.2 There is no evil worse than ambition; no misery worse then discontent; no crime greater than greed.

46.3 Content of mind is peace and satisfaction eternal.

47.1 One need not pass his threshold to comprehend all that is under Heaven, nor to look out from his lattice to behold the Dao Celestial. Nay! but the farther a man goes, the less he knows.

47.2 The sages acquired their knowledge without travel; they named all things aright without beholding them; And, acting without aim, fulfilled their Wills.

48.1 The scholar seeks daily increase of knowing; the sage of Dao, daily decrease of doing.

48.2 He decreases it, again and again, until he does no act with the lust of result. Having attained this Inertia, all accomplishes itself. He who attracts to himself all that is under Heaven does so without effort.

48.3 He who makes effort is not able to attract it.

49.1 The wise man has no fixed principle; he adapts his mind to his environment.

49.2 To the good I am good, And to the evil I am good also; thus all become good.

49.3 To the false I am true; thus all become true.

49.4 The sage appears hesitating to the world, because his mind is detached. Therefore the people look and listen to him, as his children; And thus does he shepherd them.

50.1 Man comes into life, And returns again into death.

50.2 Three men in ten conserve life; three men in ten pursue death. Three men also in ten desire to live, but their acts hasten their journey to the home of death. Why is this? Because of their efforts to preserve life.

50.3 But this I have heard. He that is wise in the economy of his life, whereof he is warden for a season, journeys with no need to avoid the tiger or the rhinoceros, And goes uncorseleted among the warriors with no fear of sword or lance.

50.4 The rhinoceros finds in him no place vulnerable to its horn, the tiger to its claws, the weapon to its point. Why is this? Because there is no house of death in his whole body.

51.1 All things proceed from the Dao; And are sustained by its forth-flowing virtue. Every one takes form according to his nature, And is perfect, each in his own particular way. Therefore each and every one of them glorify the Dao, And worship its forth-flowing Virtue.

51.2 This glorifying of the Dao, this worship of the De, is constantly spontaneous, And not by appointment of Law. Thus the Dao buds them out, nurtures them, develops them, sustains them, perfects them, ripens them, upholds them, And reabsorbs them.

51.3 It buds them forth, And claims not lordship over them; is overseer of their changes, And boasts not of his puissance; perfects them, And interferes not with their Ways; this is called the Mystery of its Virtue.

52.1 The Dao buds forth all things under Heaven; it is the Mother of all.

52.2 Knowing the Mother, we may know her offspring. He that knows his Mother, And abides in Her nature, remains in surety all his days.

52.3 With the mouth closed, And the Gates of Breath controlled, he remains at ease all his days.

52.4 With the mouth open, And the Breath directed to outward affairs, he has no surety all his days.

52.5 To perceive that Minute Point is True Vision; to maintain the Soft and Gentle is True Strength.

52.6 Employing harmoniously the Light Within so that it returns to its Origin, one guards even one's body from evil, And keeps Silence before all men.

53.1 Were I discovered by men, And charged with government, my first fear would be lest I should become proud.

53.2 The true Path is level and smooth; but men love by-paths.

53.3 They adorn their courts, but they neglect their fields, And leave their storehouses empty.

53.4 They wear elaborate and embroidered robes; they gird themselves with sharp swords; they eat and drink with luxury; they heap up goods; they are thievish and vainglorious. All this is opposite to the Way of the Dao.

54.1 If a man plant according to the Dao, it will never be uprooted; if he thus gather, it will never be lost. His sons and his sons' sons, one following another, shall honour the shrine of their ancestor.

54.2 The Dao, applied to oneself, strengthens the Body; to the family, brings wealth; to the district, prosperity; to the state; great fortune. Let it be the Law of the Kingdom, And all men will increase in virtue.

54.3 Thus we observe its effect in every case, as to the person, the family, the district, the state, And the kingdom.

54.4 How do I know that this is thus universal under Heaven? By experience.

55.1 He that has the Magick Powers of the Dao is like a young child. Insects will not sting him or beasts or birds or prey attack him. The young child's bones are tender and its sinews are elastic, but its grasp is firm.

55.2 It knows nothing of the Union of Man and Woman, yet its organ may be excited. This is because of its natural perfection.

55.3 It will cry all day long without becoming hoarse, because of the harmony of its being. He who understands this harmony knows the mystery of the Dao, And becomes a True Sage.

55.4 All devices for inflaming life, And increasing the vital Breath by mental effort are evil and factitious.
55.5 Things become strong, then age. This is in discord with the Dao, And what is not at one with the Dao soon comes to an end.

56.1 Who knows the Dao keeps silence. He who babbles knows it not.
56.2 Who knows it closes his mouth and controls the Gates of his Breath. He will make his sharpness blunt; he will loosen his complexes; he will tone down his brightness to the general obscurity. This is called the Secret of Harmony.
56.3 He cannot be insulted either by familiarity or aversion; he is immune to ideas of gain or loss, of honour or disgrace; he is the true man, unequalled under Heaven.

57.1 One may govern a state by restriction; weapons may be used with skill and cunning; but one acquires true command only by freedom, given and taken. How am I aware of this? By experience,
57.2 that to multiply restrictive laws in the kingdom impoverishes the people; the use of machines causes disorder in state and race alike.
57.3 The more men use skill and cunning, the more machines there are; And the more laws there are, the more felons there are.
57.4 A wise man has said this: I will refrain from doing, And the people will act rightly of their own accord; I will love Silence, And the people will instinctively turn to perfection;
57.5 I will take no measures, And the people will enjoy true wealth; I will restrain ambition, And the people will attain simplicity.

58.1 The government which exercises the least care serves the people best; that which meddles with everybody's business works all manner of harm.
58.2 Sorrow and joy are bedfellows; who can divine the final result of either.
58.3 Shall we avoid restriction? Yea; restriction distorts nature, so that even what seems good in it is evil. For how long have men suffered from misunderstanding of this!
58.4 The wise man is foursquare, And avoids aggression; his corners do not injure others. He moves in a straight line and turns not aside therefrom; he is brilliant but does not blind with his brightness.

59.1 To balance our earthly nature and cultivate our heavenly nature, tread the Middle Path.
59.2 This Middle Path alone leads to the Timely Return to the True Nature. This Timely Return results from the constant gathering of Magick Powers. With that Gathering comes Control. This Control we know to be without Limit,
59.3 And he who knows the Limitless may rule the state. He who possesses the Dao continues long.
59.4 He is like a plant with well-set roots and strong stems. Thus it secures long continuance of its life.

60.1 The government of a kingdom is like the cooking of a fish.
60.2 If the kingdom be ruled according to the Dao, the spirits of our ancestors will not manifest their De.
60.3 These spirits have this De, but will not turn it against men. It is able to hurt men; so also is the Wise King; but he does not.
60.4

61.1 A state becomes powerful when it resembles a great river, deep-seated; to it tend all the small streams under Heaven. It is as with the female, that conquers the male by her Silence. Silence is a form of Gravitation.
61.2 Thus a great state attracts small states by meeting their views, and the small state attracts the great state by revering its eminence.
61.3 In the first case this Silence gains supporters; in the second, favour.
61.4 The great state unites men and nurtures them; the small state wishes the good will of the great, and offers service;
61.5 thus each gains its advantage.

62.1 The Dao is the most exalted of all things. It is the ornament of the good, and the protection and purification of the evil.
62.2 Its words are the fountain of honour, and its deeds the engine of achievement. It is present even in evil.
62.3 Though the Son of Heaven were enthroned with his three Dukes appointed to serve him, and he were offered a round symbol-of-rank as great as might fill the hands, with a team of horses to follow; this gift were not to be matched against the Dao, which might be offered by the humblest of men.
62.4 Why did they of old time set such store by the Dao? Because he that sought it might find it, and because it was the Purification from all evil. Therefore did all men under Heaven esteem it the most exalted of all things.

63.1 Act without lust of result; work without anxiety; taste without attachment to flavour;
63.2 esteem small things great and few things many; repel violence with gentleness.
63.3 Do great things while they are yet small, hard things while they are yet easy;
63.4 for all things, how great or hard soever, have a beginning when they are little and easy.

63.5 So thus the wise man accomplishes the greatest tasks without undertaking anything important.
63.6 Who undertakes thoughtlessly is certain to fail in attainment; who estimates things easy finds them hard.
63.7 The wise man considers even easy things hard, do that even hard things are easy to him.

64.1 It is easy to grasp what is not yet in motion, to withstand what is not yet manifest, to break what is not yet compact, to disperse what is not yet coherent.
64.2 Act against things before they become visible; attend to order before disorder arises.
64.3 The tree which fills the embrace grew from a small shoot; the tower nine-storied rose from a low foundation; the ten day journey began with a single step.
64.4 He who acts works harm; he who grasps finds it a slip. The wise man acts not, so works no harm; he does not grasp, and so does not let go.
64.5 People in their handling of affairs often fail when they are about to succeed. If one remains as careful at the end as he was at the beginning, there will be no failure.
64.6 Thus he is in accord with the natural course of events, and he is not overbold in action.

65.1 They of old time that were skilled in the Dao sought not to enlighten the people, but to keep them simple.
65.2 The difficulty of government is the vain knowledge of the people. To use cleverness in government is to scourge the kingdom; to use simplicity is to anoint it.
65.3 Know these things, and make them your law and your example. To possess this Law is the Secret Perfection of rule.
65.4 Profound and Extended is this Perfection; he that possesses it is indeed contrary to the rest, but he attracts them to full accordance.

66.1 The oceans and rivers attract the streams by their skill in being lower than they; thus are they masters thereof.
66.2 So the Wise Man, to be above men, speaks lowly; and to precede them acts with humility.
66.3 Thus, though he be above them, they feel no burden; nor, though he precede them, do they feel insulted. So then do all men delight to honour him, and grow not weary of him.
66.4 He contends not against any man; therefore no man is able to contend against him.

67.1 They say that while this Dao of mine is great, yet it is inferior. This is the proof of its greatness. If it were like anything else, its smallness would have long been known.
67.2 I have three jewels of price whereto I cleave: gentleness, economy, and humility.
67.3 That gentleness makes me courageous, that economy generous, that humility honoured.
67.4 Men of today abandon gentleness for violence, economy for extravagance, humility for pride: this is death.
67.5 Gentleness brings victory in fight, and holds its ground with assurance. Heaven wards the gentle man, by that same virtue.

68.1 He that is skilled in war makes no fierce gestures; the most efficient fighter beware of anger.
68.2 He who conquers refrains from engaging in battle; he whom men most willingly obey continues silently with his work.
68.3 So it is said: he rules who unites with his subjects; he shines whose will is that of Heaven.

69.1 A great strategist said: 'I dare not take the offensive. I prefer the defensive. I dare not advance an inch; I prefer to retreat a foot.'
69.2 Place therefore the army where there is no army; prepare for action where there is no conflict; advance against the enemy where the enemy is not.
69.3 There is no error so great as to engage in battle without sufficient force. To do so is to risk losing the gentleness which is beyond price.
69.4 Thus, when the lines actually engage, he who regrets the necessity is the victor.

70.1 My words are easy to understand and to perform; but is there anyone in the world who can understand them and perform them?
70.2 My words derive from a creative and universal Principle, in accord with the One Law. Men, not knowing these, understand me not. Few are they that understand me; therefore am I the more to be valued.
70.3 The Wise Man wears sackcloth, but guards his jewel in his bosom.

71.1 To know, yet to know nothing, is the highest; not to know, yet pretend to knowledge, is a distemper. Painful is this distemper; therefore we shun it.
71.2 The wise man has it not. Knowing it to be bound up with Sorrow, he puts it away from him.

72.1 When men fear not that which is to be feared, that which they fear will come upon them.
72.2 Let them not live, without thought, the superficial life. Let them not weary of the Spring of Life! By avoiding the superficial life, this weariness comes not upon thee.
72.3 These things the wise man knows, not shows; he loves himself, without isolating his value. He accepts the former and rejects the latter.

73.1 One man, daring, is executed; another, not daring, lives.
73.2 It would seem as if the one course were profitable and the other detrimental. Yet, when Heaven smites a man, who shall assign the cause thereof? Therefore the sage is indifferent.
73.3 The Dao of Heaven contends not, yet it overcomes; it is silent, yet its need is answered; it summons none, but all men come to it of their own free will. Its method is quietness, yet its will is efficient.
73.4 Large are the meshes of Heaven's Net; wide open, yet letting none escape.

74.1 The people have no fear of death; why then seek to awe them by the threat of death?
74.2 If the people feared death and I could put to death evil-doers, who would dare to offend?
74.3 There is one appointed to inflict death. He who would usurp that position resembles a hewer of wood doing the work of a carpenter. Such a one, presumptuous, will be sure to cut his own hands.

75.1 The people suffer hunger because of the weight of taxation imposed by their rulers. This is the cause of famine.
75.2 The people are difficult to govern because their rulers meddle with them. This is the cause of bad government.
75.3 The people welcome death because the toil of living is intolerable. This is why they esteem death lightly. In such a state of insecurity it is better to ignore the question of living than to set store by it.

76.1 At the birth of a man he is elastic and weak; at his death rigid and unyielding.
76.2 This is the common law; trees also, in their youth, are tender and supple; in their decay, hard and dry.
76.3 So then rigidity and hardness are the stigmata of death; elasticity and adaptability, of life.
76.4 He then who puts forth strength is not victorious; even as a strong tree fills the embrace.
76.5 Thus the hard and rigid have the inferior place, the soft and elastic the superior.

77.1 The Dao of Heaven is likened to the bending of a bow, whereby the high part is brought down, and the low part raised up. The extreme is diminished, and the middle increased.
77.2 This is the Way of Heaven, to remove excess, and to supplement insufficiency. Not so is the way of man, who takes away from him that has not to give it to him that has already excess.
77.3 Who can employ his own excess to the weal of all under Heaven? Only he that possesses the Dao.
77.4 So the wise man acts without lust of result; achieves and boasts not; he wills not to proclaim his greatness.

78.1 Nothing in the world is more elastic and yielding than water; yet it is preeminent to dissolve things rigid and resistant; there is nothing which can match it.
78.2 All men know that the soft overcomes the hard, and the weak conquers the strong; but none are able to use this law in action.
78.3 A wise man has said: 'He that takes on the burden of the state is a demi-god worthy of sacrificial worship; and the true King of a people is he that undertakes the weight of their sorrows. Truth appears paradox.'

79.1 When enemies are reconciled, there is always an aftermath of ill will. How can this be useful?
79.2 Therefore the Wise Man, while he keeps his part of the record of a transaction, does not insist on its prompt execution.
79.3 He who has the De considers the situation from all sides, while he who has it not seeks only to benefit himself.
79.4 In the Dao of Heaven, there is no distinction of persons in its love; but it is for the True Man to claim it.

80.1 In a little kingdom of few people it should be the order that though there were men able to do the work of ten men or five score, they should not be employed. Though the people regarded death as sorrowful, yet they should not wish to go elsewhere.
80.2 They should have boats and wagons, yet no necessity to travel; corslets and weapons, yet no occasion to fight.
80.3 For communication they should use knotted cords. They should deem their food sweet, their clothes beautiful, their houses home; their customs delightful.
80.4 There should be another state within view, so that its fowls and dogs should be heard; yet to old age, even to death, the people should hold no traffic with it.

81.1 True speech is not elegant; elaborate speech is not truth.

81.2 Those who know do not argue; the argumentative are without knowledge.

81.3 Those who have assimilated are not learned; those who are gross with learning have not assimilated.

81.4 The Wise Man does not hoard. The more he gives, the more he has; the more he waters, the more he is watered himself.

81.5 The Dao of Heaven is like an Arrow, yet it wounds not; and the Wise Man, in all his works, makes no contention.

Feng & English version

1

The Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao.
The name that can be named is not the eternal name.
The nameless is the beginning of heaven and Earth.
The named is the mother of the ten thousand things.
Ever desireless, one can see the mystery.
Ever desiring, one sees the manifestations.
These two spring from the same source but differ in name; this appears as darkness.
Darkness within darkness.
The gate to all mystery.

2

Under heaven all can see beauty as beauty only because there is ugliness.
All can know good as good only because there is evil.
Therefore having and not having arise together.
Difficult and easy complement each other.
Long and short contrast each other: High and low rest upon each other; Voice and sound harmonize each other; Front and back follow one another.
Therefore the sage goes about doing nothing, teaching no-talking.
The ten thousand things rise and fall without cease, Creating, yet not.
Working, yet not taking credit.
Work is done, then forgotten.
Therefore it lasts forever.

3

Not exalting the gifted prevents quarreling.
Not collecting treasures prevents stealing.
Not seeing desirable things prevents confusion of the heart.
The wise therefore rule by emptying hearts and stuffing bellies, by weakening ambitions and strengthening bones.
If men lack knowledge and desire, then clever people will not try to interfere.
If nothing is done, then all will be well.

4

The Tao is an empty vessel; it is used, but never filled.
Oh, unfathomable source of ten thousand things! Blunt the sharpness, Untangle the knot, Soften the glare, Merge with dust.
Oh, hidden deep but ever present! I do not know from whence it comes.
It is the forefather of the gods.

5

Heaven and Earth are impartial; They see the ten thousand things as straw dogs.
The wise are impartial; They see the people as straw dogs.
The space between heaven and Earth is like a bellows.
The shape changes but not the form; The more it moves, the more it yields.
More words count less.
Hold fast to the center.

6

The valley spirit never dies; It is the woman, primal mother.
Her gateway is the root of heaven and Earth.
It is like a veil barely seen.
Use it; it will never fail.

7

Heaven and Earth last forever.

Why do heaven and Earth last forever? They are unborn, So ever living.
The sage stays behind, thus he is ahead.
He is detached, thus at one with all.
Through selfless action, he attains fulfillment.

8

The highest good is like water.
Water give life to the ten thousand things and does not strive.
It flows in places men reject and so is like the Tao.
In dwelling, be close to the land.
In meditation, go deep in the heart.
In dealing with others, be gentle and kind.
In speech, be true.
In ruling, be just.
In daily life, be competent.
In action, be aware of the time and the season.
No fight: No blame.

9

Better to stop short than fill to the brim.
Oversharpen the blade, and the edge will soon blunt.
Amass a store of gold and jade, and no one can protect it.
Claim wealth and titles, and disaster will follow.
Retire when the work is done.
This is the way of heaven.

10

Carrying body and soul and embracing the one, Can you avoid separation? Attending fully and becoming supple, Can you be as a newborn babe? Washing and cleansing the primal vision, Can you be without stain? Loving all men and ruling the country, Can you be without cleverness? Opening and closing the gates of heaven, Can you play the role of woman? Understanding and being open to all things, Are you able to do nothing? Giving birth and nourishing, Bearing yet not possessing, Working yet not taking credit, Leading yet not dominating, This is the Primal Virtue.

11

Thirty spokes share the wheel's hub; It is the center hole that makes it useful.
Shape clay into a vessel; It is the space within that makes it useful.
Cut doors and windows for a room; It is the holes which make it useful.
Therefore benefit comes from what is there; Usefulness from what is not there.

13

The five colors blind the eye.
The five tones deafen the ear.
The five flavors dull the taste.
Racing and hunting madden the mind.
Precious things lead one astray.
Therefore the sage is guided by what he feels and not by what he sees.
He lets go of that and chooses this.

13

Accept disgrace willingly.
Accept misfortune as the human condition.
What do you mean by "Accept disgrace willingly"? Accept being unimportant.
Do not be concerned with loss or gain.
This is called "accepting disgrace willingly." What do you mean by "Accept misfortune as the human condition"? Misfortune comes from having a body.
Without a body, how could there be misfortune? Surrender yourself humbly; then you can be trusted to care for all things.
Love the world as your own self; then you can truly care for all things.

14

Look, it cannot be seen - it is beyond form.
Listen, it cannot be heard - it is beyond sound.
Grasp, it cannot be held - it is intangible.
These three are indefinable; Therefore they are joined in one.
From above it is not bright; From below it is not dark: An unbroken thread beyond description.
It returns to nothingness.
The form of the formless, The image of the imageless, It is called indefinable and beyond imagination.
Stand before it and there is no beginning.
Follow it and there is no end.
Stay with the ancient Tao, Move with the present.
Knowing the ancient beginning is the essence of Tao.

15

The ancient masters were subtle, mysterious, profound, responsive.
The depth of their knowledge is unfathomable.
Because it is unfathomable, All we can do is describe their appearance.
Watchful, like men crossing a winter stream.
Alert, like men aware of danger.
Courteous, like visiting guests.
Yielding like ice about to melt.
Simple, like uncarved blocks of wood.
Hollow, like caves.
Opaque, like muddy pools.
Who can wait quietly while the mud settles? Who can remain still until the moment of action? Observers of the Tao do not seek fulfillment.
Not seeking fulfillment, they are not swayed by desire for change.

16

Empty yourself of everything.
Let the mind become still.
The ten thousand things rise and fall while the Self watches their return.
They grow and flourish and then return to the source.
Returning to the source is stillness, which is the way of nature.
The way of nature is unchanging.
Knowing constancy is insight.
Not knowing constancy leads to disaster.
Knowing constancy, the mind is open.
With an open mind, you will be openhearted.
Being openhearted, you will act royally.
Being royal, you will attain the divine.
Being divine, you will be at one with the Tao.
Being at one with the Tao is eternal.
And though the body dies, the Tao will never pass away.

17

The very highest if barely known.
Then comes that which people know and love.
Then that which is feared, Then that which is despised.
Who does not trust enough will not be trusted.
When actions are performed Without unnecessary speech, People say, "We did it!"

18

When the great Tao is forgotten, Kindness and morality arise.
When wisdom and intelligence are born, The great pretense begins.
When there is no peace within the family, Filial piety and devotion arise.

When the country is confused and in chaos, Loyal ministers appear.

19

Give up sainthood, renounce wisdom, And it will be a hundred times better for everyone.
Give up kindness, renounce morality, And men will rediscover filial piety and love.
Give up ingenuity, renounce profit, And bandits and thieves will disappear.
These three are outward forms alone; they are not sufficient in themselves.
It is more important To see the simplicity, To realize one's true nature, To cast off selfishness And temper desire.

20

Give up learning, and put an end to your troubles.
Is there a difference between yes and no? Is there a difference between good and evil?
Must I fear what others fear? What nonsense! Other people are contented, enjoying the sacrificial feast of the ox.
In spring some go to the park, and climb the terrace, But I alone am drifting, not knowing where I am.
Like a newborn babe before it learns to smile, I am alone, without a place to go.
Others have more than they need, but I alone have nothing.
I am a fool.
Oh, yes! I am confused.
Others are clear and bright, But I alone am dim and weak.
Others are sharp and clever, But I alone am dull and stupid.
Oh, I drift like the waves of the sea, Without direction, like the restless wind.
Everyone else is busy, But I alone am aimless and depressed.
I am different.
I am nourished by the great mother.

21

The greatest Virtue is to follow Tao and Tao alone.
The Tao is elusive and intangible.
Oh, it is intangible and elusive, and yet within is image.
Oh, it is elusive and intangible, and yet within is form.
Oh, it is dim and dark, and yet within is essence.
This essence is very real, and therein lies faith.
From the very beginning until now its name has never been forgotten.
Thus I perceive the creation.
How do I know the ways of creation?
Because of this.

22

Yield and overcome; Bend and be straight; Empty and be full; Wear out and be new; Have little and gain; Have much and be confused.
Therefore the wise embrace the one And set an example to all.
Not putting on a display, They shine forth.
Not justifying themselves, They are distinguished.
Not boasting, They receive recognition.
Not bragging, They never falter.
They do not quarrel, So no one quarrels with them.
Therefore the ancients say, "Yield and overcome." Is that an empty saying? Be really whole, And all things will come to you.

23

To talk little is natural.
High winds do not last all morning.
Heavy rain does not last all day.
Why is this? Heaven and Earth! If heaven and Earth cannot make things eternal, How is it possible for man? He who follows the Tao Is at one with the Tao.
He who is virtuous Experiences Virtue.
He who loses the way Is lost.
When you are at one with the Tao, The Tao welcomes you.

When you are at one with Virtue, The Virtue is always there.
When you are at one with loss, The loss is experienced willingly.
He who does not trust enough Will not be trusted.

24

He who stands on tiptoe is not steady.
He who strides cannot maintain the pace.
He who makes a show is not enlightened.
He who is self-righteous is not respected.
He who boasts achieves nothing.
He who brags will not endure.
According to followers of the Tao, "These are extra food and unnecessary luggage." They do not bring happiness.
Therefore followers of the Tao avoid them.

25

Something mysteriously formed, Born before heaven and Earth.
In the silence and the void, Standing alone and unchanging, Ever present and in motion.
Perhaps it is the mother of ten thousand things.
I do not know its name Call it Tao.
For lack of a better word, I call it great.
Being great, it flows I flows far away.
Having gone far, it returns.
Therefore, "Tao is great; Heaven is great; Earth is great; The king is also great." These are the four great powers of the universe,
And the king is one of them.
Man follows Earth.
Earth follows heaven.
Heaven follows the Tao.
Tao follows what is natural.

26

The heavy is the root of the light.
The still is the master of unrest.
Therefore the sage, traveling all day, Does not lose sight of his baggage.
Though there are beautiful things to be seen, He remains unattached and calm.
Why should the lord of ten thousand chariots act lightly in public? To be light is to lose one's root.
To be restless is to lose one's control.

27

A good walker leaves no tracks; A good speaker makes no slips; A good reckoner needs no tally.
A good door needs no lock, Yet no one can open it.
Good binding requires no knots, Yet no one can loosen it.
Therefore the sage takes care of all men And abandons no one.
He takes care of all things And abandons nothing.
This is called "following the light."
What is a good man? A teacher of a bad man.
What is a bad man? A good man's charge.
If the teacher is not respected, And the student not cared for, Confusion will arise, however clever one is.
This is the crux of mystery.

28

Know the strength of man, But keep a woman's care! Be the stream of the universe! Being the stream of the universe, Ever true and unswerving, Become as a little child once more.
Know the white, But keep the black! Be an example to the world! Being an example to the world, Ever true and unwavering, Return to the infinite.
Know honor, Yet keep humility.

Be the valley of the universe! Being the valley of the universe, Ever true and resourceful, Return to the state of the uncarved block.

When the block is carved, it becomes useful.

When the sage uses it, he becomes the ruler.

Thus, "A great tailor cuts little."

29

Do you think you can take over the universe and improve it? I do not believe it can be done.

The universe is sacred.

You cannot improve it.

If you try to change it, you will ruin it.

If you try to hold it, you will lose it.

So sometimes things are ahead and sometimes they are behind; Sometimes breathing is hard, sometimes it comes easily;

Sometimes there is strength and sometimes weakness; Sometimes one is up and sometimes down.

Therefore the sage avoids extremes, excesses, and complacency.

30

Whenever you advise a ruler in the way of Tao, Counsel him not to use force to conquer the universe.

For this would only cause resistance.

Thorn bushes spring up wherever the army has passed.

Lean years follow in the wake of a great war.

Just do what needs to be done.

Never take advantage of power.

Achieve results, But never glory in them.

Achieve results, But never boast.

Achieve results, But never be proud.

Achieve results, Because this is the natural way.

Achieve results, But not through violence.

Force is followed by loss of strength.

This is not the way of Tao.

That which goes against the Tao comes to an early end.

31

Good weapons are instruments of fear; all creatures hate them.

Therefore followers of Tao never use them.

The wise man prefers the left.

The man of war prefers the right.

Weapons are instruments of fear; they are not a wise man's tools.

He uses them only when he has no choice.

Peace and quiet are dear to his heart, And victory no cause for rejoicing.

If you rejoice in victory, then you delight in killing; If you delight in killing, you cannot fulfill yourself.

On happy occasions precedence is given to the left, On sad occasions to the right.

In the army the general stands on the left, The commander-in-chief on the right.

This means that war is conducted like a funeral.

When many people are being killed, They should be mourned in heartfelt sorrow.

That is why a victory must be observed like a funeral.

32

The Tao is forever undefined.

Small though it is in the unformed state, it cannot be grasped.

If kings and lords could harness it, The ten thousand things would come together And gentle rain fall.

Men would need no more instruction and all things would take their course.

Once the whole is divided, the parts need names.

There are already enough names.

One must know when to stop.

Knowing when to stop averts trouble.

Tao in the world is like a river flowing home to the sea.

33

Knowing others is wisdom; Knowing the self is enlightenment.
Mastering others requires force; Mastering the self needs strength.
He who knows he has enough is rich.
Perseverance is a sign of willpower.
He who stays where he is endures.
To die but not to perish is to be eternally present.

34

The great Tao flows everywhere, both to the left and to the right.
The ten thousand things depend upon it; it holds nothing back.
It fulfills its purpose silently and makes no claim.
It nourishes the ten thousand things, And yet is not their lord.
It has no aim; it is very small.
The ten thousand things return to it, Yet it is not their lord.
It is very great.
It does not show greatness, And is therefore truly great.

35

All men will come to him who keeps to the one, For there lie rest and happiness and peace.
Passersby may stop for music and good food, But a description of the Tao Seems without substance or flavor.
It cannot be seen, it cannot be heard, And yet it cannot be exhausted.

36

That which shrinks Must first expand.
That which fails Must first be strong.
That which is cast down Must first be raised.
Before receiving There must be giving.
This is called perception of the nature of things.
Soft and weak overcome hard and strong.
Fish cannot leave deep waters, And a country's weapons should not be displayed.

37

Tao abides in non-action, Yet nothing is left undone.
If kings and lords observed this, The ten thousand things would develop naturally.
If they still desired to act, They would return to the simplicity of formless substance.
Without for there is no desire.
Without desire there is.
And in this way all things would be at peace.

38

A truly good man is not aware of his goodness, And is therefore good.
A foolish man tries to be good, And is therefore not good.
A truly good man does nothing, Yet leaves nothing undone.
A foolish man is always doing, Yet much remains to be done.
When a truly kind man does something, he leaves nothing undone.
When a just man does something, he leaves a great deal to be done.
When a disciplinarian does something and no one responds, He rolls up his sleeves in an attempt to enforce order.
Therefore when Tao is lost, there is goodness.
When goodness is lost, there is kindness.
When kindness is lost, there is justice.
When justice is lost, there ritual.
Now ritual is the husk of faith and loyalty, the beginning of confusion.
Knowledge of the future is only a flowery trapping of Tao.
It is the beginning of folly.
Therefore the truly great man dwells on what is real and not what is on the surface, On the fruit and not the flower.

Therefore accept the one and reject the other.

39

These things from ancient times arise from one: The sky is whole and clear.
The earth is whole and firm.
The spirit is whole and strong.
The valley is whole and full.
The ten thousand things are whole and alive.
Kings and lords are whole, and the country is upright.
All these are in virtue of wholeness.
The clarity of the sky prevents its falling.
The firmness of the earth prevents its splitting.
The strength of the spirit prevents its being used up.
The fullness of the valley prevents its running dry.
The growth of the ten thousand things prevents their drying out.
The leadership of kings and lords prevents the downfall of the country.
Therefore the humble is the root of the noble.
The low is the foundation of the high.
Princes and lords consider themselves "orphaned", "widowed" and "worthless".
Do they not depend on being humble? Too much success is not an advantage.
Do not tinkle like jade Or clatter like stone chimes.

40

Returning is the motion of the Tao.
Yielding is the way of the Tao.
The ten thousand things are born of being.
Being is born of not being.

41

The wise student hears of the Tao and practices it diligently.
The average student hears of the Tao and gives it thought now and again.
The foolish student hears of the Tao and laughs aloud.
If there were no laughter, the Tao would not be what it is.
Hence it is said: The bright path seems dim; Going forward seems like retreat; The easy way seems hard; The highest Virtue seems empty; Great purity seems sullied; A wealth of Virtue seems inadequate; The strength of Virtue seems frail; Real Virtue seems unreal; The perfect square has no corners; Great talents ripen late; The highest notes are hard to hear; The greatest form has no shape; The Tao is hidden and without name.
The Tao alone nourishes and brings everything to fulfillment.

42

The Tao begot one.
One begot two.
Two begot three.
And three begot the ten thousand things.
The ten thousand things carry yin and embrace yang.
They achieve harmony by combining these forces.
Men hate to be "orphaned," "widowed," or "worthless," But this is how kings and lords describe themselves.
For one gains by losing And loses by gaining.
What others teach, I also teach; that is: "A violent man will die a violent death!" This will be the essence of my teaching.

43

The softest thing in the universe Overcomes the hardest thing in the universe.
That without substance can enter where there is no room.
Hence I know the value of non-action.
Teaching without words and work without doing Are understood by very few.

44

Fame or self: Which matters more? Self or wealth: Which is more precious? Gain or loss: Which is more painful? He who is attached to things will suffer much.
He who saves will suffer heavy loss.
A contented man is never disappointed.
He who knows when to stop does not find himself in trouble.
He will stay forever safe.

45
Great accomplishment seems imperfect, Yet it does not outlive its usefulness.
Great fullness seems empty, Yet cannot be exhausted.
Great straightness seems twisted.
Great intelligence seems stupid.
Great eloquence seems awkward.
Movement overcomes cold.
Stillness overcomes heat.
Stillness and tranquillity set things in order in the universe.

46
When the Tao is present in the universe, The horses haul manure.
When the Tao is absent from the universe, War horses are bred outside the city.
There is no greater sin than desire, No greater curse than discontent, No greater misfortune than wanting something for oneself.
Therefore he who knows that enough is enough will always have enough.

47
Without going outside, you may know the whole world.
Without looking through the window, you may see the ways of heaven.
The farther you go, the less you know.
Thus the sage knows without traveling; He sees without looking; He works without doing.

48
In the pursuit of learning, every day something is acquired.
In the pursuit of Tao, every day something is dropped.
Less and less is done Until non-action is achieved.
When nothing is done, nothing is left undone.
The world is ruled by letting things take their course.
It cannot be ruled by interfering.

49
The sage has no mind of his own.
He is aware of the needs of others.
I am good to people who are good.
I am also good to people who are not good.
Because Virtue is goodness.
I have faith in people who are faithful.
I also have faith in people who are not faithful.
Because Virtue is faithfulness.
The sage is shy and humble - to the world he seems confusing.
Others look to him and listen.
He behaves like a little child.

50
Between birth and death, Three in ten are followers of life, Three in ten are followers of death, And men just passing from birth to death also number three in ten.
Why is this so? Because they live their lives on the gross level.
He who knows how to live can walk abroad Without fear of rhinoceros or tiger.
He will not be wounded in battle.

For in him rhinoceroses can find no place to thrust their horn, Tigers no place to use their claws, And weapons no place to pierce.

Why is this so? Because he has no place for death to enter.

51

All things arise from Tao.

They are nourished by Virtue.

They are formed from matter.

They are shaped by environment.

Thus the ten thousand things all respect Tao and honor Virtue.

Respect of Tao and honor of Virtue are not demanded, But they are in the nature of things.

Therefore all things arise from Tao.

By Virtue they are nourished, Developed, cared for, Sheltered, comforted, Grown, and protected.

Creating without claiming, Doing without taking credit, Guiding without interfering, This is Primal Virtue.

52

The beginning of the universe Is the mother of all things.

Knowing the mother, one also knows the sons.

Knowing the sons, yet remaining in touch with the mother, Brings freedom from the fear of death.

Keep your mouth shut, Guard the senses, And life is ever full.

Open your mouth, Always be busy, And life is beyond hope.

Seeing the small is insight; Yielding to force is strength.

Using the outer light, return to insight, And in this way be saved from harm.

This is learning constancy.

53

If I have even just a little sense, I will walk on the main road and my only fear will be of straying from it.

Keeping to the main road is easy, But people love to be sidetracked.

When the court is arrayed in splendor, The fields are full of weeds, And the granaries are bare.

Some wear gorgeous clothes, Carry sharp swords, And indulge themselves with food and drink; They have more possessions than they can use.

They are robber barons.

This is certainly not the way of Tao.

54

What is firmly established cannot be uprooted.

What is firmly grasped cannot slip away.

It will be honored from generation to generation.

Cultivate Virtue in your self, And Virtue will be real.

Cultivate it in the family, And Virtue will abound.

Cultivate it in the village, And Virtue will grow.

Cultivate it in the nation, And Virtue will be abundant.

Cultivate it in the universe, And Virtue will be everywhere.

Therefore look at the body as body; Look at the family as family; Look at the village as village; Look at the nation as nation; Look at the universe as universe.

How do I know the universe is like this? By looking!

55

He who is filled with Virtue is like a newborn child.

Wasps and serpents will not sting him; Wild beasts will not pounce upon him; He will not be attacked by birds of prey.

His bones are soft, his muscles weak, But his grip is firm.

He has not experienced the union of man and woman, but is whole.

His manhood is strong.

He screams all day without becoming hoarse.

This is perfect harmony.

Knowing harmony is constancy.

Knowing constancy is enlightenment.

It is not wise to rush about.
Controlling the breath causes strain.
If too much energy is used, exhaustion follows.
This is not the way of Tao.
Whatever is contrary to Tao will not last long.

56

Those who know do not talk.
Those who talk do not know.
Keep your mouth closed.
Guard your senses.
Temper your sharpness.
Simplify your problems.
Mask your brightness.
Be at one with the dust of the Earth.
This is primal union.
He who has achieved this state Is unconcerned with friends and enemies, With good and harm, with honor and disgrace.
This therefore is the highest state of man.

57

Rule a nation with justice.
Wage war with surprise moves.
Become master of the universe without striving.
How do I know that this is so? Because of this! The more laws and restrictions there are, The poorer people become.
The sharper men's weapons, The more trouble in the land.
The more ingenious and clever men are, The more strange things happen.
The more rules and regulations, The more thieves and robbers.
Therefore the sage says: I take no action and people are reformed.
I enjoy peace and people become honest.
I do nothing and people become rich.
I have no desires and people return to the good and simple life.

58

When the country is ruled with a light hand The people are simple.
When the country is ruled with severity, The people are cunning.
Happiness is rooted in misery.
Misery lurks beneath happiness.
Who knows what the future holds? There is no honesty.
Honesty becomes dishonest.
Goodness becomes witchcraft.
Man's bewitchment lasts for a long time.
Therefore the sage is sharp but not cutting, Pointed but not piercing, Straightforward but not unrestrained, Brilliant but not blinding.

59

In caring for others and serving heaven, There is nothing like using restraint.
Restraint begins with giving up one's own ideas.
This depends on Virtue gathered in the past.
If there is a good store of Virtue, then nothing is impossible.
If nothing is impossible, then there are no limits.
If a man knows no limits, then he is fit to be a ruler.
The mother principle of ruling holds good for a long time.
This is called having deep roots and a firm foundation, The Tao of long life and eternal vision.

60

Ruling the country is like cooking a small fish.
Approach the universe with Tao, And evil is not powerful, But its power will not be used to harm others.

Not only will it do no harm to others, But the sage himself will also be protected.
They do not hurt each other, And the Virtue in each one refreshes both.

61

A great country is like low land.
It is the meeting ground of the universe, The mother of the universe.
The female overcomes the male with stillness, Lying low in stillness.
Therefore if a great country gives way to a smaller country, It will conquer the smaller country.
And if a small country submits to a great country, It can conquer the great country.
Therefore those who would conquer must yield, And those who conquer do so because they yield.
A great nation needs more people; A small country needs to serve.
Each gets what it wants.
It is fitting for a great nation to yield.

62

Tao is source of the ten thousand things.
It is the treasure of the good man, and the refuge of the bad.
Sweet words can buy honor; Good deeds can gain respect.
If a man is bad, do not abandon him.
Therefore on the day the emperor is crowned, Or the three officers of state installed, Do not send a gift of jade and a team of four horses, But remain still and offer the Tao.
Why does everyone like the Tao so much at first? Isn't it because you find what you seek and are forgiven when you sin?
Therefore this is the greatest treasure of the universe.

63

Practice non-action.
Work without doing.
Taste the tasteless.
Magnify the small, increase the few.
Reward bitterness with care.
See simplicity in the complicated.
Achieve greatness in little things.
In the universe the difficult things are done as if they are easy.
In the universe great acts are made up of small deeds.
The sage does not attempt anything very big, And thus achieved greatness.
Easy promises make for little trust.
Taking things lightly results in great difficulty.
Because the sage always confronts difficulties, He never experiences them.

64

Peace is easily maintained; Trouble is easily overcome before it starts.
The brittle is easily shattered; The small is easily scattered.
Deal with it before it happens.
Set things in order before there is confusion.
A tree as great as a man's embrace springs up from a small shoot; A terrace nine stories high begins with a pile of earth; A journey of a thousand miles starts under one's feet.
He who acts defeats his own purpose; He who grasps loses.
The sage does not act, and so is not defeated.
He does not grasp and therefore does not lose.
People usually fail when they are on the verge of success.
So give as much care to the end as to the beginning; Then there will be no failure.
Therefore the sage seeks freedom from desire.
He does not collect precious things.
He learns not to hold on to ideas.
He brings men back to what they have lost.
He helps the ten thousand things find their own nature, But refrains from action.

65

In the beginning those who knew the Tao did not try to enlighten others, But kept it hidden.
Why is it so hard to rule? Because people are so clever.
Rulers who try to use cleverness Cheat the country.
Those who rule without cleverness Are a blessing to the land.
These are the two alternatives.
Understanding these is Primal Virtue.
Primal Virtue is deep and far.
It leads all things back Toward the great oneness.

66

Why is the sea king of a hundred streams?
Because it lies below them.
Therefore it is the king of a hundred streams.
If the sage would guide the people, he must serve with humility.
If he would lead them, he must follow behind.
In this way when the sage rules, the people will not feel oppressed; When he stands before them, they will not be harmed.
The whole world will support him and will not tire of him.
Because he does not compete, He does not meet competition.

67

Everyone under heaven says that my Tao is great and beyond compare.
Because it is great, it seems different.
If it were not different, it would have vanished long ago.
I have three treasures which I hold and keep.
The first is mercy; the second is economy; The third is daring not to be ahead of others.
From mercy comes courage; from economy comes generosity; From humility comes leadership.
Nowadays men shun mercy, but try to be brave; They abandon economy, but try to be generous; They do not believe in humility, but always try to be first.
This is certain death.
Mercy brings victory in battle and strength in defense.
It is the means by which heaven saves and guards.

68

A good soldier is not violent.
A good fighter is not angry.
A good winner is not vengeful A good employer is humble.
This is known as the Virtue of not striving.
This is known as ability to deal with people.
This since ancient times has been known as the ultimate unity with heaven.

69

There is a saying among soldiers: I dare not make the first move but would rather play the guest; I dare not advance an inch but would rather withdraw a foot.
This is called marching without appearing to move, Rolling up your sleeves without showing your arm, Capturing the enemy without attacking, Being armed without weapons.
There is no greater catastrophe than underestimating the enemy.
By underestimating the enemy, I almost lost what I value.
Therefore when the battle is joined, The underdog will win.

70

My words are easy to understand and easy to perform, Yet no man under heaven knows them or practices them.
My words have ancient beginnings.
My actions are disciplined.
Because men do not understand, they have no knowledge of me.
Those that know me are few; Those that abuse me are honored.
Therefore the sage wears rough clothing and holds the jewel in his heart.

71

Knowing ignorance is strength.
Ignoring knowledge is sickness.
If one is sick of sickness, then one is not sick.
The sage is not sick because he is sick of sickness.
Therefore he is not sick.

72

When men lack a sense of awe, there will be disaster.
Do not intrude in their homes.
Do not harass them at work.
If you do not interfere, they will not weary of you.
Therefore the sage knows himself but makes no show, Has self-respect but is not arrogant.
He lets go of that and chooses this.

73

A brave and passionate man will kill or be killed.
A brave and calm man will always preserve life.
Of these two which is good and which is harmful? Some things are not favored by heaven.
Who knows why? Even the sage is unsure of this.
The Tao of heaven does not strive, and yet it overcomes.
It does not speak, and yet is answered.
It does not ask, yet is supplied with all its needs.
It seems to have no aim and yet its purpose is fulfilled.
Heaven's net casts wide.
Though its meshes are coarse, nothing slips through.

74

If men are not afraid to die, It is no avail to threaten them with death.
If men live in constant fear of dying, And if breaking the law means that a man will be killed, Who will dare to break the law?
There is always an official executioner.
If you try to take his place, It is like trying to be a master carpenter and cutting wood.
If you try to cut wood like a master carpenter, you will only hurt your hand.

75

Why are the people starving? Because the rulers eat up the money in taxes.
Therefore the people are starving.
Why are the people rebellious? Because the rulers interfere too much.
Therefore they are rebellious.
Why do the people think so little of death? Because the rulers demand too much of life.
Therefore the people take death lightly.
Having little to live on, one knows better than to value life too much.

76

A man is born gentle and weak.
At his death he is hard and stiff.
Green plants are tender and filled with sap.
At their death they are withered and dry.
Therefore the stiff and unbending is the disciple of death.
The gentle and yielding is the disciple of life.
Thus an army without flexibility never wins a battle.
A tree that is unbending is easily broken.
The hard and strong will fall.
The soft and weak will overcome.

77

The Tao of heaven is like the bending of a bow.
The high is lowered, and the low is raised.
If the string is too long, it is shortened; If there is not enough, it is made longer.
The Tao of heaven is to take from those who have too much and give to those who do not have enough.
Man's way is different.
He takes from those who do not have enough and give to those who already have too much.
What man has more than enough and gives it to the world? Only the man of Tao.
Therefore the sage works without recognition.
He achieves what has to be done without dwelling on it.
He does not try to show his knowledge.

78

Under heaven nothing is more soft and yielding than water.
Yet for attacking the solid and strong, nothing is better; It has no equal.
The weak can overcome the strong; The supple can overcome the stiff.
Under heaven everyone knows this, Yet no one puts it into practice.
Therefore the sage says: He who takes upon himself the humiliation of the people is fit to rule them.
He who takes upon himself the country's disasters deserves to be king of the universe.
The truth often sounds paradoxical.

79

After a bitter quarrel, some resentment must remain.
What can one do about it? Therefore the sage keeps his half of the bargain But does not exact his due.
A man of Virtue performs his part, But a man without Virtue requires others to fulfill their obligations.
The Tao of heaven is impartial.
It stays with good men all the time.

80

A small country has fewer people.
Though there are machines that can work ten to a hundred times faster than man, they are not needed.
The people take death seriously and do not travel far.
Though they have boats and carriages, no one uses them.
Though they have armor and weapons, no one displays them.
Men return to the knotting of rope in place of writing.
Their food is plain and good, their clothes fine but simple, their homes secure; They are happy in their ways.
Though they live within sight of their neighbors, And crowing cocks and barking dogs are heard across the way, Yet they leave each other in peace while they grow old and die.

81

Truthful words are not beautiful.
Beautiful words are not truthful.
Good men do not argue.
Those who argue are not good.
Those who know are not learned.
The learned do not know.
The sage never tries to store things up.
The more he does for others, the more he has.
The more he gives to others, the greater his abundance.
The Tao of heaven is pointed but does no harm.
The Tao of the sage is work without effort.

Ganson version

1

The Tao described in words is not the real Tao.
Words cannot describe it.
Nameless, it is the source of creation.
Named, it is the mother of all things.
To see Tao the observer must be motiveless.
Those with selfish motives see only the surface, not the innermost depths.
These two kinds of observers look alike, but differ in the insight of their observations.
They look alike because they are both human.
Within humanity is the key to the door of creation.

2

Whenever the most beautiful is perceived ugliness arises, the least beautiful.
Whenever good is perceived evil exists, its natural opposite.
Perception involves opposites: Reality and fantasy are opposing thoughts.
Difficult and simple oppose in degree.
Long and short oppose in distance.
High and low oppose in height.
Shrill and deep oppose in tone.
Before and after oppose in sequence.
The truly wise accept this, and they work diligently without allegiance to words.
They teach by doing, not by saying; are genuinely helpful, not discriminating; are positive, not possessive.
They do not proclaim their accomplishments, and because they do not proclaim them, credit for them can never be taken away.

3

Leaders should not seek power or status; people will not then crave power or status.
If scarce goods are not valued highly, people will have no need to steal them.
If there is nothing available to arouse passion, people will remain content and satisfied.
The truly wise do lead by instilling humility and open-mindedness, by providing for fair livelihoods, by discouraging personal ambition, by strengthening the bone-structure of the people.
The wise avoid evil and radical reform; thus the foolish do not obstruct them.
They work serenely, with inner quiet.

4

Tao is a vast immeasurable void.
It can be used to infinity.
It is truly inexhaustible.
Like nature, it appears to be the origin of everything.
In it, conflicts (sharp edges) are satisfied (rounded).
Differences (tangles) are resolved (untied).
Observations (light) are clarified (tempered).
Disturbances (turmoil) are quieted (submerged).
It is like a deep dark pool.
I do not know its source.
It is like a prelude to nature, a preface to God.

5

Nature is indifferent to life.
It realizes everything is as a straw dog (a sacrificial animal-image).
The truly wise are also indifferent to life.
They realize humanity is as a straw dog.
The universe is like a bellows: empty, yet quite full.
As it proceeds, it produces.
Much talk, much exhaustion.

Keep your thoughts within!

6

The concept of Yin is ever present.
It is the Mystic Female from whom the heavens and the earth originate.
Constantly, continuously, enduring always.
Use her!

7

The heavens endure; the earth is very old.
Why? Because they do not exist for themselves, they therefore have long life.
The truly wise are content to be last; they are therefore first.
They are indifferent to themselves; they are therefore self-confident.
Perhaps because they do not exist for themselves they find complete fulfillment.

8

The highest motive is to be like water.
Water is essential to all life, yet it does not demand a fee or proclaim its importance.
Rather, it flows humbly to the lowest level, and in so doing it is much like Tao.
In the home the truly wise love the humble earth, the foundation on which the home is built.
In the heart they love what is genuine.
In friendship they are compassionate.
In words they are sincere.
In government they foster peace and goodwill.
In business they work with quiet efficiency.
Serenity is the goal of Tao.
Through it nothing is lost.

9

There is a danger in extremes: Pull a bowstring too far, and you wish you had let go before.
Hone a sword-edge too sharp, and the edge will wear too soon.
Fill your house with gold and jade, and you invite thieves.
Be proud and arrogant over good fortune, and you prepare your own downfall.
When you have reached your goal, be satisfied to go no further.
This is the way of Tao.

10

Can you control your mind so that it never strays from the way of Tao? Can you control your breathing so that it is soft and gentle like a new-born babe? Can you purify yourself so that you are perfect? Can you love all the people, rule them, and remain unknown? And do so without interference? Can you play the same role always? Give birth, provide nourishment; do this without being possessive.
Give help without obligation.
Lead without dominating.
This is the Mystic Virtue (The).

11

Thirty spokes unite at the hub of a wheel but the ultimate use of the wheel depends on the part where nothing exists.
Clay is molded into a vessel but the ultimate use of the vessel depends on the part where nothing exists.
Doors and windows are cut from the walls of a house but the ultimate use of the house depends on the part where nothing exists.
So there is advantage in using what can be seen, what does exist.
There is also advantage in using the invisible, the non-existent.

12

Five colors (blue, yellow, red, white, black) blind the eye.
Five notes (do, re, mi, so, la) deafen the ear.
Five tastes (sweet, sour, bitter, pungent, salt) dull the tongue.

Hunting and pursuing will unbalance the mind.
Striving for earthly goods produces unhealthy tension.
Therefore the truly wise satisfy the internal and reject the external.
They accept one and deny the other.

13
It is said: Both good fortune and misfortune cause tension.
The creative and the destructive exist equally in the mind.
How can both good fortune and misfortune cause tension? Those with good fortune are tense anticipating their gift; those with misfortune are tense lamenting their loss.
How can the creative and destructive exist equally in the mind? Tension exists because we have a mind, a self, with dual purposes. If we can be selfless, indifferent to the mind, then tension cannot exist.
Thus, one who views the world as he views himself is best suited to govern the world; one who loves humanity as he loves himself can be entrusted with the world.

14
Looked for it cannot be seen; it is invisible.
Listened for it cannot be heard; it is inaudible.
Reached for it cannot be touched; it is intangible.
These three are beyond analysis; these three are one.
It rises like the sun, but does not illuminate.
It sets like the sun, but does not darken.
Without beginning, without end, it is infinite, undefinable.
It is the form of the formless; it is existence in non-existence; it is the greatest mystery.
Meet it and it has no face; follow it and it has no back.
Hold close to the ancient Tao and be master of your present existence.
Knowing the present you mirror the past.
This is the clue to Tao.

15
The ancient followers of the Tao: so wise, so subtle, so profound, so deeply understanding, that they were themselves misunderstood.
They must therefore be described.
Cautious, like crossing a stream in mid-winter; observant, like moving in fear through hostile land; modest, retiring like ice beginning to melt; dignified, like an honored guest; genuine, like natural, untouched wood; receptive, like an inviting, open valley; friendly, like muddied water, freely mixing.
Who can make sense of a world like cloudy water? Left alone and still, it becomes clear.
Should this stillness be maintained? Moving hastily will surely cloud it again.
How then can one move and not become clouded? Accept Tao and achieve without being selfish; being unselfish one endures the world's wear, and needs no change of pace.

16
Achieve the highest goal by being passive; hold close to a state of perfect serenity.
Everything comes into existence, but observe, returns to its source.
Thus, vegetation flourishes and grows, but returns to the soil whence it came.
Returning to the source is serenity; it is to realize one's destiny.
To realize one's destiny is to know the Eternal Constant.
To know the Eternal Constant is to be enlightened.
To be ignorant of this is blindness that begets evil.
Whoever knows the Eternal Constant is open-minded.
Being open-minded is to be impartial.
Being impartial is to be above nations and laws.
Being above nations and laws is to be in accord with nature.
Being in accord with nature is to be in accord with Tao.
Being in accord with Tao is to be eternal.
Although his body may die and decay, he shall live forever.

17

The best leaders, the people do not notice.
The next best, the people honor and praise.
The next, the people fear; and the next, the people hate.
If you have no faith, people will have no faith in you, and you must resort to oaths.
When the best leader's work is done the people say: "We did it ourselves!"

18

Nature is sparing in its talk.
High winds seldom last all morning.
Heavy rains seldom last all day.
Where do these things originate? In nature.
And if nature so spares its talk, how much more, then, should you?

19

Do away with learning, the same with wisdom; the people will gain a hundredfold.
Do away with "humanity" and the same with "justice"; the people will rediscover love and duty.
Do away with expensive arts, the same with profits; there will be no thieves, no robbers.
These three things involve the external world; they are therefore of no real value.
Do away with formal learning and you will not be annoyed by its multitude of details.
How much difference between yes and yea? How much difference between good and evil? It is true that what men fear you must also fear, but how very remote the actual occurrence.
The people need what is more dependable.
Reveal, then, your natural, inner self.
Realize your original nature; control selfishness; subdue desires.

20

The great mass of people are content as if at the sacrificial feast or at the spring carnival.
I alone am serene, quiet, passive, like a newborn baby unable yet to smile.
I am alone, like one who is homeless.
Others seem to have abundance while I seem to live in contemplation.
Perhaps I am the fool, so obscure, so vague.
The masses seem bright and informed; I alone seem dull and uninformed.
The masses are clever and smug; I alone am simple and unassuming.
Alone, as if adrift on the lonely sea.
And others seem to have useful purpose; I alone seem impractical and awkward.
I am alone, different.
I choose to be sustained by nature.

21

The Teh follows Tao.
Tao is like a dream: invisible, intangible, obscure.
It is invisible yet there is a form to it.
It is intangible yet there is a feel to it.
It is obscure yet there is method to it.
The method is true and so there are signs of it.
From ancient times until now the signs have never ceased by which we can still see the beginning.
How can I know the nature of the beginning? By these signs!

22

Be humble; you will remain yourself.
Be flexible, bend, and you will be straight.
Be ever receptive, and you will be satisfied.
Become tired and weary and you will be renewed.
Have little, you will have enough; to have abundance is to be troubled.
The truly wise seek Unity, embrace oneness, and become examples for all the world.

Not revealing themselves, they shine; not self-righteous, they are distinguished; not self-centered, they are famous; not seeking glory, they are leaders.

Because they are not quarrelsome no one quarrels with them.

Thus it is as the ancients said: "To yield is to retain Unity." The truly wise have Unity, and the world respects them.

23

Whoever follows Tao becomes as Tao.

Whoever follows Teh becomes as Teh.

Whoever abandons Tao or Teh will be abandoned by Tao and Teh.

Whoever seeks Tao is welcomed by Tao.

Whoever seeks Teh is welcomed by Teh.

Whoever seeks abandonment is welcomed by abandonment.

24

Whoever stands on tiptoe is unsteady.

Whoever walks with long strides cannot long keep up the pace.

Whoever makes a show of himself cannot shine.

Whoever is self-righteous cannot gain the respect of the people.

Whoever is self-centered cannot become loved by others.

Whoever seeks glory cannot become a true leader.

According to the Tao these attitudes are excessive, unnecessary.

Even in earthly matters they are to be avoided.

Therefore the follower of Tao avoids them.

25

There is something mysterious, without beginning, without end, that existed before the heavens and earth.

Unmoving; infinite; standing alone; never changing.

It is everywhere and it is inexhaustible.

It is the mother of all.

I do not know its name.

If I must name it I call it Tao and I hail it as supreme.

Supreme means never-ending; never-ending means far-reaching; and far-reaching means returning.

Thus Tao is supreme, the heavens are supreme, earth is supreme, and man is supreme.

There are four supremes in the universe; man is one of them.

Man is subject to the laws of the earth, the earth is subject to the laws of the universe, the universe is subject to the laws of Tao, and Tao is subject to the laws of its own nature.

26

Heaviness (sincerity) is the root of lightness (frivolity).

And serenity far surpasses hastiness.

The truly wise can travel all day yet never put down their baggage (a pun alluding to depth or heaviness of spirit).

Though there be appealing distractions they remain serene, passive, undisturbed.

How can a leader of ten thousand chariots make his rule obscure, insignificant? To be light is to lose the root of lightness; to be hasty is to lose self-mastery.

27

A good traveller has no need to leave tracks; a good speaker leaves no grounds for rebuttal; a good trader needs no scales, no computer; a good door needs no latch to remain shut; a good fastener needs no rope to perfect its bond.

The truly wise are helpful to people.

No one is rejected.

The truly wise are helpful to everything.

Nothing is rejected.

This is double enlightenment.

Therefore the good teach the bad; the bad are lessons for the good.

Whoever dislikes such a teacher, who dislikes such lessons, may appear learning but is misguided.

This is the subtlety of true wisdom.

28

He who knows the mystic male (Yang) yet retains the mystic female (Yin) is as a great canyon welcoming the whole world.
He has Teh and is innocent as a child.
Whoever is aware of the white (Yang) yet retains the black (Yin) is as a standard for all the world.
He has Teh and has returned to the Absolute.
Whoever is aware of fame and glory yet retains humility and obscurity is as a valley that can hold the earth.
He has Teh and has returned to Unity.
Divide the Unity; the parts become as tools.
In the hands of the truly wise they become the means to an end, but never ends in themselves.

29

Those who seek to conquer the world and shape it as they see fit never succeed.
The world is a sacred vessel and cannot be improved.
Whoever tries to alter it spoils it; whoever tries to direct it, misleads it.
So, some things advance, others lag; some proceed in silence, others make sound; some are strong, others weak; some are forward, others retiring.
Therefore the truly wise avoid extremes, extravagance, and foolish pride.

30

Whoever advises a ruler according to Tao opposes conquest by war.
Policies of war tend to rebound.
Where the armies march, brambles grow.
Whenever a great army is formed, hunger and evil follow.
So, a wise general achieves his goal and stops; he does not battle beyond victory.
He wins, but does not boast of it; he wins, but does not celebrate it; he wins, but does not revel in the spoils; he wins, for it is his duty to win; he wins, but not from love of violence.
Things reach their peak, then decline.
Violence opposes Tao.
Whoever opposes Tao dies early.

31

Weapons are tools of destruction avoided by followers of Tao.
The citizen favors the creative in time of peace; the citizen favors the destructive in time of war.
Weapons are tools of destruction not used by people of dignity, but when their use cannot be avoided, the best policy is calm restraint.
There is no beauty in victory.
Whoever calls it so delights in slaughter.
Whoever delights in slaughter is not fit to rule.

32

Tao is absolute, nameless.
A piece of wood, uncarved, natural, cannot be used by anyone.
The leaders who can be genuine and natural as this, gain the respect of the people.
The heavens and the earth join and gentle rains fall, beyond anyone's command, to everyone equally.
When civilization grew, names began.
With names, one should know where to stop.
Whoever knows this has security.
In the world Tao is like rain that falls into the rivers and thence to the open sea.

33

One who knows others is wise; one who knows himself is wisest.
One who conquers others is strong; one who conquers himself is strongest.
To be content is to be wealthy.
To be dedicated is to be strong.
To be genuine is to endure.
To die and be remembered is to have immortality.

34

The great Tao is everywhere, on all sides.
Everything derives from it; nothing is rejected by it.
Through Tao everything exists yet it does not take possession.
It provides for everything yet it does not lay claim.
Without motive it seems small.
Being the source of everything it is great.
Because it never claims greatness, its greatness shines brightly.

35

The world will follow, without fear of evil, serene, peaceful, secure, one who follows the great symbol of Yin-Yang.
Music and good food will stop the passing stranger, but Tao, offered by the spoken word, seems unappealing, tasteless.
Looked for, it cannot be seen; listened for, it cannot be heard; applied, it cannot be exhausted.

36

That which is to contract is first expanded.
That which is to weaken is first strengthened.
That which is to be felled is first reinforced.
This is subtle enlightenment.
Being gentle overcomes strength.
As fish should not leave the deep, so the sharp weapons of the state should always be hidden from view.

37

Tao never acts directly; it activates everything.
If rulers would do likewise, the world would improve of itself.
But when improving, motives show.
These should be restrained by motiveless Yin.
Motiveless Yin is free of all desire.
Being free of desire is to be serene.
Being serene, the world is at peace.

38

Whoever has Teh never boasts of it, and so truly possesses it.
Whoever has Teh and boasts of it, no longer possesses it.
Possessing Teh is to be serene; with little effort much is done and motives diminish.
Losing Teh is to be hasty; with great effort much is wasted and motives increase.
Possessing Teh is to act out of love without ulterior motive; losing Teh is to act self-righteous with an ulterior motive.
When a person of high station directs but sees no following of that direction, he shows his hand and forces direction.
When Tao is lost "compassion" becomes doctrine; when compassion is lost "justice" becomes doctrine; when justice is lost ritual becomes doctrine.
Ritual is the slow loss of loyalty, the beginning of unprincipled confusion.
Foreknowledge is Tao blossoming; it is also the flower of folly.
The truly wise seek the center, not the surface; take the fruit, leaving the flower.
Accept one and reject the other.

39

From past ages there has been Unity: the heavens achieved it and became clear, the earth achieved it and became firm, the valleys achieved it and became fertile, the spirit achieved it and become inspired, all things achieved it and became existent, leaders achieved it and became good rulers.
Without clarity the heavens would be tempestuous, without firmness the earth would tremble, without fertility the valleys would dry up, without inspiration the spirit would be lost, without existence all things would vanish, rulers would falter and fall.

Thus good leaders are humble.
The high are founded on the low just as a chariot is made up of many small parts.
Better to rumble like rocks (have depth) than to jingle lightly like jewels (be flighty).

40

Tao is an endless circle, ever returning.
Serenity is its ultimate function.
Everything rises from existence.
Existence rises from non-existence.

41
Whenever the truly wise hear of Tao they strive earnestly to use it.
Whenever the mediocre hear of Tao they are aware, yet unaware of it.
Whenever the stupid hear of Tao they laugh aloud at it.
If it were not laughed at it would not be Tao.
Therefore it is said of Tao: enlightenment seems dullness; progress seems regression; the true path seems misleading.
The highest character seems recessive like a valley; the purest virtue seems tarnished; the most adequate seems somehow insufficient; the most firm seems frail; the most fundamental seems changeable.
Great space has no corners; great ability takes time to mature; great music is soft and mellow; great form is shapeless, contourless.
Tao is hidden; it is nameless; yet it stimulates; it brings fulfillment.

42
Out of Tao comes Unity; out of Unity comes two; from two comes three; from three all things come.
The shade of Yin is on the back of everything; the light of Yang is on the face of everything.
From their blending together balance exists in the world.
To feel unworthy, to be alone, orphaned, is greatly feared and disliked, yet statesmen claim these feelings.
Loss sometimes benefits; benefits can be a loss.
Others have taught this too: the violent meet violent ends.
This is a good teaching.

43
The softest will penetrate the hardest.
The non-existent will penetrate the existent.
By this I know the value of being passive.
This is teaching without words, achievement without direct action.
In all the world few know this.

44
Fame or self: which is more important? Wealth or self: which is more valuable? Gain or loss: which is the greater evil? Overdoing leads to waste; great fortunes invite theft.
Being content prevents humiliation.
Knowing where to stop prevents danger.
To know this is to endure.

45
The most perfect seems imperfect, but it endures with constancy.
The greatest fullness seems empty, but it cannot be exhausted.
The most straight seems twisted.
The most skillful seems clumsy.
The most eloquent seems awkward.
Movement overcomes cold, stillness overcomes heat. The serene and passive are guides for all.

46
When the world follows Tao, racehorses work on farms.
When the world forsakes Tao, cavalry horses practice in parks.
The greatest curse is discontent.
It is the greatest misery.
The greatest sin is selfish striving.
Being content with contentment is to be always satisfied.

47

One can know the world without leaving the house.
One can see Tao without looking out the window.
The more you study the less you know.
Thus the truly wise know without travelling, perceive without seeing, achieve without doing.

48
The scholar needs to know more and more each day.
The follower of Tao needs to know less and less each day.
By lessening knowledge one reaches inaction.
By inaction everything can be done.
The world is won by those who leave it alone.
When one feels compelled to dominate, the world is already beyond reach.

49
The truly wise are selfless.
People's needs are their needs.
The good are treated with goodness; the bad are also treated with goodness; this is the goodness of Teh.
The faithful are treated with faith; the faithless are treated with faith; this is the faith of Teh.
The truly wise live peacefully and impartially.
In their eyes people share a common heritage.
The truly wise accept all people as their own family.

50
Life leaves and death enters.
Three and ten parts accompany life; three and ten parts accompany death; three and ten parts move toward death.
(Four limbs plus nine orifices.) Why? The wear of the drive to live.
Why? Living tips the balance toward dying.
It is said that whoever realizes this is not attacked by the wild buffalo or tiger and is not vulnerable on the field of battle.
The buffalo's horns find no place to gore, the tiger's claws no place to tear, the soldier's weapons no place to pierce.
Why? Because death is not yet within reach.

51
Tao causes all things to exist; Teh sustains them.
Reality gives them form; fate completes them.
Thus all things honor Tao and respect Teh of their own accord.
Teh sustains all things in existence.
It fosters growth, develops them, harbors them, provides shelter.
It nourishes them, gives protection.
Everything exists through Tao and nothing is rejected.
Everything is produced through Tao but Tao is not possessive.
Tao is superior but never interferes.

52
The beginning of the universe may be considered the mother.
Knowing the mother the sons can be known.
Knowing the sons we can keep close to the mother.
Thus life has within itself security.
Eyes closed and mouth shut, life is without trouble. Eyes open, busily conversant, life is without hope.
Whoever sees the most minute sees clearest.
Whoever cherishes the weak has the most strength.
Whoever uses enlightenment has bright vision.
Thus, no harm is done.
This is following Tao.

53
Let me walk along the main path of Tao and avoid by-paths of worthless knowledge.
I would not leave this main path, so easily followed, but many people prefer the by-paths.

The palaces are well kept while fields go untilled and the granaries are empty.
To wear elegant clothes, to carry a fine sword, to gorge with food and drink, to have wealth and riches, all this invites plunder.
Is this not departing from Tao?

54

Whatever is firmly planted is not easily uprooted.
Whatever is firmly grasped is not easily loosened.
Generation follows generation, continuing endlessly.
Accept Tao in yourself and Teh is yours.
Accept Tao in the family and Teh is abundant.
Accept Tao in the village and Teh multiplies.
Accept Tao in the nation and Teh flourishes.
Accept Tao in the world and Teh is universal.
Therefore, one can measure by Teh: By your Teh gauge the family.
By the family's Teh gauge the village.
By the village's Teh gauge the nation.
By the nation's Teh gauge the world.
How do I know this is so? By seeing it so!

55

Whoever has Teh is like a child: Poisonous insects will not bit.
Wild animals will not attack.
Predatory birds will not strike.
Bones soft, muscles weak, but gripping strongly.
Unconcerned about sex yet most vigorous.
Crying out all day long but not hoarse.
This involves perfect harmony.
Knowing harmony is to approach the eternal.
Knowing the eternal is to be enlightened.
To become excitable leads to confusion.
To freely vent emotions is to be aggressive.
Things reach their prime and then decline.
To be impatient is to oppose Tao.
Whatever opposes Tao dies young.

56

Whoever knows does not speak; whoever speaks does not know.
So, stop the senses.
Close their doors.
Solve their riddles.
Subdue their light.
Be one with humble dust.
This is the mystic unity.
It is beyond love and hate, beyond profit and loss, beyond honor and dishonor.
Thus it is the most valuable treasure in all the world.

57

Rule by what is right.
Wage war by clever strategy.
Win the world by being passive.
How do I know? By this: More restrictions mean weaker people.
More weapons mean a troubled state.
More cunning means many surprises.
More laws mean more violators.
Be passive and the people will be reformed.
Be serene and the people will be righteous.
Be peaceable and the people will be wealthy.

Be selfless and the people will be simple and serene.

58
Govern passively, the people are happy.
Govern precisely, the people are restless.
Happiness arises from unhappiness; unhappiness lies beneath happiness.
Who knows what is best? When the state is self-righteous, self-righteousness becomes strategy and good becomes evil.
Man has long been misguided.
The truly wise are: square (sharp-cornered) but not cutting; angled (wedge-like) but not interfering; straight (pointed) but not domineering; bright (enlightened) but not binding.

59
With Tao, You Are Supreme In ruling men be reserved.
To be reserved is to conform to Tao.
To conform to Tao is to achieve Teh.
With Teh anything is possible.
Because anything is possible, no one knows your supremacy.
Because no one knows your supremacy, a nation can be ruled well.
Because this is a Mother Principle it long endures.
Therefore you are as deeply rooted and as immortal as it is.

60
Rule a great state as you cook a small fish: do not overdo it! Rule with Tao and evil departs.
Evil will still have power, but it will not harm the people.
Then not only does evil cease to do harm, the ruler also ceases to do harm, and therefore both possess Teh.

61
The Tao of Statecraft A great nation is one to which the streams descend.
It is the meeting place, the female of the world.
Quiet, passive, leading the male by humble submission.
A great nation lowers itself to the smaller and thus wins the smaller nation.
A smaller nation lowers itself beneath the greater and thus wins the greater nation.
So, some lower themselves to win others; some are already low, and therefore win others.
A great nation wants more people; a small nation wants more room.
When both are dedicated to these ends, the greater nation should humbly yield.

62
Tao is at the source of everything: treasure for the good, refuge for the bad.
Fine words can be sold; fine deeds can be just a show.
Why then reject the bad? Therefore, at the crowning of the emperor or at the appointment of the three ministers, rather than present gifts of jade and horses, present the gift of Tao.
Why did the ancients value Tao so? Did they not say the seeker shall find it, the sinner shall find it and be forgiven? So is it the treasure of the world.

63
Achieve serenity.
Work passively.
Taste the flavorless.
Large or small, many or few, exchange love for hatred.
Undertake the difficult while it is still simple.
Undertake the great while it is still minor.
The problems of the world must be solved while they are easy, the great while they are minor.
The truly wise find greatness by undertaking nothing great.
A promise lightly made is often difficult to keep.
Whoever makes light of things encounters many problems.
The truly wise know that things are difficult and therefore meet with no difficulties.

64

What is not moving is easily held.
What has not happened is easily planned.
What is brittle is easily broken.
What is tiny is easily dispersed.
Deal with a problem before it arises; exercise control before confusion exists.
A tree with an arm-girth of trunk grows from a tiny sprout.
A nine-storied terrace arises from a heap of dirt.
A thousand-mile journey begins with the first step.
Action spoils; reaching loses.
The truly wise are not active.
Thus they do not spoil things.
Do not reach so do not lose.
Things are often spoiled very close to completion.
Be as careful at completion as you were at the beginning.
Thus the truly wise want the unwanted and do not prize what is rare.
Study what is unstudied and preserve what is lost.
Assist in the course of nature but never interfere in it.

65

The ancient followers of Tao did not use it to increase knowledge, but rather to preserve simplicity.
People are difficult to govern when there is too much knowledge.
Whoever rules a country by furthering knowledge is that nation's curse.
Whoever rules a country by furthering simplicity is that nation's blessing.
To know these two principles is to know the ancient standard.
To know the ancient standard is to possess Teh of a certainty.
Teh is deep and vast as infinity.
It returns us to primal peace.

66

Why do rivers and seas have dominion over lowlands? Because the one lowers itself to the other.
To be elevated by the people, speak like their inferior.
To lead the people, walk behind them.
Thus the truly wise are above, but people do not feel their weight.
They walk in front, but people do not feel blocked.
The whole world respects and never grows tired of such leadership.
Because the truly wise are not aggressive, no one attacks them.

67

The world says: "Tao is great but seems so foolish!" It seems foolish because it is great. If it did not seem so foolish it would long since have lost its value.
I have three treasures.
Guard them and keep them safe! The first is love, the second is moderation, the third is humility.
From love one gains courage, from moderation one gains ability, from humility one achieves greatness.
To forsake love and courage, to forsake moderation and ability, to forsake humility and rush to the forefront, is death to all hope.
With love battles can be won, with love defense proves invulnerable, with love heaven arms those it would protect.

68

The most skilled soldier is not aggressive.
The most proficient fighter never loses control.
The most victorious commander does not bicker.
The most efficient leader is humble before all.
This is the virtue of serenity.
This is the mastery of life.
This is matching Teh to Tao.

69

Ancient military strategists said: I would rather be invaded than be the invader.

I would rather retreat one foot than advance one inch.

This means not marching in formation; not appearing prepared, with sleeves up; not charging in frontal assault; not arming with elaborate weapons.

There is no worse catastrophe than to underestimate the enemy.

To underestimate the enemy is to run the risk of losing everything.

When evenly matched armies do battle, the passive, recessive one is the victor.

70

My teachings are easily understood and readily put into practice.

Yet not everyone understands them, not everyone practices them.

Words have specific origins, deeds specific controls.

Not having such knowledge, people do not know me.

Being unknown, honor is mine.

Unknown, I am distinguished.

The wise wear common clothes and carry jewels in their hearts.

71

To know what you do not know, is best.

He who thinks he knows what he does not know, is sick in mind.

One who sees this sickness for what it is, is not sick in mind.

The followers of Tao are not sick in mind, because they know this.

72

When the people do not fear absolute rule, a greater fear will yet descend on them.

Do not give them cramped quarters.

Do not make sacrifice of their children.

If you do not dislike them you will not be disliked yourself.

The truly wise know themselves but do not flaunt themselves.

The truly wise love themselves but do not take pride in themselves.

They reject the one and accept the other.

73

One of courage, with audacity, will kill.

One of courage, but gentle, spares life.

From these two kinds of courage arise harm and benefit.

Even if Tao dislikes certain people, who can say why? The truly wise regard this as a most difficult question.

Tao does not contend but it surely wins, does not speak but it surely responds, does not command but things come of themselves.

It is empty yet contains the master plan.

The net of Tao is all-encompassing, its meshes are wide, yet nothing is lost.

74

If the people do not fear death, why threaten them with it? If the people do fear death, and if the unlawful be killed, who would dare to execute them? Only the Supreme Executioner kills.

To take His place is to set an unskilled man to wield the hatchet of the master carpenter: he rarely escapes chopping off his own hand!

75

The people starve when rulers impose heavy taxes.

That is why people starve.

The people are rebellious when rulers meddle in their affairs.

That is why people are rebellious.

The people do not fear death when they try to lead a better life.

That is why they do not fear death.

Those who do not interfere with life receive genuine value from it.

76

Living, man is supple and yielding; when dead, man is hard and stiff.
Living, animals and plants are soft and pliant; when dead, they are withered and brittle.
Being inflexible and unyielding is part of dying; being flexible and yielding is part of living.
A headstrong legion will lose in war just as an unyielding tree will snap under the axe.
The place of the strong is below; the place of the gentle is above.

77

Is not Tao like the drawn bow? The highest part is lowered, the lowest part is raised.
Overall length is shortened, overall depth is lengthened.
So the Great Tao lowers the highest and raises the lowest.
But the Tao of man increases the high and decreases the low.
Who can take from the high and give to the low? Only the true follower of Tao.
Thus, the truly wise act but are not possessive, achieve but claim no credit, because they have no desire for vain glory.

78

Nothing in the world is weaker or more yielding than water.
Yet nothing is its equal in wearing away the hard and strong.
There is nothing quite like it.
Thus the weak can overpower the strong; the flexible can overcome the rigid.
The whole world can perceive this, but does not put it into practice.
And so the truly wise say: Whoever bears the shame of the nation is fit to lead the nation.
Whoever bears the sins of the world is fit to lead the world.
Straight words (truth) can seem crooked (paradoxical).

79

Settling a great dispute leaves some hatred behind.
Can this be good? Therefore the truly wise defend the weak and do not seek vengeance.
The man with Teh fosters reconciliation; the man without Teh fosters reaction.
And so it is truly said: While Tao is impartial, it permeates good men.

80

The ideal state is small with few people.
It has abundance of goods, beyond possible use.
Understanding death, the people do not emigrate.
Though they have vessels and vehicles, they do not travel far in them.
Though they have armour and weapons, they have no need to display them.
Let them use knotted ropes for simple reckoning, be satisfied with their food, be attractive in their clothing, be comfortable in their homes, be happy with their customs.
Though from other states the dog's bark and cock's crow can clearly be heard, the people never leave the ideal state.

81

Words of truth are not high-sounding; high-sounding words are not the truth.
One who has Teh does not argue; one who argues does not have Teh.
The truly wise do not know many things; one who knows many things is not truly wise.
The truly wise do not selfishly crave.
They live for other people and thereby grow richer.
They give freely of themselves and thereby have great abundance.
The great Tao endows, but does so unconditionally.
The Tao of the wise accomplishes, but does so unselfishly.

Gibbs version

Chapter 1

The tao that can be talked about is not the Absolute Tao.
If it can be named, it is not an Absolute name.
That which has no name is the origin of heaven and earth;
That which has a name is the Mother of all things.

Thus, if always without desire, one can observe indescribable marvels;
If always desirous, one sees merest traces.
These two come from the same source but are differently named.
Both are called Mysterious.
The mystery of the Mysterious is the gateway to all indescribable marvels.

Chapter 2

If everyone understands the beautiful as beauty, there must be ugliness.
If everyone understands goodness as good, there must be not good.

Being and not being are mutually arising;
Difficult and easy are complementary;
Long and short arise from comparison;
Higher and lower are interdependent;
Vocalisation and verbalisation harmonise with each other;
Before and after accompany each other.

This is why the Sage manages affairs of Non-action and performs wordless teaching.
The myriad things are made without the slightest word.
Nature gives birth but does not possess.
It acts but does not demand subservience.
Only because it claims no credit is it indispensable.

Chapter 3

Not honouring men of worth keeps the people from competing;
Not wanting rare things keeps the people from thievery;
Not showing off desirous objects keeps the hearts of the people from disaster.

That is why the Sage governs himself by relaxing the mind, reinforcing the abdomen, gentling the will, strengthening the bones.

Always cause the people to be without knowledge or desires.
Cause the intelligent ones to dare not act.
Let there be Non-action and there is nothing that will not be well regulated.

Chapter 4

The Tao is empty, yet when applied it is never exhausted.
So deep it is, it seems to be the ancestor of all things.

Blunting sharp edges, resolving confusions,
Diffusing glare, uniting the world:
Such depth, something seems to exist there.

I do not know whose child it is.

It seems to have existed before the Ancestor.

Chapter 5

Heaven and earth are not humane, treating the myriad things as straw dogs.
The Sage is not humane, treating the people as straw dogs.

The space between heaven and earth is like a bellows, empty and yet inexhaustible;
Move it and even more comes out.
Too many words quickly exhaust;
It is not as good as holding to the centre.

Chapter 6

The spirit of the valley does not die, and is called Mysterious Female.
The door of the Mysterious Female is called the root of heaven and earth.
It lingers in wisps; Use it without haste.

Chapter 7

Heaven is long-lasting and earth is enduring.
The reason why heaven and earth can live long and endure is that they do not live only for themselves.
Therefore they can produce perpetually.
This is why the Sage puts himself behind, yet ends up ahead,
Considers himself an outsider yet finds himself in the mainstream.
Is it not because he is selfless that his Self can be realised?

Chapter 8

The greatest attitude is like water;
Water is good at benefiting all things and yet it does not compete with them.
It seeks out those places regarded as evil by man.
Thereby, it is close to Tao.

For one's dwelling, choose the ground well.
In cultivating one's heart, search the depths well.
In dealing with people, treat them well.
When speaking, do so with sincerity. In governing, keep order.
In serving, do to the best of your ability. In acting, choose the timing well.

Only by not competing can one be beyond reproach.

Chapter 9

To grasp after until full is not as good as stopping.
Measure and fit a crossbrace; It cannot last long.

If one's hall is filled with gold and jade, it cannot be safeguarded.
If one is wealthy and honoured, pride follows; and one gifts oneself with the faults thereof.
When the work is done, retire.
This is the Tao of heaven.

Chapter 10

In unifying the spirit-of-the-blood and the spirit-of-the-breath can you keep them from separating?
In concentrating the chi to attain resiliency, can you be like an infant?
In polishing the mirror of Mysterious Vision, can you do it spotlessly?

In opening and closing heaven's gate, can you be the Female? In being enlightened and comprehending all, can you do it without knowledge?

In loving the people and governing the nation can you practice Non-action?

Produce and provide a good environment;
Create but do not possess,
Act but do not control,
Raise but do not harvest,
This is called Profound Te.

Chapter 11

Thirty spokes converge at a single hub;
It is the vacancy that begets the vehicle's usefulness.
Mix clay to make a vessel;
It is the vacancy that makes the vessel useful.
Cut out the doors and windows to make a room;
It is the vacancy that constitutes the usefulness of the room.

Therefore, that which is there is an advantage,
But it's vacancy is what is useful.

Chapter 12

The five colours cause one's eyes to be blinded.
The five tones cause one's ears to be deafened.
The five flavours cause one's palette to be cloyed.
Racing about on horseback and hunting cause one's mind to be maddened.

Hard to obtain merchandise causes mankind to do wrong,
So the Sage concerns himself with the abdomen and not the eyes.
Therefore, he rejects the one and chooses the other.

Chapter 13

Favour and disgrace are both alarming.
Treat great calamities as if they were happening to yourself.
What does "favour and disgrace are both alarming" mean?
When favour is conferred upon a lowly position, it is like a shock.
And when it is taken away, it is like a shock.
This is what is spoken of as "Favour and disgrace are both alarming."
What does this mean: "Treat calamities as though they were happening to yourself"?
I am able to feel great calamities because I have a self.
If I have no self, what calamity is there?

Therefore, only one who values himself as he values the world is fit to be entrusted with the world.
Only one who loves the world as he loves himself is worthy of being the trustee of the world.

Chapter 14

To look but not see is called yi, the extremely dim,
To listen but not hear is called hsi, the extremely faint,
To grasp after but not catch is called wei, the extremely small.
These three qualities cannot be entirely understood, thus they blend into one, a unity.

Its upper surface is not bright, its underside is not dark.
In endless procession the unnameable moves on, until it returns to nothingness.

It is the formless form, the image of nothingness,
It may be called huang-hu, the illusive and evasive.
Confront it , and you cannot see it's face;
Follow it and you cannot see its back.
Hold to the ancient Tao to regulate present realities.
One who is able to comprehend the ancient beginnings may be termed a part of the system of Tao.

Chapter 15

In ancient times, those who were well educated were in communion with heaven, and were subtle, profound, mysterious and penetratingly wise.
Their depth was unfathomable.
Because of this, they appeared reluctant, hesitant, like one wading across a stream in winter;
Wary, as if there were dangers on all four sides;
Solemn, as if a guest;
Yielding, like ice on the verge of melting;
Pure, like uncarved wood;
Broad and expansive, like a valley;
Chaotic, like muddy water.

Who can still muddy water and gradually make it become clear?
Who can make the still gradually become alive through activity?
Those who maintain the Tao do not want to be full.
Just because they are not full they can avoid wearing out and being replaced.

Chapter 16

Maintain utmost emptiness.
Maintain profound tranquillity.
All things together arise,
By this I see their return.
Things flourish, and each returns to its root.
To return to the root is to attain tranquillity.
This is called returning to one's basic nature.
Returning to one's basic nature is called constancy (ch'ang2).
To understand constancy is called enlightening (ming2).

Not understanding constancy is blindly doing unfortunate things.
Understanding constancy, one gains a capacity for forbearance.
With forbearance, one can be impartial(kung1).
If one is impartial, one can be kingly.
If one is kingly. then one can communicate with heaven.
To communicate with heaven is to be in accord with Tao.
To be in accord with Tao is to be everlasting,
Even though one's body ceases to be, one is not destroyed.

Chapter 17

From times immemorial there have been some who have known.
There have also been those who were sympathetic, and praising.
There have been those that feared. There have been those that ridiculed.
There have been those who were not true enough,
And there have been those who were not true at all.

How valuable are the words,
"When an accomplishment is achieved and the task finished, People say it was only natural."

Chapter 18

If the great Tao is lost, humanism and justice appear.
When intelligence and cleverness arise, so does gross hypocrisy.

When the six relationships fall into discord, filial piety and parental affection arise.
When a nation falls into darkness and confusion, patriotic ministers arise.

Chapter 19

Divorce wisdom and abandon intelligence,
And the people will benefit a hundred-fold.
Divorce humanism and abandon justice,
And the people will return to filial piety and parental affection.
Divorce shrewdness and abandon selfishness,
And there will be no thieves.
I believe these three statements show that words are inadequate.
The people should be made to adhere to these principles:
"Look to the origins and maintain purity; Diminish self and curb desires."
Divorce learning and one will lose anxiety.

Chapter 20

How much difference is there between yes and no?
How much distance is there between good and bad?
What others fear, I must fear.
Wildly, endlessly, all men are merry, as though feasting upon beef or sitting on the verandah in the spring sunshine.
I alone remain uncommitted,
Like an infant who has not yet smiled.
I alone seem as mindless as one who has no home to return to.
Everyone else has enough and more,
Yet I alone seem to be left with nothing.
What a fool's mind I have!

How muddled I am!
Most people seek brightness and clarity.
I alone seek dullness and darkness.
Most people are imaginative and observant.
I alone am stifled and confused.
I am as unmoved as the ocean,
As ceaseless as the wind high in the sky.
Everyone else has something to do;
I alone am ignorant and dull.
I alone am different from the rest in that I value taking sustenance from the Mother.

Chapter 21

The countenance of a person of high moral cultivation comes from living according to the Tao.
The phenomenon of Tao is so elusive and evanescent.
Evanescent and elusive it is, yet there is a form contained within.
Elusive and evanescent, yet there is substance within.
So vacant and so dark, yet there is a vital essence (ching1) within.
This vital essence is very real;
For within is the proof.
From the past to the present its name has not been obliterated, because it is evident in the origin of all things.
How do I know the circumstances of the origin of all things?
Exactly by this phenomenon.

Chapter 22

Yield, and become whole,
Bend, and become straight.
Hollow out, and become filled.
Exhaust, and become renewed
Small amounts become obtainable,
Large amounts become confusing.
Therefore the Sage embraces the One, and so is a shepherd for the whole world.

He does not focus on himself and so is brilliant.
He does not seek self-justification and so becomes his own evidence.
He does not make claims and hence is given the credit.
He does not compete with anyone and hence, no-one in the world can compete with him.
How can that which the ancients expressed as "yield, and become whole" be meaningless?
If wholly sincere, you will return to them.

Chapter 23

It is nature's way to say little,
For hurricanes do not last a whole morning nor thunderstorms all day.
What causes them? Heaven and earth.
Even if heaven and earth are unable to persevere for long
Then how much longer can man?

Therefore, there are those who practice the Tao.
Those who behave according to Tao are in communication with the Tao.
Those who behave according to Te are in communication with Te.
Those who have lost Tao and Te are in communication with failure.
Those in communication with Tao are also joyously received by Tao.
Those in communication with Te are also joyously received by Te.
Those in communication with failure are also welcomed by failure.
Some are not true enough to the Tao,
And so there are some who are not true to it at all.

Chapter 24

If one is on tiptoe, he cannot stand firm.
If one stands with straddled legs he cannot walk.
One who is fascinated with himself is not clear-sighted.
If one seeks self-justification, he will not be his own evidence.
If one makes claims, he will not get credit.
If one considers his successes important, he will not endure.
According to Tao, these are called "excess nature"(yu te) and "superfluous behaviour," and go against natural law. Hence, a man of Tao spurns them.

Chapter 25

There is a chaotic thing, born before heaven and earth,
So silent, so empty, unique and unchanging, circling endlessly,
It could be considered the Mother of all under heaven.
I do not know its name.
I reluctantly style it "Tao"
And if forced to, reluctantly describe it as "great."
"Great" can be described as going ever onward.
"Going ever onward" can be described as going far.

"Going far" can be described as returning.
Hence, Tao is great. Heaven is great, earth is great, and mankind, also, is great.
There are four phenomena in the universe, and mankind is one of them.
Mankind follows the ways of the earth,
The earth follows the ways of heaven,
Heaven follows the ways of Tao,
And Tao follows the ways of Nature(tzu4 jan3).

Chapter 26

Heaviness is the root of lightness.
Tranquillity is the master of emotion.
That is why the Sage, practising all day long, does not part from his baggage.
Although he may have a grand mansion, still his daily life remains simple.
How can one be lord of a large state and behave lightly before the world?
If light, his root will be lost;
If emotional, his mastery will be lost.

Chapter 27

The best walking leaves no tracks.
The best speech is flawless.
The best calculation needs no counting slips.
The best latch has no bolt, yet it cannot be opened.
The best knot uses no rope, yet it cannot be untied.

That is why the Sage is always good at saving people, and therefore abandons nobody.
He is always good at saving things and therefore abandons nothing.
This is called hsi ming.

Therefore good people are examples for mediocre people,
While mediocre people have the potential to be good people.
Not to appreciate the example, not to cherish the potential,
Is to be far astray, regardless of intelligence.
This is an essential tenet of the Tao.

Chapter 28

Know the masculine, cleave to the feminine.
Be the valley for the world.
To be the valley for the world, do not swerve from your innate nature and return to the state of infancy.
Know the bright, keep to the dull.
Be a guide for the world, follow your innate nature without changing and return to the pre-conceptual.
Understand glory, keep to humility.
Be the valley for the world.
Innate nature completed, return to original uniqueness.

When original uniqueness is divided,
It then becomes the instrumentalities.
The Sage employs them,
They then become the officers,
Thus, subtle governance shapes not.

Chapter 29

If one strives to be the ruler of the world, I do not see how they can succeed.
The world is a vessel for the spirit which cannot be acted upon.

Those who act upon it destroy it.
Those who try to hold on to it lose it.

Therefore, things either move forward or fall behind,
Puff strongly or weakly, grow powerful or become weak,
Persevere or fall.
And therefore, the enlightened do away with excess, extravagances and extremes.

Chapter 30

Those who use Tao to help the ruler never use arms to force the world.
Such affairs tend to easily rebound.
Brambles grow where an army camps.
Famine is sure to follow a war.
Subtly arrange the outcome and nothing more.
Dare not use force.
After the outcome do not be complacent. A
fter the outcome do not be smug.
After the outcome do not be conceited.
Overcome only because there is no choice.
Overcome but do not force.

When things have matured, they are old.
This is not Tao.
That which runs counter to the Tao is soon finished.

Chapter 31

The finest weapons are still instruments of misfortune.
Everything hates them, therefore, those who follow the Tao avoid them.
In peacetime, the nobleman regards the left side of the host as the place of honour.
In wartime, he regards the right side of the commander as the place of honour.
Since weapons are inauspicious instruments, they are not the instruments of a noble man.
He uses them only when necessary, for peace and quiet are what he holds highest.
To him even a victory is not worthy of celebration.
Those who celebrate it take pleasure in the slaughter of men.
Those that take pleasure in the slaughter of men consequently cannot have their way in the world.

On auspicious occasions, the place of honour is to the left of the host;
On inauspicious occasions the place of honour is to the right of the commander.
In the military the lesser commander stand on the left, while the commander in chief stands on the right, the same as in the
etiquette of funerary rites.
When many people have been killed there is mourning, grief and tears.
Hence, even victory is treated according to funerary rites.

Chapter 32

Tao is always without a name.
Small as it may be in its original uniqueness,
It is inferior to no power in the world.
If a ruler can cleave to it,
All beings will pay homage to him.

Heaven and earth mingle in harmony and a sweet liquor rains down.
Without command from above peace and order spread among the people.
With the genesis of the world, names appeared.
There are so many names, is it not time to stop?

Knowing when to stop is to be free from danger.
Tao is to the world as a valley or brook is to a river or ocean.

Chapter 33

One who knows others is intelligent;
One who knows himself is enlightened.
One who conquers men is strong;
One who conquers himself has strength.

One who knows sufficiency is rich.
One who pursues his objective with steadfastness has willpower.
One who does not lose what he has gained is durable.
One who dies yet still remains has longevity.

Chapter 34

The great Tao is so all pervasive, how can we tell where its right or left is?
All things depend on it for growth, and it requires nothing from them.
It accomplishes its work, but makes no claim for itself.
It clothes and feeds all, but it does not control them.
Everlasting Non-desire is called "the lesser."

That all things return to it and yet it does not control them is called "the greater."
Because it never insists on its greatness, Its greatness becomes a reality.

Chapter 35

The world moves toward the possessor of the great image.
Moving toward him there is no harm, only peace and order.
The passing guest pauses for sweetmeats and music.
The Tao that can be uttered seems bland, even flavourless.
It does not appear noteworthy. It does not sound worth listening to.
It has unlimited uses.

Chapter 36

That which should be reduced, must first be enlarged.
That which should be weakened, must first be strengthened.
That which should be abolished, must first be established.
That which should be taken away, must first be given.

Softness and suppleness overcome hardness and strength.
Fish cannot leave the depths.
The sharpest weapons of the state must not be displayed.

Chapter 37

Tao never makes a name for itself,
Yet there is nothing it does not do.
If a ruler can cleave to it,
All beings will eventually change by themselves.
After this change, when they desire to act,
He will keep them in their places with original uniqueness of the Nameless.
Eventually there will be Non-desire.
If no desire arises, then serenity,
And eventually the world will settle by itself.

PART 2 - TE -

Chapter 38

Superior Te does not reveal its Te, thereby retaining it.
Inferior Te cannot rid itself of the appearance of Te, and thereby loses te.
Superior Te practices Non-action and has no private ends to serve.
Inferior Te both acts and has private ends to serve.
Superior humanism acts but has no private ends to serve.
Superior justice both acts and has private ends to serve.
Superior etiquette not only acts but, getting no response, tries to enforce its will with raised fists.
Thus, if Tao is lost, Te appears.
If Te is lost, humanism appears.
If humanism is lost, justice appears.
If justice is lost, etiquette appears.
When conscience and honesty wear thin,
Etiquette is the beginning of strife.

As to prescience, it is merely a blossom of Tao, and the beginning of stupidity.
That is why the truly cultivated man takes generosity for his location, and does not dwell on the meanness;
Focuses on the fruit, and does not dwell on the blossom.
So he avoids the one and chooses the other.

Chapter 39

In times past, Oneness appeared in the following pattern:
The heavens attained Oneness and became clear;
The earth attained Oneness and settled;
The spirits attained Oneness and became numinous;
Valleys attained Oneness and became reproductive;
All things attained Oneness and became alive;
Kings and queens attained Oneness and became the orthodox of the world.

In the heavens, that which is not clear eventually settles.
On the earth, that does not settle dissipates.
Spirits which are not luminous disappear.
Valleys not filled will dry up.
Creatures that do not reproduce become extinct.
Kings and officials, if not honoured and esteemed, will fail.

Hence the honourable takes the as its trunk.
The high takes the low as its foundation.
That is why the officials call themselves the lonely, the hubless.
This is taking the humble for the trunk, is it not?
Therefore, it is better to consider the vacancy of the vehicle rather than its appearances.
Do not desire to be as shiny and attractive as fine jade.
Be as ordinary as stone.

Chapter 40

Tao moves in cycles;
Tao functions through softness.
All is born of nothing.
Something is born of nothing.

Chapter 41

When a superior scholar hears the Tao he tirelessly practices it.
When a middling scholar hears the Tao sometimes he follows it and sometimes he forgets it.
When a piddling scholar hears the Tao he laughs loudly at it.
Without his laughter it would not be worthy of being Tao,
Hence the sayings:
"One who understands the Tao seems benighted;
One who progresses towards the Tao seems to regress;
One who is in accord with the Tao seems tied in knots."

Great Te seems like a valley.
The completely immaculate seems disgraced.
The thoroughly virtuous seems insufficient.
Established morality seems a conspiracy.
True characteristics seem submerged.
A great square has no corners.
A great instrument is completed late.
A great sound comes from a small noise.
A great form has no shape.
Tao is hidden and nameless.
Yet wonderfully, Tao guarantees that all things are fulfilled.

Chapter 42

Tao gives birth to unity, unity gives birth to duality, duality gives birth to trinity, and trinity gives birth to all things.
All things are wrapped by yin and contain yang, and their pulsing ch'is marry.
That which men abominate, the lonely, the hubless, their leaders take as names.
Thus one does not either benefit from a loss or lose from a benefit.

What other people teach, I also teach.
"The end of a strong one is an untimely death."
I will take this as a precept to teach proper behaviour.

Chapter 43

The softest in the world overcomes the strongest, just as a rider controls his galloping steed.
The insubstantial can penetrate where there is no opening.
Because of that I know the benefit of Non-action.
Few in the world attain wordless teaching and the benefit of Non-action.

Chapter 44

Which is dearer, fame or health?
Which is worth more, health or wealth?
Which is more beautiful, gain or loss?
Hence excessive love finally exacts its price.
The certain consequence of proud ownership is ruin.
To know sufficiency is to be blameless.
Knowing when to stop avoids danger.
Thereby one can be durable.

Chapter 45

The greatest accomplishment seems unfinished, yet its applications are endless.
The greatest fullness seems crude.
The greatest eloquence seems stuttering.
Activity overcomes cold.

Tranquillity overcomes heat.
Peace and quiet is the true path in the world.

Chapter 46

When Tao prevails in the world, stray horses are kept away from tilled fields.
When Tao does not prevail in the world, warhorses breed in fields grown wild.

No disaster is greater than not knowing what is sufficient.
No crime is greater than avarice.
No defect is worse than the desire to achieve.
One who knows sufficiency will always have enough.

Chapter 47

Without leaving his door one can understand the world.
Without glancing out the window one can see the Tao of heaven.
The further one travels the less one knows.
That is why the Sage does not travel and yet understands.
Does not look and yet names.
Does not act and yet completes.

Chapter 48

In pursuing knowledge, one accumulates daily.
In practicing Tao, one loses daily.
Lose and lose and lose, until one reaches Non-action.
Non-action, yet there is nothing left undone.
To win the world one must not act for gain.
If one acts for gain, one will not be able to win the world.

Chapter 49

The Sage is without a set mind.
He makes the mind of the people his own.
I am kind.
I am also kind to the unkind.
Thus kindness is attained.
I believe those who believe.
I believe also those who do not believe.
Thus faith is attained.
The Sage, when in the midst of the worldly, does it calmly and slowly, and his mind merges with the world.
The Sage treats everyone as his children.

Chapter 50

In circumstances of life and death, the chances of living are three out of ten, the chances of dying are three out of ten.
In ordinary conditions, where activity is the province of death, the chances are also three out in ten.
Why is this so?
Because of the propagative force of the life principle.
It is said that those who cultivate the life principle can travel without encountering a tiger or wild buffalo.
In battle, no weapon can penetrate their armour.
The wild buffalo's horns find nothing to gore, the tigers claws nothing to flay, and weapons find no place for their points to penetrate.
Why is this so?
Because for them, there is no province of death.

Chapter 51

Tao propagates life; Te provides fecundity; species shapes life; affinity brings to completion.
That is why all living things revere Tao and kneel down to Te.
Tao inspires reverence and Te inspires awe because they give no commands and yet nature continues on and on.
Thus Tao creates life, and Te conceives, grows, fosters, shelters, comforts, nurtures and protects it.
Producing but not possessing,
Acting but not controlling,
Growing but not slaughtering,
These are Mysterious Te.

Chapter 52

The beginning of the world may be called the Mother of the world.
Once we discover the Mother, we can know the children.
Once we know the children, we should return and cleave to the mother.
Even though the body may die, there is no danger.
Close the mouth, shut the door, and to the end of life do not strain.
Open the mouth, increase involvements, and be helpless to the end of life.
To value the lesser is enlightenment.
To cleave to the gentle is steadfastness.
Use bright intellect, but return to enlightenment.
Do not ask for trouble. This is "practicing longevity."

Chapter 53

I have cause to know that, though I possess great wisdom, to preach it while traveling on the highway is dangerous. Though the highway is smooth and straight,
The common people prefer the byways.

The ruler's court is well tended, but the fields are neglected.
The granaries are empty, but garments are gorgeous.
Men carry sharp swords, but food and drink satiate them.
There is a surplus of money and merchandise, "temptation for bandits"
Alas, it is not Tao.

Chapter 54

The well established cannot be uprooted.
The well embraced cannot be lost.
Descendants will continue ancestral sacrifices for generations without end.
Cultivate in yourself, and its Te will become real.
Cultivate in the family, and its Te will become abundant.
Cultivate in the community, and Te will have an enduring effect.
Cultivate in the nation, and Te will flourish.
Cultivate in the world, and Te will become ubiquitous.
Hence, judge a person as a person, a family as a family, a community as a community and a nation as a nation, the world as a world.
How do I know about the world?
By this.

Chapter 55

Measure the fullness of one's virtue against an infant:
Neither scorpion nor snake will attack it.
Nor does the tiger maul it.
Nor do the birds of prey clutch it.

Its bones and sinews soft,
Yet its grip is firm.
It does not know the union of male and female,
Yet its reproductive organ is fully formed:
Its essence is whole.
It can cry all day without getting hoarse;
This is total harmony.
To know harmony is constancy.
To know constancy is enlightening.
That which is beneficial to life is auspicious.
To direct ch'i by heart is steadfastness.
Things mature and then decay.
This is contra-Tao.
That which runs counter to the Tao is soon finished.

Chapter 56

One who knows does not speak.
One who speaks does not know.
Close the mouth.
Shut the door.
Blunt the sharp edge.
Untie the knot.
Harmonise with others' light.
Merge with the mundane world.
This is "mysterious assimilation."
When one acquires it,
One is neither familiar with it nor escapes it.
Neither takes advantage of it nor harms it,
Neither increases it nor cheapens it.
Therefore, it is the most precious thing in the world.

Chapter 57

Use the orthodox to govern the state;
Use the unorthodox to wage war.
Use non-involvement to win the world.
How do I know it is so?
By this;

The more restrictions and prohibitions there are, the poorer the people become.
The sharper the people's weapons are, the more national confusion increases.
The more skill artisans require, the more bizarre their products are.
The more precisely the laws are articulated, the more thieves and criminals increase.

Therefore the Sage says; I practice non-action, and the people gradually transform themselves.
I love tranquillity, and the people gradually become orthodox by themselves.
I do not interfere, and the people gradually become wealthy by themselves.
I am without desires, and the people gradually return to simplicity.

Chapter 58

If the government is muffled and subdued, the people will be simple and sincere.
If the government is strict and exacting, the people will be lax and indifferent.

Good fortune depends on bad fortune, bad fortune lurks behind good fortune.
Who know where this process will end?

If there is no orthodoxy, the orthodox will return to the unorthodox.
Good becomes perverse.
Mankind's state of confusion has continued for a long time.

That is why the Sage squares up but doesn't cut, is sharp but not injurious, is straightforward but not unrestrained, and is bright but doesn't dazzle.

Chapter 59

In governing people and in serving heaven, nothing compares with frugality.
Frugality is "to acquire the habit early."
"To acquire the habit early" stresses accumulating Te.
There is nothing which cannot be overcome, by stressing the accumulation of Te.
If there is nothing which cannot be overcome,
Then one's limits are unfathomable.
If one's limits are unfathomable, one can rule a state.
If one can arrive at the Mother of the State, one can endure.
This is called "deeply rooted and firmly seated."
It is the Tao of longevity and lasting vision.

Chapter 60

Ruling a large country is like cooking a small fish.
When the world is ruled by Tao, spirits do not haunt.
It is not that Spirits are no longer numinous, but that their powers do not harm men.
It is not just that their powers do not harm men, the Sage also does not harm men.
If neither side harms the other, Te spreads throughout.

Chapter 61

A great nation receives all that flows into it.
It the place of intercourse with world, the Feminine of the world.
The feminine always conquers the masculine through tranquillity.
Tranquillity is the lower position.
Hence, if a large country take a position under a small country, it can win over the small country.
If a small country takes a position under a large country, it will win over the large country.
In the first case the large country purposely takes the lower position;
In the other case the small country simply remains in the lower position.
A large country wants no more than to protect its people and provide the environment for growth.
A small country wants no more than to enter into the service of a patron.
Thus, each party gets its wish.
It is fitting that the greater take the lower position.

Chapter 62

Tao is the enigma of all creation.
It is a treasure for the good man, a shelter for the bad.
Words of worth can create a city;
Noble deeds can elevate a man.
Even though a man is not good, how can he be abandoned?
A jade disc and a coach and four are presented to the emperor at his enthronement ceremony and to the Three Ministers at their installation, but this cannot compare with riding toward the Tao.
Those ancients who prized Tao would instead have said, "Seek and you will find, thus you will be free from guilt."
Hence Tao is valued by the world.

Chapter 63

Act through Non-action.
Do without doing.
Taste the tasteless.
Great or small, many or few, repay injury with kindness.
Plan to tackle the difficult when it is easy.
Undertake the great while it is small.
Begin the most difficult task in the world while it is still easy.
Begin the greatest task in the world while it is still small.
That is how the Sage becomes great without striving.
One who makes promises easily is inevitably unreliable.
One who thinks everything is easy eventually finds everything difficult.
That is why the Sage alone regards everything as difficult and in the end finds no difficulty at all.

Chapter 64

When at peace, control is easy.
When there are no omens, planning is easy.
The brittle shatters easily.
The minuscule disperses easily.
Act before it is gone.
Establish order before confusion sets in in.
A tree that takes several armspans to circle grew from a tiny sprout.
A tower nine stories high began from a mound of earth.
A journey of a thousand li starts with a step. To act consciously is to fail.
To clutch at is to lose.

That is why the Sage does nothing and therefore fails at nothing,
Clutches at nothing and therefore loses nothing.
The way people commonly handle affairs often leads to failure just at the point of success.
Be as cautious throughout as at the beginning, and there will be no failures.
That is why the Sage desires Non-desire.
He does not value rare things.
He studies the unfathomable.
He avoids the mistakes of ordinary people and assists all things to fulfil their natures, not daring to contrive any other action.

Chapter 65

The ancients who were most adept at ruling did not try to enlighten the people, but instead gradually made them stupid. The people are difficult to govern because they are clever.
Hence, the nation's malefactor is one who uses cleverness to govern.
While the nation's benefactor is one who does not use cleverness to govern.
To understand both of these is also to harmonise with an eternal pattern.
To understand and harmonise with that pattern is called Profound Te.
Profound Te is so deep, so far-reaching.
It causes things to return and eventually reach Great Confluence.

Chapter 66

The river and sea rule the hundred valleys by making the lower position an asset.
Hence, they are kings of the hundred valleys.
One must speak as if under them;
That is how the Sage remains over the people without oppressing them.
That is how he remains in front without blocking them.
The whole world is happy to draw near him and does not tire of him.
Because he does not compete, absolutely no-one can compete with him.

Chapter 67

All the world considers my Tao great and unrelated to anything else.
Precisely because it is so great it is "unrelated to anything else."
If it were related to other things it would have grown small a long time ago.
I have three treasures which I possess and maintain securely.
The first is parental love.
The second is frugality.
The third is not daring to be first.
Possessing parental love, one can be courageous.
Possessing frugality, one can be generous.
Not daring to be first, one can lead all "instruments".
Today, many people reject parental love but desire courage.
They reject frugality but desire generosity.
And they reject following but desire to be first.
This is to court death. Influenced by parental love, the offence will win wars, and the defence will be firm.
Through the influence of parental love, heaven will provide succour and protection.

Chapter 68

Good men are not aggressive.
A good fighter does not lose his temper.
Those good at defeating the enemy do not engage them directly.
One who is good at using men places himself below them.
This is the Te of non-contention or strength from the ability to use people.
It is in accord with most ancient heaven.

Chapter 69

Military tacticians have a saying:
"I dare not be the aggressor, but rather the defender.
I dare not advance an inch, but would rather retreat a foot."
This is to move without moving,
To raise one's fists without showing them,
To lead the enemy on but against no adversary,
To wield a weapon but not clash with the enemy's.
No disaster is greater than taking the enemy lightly.
If I take the enemy lightly, I am on the verge of losing my treasures.
Hence, when opposing troops resist each other, the one stung by grief will be the victor.

Chapter 70

My words are very easy to understand and very easy to practice.
Yet no-one in the world can understand them;
No-one can practice them.
My words have their sources, my deeds their precedents.
If people do not understand that, they do not understand me.
The fewer who know me, the more valuable I am.
That is why the Sage wears coarse clothes while carrying jade in his bosom.

Chapter 71

To know yet appear not knowing is best.
To not know yet appear knowing is sickness.
Whoever is sick of sickness will not be sick.
The Sage is never sick, because he is sick of sickness.

Thereby he is never sick.

Chapter 72

If people do not fear the awesome, something more awful is imminent.
But do not be disrespectful of their dwellings.
If not oppressed, they will not press.
That is why the Sage knows himself but does not reveal himself.
He has self-respect, but does not seek recognition.
Hence, he rejects one and takes the other.

Chapter 73

To have the courage to dare is to die.
To have the courage to dare not is to live.
Heaven abominates in both these cases, whether harmful or beneficial.
Who knows why?
Even the Sage feels it is difficult.
The Tao of heaven does not contend, yet it easily wins;
It does not speak, yet gets a good response;
It comes without being called;
It is calm, yet everything is minutely planned.
The web of heaven is so vast, so vast.
Though its mesh is wide, it loses nothing.

Chapter 74

If the people do not fear death, it is useless to threaten them with the spectre of death.
If the people have a normal fear of death, and some do something unorthodox,
Then I would catch them and put them to death.
Who would dare break the law?
There is always an executioner in charge of killing.
If someone tries to do the killing for the executioner, it is called trying to chop wood for the Great Carpenter.
Few who substitute for the Great Carpenter do not injure their own limbs.

Chapter 75

If the people starve, it is because those above them tax their livelihood too heavily.
That is why they starve.
If the people are unruly,
It is because those above them are too Active.
That is why they are unruly.
If the people take death lightly, it is because they seek life's bounty.
That is why they take death lightly.
Those who live life without striving are exemplars of valuing life.

Chapter 76

When a person is born he is soft and supple.
When he dies he is stiff and hard.
All things, including plants are soft and tender at birth.
At death they are withered and dry.
Hence the stiff and the hard are the closest to death; the soft and the supple are closest to life.

That is why a rigidly strong army is not victorious.
The sturdy tree gets cut down.
Rigidity and strength are inferior;

Suppleness and softness are superior.

Chapter 77

The Tao of heaven is like drawing a bow:
For high things, lower; for low things, raise;
If excessive, reduce; if insufficient, supplement.
The Tao of heaven reduces the excessive and supplements the insufficient.
The way of man is not so.
It takes from the insufficient and adds to the excessive.
Who can have enough surplus to supplement the world?
Only those with Tao.
That is why the Sage acts but does not demand subservience; is deserving of merit yet claims no credit.
He has no desire to show his worth.

Chapter 78

Nothing in the world is softer and more supple than water.
Yet when attacking the hard and the strong nothing can surpass it.
The supple overcomes the hard.
The soft overcomes the strong.
None in the world do not know this.
Yet none can practice it.
That is why the Sage says to accept the filth of a nation is to be the lord of the society.
To accept the disasters of a nation is to be is to be the ruler of the world.
Words of truth seem contradictory.

Chapter 79

Compromising with great hatred inevitably leads to more hatred.
How can this be considered good?
That is why the Sage holds the left half of the tally-stick yet does not demand others measure up.
To have Te is to hold the other half of the tally-stick.
To be without Te is to lose the tally-stick.
The Tao of heaven is not clannish.
It always dwell with the good man.

Chapter 80

In small country of few people, even if there are hundreds of weapons, they are unnecessary.
Cause the people to respect death and they will not migrate.
Though there are ships and vehicles, no-one boards them.
Though there are armour and weapons, no-one parades with them.
Let men return to knotting strings and using them.
Food will be sweet.
Clothes will be beautiful.
Homes will be comfortable.
Customs will delight.
Although neighbouring states will see each other and hear the other's chickens and dogs,
the citizens of each will age and die establishing contact with the other.

Chapter 81

Words of truth are not beautiful.
Beautiful words are not truthful.
The good do not argue;
Those who are argue are not good.

The wise are not extensively learned;
The extensively learned are not wise.
The Sage is not mean.
Simply doing things for others he feels the greater fulfillment.
Simply giving to others he feels he has gained more.
The Tao of heaven benefits and does not harm.
The Tao of the Sage is to accomplish without competing.

Hansen version

- 1.1 To guide what can be guided is not constant guiding. To name what can be named is not constant naming.
 - 1.2 'Not-exist' names the beginning (boundary) of the cosmos (Heaven and earth) 'Exists' names the mother of the ten-thousand natural kinds.
 - 1.3 Thus, to treat 'not-exist' as constant is desiring to use it to view its mysteries. To treat 'exists' as constant is desiring to use it to view its manifestations.
 - 1.4 These two emerge together yet have different names.
 - 1.5 'Together' - call that 'obscure.' 'Obscure' it and it is more obscure. ... the gateway of a crowd of mysteries.
-
- 2.1 That the social world knows to deem the beautiful as 'beautiful' simply creates the 'ugly.'
 - 2.2 That the social world knows to deem worth as 'worthy' simply creates 'worthlessness.'
 - 2.3 Thus 'exists' and 'not-exists' mutually sprout. 'Difficult' and 'easy' are mutually done. 'Long' and 'short' are mutually gauged.
 - 2.4 'High' and 'low' mutually incline. 'Sound' and 'tone' mutually blend. 'Before' and 'after' mutually supervene.
 - 2.5 (Pro-sage Commentary:) Using this: sages fix social issues without deeming ; administer a 'no words' teaching.
 - 2.6 The ten-thousand natural kinds work by it and don't make phrases. They sprout but don't 'exist'. Deem-act and don't rely on anything.
 - 2.7 Accomplish their work and don't dwell in it. Because they don't dwell in it, they don't lose it.
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- 3.1 Don't glorify the high-brow: cause people not to wrangle.
 - 3.2 Don't value limited commodities: cause people not to contemplate stealing.
 - 3.3 Don't display the desirable: prevent confusing the people's hearts-'n-minds.
 - 3.4 Using these: The governance of sages: empties their hearts-'n-minds, stuffs their guts Weakens their resolve, and strengthens their bones.
 - 3.5 He treats causing the people to lack both knowledge and desire as constants. Causing those with knowledge not to venture deeming-actions.
 - 3.6 They deem the absence of deeming-action and thus nothing is ungoverned.
-
- 4.1 Guidance pours out but in using it, something is not filled.
 - 4.2 Whew! It's like the ancestor of the ten-thousand natural kinds.
 - 4.3 'Dull' its 'sharp', 'untie' its 'tie', 'blend' its 'bright', 'together' its 'diffused particles'.
 - 4.4 Ooo! It's like it partly endures.
 - 4.5 I don't know whose son it is. It is before the emperor of signs!
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- 5.1 Heaven-earth [the cosmos] is not kind. It treats the 10,000 natural kinds as straw dogs.
 - 5.2 Sages are not kind. They treat the hundred surname-groups as straw dogs.
 - 5.3 Is the space between Heaven and earth not like bellows and flutes? Empty and not warped. As long as you move them, they produce.
 - 5.4 Many words and numbers unlimited are not as good as holding the center.
-
- 6.1 The Valley energy never dies. This is called 'fathomless female'
 - 6.2 The channel of the fathomless female: This is called the basis of the cosmos.
 - 6.3 Silken! It's as if it abides. Handle it gently.
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- 7.1 Heaven is old and Earth is enduring.
 - 7.2 What do Heaven and Earth rely on in order to be old and enduring? They rely on avoiding self creation. Hence they can be old and enduring.
 - 7.3 Using this: Sages 'later' themselves and yet they comes first.
 - 7.4 They 'outside' themselves and yet they abide.
 - 7.5 Is this not a case of their lacking selfishness? So they are able to achieve their selfishness.
-
- 8.1 Higher worth is like water. Water is good at benefitting the ten-thousand natural kinds Without wrangling for position. What the crowd despises Hence close to the guide.
 - 8.2 In dwelling value the earth. In heart-mind value depth. In being-with value kindness. In words value reliability.
 - 8.3 In rectifying value order. In social affairs value ability. In action value timing.

8.4 In general, simply don't wrangle Hence have no indiscretion.

9.1 To grasp and pile things up is not as good as regarding it as already done.

9.2 When you measure and build a pillar , you cannot preserve it for long.

9.3 When gold and jade fill the hall, you can't keep any of it.

9.4 Rich, ennobled and thus proud bequeaths ruin.

9.5 With success, disappear: this is the heavenly guide.

10.1 In general: In mustering your vitalities, embracing in one, can you fail to distinguish?

10.2 In specializing in breath and consummating weakness, can you be a child?

10.3 In cleansing and voiding your profound mirror, can you be without flaw?

10.4 In loving the people and ordering the state, can you fail to know?

10.5 In opening and closing the heavenly channel, can you fail to be female?

10.6 In discerning all within the four directions, can you fail to deem-act?

10.7 Generate it, nourish it: Generate it and not 'exist' it. Deem:act and not rely on anything. Become 'elder' and not rule. These are called 'profound virtuositities.'

11.1 Thirty spokes together make one hub. Where the nothing is, lies the cart's use.

11.2 Throwing clay to deem:make a utensil; Where the nothing is, lies the utensil's use.

11.3 Sculpting windows and doors to deem:make a room; Where the nothing is, lies the room's use.

11.4 So where we deem having it as beneficial. We deem use to consist in lacking it.

12.1 The five colours stupefy the people's eyes. The five tones desensitize the people's ears. The five flavours numb the people's mouths

12.2 Horse races and hunting derange the people's heart-minds. Hard to get goods pervert the people's behavior.

12.3 Using this: Sages deem:act for the gut not the eye. So they choose this and reject that.

13.1 Favour is as disgraceful as a warning. Nobility is as great a trouble as a self.

13.2 Why say 'favour is as disgraceful as a warning'? The favoured is deemed below. Receiving it is like a warning. Losing it is like a warning. This is called 'favour is as disgraceful as a warning.'

13.3 Why say 'nobility is as great a trouble as a self'? Deeming I have a self is what makes it possible for me have trouble. And if I had no self, what trouble could I have?

13.4 Hence nobility is regarding your self as the social world. To the likes of that, the social world can be delivered. [Nobility's] love regards the self as the social world. To the likes of that, the social world can be entrusted.

14.1 Look at it and fail to see: its name is 'remote.' Listen to it and fail to hear: its name is 'diffuse.' Feel it and fail to get anything: its name is 'subtle.'

14.2 This threesome cannot be exhaustively probed for portents. Hence we blend them and deem them as one.

14.3 Its height is not sparkling. Its depth is not murky. Stringlike, it cannot be named. It reverts to being no natural kind.

14.4 This we call the condition of being in no condition; the sign of no natural kind. This we call 'confused' and 'indistinct.' Facing it you cannot see its head; Following it you cannot see its rear

14.5 If you grasp guiding discourse from ancient times in dealing with today's reality you can know the ancient beginnings. This is called a guiding discourse's record.

15.1 Those in ancient times who were good at deem:acting as scholars Were subtly mysterious and profoundly receptive Unfathomably deep.

15.2 Now, precisely because unfathomable, We must force a description of them. Cautious: like crossing a stream in winter.

Ambivalent: like fearing those on all sides. Exacting: like being a guest

15.3 Mutable: like ice on the point of melting Unaffected: like uncarved wood. Munificent: like a valley Obscure: like muddied water

15.4 Who can, while muddy, using calmness gradually become clear? Who can, while at ease, using activity gradually come to life.?

15.5 She who embraces this guiding discourse doesn't desire fulfilling. Now precisely because not fulfilled, she can obscure and not newly fabricate.

16.1 Go to the limit of emptiness Take on quiet dependability

16.2 The ten-thousand natural kinds are all dealt with. And I thus view their response In general, natural kinds flourish. Each responds by returning to its root.

16.3 returning to the root is called quietude. This I call responding to the word. Responding to the word we describe as 'constant'. To know what is constant we describe as 'discernment'. Not to know what is constant is wantonly taking risks.

16.4 To know what is constant is openness; Open thus equitable; Equitable thus kingly; Kingly thus natural; Natural thus guiding;

16.5 Guiding thus enduring Doesn't stop when you bury the body.

17.1 The best hierarchy is one those below realize is there. Next to that is one that you feel kin to and extol. Next to that is one you dread. Next to that is one you contemn.

17.2 When reliability is inadequate in it There will be unreliability in it.

17.3 Reflectively! His ennobling of language. Works are completed; affairs proceed And the hundred surnames all call this 'our nature (our own doing)'

18.1 When the great guide is cast aside you will have 'humanity' and 'morality.'

18.2 When intuitive wisdom emerges you will have great artifice.

18.3 When great kinship is not in harmony, you will have 'filiality' and 'affection.'

18.4 When states and great families sink and become deranged, you will have 'loyal ministers'.

19.1 Terminate 'sageliness', junk 'wisdom' the people will benefit a hundred-fold.

19.2 Terminate 'humanity', junk 'morality' the people will respond with 'filiality' and 'affection'.

19.3 Terminate 'artistry', junk 'benefit' thieves and robbers will lack 'existence'.

19.4 These three taken as slogans are insufficient.

19.5 Hence, leads us to postulate that to which they belong. Visualize simplicity and embrace uncarved wood. Downgrade 'selfishness' and diminish 'desire.' Terminate learning and you will lack irritation.

20.1 How much separates 'Uh huh' and 'Huh uh'? What is the separation like between 'worthy' and 'vile'?

20.2 What humans fear cannot not be feared. Futile! Not focussed yet.

20.3 The crowd festive - like enjoying an Easter picnic or on an Easter sunrise hike. I, alone, am placid - it's portent not yet clear. Like an infant not yet a baby. Dangerous! Like having no refuge.

20.4 The crowd all have plenty I alone treat it as loss. Mine is the heart-mind of the stupid, indeed. Indiscriminate!

20.5 People of custom are lustrous, I alone am dull. People of custom are critically discriminating; I alone obfuscate. Bland! It's like the ocean; drifting! like I have no place to stop.

20.6 The crowd all have the-capacity-to and I alone am dallying and wanton. I alone am different from humans, and value nursing at Mother's breast.

21.1 The content of permeating virtuosity is merely following a guide.

21.2 To deem guides as a natural kind: Indeed confused! Indeed indistinct! Indistinct! Confused! Within them there are signs. Confused! Indistinct! Within them there are natural kinds. Yawning! Murky! Within them there is generative energy. Their energy is optimally authentic. Within it there is reliability.

21.3 From the past to the present it's name remains. And elucidates the crowd's honoured father.

21.4 How do I know the shape of the crowd's honoured father? With this.

22.1 If 'crooked' then 'intact' If 'twisted' then 'straight' If 'vacuous' then 'filled' If 'worn out' then 'new' If 'deficient' then 'endowed' If 'endowed' then 'confounded'

22.2 Using this: Sages embrace one and deem it the social world's model.

22.3 He doesn't see by himself hence is perceptive. Doesn't affirm himself hence is discerning. Doesn't attack by himself hence has success. Doesn't esteem himself hence becomes an elder.

22.4 In general: he does not dispute hence in the social world none is able to dispute with him.

22.5 The ancients who said "If 'crooked' then 'intact'" - could they have offered empty words? Take 'intact' as sincere and return to it.

23.1 Rare language is our own doing. Hence a twisting wind does not end the morning. A sudden storm does not end the day.

23.2 What makes these the case? - the cosmos. The cosmos can raise it but cannot make it endure. How much more is this the case with the human realm?

23.3 Hence those who pursue affairs with 'guidance' Those of 'guidance,' join in guidance. Those of 'virtuosity,' join in virtuosity. Those of 'loss,' join in loss.

23.4 Those who join in guidance, guidance is pleased to get them. Those who join in virtuosity, virtuosity is pleased to get them. Those who join in loss, loss is pleased to get them.

23.5 When reliability is inadequate in it There will be unreliability in it.

24.1 Those who tiptoe do not stand. Those who stride do not walk.

24.2 Those who see for themselves are not discerning. Those who affirm for themselves are not insightful.

24.3 Those who attack themselves do not achieve. Those who esteem themselves do not become elders.

24.4 When these are in guides, we say: 'Excess provision; redundant action.' Some natural kinds avoid them. Hence those who have guides don't place them.

25.1 There is a thing-kind made up of a mix. It emerges before the cosmos. Solitary! Inchoate! Self grounded and unchanging. Permeating all processes without extremity. We can deem it the mother of the social world.

25.2 I don't know its name. When put in characters we say dao. Forced to deem it as named, we say 'great.'

25.3 Being great, we say 'comprehensive.' Being comprehensive, we say 'far reaching.' Being far reaching, we say 'reverting.'

25.4 So our dao is great; Nature (heaven) is great, Earth is great, and kings are also great. Within a region are four 'greats.' And the King occupies one of those [lofty] statuses.

25.5 Humans treat earth as a standard. Earth treats constant nature as a standard. Constant nature treats dao as a standard.

Dao treats being so of itself as a standard.

26.1 Deem 'heavy' as root of 'light' Deem 'calm' as lord of 'uproar'.

26.2 Using this: Sages pass the whole day in activity and never separate from his heavy provisions cart. Even though he has an sublime views, surpassing those where swallows dwell.

26.3 What do we say, then, of the 10,000 chariot ruler who, based on the self, 'lights' the social world?

26.4 To 'light' is to lose the root. To 'uproar' is to lose the lord.

27.1 Worthy travel lacks ruts and footprints. Worthy language lacks flaws and reproach. Worthy tallying doesn't use algorithms.

27.2 Worthy closing lacks bars and bolts and still can't be opened. Worthy securing lacks rope or restraint and still can't be loosed.

27.3 Using this: Sages take saving humanity as a constant hence don't abandon humans take saving thing-kinds as a constant, therefore don't abandon thing-kinds. Call this 'bushwhacking discernment.'

27.4 Hence those who are worthy are the instructors of the unworthy The unworthy are the stuff of the worthy.

27.5 'Don't value their instructor, don't love their stuff' Even the wise are greatly puzzled Call this "the necessary mystery."

28.1 To know its 'male' and preserve its 'female' is to act as the world's ravine. To act as the world's ravine, treat virtuosity as constant, and avoid separating is to return to infancy.

28.2 To know its 'white' and preserve its 'black' is to act as the world's paradigm. To act as the world's paradigm, treat virtuosity as constant and avoid lapses is to return to the negative ultimate.

28.3 To know its 'sublime' and preserve its 'disgraced' is to act as the world's valley. To act as the world's valley, treating virtuosity as constant is sufficient to return to uncarved wood.

28.4 If wood is split then it is deemed an artifact. Sages use it and they are deemed officials and elders. Thus great systems don't cut.

29.1 Those who desire to take the social world and deem-act it, I see that they just don't get it.

29.2 The social world is an energized artifact. It is not the case that it can be deemed. Those who deem-act crush it. Those who grasp lose it.

29.3 Hence, among natural kinds sometimes act, sometimes conform. sometimes snort sometimes blow. sometimes be strong sometimes weak. sometimes control sometimes destroy.

29.4 Using this: Sages abandon superlatives, abandon extravagance, abandon expansiveness.

30.1 Those who use a guide to help the ruling class should not coerce the social world with arms. Social affairs are highly reciprocal.

30.2 Where you place a division, thorns and briars grow. In the wake of a great army inevitably lies years of calamities.

30.3 Skill bears fruit - period! Do not presume, in view of that, to choose coercion.

30.4 Have effects and avoid regard. Have effects and avoid assault. Have effects and avoid pride. Have effects and treat it as inevitable. Have effects and avoid coercion.

30.5 Natural kinds are robust - then they get old. This is called 'don't guide.' Practice 'don't guide' early!

31.1 In general, splendid martial force is an inauspicious artifact. Among natural kinds some eschew them. Hence some guides don't place them.

31.2 If the 'superior gentleman' is in place then we value the left. If we use martial force then we value the right.

31.3 Martial force is an inauspicious artifact. It is not an artifact of the 'superior gentleman.' When you have no choice and use it, deem detachment the better attitude.

31.4 When victorious don't treat it as glorious. Those who glorify it - that is to take satisfaction in killing. If you take satisfaction in killing, you cannot take that as filling the intent of the social world.

31.5 Auspicious affairs favour the left, inauspicious the right. The lower-rank general is on the left and the higher rank on the right. These words amount to arranging them according to the funeral rite.

31.6 Killing peoples in crowds, we cry for them in bitter grief. With victory in war we arrange things according to the funeral rite.

32.4 To begin to restrain you have names. As soon as you have names then, in general, you must also come to know to stop. If you know to stop, you can avoid danger.

32.1 Guide by treating nameless uncarved wood as constant. Although small, none in the social world can treat it as vassal.

32.2 If fief-holding kings could embrace it, all the natural kinds would come to self conformity.

32.3 Heaven and earth mutually coalesce to rain down sweet dew. The people, no one ordering them, self balance.

32.5 Compare this guide's being in the social world to the relation of brook valleys to rivers and oceans.

33.1 Those who know the human are wise. The self-knowing are discerning.

33.2 Those who triumph among the human have power. The self-triumphing are coercive.

33.3 Those who know sufficiency are affluent. Those who coercively act have will.

33.4 Those who don't lose their 'that-which' are long-lasting Those who die and don't disappear are long-lived.

34.1 The great guide is everywhere! Thus it can 'left' the 'right.'

34.2 The ten-thousand natural kinds depend on it and thus live. And it does not phrase its guidance. Success is achieved and not named as 'having.' Supports and nourishes the ten-thousand natural kinds and does not deem-act as lord.

34.3 Treating lack of desire as constant; it can be named in the direction of 'small.'

34.4 The ten-thousand natural kinds return to it and it does not deem-act as lord. It can be named as 'great.'

34.5 With its ultimately not self-deeming as 'great' Hence it is able to achieve its 'great.'

35.1 Grasp great signs. The social world moves. If it move and does not harm, the comfort and balance is supreme.

35.2 Concerts and feasts bring passing guests to a halt.

35.3 Guidance coming out of the mouth. Isn't it bland? It lacks flavour. Looking at it, it is not visible. Listen to it, it is not audible. Use it, it is not applicable.

36.1 On the point of desiring to contract it, you must regard it as inherently expanded. On the point of desiring to weaken it, you must regard it as inherently strong. On the point of desiring to dissipate it, you must regard it as inherently thriving. On the point of desiring to steal it, you must regard it as inherently belonging.

36.2 This is called minute discernment. Soft and pliant triumph over hard and coercive.

36.3 Fish cannot leave the abyss. The state's beneficial artifacts cannot be shown to people.

37.1 Some guide treats lacking deeming-action as a constant yet everything is deem-acted.

37.2 If fief-holding kings could preserve this, all the natural kinds would come to self transformation. If they transform and desire to construct, I will mollify them with the nameless uncarved wood. Nameless uncarved wood is, in general also being on the point of lacking desires.

37.3 If we use not desiring to get calm, the social world will be on the point of self-fixing.

38.1 Superior virtuosity does not 'virtuosity.' For that reason it has virtuosity. Inferior virtuosity never forgets 'virtuosity' For that reason it lacks virtuosity.

38.2 Superior virtuosity lacks deeming action and lacks that with which to deem. Inferior virtue deems it and has something with which to deem.

38.3 Superior humanity deems it and lacks that with which it deems. Superior morality deems it and has that with which it deems. Superior conventionality deems it and nothing answers. So it raises its arm and throws it.

38.4 Hence we lose the guide and then virtuosity. Lose virtuosity and then humanity. Lose humanity and then morality. Lose morality and then conventionality.

38.5 In general conventionality is the thinning of fealty and trustworthiness and the forerunner of disorder. Those who realize first take elaboration of guides as the beginning of making them stupid.

38.6 For this reason, mature men place emphasis on the thick and do not dwell on the thin. Place emphasis on the stuff and don't dwell on the elaboration. So they discard this and choose that.

39.1 Things which from the beginning have achieved oneness: Heaven achieves oneness in being clear. Earth achieves oneness in stability. Energy achieves oneness in spirit.

39.2 Valleys achieve oneness in filling. The ten-thousand natural kinds achieve oneness in life. Fiefholders and Kings achieve oneness in deem-acting to make the social world correct. They take it to the extreme.

39.3 When heaven lacks that with which to become clear, we're on the point of fearing splitting. When earth lacks that with which to become stable, we're on the point of fearing spreading out. When energy lacks that with which to become spirit, we're on the point of fearing death.

39.4 When valleys lack that with which to become full, we're on the point of fearing depletion. When the ten-thousand natural kinds lack that with which to become alive, we're on the point of fearing extinction. When fiefholders and kings lack that with which to become noble and exalted, we're on the point of fearing toppling.

39.5 Hence the noble uses the plebeian as its base. The high uses the low as its foundation.

39.6 Using this: Fiefholders and kings refer to themselves as 'this orphan,' 'this lonely one,' and 'this impoverished one.' Is this not taking the plebeian as the base? It's not?!

39.7 Hence the extreme of numbering chariots is zero chariots.

39.8 Don't desire to coloured veneer of jade or the solid dullness of a rock.

40.1 That which is converse is the action of a guide. That which is weak is the use of a guide.

40.2 The cosmos and the ten-thousand natural kinds arise from 'existing.' 'Existing' arises from 'non-existing.'

41.1 The 'superior' scholar hears a guide. He gets all serious and follows it. The 'medium' scholar hears a guide. It's like it endures; it's like it disappears!

41.2 The 'lower' scholar hears a guide. He hilariously laughs at it. If he did not laugh, it would not be up to being deemed a guide.

41.3 Hence, as the saying goes - A discerning guide is like a murky one. A guide to advancing is like one to retreating. A guide to leveling is like one to roughing up. 'Superior' virtuosity is like a valley. The greatest 'white' is like filthy. 'Expansive' virtuosity is like 'insufficient.'

41.4 'Creating' virtuosity is like 'stealing.' 'Solid authenticity' is like 'sliminess.' The greatest square has no corners. The greatest artifact is never finished. The greatest note rarely sounds. The greatest sign lacks shape.

41.5 Guides hide the lack of names. In general only guides are good at adopting and also completing.

42.1 A guide generates 'one.' 'One' generates 'two.' 'Two' generates 'three.' 'Three' generates the ten-thousand natural kinds.

42.2 The ten-thousand natural kinds bear Yin and embrace Yang. Blend the life-forces and deem-make 'harmony.'

42.3 What humans revile is specifically 'orphan,' 'lonely' and 'impoverished.' Yet Kings and Dukes deem them as titles.

42.4 Hence among natural kinds: sometimes you diminish it and it increases. Sometime you increase it and it diminishes.

42.5 What humans teach, I also teach. Those who force issues don't get their death. I'm on the point of deeming this 'the father of teaching.'

43.1 The most yielding in the social world gallops over the most firm in the social world. That which lacks being enters into that which lacks space. I, with this, know the advantage of lacking deem-acting.

43.2 The teaching that is not put in language, The advantage of lacking deem-acting, In the social world, these are rarely achieved.

44.1 Your name or your self - which is closest to you? Your self and commodities - which counts as more? Obtaining and losing - which is a defect?

44.2 For this reason, superlative love certainly has great cost. Much storage certainly increases losses.

44.3 Knowing to 'sufficient' does not disgrace. Knowing to 'stop' does not endanger. You can endure longer.

45.1 Great completion is like deficiency. Its use does not 'corrupt'. Great filling is like being poured. Its use does not exhaust. Great straightforwardness is like being bent.

45.2 Great skill is like clumsiness. Great distinction-debating is like shouting.

45.3 Exercise conquers a chill. Rest conquers a fever. 'Clear' and 'quiet' are deemed as correct for the social world.

46.1 When the social world has a guide We turn back fast horses in order to fertilize. When the social world lacks a guide War horses are produced in the suburbs.

46.2 Among bad omens, none is greater than not knowing to 'sufficient.' Among evils, none is greater than desiring 'getting.'

46.3 Hence, knowing to 'sufficient' is sufficient for constant sufficiency.

47.1 Don't step outside your door. Know the social world. Don't look out the window. See the natural guide. The farther you go the less you know what to do.

47.2 Using this: Sages don't go anywhere and yet know what to do. Don't see and yet name things. Don't deem-act and yet accomplish.

48.1 In deem-acting on 'study' one daily increases. In deem-acting on 'the guide ' one daily decreases.

48.2 Decrease it and further decrease it. In order to arrive at no deem-acting. No deem-acting and nothing not deem-acted. Taking the social world , you treat relying on lacking social acts as constant.

48.3 When it comes to engaging in social acts, it is not sufficient for taking the social world.

49.1 Sages lack a constant heart-mind; they deem the public's heart-mind as heart-mind.

49.2 Things which are worthy, I 'worthy'. Things which are unworthy, I also 'worthy' This treats 'worthy'-ing as a virtuosity.

49.3 Things which are reliable, I 'reliable'. Things which are unreliable, I also 'reliable' This treats 'reliable'-ing as a virtuosity.

49.4 A sage in the social world is like an outcast. Deem-acting for the social world, he addles his heart-mind. Sages all 'child' themselves.

50.1 We emerge into life and enter into death.

50.2 Of life's associates, ten have three. Of death's associates, ten have three. People's being alive, death ground's activities also ten have three. Now, why is this? Because they 'life' the thickness of life.

50.3 In general, when we hear about those worthy to abet life: They walk the earth without encountering rhinoceros or tiger. They enter the army and don't bear armour or weapons.

50.4 The rhinoceros has no place to thrust its horn. The tiger has no place to wield its claws. Arms have no place to accommodate their points. Now, why is this? Because they lack death's ground.

51.1 A guide starts it, virtuosity cultivates it, Natural kinds model it and circumstances complete it. For this reason, among the ten-thousand natural kinds, None fail to respect a guide and value virtuosity.

51.2 This respecting of guides and valuing of virtuosity is not, in general, commanded in words instead it treats self-so-ing as constant. Hence a guide starts it, virtuosity cultivates it, Acts as its elder, educates it, shades it, poisons it, nourishes it and returns it.

51.3 Gives rise to and not 'exist,' Deem:act and not rely on anything. Acts as elder and does not rule. This would be called 'profound virtuosity.'

52.1 The social world has a beginning We deem it 'mother' of the social world.

52.2 Since we acquired its 'mother' We use that to know its 'son' Since we know its 'son' We revert to embracing its mother. Burying the self we risk nothing.

52.3 Shut up its exchanges, close its gates and end life without struggle.

52.4 Open its exchanges, benefit its social affairs and still end life without saving anything.

52.5 See small, say 'discernible' Protect weakness, say 'coerce'

52.6 Use its light; Revert and return to its discernment. Bequeath yourself no trouble; Deem this to be rehearsing the constant.

53.1 Let me suddenly have some know-how To exercise on The Great Guide - Only helping it - this I fear!

53.2 The Great Guide is profoundly smooth and people easily track it.

53.3 The palace is profoundly stripped. Fields are profoundly overgrown. Granaries are profoundly bare.

53.4 Clothes embroidered colourfully. Belts have sharp swords. Bored of drink and food. Wealth and commodities are excessive. This is called 'stealing.' Exaggeration! Not a guide!

54.1 Worthy builders do not tear down. Worthy embracers do not let go. Sons and grandsons never stop sacrificing.

54.2 Culture it in one self and its virtuosity is authenticity. Culture it in a family and its virtuosity is sufficiency. Culture it in a village and its virtuosity is elders. Culture it in a state and its virtuosity is wealth. Culture it in the social world and its virtuosity is universality.

54.3 Hence use 'self' to view the self. 'Family' to view the family. 'Village' to view the village. 'State' to view the state. 'Social world' to view the social world.

54.4 How do I know the social world's condition? With this.

55.1 The thickness of implicit virtuosity: Compare it to a robust infant. Bees, scorpions, serpents, and snakes do not sting. Ferocious animals do not seize. Birds of prey do not take. Bones are weak and muscles soft and yet he has a firm grasp.
55.2 He does not yet know to join male and female and yet he is completely ready. This is the instinct's having arrived.
55.3 The whole day he babbles and he does not get hoarse. This is the balance having arrived. Knowing to balance, call it 'constant' Knowing how to stay constant, call it 'discernment.' Benefiting life, call it 'auspicious.'
55.4 The heart-mind's deploying life-force, call it 'coercion.'
55.5 When natural kinds are mature then old age sets in. Call this not guided. That which is not guided is early already.

56.1 He who speaks (much, shows thereby that he) does not know (the Principle).
56.2 Shut up its exchanges, close its gates. Dull its sharpness, undo its divisions. Balance its brightness, treat its particles as identical. This is called the abstruse identity.
56.3 Hence we cannot obtain and be close. Cannot obtain and be distant. Cannot obtain and benefit. Cannot obtain and harm. Cannot obtain and value. Cannot obtain and debase. Hence we deem the social world as valuable.

57.1 Use correcting to order the state. Use shock in deploying military force. Use absence of social matters to take charge of the social world. How do I know these are so? With this.
57.2 The more the social world has to elude, the more the people are impoverished. The more the people have beneficial artifacts, the more the state and society are befuddled.
57.3 The more humans are skilled and clever the more strange natural kinds crop up. The more standards of behaviour and commands are promulgated, the more thieves and robbers there are.
57.4 Hence sages say: I lack deeming-action and the people self-transform. I remain calm and the people self-correct.
57.5 I avoid social matters and the people self-enrich. I lack desires and the people self-simplify (become like uncarved wood).

58.1 Its regime is torpid its people are guileless. Its government is critically discriminating its people are deficient.
58.2 Calamity! The ground of fortuity. Fortuity! The obverse of calamity.
58.3 Who knows its pivot? It lacks a 'correct' The 'correct' returns to be deemed unorthodox. Worthiness returns to be deemed an apparition. Human superstition a truly old story.
58.4 Using this: Sages square things without carving Are fair without punishing. Are straight without being arbitrary. Are bright without dazzling us.

59.1 In governing people and serving nature, nothing is better than conserving.
59.2 In general, only conserving deserves to be called early readiness. Early readiness: call it emphasizing accumulating virtuosity. If one emphasizes accumulating virtuosity then there is nothing one cannot conquer. If there is nothing one cannot conquer, no one knows one's limit. Those of whom no one knows their limits may take states.
59.3 The mother of taking states is able to endure.
59.4 This is called the deep root and inherent base Of the guide to long-life and enduring vision.

60.1 Ruling a large state is like grilling a small bit of fresh food.
60.2 Using a guide to manage the social world Its ghost does not energize.
60.3 not that they display no powers their powers do people no harm not that their powers do people no harm the sage does people no harm
60.4

61.1 Those which are great states flow downward. The interchanges in the social world! The female of the social world! The female constants using stillness. She conquer the male using stillness to act out 'beneath'.
61.2 Hence if great states use 'beneath' on small states, then they take small states. If small states use 'beneath' on great states, then they take great states.
61.3 Hence some 'beneath' in order to take, some 'beneath' and then take.
61.4 Great states simply desire universally domesticating people. Small states simply desire serving people.
61.5 So of the two, each gets what it wants. The great fittingly deems 'beneath'.

62.1 A guide is a mystery among the ten-thousand natural kinds. A treasure to worthy people. That which non-worthy people sustain.
62.2 Beautiful language can be marketed. Respectful behaviour can augment humanness. Those who are not worthy, what abandonment is there?
62.3 Hence, set up the master of nature and establish the three dukes. Although one presents jade followed by a team of horses It is not as good as sitting and promoting this guide.

62.4 That which ancient times treated as valuable was guidance. How can we not say "with seeking you get to have it, with wrongdoing avoid unorthodoxy." Hence construe the social world's value.

63.1 Treat lacking deem-action as 'deem-acting'. Treat having no social affair as 'social affair'. Treat the absence of flavour as 'flavour'.

63.2 'Great' the small; 'many' the few; Use virtuosity in dealing with moral anger.

63.3 Plan the difficult in its easy phases. Deem-act on the great in its small phases.

63.4 The difficult affairs of the social world start with something easy. The great affairs of the social world start with something small.

63.5 Using this: Sages, to the end, do not deem-act on it as 'great' and so are able to accomplish its greatness.

63.6 In general, light assent necessarily diminishes trust. Much ease then necessarily much difficulty.

63.7 Using this: Sages make it even more difficult. So in the end they have no difficulty.

64.1 It is easy to sustain a situation when it is pacified. It is easy to plan when it doesn't yet show signs of danger. It is easy to dissolve what is crisp; easy to disperse what is minute.

64.2 Deem-act on it in its not-yet-exist phase; order it in its not-yet-disordered phase.

64.3 An armful of wood arises from small sprouts; nine story towers start from a pile of earth. A thousand league walk starts with putting the foot down.

64.4 Those who deem-act wreck it; those who grasp lose it. Using this: Sages lack deeming action, hence they lack wrecking, lack grasping hence lack losing.

64.5 The people in pursuing social affairs take the phase of nearly completed as constant and then wreck it. If you are as careful at the end as in the beginning then you will lack wrecking things.

64.6 Using this: Sages treat not-desiring as a desire and don't value goods difficult to obtain. Study not-studying and restore what the crowd of humanity has passed by. Use restoring the self-so nature of the ten-thousand natural kinds and don't recklessly deem-act.

65.1 Those in ancient times who were good at deem-acting on a guide Did not to use it to make the people discerning but to make them stupid.

65.2 People's being hard to govern comes from their knowing how to do too much. Hence to use know-how to govern a state is the thief of the state. Not to use know-how to govern a state is the blessing of the state.

65.3 Those who know to do these two things are also evaluated models. To treat knowing to follow evaluated models as constant, This is called obscure virtuosity.

65.4 Obscure virtuosity becomes deep! Becomes distant! Becomes the reversal of natural kinds. After it is so, then it achieves great flow.

66.1 The reason rivers and oceans can deem-act as kings of a hundred valleys: Is that they are good-at lowering them. Hence they are able to deem-act as king of a hundred valleys.

66.2 Using this: if you desire to elevate the people, you must use language to diminish them. If you desire to place the people first, you must treat them as less than your body.

66.3 Using this: Sages occupy the upper position and the people are not important. Occupy the prior position and the people are not harmed. Using this: the social world happily promotes and does not resent.

66.4 It's because he does not dispute. So in the social world, nothing disputes with him.

67.1 Everyone in the social world calls my guide 'great' It's like not resembling. In general only being great hence like not resembling. If it resembled, it would long since have been small!

67.2 I have three treasures. I grasp and preserve them. The first is called 'charity' the second 'frugality' and the third not presuming to deem-act coming before the social world.

67.3 Charity, hence one can be brave. Frugal, hence one can be magnanimous. Not presuming to deem-act coming before the social world, hence one can to fulfill the artifactual role of an elder.

67.4 Moderns abandon charity and are still brave. Abandon frugality and are still liberal. Abandon following and still put themselves in front. Dead already!

67.5 Using charity in battle, one is victorious. If involved in preserving then inherent nature will save it. Use charity to defend it.

68.1 Those who are good champions don't battle. Those who are good at war don't get angry.

68.2 Those who are good at defeating the enemy don't engage them. Those who are good at using people deem it as a something beneath them.

68.3 This is called virtuosity at not contending. This is called the power of using people. This is called on a par with nature - the apex of antiquity.

69.1 There are slogans for using armies. "I don't presume to deem-act as lord and deem-act as guest. Don't presume to advance an inch and withdraw a foot."

69.2 This is called "carrying out not carrying out. Bearing non-existent arms; Throwing against non-existent enemies. Controlling non-existing armies."

69.3 No disaster is greater than taking an enemy lightly. Taking an enemy lightly almost brings my treasures to grief.

69.4 Inherently, opposing armies strengthen each other. Grieving then wins.

70.1 My words are profoundly easy to know. Profoundly easy to perform. In the social world none are able to know or to perform.

70.2 Language has an ancestor and social affairs have a ruler. In general only lacking know-how - this counts as my know-how. If those who know me are rare then things of mine are valuable.

70.3 Using this: Sages wrap precious jade in burlap.

71.1 Knowing not to know is better. Not knowing to know is a defect. In general, in only 'defecting' defects, using this is not to 'defect.'

71.2 Sages do not 'defect' because they 'defect' defects. For this reason they do not 'defect.'

72.1 If the people do not fear authority then great authority has arrived.

72.2 Don't toy around with things they are at home with. Don't despise things that contribute to their livelihood. In general, only if you don't despise [them], using this [they] will not despise [you].

72.3 Using this: Sages start from what they know to do not from what they see. Start from love not from value. So they choose this and reject that.

73.1 If one is courageously presumptuous, then - killing. If one is courageously non-presumptuous, then - living.

73.2 These pairings: one benefits, one harms. That which nature despises, who knows its cause? Using this, sages make it even more difficult.

73.3 The natural guide does not contend and yet is good at winning. Does not discourse and yet skillfully responds. Does not call and yet comes of itself. Insensate and yet good at planning.

73.4 The natural net is all encompassing. It is loose and yet nothing is lost.

74.1 When the people are not afraid of death For what reason would you use death to frighten them?

74.2 If you cause the people to constant fear of death And yet those who deem:act deviantly, we take, hold and kill them, who will dare do it?

74.3 Should we constant having a professional executor do the killing? To delegate a professional executor for killing, Is this called "delegating the great carpenter to chop"? Those who delegate the great carpenter to chop are few. It doesn't hurt his hand.

75.1 Starvation among the people comes from how much taxes-in-kind those above them 'eat'. From this: they starve.

75.2 The difficulty in governing people comes from those above them taking deeming-action. From this: they are difficult to govern.

75.3 People take death lightly because those above them seek life's richness. From this they take death lightly. In general: only those who don't deem-act using 'life' - these are worthies at valuing life.

76.1 The human living state is soft and pliable. The dead state is hard and rigid.

76.2 The alive state of the ten-thousand natural kinds - grass and wood - is soft and crisp. Their dead state is hard and dry.

76.3 So things that are hard and rigid accompany death. Things that are soft and pliable accompany life.

76.4 So if troops are strong they do not triumph. When wood is stiff, it makes weapons.

76.5 When strength is great, its place is down. When soft and pliable, its place is up.

77.1 The guide of nature: Is it not like a taut bow? That which is high, represses them. That which is low, raise them up. That which has abundance, pare it back. That which is insufficient, add to it.

77.2 The guide of nature is to pare back abundance and add to the insufficient. If it's the guide of humans then it's not like that. It injures that which is not sufficient and piles it on that which has abundance.

77.3 Who can have abundance and use it to pile it on the social world? Only one who has a guide.

77.4 Using this: Sages Deem-act and don't rely on anything. His work is accomplished and he doesn't locate it. This is his not desiring the apprehending of worthies.

78.1 In the social world, nothing is softer or more pliant than water. And yet when it attacks firm, rigid things, none of them is able to win. This is due to their lacking that with which to metamorphose it.

78.2 That the pliant wins over the rigid, the soft wins over the hard, In the social world, no one fails to know. [Yet] no one is able to execute.

78.3 Using this: Sages say, "Taking the soil of a state, this is called ruler of the world's grain alters. Taking the non-auspicious state, this is being deemed the king of the social world." Rectified language is like its opposite.

79.1 Settling a massive resentment Necessarily some resentment will be left-over. How can such be deemed as worth?

79.2 Using this: Sages grasp the left side of the agreement. And don't demand from others.

79.3 Have virtuosity in supervising agreements. Lack virtuosity in supervising taxation. The natural guide has no kin.

79.4 The natural guide has no kin. It constants being with worthy people.

80.1 'Small' the state and 'few' the people. Bring about that having artifacts by the tens and hundreds yet they won't use them. Bring it about that the people "weight" death and don't venture far.

80.2 Although they have boats and chariots, they don't have reasons to ride in them. Although they have armour and weapons, they don't have reasons to marshal them.

80.3 Bring it about that humans revert to knotting string and use that. 'Sweet' their food; 'beautiful' their clothing. 'Peaceful' their neighbourhoods; 'pleasant' their customs.

80.4 Nearby states can see each other. And hear the sounds of each other's chickens and dogs. The peoples reach old age and death without any interaction.

81.1 Accurate language is not beautiful. Beautiful language is not accurate.

81.2 Those who are good at [things] don't distinguish. Those who distinguish are not good at [things].

81.3 Those who know-how are not comprehensive. Those who are comprehensive do not know how.

81.4 Sages don't accumulate. Although they use it to deem-act "others" Themselves increase 'having' Although they use it to give others. Themselves increase in magnitude.

81.5 The guide of nature: benefit and yet do not harm. The guide of Sages: deem-act and don't dispute.

Headless version

1.

Words and names are not the way
They can't define the absolute
It's better that you look within
Hold your tongue and just be mute
Look within and look out too
You will not find a separation
Out there you see appearance
Within you see origination
Look within with wonder
At emptiness and bliss
For wonder names totality
Where nothing is amiss
The space within is always there
If you can moderate desire
A place of utter emptiness
And possibility entire

2.

Where beautiful and ugly
Do not stand in opposition
Where life and death or yes and no
Do not make a contradiction
Can you see the vacant place
Where good and bad and sad and merry
Disappear forevermore?
Where nothing ever is contrary
So stay within the emptiness
Unless you rise you never fall
Accepting that which comes your way
You are forever all in all

3.

If you love accumulation
Gain and increase every day
Thieves and robbers will be waiting
Just to take it all away
Best to be so empty-headed
That it seems you've lost it all
You will know you're on the way
Though others say you're at a stall

4.

This nothingness is like a well
Always giving, never taking
And all claims to origin
Neither wanting or forsaking
You know it's ever present
You find it where you have no face
It is a wondrous blessing
Original amazing grace

5.

This emptiness is truly void

And infinitely capacious
It holds whatever comes its way
Eternally tenacious
Can you take whatever comes?
Though judgment calls it bad and good
Seeing is acceptance
And nothing to be understood

6.
Complete and full awareness
Is like an open valley
Of endless generation
That doesn't reach finale
It is a simple presence
It's a nothing you can see
You'll find it right at center
Wherever you may be
You are Tao

7.
This presence is unlimited
Because it wasn't ever born
And it will not be perishing
Will never give you cause to mourn
It truly wants for nothing
It has no wishes of its own
It is the one and only Eternally alone
It holds itself in vacancy
With no desire to advance
Remaining in simplicity
It merely witnesses the dance
The seer will remain behind
And never yearns for leaving home
Just living in the here and now
Prefers to stay unknown

8.
The seer flows like water
Lying low along the way
Nourishing whatever comes
To be held on display
The seer keeps to simple ways
And therefore is content
When joy or sorrow manifests
To give complete assent
If you can clearly be yourself
And never rise to interfere
Everyone will cherish you
And always hold you dear

9.
Don't fill a bowl
Till it's more than full
Or sharpen a blade
Till it must go dull
Don't pile up treasure
That comes at great cost

Approval and riches
Are easily lost
Can you only do
What's really needed
Then stop and withdraw
When your task is completed?

10.
Can you see as a child sees
And keep the simple vision?
See the inner oneness
With absolute precision
Hold all things in your embrace
The entire world is in your care
Let things be just as they are
Extend acceptance everywhere
Let go all need to comprehend
The truth is here where all behold
Their infinite capacity
To welcome and enfold

11.
The empty hub at center
Allows a wheel to roll
The vacancy within defines
The function of a bowl
The openness within a house
Provides location to reside
The open space that is my heart
Is where ten thousand things abide

12.
Too much sound can make you deaf
Too many colors leave you blind
Can you let desire die down
And not leave emptiness behind?
Wanting things can drive you mad
And acquisition makes you poor
See that you are everything
And leave off wanting more

13.
Fame and shame are equal
And so are gain and loss
It isn't very difficult
To get this point across
Having fame you know that you
Are terrified to lose it
Making gain you always fear
That others will abuse it
Can you see that you're not like
Your image or reflection?
Just see you are totality
By looking in your own direction
The one who is not limited
Accepts whatever comes or goes
And cares for everything around

On opening and close

14.

When you look, it isn't there
Listen and you cannot hear it
It seems to be beyond your reach
Because you are so near it
This single source of everything
Appears to be an empty image
Though it cannot be understood
You can see its naked visage
Follow it to nothingness
Approach it where you have no face
From nowhere to infinity
This vacant image leaves no trace
From never to eternity
This naked face is what you are
An empty, vacant, open door
Forevermore ajar

15.

Those of old who knew the way
To origin and source within
Have seen the place where wholeness
And infinity begin
Alert as one on a frozen stream
Or one who watches for the foe
Deferential as a guest
And generous as melting snow
Plain as an uncarved block of wood
Expansive as a vale
Transparent just like water
Whose clarity will never fail
Can you keep yourself so still
That muddy water clears
? And wait until right action
Spontaneously appears?

16.

See that you are emptiness
Always quiet and at peace
You're in the place where all begins
The space where all things cease
All things arise and have their day
And then go back to the single source
Returning to serenity
With no regret and no remorse
When you see the source within
You only give assent
You see you're everlasting
And eternally omnificient

17.

It's best if you are barely known
The lesser state is being praised
Worse is being hated
Just stay empty and amazed

Only do what must be done
And see you are the one alone
When you finish all will say
We did this on our own

18.
Goodness and compliance
Came when people lost the way
Spontaneity declined
Hypocrisy was here to stay

19.
Banish learned discourse
And everyone will be content
Eliminate propriety
Increase astonishment
Stay away from fraud and swindle
Everyone is bound to gain
You really have it all you know
There is no basis to complain
Can you see your empty core?
It isn't missing, gone or hidden
Just let go of neediness
And it will come unbidden

20.
You need not give a yes or no
Such distinctions matter little
Keep your vision open
And be at center noncommittal
See that it's ridiculous
To seek success and fear to fail
To ever want what others want
To think you always must prevail
Other people look so bright
I am dark and void and null
Others are so very sharp
While I alone am dull
Others are so purposeful
Only I don't understand
Aimless, drifting, weak and dumb
Uninteresting and bland
I see I'm different from the rest
For I take in what's plainly shown
And I take my sustenance
Only from the great unknown

21.
Seeming utter emptiness
Quite impossible to trace
Yet it contains all images
Within its wide embrace
Appearing total darkness
Yet you see that it is right
To stay with its obscurity
The only origin of light
This ever present openness

At center and within
Can be seen just anytime
So look and look again

22.

Overcome by giving up
See that you are really nil
Look into your emptiness
If you want to have your fill
Be satisfied with little
Just content with what you need
If you are always wanting more
You surely are consumed by greed
Abide in your simplicity
Though you are not on display
See all things are shining bright
In marvelous array
If you do not boast or brag
Everyone will hold you high
If you do not argue
You will prevail thereby
Only see you are complete
And all things have come to you
Overcome by giving up
All except your inner view

23.

Say your piece and then be still
Like nature in a storm
That rains and blows and ceases
And sees the sun reborn
Open to the inward view
You are at one with all existence
There's nothing blocking up the way
Or putting up resistance
If you're at home with nothingness
And simply trust what comes about
You'll find that all is in its place
Without a question or a doubt

24.

Who stands on tiptoe topples
Who runs ahead soon loses speed
Who goes on show is hidden
Who pushes far gives up the lead
Don't depart from what is given
The ever present here and now
Don't overreach and don't oppose
Invite, admire and allow

25.

Before creation did occur
This blessed emptiness was here
Alone forever and at peace
The source of all that does appear
Eternally unchanging
Forever lacking limit

This void is all potential
The everlasting ultimate
It flows through all existence
And then returns to source
It's ever at your center
Your only true recourse
For here begins the universe
The earth and humankind
Following this greatest way
You can never be defined

26.

The naked center doesn't change
Its quietude is absolute
Yet from it spring all things that move
This bare awareness is the root
Can you go about all day
And never leave your true abode
No matter how enticing are
The splendors of the road?
Don't think that you can run around
And act a perfect fool
Just see that you are at the eye
Of nature's whirlpool

27.

Can you walk and leave no tracks?
Make no errors when you talk?
Count without a tally?
Secure a door without a lock?
You can abandon no one
There's nothing you can leave behind
In you there are no limits
You are forever unconfined
What happens is spontaneous
Good and bad are just the same
In origin identical
Beyond both praise and blame

28.

Know the strong but keep the weak
The whole wide world is born in you
You'll see just what a child sees
A vast and comprehensive view
Know the light but keep the dark
And watch ten thousand things emerge
In you they have their residence
Where space and time converge
Know the high but keep the low
Humility will honor you
Attend to your vacuity
There's nothing else to do
Be like an uncarved block of wood
Don't squander your potential
Or overlook your vacant core
Nothing else is so essential

29.

Do you want to change the world?
You cannot possibly succeed
The given cannot be improved
On this the seers are agreed
At times you find you're out in front
At other times you fall behind
Sometimes you're all commotion
But afterwards you must unwind
When all around is turmoil
Just stay with the serene
You are the quiet center
Of the ever changing scene
Can you see things as they are
And let them be all on their own?
Remain in pure awareness
You never need to stray from home
Things are just as they are.
They arise out of nowhere.
What good does it do to reject some events and accept others?
It harms no one but yourself.
You are not made to reject anything.
You are made open and aware.
You take in the world.

30.

There is an ancient way to lead
That just allows and does not force
For what goes out will come around
And violence will lead to wars
The one who sees completes a task
And stops when it is done
Seeing all is on its own
And not controlled by anyone
The seer sees that all is well
And does not need to please
Just gives acceptance everywhere
Puts everyone at ease

31.

Weapons lead to violence
Which everyone despises
Avoid them altogether
Allow no compromises
If use of weapons has to be
When enemies just leave no choice
Use them but reluctantly
In victory do not rejoice
Ascendancy brings sorrow
And triumph doesn't carry pleasure
It severs you from wholeness
And robs you of your real treasure
Victory is like a funeral
Where loss of life must make you sad
For putting other people down
Never ought to make you glad

32.

Awareness is not limited
It's like an uncarved block of wood
With infinite potential
Beyond all usefulness for good
If leaders could stay centered
In awareness pure and plain
This world would be as nourishing
As nature's gentle rain
Everyone would be at peace
And always living in the whole
Opposition and division
Could never take their toll

33.

It may be said that you are wise
To see yourself as others do
But you are wiser still to see
From your own central point of view
Then you see you have it all
The riches that are always here
Belong to you completely
Because your vision is so clear

34.

The empty center's everywhere
It flows both left and right
It brings to pass ten thousand things
And yet it never leaves your sight
It welcomes everything around
On nothing does it make a claim
It's in the heart of each and all
This ultimate without a name
Some can see that it is great
And some will say that it's obscure
It is your real identity
Simplicity that will endure

35.

Totality will be with you
If you can see the simple presence
Although there's danger all around
You give complete acceptance
Good music, food and company
Are welcome when you're traveling
The inner truth seems tasteless
Yet it produces everything
You look and you see nothing
You listen and hear silence
Its use is inexhaustible
It's ever worthy of reliance

36.

You cannot be diminished
Unless you've been inflated
You cannot be defeated
Unless you've been elated

You cannot be belittled
Unless you've been esteemed
Unless you're wholly missing
You cannot be redeemed
The soft and slow can overcome
The rigid and the hard and fast
Just see your inner emptiness
For nothing else is made to last

37.

Only see you're doing nothing
Yet not a thing is left undone
For all things happen on their own
In you who are the all in one
If leaders could be centered
All ten thousand things would thrive
By seeing what is natural
All creation comes alive
Everyone would be content
With living simply every day
Desires would be moderate
And peace would be the only way

38.

You needn't search for power
You already have it all
To seek outside your empty core
Is looking for a fall
The seer doesn't do a thing
But sees that all is finished
Foolish people run about
And leave totality diminished
Goodness must be doing
And justice never is complete
Propriety can't satisfy
Obedience is forced defeat
When totality is lost
Goodness comes to take its place
Followed by propriety
Bewilderment and end of grace
The seer sees periphery
But also sees the open core
And thus the seer sees the whole
And dwells therein forevermore

39.

If you stay with clear awareness
The sky is open, pure and spacious
The earth is firm and friendly too
Activity is efficacious
But depart from clarity
The purest sky is torn apart
The earth is so divided
Felicity must flee your heart
The seer knows humility
Doesn't argue or cajole
Doesn't discard anything

Or mutilate the whole
The seer doesn't show at all
Doesn't sparkle like a jewel
The seer's vast immensity
Is truly less than minuscule

40.

All is born of emptiness
Manifests and has its day
Then yields and surrenders
Returns and dies away

41.

When seers see their nothingness
They never let it out of sight
But others see it now and then
And miss out on its true delight
Still others only laugh it off
And look at it with ridicule
It wouldn't be the real truth
If it weren't laughed at by the fool
The brightest way seems darkness
Just going on seems like retreat
The simple way seems difficult
Capacity seems like defeat
Clarity can seem obscure
And love seem not to care
Totality seems not enough
And truth can seem to err
Awareness doesn't have a name
To all appearances is null
Yet it produces everything
And so this empty place is full

42.

Awareness comes from nothingness
So all can see it's plainly one
Contains all opposition
Ten thousand things are now begun
All these things embrace the void
And face the manifest
Achieving thus true harmony
They find existence truly blessed
No one wants to be considered
Empty and alone
Yet that's exactly what the seers
Say they have been shown
And violence is not the way
I give you this instruction
Those who live by violence
Will bring about their own destruction

43.

Overcome by yielding
The weak can overcome the strong
For only absence can provide
The place where everything belongs

And thus it is that I can see
The worthiness of not contending
Yet few will ever comprehend
The potency of bending

44.
Which of these means more to you
Integrity or reputation?
Are gain and loss not equally
Responsible for limitation?
Everything that you possess
Is surely transitory
Just be pleased with emptiness
And witness inner bliss and glory
You know that you are always safe
If only you can be contented
With awareness as capacity
And with all that is presented

45.
Wholeness seems like imperfection
Yet its usefulness is sure
Fullness seems quite empty
But it is certain to endure
True straightness can seem twisted
True wisdom does not seem to know
Great eloquence seems halting
Great darkness seems to be aglow
Can you see that emptiness
Contains all oppositions?
Like hot and cold and fast and slow?
All differences and all conditions?

46.
When the absolute is cherished
Horses graze on the open green
When the absolute is lost
Only steeds of war are seen
No calamity exceeds desire
And always wanting more
Can you not see you have enough
And live in plenitude galore?

47.
No need to go outside a door
To see totality
Or look out of a window
For seeing what will always be
Going out you go astray
At home and center all is one
The seer doesn't have to do
To see that everything is done

48.
In going after learning
Something's added every day
For resting in the ultimate

Everything must drop away
Day by day do less and less
Until nothingness is seen
All occurs quite on its own
A doer need not intervene
Allow all things to run their course
If you want to be proficient
Make a fuss and bother
And existence will be insufficient

49.

The seer doesn't own a thought
For thoughts do not reside within
Thoughts concern ten thousand things
And that's the way it's always been
The seer doesn't rush to judge
And treats all people well
Considers no one bad or good
Attracts but never does repel
The seer trusts things as they are
And takes all people at their word
Giving trust to everyone
Knows faithfulness will be returned
The seer turns your view around
So you can never be beguiled
And gives you back all that you lost
The vision of a little child

50.

Between the time when they are born
And the time that they will die
Three in ten will follow life
Three others only will deny
Three others are so casual
They live as though they're passing through
But one remains who clearly sees
There's not a single thing to do
Can you be like the one who sees
The world emerging on its own?
What's needed for each moment
Arises from the great unknown
This one doesn't have a fear
Of weaponry or wild beast
These enemies can't harm the one
Whose separate self is long deceased

51.

Everything arises
From this total emptiness
Is nourished and completed
And finds creation blessed
All things arise from nothingness
Are cared for by existence
Which freely gives what is required
For bountiful subsistence
Existence does not make a claim
On what it has created

It nourishes and serves and leads
Is honored and appreciated

52.

All things emerge from nullity
The only derivation
Of everything that manifests
The source of all creation
Stay in touch with origin
There's nothing that you need deny
Seeing your totality
You will not fear to die
Do not be in haste to speak
And always guard the senses
You will find your heart at peace
And in the place where all commences
See the subtle and the clear
It is the empty source of light
There is no danger in this place
That is forever in plain sight

53.

This way is wide and easy
Yet people love to stray
They love to take the sidetracks
And wander from the way
When the few are rich and wealthy
Living way above their needs
The granaries are empty
And the fields are full of weeds
When rulers spend on weapons
And implements of war
It's a never ending circle
Of ever wanting more
When the rich have all abundance
What remains must surely dwindle
Having more than you can use
Is thievery and fraud and swindle

54.

Hold fast to this awareness
Seeing that it is your root
It will not ever slip away
This ever present absolute
It cannot be uprooted
It's always held in veneration
Discovered very close at hand
In every generation
Allow its presence in your life
Awareness real and profound
Allow it in the family
Its blessings will abound
And if you care to share it
With neighbor and with friend
Its potency will multiply
With benefits that never end
You ask me how I know it's true

It isn't something I mistook
Well nothing is more obvious
The only thing I do is look

55.

One who sees full emptiness
Is like a child just born
With muscles weak and bones so soft
Yet with a grip that's strong
The newborn hasn't been fulfilled
Its nature is pure vacancy
Nullity and nothingness
And potent spontaneity
It can scream and cry all day
And yet it never does get hoarse
It only does what naturally
Emerges from the inner source
To see this inner nature
Is seeing in a way that's bold
Into the only place there is
That cannot possibly grow old

56.

Those who know don't like to say
Those who say don't know
Close the mouth and guard the senses
You'll see more than what's on show
Untie tangles, dim the glare
Dull the sharp and join the dust
Abide in primal unity
And then do what you must
You cannot hold it or let go
It can't be blamed or praised
In all-embracing oneness
Be astonished and amazed

57.

To truly lead with fairness
You must put aside control
Abandon imposition
Make spontaneity your goal
The more you try to run their lives
With rules and prohibition
The poorer people's lives become
The more they live in opposition
The more you deal with others
With cunning and with guile
The more that other people say
Our lives are not worthwhile
The more you hoard your treasures
The more you're giving hope to thieves
The more you sharpen weapons
The more the country grieves
Do nothing and see all is done
And everyone is true
Drop the rules and people owe
Prosperity to you

Just let go of all desire
And people will return
To natural and simple ways
To life without concern

58.

Let your lead be gentle
And people will be satisfied
Let it be severe and harsh
And be rejected and defied
Happiness may reign today
But who knows what tomorrow holds?
Sadness too will have its time
As all ten thousand things unfold
The seer's sight is sharp and pointed
But it does not cut or pierce
The seer sees and shows the truth
This gentle way is never fierce

59.

To serve and care for others
With restraint and moderation
Stay centered in the here and now
And free of limitation
If you keep returning
To this your central root
You will possess forever
Awareness undilute

60.

It's best to lead a large domain
As you would cook a little fish
Don't poke and prod or you are bound
To spoil the country and the dish
Just stay open and aware
And evil cannot get a hold
Cannot find a home in you
Even evil's not that bold
At center you harm no one
And no one's able to harm you
This kind of reciprocity
Creates the world anew

61.

A great domain is like the sea
Whose power comes from lying low
And due to this humility
Its greatness has to grow
A small domain can lie low too
Acknowledging its low location
Surrender and humility
Give rise to exaltation
If you lie low you too arise
To uppermost position
For everyone's attracted to
One who doesn't fear submission

62.

I'm at the center and the source
Of all ten thousand things
Where I receive the benefits
That pure awareness brings
These benefits belong to all
To good and bad the same
For nature gives you what you need
With no regard for praise or blame
Words and deeds of excellence
May bring you honor and acclaim
But nature values each alike
And is indifferent to fame
When new leaders are installed
Don't send gifts or lofty praise
Stay centered in the unity
Provided by the inward gaze
Why should you esteem the void?
It does away with imperfection
Those who seek are bound to find
It disappears on close inspection

63.

Begin with the easy
And do without doing
There isn't a thing
That you should be pursuing
Begin with the simple
There's no need attacking
Your greatness will lie
In all that you're lacking
Tackle problems when they're small
And still subject to solution
The largest problem is resolved
By simple deeds of diminution
Can you center every day
And see all the seers see
Empty here and brimming there
A marvelous asymmetry?

64.

To keep the peace is easy
Begin before a problem stirs
Handle things before they happen
And trouble before it occurs
Be calm and conquer worries
Before they can proceed
The very largest tree begins
As just a tiny seed
It takes a single step to start
A journey of a thousand miles
And just one brick to start to build
The grandest domiciles
Let things happen as they will
You do not need to interfere
See that you do nothing
That causes discord to appear

65.

Those of old who found the way
Could see their inner core
They saw that it was hidden
And didn't bring it to the fore
When people think they know the truth
They want all others to concur
But they are happy and content
When they remain unsure
Don't try to lead with cleverness
Prefer instead simplicity
It's obvious that truth must lie
In nothingness and clarity

66.

The sea is large and mighty
Because it lies below
The streams and rivers of the world
Thus capturing their flow
If you want to have your fill
Then you must see that you are hollow
If you want to lead the way
Then you must be prepared to follow
When you lead you are above
But no one feels put down
And when you must be out in front
Know that no one's losing ground
When you see that you're not built
For facing up or confrontation
No one can contend with you
Who are the ultimate negation

67.

On seeing inner nothingness
You see it's great beyond compare
Though many find it curious
That you would even care
I have three treasures that I keep
The first is friendliness
The second is to stay behind
The third is wanting less
For if you're friendly and you care
You can dare to do what's needed
And if you always stay behind
The lead will surely be conceded
And if you're satisfied with less
You have everything to give
Keep these treasures in your heart
Then you will truly live

68.

Violence is not the way
The greatest warriors know
That treachery and anger
Will not defeat the foe
You only win if you don't strive

And gain if you do not oppose
This is the certain victory
Simplicity bestows

69.

In conflict just be cautious
And always on your guard
Rather than advance an inch
Instead retreat a yard
In this way you go along
And make your gain without advancing
You deal with the rival
As your position is enhancing
Remember that it's possible
Your rival just may yield
So don't advance on such a foe
Let differences be healed

70.

Embarrassingly obvious
And always near at hand
It is this nothingness you see
But never understand
Though truth within is ageless
Very few will ever see
My face is what I give to you
The jewel within is me

71.

You cannot understand the truth
Claim to know and show you're ill
Just see that you are missing
That truth is bare and nil
Unknowing is the final cure
When knowledge takes its heavy toll
Pure presence is totality
And absence makes you whole

72.

When the sense of wonder goes
Disaster is not far behind
Don't intrude in people's lives
And they won't think you are unkind
The seer sees both this and that
But doesn't ask for praise
Finding this immensity
With just a simple inward gaze

73.

The way is very easy
Its purposes prevail
When all is done in silence
Intention cannot fail
Its net is vast and over all
With meshes large and wide
Yet it loses nothing
Holds everything inside

74.

You truly are what isn't born
You need not be afraid to die
Just live your life and know that you
Will never lose the inner eye
You can't control what is to be
In using tools you don't command
Unlike the master carpenter
You're bound to cut your hand

75.

The people starve when taxes take
The bulk of what they earn
When leaders interfere too much
They get rebellion in return
The people do not fear to die
If leaders rob them of their lives
But taking no more than you need
You see that everybody thrives

76.

We're soft and supple when we're born
Hard and rigid when we die
Living plants are pliable
Deadwood is brittle and dry
This way life befriends the weak
But death draws near the strong
The hard and stiff are bound to break
The supple bends and goes along

77.

Nature's way of doing
Is like the bending of a bow
For pulling on a bow you see
The low go high and the high go low
Nature takes from those who have
And gives to those who lack
When nature takes from human beings
They fight to get it back
But if you see you have it all
You're not afraid to give away
Expecting nothing in return
It all comes back with no delay

78.

Water is so very soft
It overcomes because it yields
By wearing down the hardest rock
It shows what power weakness wields
The weak can overcome the strong
The soft can overcome the hard
Everybody knows it's true
So hold the low in high regard
The seer sees serenity
Where others see affliction
The seer sees the inner truth

Where others only see a fiction

79.

There's little good in making peace
If resentment lingers
You'll never see an end to blame
If everyone is pointing fingers
It's better to be pointing
At the peaceful and creative place
Where you see naught but emptiness
And others say they see your face

80.

If a land is small and the people few
And the rulers recognize what's needed
The simple ways of courtesy
Are happily and gladly heeded
For people need so little
To live their lives aright
Are food and home and clothing
Not enough for pure delight?
Though nearby lands are close enough
To hear their roosters crow
The people will be so content
That not a one will want to go

81.

Truth need not be eloquent
And eloquence may not be true
There is no need to argue
When truth is shining through
Those who see may not be learned
The learned may not see
To see you merely need to look
In pure simplicity
The seer doesn't have to hoard
And does not fear to lose
The more you give, the more you have
So why should you refuse?
Why not give it all away?
For emptiness brings benefit
And as the seers always say
The more you give, the more you get

Kiyoashi version

1

The tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao.
The name that can be named is not the eternal name.
The unnamable is the eternally real.
Naming is the origin of all particular things.
Free from desire, you realize the mystery.
Caught in desire, you see only the manifestations.
Yet mystery and manifestations arise from the same source. This source is called darkness.
Darkness within darkness.
The gateway to all understanding.

2

When people see some things as beautiful, other things become ugly.
When people see some things as good, other things become bad.
Being and non-being create each other. Difficult and easy support each other. Long and short define each other. High and low depend on each other. Before and after follow each other.
Therefore the Master acts without doing anything and teaches without saying anything.
Things arise and she lets them come; things disappear and she lets them go. She has but doesn't expect.
When her work is done, she forgets it. That is why it lasts forever.

3

If you overesteem great men, people become powerless.
If you overvalue possessions, people begin to steal.
The Master leads
by emptying people's minds
and filling their cores, by weakening their ambition
and toughening their resolve.
He helps people lose everything
they know, everything they desire, and creates confusion
in those who think that they know.
Practice not-doing, and everything will fall into place.

4

The Tao is like a well: used but never used up.
It is like the eternal void: filled with infinite possibilities.
It is hidden but always present.
I don't know who gave birth to it.
It is older than God.

5

The Tao doesn't take sides; it gives birth to both good and evil.
The Master doesn't take sides; she welcomes both saints and sinners.
The Tao is like a bellows: it is empty yet infinitely capable.
The more you use it, the more it produces; the more you talk of it, the less you understand.
Hold on to the center.

6

The Tao is called the Great Mother: empty yet inexhaustible, it gives birth to infinite worlds.
It is always present within you.
You can use it any way you want.

7

The Tao is infinite, eternal.
Why is it eternal?

It was never born; thus it can never die.
Why is it infinite?
It has no desires for itself; thus it is present for all beings.
The Master stays behind; that is why she is ahead.
She is detached from all things; that is why she is one with them.
Because she has let go of herself, she is perfectly fulfilled.

8

The supreme good is like water, which nourishes all things without trying to.
It is content with the low places that people disdain.
Thus it is like the Tao.
In dwelling, live close to the ground.
In thinking, keep to the simple.
In conflict, be fair and generous.
In governing, don't try to control.
In work, do what you enjoy.
In family life, be completely present.
When you are content to be simply yourself and don't compare or compete, everybody will respect you.

9

Fill your bowl to the brim and it will spill.
Keep sharpening your knife and it will blunt.
Chase after money and security and your heart will never unclench.
Care about people's approval and you will be their prisoner.
Do your work, then step back.
The only path to serenity.

10

Can you coax your mind from wandering and keep to the original oneness?
Can you let your body become supple as a newborn child's?
Can you cleanse your inner vision until you see nothing but the light?
Can you love people and lead them without imposing your will?
Can you deal with the most vital matters by letting events take their course?
Can you step back from your own mind and thus understand all things?
Giving birth and nourishing, having without possessing, acting with no expectations, leading and not trying to control: this is the supreme virtue.

11

We join spokes together in a wheel, but it is the center hole that makes the wagon move.
We shape clay into a pot, but it is the emptiness inside that holds whatever we want.
We hammer wood for a house, but it is the inner space that makes it livable.
We work with being, but non-being is what we use.

12

Colors blind the eye.
Sounds deafen the ear.
Flavors numb the taste.
Thoughts weaken the mind.
Desires wither the heart.
The Master observes the world but trusts his inner vision.
He allows things to come and go.
His heart is open as the sky.

13

Success is as dangerous as failure.
Hope is as hollow as fear.
What does it mean that success is as dangerous as failure?

Whether you go up the ladder or down it, your position is shaky.
When you stand with your two feet on the ground, you will always keep your balance.
What does it mean that hope is as hollow as fear?
Hope and fear are both phantoms that arise from thinking of the self.
When we don't see the self as self, what do we have to fear?
See the world as your self.
Have faith in the way things are.
Love the world as your self; then you can care for all things.

14

Look, and it can't be seen.
Listen, and it can't be heard.
Reach, and it can't be grasped.
Above, it isn't bright.
Below, it isn't dark.
Seamless, unnamable, it returns to the realm of nothing.
Form that includes all forms, image without an image, subtle, beyond all conception.
Approach it and there is no beginning; follow it and there is no end.
You can't know it, but you can be it, at ease in your own life.
Just realize where you come from: this is the essence of wisdom.

15

The ancient Masters were profound and subtle.
Their wisdom was unfathomable.
There is no way to describe it; all we can describe is their appearance.
They were careful as someone crossing an iced-over stream.
Alert as a warrior in enemy territory.
Courteous as a guest.
Fluid as melting ice.
Shapable as a block of wood.
Receptive as a valley.
Clear as a glass of water.
Do you have the patience to wait till your mud settles and the water is clear?
Can you remain unmoving till the right action arises by itself?
The Master doesn't seek fulfillment.
Not seeking, not expecting, she is present, and can welcome all things.

16

Empty your mind of all thoughts.
Let your heart be at peace.
Watch the turmoil of beings, but contemplate their return.
Each separate being in the universe returns to the common source.
Returning to the source is serenity.
If you don't realize the source, you stumble in confusion and sorrow.
When you realize where you come from, you naturally become tolerant, disinterested, amused, kindhearted as a grandmother, dignified as a king.
Immersed in the wonder of the Tao, you can deal with whatever life brings you, and when death comes, you are ready.

17

When the Master governs, the people are hardly aware that he exists.
Next best is a leader who is loved.
Next, one who is feared.
The worst is one who is despised.
If you don't trust the people, you make them untrustworthy.
The Master doesn't talk, he acts.
When his work is done, the people say, "Amazing: we did it, all by ourselves!"

18

When the great Tao is forgotten, goodness and piety appear.
When the body's intelligence declines, cleverness and knowledge step forth.
When there is no peace in the family, filial piety begins.
When the country falls into chaos, patriotism is born.

19

Throw away holiness and wisdom, and people will be a hundred times happier.
Throw away morality and justice, and people will do the right thing.
Throw away industry and profit, and there won't be any thieves.
If these three aren't enough, just stay at the center of the circle and let all things take their course.

20

Stop thinking, and end your problems.
What difference between yes and no?
What difference between success and failure?
Must you value what others value, avoid what others avoid?
How ridiculous!
Other people are excited, as though they were at a parade.
I alone don't care, I alone am expressionless, like an infant before it can smile.
Other people have what they need; I alone possess nothing.
I alone drift about, like someone without a home.
I am like an idiot, my mind is so empty.
Other people are bright; I alone am dark.
Other people are sharp; I alone am dull.
Other people have a purpose; I alone don't know.
I drift like a wave on the ocean, I blow as aimless as the wind.
I am different from ordinary people.
I drink from the Great Mother's breasts.

21

The Master keeps her mind always at one with the Tao; that is what gives her her radiance.
The Tao is ungraspable.
How can her mind be at one with it?
Because she doesn't cling to ideas.
The Tao is dark and unfathomable.
How can it make her radiant?
Because she lets it.
Since before time and space were, the Tao is.
It is beyond IS and IS NOT.
How do I know this is true?
I look inside myself and see.

22

If you want to become whole, let yourself be partial.
If you want to become straight, let yourself be crooked.
If you want to become full, let yourself be empty.
If you want to be reborn, let yourself die.
If you want to be given everything, give everything up.
The Master, by residing in the Tao, sets an example for all beings.
Because he doesn't display himself, people can see his light.
Because he has nothing to prove, people can trust his words.
Because he doesn't know who he is, people recognize themselves in him.
Because he has no goal in mind, everything he does succeeds.
When the ancient Masters said, "If you want to be given everything, give everything up," they weren't using empty phrases.
Only in being lived by the Tao can you be truly yourself.

23

Express yourself completely, then keep quiet.

Be like the forces of nature: when it blows, there is only wind; when it rains, there is only rain; when the clouds pass, the sun shines through.

If you open yourself to the Tao, you are at one with the Tao and you can embody it completely.

If you open yourself to insight, you are at one with insight and you can use it completely.

If you open yourself to loss, you are at one with loss and you can accept it completely.

Open yourself to the Tao, then trust your natural responses; and everything will fall into place.

24

He who stands on tiptoe doesn't stand firm.

He who rushes ahead doesn't go far.

He who tries to shine dims his own light.

He who defines himself can't know who he really is.

He who has power over others can't empower himself.

He who clings to his work will create nothing that endures.

If you want to accord with the Tao, just do your job, then let go.

25

There was something formless and perfect before the universe was born.

It is serene. Empty.

Solitary. Unchanging.

Infinite. Eternally present.

It is the mother of the universe.

For lack of a better name, I call it the Tao.

It flows through all things, inside and outside, and returns to the origin of all things.

The Tao is great.

The universe is great.

Earth is great.

Man is great.

These are the four great powers.

Man follows the earth.

Earth follows the universe.

The universe follows the Tao.

The Tao follows only itself.

26

The heavy is the root of the light.

The unmoved is the source of all movement.

Thus the Master travels all day without leaving home.

However splendid the views, she stays serenely in herself.

Why should the lord of the country flit about like a fool?

If you let yourself be blown to and fro, you lose touch with your root.

If you let restlessness move you, you lose touch with who you are.

27

A good traveler has no fixed plans and is not intent upon arriving.

A good artist lets his intuition lead him wherever it wants.

A good scientist has freed himself of concepts and keeps his mind open to what is.

Thus the Master is available to all people and doesn't reject anyone.

He is ready to use all situations and doesn't waste anything.

This is called embodying the light.

What is a good man but a bad man's teacher?

What is a bad man but a good man's job?

If you don't understand this, you will get lost, however intelligent you are.

It is the great secret.

28

Know the male, yet keep to the female: receive the world in your arms.
If you receive the world, the Tao will never leave you and you will be like a little child.
Know the white, yet keep to the black: be a pattern for the world.
If you are a pattern for the world, the Tao will be strong inside you and there will be nothing you can't do.
Know the personal, yet keep to the impersonal: accept the world as it is.
If you accept the world, the Tao will be luminous inside you and you will return to your primal self.
The world is formed from the void, like utensils from a block of wood.
The Master knows the utensils, yet keeps to the block: thus she can use all things.

29

Do you want to improve the world?
I don't think it can be done.
The world is sacred.
It can't be improved.
If you tamper with it, you'll ruin it.
If you treat it like an object, you'll lose it.
There is a time for being ahead, a time for being behind; a time for being in motion, a time for being at rest; a time for being vigorous, a time for being exhausted; a time for being safe, a time for being in danger.
The Master sees things as they are, without trying to control them.
She lets them go their own way, and resides at the center of the circle.

30

Whoever relies on the Tao in governing men doesn't try to force issues or defeat enemies by force of arms.
For every force there is a counterforce.
Violence, even well intentioned, always rebounds upon oneself.
The Master does his job and then stops.
He understands that the universe is forever out of control, and that trying to dominate events goes against the current of the Tao.
Because he believes in himself, he doesn't try to convince others.
Because he is content with himself, he doesn't need others' approval.
Because he accepts himself, the whole world accepts him.

31

Weapons are the tools of violence; all decent men detest them.
Weapons are the tools of fear; a decent man will avoid them except in the direst necessity and, if compelled, will use them only with the utmost restraint.
Peace is his highest value.
If the peace has been shattered, how can he be content?
His enemies are not demons, but human beings like himself.
He doesn't wish them personal harm.
Nor does he rejoice in victory.
How could he rejoice in victory and delight in the slaughter of men?
He enters a battle gravely, with sorrow and with great compassion, as if he were attending a funeral.

32

The Tao can't be perceived.
Smaller than an electron, it contains uncountable galaxies.
If powerful men and women could remain centered in the Tao, all things would be in harmony.
The world would become a paradise.
All people would be at peace, and the law would be written in their hearts.
When you have names and forms, know that they are provisional.
When you have institutions, know where their functions should end.
Knowing when to stop, you can avoid any danger.
All things end in the Tao as rivers flow into the sea.

33

Knowing others is intelligence; knowing yourself is true wisdom.
Mastering others is strength; mastering yourself is true power.
If you realize that you have enough, you are truly rich.
If you stay in the center and embrace death with your whole heart, you will endure forever.

34

The great Tao flows everywhere.
All things are born from it, yet it doesn't create them.
It pours itself into its work, yet it makes no claim.
It nourishes infinite worlds, yet it doesn't hold on to them.
Since it is merged with all things and hidden in their hearts, it can be called humble.
Since all things vanish into it and it alone endures, it can be called great.
It isn't aware of its greatness; thus it is truly great.

35

She who is centered in the Tao can go where she wishes, without danger.
She perceives the universal harmony, even amid great pain, because she has found peace in her heart.
Music or the smell of good cooking may make people stop and enjoy.
But words that point to the Tao seem monotonous and without flavor.
When you look for it, there is nothing to see.
When you listen for it, there is nothing to hear.
When you use it, it is inexhaustible.

36

If you want to shrink something, you must first allow it to expand.
If you want to get rid of something, you must first allow it to flourish.
If you want to take something, you must first allow it to be given.
This is called the subtle perception of the way things are.
The soft overcomes the hard.
The slow overcomes the fast.
Let your workings remain a mystery.
Just show people the results.

37

The Tao never does anything, yet through it all things are done.
If powerful men and women could center themselves in it, the whole world would be transformed by itself, in its natural rhythms.
People would be content with their simple, everyday lives, in harmony, and free of desire.
When there is no desire, all things are at peace.

38

The Master doesn't try to be powerful; thus he is truly powerful.
The ordinary man keeps reaching for power; thus he never has enough.
The Master does nothing, yet he leaves nothing undone.
The ordinary man is always doing things, yet many more are left to be done.
The kind man does something, yet something remains undone.
The just man does something, and leaves many things to be done.
The moral man does something, and when no one responds he rolls up his sleeves and uses force.
When the Tao is lost, there is goodness.
When goodness is lost, there is morality.
When morality is lost, there is ritual.
Ritual is the husk of true faith, the beginning of chaos.
Therefore the Master concerns himself with the depths and not the surface, with the fruit and not the flower.
He has no will of his own.
He dwells in reality, and lets all illusions go.

39

In harmony with the Tao, the sky is clear and spacious, the earth is solid and full, all creatures flourish together, content with the way they are, endlessly repeating themselves, endlessly renewed.

When man interferes with the Tao, the sky becomes filthy, the earth becomes depleted, the equilibrium crumbles, creatures become extinct.

The Master views the parts with compassion, because he understands the whole.

His constant practice is humility.

He doesn't glitter like a jewel but lets himself be shaped by the Tao, as rugged and common as a stone.

40

Return is the movement of the Tao.

Yielding is the way of the Tao.

All things are born of being.

Being is born of non-being.

41

When a superior man hears of the Tao, he immediately begins to embody it.

When an average man hears of the Tao, he half believes it, half doubts it.

When a foolish man hears of the Tao, he laughs out loud.

If he didn't laugh, it wouldn't be the Tao.

Thus it is said: The path into the light seems dark, the path forward seems to go back, the direct path seems long, true power seems weak, true purity seems tarnished, true steadfastness seems changeable, true clarity seems obscure, the greatest art seems unsophisticated, the greatest love seems indifferent, the greatest wisdom seems childish.

The Tao is nowhere to be found.

Yet it nourishes and completes all things.

42

The Tao gives birth to One.

One gives birth to Two.

Two gives birth to Three.

Three gives birth to all things.

All things have their backs to the female and stand facing the male.

When male and female combine, all things achieve harmony.

Ordinary men hate solitude.

But the Master makes use of it, embracing his aloneness, realizing he is one with the whole universe.

43

The gentlest thing in the world overcomes the hardest thing in the world.

That which has no substance enters where there is no space.

This shows the value of non-action.

Teaching without words, performing without actions: that is the Master's way.

44

Fame or integrity: which is more important?

Money or happiness: which is more valuable?

Success or failure: which is more destructive?

If you look to others for fulfillment, you will never truly be fulfilled.

If your happiness depends on money, you will never be happy with yourself.

Be content with what you have; rejoice in the way things are.

When you realize there is nothing lacking, the whole world belongs to you.

45

True perfection seems imperfect, yet it is perfectly itself.

True fullness seems empty, yet it is fully present.

True straightness seems crooked.

True wisdom seems foolish.

True art seems artless.

The Master allows things to happen.

She shapes events as they come.
She steps out of the way and lets the Tao speak for itself.

46
When a country is in harmony with the Tao, the factories make trucks and tractors.
When a country goes counter to the Tao, warheads are stockpiled outside the cities.
There is no greater illusion than fear, no greater wrong than preparing to defend yourself, no greater misfortune than having an enemy.
Whoever can see through all fear will always be safe.

47
Without opening your door, you can open your heart to the world.
Without looking out your window, you can see the essence of the Tao.
The more you know, the less you understand.
The Master arrives without leaving, sees the light without looking, achieves without doing a thing.

48
In the pursuit of knowledge, every day something is added, In the practice of the Tao, every day something is dropped.
Less and less do you need to force things, until finally you arrive at non-action.
When nothing is done, nothing is left undone.
True mastery can be gained by letting things go their own way.
It can't be gained by interfering.

49
The Master has no mind of her own.
She works with the mind of the people.
She is good to people who are good.
She is also good to people who aren't good.
This is true goodness.
She trusts people who are trustworthy.
She also trusts people who aren't trustworthy.
This is true trust.
The Master's mind is like space.
People don't understand her.
They look to her and wait.
She treats them like her own children.

50
The Master gives himself up to whatever the moment brings.
He knows that he is going to die, and he had nothing left to hold on to: no illusions in his mind, no resistances in his body.
He doesn't think about his actions; they flow from the core of his being.
He holds nothing back from life; therefore he is ready for death, as a man is ready for sleep after a good day's work.

51
Every being in the universe is an expression of the Tao.
It springs into existence, unconscious, perfect, free, takes on a physical body, lets circumstances complete it.
That is why every being spontaneously honors the Tao.
The Tao gives birth to all beings, nourishes them, maintains them, cares for them, comforts them, protects them, takes them back to itself, creating without possessing, acting without expecting, guiding without interfering.
That is why love of the Tao is in the very nature of things.

52
In the beginning was the Tao.
All things issue from it; all things return to it.
To find the origin, trace back the manifestations.
When you recognize the children and find the mother, you will be free of sorrow.
If you close your mind in judgments and traffic with desires, your heart will be troubled.

If you keep your mind from judging and aren't led by the senses, your heart will find peace.
Seeing into darkness is clarity.
Knowing how to yield is strength.
Use your own light and return to the source of light.
This is called practicing eternity.

53
The great Way is easy, yet people prefer the side paths.
Be aware when things are out of balance.
Stay centered within the Tao.
When rich speculators prosper while farmers lose their land; when government officials spend money on weapons instead of cures; when the upper class is extravagant and irresponsible while the poor have nowhere to turn-- all this is robbery and chaos.
It is not in keeping with the Tao.

54
Whoever is planted in the Tao will not be rooted up.
Whoever embraces the Tao will not slip away.
Her name will be held in honor from generation to generation.
Let the Tao be present in your life and you will become genuine.
Let it be present in your family and your family will flourish.
Let it be present in your country and your country will be an example to all countries in the world.
Let it be present in the universe and the universe will sing.
How do I know this is true?
By looking inside myself.

55
He who is in harmony with the Tao is like a newborn child.
Its bones are soft, its muscles are weak, but its grip is powerful.
It doesn't know about the union of male and female, yet its penis can stand erect, so intense is its vital power.
It can scream its head off all day, yet it never becomes hoarse, so complete is its harmony.
The Master's power is like this.
He lets all things come and go effortlessly, without desire.
He never expects results; thus he is never disappointed.
He is never disappointed; thus his spirit never grows old.

56
Those who know don't talk.
Those who talk don't know.
Close your mouth, block off your senses, blunt your sharpness, untie your knots, soften your glare, settle your dust.
This is the primal identity.
Be like the Tao.
It can't be approached or withdrawn from, benefited or harmed, honored or brought into disgrace.
It gives itself up continually.
That is why it endures.

57
If you want to be a great leader, you must learn to follow the Tao.
Stop trying to control.
Let go of fixed plans and concepts, and the world will govern itself.
The more prohibitions you have, the less virtuous people will be.
The more weapons you have, the less secure people will be.
The more subsidies you have, the less self-reliant people will be.
Therefore the Master says: I let go of the law, and people become honest.
I let go of economics, and people become prosperous.
I let go of religion, and people become serene.
I let go of all desire for the common good, and the good becomes common as grass.

58

If a country is governed with tolerance, the people are comfortable and honest.
If a country is governed with repression, the people are depressed and crafty.
When the will to power is in charge, the higher the ideals, the lower the results.
Try to make people happy, and you lay the groundwork for misery.
Try to make people moral, and you lay the groundwork for vice.
Thus the Master is content to serve as an example and not to impose her will.
She is pointed, but doesn't pierce.
Straightforward, but supple.
Radiant, but easy on the eyes.

59

For governing a country well there is nothing better than moderation.
The mark of a moderate man is freedom from his own ideas.
Tolerant like the sky, all-pervading like sunlight, firm like a mountain, supple like a tree in the wind, he has no destination in view and makes use of anything life happens to bring his way.
Nothing is impossible for him.
Because he has let go, he can care for the people's welfare as a mother cares for her child.

60

Governing a large country is like frying a small fish.
You spoil it with too much poking.
Center your country in the Tao and evil will have no power.
Not that it isn't there, but you'll be able to step out of its way.
Give evil nothing to oppose and it will disappear by itself.

61

When a country obtains great power, it becomes like the sea: all streams run downward into it.
The more powerful it grows, the greater the need for humility.
Humility means trusting the Tao, thus never needing to be defensive.
A great nation is like a great man: When he makes a mistake, he realizes it.
Having realized it, he admits it.
Having admitted it, he corrects it.
He considers those who point out his faults as his most benevolent teachers.
He thinks of his enemy as the shadow that he himself casts.
If a nation is centered in the Tao, if it nourishes its own people and doesn't meddle in the affairs of others, it will be a light to all nations in the world.

62

The Tao is the center of the universe, the good man's treasure, the bad man's refuge.
Honors can be bought with fine words, respect can be won with good deeds; but the Tao is beyond all value, and no one can achieve it.
Thus, when a new leader is chosen, don't offer to help him with your wealth or your expertise.
Offer instead to teach him about the Tao.
Why did the ancient Masters esteem the Tao?
Because, being one with the Tao, when you seek, you find; and when you make a mistake, you are forgiven.
That is why everybody loves it.

63

Act without doing; work without effort.
Think of the small as large and the few as many.
Confront the difficult while it is still easy; accomplish the great task by a series of small acts.
The Master never reaches for the great; thus she achieves greatness.
When she runs into a difficulty, she stops and gives herself to it.
She doesn't cling to her own comfort; thus problems are no problem for her.

64

What is rooted is easy to nourish.
What is recent is easy to correct.
What is brittle is easy to break.
What is small is easy to scatter.
Prevent trouble before it arises.
Put things in order before they exist.
The giant pine tree grows from a tiny sprout.
The journey of a thousand miles starts from beneath your feet.
Rushing into action, you fail.
Trying to grasp things, you lose them.
Forcing a project to completion, you ruin what was almost ripe.
Therefore the Master takes action by letting things take their course.
He remains as calm at the end as at the beginning.
He has nothing, thus has nothing to lose.
What he desires is non-desire; what he learns is to unlearn.
He simply reminds people of who they have always been.
He cares about nothing but the Tao.
Thus he can care for all things.

65

The ancient Masters didn't try to educate the people, but kindly taught them to not-know.
When they think that they know the answers, people are difficult to guide.
When they know that they don't know, people can find their own way.
If you want to learn how to govern, avoid being clever or rich.
The simplest pattern is the clearest.
Content with an ordinary life, you can show all people the way back to their own true nature.

66

All streams flow to the sea because it is lower than they are.
Humility gives it its power.
If you want to govern the people, you must place yourself below them.
If you want to lead the people, you must learn how to follow them.
The Master is above the people, and no one feels oppressed.
She goes ahead of the people, and no one feels manipulated.
The whole world is grateful to her.
Because she competes with no one, no one can compete with her.

67

Some say that my teaching is nonsense.
Others call it lofty but impractical.
But to those who have looked inside themselves, this nonsense makes perfect sense.
And to those who put it into practice, this loftiness has roots that go deep.
I have just three things to teach: simplicity, patience, compassion.
These three are your greatest treasures.
Simple in actions and in thoughts, you return to the source of being.
Patient with both friends and enemies, you accord with the way things are.
Compassionate toward yourself, you reconcile all beings in the world.

68

The best athlete wants his opponent at his best.
The best general enters the mind of his enemy.
The best businessman serves the communal good.
The best leader follows the will of the people.
All of them embody the virtue of non-competition.
Not that they don't love to compete, but they do it in the spirit of play.
In this they are like children and in harmony with the Tao.

69

The generals have a saying: "Rather than make the first move it is better to wait and see. Rather than advance an inch it is better to retreat a yard."

This is called going forward without advancing, pushing back without using weapons.

There is no greater misfortune than underestimating your enemy.

Underestimating your enemy means thinking that he is evil.

Thus you destroy your three treasures and become an enemy yourself.

When two great forces oppose each other, the victory will go to the one that knows how to yield.

70

My teachings are easy to understand and easy to put into practice.

Yet your intellect will never grasp them, and if you try to practice them, you'll fail.

My teachings are older than the world.

How can you grasp their meaning?

If you want to know me, look inside your heart.

71

Not-knowing is true knowledge.

Presuming to know is a disease.

First realize that you are sick; then you can move toward health.

The Master is her own physician.

She has healed herself of all knowing.

Thus she is truly whole.

72

When they lose their sense of awe, people turn to religion.

When they no longer trust themselves, they begin to depend upon authority.

Therefore the Master steps back so that people won't be confused.

He teaches without a teaching, so that people will have nothing to learn.

73

The Tao is always at ease.

It overcomes without competing, arrives without being summoned, accomplishes without a plan.

Its net covers the whole universe.

And though its meshes are wide, it doesn't let a thing slip through.

74

If you realize that all things change, there is nothing you will try to hold on to.

If you aren't afraid of dying, there is nothing you can't achieve.

Trying to control the future is like trying to take the master carpenter's place.

When you handle the master carpenter's tools, chances are that you'll cut your hand.

75

When taxes are too high, people go hungry.

When the government is too intrusive, people lose their spirit.

Act for the people's benefit.

Trust them; leave them alone.

76

Men are born soft and supple; dead, they are stiff and hard.

Plants are born tender and pliant; dead, they are brittle and dry.

Thus whoever is stiff and inflexible is a disciple of death.

Whoever is soft and yielding is a disciple of life.

The hard and stiff will be broken.

The soft and supple will prevail.

77

As it acts in the world, the Tao is like the bending of a bow.
The top is bent downward; the bottom is bent up.
It adjusts excess and deficiency so that there is perfect balance.
It takes from what is too much and gives to what isn't enough.
Those who try to control, who use force to protect their power, go against the direction of the Tao.
They take from those who don't have enough and give to those who have far too much.
The Master can keep giving because there is no end to her wealth.
She acts without expectation, succeeds without taking credit, and doesn't think that she is better than anyone else.

78

Nothing in the world is as soft and yielding as water.
Yet for dissolving the hard and inflexible, nothing can surpass it.
The soft overcomes the hard; the gentle overcomes the rigid.
Everyone knows this is true, but few can put it into practice.
Therefore the Master remains serene in the midst of sorrow.
Evil cannot enter his heart.
Because he has given up helping, he is people's greatest help.
True words seem paradoxical.

79

Failure is an opportunity.
If you blame someone else, there is no end to the blame.
Therefore the Master fulfills her own obligations and corrects her own mistakes.
She does what she needs to do and demands nothing of others.

80

If a country is governed wisely, its inhabitants will be content.
They enjoy the labor of their hands and don't waste time inventing labor-saving machines.
Since they dearly love their homes, they aren't interested in travel.
There may be a few wagons and boats, but they don't go anywhere.
There may be an arsenal of weapons, but nobody ever uses them.
People enjoy their food, take pleasure in being with their families, spend weekends working in their gardens, delight in the doings of the neighborhood.
And even though the next country is so close that people can hear its roosters crowing and its dogs barking, they are content to die of old age without ever having gone to see it.

81

True words aren't eloquent; eloquent words aren't true.
Wise men don't need to prove their point; men who need to prove their point aren't wise.
The Master has no possessions.
The more he does for others, the happier he is.
The more he gives to others, the wealthier he is.
The Tao nourishes by not forcing.
By not dominating, the Master leads.

LaFargue version

- 1.1 The Tao that can be told is not the invariant Tao the names that can be named are not the invariant Names.
 - 1.2 Nameless, it is the source of the thousands of things (named, it is 'Mother' of the thousands of things).
 - 1.3 Yes: Always: being desireless, one sees the hidden essentials. Always: having desires, one sees only what is sought.
 - 1.4 These two lines are about The Merging - it is when things develop and emerge from this that the different names appear.
 - 1.5 The Merging is something mysterious - mysterious, and more mysterious, the abode of all the hidden essences.
-
- 2.1 When everyone in the world recognizes the elegant as elegant ... then ugliness has just appeared.
 - 2.2 When all recognize goodness as good ... then the not-good has just appeared.
 - 2.3 Yes: 'Being' and 'nothing' give birth one to the other 'the difficult' and 'the easy' give full shape to one another 'what excels' and 'what falls short' form one another
 - 2.4 'the noble' and 'the lowly' give content to one another the music and the voice harmonize with one another the back and the front follow one another. Always.
 - 2.5 And so the Wise Person: Settles into his job of Not Doing carries on his teaching done without talking.
 - 2.6 The thousands of things arise and are active - and he rejects none of them.
 - 2.7 He is a doer but does not rely on this he achieves successes but does not dwell in them. He just does not dwell in them, and so they cannot be taken away.
-
- 3.1 Not promoting the wise and worthy brings it about that the people are not contentious.
 - 3.2 Not prizing goods hard to come by brings it about that the people do not become thieves
 - 3.3 Not paying attention to the desirable brings it about that the people's minds do not become disordered.
 - 3.4 And so, the government of the Wise Person: Empty their minds, fill their bellies weaken their ambitions, strengthen their bones.
 - 3.5 Always bring it about that the people are without knowledge and without desires. Bring it about that the clever ones do not presume to set about doing.
 - 3.6 Do Not Doing and nothing will be left un-governed.
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- 4.1 Tao being Empty, it seems one who uses it will lack solidity.
 - 4.2 An abyss, it seems something like the ancestor of the thousands of things.
 - 4.3 It dampens the passion it unties the tangles it makes the flashing things harmonious it makes the dust merge together.
 - 4.4 Deep, it is perhaps like an enduring something.
 - 4.5 I don't know of anything whose offspring it might be - it appears to precede God.
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- 5.1 "Heaven and Earth are not Good they treat the thousands of things like straw dogs
 - 5.2 The Wise Person is not Good he treats the hundred clans like straw dogs."
 - 5.3 The space between heaven and earth isn't it like a bellows? Empty, but not shriveled up, set it in motion and always more comes out.
 - 5.4 Much talking, quickly exhausted. It can't compare to watching over what is inside.
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- 6.1 "The Valley Spirit is undying." This is mysterious Femininity.
 - 6.2 The Abode of mysterious Femininity: This is the Root of Heaven and Earth.
 - 6.3 It seems to endure on and on. One who uses It never wears out.
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- 7.1 Heaven is lasting, Earth endures.
 - 7.2 What enables Heaven and Earth to last and endure? Because they do not live for themselves - so it is that they can live so long.
 - 7.3 And so, the Wise Person: Puts himself last, and so finds himself in front.
 - 7.4 puts himself in the out group, and so maintains his place.
 - 7.5 The personal does not exist for him - isn't this how he can perfect what for him is most personal?
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- 8.1 The highest Excellence is like water. Water, Excellent at being of benefit to the thousands of things, does not contend - it settles in places everyone else avoids. Yes, it is just about Tao.
 - 8.2 Excellence in a house: the ground "Excellence in a mind: depth Excellence in companions: Goodness Excellence in speaking: sincerity

8.3 Excellence in setting things right: good management Excellence on the job: ability Excellence in making a move: good timing."

8.4 Simply do not contend then there will be no fault.

9.1 In filling, if you keep on and on - better to have stopped.

9.2 In sharpening, if you keep trying - the edge won't last long.

9.3 When gold and jade fill the halls, no one can guard it all.

9.4 Rich, famous - and conceited: leading to a downfall self-caused.

9.5 Achieve successes, win the fame, remove yourself: Heaven's Way.

10.1 When 'carrying your soul,' embracing the One Thing, can you be undivided?

10.2 When 'concentrating ch'i', bringing about Softness, can you be like an infant?

10.3 When 'cleansing and purifying the mysterious mirror,' can you be without blemish?

10.4 When 'loving the people and caring for the kingdom,' can you be without knowledge?

10.5 When 'the Doors of Heaven open and shut,' can you remain Feminine?

10.6 When 'Clarity and bareness penetrate everywhere,' can you remain not doing?

10.7 Produce and nourish. Produce but don't possess work but don't rely on this preside but don't rule. This is mysterious Te.

11.1 Thirty spokes unite in one hollow hub in this 'nothing' lies the wheel's usefulness.

11.2 Knead clay to make a jar - in its 'nothing' lies the jar's usefulness.

11.3 Cut out doors and windows in making a house - in their 'nothing' lies the house's usefulness.

11.4 Yes: 'Being' makes for profit 'Nothing' makes for use fulness.

12.1 The five colours make people's eyes go blind the five tones make people's ears go deaf the five flavours make people's mouths turn sour.

12.2 Galloping and racing, bunting and chasing, make people's minds go mad. Goods hard to come by corrupt people's ways.

12.3 And so the Wise Person: Goes by the belly, not by the eye. Yes: He leaves 'that' aside, and attends to 'this'

13.1 "Favour and disgrace: this means being upset high rank does great damage to your self."

13.2 What does it mean, "favour and disgrace: this means being upset"? Favour is degrading: Gaining it you will be upset losing it you will be upset This is what it means, "favour and disgrace: this means being upset."

13.3 What does it mean, "high rank does great damage to your self"? What is the source of the great damage done me? It is because I have a self If I had no self what damage could be done me? This is what it means, "high rank does great damage to your self."

13.4 Yes: A valuing of one's self that regards the self the same as the world - this means one can be entrusted with the world. A loving of one's self that regards the self the same as the world - this means one can be given the world.

14.1 "Look for It, you won't see It: It is called 'fleeting' Listen for It, you won't hear It: It is called 'thin'. Grasp at It, you can't get It: It is called 'subtle'."

14.2 These three lines are about something that evades scrutiny. Yes, in it everything blends and becomes one.

14.3 Its top is not bright Its underside is not dim. Always unnameable, It turns back to nothingness.

14.4 This is the shape of something shapeless the form of a nothing this is elusive and evasive. Encountering It, you won't see the front following It, you won't see Its back.

14.5 Keep to the Tao of the ancients and so manage things happening today. The ability to know the ancient sources, this is the main thread of Tao.

15.1 The Excellent shih of ancient times penetrated into the most obscure, the marvelous, the mysterious. They had a depth beyond understanding.

15.2 They were simply beyond understanding. The Appearance of their forceful presence: Cautious, like one crossing a stream in winter timid, like one who fears the surrounding neighbours reserved, like guests

15.3 yielding, like ice about to melt unspecified, like the Uncarved Block all vacant space, like the Valley everything mixed together, like muddy water.

15.4 Who is able, as muddy water, by Stilling to slowly become clear? Who is able, at rest, by long drawn-out movement to slowly come to life?

15.5 Whoever holds onto this Tao does not yearn for solidity. He simply lacks solidity, and so what he is capable of: Remaining concealed, accomplishing nothing new.

16.1 Push Emptiness to the limit, watch over Stillness very firmly.

16.2 The thousands of things all around are active - I give my attention to Turning Back. Things growing wild as weeds all turn back to the Root.

16.3 To turn back to The Root is called Stillness. This is 'reporting in' 'reporting in' is becoming Steady. Experiencing Steadiness is Clarity. Not to experience Steadiness is to be heedless in one's actions - bad luck.

16.4 Experiencing Steadiness, then one is all-embracing all-embracing, then an impartial Prince Prince, then King King, then Heaven Heaven, then Tao

16.5 Tao then one lasts very long. As to destroying the self, there will be nothing to fear.

17.1 The greatest ruler: those under him only know he exists the next best kind: they love and praise him the next: they are in awe of him the next: they despise him.

17.2 When sincerity does not suffice it was not sincerity.

17.3 ("Reticent - he is sparing with words.") He achieves successes he accomplishes his tasks and the hundred clans all say: We are just being natural.

18.1 When Great Tao vanished we got 'Goodness and Morality.'

18.2 When 'Wisdom and Know-how' arose we got the Great Shams.

18.2 When the six family relationships fell into disharmony we got 'Respect and Caring.'

18.4 When the states and the great families became all benighted and disordered we got 'Loyal Subjects'.

19.1 Discard "Wisdom," throw away "Knowledge" - the people will benefit a hundredfold.

19.2 Discard "Goodness," throw away "Morality" - the people will turn back to respect and caring.

19.3 Discard "Skill," throw away "Profit" - robbers and thieves will disappear.

19.4 Taking these three lines as your text - this is not sufficient. Give them something to fasten on to:

19.5 Pay attention to the Raw, embrace the Uncarved discount your personal interests, make your desires few, doing of the will of every man would put an end to vain ambitions and desires.

20.1 Break with Learning, and there will be no trouble. 'Yeah' and 'yes sir' - is there a big difference between them? 'Excellent' and 'despicable' - what's the real difference between them?

20.2 "What others hold in respect, we can't fail to respect." Crazy. Aren't we over this yet?

20.3 "All the others are beaming and beaming like people enjoying a great ceremonial feast, like people climbing an overlook tower in the spring. I am alone still - no indications at all yet like an infant who hasn't yet even smiled. So sad. Like someone with no place to go home to.

20.4 All the others have a superabundance I alone seem to have missed out. Oh my simpleton's mind! So confused.

20.5 Ordinary men are so bright I alone am so dull. Ordinary men are so sharp I alone am so stupid. Churned up like the ocean, blown about, like someone with no place to rest.

20.6 All the others all have their function I alone am thick-headed, like someone from the back country." I am alone, different from others - treasuring the nourishing Mother.

21.1 The impression made by magnificent Te comes only from Tao.

21.2 Tao is a something but elusive, but evasive. Evasive, elusive, inside it lies the mind's true form. Elusive, evasive, inside it lies something substantial. Shadowy, dim. Inside it lies vital energy. This energy is very strong inside it lies true genuineness.

21.3 From ancient times until today Its name has not been forgotten allowing us to see the beginnings of everything.

21.4 How do I recognize the form of the beginnings of everything? By this low in the cycle of Change, which is Love and Beauty. How do I know this? By my comprehension of the Dao.

22.1 "Bent - then mature." Compromised - then upright Empty - then solid old and spent - then young and sprightly. A little - then a gain a lot - then confusing.

22.2 And so the Wise Person: Embraces The One Thing, and becomes the Shepherd of the World.

22.3 He does not show off, so he shines he does not promote himself, so he becomes famous he does not boast of himself, so he gets the credit he does not glorify himself, so he becomes leader.

22.4 He just does not contend and so no one can contend with him.

22.5 What the ancients said: "bent - then mature," is this an empty saying? This is true maturity, turn back to it.

23.1 Speaking little is what is natural. Yes: A whirlwind does not blow a whole morning a downpour does not fall a whole day.

23.2 And who causes these things? - Heaven and Earth. If even Heaven and Earth cannot make things last very long, how much less can man.

23.3 Yes: One devoted to Tao: Is a Tao man, merges with Tao is a Te man, merges with Te is a man left out, merges with What Is Left Out.

23.4 One who merges with Tao, Tao welcomes him one who merges with Te, Te welcomes him one who merges with What Is Left Out, What Is Left Out welcomes him.

23.5 When sincerity does not suffice, it was not sincerity.

24.1 "A person on tiptoe is not firmly planted a person in a rush will not go far."

24.2 One who shows off will not shine one who promotes himself won't become famous

24.3 one who boasts of himself will get no credit one who glorifies himself will not become leader.

24.4 In Tao this is called 'Stuffing oneself', 'overdoing it.' Things seem to detest this, so the ambitious man does not dwell here.

25.1 There was a chaotic something, yet lacking nothing born before Heaven and Earth. Alone. Still. Standing alone, unchanging. Revolving, endlessly. It can be thought of as Mother of the World.

25.2 I do not know its name, one can call it 'Tao.' The name of its powerful presence: One can call it 'The Great One.'

25.3 Great means going forth going forth means going far away going far away means turning back.

25.4 Yes: Tao is great Heaven is great Earth is great (the king is also great in the universe there are four great ones and the king takes his place as one of them).

25.5 Earth gives the rule for people Heaven gives the rule for Earth Tao gives the rule for Heaven the rule for Tao: things as they are.

26.1 Heaviness is the root of lightness Stillness is the master of agitation.

26.2 And so the Wise Person: Travels all day, not departing from the heavy baggage wagon although there are grand sights, he sits calmly aloof.

26.3 Why is this? A 10,000-chariot lord, mindful of his self takes the world lightly.

26.4 Light, then lose the Root agitated, then lose the mastery.

27.1 Excellent traveling: no tracks or traces Excellent speaking: no blemish or blame. Excellent counting does not use counting slips.

27.2 Excellent locking: no bolt or bar, but the door cannot be opened. Excellent tying: no cord or rope, but the knots cannot be undone.

27.3 And so the Wise Person: Always Excels at rescuing people and so does not turn anyone away. Always Excels at resolving things and so does not turn away from anything. This is called 'being clothed in Clarity.'

27.4 The Excellent person is the teacher of the person who is not Excellent. The person who is not Excellent is material for the Excellent person.

27.5 Not to treasure one's teacher not to love one's material, though 'smart,' is a great mistake. This is an important secret.

28.1 Be familiar with Masculinity but watch over Femininity - and become the Valley of the World. Being the Valley of the World, invariant Te will not leave you. Turn back to being an infant.

28.2 Be familiar with what is pure and white but watch over what is dark and black - and become the Pattern for the World. Being the Pattern for the World, your invariant Te Will be constant. Turn back to being limitless.

28.3 Be familiar with what is praiseworthy but watch over what is disgraceful - and become the Valley of the World. Being the Valley of the World, your invariant Te will be sufficient. Turn back to being an Uncarved Block.

28.4 When the Uncarved Block is cut up then it becomes a government tool. When the Wise Person instead uses it then it becomes head of the government Yes: A great carver does no cutting, a great ruler makes no rules.

29.1 When someone wants to take over the world and do some work on it, I can see he won't be able.

29.2 The world is a spirit-thing, it can't be 'worked' on. One who works ruins one who grasps loses.

29.3 Yes, things: Sometimes they will go ahead, sometimes follow after sometimes they will be snorting wildly sometimes breathing easily sometimes they will be strong, sometimes weak sometimes they will break, sometimes destroy.

29.4 And so the Wise Person: Avoids excess, avoids extravagance, avoids being grandiose.

30.1 One who assists the people's rulers with Tao does not use weapons to force changes in the world. "Such action usually backfires."

30.2 Where troops camp, thorns and brambles grow.

30.3 Excellence consists in: Being resolute, that is all not venturing to take control by force

30.4 being resolute, but not boastful being resolute, but not overbearing being resolute, but not arrogant being resolute, when you have no choice being resolute, but not forcing.

30.5 Things are vigorous, then grow old and weak: A case of 'not-Tao.' Not-Tao, soon gone.

31.1 'Fine weapons' are ill-omened instruments. Things seem to detest them so the ambitious man does not dwell here.

31.2 "The gentleman at home favours the left when at war he favours the right."

31.3 Weapons are ill-omened instruments not instruments for the gentleman he uses them when he has no choice. What is calm and quiet is highest.

31.4 When victorious, he does not think this a fine thing because to think it fine is to delight in slaughtering people. One who delights in slaughtering people cannot achieve his purposes in the world.

31.5 "In fortunate times, prefer the left in mourning, prefer the right." The lower officer takes his stand on the left the higher officer takes his stand on the right. This says: He takes his stand as at a mourning ceremony.

31.6 At the slaughter of such masses of men, he weeps for them, mourning and lamenting. When victorious in the battle - he takes his stand as at a mourning ceremony.

32.4 When you begin making decisions and cutting it up, rules and names appear. And once names appear; you should know to stop. Knowing to stop, you can be without fear.

32.1 Tao will always be nameless, an Uncarved Block although it is a thing of no account, no one in the world can make it his subject.

32.2 If the princes and kings could watch over it, the thousands of things would on their own be as deferential as guests.

32.3 Heaven and Earth would join together to send sweet dew. The people on their own would share equally without anyone giving orders.

32.5 A comparison: Tao's presence in the world is like the relation of small river valleys to the Yang-tze and the ocean.

33.1 One who understands others is clever one who understands himself has Clarity.

33.2 One who wins out over others has power one who wins out over himself is strong.

33.3 One who is content is wealthy one strong in his practice is self-possessed.

33.4 One who does not leave his place is lasting one who dies and does not perish is truly long lived.

34.1 Great Tao drifts - it can go right or go left.

34.2 The thousands of things depend on it for life, it rejects nothing. It achieves successes, but does not hold tight to the fame. It clothes and feeds the thousands of things but does not act the ruler.

34.3 Always: Desiring nothing, it can be called 'of no account.'

34.4 The thousands of things turn back to it but it does not act the ruler - it can be called 'Great'

34.5 Because in the end it does not insist on its own greatness, yes, it is able to achieve its full greatness.

35.1 Grasp the Great Image and the world will come it will come and not be harmed - a great peace and evenness.

35.2 or music and cakes, passing strangers stop

35.3 Tao flowing from the lips - flat. No taste to it. Look for it: you will not be satisfied looking listen for it: you will not be satisfied listening put it into practice: you will not be satisfied stopping.

36.1 When you want to shrink something you must always enlarge it. When you want to weaken something you must always strengthen it. When you want to neglect something you must always involve yourself with it. When you want to deprive something you must always give to it.

36.2 This is called 'Subtle Clarity.' Softness and Weakness overcome what is hard and strong.

36.3 "The fish must not leave the depths the state's 'sharp weapons' must not be shown to others."

37.1 Tao invariably Does Nothing, and nothing remains not done

37.2 If the princes and kings can watch over it the thousands of things will change by themselves.

37.3 Not being disgraced, they will be still. The world will order itself.

38.1 The finest Te is not Te-like, so it is Te the poorest Te never leaves off being Te-like, so it is not Te.

38.2 The finest Te: no working at it, no goal in mind the poorest Te: people work at it, with a goal in mind.

38.3 The finest Goodness: People work at it, but with no goal in mind the finest Morality': People work at it, with a goal in mind the finest Etiquette: People work at it, and, when none pay attention, they roll up their sleeves and go on the attack.

38.4 Yes: Losing Tao, next comes Te losing Te, next comes Goodness losing Goodness, next comes Morality losing Morality, next comes Etiquette.

38.5 And now Etiquette is loyalty and sincerity spread thin and the first sign of disorders. Foreknowledge is the flower of Tao and the beginning of folly.

38.6 And so the great man: Resides with the substance does not stay with what is thin. Resides with the fruit does not stay with the flower. Yes: He leaves 'that' aside and attends to 'this.'

39.1 Those that of old got The One Thing: The sky got The One Thing, and by this became clear. The earth got The One Thing, and by this became steady. The spirits got The One Thing, and by this obtained their powers.

39.2 The rivers got The One Thing, and by this became full. The thousands of things got The One Thing, and by this came to life. The princes and kings got The One Thing, and by this became the Standard for the World. This is how things came about.

39.3 The sky, without what makes it clear, is likely to crack. The earth, without what makes it steady, is likely to quake. The spirits, without what gives them powers, are likely to vanish.

39.4 The rivers, without what makes them full are likely to dry up. The thousands of things, without what gives them life, are likely to perish. The princes and kings, without what makes them eminent and noble, are likely to fall.

39.5 Yes, the eminent takes the common and ignored as a root the noble takes the lowly as a foundation.

39.6 And so, the princes and kings call themselves 'the orphan ...', 'the poor ...', 'the destitute ...' is this not using the common and ignored as a root Is it not so?

39.7 Yes, enumerate the carriage parts - still not a carriage.

39.8 He doesn't wish to glitter and glitter like jade he falls like a stone, falling into oblivion.

40.1 Turning Back is Tao movement being Weak is Tao practice.

40.2 "The thousands of things in the world are born of Being" Being is born of Nothing.

41.1 "When the best shih hears Tao, he puts out great effort to practice it. When the average shih hears Tao, he will keep it sometimes, and sometimes forget about it.

41.2 When the poorest shih hears Tao, he just has a big laugh." If he does not laugh, it must not quite be Tao.

41.3 Yes, the 'Well-Founded Sayings' has it: The bright Tao seems dark the Tao going forward seems to be going backward the smooth Tao seems rough. The loftiest Te seems like a valley great purity seems sullied abundant Te seems insufficient

41.4 Well-founded Te seems flimsy what is pure and natural seems faded the best square has no corners A great bronze takes long to finish great music has a delicate sound the Great Image has no shape.

41.5 Tao is something concealed, nameless. It is just Tao, good at sustaining a person and completing him.

42.1 Tao produced The One The One produced Two Two produced Three Three produced the thousands of things.

42.2 The thousands of things: Turn their backs on the quiet and dark and embrace the aggressive and bright. An Empty ch'i brings Harmony.

42.3 What people look down upon: to be orphaned, poor, destitute. But the kings and princes make these names into titles.

42.4 Yes, things: Sometimes you reduce them, and they are enlarged sometimes you enlarge them, and they are reduced.

42.5 What another has taught, I also teach: "A violent man will not reach his natural end." I will make of this the father of my teaching.

43.1 The Softest thing in the world rides right over the Hardest things in the world. What-has-No-Being enters what-leaves-no-opening. This makes me realize the advantage of Not Doing.

43.2 Teaching done by not talking the advantage gained by Not Doing - few things in the world can match this.

44.1 Your fame or your self, which is closer to you? Your self or your possessions, which counts for more? Gaining or losing, which brings the pain?

44.2 Indeed: Very fond, much expended much hoarding, heavy loss.

44.3 Be content and there will be no disgrace. Know to stop and there will be no danger. And you can last very long.

45.1 The greatest perfection will seem lacking in something but its usefulness never ends. The greatest solidity will seem Empty but its usefulness is inexhaustible. The greatest uprightness will seem compromised

45.2 the greatest ability will seem clumsy the greatest eloquence will seem tongue-tied.

45.3 "Agitation overcomes cold Stillness overcomes heat. "Purity and Stillness are the Norm of the World.

46.1 When the world has Tao, they have no use for saddle horses, using them to haul manure. When the world has no Tao, they raise war horses on sacred ground.

46.2 Nothing is more crime producing than desirable things nothing is a worse misfortune than not being content nothing makes for more guilt than desire for gain.

46.3 Yes: Be content with enough, and there will always be enough.

47.1 Understanding the world without going out the door. Understanding Heaven's Way without looking out the window. Traveling very widely, understanding very little.

47.2 And so the Wise Person: Knows without any going names without any looking accomplishes without any doing.

48.1 "Doing Learning, one profits everyday." Doing Tao, one suffers a loss everyday -

48.2 loses, and loses some more and so arrives at not doing anything. Doing nothing, nothing will remain not done. Taking over the world: only by not working.

48.3 A person who sets to working, doesn't have what it takes to take over the world.

49.1 The Wise Person is always a man without a mind - he takes the mind of the hundred clans as his mind.

49.2 Those who are good, I am good to them those who are not good, I am also good to them - Te is good.

49.3 Those who are honest, I am honest with them those who are not honest, I am also honest with them - Te is honest.

49.4 The Wise Person lives in the world all drawn in for the world's sake he keeps his mind muddled. The hundred clans all strain their eyes and ears toward him. The Wise Person treats them all as his children.

50.1 "Setting out to live is entering into death."

50.2 "Thirteen are the life givers thirteen are the death bringers." The thirteen body parts are also death spots in people's life and activity? Why? Because they live life so lavishly.

50.3 So we hear: One who Excels at fostering life "travels on land without meeting rhinoceros or tiger enters combat without armour or weapon."

50.4 The rhinoceros finds no place to jab its horn the tiger finds no place to lay its claws a weapon finds no place where its point can enter. Why? Because he has no death spot.

51.1 Tao produces them Te rears them events shape them talents complete their development. And so: Among the thousands of things there are none that do not honour Tao and treasure Te

51.2 This honouring Tao and treasuring Te - no one commands it, it always happens naturally. Tao produces them, Te rears them makes them grow, nurses them, settles them, heals them, sustains them, protects them.

51.3 Produces but does not possess works but does not rely on this presides but doesn't rule. This is mysterious Te.

52.1 The world has a Source, the Mother of the World.

52.2 Once you get the Mother then you understand the children. Once you understand the children turn back and watch over the Mother. As to destroying the self, there will be nothing to fear.

52.3 Close your eyes shut your doors, till the end of your life you will not get tired.

52.4 Open your eyes carry on your business, till the end of your life you will not be safe.

52.5 Keeping your eyes on the Small Thing is called Clarity watching over Weakness is called strength.

52.6 Engage with the flashing things turn back to Clarity do not deliver yourself to disaster. This is cultivating Steadiness.

53.1 if I had the least bit of understanding I would walk on the great Way. Only display will be dangerous.

53.2 The great Way is very smooth but people love bypaths.

53.3 The court is very well kept the fields are very weedy the granaries very empty.

53.4 "Their clothes are fine and colourful on their belts are sharp swords, they are filled with food and drink" a superabundance of expensive goods. This is robbers boasting, certainly not the Way.

54.1 Excellently founded: it will not be uprooted Excellently embraced and cared for: it will not slip away so sons and grandsons will never cease to offer the sacrifices.

54.2 Cultivate It in your person, its Te will be pure cultivate It in the clan, its Te will be abundant cultivate It in the village, its Te will be lasting cultivate It in the state, its Te will be ample cultivate It in the empire, its Te will be all-embracing.

54.3 Yes: Judge a person taking that person as the measure judge a clan taking that clan as the measure judge a village taking that village as the measure judge a state taking that state as the measure judge the world taking the world as the measure.

54.4 How do I know the nature of the world? By this.

55.1 One who has an abundance of Te is like a newborn child: Poisonous bugs will not bite it fierce beasts will not snatch it birds of prey will not attack it. Its bones are Soft, its sinews Weak, but its grip is firm.

55.2 It has not known the union of man and woman, but its organs get aroused: Vital energy at its height.

55.3 It will scream all day without getting hoarse: Harmony at its height. To experience Harmony is called being Steady to experience Steadiness is called Clarity.

55.4 'Increasing life': ominous 'the mind controlling the ch'i': forcing.

55.5 Things are vigorous, then grow old: A case of 'not-Tao'. Not-Tao, soon gone.

56.1 Those who understand are not talkers talkers don't understand.

56.2 Close your eyes shut your doors. Dampen the passion untie the tangles make the flashing things harmonious make the dust merge together. This is called the mysterious Merging.

56.3 Yes: You cannot get close you cannot stay away you cannot help It you cannot harm It you cannot treasure It you cannot look down on It. Yes: It is the Treasure of the World.

57.1 "Rule the kingdom by the norm wage war by the unexpected." Take over the world by Not Working. How do I know it is so? By this.

57.2 In the world: The more rules and restrictions there are the poorer the people will be. The people: The more 'sharp weapons' they have, the more disordered the state and the clans will be.

57.3 Men: The more clever and skillful they are, the more weird things will start to happen. The more you publicize rules and laws, the more robbers and thieves you will have.

57.4 Yes, the Wise Person says: I Do Nothing, and the people transform themselves. I love Stillness, and the people bring themselves to correctness.

57.5 I do No Work, and the people enrich themselves. I have no desires, and the people by themselves become Simple.

58.1 When the ruler is dull and incompetent, the people are pure and simple. When the ruler is sharp and alert, the people are a bad lot.

58.2 "Bad luck: good luck depends on it good luck: bad luck hides in it."

58.3 Who knows where this ends? There is no norm. What accords with the norm turns around and becomes weird what is excellent turns around and becomes ominous. "People's blindness - it has been going on so long now."

58.4 And so the Wise Person: Is square and honest but does not cut is pointed and exact but does not hurt is straight and direct but not tactless shines but does not dazzle.

59.1 "When it comes to governing the people and serving Heaven there's no one like a farmer."

59.2 Just being a farmer - this means getting dressed early. Getting dressed early means increasing one's store of Te increasing one's store of Te, then nothing is impossible nothing impossible, then no telling the limit no telling the limit, then one can possess the state.

59.3 One who possesses the Mother of the state can last a long time.

59.4 This means having deep roots and strong foundations, the Way of 'lasting life, good eyesight into old age'.

60.1 Governing a large state is like cooking a small fish.

60.2 Rule the world by Tao then ghosts will not take to haunting.

60.3 It is not that the ghosts will not haunt their haunting will cause no hurt to humankind. (It's not only that their haunting will not hurt humankind, the Wise Person also does not cause hurt to them.

60.4 These two do not hurt each other.) Yes, Te unifies and restores.

61.1 The great state is a low and easy woman for the world the one the Whole world unites with. Femininity always overcomes Masculinity, by Stillness, in Stillness it takes the low place.

61.2 Yes: A great state, by putting itself lower than the smaller state, will win out over the smaller state. A small state, by putting itself lower than the great state, will win out over the great state.

61.3 Yes: One puts itself lower so it will win out, if the other gets lower, then it will win.

61.4 (A great state has no further desire than to embrace and protect other states. A small state has no further desire than to enter and serve other states.

61.5 So both get what they want) The greatest should be the lowest.

62.1 Tao is the honoured center for the thousands of things. The treasure of the good what protects the not good.

62.2 Elegant words can buy and sell fine conduct gets people promoted. People who are not good, why are they rejected?

62.3 Yes: When they are enthroning the Son of Heaven or installing the Three Ministers - although they are presenting in tribute jade medallions out in front of four-horse teams, this cannot compare to sitting and setting forth this Tao.

62.4 What was the reason that the ancients treasured this Tao? is it not said: "By it the seeker obtains by it the guilty escapes." Yes: It is the Treasure of the World.

63.1 Be a Non Doer work at Not Working acquire a taste for that which has no taste.

63.2 Treat small things as though they were great treat few things as though they were many. "Reward what is injurious, with kind Te."

63.3 Plan difficult things focussing on the easy parts do great things focussing on the small details.

63.4 Difficult tasks in the world always begin from what is easy great tasks in the world always begin from what is small.

63.5 And so the Wise Person: Does not 'do great things' and so is able to fulfill his greatness.

63.6 Yes: Light agreement is never very trustworthy considering everything easy makes everything difficult.

63.7 And so the Wise Person: Treats things as difficult, and in the end has no difficulty.

64.1 When sitting still, they are easy to hold down no omens yet, it is easy to plan when fragile, they are easy to break when small, they are easy to scatter.

64.2 Work on it when it isn't yet put it in order when it is not yet disordered.

64.3 A tree you can barely get your arms around, grows from a tiny shoot a nine-story tower begins as a heap of earth a thousand-mile journey begins under your feet.

64.4 Working ruins, grasping loses. And so the Wise Person: Does not work, so does not ruin does not grasp, so does not lose.

64.5 Men often ruin their affairs on the eve of success, because they are not as prudent at the end as in the beginning. The wise man wills what others do not will, and values not things rare. He learns what others learn not, and gathers up what they despise.

64.6 And so the Wise Person: Desires to be desireless does not prize goods hard to come by learns to be un-learned turns back to the place all others have gone on from. So as to help along the naturalness of the thousands of things with out presuming to be a Worker.

65.1 Those Excellent at doing Tao in ancient times - it was not to enlighten the people, but to keep them stupid.

65.2 The difficulty in governing the people - because of their knowledge. Yes: By "Knowledge!" govern the state - a crime against the state. By "Ignorance!" govern the state - a boon to the state.

65.3 Always: To understand these two lines, is also to understand the Ideal Pattern. Always: To understand the Ideal Pattern, is to have mysterious Te.

65.4 Mysterious Te is deep, far-reaching, in opposition to things - only afterward comes the Great Harmony.

66.1 The Yang-tze and the ocean: How are they able to be Kings of the hundred streams? Because they excel at being low - this is how they are able to be Kings of the hundred streams.

66.2 And so: Wishing to be high above the people, you must by your speech put yourself at the bottom Wishing to be out in front of the people, you must put your self in the last place.

66.3 And so, the Wise Person: Stands above, but the people are not weighed down stands out in front, but the people are not harmed and so the world delights in praising him, and does not tire.

66.4 Because of his not contending no one in the world can contend with him.

67.1 Everyone in the world says of me: 'great - but doesn't seem normal.' It's just 'greatness' - that's why it does not seem normal. If I were normal, I'd have been of little worth for a long time now.

67.2 I have three treasures, I protect and keep hold of them. The first is called 'gentleness' the second is called 'frugality' the third is called 'not presuming to act like leader of the world.'

67.3 Gentle, so able to be bold frugal, so able to be lavish not presuming to act like leader of the world, so able to become head of a government.

67.4 Now: To be bold without being gentle to be lavish without being frugal to act like leader without putting oneself last: This is death.

67.5 Yes, gentleness: "Attack with it and you will win defend with it and you will stand firm." When Heaven wants to rescue someone, it surrounds him with a wall of gentleness.

68.1 The best soldier is not warlike the best fighter shows no anger

68.2 the one best at defeating the enemy does not engage him the one best at managing people puts himself below them.

68.3 This is the Te of not contending this is the power to manage people. This is being the Counterpart of Heaven equalling the very best of the ancients.

69.1 Military men have a saying: "I do not presume to act as master, I act as guest I do not presume to advance an inch, I retreat a foot."

69.2 This is like "going forward without going forward rolling up the sleeves but baring no arm attacking without showing hostility drawing with no sword."

69.3 Nothing brings greater disaster than the motto: "The enemy is nothing." Thinking, "the enemy is nothing": close to losing my Treasure.

69.4 Yes, when they cross weapons and attack each other the one in mourning will win.

70.1 My words are very easy to understand, very easy to practice. No one in the world can understand, No one can practice them.

70.2 The words have an ancestor the practice has a master. They just do not understand and so they do not understand me. (So few understand me - a rare treasure indeed.)

70.3 And so the Wise Person: Dressed in shabby clothes, jade under his shirt.

71.1 "Aware but not aware of it: a high thing." Not aware but aware of it: sick of this. Simply sick of the sickness - and so no longer sick.

71.2 The Wise Person's lack of this sickness: He became sick of being sick, and so he's no longer sick.

72.1 When the people are not in awe of your majesty then great majesty has been achieved.

72.2 Do not restrict where they can live do not tire them out by taxing what they live on. Simply do not tire them and they will not tire of you.

72.3 And so, the Wise Person: Knows himself does not make a show of himself. Loves himself does not exalt himself. Yes, he leaves 'that' aside, and attends to 'this.'

73.1 "One who shows bravery by being daring will get killed one who shows bravery by not being daring will survive.'

73.2 But in both these cases: "Sometimes it helps, sometimes it harms." "What Heaven picks to hate - who knows the reason?" And so the Wise Person: Treats things as difficult.

73.3 Heaven's Way: Not contending, but excels at overcoming not speaking, but excels in getting answers not summoning, but people come of themselves lax, but excels at organization.

73.4 Heaven's net is very wide - loosely woven, but it lets nothing slip by.

74.1 "The people are always lacking in the fear of death." Then why frighten them with death?

74.2 Supposing the people always had the fear of death, and we could catch law breakers and kill them - who would dare?

74.3 There is always The Executioner - he does the killing. Doing the killing in The Executioner's place, this is like "doing the cutting in the master carpenter's place." One who cuts in the master carpenter's place - seldom it is he does not cut his hand.

75.1 'The people are starving.' It is because those high up eat too much tax grain, this is why they are starving.

75.2 'The people are hard to govern.' It is because there is Working among those high up, this is why they are hard to govern.

75.3 'The people take death lightly.' It is because they pursue a lavish life, this is why they take death lightly. Simply: Those who do not Work at 'living' - these are better men than those who 'love life.'

76.1 People begin life Soft and Weak when they are dead they are hard and firm.

76.2 Among the thousands of things: Grass and trees begin life Soft and tender when they are dead they are withered and brittle.

76.3 Yes, strength and hardness accompany death Softness and Weakness accompany life.

76.4 And so: With a battle axe too hardened, you cannot win when a tree becomes hard, then comes the axe.

76.5 The strong and the great stand lowest the Soft and Weak stand highest.

77.1 Heaven's Way is like the stringing of a bow: It pulls down what is high it lifts up what is low it takes away from what has an abundance to give to what has not enough.

77.2 Heaven's Way: Take away from what has an abundance help along what has not enough. People's way is not like this: Take away from what has not enough to offer it to what has an abundance.

77.3 Who can have an abundance to offer the world? Only the one who has Tao.

77.4 And so the Wise Person: Works but does not rely on this achieves successes but does not dwell in them has no desire to show off his worth.

78.1 Nothing in the world is Softer or Weaker than water. But when it attacks what is hard and strong none of them can win out, because they have no way of affecting it.

78.2 Softness overcomes what is hard Weakness overcomes what is unyielding. Everyone in the world understands it no one can practice it.

78.3 And so the Wise Person says: Taking on a state's dirt makes one lord of its earth altars taking on a state's misfortunes makes one King of the world. Right words seem the opposite.

79.1 "When great hostilities are smoothed over there is always some hostility left." How could this be considered good?
79.2 And so the Wise Person: "Keeps hold of the left-hand contract tally, and doesn't make demands on others."
79.3 One who has Te is concerned with fulfilling his contract one who does not have Te concerns himself with collecting his due.
79.4 Heaven's Way: Not to have personal favourites, but to be invariably good to all.

80.1 Oh for a small country with few people! Supposing there were men with the talents of dozens and hundreds, but no one employed them. Supposing the people took death seriously, and did not travel far distances.
80.2 Although there exist boats and carriages, they have no occasion to ride in them. Although there exist armour and weapons, they have no occasion to show them off.
80.3 Supposing people returned to knotting cords, and using this as writing. They find their food savoury they find their clothes elegant they are content with their homes they are fond of their folkways.
80.4 Neighbouring states are in sight of one another so they hear the sounds of each others' dogs and roosters - but people reach old age and die with no comings and goings between them.

81.1 Sincere words are not elegant elegant words are not sincere.
81.2 Excellence is not winning arguments winning arguments is not being Excellent.
81.3 Understanding is not wide learning wide learning is not understanding.
81.4 The Wise Person does not store up for himself. By working for others he increases what he himself possesses. By giving to others he gets increase for himself more and more.
81.5 "Heaven's Way: to benefit and not to harm." The Way of the Wise Person: to work and not contend.

Legge version

1.1 The Tao that can be trodden is not the enduring and unchanging Tao. The name that can be named is not the enduring and unchanging name.

1.2 (Conceived of as) having no name, it is the Originator of heaven and earth; (conceived of as) having a name, it is the Mother of all things.

1.3 Always without desire we must be found, If its deep mystery we would sound; But if desire always within us be, Its outer fringe is all that we shall see.

1.4 Under these two aspects, it is really the same; but as development takes place, it receives the different names.

1.5 Together we call them the Mystery. Where the Mystery is the deepest is the gate of all that is subtle and wonderful.

2.1 All in the world know the beauty of the beautiful, and in doing this they have (the idea of) what ugliness is;

2.2 they all know the skill of the skillful, and in doing this they have (the idea of) what the want of skill is.

2.3 So it is that existence and non-existence give birth the one to (the idea of) the other; that difficulty and ease produce the one (the idea of) the other; that length and shortness fashion out the one the figure of the other;

2.4 that (the ideas of) height and lowness arise from the contrast of the one with the other; that the musical notes and tones become harmonious through the relation of one with another; and that being before and behind give the idea of one following another.

2.5 Therefore the sage manages affairs without doing anything, and conveys his instructions without the use of speech.

2.6 All things spring up, and there is not one which declines to show itself; they grow, and there is no claim made for their ownership; they go through their processes, and there is no expectation (of a reward for the results).

2.7 The work is accomplished, and there is no resting in it (as an achievement). The work is done, but how no one can see; 'Tis this that makes the power not cease to be.

3.1 Not to value and employ men of superior ability is the way to keep the people from rivalry among themselves;

3.2 not to prize articles which are difficult to procure is the way to keep them from becoming thieves;

3.3 not to show them what is likely to excite their desires is the way to keep their minds from disorder.

3.4 Therefore the sage, in the exercise of his government, empties their minds, fills their bellies, weakens their wills, and strengthens their bones.

3.5 He constantly (tries to) keep them without knowledge and without desire, and where there are those who have knowledge, to keep them from presuming to act (on it).

3.6 When there is this abstinence from action, good order is universal.

4.1 The Tao is (like) the emptiness of a vessel; and in our employment of it we must be on our guard against all fullness.

4.2 How deep and unfathomable it is, as if it were the Honoured Ancestor of all things!

4.3 We should blunt our sharp points, and unravel the complications of things; we should atemper our brightness, and bring ourselves into agreement with the obscurity of others.

4.4 How pure and still the Tao is, as if it would ever so continue!

4.5 I do not know whose son it is. It might appear to have been before God.

5.1 Heaven and earth do not act from (the impulse of) any wish to be benevolent; they deal with all things as the dogs of grass are dealt with.

5.2 The sages do not act from (any wish to be) benevolent; they deal with the people as the dogs of grass are dealt with.

5.3 May not the space between heaven and earth be compared to a bellows? 'Tis emptied, yet it loses not its power; 'Tis moved again, and sends forth air the more.

5.4 Much speech to swift exhaustion lead we see; Your inner being guard, and keep it free.

6.1 The valley spirit dies not, aye the same; The female mystery thus do we name.

6.2 Its gate, from which at first they issued forth, Is called the root from which grew heaven and earth.

6.3 Long and unbroken does its power remain, Used gently, and without the touch of pain.

7.1 Heaven is long-enduring and earth continues long.

7.2 The reason why heaven and earth are able to endure and continue thus long is because they do not live of, or for, themselves. This is how they are able to continue and endure.

7.3 therefore the sage puts his own person last, and yet it is found in the foremost place;

7.4 he treats his person as if it were foreign to him, and yet that person is preserved.

7.5 Is it not because he has no personal and private ends, that therefore such ends are realized?

8.1 The highest excellence is like (that of) water. The excellence of water appears in its benefitting all things, and in its occupying, without striving (to the contrary), the low place which all men dislike. Hence (its way) is near to (that of) the Tao.

8.2 The excellence of a residence is in (the suitability of) the place; that of the mind is in abysmal stillness; that of associations is in their being with the virtuous;

8.3 that of government is in its securing good order; that of (the conduct of) affairs is in its ability; and that of (the initiation of) any movement is in its timeliness.

8.4 And when (one with the highest excellence) does not wrangle (about his low position), no one finds fault with him.

9.1 It is better to leave a vessel unfilled, than to attempt to carry it when it is full.

9.2 If you keep feeling a point that has been sharpened, the point cannot long preserve its sharpness.

9.3 When gold and jade fill the hall, their possessor cannot keep them safe.

9.4 When wealth and honours lead to arrogance, this brings its evil on itself.

9.5 When the work is done, and one's name is becoming distinguished, to withdraw into obscurity is the way of Heaven.

10.1 When the intelligent and animal souls are held together in one embrace, they can be kept from separating.

10.2 When one gives undivided attention to the (vital) breath, and brings it to the utmost degree of pliancy, he can become as a (tender) babe.

10.3 When he has cleansed away the most mysterious sights (of his imagination), he can become without a flaw.

10.4 In loving the people and ruling the state, cannot he proceed without any (purpose of) action?

10.5 In the opening and shutting of his gates of heaven, cannot he do so as a female bird?

10.6 While his intelligence reaches in every direction, cannot he (appear to) be without knowledge?

10.7 (The Tao) produces (all things) and nourishes them; it produces them and does not claim them as its own; it does all, and yet does not boast of it; it presides over all, and yet does not control them. This is what is called 'The mysterious Quality' (of the Tao).

11.1 The thirty spokes unite in the one nave; but it is on the empty space (for the axle), that the use of the wheel depends.

11.2 Clay is fashioned into vessels; but it is on their empty hollowness, that their use depends.

11.3 The door and windows are cut out (from the walls) to form an apartment; but it is on the empty space (within), that its use depends.

11.4 Therefore, what has a (positive) existence serves for profitable adaptation, and what has not that for (actual) usefulness.

12.1 Colour's five hues from the eyes their sight will take; Music's five notes the ears as deaf can make; The flavours five deprive the mouth of taste.

12.2 The chariot course, and the wild hunting waste Make mad the mind; and objects rare and strange, Sought for, men's conduct will to evil change.

12.3 Therefore the sage seeks to satisfy (the craving of) the belly, and not the (insatiable longing of the) eyes. He puts from him the latter, and prefers to seek the former.

13.1 Favour and disgrace would seem equally to be feared; honour and great calamity, to be regarded as personal conditions (of the same kind).

13.2 What is meant by speaking thus of favour and disgrace? Disgrace is being in a low position (after the enjoyment of favour). The getting that (favour) leads to the apprehension (of losing it), and the losing it leads to the fear of (still greater calamity):--this is what is meant by saying that favour and disgrace would seem equally to be feared.

13.3 And what is meant by saying that honour and great calamity are to be (similarly) regarded as personal conditions? What makes me liable to great calamity is my having the body (which I call myself); if I had not the body, what great calamity could come to me?

13.4 Therefore he who would administer the kingdom, honouring it as he honours his own person, may be employed to govern it, and he who would administer it with the love which he bears to his own person may be entrusted with it.

14.1 We look at it, and we do not see it, and we name it 'the Equable.' We listen to it, and we do not hear it, and we name it 'the Inaudible.' We try to grasp it, and do not get hold of it, and we name it 'the Subtle.'

14.2 With these three qualities, it cannot be made the subject of description; and hence we blend them together and obtain The One.

14.3 Its upper part is not bright, and its lower part is not obscure. Ceaseless in its action, it yet cannot be named, and then it again returns and becomes nothing.

14.4 This is called the Form of the Formless, and the Semblance of the Invisible; this is called the Fleeting and Indeterminable. We meet it and do not see its Front; we follow it, and do not see its Back.

14.4 When we can lay hold of the Tao of old to direct the things of the present day, and are able to know it as it was of old in the beginning, this is called (unwinding) the clue of Tao.

15.1 The skillful masters (of the Tao) in old times, with a subtle and exquisite penetration, comprehended its mysteries, and were deep (also) so as to elude men's knowledge.

15.2 As they were thus beyond men's knowledge, I will make an effort to describe of what sort they appeared to be. Shrinking looked they like those who wade through a stream in winter; irresolute like those who are afraid of all around them; grave like a guest (in awe of his host);

15.3 evanescent like ice that is melting away; unpretentious like wood that has not been fashioned into anything; vacant like a valley, and dull like muddy water.

15.4 Who can (make) the muddy water (clear)? Let it be still, and it will gradually become clear. Who can secure the condition of rest? Let movement go on, and the condition of rest will gradually arise.

15.5 They who preserve this method of the Tao do not wish to be full (of themselves). It is through their not being full of themselves that they can afford to seem worn and not appear new and complete.

16.1 The (state of) vacancy should be brought to the utmost degree, and that of stillness guarded with unwearying vigour.

16.2 All things alike go through their processes of activity, and (then) we see them return (to their original state). When things (in the vegetable world) have displayed their luxuriant growth, we see each of them return to its root.

16.3 This returning to their root is what we call the state of stillness; and that stillness may be called a reporting that they have fulfilled their appointed end. The report of that fulfilment is the regular, unchanging rule. To know that unchanging rule is to be intelligent; not to know it leads to wild movements and evil issues.

16.4 The knowledge of that unchanging rule produces a (grand) capacity and forbearance, and that capacity and forbearance lead to a community (of feeling with all things). From this community of feeling comes a kingliness of character; and he who is king-like goes on to be heaven-like. In that likeness to heaven he possesses the Tao.

16.5 Possessed of the Tao, he endures long; and to the end of his bodily life, is exempt from all danger of decay.

17.1 In the highest antiquity, (the people) did not know that there were (their rulers). In the next age they loved them and praised them. In the next they feared them; in the next they despised them.

17.2 Thus it was that when faith (in the Tao) was deficient (in the rulers) a want of faith in them ensued (in the people).

17.3 How irresolute did those (earliest rulers) appear, showing (by their reticence) the importance which they set upon their words! Their work was done and their undertakings were successful, while the people all said, 'We are as we are, of ourselves!'

18.1 When the Great Tao (Way or Method) ceased to be observed, benevolence and righteousness came into vogue.

18.2 (Then) appeared wisdom and shrewdness, and there ensued great hypocrisy.

18.3 When harmony no longer prevailed throughout the six kinships, filial sons found their manifestation;

18.4 when the states and clans fell into disorder, loyal ministers appeared.

19.1 If we could renounce our sageness and discard our wisdom, it would be better for the people a hundredfold.

19.2 If we could renounce our benevolence and discard our righteousness, the people would again become filial and kindly.

19.3 If we could renounce our artful contrivances and discard our (scheming for) gain, there would be no thieves nor robbers.

19.4 Those three methods (of government) Thought olden ways in elegance did fail And made these names their want of worth to veil;

19.5 But simple views, and courses plain and true Would selfish ends and many lusts eschew.

20.1 When we renounce learning we have no troubles. The (ready) 'yes,' and (flattering) 'yea;!-- Small is the difference they display. But mark their issues, good and ill;-- What space the gulf between shall fill?

20.2 What all men fear is indeed to be feared; but how wide and without end is the range of questions (asking to be discussed)!

20.3 The multitude of men look satisfied and pleased; as if enjoying a full banquet, as if mounted on a tower in spring. I alone seem listless and still, my desires having as yet given no indication of their presence. I am like an infant which has not yet smiled. I look dejected and forlorn, as if I had no home to go to.

20.4 The multitude of men all have enough and to spare. I alone seem to have lost everything. My mind is that of a stupid man; I am in a state of chaos.

20.5 Ordinary men look bright and intelligent, while I alone seem to be benighted. They look full of discrimination, while I alone am dull and confused. I seem to be carried about as on the sea, drifting as if I had nowhere to rest.

20.6 All men have their spheres of action, while I alone seem dull and incapable, like a rude borderer. (Thus) I alone am different from other men, but I value the nursing-mother (the Tao).

21.1 The grandest forms of active force From Tao come, their only source.

21.2 Who can of Tao the nature tell? Our sight it flies, our touch as well. Eluding sight, eluding touch, The forms of things all in it crouch; Eluding touch, eluding sight, There are their semblances, all right. Profound it is, dark and obscure; Things' essences all there endure. Those essences the truth enfold Of what, when seen, shall then be told.

21.3 Now it is so; 'twas so of old. Its name--what passes not away; So, in their beautiful array, Things form and never know decay.

21.4 How know I that it is so with all the beauties of existing things? By this (nature of the Tao).

22.1 The partial becomes complete; the crooked, straight; the empty, full; the worn out, new. He whose (desires) are few gets them; he whose (desires) are many goes astray.

22.2 Therefore the sage holds in his embrace the one thing (of humility), and manifests it to all the world.

22.3 He is free from self-display, and therefore he shines; from self-assertion, and therefore he is distinguished; from self-boasting, and therefore his merit is acknowledged; from self-complacency, and therefore he acquires superiority.

22.4 It is because he is thus free from striving that therefore no one in the world is able to strive with him.

22.5 That saying of the ancients that 'the partial becomes complete' was not vainly spoken:--all real completion is comprehended under it.

23.1 Abstaining from speech marks him who is obeying the spontaneity of his nature. A violent wind does not last for a whole morning; a sudden rain does not last for the whole day.

23.2 To whom is it that these (two) things are owing? To Heaven and Earth. If Heaven and Earth cannot make such (spasmodic) actings last long, how much less can man!

23.3 Therefore when one is making the Tao his business, those who are also pursuing it, agree with him in it, and those who are making the manifestation of its course their object agree with him in that; while even those who are failing in both these things agree with him where they fail.

23.4 Hence, those with whom he agrees as to the Tao have the happiness of attaining to it; those with whom he agrees as to its manifestation have the happiness of attaining to it; and those with whom he agrees in their failure have also the happiness of attaining (to the Tao).

23.5 (But) when there is not faith sufficient (on his part), a want of faith (in him) ensues (on the part of the others).

24.1 He who stands on his tiptoes does not stand firm; he who stretches his legs does not walk (easily).

24.2 (So), he who displays himself does not shine; he who asserts his own views is not distinguished;

24.3 he who vaunts himself does not find his merit acknowledged; he who is self-conceited has no superiority allowed to him.

24.4 Such conditions, viewed from the standpoint of the Tao, are like remnants of food, or a tumour on the body, which all dislike. Hence those who pursue (the course) of the Tao do not adopt and allow them.

25.1 There was something undefined and complete, coming into existence before Heaven and Earth. How still it was and formless, standing alone, and undergoing no change, reaching everywhere and in no danger (of being exhausted)! It may be regarded as the Mother of all things.

25.2 I do not know its name, and I give it the designation of the Tao (the Way or Course). Making an effort (further) to give it a name I call it The Great.

25.3 Great, it passes on (in constant flow). Passing on, it becomes remote. Having become remote, it returns.

25.4 Therefore the Tao is great; Heaven is great; Earth is great; and the (sage) king is also great. In the universe there are four that are great, and the (sage) king is one of them.

25.5 Man takes his law from the Earth; the Earth takes its law from Heaven; Heaven takes its law from the Tao. The law of the Tao is its being what it is.

26.1 Gravity is the root of lightness; stillness, the ruler of movement.

26.2 Therefore a wise prince, marching the whole day, does not go far from his baggage waggons. Although he may have brilliant prospects to look at, he quietly remains (in his proper place), indifferent to them.

26.3 How should the lord of a myriad chariots carry himself lightly before the kingdom?

26.4 If he do act lightly, he has lost his root (of gravity); if he proceed to active movement, he will lose his throne.

27.1 The skillful traveler leaves no traces of his wheels or footsteps; the skillful speaker says nothing that can be found fault with or blamed; the skillful reckoner uses no tallies;

27.2 the skillful closer needs no bolts or bars, while to open what he has shut will be impossible; the skillful binder uses no strings or knots, while to unloose what he has bound will be impossible.

27.3 In the same way the sage is always skillful at saving men, and so he does not cast away any man; he is always skillful at saving things, and so he does not cast away anything. This is called 'Hiding the light of his procedure.'

27.4 Therefore the man of skill is a master (to be looked up to) by him who has not the skill; and he who has not the skill is the helper of (the reputation of) him who has the skill.

27.5 If the one did not honour his master, and the other did not rejoice in his helper, an (observer), though intelligent, might greatly err about them. This is called 'The utmost degree of mystery.'

28.1 Who knows his manhood's strength, Yet still his female feebleness maintains; As to one channel flow the many drains, All come to him, yea, all beneath the sky. Thus he the constant excellence retains; The simple child again, free from all stains.

28.2 Who knows how white attracts, Yet always keeps himself within black's shade, The pattern of humility displayed, Displayed in view of all beneath the sky; He in the unchanging excellence arrayed, Endless return to man's first state has made.

28.3 Who knows how glory shines, Yet loves disgrace, nor e'er for it is pale; Behold his presence in a spacious vale, To which men come from all beneath the sky. The unchanging excellence completes its tale; The simple infant man in him we hail.

28.4 The unwrought material, when divided and distributed, forms vessels. The sage, when employed, becomes the Head of all the Officers (of government); and in his greatest regulations he employs no violent measures.

29.1 If any one should wish to get the kingdom for himself, and to effect this by what he does, I see that he will not succeed.

29.2 The kingdom is a spirit-like thing, and cannot be got by active doing. He who would so win it destroys it; he who would hold it in his grasp loses it.

29.3 The course and nature of things is such that What was in front is now behind; What warmed anon we freezing find. Strength is of weakness oft the spoil; The store in ruins mocks our toil.

29.4 Hence the sage puts away excessive effort, extravagance, and easy indulgence.

30.1 He who would assist a lord of men in harmony with the Tao will not assert his mastery in the kingdom by force of arms. Such a course is sure to meet with its proper return.

30.2 Wherever a host is stationed, briars and thorns spring up. In the sequence of great armies there are sure to be bad years.

30.3 A skilful (commander) strikes a decisive blow, and stops. He does not dare (by continuing his operations) to assert and complete his mastery.

30.4 He will strike the blow, but will be on his guard against being vain or boastful or arrogant in consequence of it. He strikes it as a matter of necessity; he strikes it, but not from a wish for mastery.

30.5 When things have attained their strong maturity they become old. This may be said to be not in accordance with the Tao: and what is not in accordance with it soon comes to an end.

31.1 Now arms, however beautiful, are instruments of evil omen, hateful, it may be said, to all creatures. Therefore they who have the Tao do not like to employ them.

31.2 The superior man ordinarily considers the left hand the most honourable place, but in time of war the right hand.

31.3 Those sharp weapons are instruments of evil omen, and not the instruments of the superior man; - he uses them only on the compulsion of necessity.

31.4 Calm and repose are what he prizes; victory (by force of arms) is to him undesirable. To consider this desirable would be to delight in the slaughter of men; and he who delights in the slaughter of men cannot get his will in the kingdom.

31.5 On occasions of festivity to be on the left hand is the prized position; on occasions of mourning, the right hand. The second in command of the army has his place on the left; the general commanding in chief has his on the right; - his place, that is, is assigned to him as in the rites of mourning.

31.6 He who has killed multitudes of men should weep for them with the bitterest grief; and the victor in battle has his place (rightly) according to those rites.

32.4 As soon as it proceeds to action, it has a name. When it once has that name, (men) can know to rest in it. When they know to rest in it, they can be free from all risk of failure and error.

32.1 The Tao, considered as unchanging, has no name. Though in its primordial simplicity it may be small, the whole world dares not deal with (one embodying) it as a minister.

32.2 If a feudal prince or the king could guard and hold it, all would spontaneously submit themselves to him.

32.3 Heaven and Earth (under its guidance) unite together and send down the sweet dew, which, without the directions of men, reaches equally everywhere as of its own accord.

32.5 The relation of the Tao to all the world is like that of the great rivers and seas to the streams from the valleys.

33.1 He who knows other men is discerning; he who knows himself is intelligent.
33.2 He who overcomes others is strong; he who overcomes himself is mighty.
33.3 He who is satisfied with his lot is rich; he who goes on acting with energy has a (firm) will.
33.4 He who does not fail in the requirements of his position, continues long; he who dies and yet does not perish, has longevity.

34.1 All-pervading is the Great Tao! It may be found on the left hand and on the right.
34.2 All things depend on it for their production, which it gives to them, not one refusing obedience to it. When its work is accomplished, it does not claim the name of having done it. It clothes all things as with a garment, and makes no assumption of being their lord; -
34.3 it may be named in the smallest things.
34.4 All things return (to their root and disappear), and do not know that it is it which presides over their doing so; - it may be named in the greatest things.
34.5 Hence the sage is able (in the same way) to accomplish his great achievements. It is through his not making himself great that he can accomplish them.

35.1 To him who holds in his hands the Great Image (of the invisible Tao), the whole world repairs. Men resort to him, and receive no hurt, but (find) rest, peace, and the feeling of ease.
35.2 Music and dainties will make the passing guest stop (for a time).
35.3 But though the Tao as it comes from the mouth, seems insipid and has no flavour, though it seems not worth being looked at or listened to, the use of it is inexhaustible.

36.1 When one is about to take an inspiration, he is sure to make a (previous) expiration; when he is going to weaken another, he will first strengthen him; when he is going to overthrow another, he will first have raised him up; when he is going to despoil another, he will first have made gifts to him: -
36.2 this is called 'Hiding the light (of his procedure).' The soft overcomes the hard; and the weak the strong.
36.3 Fishes should not be taken from the deep; instruments for the profit of a state should not be shown to the people.

37.1 The Tao in its regular course does nothing (for the sake of doing it), and so there is nothing which it does not do.
37.2 If princes and kings were able to maintain it, all things would of themselves be transformed by them. If this transformation became to me an object of desire, I would express the desire by the nameless simplicity. If they change, and become desirous and active, I will restrain them with the Nameless One's Simplicity. Restraining them with the Nameless One's Simplicity will cause them no disgrace.
37.3 Simplicity without a name is free from all external aim. With no desire, at rest and still, All things go right as of their will.

38.1 (Those who) possessed in highest degree the attributes (of the Tao) did not (seek) to show them, and therefore they possessed them (in fullest measure). (Those who) possessed in a lower degree those attributes (sought how) not to lose them, and therefore they did not possess them (in fullest measure).
38.2 (Those who) possessed in the highest degree those attributes did nothing (with a purpose), and had no need to do anything. (Those who) possessed them in a lower degree were (always) doing, and had need to be so doing.
38.3 (Those who) possessed the highest benevolence were (always seeking) to carry it out, and had no need to be doing so. (Those who) possessed the highest righteousness were (always seeking) to carry it out, and had need to be so doing. (Those who) possessed the highest (sense of) propriety were (always seeking) to show it, and when men did not respond to it, they bared the arm and marched up to them.
38.4 Thus it was that when the Tao was lost, its attributes appeared; when its attributes were lost, benevolence appeared; when benevolence was lost, righteousness appeared; and when righteousness was lost, the proprieties appeared.
38.5 Now propriety is the attenuated form of leal-heartedness and good faith, and is also the commencement of disorder; swift apprehension is (only) a flower of the Tao, and is the beginning of stupidity.
38.6 Thus it is that the Great man abides by what is solid, and eschews what is flimsy; dwells with the fruit and not with the flower. It is thus that he puts away the one and makes choice of the other.

39.1 The things which from of old have got the One (the Tao) are - Heaven which by it is bright and pure; Earth rendered thereby firm and sure; Spirits with powers by it supplied;
39.2 Valleys kept full throughout their void All creatures which through it do live Princes and kings who from it get the model which to all they give. All these are the results of the One (Tao).
39.3 If heaven were not thus pure, it soon would rend; If earth were not thus sure, 'twould break and bend; Without these powers, the spirits soon would fail;

39.4 If not so filled, the drought would parch each vale; Without that life, creatures would pass away; Princes and kings, without that moral sway, However grand and high, would all decay.

39.5 Thus it is that dignity finds its (firm) root in its (previous) meanness, and what is lofty finds its stability in the lowness (from which it rises).

39.6 Hence princes and kings call themselves 'Orphans,' 'Men of small virtue,' and as 'Carriages without a nave.' Is not this an acknowledgment that in their considering themselves mean they see the foundation of their dignity?

39.7 So it is that in the enumeration of the different parts of a carriage we do not come on what makes it answer the ends of a carriage.

39.8 They do not wish to show themselves elegant-looking as jade, but (prefer) to be coarse-looking as an (ordinary) stone.

40.1 The movement of the Tao By contraries proceeds; And weakness marks the course Of Tao's mighty deeds.

40.2 All things under heaven sprang from It as existing (and named); that existence sprang from It as non-existent (and not named).

41.1 Scholars of the highest class, when they hear about the Tao, earnestly carry it into practice. Scholars of the middle class, when they have heard about it, seem now to keep it and now to lose it.

41.2 Scholars of the lowest class, when they have heard about it, laugh greatly at it. If it were not (thus) laughed at, it would not be fit to be the Tao.

41.3 Therefore the sentence-makers have thus expressed themselves: - 'The Tao, when brightest seen, seems light to lack; Who progress in it makes, seems drawing back; Its even way is like a rugged track. Its highest virtue from the vale doth rise; Its greatest beauty seems to offend the eyes; And he has most whose lot the least supplies.

41.4 Its firmest virtue seems but poor and low; Its solid truth seems change to undergo; Its largest square doth yet no corner show A vessel great, it is the slowest made; Loud is its sound, but never word it said; A semblance great, the shadow of a shade.'

41.5 The Tao is hidden, and has no name; but it is the Tao which is skillful at imparting (to all things what they need) and making them complete.

42.1 The Tao produced One; One produced Two; Two produced Three; Three produced All things.

42.2 All things leave behind them the Obscurity (out of which they have come), and go forward to embrace the Brightness (into which they have emerged), while they are harmonized by the Breath of Vacancy.

42.3 What men dislike is to be orphans, to have little virtue, to be as carriages without naves; and yet these are the designations which kings and princes use for themselves.

42.4 So it is that some things are increased by being diminished, and others are diminished by being increased.

42.5 What other men (thus) teach, I also teach. The violent and strong do not die their natural death. I will make this the basis of my teaching.

43.1 The softest thing in the world dashes against and overcomes the hardest; that which has no (substantial) existence enters where there is no crevice. I know hereby what advantage belongs to doing nothing (with a purpose).

43.2 There are few in the world who attain to the teaching without words, and the advantage arising from non-action.

44.1 Or fame or life, Which do you hold more dear? Or life or wealth, To which would you adhere? Keep life and lose those other things; Keep them and lose your life: - which brings Sorrow and pain more near?

44.2 Thus we may see, Who cleaves to fame Rejects what is more great; Who loves large stores Gives up the richer state.

44.3 Who is content Needs fear no shame. Who knows to stop Incurs no blame. From danger free Long live shall he.

45.1 Who thinks his great achievements poor Shall find his vigour long endure. Of greatest fulness, deemed avoid, Exhaustion ne'er shall stem the tide. Do thou what's straight still crooked deem;

45.2 Thy greatest art still stupid seem, And eloquence a stammering scream.

45.3 Constant action overcomes cold; being still overcomes heat. Purity and stillness give the correct law to all under heaven.

46.1 When the Tao prevails in the world, they send back their swift horses to (draw) the dung-carts. When the Tao is disregarded in the world, the war-horses breed in the border lands.

46.2 There is no guilt greater than to sanction ambition; no calamity greater than to be discontented with one's lot; no fault greater than the wish to be getting.

46.3 Therefore the sufficiency of contentment is an enduring and unchanging sufficiency.

47.1 Without going outside his door, one understands (all that takes place) under the sky; without looking out from his window, one sees the Tao of Heaven. The farther that one goes out (from himself), the less he knows.

47.2 Therefore the sages got their knowledge without traveling; gave their (right) names to things without seeing them; and accomplished their ends without any purpose of doing so.

48.1 He who devotes himself to learning (seeks) from day to day to increase (his knowledge); he who devotes himself to the Tao (seeks) from day to day to diminish (his doing).

48.2 He diminishes it and again diminishes it, till he arrives at doing nothing (on purpose). Having arrived at this point of non-action, there is nothing which he does not do. He who gets as his own all under heaven does so by giving himself no trouble (with that end).

48.3 If one take trouble (with that end), he is not equal to getting as his own all under heaven.

49.1 The sage has no invariable mind of his own; he makes the mind of the people his mind.

49.2 To those who are good (to me), I am good; and to those who are not good (to me), I am also good; - and thus (all) get to be good.

49.3 To those who are sincere (with me), I am sincere; and to those who are not sincere (with me), I am also sincere; - and thus (all) get to be sincere.

49.4 The sage has in the world an appearance of indecision, and keeps his mind in a state of indifference to all. The people all keep their eyes and ears directed to him, and he deals with them all as his children.

50.1 Men come forth and live; they enter (again) and die.

50.2 Of every ten three are ministers of life (to themselves); and three are ministers of death. There are also three in every ten whose aim is to live, but whose movements tend to the land (or place) of death. And for what reason? Because of their excessive endeavours to perpetuate life.

50.3 But I have heard that he who is skillful in managing the life entrusted to him for a time travels on the land without having to shun rhinoceros or tiger, and enters a host without having to avoid buff coat or sharp weapon.

50.4 The rhinoceros finds no place in him into which to thrust its horn, nor the tiger a place in which to fix its claws, nor the weapon a place to admit its point. And for what reason? Because there is in him no place of death.

51.1 All things are produced by the Tao, and nourished by its outflowing operation. They receive their forms according to the nature of each, and are completed according to the circumstances of their condition. Therefore all things without exception honour the Tao, and exalt its outflowing operation.

51.2 This honouring of the Tao and exalting of its operation is not the result of any ordination, but always a spontaneous tribute. Thus it is that the Tao produces (all things), nourishes them, brings them to their full growth, nurses them, completes them, matures them, maintains them, and overspreads them.

51.3 It produces them and makes no claim to the possession of them; it carries them through their processes and does not vaunt its ability in doing so; it brings them to maturity and exercises no control over them; - this is called its mysterious operation.

52.1 (The Tao) which originated all under the sky is to be considered as the mother of them all.

52.2 When the mother is found, we know what her children should be. When one knows that he is his mother's child, and proceeds to guard (the qualities of) the mother that belong to him, to the end of his life he will be free from all peril.

52.3 Let him keep his mouth closed, and shut up the portals (of his nostrils), and all his life he will be exempt from labourious exertion.

52.4 Let him keep his mouth open, and (spend his breath) in the promotion of his affairs, and all his life there will be no safety for him.

52.5 The perception of what is small is (the secret of clear-sightedness; the guarding of what is soft and tender is (the secret of) strength.

52.6 Who uses well his light, Reverting to its (source so) bright, Will from his body ward all blight, And hides the unchanging from men's sight.

53.1 If I were suddenly to become known, and (put into a position to) conduct (a government) according to the Great Tao, what I should be most afraid of would be a boastful display.

53.2 The great Tao (or way) is very level and easy; but people love the by-ways.

53.3 Their court(-yards and buildings) shall be well kept, but their fields shall be ill-cultivated, and their granaries very empty.

53.4 They shall wear elegant and ornamented robes, carry a sharp sword at their girdle, pamper themselves in eating and drinking, and have a superabundance of property and wealth; - such (princes) may be called robbers and boasters. This is contrary to the Tao surely!

54.1 What (Tao's) skillful planter plants Can never be upturned; What his skillful arms enfold, From him can ne'er be borne. Sons shall bring in lengthening line, Sacrifices to his shrine.

54.2 Tao when nursed within one's self, His vigour will make true; And where the family it rules What riches will accrue! The neighbourhood where it prevails In thriving will abound; And when 'tis seen throughout the state, Good fortune will be found. Employ it the kingdom o'er, And men thrive all around.

54.3 In this way the effect will be seen in the person, by the observation of different cases; in the family; in the neighbourhood; in the state; and in the kingdom.

54.4 How do I know that this effect is sure to hold thus all under the sky? By this (method of observation).

55.1 He who has in himself abundantly the attributes (of the Tao) is like an infant. Poisonous insects will not sting him; fierce beasts will not seize him; birds of prey will not strike him. (The infant's) bones are weak and its sinews soft, but yet its grasp is firm.

55.2 It knows not yet the union of male and female, and yet its virile member may be excited; - showing the perfection of its physical essence.

55.3 All day long it will cry without its throat becoming hoarse; - showing the harmony (in its constitution). To him by whom this harmony is known, (The secret of) the unchanging (Tao) is shown, And in the knowledge wisdom finds its throne.

55.4 All life-increasing arts to evil turn; Where the mind makes the vital breath to burn, (False) is the strength, (and o'er it we should mourn.)

55.5 When things have become strong, they (then) become old, which may be said to be contrary to the Tao. Whatever is contrary to the Tao soon ends.

56.1 He who knows (the Tao) does not (care to) speak (about it); he who is (ever ready to) speak about it does not know it.

56.2 He (who knows it) will keep his mouth shut and close the portals (of his nostrils). He will blunt his sharp points and unravel the complications of things; he will temper his brightness, and bring himself into agreement with the obscurity (of others). This is called 'the Mysterious Agreement.'

56.3 (Such an one) cannot be treated familiarly or distantly; he is beyond all consideration of profit or injury; of nobility or meanness: - he is the noblest man under heaven.

57.1 A state may be ruled by (measures of) correction; weapons of war may be used with crafty dexterity; (but) the kingdom is made one's own (only) by freedom from action and purpose. How do I know that it is so? By these facts: -

57.2 In the kingdom the multiplication of prohibitive enactments increases the poverty of the people; the more implements to add to their profit that the people have, the greater disorder is there in the state and clan;

57.3 the more acts of crafty dexterity that men possess, the more do strange contrivances appear; the more display there is of legislation, the more thieves and robbers there are.

57.4 Therefore a sage has said, 'I will do nothing (of purpose), and the people will be transformed of themselves; I will be fond of keeping still, and the people will of themselves become correct.'

57.5 I will take no trouble about it, and the people will of themselves become rich; I will manifest no ambition, and the people will of themselves attain to the primitive simplicity.'

58.1 The government that seems the most unwise, Oft goodness to the people best supplies; That which is meddling, touching everything, Will work but ill, and disappointment bring.

58.2 Misery! - happiness is to be found by its side! Happiness! - misery lurks beneath it!

58.3 Who knows what either will come to in the end? Shall we then dispense with correction? The (method of) correction shall by a turn become distortion, and the good in it shall by a turn become evil. The delusion of the people (on this point) has indeed subsisted for a long time.

58.4 Therefore the sage is (like) a square which cuts no one (with its angles); (like) a corner which injures no one (with its sharpness). He is straightforward, but allows himself no license; he is bright, but does not dazzle.

59.1 For regulating the human (in our constitution) and rendering the (proper) service to the heavenly, there is nothing like moderation.

59.2 It is only by this moderation that there is effected an early return (to man's normal state). That early return is what I call the repeated accumulation of the attributes (of the Tao). With that repeated accumulation of those attributes, there comes the subjugation (of every obstacle to such return). Of this subjugation we know not what shall be the limit; and when one knows not what the limit shall be, he may be the ruler of a state.

59.3 He who possesses the mother of the state may continue long.

59.4 His case is like that (of the plant) of which we say that its roots are deep and its flower stalks firm: - this is the way to secure that its enduring life shall long be seen.

60.1 Governing a great state is like cooking small fish.

60.2 Let the kingdom be governed according to the Tao, and the manes of the departed will not manifest their spiritual energy.

60.3

60.4 When these two do not injuriously affect each other, their good influences converge in the virtue (of the Tao).

61.1 What makes a great state is its being (like) a low-lying, down-flowing (stream); - it becomes the center to which tend (all the small states) under heaven. (To illustrate from) the case of all females:--the female always overcomes the male by her stillness. Stillness may be considered (a sort of) abasement.

61.2 Thus it is that a great state, by condescending to small states, gains them for itself; and that small states, by abasing themselves to a great state, win it over to them.

61.3 In the one case the abasement leads to gaining adherents, in the other case to procuring favour.

61.4 The great state only wishes to unite men together and nourish them; a small state only wishes to be received by, and to serve, the other.

61.5 Each gets what it desires, but the great state must learn to abase itself.

62.1 Tao has of all things the most honoured place. No treasures give good men so rich a grace; Bad men it guards, and doth their ill efface.

62.2 (Its) admirable words can purchase honour; (its) admirable deeds can raise their performer above others. Even men who are not good are not abandoned by it.

62.3 Therefore when the sovereign occupies his place as the Son of Heaven, and he has appointed his three ducal ministers, though (a prince) were to send in a round symbol-of-rank large enough to fill both the hands, and that as the precursor of the team of horses (in the court-yard), such an offering would not be equal to (a lesson of) this Tao, which one might present on his knees.

62.4 Why was it that the ancients prized this Tao so much? Was it not because it could be got by seeking for it, and the guilty could escape (from the stain of their guilt) by it? This is the reason why all under heaven consider it the most valuable thing.

63.1 It is the way of the Tao) to act without (thinking of) acting; to conduct affairs without (feeling the) trouble of them; to taste without discerning any flavour;

63.2 to consider what is small as great, and a few as many; and to recompense injury with kindness.

63.3 (The master of it) anticipates things that are difficult while they are easy, and does things that would become great while they are small.

63.4 All difficult things in the world are sure to arise from a previous state in which they were easy, and all great things from one in which they were small.

63.5 Therefore the sage, while he never does what is great, is able on that account to accomplish the greatest things.

63.6 He who lightly promises is sure to keep but little faith; he who is continually thinking things easy is sure to find them difficult.

63.7 Therefore the sage sees difficulty even in what seems easy, and so never has any difficulties.

64.1 That which is at rest is easily kept hold of; before a thing has given indications of its presence, it is easy to take measures against it; that which is brittle is easily broken; that which is very small is easily dispersed.

64.2 Action should be taken before a thing has made its appearance; order should be secured before disorder has begun.

64.3 The tree which fills the arms grew from the tiniest sprout; the tower of nine storeys rose from a (small) heap of earth; the journey of a thousand li commenced with a single step.

64.4 He who acts (with an ulterior purpose) does harm; he who takes hold of a thing (in the same way) loses his hold. The sage does not act (so), and therefore does no harm; he does not lay hold (so), and therefore does not lose his hold.

64.5 "When the people are engaged in some task, they are always on the point of finishing when they ruin it. Careful at the end just as at the beginning then there will be no ruining of the work.

64.6 Therefore the sage desires what (other men) do not desire, and does not prize things difficult to get; he learns what (other men) do not learn, and turns back to what the multitude of men have passed by. Thus he helps the natural development of all things, and does not dare to act (with an ulterior purpose of his own).

65.1 The ancients who showed their skill in practicing the Tao did so, not to enlighten the people, but rather to make them simple and ignorant.

65.2 The difficulty in governing the people arises from their having much knowledge. He who (tries to) govern a state by his wisdom is a scourge to it; while he who does not (try to) do so is a blessing.

65.3 He who knows these two things finds in them also his model and rule. Ability to know this model and rule constitutes what we call the mysterious excellence (of a governor).

65.4 Deep and far-reaching is such mysterious excellence, showing indeed its possessor as opposite to others, but leading them to a great conformity to him.

66.1 That whereby the rivers and seas are able to receive the homage and tribute of all the valley streams, is their skill in being lower than they; - it is thus that they are the kings of them all.

66.2 So it is that the sage (ruler), wishing to be above men, puts himself by his words below them, and, wishing to be before them, places his person behind them.

66.3 In this way though he has his place above them, men do not feel his weight, nor though he has his place before them, do they feel it an injury to them. Therefore all in the world delight to exalt him and do not weary of him.

66.4 Because he does not strive, no one finds it possible to strive with him.

67.1 All the world says that, while my Tao is great, it yet appears to be inferior (to other systems of teaching). Now it is just its greatness that makes it seem to be inferior. If it were like any other (system), for long would its smallness have been known!

67.2 But I have three precious things which I prize and hold fast. The first is gentleness; the second is economy; and the third is shrinking from taking precedence of others.

67.3 With that gentleness I can be bold; with that economy I can be liberal; shrinking from taking precedence of others, I can become a vessel of the highest honour.

67.4 Now-a-days they give up gentleness and are all for being bold; economy, and are all for being liberal; the hindmost place, and seek only to be foremost; - (of all which the end is) death.

67.5 Gentleness is sure to be victorious even in battle, and firmly to maintain its ground. Heaven will save its possessor, by his (very) gentleness protecting him.

68.1 He who in (Tao's) wars has skill Assumes no martial port; He who fights with most good will/ To rage makes no resort.

68.2 He who vanquishes yet still Keeps from his foes apart; He whose hests men most fulfil Yet humbly plies his art.

68.3 Thus we say, 'He ne'er contends, And therein is his might.' Thus we say, 'Men's wills he bends, That they with him unite.'
Thus we say, 'Like Heaven's his ends, No sage of old more bright.'

69.1 A master of the art of war has said, 'I do not dare to be the host (to commence the war); I prefer to be the guest (to act on the defensive). I do not dare to advance an inch; I prefer to retire a foot.'

69.2 This is called marshalling the ranks where there are no ranks; baring the arms (to fight) where there are no arms to bare; grasping the weapon where there is no weapon to grasp; advancing against the enemy where there is no enemy.

69.3 There is no calamity greater than lightly engaging in war. To do that is near losing (the gentleness) which is so precious.

69.4 Thus it is that when opposing weapons are (actually) crossed, he who deplores (the situation) conquers.

70.1 My words are very easy to know, and very easy to practice; but there is no one in the world who is able to know and able to practice them.

70.2 There is an originating and all-comprehending (principle) in my words, and an authoritative law for the things (which I enforce). It is because they do not know these, that men do not know me. They who know me are few, and I am on that account (the more) to be prized.

70.3 It is thus that the sage wears (a poor garb of) hair cloth, while he carries his (signet of) jade in his bosom.

71.1 To know and yet (think) we do not know is the highest (attainment); not to know (and yet think) we do know is a disease. It is simply by being pained at (the thought of) having this disease that we are preserved from it.

71.2 The sage has not the disease. He knows the pain that would be inseparable from it, and therefore he does not have it.

72.1 When the people do not fear what they ought to fear, that which is their great dread will come on them.

72.2 Let them not thoughtlessly indulge themselves in their ordinary life; let them not act as if weary of what that life depends on. It is by avoiding such indulgence that such weariness does not arise.

72.3 Therefore the sage knows (these things) of himself, but does not parade (his knowledge); loves, but does not (appear to set a) value on, himself. And thus he puts the latter alternative away and makes choice of the former.

73.1 He whose boldness appears in his daring (to do wrong, in defiance of the laws) is put to death; he whose boldness appears in his not daring (to do so) lives on.

73.2 Of these two cases the one appears to be advantageous, and the other to be injurious. But When Heaven's anger smites a man, Who the cause shall truly scan? On this account the sage feels a difficulty (as to what to do in the former case).

73.3 It is the way of Heaven not to strive, and yet it skillfully overcomes; not to speak, and yet it is skillful in (obtaining a reply; does not call, and yet men come to it of themselves. Its demonstrations are quiet, and yet its plans are skillful and effective.

73.4 The meshes of the net of Heaven are large; far apart, but letting nothing escape.

74.1 The people do not fear death; to what purpose is it to (try to) frighten them with death?

74.2 If the people were always in awe of death, and I could always seize those who do wrong, and put them to death, who would dare to do wrong?

74.3 There is always One who presides over the infliction death. He who would inflict death in the room of him who so presides over it may be described as hewing wood instead of a great carpenter. Seldom is it that he who undertakes the hewing, instead of the great carpenter, does not cut his own hands!

75.1 The people suffer from famine because of the multitude of taxes consumed by their superiors. It is through this that they suffer famine.

75.2 The people are difficult to govern because of the (excessive) agency of their superiors (in governing them). It is through this that they are difficult to govern.

75.3 The people make light of dying because of the greatness of their labours in seeking for the means of living. It is this which makes them think light of dying. Thus it is that to leave the subject of living altogether out of view is better than to set a high value on it.

76.1 Man at his birth is supple and weak; at his death, firm and strong. (So it is with) all things.

76.2 Trees and plants, in their early growth, are soft and brittle; at their death, dry and withered.

76.3 Thus it is that firmness and strength are the concomitants of death; softness and weakness, the concomitants of life.

76.4 Hence he who (relies on) the strength of his forces does not conquer; and a tree which is strong will fill the out-stretched arms, (and thereby invites the feller.)

76.5 Therefore the place of what is firm and strong is below, and that of what is soft and weak is above.

77.1 May not the Way (or Tao) of Heaven be compared to the (method of) bending a bow? The (part of the bow) which was high is brought low, and what was low is raised up. (So Heaven) diminishes where there is superabundance, and supplements where there is deficiency.

77.2 It is the Way of Heaven to diminish superabundance, and to supplement deficiency. It is not so with the way of man. He takes away from those who have not enough to add to his own superabundance.

77.3 Who can take his own superabundance and therewith serve all under heaven? Only he who is in possession of the Tao!

77.4 Therefore the (ruling) sage acts without claiming the results as his; he achieves his merit and does not rest (arrogantly) in it: - he does not wish to display his superiority.

78.1 There is nothing in the world more soft and weak than water, and yet for attacking things that are firm and strong there is nothing that can take precedence of it; - for there is nothing (so effectual) for which it can be changed.

78.2 Every one in the world knows that the soft overcomes the hard, and the weak the strong, but no one is able to carry it out in practice.

78.3 Therefore a sage has said, 'He who accepts his state's reproach, is hailed therefore its altars' lord; To him who bears men's direful woes They all the name of King accord.' Words that are strictly true seem to be paradoxical.

79.1 When a reconciliation is effected (between two parties) after a great animosity, there is sure to be a grudge remaining (in the mind of the one who was wrong). And how can this be beneficial (to the other)?

79.2 Therefore (to guard against this), the sage keeps the left-hand portion of the record of the engagement, and does not insist on the (speedy) fulfilment of it by the other party.

79.3 (So), he who has the attributes (of the Tao) regards (only) the conditions of the engagement, while he who has not those attributes regards only the conditions favourable to himself.

79.4 In the Way of Heaven, there is no partiality of love; it is always on the side of the good man.

80.1 In a little state with a small population, I would so order it, that, though there were individuals with the abilities of ten or a hundred men, there should be no employment of them; I would make the people, while looking on death as a grievous thing, yet not remove elsewhere (to avoid it).

80.2 Though they had boats and carriages, they should have no occasion to ride in them; though they had buff coats and sharp weapons, they should have no occasion to don or use them.

80.3 I would make the people return to the use of knotted cords (instead of the written characters). They should think their (coarse) food sweet; their (plain) clothes beautiful; their (poor) dwellings places of rest; and their common (simple) ways sources of enjoyment.

80.4 There should be a neighbouring state within sight, and the voices of the fowls and dogs should be heard all the way from it to us, but I would make the people to old age, even to death, not have any intercourse with it.

81.1 Sincere words are not fine; fine words are not sincere.

81.2 Those who are skilled (in the Tao) do not dispute (about it); the disputatious are not skilled in it.

81.3 Those who know (the Tao) are not extensively learned; the extensively learned do not know it.

81.4 The sage does not accumulate (for himself). The more that he expends for others, the more does he possess of his own; the more that he gives to others, the more does he have himself.

81.5 With all the sharpness of the Way of Heaven, it injures not; with all the doing in the way of the sage he does not strive.

Lindauer version

- 1.1 A tao that one can tao is not the entire tao A name that one can name is not the entire name.
- 1.2 In the absence of names lies the origin of heavens and earth The presence of names is mother to the 10000 things.
- 1.3 So viewing entirety without desire One may see subtleties Viewing entirety with desire One may see boundaries.
- 1.4 That which is these both goes about as itself yet there are different names.
- 1.5 Categorizing them together there is insight Very deep insight The gateway to collective subtleties.

- 2.1 In the world each knows how beauty acts Where there is beauty ugliness begins
- 2.2 Each knows how to value Where there is value lack of value begins.
- 2.3 In this manner Presence and absence give birth to each other Difficult and easy complete each other Long and short contrast each other
- 2.4 High and low attract each other Tone and voice harmonize each other Front and back follow each other.
- 2.5 Appropriately it happens that sages dwell absent of acting with effort Do things without explaining in words
- 2.6 Make the 10000 things blend yet without trying to describe them Give birth yet without possessing
- 2.7 Act yet without relying on results Are of outstanding service yet aren't willing to reside therein. In the end, only be unwilling to reside therein Appropriately, a lack of detachment happens.

- 3.1 Being without esteem for principles Results in people who do not contend
- 3.2 Being without treasuring goods difficult to obtain Results in people who do not act as thieves
- 3.3 Being without seeing what one can desire Results in the minds of people not being confused.
- 3.4 Appropriately the governing of sages happens. Baring the mind Solidifying the center Lessening the will Strengthening self-nature
- 3.5 These entirely result in people Who are absent of knowing and absent of desire
- 3.6 In the end they also result in the wise not venturing to act. Acting absent of acting An absence of being without governing follows.

- 4.1 Tao, like an empty bowl Being used somehow lacks fullness.
- 4.2 Such breadth! It seems to be a model for the 10000 things.
- 4.3 Blunting what is sharp Untying what is tangled Harmonizing what is bright Being together with the dusty earth.
- 4.4 Such depth! It seems to somehow exist.
- 4.5 I have no knowledge whose child it is It appears to precede the emperors.

- 5.1 Heavens and earth are without humanizing It happens that the 10000 things act as straw dogs
- 5.2 Sages are without humanizing It happens that one hundred families act as straw dogs.
- 5.3 The space bounding heavens and earth is just like the equal of a bellows Empty yet not subdued Stirring yet more goes out.
- 5.4 Much talk counts for little It can't compare to obeying the center.

- 6.1 The valley spirit has no death It is appropriately called the all-embracing female
- 6.2 The gateway of The all-embracing female is appropriately called the root of heavens and earth.
- 6.3 Continuous, soft, it looks like it exists - It is infrequently used.

- 7.1 Heavens, growth, earth, longevity.
- 7.2 In heavens and earth's place That which is able to grow and further be long-lasting happens And something lacking existence of a self happens So it is able to grow and give birth.
- 7.3 Appropriately it happens that sages put their bodies behind yet their bodies are ahead
- 7.4 Put their bodies outside yet their bodies are kept in.
- 7.5 Does it not happen they are absent of anomalous self-interest? So they are able to perfect self-interest.

- 8.1 Better value looks like water The value of water profits the 10000 things yet without contending It dwells in places the collective mind dislikes - So it is severed, relating to tao.
- 8.2 The value of a home is in location The value of a mind is in breadth The value of a relationship is in humanity The value of a word is in belief
- 8.3 The value of a government is in governing The value of an effort is in ability The value of a movement is in time.
- 8.4 In the end only be without contending So be absent from reproach.

9.1 Holding yet being full Lacks compare to not yet being so
9.2 A sword blade being oversharpened Cannot long remain so
9.3 A living room full of gold and jade There is no one able to guard it
9.4 Abundant treasures yet arrogance Self-condemnation, self-punishment.
9.5 Outstanding service performed The body withdrawing The tao of the heavens.

10.1 In containing life-force and embracing oneness Is the ability to be absent from departing equal?
10.2 In gently extending animus alone Is the ability to be as a newborn child equal?
10.3 In cleansing and clearing insightful discernment Is the ability to be absent of flaws equal?
10.4 In fondness for people, governing a nation Is the ability to be absent of action equal?
10.5 In opening and closing the gate of heavens Is the ability to be absent of femaleness equal?
10.6 In seeing clearly all four reaches Is the ability to be absent from knowledge equal?
10.7 Be giving birth, be nourishing. Giving birth yet without possessing Acting yet without sustaining Growing yet without directing Is appropriately called insightful ideal.

11.1 Thirty spokes converge at one hub The use of a chariot is in the presence of what is absent
11.2 Shaping clay, it happens to act as a vessel The use of a vessel is in the presence of what is absent
11.3 Cutting doors and windows to have it act as a room The use of a room is in the presence of what is absent.
11.4 So Where there is presence beneficial actions happen Where there is absence useful actions happen.

12.1 Five colors blind the eye of man Five tones deafen the ear of man Five flavors chafe the mouth of man
12.2 Racing and hunting inspire the mind of man to express craziness Goods difficult to obtain hamper the path of man.
12.3 Appropriately it happens That sages act from the center without acting from the eyes. So detach from that, grab this.

13.1 Favor and disgrace look alarming. The treasure of great danger looks like the body.
13.2 Why say favor and disgrace look alarming? Favor acts superior Disgrace acts inferior Being obtained it looks alarming Being lost it looks alarming Appropriately say favor and disgrace look alarming.
13.3 Why say the treasure of great danger looks like the body? I place the occurrence of things of great danger As action of I in the presence of a body. I reach the absence of a body I am present with what danger? Appropriately say the treasure of great danger looks like the body.
13.4 So treasuring it when the body acts in the world It looks like one can be committed to the world. Being fond of it when the body acts in the world It looks like one can be entrusted to the world.

14.1 Being observed, lacking sight Say the name smooth Being listened to, lacking hearing Say the name rare Being pounced on, lacking obtainment Say the name small.
14.2 That which these three describes cannot be resolved So they mingle yet act as one.
14.3 What is high lacks brightness What is low lacks darkness Restrictions and restraints cannot be named Return, merge with, relate to the absence of things.
14.4 It is an appropriate action to call it The absence of being shape's shape The absence of being thing's form. It is appropriately called ungraspable, elusive Moving toward it there is no seeing a head Following it there is no seeing a tail.
14.5 Holding the tao of the ancients Warding off presence of the now happens The ability to know the ancient beginnings Is appropriately called a bond to tao.

15.1 Those ancients who valued action in the tao Were insightful, versatile, far-reaching, coherent.
15.2 Penetrating, one cannot understand In the end it is only that one cannot understand So there is more than appears to their actions. So resigned, like fording a river in winter Just so, like respecting all four neighbors So reserved, like making an appearance
15.3 So melting, like ice halfway released So genuine, like their true nature So spacious, like a valley So well mixed, like muddy water.
15.4 Who is able to gently calm muddy water, clearing it? Who is able to endure gently stirring tranquillity so it gives birth?
15.5 Those who maintain this tao have no desire for fullness In the end only lack fullness So be able to be shabby yet perfect the new.

16.1 Taking emptiness to the limit Observing stillness genuinely
16.2 Regarding the 10000 things as side-by-side It happens that I view the return. In the end things grow and flourish Each returns, merging with its root.
16.3 Merging with the root, say still Appropriately it is called returning to giving birth. Returning to giving birth, say entirety

16.4 Knowing entirety say illuminated Without knowing entirety presumptuously do the famous. Knowing entirety is tolerance Tolerance leads to impartiality Impartiality leads to kingliness Kingliness leads to the heavens The heavens lead to tao
16.5 Tao leads to what is long-lasting. Be without a body, lack danger.

17.1 The very highest, little knowledge is present of it That next is attached to yet praised That next is respected That next is despised.

17.2 Where there is belief without enough within A lack of believing what is within is present.

17.3 So remote, those treasure words Outstanding service performed, efforts successful the one hundred families say We did it naturally.

18.1 Great tao discarded, a presence of humanity, morality

18.2 Wisdom and intelligence come out, a presence of great pretense

18.3 Families lack harmony, a presence of filial devotion and mothering

18.4 The nation's emperor blinded, confused, a presence of loyal servants.

19.1 Break away from sageliness, toss out wisdom People benefit one hundred times over

19.2 Break away from humanity, toss out morality People return to filial devotion and mothering

19.3 Break away from valuing, toss out profit Thieves and robbers are not in existence.

19.4 These three used as a basis for action are ornament, insufficient. So make present what principles?

19.5 See plainness Embrace true nature Reduce self-interest Limit desires.

20.1 Break off from studying, there is an absence of grief. Being individual or pandering to each other How do these differ? Valuing or hating each other What is the difference?

20.2 It looks like one cannot lack respect for what others put respect in Such reckless desertion! It is not yet centered, this way.

20.3 Collective mind is bright and sunny, gay and prosperous Like enjoying a sacrificial ox Like ascending a tower in springtime. The self alone, so moored! is not yet divined on the tortoise-shell Like being a baby-child before it smiles. Unattached, so unattached The self looks absent of a place to merge.

20.4 In the collective mind each is present of a surplus Yet the self alone appears to offer as a gift. The self is foolish, men's minds are also this way Unclear, so unclear.

20.5 Customs of men are clear, obvious The self alone is dark, indistinct Customs of men are curious, scrutinizing The self alone is tightly closed, shut off. So indifferent, it looks like the ocean Such a gusty wind, it looks ceaseless.

20.6 In the collective mind each possesses a cause Yet the self alone seems stubborn and rustic The self alone differs from relating to men Yet treasures nourishment in relating to the mother.

21.1 An aperture is the appearance of the ideal Only tao is appropriately followed.

21.2 The action of tao on things, Only elusive, only ungraspable. So ungraspable, so elusive At its center, the presence of form So elusive, so ungraspable At its center, the presence of things So secluded, so hard to see At its center, the presence of belief.

21.3 From ancient times reaching into the present its name does not depart Experience of the collective beginning happens.

21.4 Why do I happen to know the shape of the collective beginning is this way? It just happens.

22.1 Flexibility, then comes wholeness Being twisted, then comes straightness Emptiness, then comes fullness Shabbiness, then comes newness Scarcity, then comes obtainment Abundance, then comes perplexity.

22.2 Appropriately it happens that sages Embrace oneness Act as the model of the world

22.3 Are not showing themselves so they are luminous Are not justifying themselves so they are conspicuous Are not boasting of themselves so outstanding service is performed Are not bragging of themselves so they grow

22.4 In the end only lack contending So no one in the world is able to be contending with them.

22.5 In ancient times there was a saying, That which is flexible becomes whole. How can these be empty words? The essence, whole yet being merged together.

23.1 Rare words are natural. So the fluttering winds do not last all morning The sudden rainstorm does not last all day.

23.2 Who is it that acts this way? Heavens and earth. Heavens and earth still lack the ability for longevity Yet what relates to men is equal to this state of things?

23.3 So follow effort in things related to tao Be together with relating to tao Follow effort in things related to the ideal Be together with relating to the ideal Follow effort in things related to losing Be together with relating to losing.

23.4 What is together with things related to tao Tao also obtains joyfully What is together with things related to the ideal The ideal also obtains joyfully What is together with things related to losing Losing also obtains joyfully.

23.5 Belief without enough within A lack of belief in what is within happens.

24.1 Those on tiptoe are not standing firmly Those who stride are not moving
24.2 Those who show themselves are not luminous Those who justify themselves are not conspicuous
24.3 Those who boast of themselves are not of outstanding service Those who brag of themselves are not growing.
24.4 They that join tao also say Surplus food and redundant actions are somehow disliked So those present with tao are not dwelling there.

25.1 A presence of a thing mixed completely Before the birth of heavens and earth So lonely, so deserted Standing alone yet without deviating Working everywhere yet lacking danger Action of the mother of the world can happen.
25.2 I have no knowledge of its name Giving a word, I say tao. Stubbornly trying to name it I say great
25.3 Great, I say passing by Passing by, I say far-reaching Far-reaching, I say returning.
25.4 So tao is great, heavens are great, earth is great Kings are also great. In the center of the universe are four greatnesses Yet kings stand still, blending them into one.
25.5 Man is an offshoot of earth Earth is an offshoot of the heavens The heavens are an offshoot of tao Tao is an offshoot of the natural.

26.1 Heaviness acts as root of lightness Stillness acts as sovereign of agitation.
26.2 Appropriately it happens That sages travel throughout the day Without departing from heavy or light Even though fabulous views are present They dwell in great comfort and go about like this.
26.3 How would one be lord of 10000 war-chariots Yet have a body which is light in the world?
26.4 Following lightness comes loss of the root Following agitation comes loss of the sovereign.

27.1 Valuing going is absent of trace Valuing words are absent of flaw or censure With valuing reckoning, counters or policies are not used.
27.2 What is valuably shut Is absent of a barrier yet cannot be opened What is valuably tied Is absent of restraint or restriction yet cannot be untied.
27.3 Appropriately it happens that sages Entirely valuing help others, so others are not thrown away Entirely valuing help things, so things are not thrown away. Appropriately called following the luminance.
27.4 So those who value others teach those who lack valuing others Those who lack valuing others are a resource of those who value others.
27.5 Without treasuring a teacher, or without loving a resource Even the wise have great misconception. Appropriately called an important subtlety.

28.1 Know what is male Keep to what is female Act as the ravine of the world. Acting as the ravine of the world The ideal entirely lacks separation Return, merge with, relate to a newborn child.
28.2 Know what is white Keep to what is black Act as the model of the world. Acting as the model of the world The ideal entirely lacks error Return, merge with, relate to an absence of reaching limits.
28.3 Know what is honorable Keep to what is humiliating Act as the valley of the world. Acting as the valley of the world The ideal entirely becomes sufficient Return, merge with, relate to true nature.
28.4 True nature broken and scattered Next comes action as tools Being used by sages Next comes action as mediums for growth. In this way great tailors are not cutting.

29.1 It is attained, the desire to grab the world yet be acting on it I see it has not been satisfied yet
29.2 The world, a spirited tool, cannot act either. Those who act are spoiling Those who take hold of are losing.
29.3 So of things Some lead and some follow Some gust and some puff lightly Some are strong and some thin Some support and some destroy.
29.4 Appropriately it happens that sages are Apart from extremes Apart from extravagance Apart from excess.

30.1 When it happens that tao assists men and lords The force of the soldier is not in the world. What takes effort is likely to return.
30.2 Briars and thorns grow within the dwelling place of the army Behind a great military comes the seed for a faminous year.
30.3 Those who value Achieve results yet stop Are without venturing to strive to hold
30.4 Achieve results yet do not brag Achieve results yet do not boast Achieve results yet do not be arrogant Achieve results yet without being done Achieve results yet do not strive.
30.5 Things reach the prime and then are old? Appropriately called not in accordance with tao What is not in accordance with tao comes to an early end.

31.1 In the end those with fine strategies lack the tools of fortune They have things which are somehow disliked So those who are present with tao are not dwelling in them.

31.2 The master-child resides in and comes to treasure the left Using strategy, come to treasure the right

31.3 -

31.4 Those with strategy lack the tools of fortune They have not the tools of the master-child When using them in the absence of a foreseeable need Uncaring, indifferent actions are better.

31.5 Conquer yet without embellishing Yet those who are embellishing justify joy in slaughtering men In the end those who are joyful in slaughtering men Cannot come to achieve their aspired relation with the world.

31.6 -

32.1 The tao entirely lacks a name Although its true nature is tiny Noone in the world is able to methodize it either.

32.2 If nobles and kings are able to keep to it The 10000 things attain self-spontaneity

32.3 The heavens and earth join with each other and it rains sweet dew It is the command of noone but people cooperate.

32.4 Once measuring begins names are present Names are also grasped and possessed In the end the knowledge of stopping also follows With knowledge of stopping lack of danger can happen.

32.5 Analogically, tao being in the world Is just like how the streams and valleys relate to rivers and seas.

33.1 Those who know men are wise Those with self-knowledge are luminous

33.2 Those who conquer others possess strength Those who conquer themselves possess force

33.3 Those with knowledge of enough are wealthy Those who strive to go possess aspiration

33.4 Those who are not losing their place are long-lasting Those who die yet without perishing are long-lived.

34.1 Great tao flowing everywhere It can be left or right

34.2 All things depend on it yet exist yet without being denied. Outstanding service is performed without the presence of names It clothes and cultivates the 10000 things Yet without acting as lord.

34.3 With entireness absent of desire One can name in relation to smallness

34.4 The 10000 things merge and blend Yet without action as lord one can name great actions.

34.5 What is entirely without a self to act great happens So it is able to perfect what is great.

35.1 Take hold of the great form The world comes toward Comes toward without harm Peace and stability in the extreme.

35.2 Music and handing out dainties Passing guests stop

35.3 Things belonging with tao expressed Its blandness is equal to its lack of flavor. Observing lacks enough sight Listening lacks enough hearing Using lacks enough grasp.

36.1 Attain the desire for inhaling Firmly seed exhaling Attain the desire of lessening Firmly seed strengthening Attain the desire of discarding Firmly seed allowing back Attain the desire of taking by force Firmly seed giving away

36.2 Appropriately called subtle luminance. Yielding conquers the firm Lessening conquers the strong.

36.3 Fish cannot escape relating to deep water A direction for man cannot happen with tools benefitting a nation.

37.1 Tao, entirely absent of acting Yet is absent of being without acting.

37.2 If nobles and kings are able to keep to it The 10000 things attain self-transformation Transforming yet desiring to do. When I am able to calm the restless An absence of naming true nature happens. With an absence of naming true nature In the end an absence of desire is also obtained

37.3 Without desire tranquillity happens The world attains self-settlement

38.1 Higher ideal lacks ideal Appropriately presence of the ideal happens Lower ideal lacks a loss of ideal Appropriately absence of the ideal happens.

38.2 Higher ideal is absent of acting yet absent of causing acting Lower ideal is acting yet present with causing acting.

38.3 Higher humanity is acting yet absent of causing acting Higher morality is acting yet present with causing acting Higher propriety is acting yet the response of noone appears Next comes grabbing the arm yet throwing it aside.

38.4 So lose tao yet back ideal Lose ideal yet back humanity Lose humanity yet back morality Lose morality yet back propriety. In the end those with propriety Have loyal belief without warmth yet the leader of being confused

38.5 Those with knowledge of what comes next The flower of Tao yet the origin of being fooled.

38.6 Appropriately it happens that the great husband Dwells in what is spread thickly, not residing in what lacks warmth Dwells in the fruit, not residing in the flower. So detach from that, grab this.

39.1 From old those which are with one: Heavens with one, settling happens Earth with one, a direction happens Spirit with one, animation happens
39.2 Valley with one, fullness happens The 10000 things with one, giving birth happens Nobles and kings with one, pure action in the world happens. These are the results:
39.3 Heavens absent of settling will, I am afraid, crack Earth absent of direction will, I am afraid, shake Spirit absent of animation will, I am afraid, fall asleep
39.4 Valley absent of fullness will, I am afraid, be used up The 10000 things absent of giving birth will, I am afraid, die off Nobles and kings absent of pure action will, I am afraid, be set back.
39.5 So it happens that the common acts as a root to the treasured The lower acts as a base to the higher.
39.6 Appropriately it happens That kings and nobles call themselves orphaned, widowed, unfavored. Does it not happen that the common acts as root to the anomalous?
39.7 Are not these the same? So incur praise absent of praising
39.8 Be without desiring to tinkle, tinkle, as if jade Clatter, clatter, as if stone.

40.1 That which returns is tao moving That which lessens is tao using.
40.2 The world, the 10000 things give birth in relation to presence Presence gives birth in relation to absence.

41.1 Better knights hear of tao Dutifully, yet they are practicing it Average knights hear of tao They look aware, they look unaware
41.2 Lesser knights hear of tao They have great laughing. Without laughing, there's not enough of the action of tao happening.
41.3 So long-established words are present. Luminous tao looks dark Advancing tao looks like it is falling back Level tao looks uneven Better ideal looks like a valley Great whiteness looks spotted
41.4 Extensive ideal looks like it lacks enough Established ideal looks unsteady Durable ideal looks changeable Great squares are absent of corners Great tools are slowly perfected Great music sounds faint Great form lacks shape.
41.5 Tao is hidden, absent from name In the end, Only tao values lending at interest and moreover perfects.

42.1 Tao gives birth to one One gives birth to two Two gives birth to three Three gives birth to the 10000 things.
42.2 All things carry yin and embrace yang With their blended animus, action in harmony happens.
42.3 In the time of men they dislike orphaned, widowed, unfavored Yet kings and lords regard such as praiseworthy.
42.4 -
42.5 Men have told others I also am telling Those who are striving and fierce die incomplete. I use this as the father of my teaching.

43.1 The most yielding reach of the world Gallops around the most rigid reach of the world Absence of presence enters absence of space. Appropriately I come to know There is presence of advantage in the absence of acting.
43.2 Telling without words Advantage in the absence of acting The world rarely reaches this.

44.1 Name or body, which is more prized? Body or wealth, which is more abundant? Obtaining or losing, which is the greater fault?
44.2 So appropriately Being very fond seeds great cost What is abundantly stashed seeds heavy loss.
44.3 Know enough, lack disgrace Know to stop, lack danger Growth and the long-lasting can happen.

45.1 Great perfection looks incomplete Used it lacks impairment Great fullness looks like it needs more Used it lacks exhaustion. Great straightness looks bent
45.2 Great skill looks awkward Great eloquence looks like it stutters.
45.3 Restlessness conquers the cold Stillness conquers the heated Clarity and stillness act on the world, ordering it.

46.1 When the world is present with tao It happens that even galloping horses fertilize When the world is absent of tao War-horses exist in the suburbs.
46.2 No calamity is greater than relating to not knowing enough No fault is greater than relating to the desire to obtain.
46.3 So know the enough of being enough There is entirely enough to go with each.

47.1 Without going out through doors know the world Without seeing out through windows see the tao of the heavens Who travels extremely far knows extremely little.
47.2 Appropriately it happens that sages Are without going out yet know Are without seeing out yet name Are without acting yet perfect.

48.1 Act academic, daily gain Act tao, daily lose. Losing, again lose
48.2 It happens, reaching relating to the absence of acting Absence of acting yet absence of being without acting.
48.3 Grabbing the world, an entire absence of effort happens Liking entirely the presence of effort Is insufficient to precede grabbing the world.

49.1 Sages are entirely absent of mind It happens that the mind of the one hundred families acts as a mind.
49.2 Those who are valued I am valuing Those who lack value I also am valuing Ideal valuing.
49.3 Those who are believed I am believing Those who are not believed I also am believing Ideal believing.
49.4 Sages in the world inhale Inhale, act, mix with the mind of the world. The one hundred families concentrate their ears and eyes Sages are each being children.

50.1 Life going out, death entering
50.2 There is living following 13 There is dying following 13. The life of man strives toward the realm of death, also 13. Why is it so in the end? It happens, it is life lived thickly.
50.3 As a fact it is well known that those skilled in preserving life Travel the land without running into rhinos and tigers The militia enters and the strategy is to lack armor.
50.4 The rhino is absent of a place to thrust its horn The tiger is absent of a place to affix its claw The army is absent of a place to admit its blade. Why is it so in the end? It happens, they are absent of the realm of death.

51.1 Tao is giving birth Ideal is raising Things are embodying The environment is perfecting. Appropriately it happens that of the 10000 things None lack venerating tao yet treasuring ideal.
51.2 The venerability of tao, the treasurability of the ideal In the end it is the command of noone yet it is entirely natural. So tao is giving birth Ideal is raising Growing, rearing, balancing, maturing, deepening, enveloping.
51.3 Giving birth yet without possessing Acting yet without relying Growing yet without directing Appropriately called insightful ideal.

52.1 The world is present of an origin It happens that this acts as the mother of the world. Grasp and hold what is the mother Knowledge of what is the child happens
52.2 Grasp knowledge of what is the child Return, keep to what is the mother Till the end the body lacks danger.
52.3 Cork its bottle Obstruct its door Eventually the body lacks straining.
52.4 Open its bottle Complete its effort Eventually the body lacks hope.
52.5 Seeing the small say luminous Keeping to yielding say strong
52.6 Using what is bright Return, merge with what is luminous. An absence of offering bodily misfortune as a gift Is appropriately called learning entirely.

53.1 Supposing myself to have as little knowledge as I do I am doing things relating to great tao It alone imposes appropriate respect.
53.2 Great tao is very even yet people are fond of byways
53.3 Courts are very divided Fields are very weedy Granaries are very empty
53.4 Clothes are ornamented and patterned Sharp swords are worn Food and drink satiate Money and goods are present in surplus. Appropriately called robbery, extravagance This way is also not tao.

54.1 That which is valuably established is not weeded out That which is valuably embraced is not shed off. It happens, children and grandchildren Sacrifice to ancestors without reflection.
54.2 Tending to relating to the body Its ideal will be real Tending to relating to the family Its ideal will be bubbling over Tending to relating to the community Its ideal will be growing Tending to relating to the nation Its ideal will be abundant Tending to relating to the world Its ideal will be everywhere.
54.3 So body happens seeing body Family happens seeing family Community happens seeing community Nation happens seeing nation World happens seeing world.
54.4 Why does it happen that I know the nature of the world? This just happens.

55.1 Holding the richness of the ideal in the mouth Compares to relating to a newborn child. Poisonous bugs are without stinging Fierce animals are without grasping Birds of prey are without pouncing. There are weak bones and yielding tendons, yet a firm grasp
55.2 The male does not yet know union with the female Yet its virility is strong It has essence even at the extreme.
55.3 Screaming all day yet without being hoarse Harmonizing even at the extreme. Knowing harmony say entireness Knowing entireness say luminous In accord with giving birth say happy The mind results in animus, say strong.

55.4 -

55.5 Things reach the prime and then grow old? What is called this is without tao. What is without tao comes to an early end.

56.1 Those who know are without words Those with words are without knowing.

56.2 Corking its bottle Obstructing its door Blunting its sharpness Untying its tangles Harmonizing its brightness Being together with the dusty earth Appropriately called insightful togetherness.

56.3 So one cannot obtain it yet be attached One cannot obtain it yet be detached One cannot obtain it yet benefit One cannot obtain it yet be harmed One cannot obtain it yet treasure One cannot obtain it yet consider as common. So it acts as the treasure of the world.

57.1 When governing the nation happens correctly Surprising use of strategy happens. Absent of effort grabbing the world happens. Why do I know this is so? This just happens.

57.2 The world has an abundance of prohibitions and taboos Yet people become increasingly inadequate People have an abundance of beneficial tools Confusion multiplies in the families of the nation

57.3 Men have an abundance of skills and cleverness Surprising things arise and multiply Laws and decrees multiply conspicuously Robbers and thieves are present in abundance.

57.4 So sages say I am absent of action yet people transform themselves I am fond of stillness yet people correct themselves

57.5 I am absent of effort yet people are of themselves wealthy I am absent from desire yet people of themselves exhibit true nature.

58.1 They who administrate are covered, muffled Their people are pure, honest They who administrate are exacting, scrutinizing Their people are incomplete, deficient.

58.2 Such misfortune! The place of happiness place is to lean upon it Such happiness!

58.3 The place of misfortune is to be suppressed. Who knows its limit? It is absent from the correct. The correct returns, acting surprising The valued returns, acting as evil spirits. The dirt in the eye of men, It is solid, everyday, long-lasting.

58.4 Appropriately it happens that sages are Square yet without cutting Pointed yet without piercing Straight yet not unbridled Bright yet not dazzling.

59.1 In governing people Noone compares efforts of the heavens to restraint.

59.2 In the end only restraint is appropriately called quickly resolving What is called quickly resolving has heavy accumulation of ideal. Following heavy accumulation of ideal Comes absence of lacking conquering Following absence of lacking conquering Noone knows limits

59.3 When noone knows limits Presence of a nation can happen. In the presence of the mother of a nation Growth and longevity may happen.

59.4 Appropriately called Deep roots, firm stalks, growth, life, longevity, looking at tao.

60.1 Governing a great nation looks like cooking tiny fish.

60.2 When it happens that tao is present in the world What is clever lacks spirit

60.3 What is not clever lacks spirit What has spirit is not wounding man What has no spirit is not wounding man. Sages also are not wounding man.

60.4 In the end both are without wounding each other So ideal is reached, merges, comes within.

61.1 Those which are great nations flow and spread lower The intersection of the world The female of the world. The female entirely conquers the male through stillness

61.2 It happens that stillness acts lower. So when a great nation is lower than a tiny nation It next grabs the tiny nation When a tiny nation is lower than a great nation It next grabs the great nation.

61.3 So some are lower and it happens they grab Some are lower and yet they grab.

61.4 Without fail a great nation desires to bring together and rear others Without fail a tiny nation desires to enter into the efforts of others.

61.5 In the end for both of these to acquire their desired position Those which are great appropriately act low.

62.1 That which is tao is treasurehouse for the 10000 things Treasure of the valuing man Place of refuge for the man who is not valuing.

62.2 Embellished words can cause respect to be marketed Doing valued things can cause lavish praise to enter Men who are not valuing, why be rejecting their presence?

62.3 So establish the emperor Install three ministers Even though it happens That the gift of the large jade disk is preceded by a team of horses It can not compare to sitting, emulating this tao.

62.4 Why did it happen that in ancient times There were those who treasured this tao? Did they go without saying Seek and finding happens Possess faults and escape from the anomalous happens? So it acts as the treasure of the world

63.1 Acting absent of acting Effort absent of effort Tasting absent of tasting

63.2 Great, small, abundant, few Repay hatred, ideal happens.

63.3 Planning the difficult relates to what is easy Acting great relates to what is small

63.4 The difficult efforts of the world seed doing related to what is easy The great efforts of the world seed doing related to what is small.

63.5 Appropriately it happens That sages eventually lack great action So they are able to perfect what is great.

63.6 In the end light promises seed scanty belief Abundant easiness seeds abundant difficulty.

63.7 Appropriately it happens That sages see all things as being equally difficult So eventually an absence of difficulty is with them.

64.1 What is peaceful is easily maintained What is not begun is easily planned What is fragile is easily shattered What is tiny is easily scattered.

64.2 Acting relates to the not yet present Governing relates to the not yet confused.

64.3 A tree as big as the embrace of a man is born relating to very tiny shoots A nine story tower is raised relating to a pile of earth A journey of a thousand li begins in relating to where you stand.

64.4 Those who act are spoiling Those who take hold of are losing Appropriately it happens that sages are absent of action So there is an absence of spoiling Are absent of taking hold of So there is an absence of losing.

64.5 The following of people of effort in the entire Relates to perfecting part yet spoiling Following care throughout as if just beginning

64.6 Comes an absence of spoiling effort. Appropriately it happens that sages Desire without desiring Are without treasuring goods difficult to obtain Learn without learning Return to the place where the collective mind passes And come to support the self-nature of the 10000 things Yet without venturing to act.

65.1 Those ancients who valued acting in tao Did not come to be luminous People attaining it came to be foolish.

65.2 The difficulty with governing people? It happens that what is wise is abundant. So if it happens that wisdom governs the nation It is the enemy of the nation If it does not happen that wisdom governs the nation It is the good luck of the nation

65.3 Those who know both these things Also investigate the patterns of entireness To know and investigate patterns is appropriately called insightful ideal.

65.4 Insightful ideal goes with the penetrating, with the far-reaching With it things go with turning back And will reach the great alignment.

66.1 In the place of rivers and seas The ability to act as that which is the king of one hundred valleys happens It happens they value being low So the ability to act as the king of one hundred valleys happens.

66.2 Appropriately it happens that Desire to be above people seeds the occurrence of words being low Desire to precede people seeds the occurrence of the body following

66.3 Appropriately it happens that sages Dwell above yet people lack heaviness Dwell in front yet people are without being held back Appropriately it happens That the world joyfully supports them yet without tiring.

66.4 It happens they lack contention So in the world no one is able to be contending with them.

67.1 In the world each says My tao is great and seems to lack resemblance In the end only great therefore seems to lack resemblance. It looks like resemblance goes with the long-lasting With what is tiny as well.

67.2 In the end I possess three principles I am obtaining yet defending One, say compassion Two, say thrift Three say lack of venturing to act to precede the world.

67.3 Compassion, so be able to be brave Thrift, so be able to expand Lack venturing to act to precede the world So be able to perfect tools of growth.

67.4 Right now, abandon compassion just to be brave Abandon thrift just to expand Abandon being behind just to precede Death goes with these.

67.5 In the end with compassion A war happens and next comes conquering Keeping to it happens and next comes solidity. The heavens attain helping It happens that compassion is defending.

68.1 Those who value acting as sergeants lack ferocity Those who value war lack anger

68.2 Those who value conquering lack engagement Those who value using men are acting low.

68.3 Appropriately called ideal of lacking being contending Appropriately called strength to be using men Appropriately called distributing the ancient limit of the heavens.

69.1 Strategists possess words I am without venturing to act as lord yet act as guest Without venturing to enter an inch yet fall back a foot.

69.2 Appropriately called Going absent of going Grabbing absent of an arm Throwing absent of opposition Taking hold of absent of an enemy.

69.3 No misfortune is greater than relating to light opposition Light opposition severs and destroys my principles.

69.4 So when opposing strategies escalate each other Conquering goes with those who mourn.

70.1 My words Are very easy to know Are very easy to practice. In the world Noone is able to know Noone is able to practice.

70.2 Words possess an ancestor Efforts possess a sovereign. In the end only with absence of knowledge Appropriate lack of self-knowledge happens Knowledge of that which is the self is rare And then that which is the self is treasured.

70.3 Appropriately it happens that sages have A covering of coarse cloth A bosom of jade.

71.1 Knowing, lack of knowing Better, lack of knowing Knowing, a disease. In the end only when the disease is sick Appropriate lack of the disease happens.

71.2 Sages lack the disease It happens the disease was sick. Appropriately lack of the disease happens.

72.1 People lack respect for impressive strength And then greatly impressive strength is reached.

72.2 An absence of improper familiarity for what is their place of residence An absence of detesting what is their place of living In the end only without detesting Appropriate lack of detesting happens

72.3 Appropriately it happens that sages Know themselves without displaying themselves Are fond of themselves without treasuring themselves. So detach from that, grab this.

73.1 Bravery in relation to venturing, next comes being killed Bravery in relation to lack of venturing, next comes being mobile

73.2 Each of these two benefits some, harms some. The place of the heavens dislikes Who knows why it is so? Appropriately it happens that sages see it just as difficult.

73.3 The tao of the heavens Without contending yet values conquering Without words yet values responding Without summoning yet attracts to itself Is easy-natured yet values a place for everything.

73.4 The net of the heavens is vast, expansive A coarse mesh yet without loss.

74.1 When people lack respect for death How does it happen that death looks threatening?

74.2 Suppose people entirely respect death Yet there are those who act strange. I may obtain hold of them yet who would venture to be killing them?

74.3 Entireness possesses that which is the master killer, killing. In the end taking the place Of that which is the master killer, killing Is appropriately called Taking the place of the great carpenter, carving. In the end take the place of the great carpenter, carving It is rarely true that a lack of wounding the hand goes with this.

75.1 The hunger of people It happens that those above feed by taxing abundantly Appropriately hunger happens.

75.2 The difficulty in governing people It happens that those above possess action Appropriately the difficulty in governing happens.

75.3 The lightness of people at death It happens that those above reach for the thickness of life Appropriately lightness at death happens. In the end only those who are absent of acting to live Are appropriately wise in relating to treasuring life.

76.1 The life of man is also yielding, weak His death is also rigid, unyielding.

76.2 The 10000 things, the grass and trees Their living is also yielding, fragile Their dying is also dried up, withered.

76.3 So that which is rigid, unyielding is the pupil of dying That which is yielding, weak is the pupil of living

76.4 Appropriately it happens that With unyielding soldiers, next comes lack of conquering With an unyielding tree, next comes being attacked.

76.5 Dwelling in the unyielding and great is worse Dwelling in the yielding and supple is better.

77.1 The tao of the heavens, it is just like opening up a bow With that which towers being restrained That which is lowered being lifted That which has surplus being decreased That which lacks enough being supplemented.

77.2 The tao of the heavens Decreasing in the presence of surplus Yet supplementing what lacks enough. The tao of man, and then it lacks being so Reducing what lacks enough Coming to esteem the presence of surplus.

77.3 Who is able to come to esteem presence of surplus in the world? Only those present with tao.

77.4 Appropriately it happens that sages Act yet without relying Are of outstanding service yet without dwelling therein They lack desire to display principles.

78.1 In the world nothing is supple and weak in relation to water Yet of those things which attack the firm and unyielding Nothing is able to do better In what is absent, this easily happens.

78.2 Being supple conquers the unyielding Being weak conquers the firm In the world Noone is without knowing it Noone is able to practice it.

78.3 Appropriately it happens that sages say He who accepts the disgrace of a nation Is appropriately called lord of the grain shrine He who accepts the misfortune of a nation Is appropriately acting as the king of the world. Correct words look like they turn back.

79.1 Harmonize great resentment Seed the presence of a surplus of resentment How can valuing actions happen peacefully?

79.2 Appropriately it happens that sages Take hold of the left of a contract Yet lack censure in relating to men.

79.3 Presence of ideal controls the agreement Absence of ideal controls its resolution.

79.4 The tao of heaven is absent of favorites It is entirely with the valuing man.

80.1 A tiny nation, few people Suppose the presence of 10 or one hundred times too many tools Yet they are unused Suppose people heavy with death Yet lack moving far.

80.2 Even present with boats and carriages There is an absence of a place to be riding Even present with armor and weapons There is an absence of a place to be displaying them.

80.3 Suppose men return to knotting cords and using them What is eaten is sweet What serves as clothing is beautiful What is a home is peaceful What is common is joyful.

80.4 Nearby nations overlook each other Crowing, barking sounds are heard by each other People reach old age and die Without coming and going between each other

81.1 Believed words lack embellishment Embellished words lack belief.

81.2 Those who value lack argument Those who argue lack valuing

81.3 Those who know lack learning Those who learn lack knowing.

81.4 The sages are without accumulating Grasping, it happens they act Others later gain presence Grasping, it happens they give Others later gain abundance.

81.5 The tao of the heavens Benefitting yet without spoiling The tao of the sages Acting yet without contending.

Lin Yutang version

1. On the Absolute Tao

The Tao that can be told of
Is not the Absolute Tao;
The Names that can be given
Are not Absolute Names.

The Nameless is the origin of Heaven and Earth;
The Named is the Mother of All Things.

Therefore:

Oftentimes, one strips oneself of passion
In order to see the Secret of Life;
Oftentimes, one regards life with passion,
In order to see its manifest forms.

These two (the Secret and its manifestations)
Are (in their nature) the same;
They are given different names
When they become manifest.

They may both be called the Cosmic Mystery:
Reaching from the Mystery into the Deeper Mystery
Is the Gate to the Secret of All Life.

2. The Rise of Relative Opposites

When the people of the Earth all know beauty as beauty,
There arises (the recognition of) ugliness.
When the people of the Earth all know the good as good,
There arises (the recognition of) evil.

Therefore:

Being and non-being interdepend in growth;
Difficult and easy interdepend in completion;
Long and short interdepend in contrast;
High and low interdepend in position;
Tones and voice interdepend in harmony;
Front and behind interdepend in company.

Therefore the Sage:

Manages affairs without action;
Preaches the doctrine without words;
All things take their rise, but he does not turn away from them;
He gives them life, but does not take possession of them;
He acts, but does not appropriate;
Accomplishes, but claims no credit.
It is because he lays claim to no credit
That the credit cannot be taken away from him.

3. Action Without Deeds

Exalt not the wise,
So that the people shall not scheme and contend;
Prize not rare objects,

So that the people shall not steal;
Shut out from site the things of desire,
So that the people's hearts shall not be disturbed.

Therefore in the government of the Sage:

He keeps empty their hearts
Makes full their bellies,
Discourages their ambitions,
Strengthens their frames;
So that the people may be innocent of knowledge and desires.
And the cunning ones shall not presume to interfere.
By action without deeds
May all live in peace.

4. The Character of Tao

Tao is a hollow vessel,
And its use is inexhaustible!
Fathomless!
Like the fountain head of all things,
Its sharp edges rounded off,
Its tangles untied,
Its light tempered,
Its turmoil submerged,
Yet dark like deep water it seems to remain.
I do not know whose Son it is,
An image of what existed before God.

5. Nature

Nature is unkind:
It treats the creation like sacrificial straw-dogs.
The Sage is unkind:
He treats the people like sacrificial straw-dogs.

How the universe is like a bellows!
Empty, yet it gives a supply that never fails;
The more it is worked, the more it brings forth.

By many words is wit exhausted.
Rather, therefore, hold to the core.

6. The Spirit of the Valley

The Spirit of the Valley never dies.
It is called the Mystic Female.
The Door of the Mystic Female
Is the root of Heaven and Earth.

Continuously, continuously,
It seems to remain.
Draw upon it
And it serves you with ease.

7. Living for Others

The universe is everlasting.
The reason the universe is everlasting
Is that it does not live for Self.
Therefore it can long endure.

Therefore the Sage puts himself last,
And finds himself in the foremost place;
Regards his body as accidental,
And his body is thereby preserved.
Is it not because he does not live for Self
That his Self is realized?

8. Water

The best of men is like water;
Water benefits all things
And does not compete with them.
It dwells in (the lowly) places that all disdain -
Wherein it comes near to the Tao.

In his dwelling, (the Sage) loves the (lowly) earth;
In his heart, he loves what is profound;
In his relations with others, he loves kindness;
In his words, he loves sincerity;
In government, he loves peace;
In business affairs, he loves ability;
In his actions, he loves choosing the right time.
It is because he does not contend
That he is without reproach.

9. The Danger of Overweening Success

Stretch (a bow) to the very full,
And you will wish you had stopped in time.
Temper a (sword-edge) to its very sharpest,
And the edge will not last long.
When gold and jade fill your hall,
You will not be able to keep them safe.
To be proud with wealth and honor
Is to sow seeds of one's own downfall.
Retire when your work is done,
Such is Heaven's way.

10. Embracing the One

In embracing the One with your soul,
Can you never forsake the Tao?
In controlling your vital force to achieve gentleness,
Can you become like the new-born child?
In cleansing and purifying your Mystic vision,
Can you strive after perfection?
In loving the people and governing the kingdom,
Can you rule without interference?
In opening and shutting the Gate of Heaven,
Can you play the part of the Female?
In comprehending all knowledge,
Can you renounce the mind?

11. The Utility of Not-Being

Thirty spokes unite around the nave;
From their not-being (loss of their individuality)
Arises the utility of the wheel.
Mold clay into a vessel;
From its not-being (in the vessel's hollow)
Arises the utility of the vessel.

Cut out doors and windows in the house (-wall),
From their not-being (empty space) arises the utility of the house.
Therefore by the existence of things we profit.
And by the non-existence of things we are served.

12. The Senses

The five colors blind the eyes of man;
The five musical notes deafen the ears of man;
The five flavors dull the taste of man;
Horse-racing, hunting and chasing madden the minds of man;
Rare, valuable goods keep their owners awake at night.

Therefore the Sage:

Provides for the belly and not the eye.
Hence, he rejects the one and accepts the other.

13. Praise and Blame

"Favor and disgrace cause one dismay;
What we value and what we fear are within our Self."

What does this mean:

"Favor and disgrace cause one dismay?"
Those who receive a favor from above
Are dismayed when they receive it,
And dismayed when they lose it.

What does this mean:

"What we value and what we fear are within our Self?"
We have fears because we have a self.
When we do not regard that self as self,
What have we to fear?

Therefore he who values the world as his self
May then be entrusted with the government of the world;
And he who loves the world as his self -
The world may then be entrusted to his care.

14. Prehistoric Origins

Looked at, but cannot be seen -
That is called the Invisible (yi).
Listened to, but cannot be heard -
That is called the Inaudible (hsi).
Grasped at, but cannot be touched -
That is called the Intangible (wei).
These three elude our inquiries
And hence blend and become One.

Not by its rising, is there light,
Nor by its sinking, is there darkness.
Unceasing, continuous,
It cannot be defined,
And reverts again to the realm of nothingness.

That is why it is called the Form of the Formless,
The Image of Nothingness.
That is why it is called the Elusive:
Meet it and you do not see its face;

Follow it and you do not see its back.

15. The Wise Ones of Old

The wise ones of old had subtle wisdom and depth of understanding,
So profound that they could not be understood.

And because they could not be understood,

Perforce must they be so described:

Cautious, like crossing a wintry stream,
Irresolute, like one fearing danger all around,
Grave, like one acting as guest,
Self-effacing, like ice beginning to melt,
Genuine, like a piece of undressed wood,
Open-minded, like a valley,
And mixing freely, like murky water.

Who can find repose in a muddy world?

By lying still, it becomes clear.

Who can maintain his calm for long?

By activity, it comes back to life.

He who embraces this Tao

Guards against being over-full.

Because he guards against being over-full,

He is beyond wearing out and renewal.

16. Knowing the Eternal Law

Attain the utmost in Passivity,

Hold firm to the basis of Quietude.

The myriad things take shape and rise to activity,

But I watch them fall back to their repose.

Like vegetation that luxuriantly grows

But returns to the root (soil) from which it springs.

To return to the root is Repose;

It is called going back to one's Destiny.

Going back to one's Destiny is to find the Eternal Law.

To know the Eternal Law is Enlightenment.

And not to know the Eternal Law

Is to court disaster.

He who knows the Eternal Law is tolerant;

Being tolerant, he is impartial;

Being impartial, he is kingly;

Being kingly, he is in accord with Nature;

Being in accord with Nature, he is in accord with Tao;

Being in accord with Tao, he is eternal,

And his whole life is preserved from harm.

17. Rulers

Of the best rulers

The people (only) know that they exist;

The next best the love and praise;

The next they fear;

And the next they revile.

When they do not command the people's faith,

Some will lose faith in them,
And then they resort to oaths!
But (of the best) when their task is accomplished,
their work done,
The people all remark, "We have done it ourselves."

18. The Decline of Tao

On the decline of the great Tao,
The doctrine of "humanity" and "justice" arose.
When knowledge and cleverness appeared,
Great hypocrisy followed in its wake.

When the six relationships no longer lived at peace,
There was (praise of) "kind parents" and "filial sons."

When a country fell into chaos and misrule,
There was (praise of) "loyal ministers."

19. Realize the Simple Self

Banish wisdom, discard knowledge,
And the people shall profit a hundredfold;
Banish "humanity," discard "justice,"
And the people shall recover love of their kin;
Banish cunning, discard "utility,"
And the thieves and brigands shall disappear.
As these three touch the externals and are inadequate,
The people have need of what they can depend upon:

Reveal thy simple self,
Embrace thy original nature,
Check thy selfishness,
Curtail thy desires.

20. The World and I

Banish learning, and vexations end.
Between "Ah!" and "Ough!"
How much difference is there?
Between "good" and "evil"
How much difference is there?"
That which men fear
Is indeed to be feared;
But, alas, distant yet is the dawn (of awakening)!

The people of the world are merry-making,
As if partaking of the sacrificial feasts,
As if mounting the terrace in spring;
I alone am mild, like one unemployed,
Like a new-born babe that cannot yet smile,
Unattached, like one without a home.

The people of the world have enough and to spare,
But I am like one left out,
My heart must be that of a fool,
Being muddled, nebulous!

The vulgar are knowing, luminous;

I alone am dull, confused.
The vulgar are clever, self-assured;
I alone, depressed.
Patient as the sea,
Adrift, seemingly aimless.

The people of the world all have a purpose;
I alone appear stubborn and uncouth.
I alone differ from the other people,
And value drawing sustenance from the Mother.

21. Manifestations of Tao
The marks of great Character
Follow alone from the Tao.

The thing that is called Tao
Is elusive, evasive.
Evasive, elusive,
Yet latent in it are forms.
Elusive, evasive,
Yet latent in it are objects.
Dark and dim,
Yet latent in it is the life-force.
The life-force being very true,
Latent in it are evidences.

From the days of old till now
Its Named (manifested forms) have never ceased,
By which we may view the Father of All Things.
How do I know the shape of the Father of All Things?
Through these (manifested forms)!

22. Futility of Contention
To yield is to be preserved whole.
To be bent is to become straight.
To be hollow is to be filled.
To be tattered is to be renewed.
To be in want is to possess.
To have plenty is to be confused.

Therefore the Sage embraces the One,
And becomes the model of the world.
He does not reveal himself,
And is therefore luminous.
He does not justify himself,
And is therefore far-famed.
He does not boast of himself,
And therefore people give him credit.
He does not pride himself,
And is therefore the chief among men.

Is it not indeed true, as the ancients say,
"To yield is to be preserved whole?"
Thus he is preserved and the world does him homage.

23. Identification with Tao

Nature says few words:

Hence it is that a squall lasts not a whole morning.

A rainstorm continues not a whole day.

Where do they come from?

From Nature.

Even Nature does not last long (in its utterances),

How much less should human beings?

Therefore it is that:

He who follows the Tao is identified with the Tao.

He who follows Character (Teh) is identified with Character.

He who abandons (Tao) is identified with abandonment (of Tao).

He who is identified with Tao -

Tao is also glad to welcome him.

He who is identified with character -

Character is also glad to welcome him.

He who is identified with abandonment -

Abandonment is also glad to welcome him.

He who has not enough faith

Will not be able to command faith from others.

24. The Dregs and Tumors of Virtue

He who stands on tiptoe does not stand (firm);

He who strains his strides does not walk (well);

He who reveals himself is not luminous;

He who justifies himself is not far-famed;

He who boasts of himself is not given credit;

He who prides himself is not chief among men.

These in the eyes of Tao

Are called "the dregs and tumors of Virtue,"

Which are things of disgust.

Therefore the man of Tao spurns them.

25. The Four Eternal Models

Before the Heaven and Earth existed

There was something nebulous:

Silent, isolated,

Standing alone, changing not,

Eternally revolving without fail,

Worthy to be the Mother of All Things.

I do not know its name

And address it as Tao.

If forced to give it a name, I shall call it "Great."

Being great implies reaching out in space,

Reaching out in space implies far-reaching,

Far-reaching implies reversion to the original point.

Therefore:

Tao is Great,

The Heaven is great,

The Earth is great,

The King is also great.

There are the Great Four in the universe,

And the King is one of them.

Man models himself after the Earth;

The Earth models itself after Heaven;

The Heaven models itself after Tao;
Tao models itself after nature.

26. Heaviness and Lightness

The Solid is the root of the light;
The Quiescent is the master of the Hasty.

Therefore the Sage travels all day
Yet never leaves his provision-cart.
In the midst of honor and glory,
He lives leisurely, undisturbed.

How can the ruler of a great country
Make light of his body in the empire (by rushing about)?
In light frivolity, the Center is lost;
In hasty action, self-mastery is lost.

27. On Stealing the Light

A good runner leaves no track.
A good speech leaves no flaws for attack.
A good reckoner makes use of no counters.
A well-shut door makes use of no bolts,
And yet cannot be opened.
A well-tied knot makes use of no rope,
And yet cannot be untied.

Therefore the Sage is good at helping men;
For that reason there is no rejected (useless) person.
He is good at saving things;
For that reason there is nothing rejected.
- This is called stealing the Light.

Therefore the good man is the Teacher of the bad.
And the bad man is the lesson of the good.

He who neither values his teacher
Nor loves the lesson
Is one gone far astray,
Though he be learned.
- Such is the subtle secret.

28. Keeping to the Female

He who is aware of the Male
But keeps to the Female
Becomes the ravine of the world.
Being the ravine of the world,
He has the original character (teh) which is not cut up.
And returns again to the (innocence of the) babe.

He who is conscious of the white (bright)
But keeps to the black (dark)
Becomes the model for the world.
Being the model for the world,
He has the eternal power which never errs,
And returns again to the Primordial Nothingness.

He who is familiar with honor and glory

But keeps to obscurity
Becomes the valley of the world.
Being the valley of the world,
He has an eternal power which always suffices,
And returns again to the natural integrity of uncarved wood.

Break up this uncarved wood
And it is shaped into vessel
In the hands of the Sage
They become the officials and magistrates.
Therefore the great ruler does not cut up.

29. Warning Against Interference
There are those who will conquer the world
And make of it (what they conceive or desire).
I see that they will not succeed.
(For) the world is God's own Vessel
It cannot be made (by human interference).
He who makes it spoils it.
He who holds it loses it.
For: Some things go forward,
Some things follow behind;
some blow hot,
And some blow cold;
Some are strong,
And some are weak;
Some may break,
And some may fall.
Hence the Sage eschews excess, eschews extravagance,
Eschews pride.

30. Warning Against the Use of Force
He who by Tao purposes to help the ruler of men
Will oppose all conquest by force of arms.
For such things are wont to rebound.
Where armies are, thorns and brambles grow.
The raising of a great host
Is followed by a year of dearth.

Therefore a good general effects his purpose and stops.
He dares not rely upon the strength of arms;
Effects his purpose and does not glory in it;
Effects his purpose and does not boast of it;
Effects his purpose and does not take pride in it;
Effects his purpose as a regrettable necessity;
Effects his purpose but does not love violence.
(For) things age after reaching their prime.
That (violence) would be against the Tao.
And he who is against the Tao perishes young.

31. Weapons of Evil
Of all things, soldiers are instruments of evil,
Hated by men.
Therefore the religious man (possessed of Tao) avoids them.
The gentleman favors the left in civilian life,
But on military occasions favors the right.

Soldiers are weapons of evil.

They are not the weapons of the gentleman.
When the use of soldiers cannot be helped,
The best policy is calm restraint.

Even in victory, there is no beauty,
And who calls it beautiful
Is one who delights in slaughter.
He who delights in slaughter
Will not succeed in his ambition to rule the world.

[The things of good omen favor the left.
The things of ill omen favor the right.
The lieutenant-general stands on the left,
The general stands on the right.
That is to say, it is celebrated as a Funeral Rite.]

The slaying of multitudes should be mourned with sorrow.
A victory should be celebrated with the Funeral Rite.

32. Tao is Like the Sea

Tao is absolute and has no name.
Though the uncarved wood is small,
It cannot be employed (used as vessel) by anyone.
If kings and barons can keep (this unspoiled nature),
The whole world shall yield them lordship of their own accord.

The Heaven and Earth join,
And the sweet rain falls,
Beyond the command of men,
Yet evenly upon all.

Then human civilization arose and there were names.
Since there were names,
It were well one knew where to stop.
He who knows where to stop
May be exempt from danger.
Tao in the world
May be compared to rivers that run into the sea.

33. Knowing Oneself

He who knows others is learned;
He who knows himself is wide.
He who conquers others has power of muscles;
He who conquers himself is strong.
He who is contented is rich.
He who is determined has strength of will.
He who does not lose his center endures.
He who dies yet (his power) remains has long life.

34. The Great Tao Flows Everywhere

The Great Tao flows everywhere,
(Like a flood) it may go left or right.
The myriad things derive their life from it,
And it does not deny them.
When its work is accomplished,
It does not take possession.

It clothes and feeds the myriad things,
Yet does not claim them as its own.
Often (regarded) without mind or passion,
It may be considered small.
Being the home of all things, yet claiming not,
It may be considered great.
Because to the end it does not claim greatness,
Its greatness is achieved.

35. The Peace of Tao

Hold the Great Symbol
and all the world follows,
Follows without meeting harm,
(And lives in) health, peace, commonwealth.

Offer good things to eat
And the wayfarer stays.
But Tao is mild to the taste.
Looked at, it cannot be seen;
Listened to, it cannot be heard;
Applied, its supply never fails.

36. The Rhythm of Life

He who is to be made to dwindle (in power)
Must first be caused to expand.
He who is to be weakened
Must first be made strong.
He who is to be laid low
Must first be exalted to power.
He who is to be taken away from
Must first be given,
- This is the Subtle Light.

Gentleness overcomes strength:

Fish should be left in the deep pool,
And sharp weapons of the state should be left
Where none can see them.

37. World Peace

The Tao never does,
Yet through it everything is done.
If princes and dukes can keep the Tao,
the world will of its own accord be reformed.
When reformed and rising to action,
Let it be restrained by the Nameless pristine simplicity.
The Nameless pristine simplicity
Is stripped of desire (for contention).
By stripping of desire quiescence is achieved,
And the world arrives at peace of its own accord.

38. Degeneration

The man of superior character is not (conscious of his) character.
Hence he has character.
The man of inferior character (is intent on) not losing character.
Hence he is devoid of character.
The man of superior character never acts,
Nor ever (does so) with an ulterior motive.

The man of inferior character acts,
And (does so) with an ulterior motive.
The man of superior kindness acts,
But (does so) without an ulterior motive.
The man of superior justice acts,
And (does so) with an ulterior motive.
(But when) the man of superior li acts and finds no response,
He rolls up his sleeves to force it on others.

Therefore:
After Tao is lost, then (arises the doctrine of) humanity.
After humanity is lost, then (arises the doctrine of) justice.
After justice is lost, then (arises the doctrine of) li.
Now li is the thinning out of loyalty and honesty of heart.
And the beginning of chaos.
The prophets are the flowering of Tao
And the origin of folly.
Therefore the noble man dwells in the heavy (base),
And not in the thinning (end).
He dwells in the fruit,
And not in the flowering (expression).
Therefore he rejects the one and accepts the other.

39. Unity Through Complements

There were those in ancient times possessed of the One;
Through possession of the One, the Heaven was clarified,
Through possession of the One, The Earth was stabilized,
Through possession of the One, the gods were spiritualized,
Through possession of the One, the valleys were made full,
Through possession of the One, all things lived and grew,
Through possession of the One, the princes and dukes
became the ennobled of the people.
- that was how each became so.

Without clarity, the Heavens would shake,
Without stability, the Earth would quake,
Without spiritual power, the gods would crumble,
Without being filled, the valleys would crack,
Without the life-giving power, all things would perish,
Without the ennobling power, the princes and dukes would stumble.
therefore the nobility depend upon the common man for support,
And the exalted ones depend upon the lowly for their base.

That is why the princes and dukes call themselves
"the orphaned," "the lonely one," "the unworthy."
Is it not true then that they depend upon the common man for support?
Truly, take down the parts of a chariot,
And there is no chariot (left).
Rather than jingle like the jade,
Rumble like the rocks.

40. The Principle of Reversion

Reversion is the action of Tao.
Gentleness is the function of Tao.
The things of this world come from Being,
And Being (comes) from Non-being.

41. Qualities of the Taoist

When the highest type of men hear the Tao (truth),
they try hard to live in accordance with it.
When the mediocre type hear the Tao,
they seem to be aware and yet unaware of it.
When the lowest type hear the Tao,
They break into loud laughter -
If it were not laughed at, it would not be Tao.

Therefore there is the established saying:

"Who understands Tao seems dull of comprehension;
Who is advance in Tao seems to slip backwards;
Who moves on the even Tao (Path) seems to go up and down."

Superior character appears like a hollow (valley);
Sheer white appears like tarnished;
Great character appears like infirm;
Pure worth appears like contaminated.
Great space has no corners;
Great talent takes long to mature;
Great music is faintly heard;
Great form has no contour;
And Tao is hidden without a name.
It is this Tao that is adept at lending (its power)
and bringing fulfillment.

42. The Violent Man

Out of Tao, One is born;
Out of One, Two;
Out of Two, Three;
Out of Three, the created universe.
The created universe carries the yin at its back
and the yang in front;
Through the union of the pervading principles it
reaches harmony.

To be "orphaned," "lonely" and "unworthy" is what men hate most.
Yet the princes and dukes call themselves by such names.
For sometimes things are benefited by being taken away from,
And suffer by being added to.

Others have taught this maxim,
Which I shall teach also:
"The violent man shall die a violent death."
This I shall regard as my spiritual teacher.

43. The Softest Substance

The softest substance of the world
Goes through the hardest.
That-which-is-without-form penetrates that-which-has-no-crevice;
Through this I know the benefit of taking no action.
The teaching without words
And the benefit of taking no action
Are without compare in the universe.

44. Be Content

Fame or one's own self, which does one love more?

One's own self or material goods, which has more worth?
Loss (of self) or possession (of goods), which is the greater evil?

Therefore: he who loves most spends most,
He who hoards much loses much.
The contented man meets no disgrace;
Who know when to stop runs into no danger -
He can long endure.

45. Calm Quietude

The highest perfection is like imperfection,
And its use is never impaired.
The greatest abundance seems meager,
And its use will never fail.
What's most straight appears devious,
The greatest skill appears clumsiness;
The greatest eloquence seems like stuttering.
Movement overcomes cold,
(But) keeping still overcomes heat.
Who is calm and quiet becomes the guide for the universe.

46. Racing Horses

When the world lives in accord with Tao,
Racing horses are turned back to haul refuse carts.
When the world lives not in accord with Tao,
Cavalry abounds in the countryside.

There is no greater curse than the lack of contentment.
No greater sin than the desire for possession.
Therefore he who is contented with contentment
shall be always content.

47. Pursuit of Knowledge

Without stepping outside one's doors,
One can know what is happening in the world,
Without looking out of one's windows,
One can see the Tao of heaven.

The farther one pursues knowledge,
The less one knows.
Therefore the Sage knows without running about,
Understands without seeing,
Accomplishes without doing.

48. Conquering the World by Inaction

The student of knowledge (aims at) learning day by day;
The student of Tao (aims at) losing day by day.
By continual losing
One reaches doing nothing (laissez-faire).
He who conquers the world often does so by doing nothing.
When one is compelled to do something,
The world is already beyond his conquering.

49. The People's Hearts

The Sage has no decided opinions and feelings,
But regards the people's opinions and feelings as his own.

The good ones I declare good;
The bad ones I also declare good.
That is the goodness of Virtue.
The honest ones I believe;
The liars I also believe;
That is the faith of Virtue.

The Sage dwells in the world peacefully, harmoniously.
The people of the world are brought into a community of heart,
And the Sage regards them all as his own children.

50. The Preserving of Life
Out of life, death enters.
The companions (organs) of life are thirteen;
The companions (organs) of death are (also) thirteen.
What send man to death in this life are also (these) thirteen.
How is it so?
Because of the intense activity of multiplying life.

It has been said that the who is a good preserver of hi life
Meets no tigers or wild buffaloes on land,
Is not vulnerable to weapons in the field of battle.
The horns of the wild buffalo are powerless against him.
How is it so?
Because he is beyond death.

51. The Mystic Virtue
Tao gives them birth,
Teh (character) fosters them.
The material world gives them form.
The circumstances of the moment complete them.
Therefore all things of the universe worship Tao and exalt Teh.
Tao is worshipped and Teh is exalted
Without anyone's order but is so of its own accord.

Therefore Tao gives them birth,
Teh fosters them,
Makes them grow, develops them,
Gives them a harbor, a place to dwell in peace,
Feeds them and shelter them.
It gives them birth and does not own them,
Acts (helps) and does not appropriate them,
Is superior, and does not control them.
- This is the Mystic Virtue.

52. Stealing the Absolute
There was a beginning of the universe
Which may be regarded as the Mother of the Universe.
From the Mother, we may know her sons.
After knowing the sons, keep to the Mother.
Thus one's whole life may be preserved from harm.

Stop its apertures,
Close its doors,
And one's whole life is without toil.

Open its apertures,

Be busy about its affairs,
And one's whole life is beyond redemption.

He who can see the small is clear-sighted;
He who stays by gentility is strong.
 use the light,
 And return to clear-sightedness -
Thus cause not yourself later distress.
- This is to rest in the Absolute.

53. Brigandage

If I were possessed of Austere Knowledge,
Walking on the Main Path (Tao),
I would avoid the by-paths.
 the Main path is easy to walk on,
 Yet people love the small by-paths.

The (official) courts are spic and span,
(While) the fields go untilled,
And the (people's) granaries are very low.
(Yet) clad in embroidered gowns,
And carrying fine swords,
Surfeited with good food and drinks,
(They are) splitting with wealth and possessions.
- This is to lead the world toward brigandage.
Is this not corruption of Tao?

54. The Individual and the State

Who is firmly established is not easily shaken.
Who has a firm grasp does not easily let go.
From generation to generation his ancestral sacrifices
 Shall be continued without fail.

Cultivated in the individual, character will become genuine;
Cultivated in the family, character will become abundant;
Cultivated in the village, character will multiply;
Cultivated in the state, character will prosper;
Cultivated in the world, character will become universal.

Therefore:

 According to (the character of) the individual,
 judge the individual;
 According to (the character of) the family,
 judge the family;
 According to (the character of) the village,
 judge the village;
 According to (the character of) the state,
 judge the state;
 According to (the character of) the world,
 judge the world.
How do I know this is so?
By this.

55. The Character of the Child

Who is rich in character
Is like a child.
 No poisonous insects sting him,

No wild beasts attack him,
And no birds of prey pounce upon him.
His bones are soft, his sinews tender, yet his grip is strong.
Not knowing the union of male and female, yet his organs are complete,
Which means his vigor is unspoiled.
Crying the whole day, yet his voice never runs hoarse,
Which means his (natural) harmony is perfect.
To know harmony is to be in accord with the eternal,
(And) to know eternity is called discerning.
(But) to improve upon life is called an ill-omen;
To let go the emotions through impulse is called assertiveness.
(For) things age after reaching their prime;
That (assertiveness) would be against Tao.
And he who is against Tao perishes young.

56. Beyond Honor and Disgrace

He who knows does not speak;
He who speaks does not know.
Fill up its apertures,
Close its doors,
Dull its edges,
Untie its tangles,
Soften its light,
Submerge its turmoil,
- This is the Mystic Unity.

Then love and hatred cannot touch him.
Profit and loss cannot reach him.
Honor and disgrace cannot affect him.
Therefore is he always the honored one of the world.

57. The Art of Government

Rule a kingdom by the Normal.
Fight a battle by (abnormal) tactics of surprise.
Win the world by doing nothing.
How do I know it is so?

Through this: -

The more prohibitions there are,
The poorer the people become.
The more sharp weapons there are,
The greater the chaos in the state.
The more skills of technique,
The more cunning things are produced.
The greater the number of statutes,
The greater the number of thieves and brigands.

Therefore the sage says:

I do nothing and the people are reformed of themselves.
I love quietude and the people are righteous of themselves.
I deal in no business and the people grow rich by themselves.
I have no desires and the people are simple
and honest by themselves.

58. Lazy Government

When the government is lazy and dull,
Its people are unspoiled;
When the government is efficient and smart,
Its people are discontented.

Disaster is the avenue of fortune,
(And) fortune is the concealment for disaster.
Who would be able to know its ultimate results?
(As it is), there would never be the normal.
But the normal would (immediately) revert to the deceitful.
And the good revert to the sinister.
Thus long has mankind gone astray!

Therefore the Sage is square (has firm principles),
but not cutting (sharp-cornered),
Has integrity but does not hurt (others),
Is straight, but not high-handed,
Bright, but not dazzling.

59. Be Sparing

In managing human affairs, there is no better rule
than to be sparing.
To be sparing is to forestall;
To forestall is to be prepared and strengthened;
To be prepared and strengthened is to be ever-victorious;
To be ever-victorious is to have infinite capacity;
He who has infinite capacity is fit to rule a country,
And the Mother (principle) of a ruling country can long endure.
This is to be firmly rooted, to have deep strength,
The road to immortality and enduring vision.

60. Ruling a Big Country

Rule a big country as you would fry small fish.
Who rules the world in accord with Tao
Shall find that the spirits lose their power.
It is not that the spirits lose their power,
But that they cease to do people harm.
It is not (only) that they cease to do people harm,
The Sage (himself) also does no harm to the people.
When both do not do each other harm,
The original character is restored.

61. Big and Small Countries

A big country (should be like) the delta low-regions,
Being the concourse of the world,
(And) the Female of the world.
The Female overcomes the Male by quietude,
And achieves the lowly position by quietude.

Therefore if a big country places itself below a small country
It absorbs the small country.
(And) if a small country places itself below a big country,
It absorbs the big country.
Therefore some place themselves low to absorb (others),
Some are (naturally) low and absorb (others).

What a big country wants is but to shelter others,
And what a small country wants is but to be able to
come in and be sheltered.
Thus (considering) that both may have what they want,
A big country ought to place itself low.

62. The Good Man's Treasure

Tao is the mysterious secret of the universe,
The good man's treasure,
And the bad man's refuge.
Beautiful saying can be sold at the market,
Noble conduct can be presented as a gift.
Though there be bad people,
Why reject them?

Therefore on the crowning of an emperor,
On the appointment of the Three Ministers,
Rather than send tributes of jade and teams of four horses,
Send in the tribute of Tao.
Wherein did the ancients prize this Tao?
Did they not say, "to search for the guilty ones and pardon them"?
Therefore is (tao) the treasure of the world.

63. Difficult and Easy

Accomplish do-nothing.
Attend to no-affairs.
Taste the flavorless.
Whether it is big or small, many or few,
Requite hatred with virtue.
Deal with the difficult while yet it is easy;
Deal with the big while yet it is small.
The difficult (problems) of the world
Must be dealt with while they are yet easy;
The great (problems) of the world
Must be dealt with while they are yet small.
Therefore the Sage by never dealing with great (problems)
Accomplishes greatness.

He who lightly makes a promise
Will find it often hard to keep his faith.
He who makes light of many things
Will encounter many difficulties.
Hence even the Sage regards things as difficult,
And for that reason never meets with difficulties.

64. Beginning and End

That which lies still is easy to hold;
That which is not yet manifest is easy to forestall;
That which is brittle (like ice) easily melts;
That which is minute easily scatters.
Deal with a thing before it is there;
Check disorder before it is rife.
A tree with a full span's girth begins from a tiny sprout;
A nine-storied terrace begins with a clod of earth.
A journey of a thousand li begins at one's feet.

He who acts, spoils;

He who grasps, lets slip.
Because the Sage does not act, he does not spoil,
Because he does not grasp, he does not let slip.
The affairs of men are often spoiled within an ace of completion.
By being careful at the end as at the beginning
Failure is averted.

Therefore the Sage desires to have no desire,
And values not objects difficult to obtain.
Learns that which is unlearned,
And restores what the multitude have lost.
That he may assist in the course of Nature
And not presume to interfere.

65. The Grand Harmony
The ancients who knew how to follow the Tao
Aimed not to enlighten the people.,
But to keep them ignorant.
The reason it is difficult for the people to leave in peace
Is because of too much knowledge.
Those who seek to rule a country by knowledge
Are the nation's curse.
Those who seek not to rule a country by knowledge
Are the nation's blessing.
Those who know these two (principles)
Also know the ancient standard,
And to know always the ancient standard
Is called the Mystic Virtue.
When the Mystic Virtue becomes clear, far-reaching,
And things revert back (to their source)
Then and then only emerges the Grand Harmony.

66. The Lords of the Ravines
How did the great rivers and seas become the Lords
of the ravines?
By being good at keeping low.
That was how they became Lords of the Ravines.
Therefore in order to be the chief among the people,
One must speak like their inferiors.
In order to be foremost among the people,
One must walk behind them.
Thus it is that the Sage stays above,
And the people do not feel his weight;
Walks in front,
And the people do not wish him harm.
Then the people of the world are glad to uphold him forever.
Because he does not contend,
No one in the world can contend against him.

67. The Three Treasures
All the world says: my teaching (Tao) greatly resembles folly.
Because it is great; therefore it resembles folly.
If it did not resemble folly,
It would have long ago become petty indeed!

I have Three Treasures;
Guard them and keep them safe:

the first is Love.
The second is, Never too much.
The third is, Never be the first in the world.
Through Love, one has no fear;
Through not doing too much, one has amplitude
(of reserve power);
Through not presuming to be the first in the world,
One can develop one's talent and let it mature.

If one forsakes love and fearlessness,
forsakes restraint and reserve power,
forsakes following behind and rushes in front,
He is doomed!

For love is victorious in attack,
And invulnerable in defense.
Heaven arms with love
Those it would not see destroyed.

68. The Virtue of Not-Contending
The brave soldier is not violent;
The good fighter does not lose his temper;
The great conqueror does not fight (on small issues);
The good user of men places himself below others.
- This is the virtue of not-contending,
Is called the capacity to use men,
Is reaching to the height of being
Mated to Heaven, to what was of old.

69. Camouflage
There is the maxim of military strategists;
I dare not be the first to invade, but rather be the invaded.
Dare not press forward an inch, but rather retreat a foot.
That is, to march without formations,
To roll up the sleeves,
To charge not in frontal attacks,
To arm without weapons.
There is no greater catastrophe than to underestimate the enemy.
To underestimate the enemy might entail the loss of my treasures.
Therefore when two equally matched armies meet,
It is the man of sorrow who wins.

70. They Know Me Not
My teachings are very easy to understand
and very easy to practice,
But no one can understand them and
no one can practice them.
In my words there is a principle.
In the affairs of men there is a system.
Because they know not these,
They also know me not.
Since there are few that know me,
Therefore I am distinguished.
Therefore the Sage wears a coarse cloth on top
And carries jade within his bosom.

71. Sick-Mindedness

Who knows that he does not know is the highest;
Who (pretends to) know what he does not know is sick-minded.
And who recognizes sick-mindedness as sick-mindedness
is not sick-minded.
The Sage is not sick-minded.
Because he recognizes sick-mindedness as sick-mindedness,
Therefore he is not sick-minded.

72. On Punishment (1)

When people have no fear of force,
Then (as is the common practice) great force descends upon them.

Despise not their dwellings,
Dislike not their progeny.
Because you do not dislike them,
You will not be disliked yourself.
Therefore the Sage knows himself, but does not show himself,
Loves himself, but does not exalt himself.
Therefore he rejects the one (force) and
accepts the other (gentility).

73. On Punishment (2)

Who is brave in daring (you) kill,
Who is brave in not daring (you) let live.
In these two,
There is some advantage and some disadvantage.
(Even if) Heaven dislikes certain people,
Who would know (who are to be killed and) why?
Therefore even the Sage regards it as a difficult question.
Heaven's Way (Tao) is good at conquest without strife,
Rewarding (vice and virtue) without words,
Making its appearance without call,
Achieving results without obvious design.
The heaven's net is broad and wide.
With big meshes, yet letting nothing slip through.

74. On Punishment (3)

The people are not afraid of death;
Why threaten them with death?
Supposing that the people are afraid of death,
And we can seize and kill the unruly,
Who would dare to do so?
Often it happens that the executioner is killed.
And to take the place of the executioner
Is like handling the hatchet for the master carpenter.
He who handles the hatchet for the master carpenter
seldom escapes injury to his hands.

75. Punishment (4)

When people are hungry,
It is because their rulers eat too much tax-grain.
Therefore the unruliness of hungry people
Is due to the interference of their rulers.
That is why they are unruly.
The people are not afraid of death,
Because they are anxious to make a living.
That is why they are not afraid of death.

It is those who interfere not with their living
That are wise in exalting life.

76. Hard and Soft

When man is born, he is tender and weak;
At death, he is hard and stiff.
When the things and plants are alive, they are soft
and supple;
When they are dead, they are brittle and dry.
Therefore hardness and stiffness are the companions of death,
And softness and gentleness are the companions of life.

Therefore when an army is headstrong, it will lose in a battle.
When a tree is hard, it will be cut down.
The big and strong belong underneath.
The gentle and weak belong at the top.

77. Bending the Bow

The Tao (way) of Heaven,
Is it not like the bending of a bow?
The top comes down and the bottom-end goes up,
The extra (length) is shortened, the insufficient (width) is expanded.
It is the way of Heaven to take away from those that have too much
And give to those that have not enough.
Not so with man's way:
He takes from those that have not
And gives it as tribute to those that have too much.
Who can have enough and to spare to give to the entire world?
Only the man of Tao.
Therefore the Sage acts, but does not possess,
Accomplishes but lays claim to no credit,
Because he has no wish to seem superior.

78. Nothing Weaker than Water

There is nothing weaker than water
But none is superior to it in overcoming the hard,
For which there is no substitute.
That weakness overcomes strength
And gentleness overcomes rigidity,
No one does not know;
No one can put into practice.

Therefore the Sage says:

"Who receives unto himself the calumny of the world
Is the preserver of the state.
Who bears himself the sins of the world
Is king of the world."
Straight words seem crooked.

79. Peace Settlements

Patching up a great hatred is sure to leave some hatred behind.
How can this be regarded as satisfactory?
Therefore the Sage holds the left tally,
And does not put the guilt on the other party.
The virtuous man is for patching up;
The vicious is for fixing guilt.
But "the way of Heaven is impartial;

It sides only with the good man."

80. The Small Utopia

(Let there be) a small country with a small population,
Where the supply of goods are tenfold or hundredfold,
more than they can use.

Let the people value their lives and not migrate far.

Though there be boats and carriages,
None be there to ride them.

Though there be armor and weapons,
No occasion to display them.

Let the people again tie ropes for reckoning,

Let them enjoy their food,

Beautify their clothing,

Be satisfied with their homes,

Delight in their customs.

The neighboring settlements overlook one another

So that they can hear the barking of dogs and crowing
of cocks of their neighbors,

And the people till the end of their days shall never
have been outside their country.

81. The Way of Heaven

True words are not fine-sounding;

Fine-sounding words are not true.

A good man does not argue;

he who argues is not a good man.

the wise one does not know many things;

He who knows many things is not wise.

The Sage does not accumulate (for himself).

He lives for other people,

And grows richer himself;

He gives to other people,

And has greater abundance.

The Tao of Heaven

Blesses, but does not harm.

The Way of the Sage

Accomplishes, but does not contend.

Mabry version

- 1.1 The Tao that can be described in words is not the true Tao The Name that can be named is not the true Name.
- 1.2 From non-existence were called Heaven and Earth From existence all things were born.
- 1.3 In being without desires, you can experience the wonder But by having desires, you experience the journey.
- 1.4 Yet both spring from the same source and differ mostly in name.
- 1.5 This source is called "Mystery" Mystery upon Mystery, The womb giving birth to all of being.

- 2.1 When people see beauty as beautiful, They recognize other things as ugly.
- 2.2 When people see goodness as good, They recognize other things as being bad.
- 2.3 Therefore existence and non-existence produce one another Difficult and easy achieve each other Long and short define each other
- 2.4 High and low rely on each other Voice and accompaniment harmonize with one another Front and back follow each other.
- 2.5 Therefore, the Sage acts without "doing" And teaches without words.
- 2.6 All things arise and she does not refuse them. She creates, but does not possess
- 2.7 Accomplishes, but takes no credit When finished, she doesn't dwell on it. Because she does not dwell on it, it is always present.

- 3.1 Do not exalt people who are extraordinarily talented Or the people will become competitive.
- 3.2 Do not value precious goods Or the people will become thieves.
- 3.3 Do not make a public display of riches and finery Or the people's hearts will be envious and discontent.
- 3.4 Therefore, the wise leader will empty their hearts of coveting and fill their bellies with sustenance. He discourages their ambition and strengthens their bones.
- 3.5 If people are simple and free from desire, the crafty will not dare to take advantage of them.
- 3.6 By practicing "not doing," nothing will remain undone.

- 4.1 The Tao is like an empty pitcher, Poured from but never drained.
- 4.2 Infinitely deep, it is the source of all things.
- 4.3 It blunts the sharp, Unties the knotted, Shades the bright, Unites with all dust.
- 4.4 Dimly seen, yet eternally present,
- 4.5 I do not know who gave birth to it, It is older than any conception of God.

- 5.1 Heaven and Earth are impartial, They allow things to die.
- 5.2 The Sage is not sentimental, She knows that all beings must pass away.
- 5.3 The space between Heaven and Earth is like a bellows empty, yet inexhaustible The more it is used, the more it produces.
- 5.4 Trying to explain it will only exhaust you. It is better to hold on to paradox.

- 6.1 The spirit of emptiness is eternal. It is called "the Mysterious Woman."
- 6.2 Her womb is called "the Source of Heaven and Earth."
- 6.3 Dimly seen, yet eternally present It is always there for you to use. It's easy!

- 7.1 Heaven is eternal, and Earth is long-lasting.
- 7.2 Why are they so enduring? Because they do not live for themselves.
- 7.3 Therefore the Sage puts himself last And finds himself in the foremost place.
- 7.4 He does not promote himself, thus he is preserved.
- 7.5 Because he has no thought of "self," He is perfectly fulfilled.

- 8.1 The sagely person is like water. Water benefits all things and does not compete with them. It gathers in unpopular places. In this it is like the Tao.
- 8.2 In dwelling, live close to the Earth. In thinking, be open to new ideas. In relationships, be kind. In speech, tell the truth and keep your word.
- 8.3 In leading people, demonstrate integrity. In daily matters, be competent. In acting, consider the appropriate timing.
- 8.4 When you do not try to prove yourself to others, You will be beyond reproach.

- 9.1 Filling your cup until it overflows is not s good as stopping in time.
- 9.2 Over sharpen your sword and it will not protect you very long.

9.3 You may fill your halls with gold and jewels but you cannot keep them safe.

9.4 Being rich, highly esteemed and proud will only bring you trouble.

9.5 When you have done a good job, rest. This is the Way of Heaven

10.1 Being both body and spirit, can you embrace unity and not be fragmented?

10.2 Being spiritually focused, can you become soft, like a newborn baby?

10.3 Being clear in mind and vision, can you eliminate your flaws?

10.4 Loving all people and leading them well, can you do this without imposing your will?

10.5 When Heaven gives and takes away, can you be content to just let things come or go?

10.6 And even when you understand all things, can you simply allow yourself to be?

10.7 To give birth and nourish, To make and not own, To act but not expect something in return, To grow, yet not demand this of others, This is the virtue of Mystery.

11.1 Thirty spokes join together at one hub, But it is the hole in the center that makes it operable.

11.2 Clay is molded into a pot, But it is the emptiness inside that makes it useful.

11.3 Doors and windows are cut to make a room, It is the empty spaces that we use.

11.4 Therefore, existence is what we have, But non-existence is what we use.

12.1 Too many colors tax people's vision. Too many sounds deaden people's hearing. Too many flavors spoil people's taste.

12.2 Thrill-seeking leads people to do crazy things. The pursuit of wealth just gets in people's way.

12.3 Therefore, the Sage provides for her needs, not her desires. She renounces the latter, and chooses the former.

13.1 Success is often as unsettling as failure. The world's troubles are no more important than the well-being of your own body.

13.2 Why do I say, "Success is often as unsettling as failure?" Success strikes us deep. It shakes us up to get it. It shakes us up to lose it. Thus, success is really little different than failure, for both are unsettling.

13.3 Why do I say, "The World's greatest troubles are no more important than the well-being of your own body?" The reason I think I have troubles is because I have material existence. If I had no body, what troubles could I possibly have?

13.4 What we must do is see the whole world as our "Self." Only then will we be worthy of being entrusted with the World. Only One who values the World as his own body can truly rely on the World in return.

14.1 Look for it and it cannot be seen - it is beyond sight. Listen for it and it cannot be heard - it is beyond hearing. Grasp at it and it cannot be caught - it is beyond substance.

14.2 These three cannot be fully comprehended. They are fundamentally connected and somehow they are one.

14.3 Its highest is not bright. Its lowest isn't dark. It is infinite! Continually emerging, completely beyond description, It returns again and again to nothingness.

14.4 And this is what nothingness looks like: It is the image of the absence of being. (It sounds vague and elusive to me!)

Approach it and you will not see its beginning Follow it and you will not see its end.

14.5 If you cling to the Tao of ancient times the present will be no problem. To know the ancient origin is to follow the Tao.

15.1 The Sages of old were scholars who knew well the ways of subtlety, mystery and discernment.

15.2 Their wisdom was beyond comprehension. Because they were beyond comprehension, I can only describe their appearance: They were cautious, as if crossing a river in winter. They were hesitant, as if fearing danger from all sides, They were polite, as if they were guests.

15.3 They were always growing, like the puddle from a melting cube of ice. They were genuine, like an uncarved block of wood. They were as open-minded as a valley. They were open to infinite possibilities, like a turbulent storm.

15.4 Who can wait for the storm to stop, to find peace in the calm that follows?

15.5 The person who is able to wait patiently in this peace will eventually know what is right. Those who respect the Tao do not go to extremes. Not going to extremes, they are inconspicuous and content.

16.1 If you can empty yourself of everything, you will have lasting peace.

16.2 Things arise, but I contemplate their return. Things flourish and grow, and then return to their Source. To return to the Source is to know perfect peace. I call this a return to Life.

16.3 Returning to Life is a Universal Constant. Knowing this is illuminating. Someone who doesn't understand this is in error and may act dangerously.

16.4 But knowing this Constant, you can embrace all things. Embracing all things, you can treat them fairly. Treating them fairly, you are noble. Being noble, you are like the cosmos. If you are like the cosmos, you are like the Tao.

16.5 If you are like the Tao, you will have eternal life, and you needn't be afraid of dying.

17.1 The best leader is one that the people are barely aware of. The next best is one who is loved and praised by the people. Next comes one who is feared. Worst is one who is despised.

17.2 If the leader does not have enough faith in his people, They will not have faith in him.

17.3 The best leader puts great value in words and says little So that when his work is finished The people all say, "We did it ourselves!"

18.1 When the great Tao is abandoned, Ideas of "humanitarianism" and "righteousness" appear.

18.2 When intellectualism arises It is accompanied by great hypocrisy.

18.3 When there is strife within a family Ideas of "brotherly love" appear.

18.4 When nation is plunged into chaos Politicians become "patriotic".

19.1 Forget "holiness," abandon "intelligence" and the people will be a hundred times better off.

19.2 Give up "humanitarianism," put away "righteousness" and people will rediscover brotherly love and kindness.

19.3 Forget "great art," throw away "profit" and there will be no more thieves.

19.4 These things are superficial and are simply not enough. People need something solid to hold on to.

19.5 And here it is: Be real. Embrace simplicity. Put others first. Desire little.

20.1 Forget ambitious acquisition of knowledge, and your sorrows will end. How much difference is there between "yes" and "no"? What is the distinction between "good" and "evil"?

20.2 Must I value what others value? Nonsense! Having no end to their desires, they are desolate.

20.3 People rush here and there, maybe going to a feast, or perhaps climbing a tower in the springtime. I alone am calm and unconcerned. Like an unselfconscious infant at peace and having no destination.

20.4 Most people have more than they need. But I alone seem lost and out of place. I have the mind of a fool - so confused!

20.5 Ordinary people are bright. I alone seem dim. Ordinary people are discriminating. I alone am ambivalent. As quiet as the ocean. As free as the wind.

20.6 People rush about on their very important business. But I alone seem incorrigible and uncouth. I am different from other people; I enjoy feeding from the Great Mother's breasts.

21.1 The only virtue worth having is that of following the Tao,

21.2 and the only thing you can say about the Tao, is that it is elusive and evasive. It is elusive and evasive, yet it can be observed. It is evasive and elusive, yet it does manifest itself. It is dim and dark, yet its essence can be grasped. Its essence is unquestionably genuine. You can put your faith in it.

21.3 From the beginning of time until the present, its Name has remained. In it one can see all of Creation.

21.4 How do I know where all of Creation comes from? I know the Tao!

22.1 If you don't want to be broken, bend. If you want to be straight, allow some crookedness. If you want to be filled, become empty. If you want to be made new, let yourself be used. If you want to be rich, desire little. Wanting more and more is craziness!

22.2 Therefore the Sage embraces oneness and becomes a model for the world.

22.3 Not self-centered, she is enlightened. Not self-righteous, she is a shining example. Not self-glorifying, she accomplishes glorious things. Not boastful, she grows large inside.

22.4 She alone does not compete, And so the world can never overcome her.

22.5 When the ancients said, "If you don't want to be broken, bend" Were they just uttering empty words? Bend sincerely and wholeness will return to you.

23.1 Nature uses few words. So, a whirlwind will not last all morning. A sudden storm will not last all day.

23.2 What causes these? Heaven and Earth. If Heaven and Earth need not speak for long, How much less should humankind?

23.3 Therefore, one who seeks the Tao is at one with the Tao. One who seeks goodness is good. One who seeks loss is lost.

23.4 If you are one with the Tao, the Tao eagerly accepts you. If you are one with goodness, goodness is happy to receive you. If you are one with loss, loss welcomes you.

23.5 If you do not trust enough, you will not find trust.

24.1 One who stands on tiptoe does not stand firm. One who rushes ahead is likely to trip.

24.2 One who listens only to himself cannot learn. One who considers himself righteous, isn't.

24.3 One who brags has nothing to brag about. /One who feels sorry for himself does not grow.

24.4 Compared to the Tao, these people are table scraps and wasted effort, and not well- liked by anyone or anything. So, if you follow the Tao, you will not live like that.

25.1 Before Heaven and Earth were born There was something undescrivable. Perfectly still, having no form, It stands alone, and does not change. It acts perpetually, yet never tires. It could very well be the Mother of the Universe.

25.2 I don't know its name, so I just call it the Tao. If forced to give it a name, I would call it Great.

25.3 Being Great, I call it eternal. Being eternal, I call it infinite. Being infinite, I call it Reconciliation.

25.4 Therefore, the Tao is Great. Heaven is Great. The Earth is Great. Humankind is Great. In the Universe there are these four things which are Great, And humankind is one of them.

25.5 Humankind follows the Earth, The Earth follows Heaven, Heaven follows the Tao, And the Tao just acts like itself.

26.1 Heaviness is the root of lightness. Stillness is the master of restlessness.

26.2 Therefore, the Sage walks all day and never parts from the baggage-wagon. Although there are many beautiful places to behold, He is beyond such things and is at peace.

26.3 Why should the ruler of ten thousand chariots act with such frivolity in this world?

26.4 To act lightly is to lose one's root. To be restless is to lose one's self-control.

27.1 A skillful walker leaves no tracks. A skillful speaker makes no mistakes. A skillful accountant needs no counting-devices.

27.2 A well-made door needs no lock, yet cannot be opened. A well-made binding uses no rope, yet will not be undone.

27.3 Therefore, the Sage is always there to help people So that no one is forsaken. She is always there to see to things So that nothing is lost. This is called being clothed in light.

27.4 What is a good person but a bad person's teacher? What is a bad person but raw material for a good person?

27.5 If you do not respect your Teacher, Or love your "raw material," You are greatly confused, regardless of your intelligence. I call this an essential, yet subtle mystery.

28.1 Know the active, the masculine Yet keep to the passive, the feminine And you will cradle the World. If you lovingly hold the World You will know eternal goodness And will become again as a little child.

28.2 Be aware of the obvious - the light But keep to the mysterious - the dark And set an example for the world. Be an example for the world And do not stray from your calling And you will return to the Eternal.

28.3 Know honour, yet remain humble And be empty of the world. Being empty of the world is good enough And you will return to the simplicity of the uncarved block

28.4 If the block is carved it is trapped in one form and critiqued. The Sage prefers simplicity and so is ahead of them all. He knows better than to divide the whole.

29.1 Do you want to own the World and improve it? I don't think you can.

29.2 You see, the World is sacred. It can't be improved upon. If you try you will ruin it. If you try to own it, You will lose it.

29.3 Therefore, sometimes you must lead and sometime you must follow. Sometimes you need to blow hard, and sometimes you can breathe easily. Sometime you must be strong and sometimes tender. Sometimes you win and sometimes you lose.

29.4 Knowing this, the Sage avoids extremes, extravagances and exhaustions.

30.1 A leader who is advised to rely on the Tao Does not enforce his will upon the world by military means. For such things are likely to rebound.

30.2 Wherever armies have camped Thistles and briars grow. In the wake of war Bad years are sure to follow.

30.3 A good leader accomplishes only what he has set out to do And is careful not to overestimate his ability.

30.4 He achieves his goal, but does not brag. He effects his purpose, but does not show off. He is resolute, but not arrogant. He does what he must, though he may have little choice. He gets results, but not by force.

30.5 Things that grow strong soon grow weak. This is not the Way of the Tao. Not following the Tao leads to an early end.

31.1 All weapons are bad news And all creatures should detest them. So those who follow the Tao do not keep them.

31.2 (Wise people prefer the left side as the place of honour, but the General always stands at the right.)

31.3 Weapons are the tools of fear. They are not appropriate for a Sage And should only be one's last resort. Peace is always far superior.

31.4 There is no beauty in victory. To find beauty in it would be to rejoice at killing people. Anyone who delights in slaughter will never find satisfaction in this world.

31.5 (When celebrating happy occasions, the left side is the place of honour, But on unhappy occasions, the right is preferred. Then we see those of lower rank standing on the left; The General is given the right-hand position.)

31.6 Military officers should observe their duties gravely, For when many people are killed They should be mourned with great sorrow. Celebrate your victory only with funeral rites.

32.4 When you organize, you must of necessity use names and order. But given that, you must also know where to leave off naming and structuring. Knowing when to stop, you can avoid danger.

32.1 The Tao will always be beyond comprehension. Although it seems trivial No one in all the world can control it.

32.2 If governments and leaders can abide in it All beings shall gratefully behave likewise.

32.3 We would have a Heaven on Earth and sweet rains would fall. The people would not need to be told, They would just naturally do what is right.

32.5 All the World is to the Tao As rivers flowing home to the sea.

33.1 One who knows others is intelligent. One who knows himself is truly wise.

33.2 One who overcomes others has force. One who overcomes the self has true strength.

33.3 One who knows he has enough is truly wealthy. One who has discipline is sincere.

33.4 One who remembers his Source will endure. He embraces death and so does not perish but lives forever.

34.1 The great Tao flows everywhere, to the left and to the right.

34.2 All things rely on it for their life and it does not refuse them. When its work is done, it does not demand recognition. It clothes and nourishes all things and does not demand allegiance.

34.3 Since it makes no demands for itself, it can seem to be of small regard.

34.4 Yet as all things return to it of their own accord, without being commanded, it can truly be regarded Great.

34.5 It is only because it does not claim to be Great That it is able to achieve such Greatness.

35.1 Whoever holds firmly to following the Tao Will draw all the World to herself. She may go anywhere and not be afraid, Finding only safety, balance, and peace.

35.2 Music and good food lure passers-by But words about the Tao Seem bland and flavourless to them.

35.3 Look, and it cannot be seen. Listen, and it cannot be heard. Use it, and it cannot be exhausted.

36.1 What you want shrunk Must first be allowed to expand. What you want weakened Must first be strengthened. What you want destroyed Must first be allowed to flourish. That which you want to take Must first be given.

36.2 Seeing this is an understanding of the subtle. What is soft and weak overcomes what is hard and strong.

36.3 Just as a fish should keep to deep waters, So a country's weapons should be kept out of sight, so as not to tempt people.

37.1 The Tao never "acts" Yet nothing is left undone.

37.2 If governments and leaders would keep it All tings would of their own accord be transformed. Should desires arise from transformation I shall influence them through silent simplicity. Silent simplicity involves being free from desires.

37.3 When you are without desire you are content And all the World is at peace.

38.1 A truly good person does not try to be good, Therefore is he able to be good. Another person tries to be good, And finds that he cannot.

38.2 A good person does not act, nor has any reason to, Another person is always doing because he thinks he has to.

38.3 A humanitarian acts from the heart. A politician acts, but he has ulterior motives. When a legalist acts and get no response, He rolls up his sleeve and uses force.

38.4 Therefore, when the Tao is lost, Remember that there is still goodness. When goodness is lost, there is still kindness. When kindness is lost, there is still the law. When the law is lost, there is still politeness.

38.5 Politeness is the thin edge of loyalty and trust, And is the beginning of chaos. We need those who try to direct society About as much as the Tao needs a flower to make it attractive. They mark the beginnings of stupidity.

38.6 The Sage concerns herself with causes, Not symptom And focuses on the Tao, not the silly flower. Forget the flower, follow the Tao instead.

39.1 People of ancient times possessed oneness. The sky attained oneness and so became clear. Earth attained oneness and so found peace. The Spirit attains oneness and so is replenished.

39.2 The Valleys attained oneness and so became full The ancient leaders attained oneness And so became examples for all the world. All of this is achieved by oneness.

39.3 Without oneness, the sky would crack The Earth explode The Spirit exhaust

39.4 The Valley deplete Leaders would certainly fall And all life perish.

39.5 Therefore the Great recognizes the Small as its root. The High takes the Low as its foundation.

39.6 Leaders refer to themselves as orphans and widows. Is this not grounding oneself in humility?

39.7 Therefore the highest renown is no renown.

39.8 We do not want to glitter like jewels. We do not want to be as hard as stone.

40.1 Returning is the movement of the Tao. Yielding is the way of the Tao.

40.2 All things in the world are born of existence. Existence is born of non-existence.

41.1 When wise people hear about the Tao They follow it carefully. When ordinary people hear about the Tao They can take it or leave it.

41.2 When foolish people hear about the Tao They laugh out loud. If they didn't laugh out loud, it wouldn't be Tao!

41.3 Therefore it is said: The path into light seems dark. The way ahead seems to go backward. The path into peace seems rough. The greatest good seems to us empty. True purity seems stained. The best efforts seem inadequate.

41.4 Appropriate caution seems like cowardice. // True essence seems violated. The truly square bears no corners. Sound vessels take time to build. Celestial music is seldom paid much heed. The ultimate image is impossible to capture.

41.5 The Tao is hidden and nameless Yet it is the Tao alone that nourishes and completes things.

42.1 The Tao gives birth to one. One gives birth to two. Two gives birth to three, And three gives birth to all things.

42.2 All things carry Yin and embrace Yang Desiring nothing and finding harmony.

42.3 All people hate loneliness and poverty Though they are the noblest of states.

42.4 So in losing, much is gained, And in gaining, much is lost.

42.5 What others have taught, I also teach: "The violent shall die with violence." This is my primary teaching.

43.1 The softest thing in the World Overcomes the hardest thing in the World. That which is without substance can enter even where there is no space.

43.2 Therefore I know the value of non-action. Teaching without words And benefit without actions There are few in the World who can grasp it.

44.1 Fame of self: which is more important? Your possessions or your person: which is worth more to you? Gain or loss: which is worse?

44.2 Therefore, to be obsessed with "things" is a great waste, The more you gain, the greater your loss.

44.3 Being content with what you have been given, You can avoid disgrace. Knowing when to stop, You will avoid danger. That way you can live a long and happy life.

45.1 True perfection seems flawed Yet its usefulness is never exhausted. True fulfillment seems empty Yet its usefulness is infinite. True straightness seems crooked.

45.2 Great skill appears easy. Great eloquence sounds awkward.

45.3 Cold overcomes heat. Tranquility conquers agitation. Purity and stillness is the universal ideal.

46.1 When the World keeps to the Tao Strong horses are best used to manufacture manure. When the World forgets the Tao War horses are bred outside the city.

46.2 There is no greater cure than discontent. Nothing breeds trouble like greed.

46.3 Only one who is content with what is enough will be content always.

47.1 Without going outside, You can know the whole world. Without looking out the window, You can know Heaven's Way. The further out you seek The less you understand.

47.2 Therefore, the Sage Knows without needing to travel, Understands without needing to see, Accomplishes without "doing."

48.1 To pursue learning is to grow a little more every day. To pursue the Tao is to desire a little less every day.

48.2 Desire less and less Until you arrive at "not-doing." When you practice "not-doing," nothing is left undone. If you want to have the whole world, have nothing.

48.3 If you are always busy doing something, you cannot enjoy the world.

49.1 The Sage's heart is not set in stone. He is as sensitive to the people's feelings as to her own.

49.2 She says, "To people who are good, I am good. And to people who are not good? I am good to them, too." This is true goodness.

49.3 "People who are trustworthy, I trust. And people who are not trustworthy, I also trust." This is real trust.

49.4 The Sage who leads harmoniously considers the minds of her people as well as her own. They look to her anxiously. They are like her own children.

50.1 From birth to death,

50.2 Three people out of ten are celebrators of Life. Three people out of ten are advocates of Death. The rest simply move numbly from cradle to grave. Why is this? Because they are overly protective of this life.

50.3 It is said that one who knows how to protect his life can walk freely without fear of the wild buffalo or tiger. He may meet an army bravely with neither sword nor shield.

50.4 For the buffalo will find no place to sink its horns, The tiger finds no place to dig his claws, Weapons find no soft place to pierce./ Why? Because there is no place for death in him.

51.1 The Tao gives birth to all things. Nature's goodness nurtures them. Matter forms them. Environment shapes them. Therefore, all things cannot help but to respect the Tao and treasure goodness.

51.2 Respect for the Tao and the treasuring of goodness are not demanded of them, they do it naturally.

51.3 So, the Tao gives birth; Nature's goodness nurtures them, grows them, raises them and enables them to mature, ripens them, nourishes them and shelters them. The Tao gives birth, but does not possess; Acts, but does not take credit; Guides, but does not control. This is the mystery of goodness.

52.1 The World has an origin Which we may regard as the Mother of the Universe.

52.2 Knowing the Mother, we can also come to know her children. Knowing the children, return and hold fast to the Mother. Doing this, you will not meet with danger your whole life long.

52.3 Close your mouth Go easy on the senses And life will not be hard.

52.4 If you spend your life filling your senses And rushing around "doing" things You will be beyond hope.

52.5 To concern yourself with the beautiful and small is true wisdom. Too foster gentleness is true strength.

52.6 Choose to do what is wise and return to wisdom. Then you will avoid life's troubles. This is called practicing consistency.

53.1 If I possess even a little wisdom Then while I walk in the light of the Tao My only fear is that I'll fall into "doing."

53.2 The path of the Tao is obvious and simple, But most people prefer to take short-cuts.

53.3 The courts of law are far from the people's hearts. The fields are full of weeds, And the storehouses are empty.

53.4 But look, here are officials in elegant apparel carrying sharp swords Eating and drinking until they are bloated, Possessed of such wealth that they could never use it all. I call this positively criminal. It is not the way of the Tao.

54.1 One who is well grounded will not be uprooted. One who has a firm embrace will not let go. His descendants will faithfully carry on his tradition.

54.2 Cultivate these things in yourself And you will have true goodness. Cultivate these in your family And goodness will increase. Cultivate these in your community And goodness will catch on. Cultivate these in your nation And goodness will overflow! Cultivate these in the World And goodness will fill the Universe.

54.3 And so, let the self examine the self. Let the family consider the family. Let the community examine the community. Let the nation evaluate the nation. Let the World contemplate the World.

54.4 How do I know the World is like this? Through these: Grounding and embracing.

55.1 One who is filled with goodness is like a freshly-born infant. Wasps, scorpions, and snakes will not bite her. Wild beasts will not attack her, nor will birds of prey pounce on her. Her bones may be fragile and her skin soft, But her grasp is firm.

55.2 She does not recognize the union of male and female For she knows it only as an undivided whole. This is the essence of perfection.

55.3 She can howl all day and not get hoarse. This is perfect harmony. Knowing harmony is faithfulness. Knowing faithfulness is salvation.

55.4 Trying to extend one's life-span is dangerous and unnatural. To manipulate one's energy with the mind is a powerful thing

55.5 But whoever possesses such strength invariably grows old and withers. This is not the way of Tao. All those who do not follow the Tao will come to an early end.

56.1 Those who know, do not speak. Those who speak, do not know.

56.2 So shut your mouth Guard your senses Blunt your sharpness Untangle your affairs Soften your glare Be one with all dust. This is the mystery of union.

56.3 You cannot approach it Yet you cannot escape it. You cannot benefit it Yet you cannot harm it. You cannot bestow any honour on it Yet you cannot rob it of its dignity. That is why the whole Universe reverses it.

57.1 As a leader, lead properly. Don't resort to force in the usual ways. Win the World by "not-doing." How do I know to do this?
57.2 Listen, the more laws and prohibitions there are The poorer the people become. The more dreadful weapons you have The more chaotic the state of the nation.
57.3 The more clever and advanced your knowledge The stranger things become. The more commandments and regulations you have The more thieves there are.
57.4 Therefore the Sage who leads says: "I practice 'not-doing' and the people transform themselves. I enjoy peace and the people correct themselves.
57.5 I stay out of their business affairs and the people prosper. I have no desires and the people, all by themselves, become simple and honest."

58.1 When a government is unobtrusive The people are simple and honest. When a government is suspicious and strict The people are discontented and sneaky.
58.2 Blessings are rooted in misery. Misery lurks behind blessing.
58.3 Where does it ever end? There is no such things as "normal." What seems normal is only an illusion, And what seems good is finally revealed to be monstrous. The people's confusion has lasted a very long time.
58.4 Therefore the Sage is honest, but not judgmental Strong, but not injurious to others Straightforward, but not reckless bright, but not blinding.

59.1 In leading people and serving Heaven There is nothing better than moderation.
59.2 In moderation, one is already following the Tao. When one follows the Tao, great goodness is abundant. When great goodness is in abundance, There is nothing that cannot be overcome Then there are no limits. Having no limits, one can certainly govern a country.
59.3 If you know the country's Mother, you will long endure.
59.4 I call this having deep roots and a firm stalk, This is the Way of long life and great insight.

60.1 Govern a big country as you would fry a small fish.
60.2 Approach the world with the Tao and evil will have no power. Not that evil has no power, but it will not harm people.
60.3 Not that evil is not harmful, but the Sage is dedicated to not harming people - even evil people.
60.4 When no one hurts another, all will eventually return to the good.

61.1 A great country is like a low-lying lake where many rivers converge; A focal point for the Earth, the feminine Spirit of the World. The female always overcomes the male by stillness. Stillness is the lowest position.
61.2 Therefore a big country, By placing itself below a smaller country Will win the smaller country. And a small country, By placing itself below a larger country Will gain the large country.
61.3 Therefore, by being humble, one gains And the other, being humble already, also gains.
61.4 A great country needs to embrace the lowly. The small country needs to serve others.
61.5 Thus, both needs are satisfied And each gets what it wants. // Remember, the great country should always humble itself.

62.1 The Tao is the bosom of the Universe It is the good person's treasure And the bad person's refuge.
62.2 Flattery may buy one's position And good deeds can win people over But if one's heart is not pure That is all the more reason to cling to the Tao!
62.3 Therefore when a king is coronated, Crowned in ceremony, Presented with gifts of rare value, And escorted in luxury, All these things pale when compared to the humble gift of the Tao, offered in silence.
62.4 Why did the Sages of old value the Tao so much? Because when you seek, you find And when you sin, you are forgiven. That is why the Tao is the greatest treasure of the Universe.

63.1 Do without "doing." Work without forcing. Taste without seasonings.
63.2 Recognize the Great in the small, And the many in the few. Repay hatred with kindness.
63.3 Deal with the difficult while it is still easy. Begin great works while they are still small.
63.4 Certainly the Earth does difficult work with ease, And accomplishes great affairs from small beginnings.
63.5 So, the Sage, by not striving for greatness, Achieves greatness.
63.6 If you think everything is easy, You will find only difficulty.
63.7 That is why the Sage considers all things difficult And finds nothing too difficult in the end.

64.1 What is at rest is easy to maintain. What has not yet happened is easy to plan. That which is fragile is easily shattered That which is tiny is easily scattered.
64.2 Correct problems before they occur. Intervene before chaos erupts.

64.3 A tree too big around to hug is produced from a tiny sprout. A nine-story tower begins with a mound of dirt. A thousand-mile journey begins with your own two feet.

64.4 Whoever tries will fail. Whoever clutches, loses. Therefore the Sage, not rying, cannot fail Not clutching, she cannot lose.

64.5 When people try, they usually fail just on the brink of success. If one is as cautious at the outset as at the end, One cannot fail.

64.6 Therefore the Sage desires nothing so much as to be desireless. She does not value rare and expensive goods. She unlearns what was once taught And helps the people regain what they have lost; To help every being assume its natural way of being, And not dare to force anything.

65.1 In ancient times those who followed the Tao Did not try to educate the people. They chose to let them be.

65.2 The reason people become hard to govern is that they think they know it all. So, if a leader tries to lead through cleverness, He is nothing but a liability. But if a leader leads, not through cleverness, but through goodness, this is a blessing to all.

65.3 To be always conscious of the Great Pattern is a spiritual virtue.

65.4 Spiritual virtue is awesome and infinite And it leads all things back to their Source. Then there emerges the Great Harmony.

66.1 Rivers and the sea are able to rule the streams of a hundred valleys. Because they are good at taking the lower position, The streams of a hundred valleys run to them.

66.2 Therefore, if you want to rule effectively over people You must surely speak as if below them. If you want to lead well, You must surely walk behind them.

66.3 That way when the age takes a position of power The people will not feel oppressed. And when the Sage leads The people will not think he is in the way. Therefore the world joyfully praises him and does not tire of him.

66.4 Because he refuses to compete, The word cannot compete with him.

67.1 Everyone says this Tao of mine is great and nebulous. So great, in fact, that it is too nebulous to be of any use.

67.2 I have three treasures that I hold and cherish: One is called "compassion" Another is called "moderation" And the third is called "daring not to compete."

67.3 With compassion, one is able to be brave. With moderation, one has enough to be generous with others. Without competition, one is fit to lead.

67.4 Nowadays people don't bother with compassion But just try to be brave. They scoff at moderations And find they have little enough for themselves. They step on people in their rush to be first - This is death!

67.5 One who is compassionate in warfare is victorious And in defense he holds fast. Whn Heaven moves to save someone It protects him through compassion.

68.1 The best soldier is not violent. The best fighter is not driven by anger.

68.2 The true conqueror wins without confrontation. The best employer is humble before his employees.

68.3 I say there is much good in not competing. I call it using the power of the people. This is known as being in tune with Heaven, Like the Sages of old.

69.1 The military has a saying: "I would rather be passive, like a guest than aggressive, like a host. I would rather retreat a foot than advance an inch."

69.2 This is called going forward without instigating. Engaging without force Defense without hatred Victory without weapons.

69.3 There is no greater calamity than underestimating the enemy. If I take my enemy too lightly, I am in danger of losing my compassion, moderation, and non-competitive spirit.

69.4 So, when two armies confront each other Victory will go to them that grieve.

70.1 My words are very easy to understand And very easy to practice. Yet the World is not able to understand Nor able to put them into practice.

70.2 My words speak of the primal. My deeds are but service. Unless people understand this They won't understand me. And since so few understand me, Then such understanding is rare and valuable indeed.

70.3 Therefore the Sage wears common clothes AAnd hides his treasures only in his heart.

71.1 She who knows that she does not know is the best off. He who pretends to know but doesn't is ill. Only someone who realizes he is ill can become whole.

71.2 The Sage is not ill because she recognizes this illness as illness, Therefore she is not ill.

72.1 When people lose their fear of power Then great power has indeed arrived.

72.2 Do not intrude on people's material living. Do not despise their spiritual lives, either. If you respect them, you will be respected.

72.3 Therefore the Sage knows himself, but he is not opinionated. He loves himself, but he is not arrogant. He lets go of conceit and opinion, and embraces self-knowledge and love.

73.1 A soldier who has the courage to fight will eventually be killed. But one who has the courage not to fight will live.

73.2 In these two, one is good and the other harmful. Who knows why Heaven allows some things to happen? Even the Sage is stumped sometimes.

73.3 The way of Heaven/ Does not compete, but is good at winning. Does not speak, yet always responds; Does not demand, but is usually obeyed; Seems chaotic, but unfolds a most excellent plan.

73.4 Heaven's net is cast wide And though its meshes are loose, Nothing is ever lost.

74.1 If people do not fear death How can you threaten them with it?

74.2 If people live in constant fear of death, Because those who break the law are seized and killed, Who would dare to break the law?

74.3 There has always been an official executioner. If you take the law into your own hands And try to take his place, It is like trying to take the place of a master carpenter In which case you would probably hurt your hands.

75.1 The people are starving because their leaders eat up all their money in taxes. And so, they are hungry.

75.2 The people are rebellious because their leaders are intrusive. And so, they protest.

75.3 The people make light of death because their leaders live so well at their expense. And so, they expect death. Therefore, it seems that one who does not grasp this life too tightly is better off than one who clings.

76.1 When people are alive they are soft and weak. At their deaths they are hard and rigid.

76.2 All young things, including grass and trees Are soft and frail. At their death they are withered and dry.

76.3 So, all that are hard and rigid take the company of death. Those who are soft and weak take the company of life.

76.4 Therefore, powerful weapons will not succeed (Remember that strong and tall trees are the ones that are cut down).

76.5 The strong and rigid re broken and laid low. The soft and weak will always overcome.

77.1 The Tao of Heaven is like the stringing of a bow. The high is pressed down and the low raised up. The string that is too long is shortened and the string that is too short is added to.

77.2 Heaven's Way is to take from what has too much And give to what does not have enough. This is not the way of men, however, for they take from those who have little to increase the wealth of the rich.

77.3 So who is it that has too much and offers it to a needy World? Only someone who knows the Tao.

77.4 Therefore, the Sage works anonymously. She achieves great things but does not wait around for praise. She does not want her talents to attract attention to her.

78.1 In the whole World nothing is softer or weaker than water. And yet even those who succeed when attacking the hard and the strong cannot overcome it Because nothing can harm it.

78.2 The weak overcome the strong. The soft conquers the hard. No one in the World can deny this Yet no one seems to know how to put it into practice.

78.3 Therefore the Sage says "One who accepts a people's shame is qualified to rule it. One who embraces a condemned people is called the king of the Universe." True words seem paradoxical.

79.1 When enemies are reconciled, some resentment invariably remains. How can this be healed?

79.2 Therefore the Sage makes good on his half of the deal // And demands nothing of others.

79.3 One who is truly good will keep to his promise. One who is not good will take what he can.

79.4 Heaven doesn't choose sides It is always with the good people.

80.1 It is best to have small communities with few people. Although they have goods and equipment in abundance few of them are even used. They have great love of life, and are content to be right where they are.

80.2 Although they have boats and carriages, there is no place they particularly want to go. And although they have access to weapons and machineries of war, they have no desire to show them off.

80.3 Let people return to simplicity, working with their own hands. Then they will find joy in their food Beauty in their simple clothes Peace in their living Fulfillment in their tradition.

80.4 And although they live within sight of neighbouring states And their roosters and dogs are heard by one another The people are content to grow old and die Without having gone to see their neighbour states.

81.1 True words are not beautiful. Beautiful words are not true.

81.2 Good people do not argue. Argumentative people are not good.

81.3 The wise are not necessarily well-educated. The well-educated are not necessarily wise.

81.4 The Sage does not hoard things. The more she does for others The more he finds she has. The more she gives to others The more she finds she gains.

81.5 Heaven's Way is to nourish, not to harm. The Sage's way is to work, yet not to compete.

McDonald version

- 1.1 The way that can be told of is hardly an eternal, absolute, unvarying one; the name that can be coded and given is no absolute name.
- 1.2 Heaven and earth sprang from something else: the bright nameless; the named is but the said mother that rears the ten thousand creatures of heaven and earth, each after its kind.
- 1.3 He that rids himself of base desire can see the secret essences; he that didn't and reached high being, he can see outcomes.
- 1.4 Still the two are the same; the secret and its manifestations came from the same ground, the same mould, but anyway sound different - they're given different names where they appear. They can both be called the cosmic mystery, awesome deep or rather more secret than so-called mystery.
- 1.5 There's the deeper mystery: the gate and doorway from which issued all secret essences, yes, all subtleties, and the subtle mystical opening homewards. Call it the door mystery or golden secret of all life.

- 2.1 When the people of the world see beauty as beauty, the notion of ugliness pops up along with that
- 2.2 And equally if every one recognize virtue as virtue, if they all know the good as good, the recognition of adjacent evil is wont to rise.
- 2.3 So: Being and not-yet-being interdepend in growth; grow out of another, they can produce each other. And hard and easy interdepend in completion; long and short interdepend. They test each other in contrast.
- 2.4 High and low determine one another and interdepend or distinguish each other in position. So it seems. Pitch and mode give harmony to one another; tones, sound and voice interdepend in basic, functional harmony; Front and back give sequence to one another. The couples follow each other - interdepend in company, so to speak.
- 2.5 From this the wise man relies on doing nothing in the open, it's wu-wei. And he spreads doctrines without true or false words, by oddly wordless influence.
- 2.6 All things appear, and he hardly turns away from the creatures worked on by him: Some he gives solid, good life, he hardly disowns his chosen ones.
- 2.7 He hardly takes possession of anyone under fair conditions. He rears his sons in earthly ways, but neither appropriates nor lays blatant claim to any one. He acts, but doesn't rely on his outer, visible smartness or miracle-working ability. He very often claims no credit. At times he controls them, but hardly leans on any of them. Because he lays claim to no credit, the handy credit can hardly be taken away from him. Yes, for the very reason that he hardly calls attention to what he does, he isn't ejected at once.

- 3.1 Stop looking for rare, moral persons (hsien) to put in power. There will be jealousies among people, jealousies and strife.
- 3.2 If we cease to set store by products that are hard to get, there will be less outright thieves.
- 3.3 If the people never see such things as excite desire, their hearts can remain placid and undisturbed.
- 3.4 Therefore the wise one rules by emptying their hearts [like the clown]. He fills their bellies, weakens their brightness and toughens their bones, ever striving to make the people without knowledge.
- 3.5 He sees to it that if there are any who are bright and clever, they dare not interfere.
- 3.6 Through his non-do actions all [such subjection] runs well [for some time].

- 4.1 Dao is like an empty vessel that yet can be drawn from without ever needing to be filled.
- 4.2 It's without bottom; the very breeder of all things in the world.
- 4.3 In it all sharpness is blunted, all tangles untied, all glare tempered, all turmoil smoothed.
- 4.4 It's like a deep pool that never dries.
- 4.5 Was it too the child of something else? We can hardly tell. A substanceless image of all things seemed to exist before the progenitor that we hardly know of.

- 5.1 The universe seems without mercy, quite ruthless; in that wider perspective all things are but as ritual straw dogs.
- 5.2 The wise man too is hard as nail; to him the people are but as straw dogs to throw.
- 5.3 Yet heaven and earth and all that lies between is like a bellows; empty, yet yielding a supply that hardly fails. Work it, and more comes out. Whereas the force of words is soon spent.
- 5.4 It seems far better to keep what's in the heart. So hold to the heart core and a regular mean.

- 6.1 The valley spirit never dies. It's named the mystic woman.
- 6.2 And the gate of the profound woman is the root that heaven and earth sprang from.
- 6.3 It's there within us all the while; draw upon it as you will, you can never wear it out.

7.1 Heaven is always, the earth, too. How can it be?

7.2 Well, they don't live only for themselves; that's why they live long.

7.3 So the wise man puts himself last, and finds himself in the foremost place, puts himself in the background; yet always comes to the fore.

7.4 He keeps well fit; looks on his body almost as accidental, outer, something to be well taken care of; still it always there, and always remains. He remains in the open by it, too.

7.5 He hardly strives for great personal ends; his main ends seem fulfilled.

8.1 The highest good is like that of water. The goodness of water is that it benefits the ten thousand creatures; yet itself hardly ever scrambles - it seems quite content with the places that all men disdain. It's this that can make water so near to some dao.

8.2 And if men think the ground the best place for building a house upon, if among thoughts they value those that are profound, if in friendship they value gentleness; in words, truth, or sincere faithfulness,

8.3 in government, [bugbear] order; in deeds: competence, ability, effectiveness; in actions: timeliness and being properly timed -

8.4 In each case it's because they prefer things that hardly lead to strife, and therefore hardly go much astray or amiss.

9.1 Stretch a bow to the full, and you'll end up wishing you'd stopped in time; to hold and fill to overflowing isn't quite as able as to stop in time.

9.2 Temper a sword-edge to its very sharpest, and you'll find it soon grows dull.

9.3 When gold and jade fills your hall, can it be well guarded any more?

9.4 To be proud with things and glory given, could bring ruin. Wealth and place breed insolence and could slowly harm and ruin:

9.5 If your work is done, withdraw! That's heaven's way. It can be opposed to lots of ways of man.

10.1 Can you keep the unquiet physical-soul from straying, hold fast to the unity and middle, and never quit it?

10.2 Can you, when concentrating your breath, make it soft like that of an infant?

10.3 Strive after less tainted perfection, let it be aided by penetrating insight. So wipe and cleanse your vision of the mystery till all is without blur.

10.4 Can you love the people and rule the land, yet remain unknown?

10.5 Can you in opening and shutting the heavenly gates, ever play the feminine part?

10.6 Can your mind penetrate every corner of the land, but you yourself never interfere? Can you renounce the grosser mind for comprehending all inside knowledge?

10.7 Produce things and rear well, but never lay claims to such things - control them, never lean upon them. Rely on some innate ability to act well. Be a sort of master among others, just refrain from mismanaging. Here is found the essence of dao might, its deep, mystic virtue.

11.1 We put thirty spokes together and call it a wheel; but it's on the space where there's nothing that the usefulness of the wheel depends.

11.2 We turn clay to make a vessel; but it's on the space where there's nothing that the usefulness of the vessel depends.

11.3 We pierce and cut out doors and windows to make a house; and it's on these spaces where there's nothing that the usefulness of the house depends.

11.4 Take advantage of what is, turn existing into a great advantage: just make as much as you can out of it here. Feel free to recognise the possible usefulness of what's not yet here. Prosper by clever use of something not yet.

12.1 The five colours tend to confuse the eye, the five sounds of music can deafen the ear, the five tastes all dull or spoil the palate.

12.2 Excess of hunting and chasing makes a mind go mad. Things hard to get, keeps one on one's guard. Valuable things and products quite hard to get, can impede their owner's progress.

12.3 So the wise man is concerned with his tummy before his eyes. He can consider the tummy first, not the eye. That is: He disregards the world outside - "that", and he accepts, goes for and in the end grabs the supernatural powers dormant within - his daoist "this". Therefore he rejects the one but accepts the other.

13.1 Be glad for favour. Still receive favour or disgrace with regular apprehension. Be cautious not to lose the winning sort of favour. Lower favour and disgrace can cause one dismay; We can have fears because we have a self. Yet what we value and what we fear are as if within that inner sanctimonium self."

13.2 What does this mean: "Favour and disgrace can cause one dismay? Those who receive favour from above are dismayed when they receive it. And should they lose it they turn distraught.

13.3 What does this mean: "What we value and what we fear are as if within our serious self?" Regard great trouble as seriously as you regard the body. One reason that we suffer hurt is that we have bodies. When we don't regard that gross body as [most important aspect of self, what have we to fear? [Lao tse.]

13.4 And so, the one who values his experienced world as part of his exploring inner self, can then be entrusted with rule of something. The he who loves the all as an aspect of his sensing self - all can then be entrusted to his care.

14.1 Look at it, it can't be seen, is called the invisible. Listen to it, it can't be heard, is called the inaudible. Grasp at it, it can't be touched, is called the fine formless.

14.2 These three elude all solid inquiries And merge and become one.

14.3 Its rising brings no light; its sinking, no darkness. Unceasing, continuous, it can't be defined, on the way back to where there's nothing.

14.4 It's called shape free from shapes; forms without form; the image of nothingness. That's why it's called the elusive; Go towards them, and you can see no physical front; go after them, and you see no rear.

14.5 Hold on to the dao of old to master the things of the present. Master what once was, at the start, It's the essence of rarefied, pearl-stringed dao.

15.1 The best rulers of old had fine natures, mysterious, too deep, they could not be understood.

15.2 And because such men could not be fully grasped at once, they appeared to be cautious, like wading a stream in winter; at a loss, like one fearing and having to deal with danger on every side; reserved, like one who pays a visit;

15.3 pliant and yielding, as ice when it begins to melt; genuine, like a piece of raw wood; open-minded like a valley; and blending freely like a troubled, muddy stream of water.

15.4 Find repose in a muddy world by lying still; be gradually clear through tranquillity. You can assume such murkiness, to become in the end still and clear. And maintain your calm long in between. So make yourself inert, to get in the end full of life and stir. By such activity come back to life.

15.5 Who hugs this dao doesn't want to fill himself to overflowing. It's just because he guards against being over-full, there's no overflowing, and next he is like a garment that endures all, beyond wearing out and renewal.

16.1 Attain complete humility towards the void; hold firm to the basis of quietude.

16.2 The myriad things take shape and rise to activity, Now, I watch them fall, worked on, back to their repose and roots like plants that flourish but return to the soil and root they grew from.

16.3 To return to the root is basic repose; it's quiet and returning to some destiny. To submit to a destiny is to find the eternal shelter, the always-so, or the eternal dao. To know the eternal always-so is to be somewhat illumined. Not to know it courts disaster.

16.4 Who knows the eternal shelter has room in him for nearly everything - he is wide as tolerant. Being much including, there's little prejudice; to be without blunt prejudice is kingly; to be kingly is to be well in accord with nature; it's to be of heaven.

16.5 To be of heaven in unison with an undaunted nature is to be in dao; This dao is forever, and he that owns it, is hardly destroyed, even though his body ceases.

17.1 Of the best the people hardly ever know they exist; The next best they flock to and praise for nothing. The next they shrink from; the next get reviled.

17.2 "Not believing people you turn them into liars" - such bosses don't command the people's faith. They lose faith in them and take to oaths!

17.3 The wise man is a clever ruler; he values his words highly. It's so hard to get a single word from at any price that when his task is finished, a work well done, everyone says, "It happened by itself, and we did it."

18.1 When the great dao declined, jen and I arose, humanity and righteousness."

18.2 Next, when brightness and know-how came in vogue, the great pretence fully started.

18.3 When the six family relationships are not in harmony There's open talk of kind parents" dutiful sons" and deep love to children.

18.4 A confused country enmeshed in disorder praises ministers in chaos and misrule.

19.1 Banish wisdom, discard knowledge, Then the people will benefit a hundred times.

19.2 Banish human love, just dump righteous, moral justice, and then the people will be dutiful and recover deep love of their kin.

19.3 Banish cunning and skill, dispel profit; dismiss utility," then thieves and robbers will disappear.

19.4 These three things are not enough; externals are somehow decorations, purpose's not enough; they tend to rob life and make it too little complicated.

19.5 Therefore let people hold well on to keeping accessories; keeping simplicity to look at. Go on and shield their internal soul's nature as some ritual, raw block to hold, their private, secret means and foster less ardent desires.

20.1 Abandon learning and there will be no sorrow. Between Yes, sir," and Of course not", how much difference is there? Between good" and bad", how much difference is there?

20.2 That which men fear is indeed to be feared; alas confused, and the end isn't yet.

20.3 All men are wreathed in smiles, ever merry-making, as if feasting after the great sacrifice, like ascending a tower in spring. I alone am inert, like a child that has not yet given sign; Like a new-born child that can't smile yet. I seem to be without a home, droop and drift, as though I belonged nowhere, completely unattached.

20.4 All men have enough and to spare; I alone seem to have lost everything; I am like one left out. Mine is indeed the mind of a very idiot, my heart must be that of a fool, dull as I seem - muddled, nebulous!

20.5 The world is full of knowing people that shine; I alone am dull, confused. I seem to be in the dark. They look lively and clear-cut self-assured; I appear alone, depressed, or patient as the sea, blown adrift, seemingly aimless, never brought to a stop.

20.6 All men can be put to some use; as worldlings have a purpose. I alone am intractable and boorish, appearing rustic, stubborn and uncouth, differing from most people, But I differ most from others in that I prize no sustenance that doesn't come from the breast of mama mia.

21.1 The marks of great virtue follow alone from the (one) dao. What's called one dao seems impalpable and vague, not to be measured at all.

21.2 Dao is an elusive, virtually incommensurable form, but eluding, elusive it contains sub-forms.

21.3 Within it lie idea-images of coming things, within it are some shadowy entities or some dormant, vibrant life force of the firstborn, dim essence - even of objects, somehow, but much rarefied - latent in the essence is the life-force. The life-force is real and to be trusted. It's true, and can be set to operate. and latent in it are evidences. From the days of old till now its chunks haven't departed or ceased, By its chunks we can view some origin of all descended units.

21.4 Do I know a father of a thing? How to know how some origin of a manifestation is formed? By much developed intuition, possibly.

22.1 "To remain whole, yield somewhat or seem curved and bent if you may." To become straight, let yourself look bent. To become full, seem hollow. Seem tattered now, that you can be renewed. Those that have little, can get more, To have plenty is to be confused.

22.2 Therefore the wise man clasps the primal unity, testing by it everything under heaven by himself - it.

22.3 He doesn't show himself much, he is therefore luminous and clear. He doesn't define himself, therefore he is distinct. He doesn't boast, therefore people give him credit: he succeeds by that. He's never outright proud of his work, and therefore it endures.

22.4 Because he doesn't contend, none in the world can contend with him.

22.5 So the old saying To remain whole, seem twisted!" was no idle word; for true wholeness can only be won by return to dao.

23.1 To be always talking goes against nature. For the same reason a good whirlwind never lasts the whole morning, nor a swell rainstorm the whole day.

23.2 The wind and rain emerge from nature. And if even nature can't blow, last or pour for long, how much less should man-given tenets?

23.3 So, he who takes to or follows (one) dao, becomes merged with (this) dao. Or if one uses dao as one's instrument, the results will be like dao. Who follows virtue, is soaked by it. If one uses the "power" as one's instrument, the results will be like the power. If one uses what's the "reverse of the power", the results will be the "reverse of the power".

23.4 Who is dao identified, could be glad as well. For to those who have conformed themselves to dao, dao readily lends its power. To those who have conformed themselves to the power, the power readily lends more power. While to those who conform themselves to inefficacy, inefficacy readily lends its ineffectiveness.

23.5 Who has not enough faith will not be able to get faith. Or: "By not believing in people you turn them into liars."

24.1 Who stands on tiptoe, doesn't stand steady; He who takes the longest strides, doesn't walk.

24.2 He who does his own looking sees little, and he who shows or reveals himself is hardly luminous.

24.3 He who justifies and defines himself isn't subsequently distinct. He who boasts of what he will do succeeds in nothing; Who brags doesn't endure for long. Who is proud of his work, achieves nothing well lasting.

24.4 Such people are like remnants of food and tumours of action from the dao point of view. Good braggarts could be dregs. So it's said "Pass round superfluous dishes to those that have already had enough, Such things of disgust all are likely to detest and reject in disgust." So the man of dao spurns them. The man that has dao doesn't stay to bray and show off.

25.1 Before heaven and earth there was something nebulous, formless yet complete; without sound, without substance, isolated, free from all form; standing alone and depending on nothing, unchanging, operating everywhere, all pervading, revolving and without fail. One can think of it as the mother of all

25.2 I don't know its true name. I call it dao. "Way" is the by-name. If forced to give it a name I can call it great (ta) .

25.3 Now such greatness implies reaching out in space, and also means functioning everywhere, or passing on; Space-yielding or functioning everywhere signifies far-reaching. And passing on means going far away, To go really far is to return to the original point. To reach far is a return. To go far away means to return.

25.4 So dao is great and far-reaching, and so is heaven, earth and the king. For just as dao, earth and heaven each has its subtle greatness, so does the ruler. There are four great things in the universe, and the king is one of them. So within the realm there are four portions of greatness", and one belongs to the king.

25.5 The ways of men are conditioned by those of earth. The ways of earth, by those of heaven. The ways of heaven by those of dao, and the ways of dao by the Self-so's Dao in turn models itself after Nature.

26.1 The solid is the platform of the light, and the heavy is the root of the light. (Maybe firm integrity has to be the basis of light frivolity). Quiet strength rules over activity, the not-so-active could be the big boss of the hasty.

26.2 So the wise man travels all day and never leaves his baggage; he who travels all day hardly likes to be separated from his provision-chart: However great and glorious the view, he sits quiet and dispassionate".

26.3 So the lord with ten thousand chariots can seldom allow himself to be light-spirited and lighter than those he rules. The ruler of a great country should never make light of his body - anywhere. In light frivolity, the controller's centre is lost; in hasty action, such self-mastery.

26.4 If the ruler is light-hearted, the minister will be destroyed. If he is light, the foundation is lost; If he is active, the lord is lost. [Maybe for ever.]

27.1 A good traveller leaves no track or trace behind, nor does fit activity. So a good runner leaves no track. Perfect speech is like a jade-worker whose tool leaves no mark. Good speech leaves no flaws. The perfect reckoner needs no counting-slips; the good reckoner uses no counters.

27.2 The perfect, shut door is without bolt nor bar and can't be opened. The perfect knot needs neither rope nor twine, yet can't be untied. No one can untie it.

27.3 So the wise man is good at helping men, always good in saving men: the wise man is all the time helping men in the most perfect way - he certainly doesn't turn his back on men; is all the time in the most perfect way helping creatures. He certainly doesn't turn his back on creatures, and consequently no man is rejected. For that reason there's no useless person. And he is always good in saving. So nothing is rejected. This is called following the light (of nature) - is called resorting to the light, nay, stealing some divine light.

27.4 Truly, the good man is the teacher of the bad, as they say. But the bad man is the lesson of the good, in part some material from which the good can learn. And so the imperfect is the equipment of the perfect man".

27.5 He who hardly respects or values his teacher, hardly cares for the material or loves his lesson, is gone far astray even if well versed. That's the fine secret.

28.1 "He who knows the male (active force), yet keeps to the female (the passive force or receptive element), becomes like a ravine, receiving all sort of things. Being the all-encompassing ravine he knows a power that he never calls upon in vain. This is returning to the state of infancy.

28.2 He who knows the white, yet keeps and cleaves to the black becomes the standard by which all things are tested, he becomes the model for the world. As such he has all the time the eternal power that never errs; and he returns to the limitless, a primordial nothingness.

28.3 He who knows glory, yet keeps to obscurity or even cleaves to ignominy, turns into the valley that receives into it all kind of things. And being such a valley he has all the time a power that suffices. So he returns again to some pristine simplicity, returns to the state of simplicity: its the raw, uncarved block.

28.4 Break up simple awareness and it becomes shaped. Next it becomes someone's tool in the hands of the wise man. For when a block is sawed up it's made into subordinates or implements. When the wise man uses it, it becomes chief. So the greatest carver does the least cutting, as they say. The great ruler doesn't cut up.

29.1 Those that would gain what's under heaven by tampering with it - I've seen that they don't succeed.

29.2 For that which is under heaven is like a holy vessel, dangerous to tamper with. Those that tamper with it, harm it. Human go-between is likely to fail. Those that grab at it lose it. Who makes can spoil well; who holds can lose.

29.3 Among creatures of this world some lead and some follow. Some things go forward among creatures: some go in front, some follow behind - Some blow out, some blow in; some blow out while others would blow in. Some are feeling vigorous just

when others are worn out. Some are strong, some are weak. Some are loading just when others would be tilting out. Some can break, some can fall.

29.4 So the wise man discards excess, extravagance, and ridiculous pride: He discards even the absolute, the all-inclusive, the extreme.

30.1 He who by dao purposes to help a ruler of men, will oppose most conquest by force of arms: such things are wont to rebound.

30.2 Where armies are, thorns and brambles can grow. The raising of a great host could be followed by a year of dearth.

30.3 Therefore a good general effects his purpose and next stops; for he dares not rely upon the strength of arms: he doesn't take further advantage of a victory.

30.4 He fulfils his purpose and does hardly glory in things he has done; effects his purpose and doesn't boast of a thing he accomplished; fulfils an ignoble purpose, but takes no pride in something he did well; fulfils his purpose as some perhaps regrettable necessity - does it as a step that could hardly be averted and avoided. So he effects his purpose, but hardly loves violence. Why?

30.5 Things age after reaching their prime. What has a time of vigour (and conquest) also has its time of decay. After things reach their prime, they begin to grow old, which means being contrary to dao. Furthermore, morbid violence and violence in excess could be against dao. He who is against the dao perishes young. Whatever is contrary to dao will soon perish. What's against dao will hardly survive.

31.1 Fine weapons are instruments of evil as soldiers can be: quite ill-omened things, often hated. Those with fine dao turn away from weapons that are most often hated.

31.2 The gentleman favours the left hand side among people in peace; peace people are of good birth. In a fair peace the symbolic left is the place of honour. Yes, a good ruler honours the left and its good omens when at home, but in war this is reversed: On military occasions he favours the right side as the place of war honour. And so he honours the right of bad omens.

31.3 -

31.4 The durable, even when he conquers, does hardly regard weapons as lovely things. Weapons and soldiers can be bad and evil-doing tools. They're not often the tools of the gentleman and good ruler. To hold them dear means to delight in them, and so to delight in slaughter of men. And he who delights in the slaughter of men will never get what he looks for out of those that live and function under heaven. In ugly victory there's no beauty, and who calls it handsome perhaps preaches slaughter. Use of soldiers [and police] can't be helped, best policy is calm restraint. Who delights in the slaughter of men wont succeed, wont succeed in ruling the world; and slaying of multitudes should be mourned.

31.5 -

31.6 A host that has slain men had better be received with grief and mourning rites; he that has conquered in battle had better be received and celebrated with some mournful funeral custom. A victory is the grand occasion for funerals.

32.1 Best dao is absolute and eternal. As such it has neither name nor fame. Its uncunning, cute naiveté, the fabled raw block of wood, and it cant be used by anybody. None in the whole world can master and make use of such basic simplicity. Yet, though seemingly of small value, it could be greater than anything in the universe.

32.2 Good kings and barons can keep such unspoiled, inborn nature. If kings and barons would but hold on to it, all beings and things would submit to them well of their own accord.

32.3 Yes, the best let heaven and earth join, so that the mystic sweet rain falls, all the time beyond the command of men, yet evenly upon all. Let heaven and earth unite to drip sweet dew. And the ten thousand creatures would flock to honour you; for the world would conspire much for sweet dew: Without law or compulsion, men would take up regulations and institutions, sort out names and [try to] live in harmony. A human civilisation can rise once there are names [principles].

32.4 Once the block is carved, there will be such names; they're wide differentiations of things. But as soon as there are [principles and neatly differentiated] names, know that it's time to stop. Its well to know where to stop for calm and poise. As soon as there are names [and study] it's time to stop. By knowing when it's time to stop, much danger could be avoided.

32.5 In the world dao can be likened to rivers that turn into wider rivers and eventually course into some sea. All will come to and be clasped by one and more such dao rivers -and to [some] dao all under heaven will come, as streams and torrents flow into a great river or sea [of universal dao].

33.1 He who knows others is learned; but he who knows himself is wise, nay, in the end it could be illumined.

33.2 He who conquers others has strength of muscles; To conquer oneself is hard. So he who conquers himself is strong.

33.3 To be content with what one has is to feel rich; so let the contented feel rich. Next: He who works, may eventually succeed. And he one who acts with vigour has will. Even he who works through sordid violence can get his way - The determined one has strength of will.

33.4 What stays in its place can endure. He who doesn't lose his centre can last quite long, he who hardly loses his place (with such as dao). The one who dies but doesn't really perish enjoys long life. He who dies yet (his power) remains has long life. When such a one dies he should hardly be thought of as [too] lost; there's no other longevity [than long life].

34.1 Some great dao can flow everywhere. Like a flood it can go left or right. Like a drifting boat it can go this way or that.

34.2 All things [eventually] derive their life from it. It hardly denies or disowns them. It accomplishes its task, but seem to claim no credit for it. It hardly takes possession of anyone, either. So though it covers all there is like some garment, it hardly takes possession. It can clothe and feed all beings but hardly claims to be guru over them.

34.3 Therefore it can perhaps be called low and quite free from insignificant desires.

34.4 To turn into the home of all things, don't make any outer claims. (Implied; cf. Y) See into how dao is by non-desiring empty mind. (Cf. Y) Ten thousand [hungry] creatures obey a dao master and his ways, though they hardly understand it or how. Dao is called great. And the man who lives it or a dao repertoire is called great as well. The wise man never strives [verbally] for the great. To the end the wise dao man doesn't claim any outer greatness. Thus [some degree of subtle Vossa-] greatness is installed.

34.5 And the wise man never at any time hardly ever makes a show of greatness. By such a dogged, keen strategy some [clowns] achieves greatness.

35.1 Hold the great symbol and great form of dao know-how. He who visualises or holds the great symbol form at its best can go about his work (in such as his empire), yet without doing harm. An then all the world follows. At last a lot of people will come and meet no harm. All in peace, quietness and security, commonwealth. All can enjoy comfort and health.

35.2 Sound of music, smell of good dishes will make the passing stranger pause. Yes, offer music and dainties, very good things to eat and the [odd], passing and wayfaring stranger will stay.

35.3 How different the words that dao gives forth! So thin, insipid, so flavour- or tasteless! Still dao is mild to the taste. Looked at, it can't be seen. So look at dao; it's quite imperceptible. If one looks for dao, there's hardly anything solid to see. If one listens for it, there's nothing loud to hear. We listen to this inaudible [thing]. If one uses it, its supply never fails. So use it; it's inexhaustible.

36.1 What's in the end to be shrunk can first be stretched. The one who is to be made to dwindle (in power) can first be caused to expand; and then it's necessary first to expand. Whatever is to be weakened must begin by being made strong [enough for it first of all]. He who is to be laid low can first be exalted to power. So: first promote, next destroy. Or: To destroy, first promote. What's to be overthrown must begin by being set up. He who would be a taker must begin as a giver.

36.2 And this is the fine art of "dimming" one's light. According to this [set-up] the soft overcomes the hard; and the weak, the strong. [Such things can happen, but most often not, or what?]

36.3 Fish should be left in the deep pool, not taken away from water. And sharp weapons of the state should not be displayed, but left where nobody can see them.

37.1 The dao never does; it takes no action. Through it everything is done, yet there's nothing left undone.

37.2 If good kings and barons would master some fit dao and keep it, all things in the world should transform spontaneously. When reformed and rising to action, let all influenced be restrained by the blankness of the unnamed, the nameless pristine simplicity. Yes, if after being transformed they should desire to act, someone has to restrain them with simplicity that has no name.

37.3 It's an unnamed blankness; it could bring dispassion; As such nameless pristine simplicity is stripped of desire. So to be truly, artfully dispassionate, be free of desires and still. Simple wit and sense is free of desires. By stripping of desire true [yoga] rest is achieved almost of itself, the whole [body or] empire will be at rest of its own accord. And next the world [perhaps of somebody] could get at peace of its own accord.

38.1 The man of superior [scholar] virtue is hardly (conscious of his) virtue, and so he is virtuous. Superior virtue is hardly (conscious of) its virtue. [Or could it be that superior virtue is hardly virtue at all?] The high-standing man hardly ever shows off he has some supreme powers or prowess deep inside himself. He keeps such powers, and in this way he really owns virtue. The man of low virtue is hardly losing virtue, and so he is devoid of virtue. The man of low virtue can lose sight of some virtue by never losing sight of it. Rather low or indecent power" can't get rid of the appearance of being some power'; [There's no scoffed, angrily sulking Messiah power'].

38.2 No one thinks a man of highest calibre acts. No one thinks he ever acts with ulterior motives. The man of low virtue acts from himself, and very often with an ulterior motive - and is so regarded -

38.3 The man of super-kindness also acts, but with no irksome, ulterior motives. But all folks never think the superman acts. The man of superior justice acts but has no ulterior motive to do so, and maybe with an ulterior motive, as he who is best in ritual

acts not merely acts. (Yes, when) the man of superior morality acts and finds no response, he rolls up his sleeves and stretches his arms or advances upon them to force it on others.

38.4 So: Only when dao is lost does [said] virtue arise. When [spoken-of] virtue is lost, only then does [a parade of] kind humanity rise. Such good kindness is lost, then (comes some sort of or endorsement of) just moral: When humanist riches deep inside are lost, only then comes [conform, outer-directed] normal righteousness. When righteousness is lost, only then propriety pops up.

38.5 [And now it stands up: Boss-given, endorsed] morality can be the thinning out of loyalty and honesty of heart and the start of chaos. [Inner, hearty] morality lost, then propriety or semi-ritual. So [much] ritual endorsement could be the mere husk of loyalty and promise-keeping. [And so, all in all,] good, seemly propriety is a superficial expression of loyalty and faithfulness, and the start of chaos or disorder.

38.6 Those who are the first to know, let words of dao flower, and in the end it's an origin of folly. From this the great or noble man dwells in the solid, heavy and thick (base), and not in the superficial or thinned (end). Yes, he dwells in reality, which is a fruit, and not in the show of appearances, or flowering (expression). Therefore he rejects the one and accepts the other.

39.1 There were those in old times who grasped and were possessed of the one: The heaven was much clarified by attaining it. Likewise, the earth got stable or calm by the same [rotating] measure; and demon spirits or gods were spiritualised, became divine.

39.2 The valley likewise became full, the abyss replenished. By staying in the one, all creatures lived and grew. By staying in some basic unity, [Russian] princes and dukes became the ennobled of the people - That was how each became so. Barons and princes direct their people [in some ways]. It's some inner fabric of unified wholeness that sees to it.

39.3 [Man-felt] heaven could soon split open without fundamental clarity. Without basic clarity, heavens might become torn. Without resting, steady stability, the earth might quake and tip over. Without spiritual power, the gods might wither and crumble,

39.4 Without being filled, the valleys might crack and run dry. If the myriad things had not thus lived and grown all would end without the life-giving sustenance of power. Without the ennobling power, the honourable kings and barons in high places, even the directors of their people, might stumble, some overthrown.

39.5 So the humble is the stem upon which the mighty grows. Yes, humble oneness is the basis for all honour. So even the exalted ones depend upon the lowly for their base.

39.6 That could be [one reason] why [Russian] princes and dukes call themselves the orphaned," the lonely one," the unworthy," or the truly ill-provided. Is it not true then that they [to some extent] depend upon common man for support, or on hard ruler might rooting itself upon humility?

39.7 Just enumerate all the parts of a chariot. and you still have no [unified construct, no] chariot.

39.8 So [learn to] rumble like rocks rather than jingle like jade.

40.1 Reversion is the action of dao. In dao the only motion is a return; and the one useful quality is named soft [or polite] gentleness, So polite or weak gentleness [or humility] is the function of dao.

40.2 The creatures and things of this world come from being. And being from not-yet-being. though all

41.1 When the highest of men hear of dao and truth they put it into practice quite diligently. When the common types hear of dao, they seem to be in two minds about it, half believing, aware and unaware of some.

41.2 When the lowest types hear of dao, they ridicule or laugh loudly - but if they did not laugh, it would be no dao.

41.3 The proverb has it: The way out into the light often looks dark; one who understands dao seems dull, as dao which is bright appears to be dark. The dao which goes forward appears to fall backward; the one who is advanced (in dao) seems to slip backwards; the way that goes ahead often looks as if it went back. He who works and moves on the even dao [co-path] seems to go up and down; the least hilly way often looks as if it went thus, as level dao appears uneven.

41.4 Great virtue seems hollow and empty. The truly loftiest might looks like an abyss; superior virtue appears like a valley (hollow). Great capability is [granted to be] hollow. Yes, the loftiest is something abysmal. Sheerest white seems blurred, sheer white is like tarnished; (most) purity seems like disgrace. The most sufficing might looks inadequate; far-reaching virtue hardly seems to be enough; and great [and rustic] character appears to be not enough [but it's all the same]. The [organising] might that stands most firm seems flimsy. Solid character looks infirm; and solid virtue unsteady. What's in its natural, pure state looks faded: True substance looks changeable, and pure worth seems dirtied. The largest square has no corners: great space has no corners. The greatest capacities develop latest, and great talent could be slow to mature; as they say: The greatest vessel takes the longest to finish. The great tool and talent is slow to finish (or mature). Great tools do slow work. Great inside talent takes long to ripen. Great music is far from course; [at times] rare, it could be hard to get, or hardly heard.

41.5 Great, hidden form has neither shape nor contour; as great here means of dao, [which is thought up as] hidden and without (overtly sounded) name. Now, dao backs all things financially; dao alone skilfully provides for all - it supports all things and

advances [some] to perfection. Well dao-lent power could bring us (some degree of) fulfilment. Skilled, able dao-lending (of some majesty and power) could bring [Christian] fulfilment.

42.1 Dao gave birth to the one; the one gave birth successively to two things, three things, up the everything, everybody and the whole world we know.

42.2 The ten thousand things carry the yin as some back or behind, and hug the yang in front. Through the blending of the pervading principles as some abstract union, and by a further blending [designing] the material force (ki) they can gain [sound] harmony. And so the union in harmony gets strong [and defences]. In other words, living beings can't turn their backs to the shade [such as cooling yin] without having the sun on their bellies [it could be invigorating yang], and it's on such (yin-yang) blending of so-called breaths that [most] harmony depends.

42.3 Most people hate to be diagnosed as lonely, unworthy, orphaned, needy, ill-provided. Yet princes and dukes style themselves so, and call themselves by these names.

42.4 Truly, things are often increased by seeking to diminish them and diminished by seeking to increase them." And sometimes things are benefited by being taken away from and suffer by being added to. And so it often happens that things can gain by losing and lose by gaining.

42.5 What others have taught, I teach also: "Violent and fierce people hardly die a natural [elegant] death." Yet, show me a man of violence that came to a good end, and I will take him for my teacher. I shall make all this the father (basis) of my teaching. [Uha.]

43.1 The softest things in the world overcome the hardest things in the world. The softest substance radiates through the hardest. Also, what's most yielding can eventually overwhelm the hardest. Formless penetrates no-crevice; substanceless it can enter where there's no space; all this could be not-yet-being entering and jostling non-space. That's how I know the value of action that's actionless. Through this I [also] know the benefit or advantage of taking no action.

43.2 There can be [sad] teaching without words. To teach without words can be best. Still few can understand such stuff. And there can be solid value in action that's actionless, or the advantage of taking no action. Yes, the [said] benefit of taking no action is without compare. Few can understand it.

44.1 Fame or one's own self, which matters most? Nay, which does one love more? Which should one love more, fame or one's own life? Which is more valuable, one's own life or wealth? One's own self or things bought, the solid goods, which should really count most? Which is worse, gain or loss? Could it be loss (of self) or possession which is the greater evil? [Which gain is the greater evil here?]

44.2 Therefore: he who loves most spends most. He who has lavish desires could spend extravagantly. He who hoards much could lose much. Who hoards much is in for losing heavily if who has hoarded most could suffer the heaviest loss.

44.3 The contented man could meet no disgrace; Who stops in time knows when to stop. Who stops in time nothing can harm if free from danger he can long endure and feel forever safe and secure. He can long endure who stays forever safe and secure -

45.1 What's most perfect [ambivalence] seems to be incomplete; [its] highest perfection is never impaired. The perfect seems to have something missing; [so have something missing]. Highest perfection is like imperfection, but its use is never impaired, nor its utility [at times]. What's most full [opening] seems empty; its use will never fail. The greatest abundance seems meagre indeed, but its use will never fail. What's most straight seems devious, maybe crooked.

45.2 The greatest skills seems to be [rustic,] clumsy. The greatest cleverness appears like stupidity, [(Demon skill seems like clumsiness. Apt skill seems clumsy, true cleverness seems clumsy.) The greatest [harlequin] eloquence seems to stutter or seems like stuttering.

45.3 Hasty movement overcomes cold. Keeping still can overcome heat. Tranquillity and staying still can overcome heat. By being greatly still you'll next be fit to rule the world. Who is calm and quiet becomes the universe deceit. By his limpid calm he all the time puts right everything [as universal deceit].

46.1 When dao reigns in the kingdom, galloping horses are turned back to fertilise certain fields with their manure. If the world in accord with dao, racing horses are turned back to pull refuse carts. When the world hardly lives in accord with dao, dao doesn't prevail or win. Next war horses will be reared even on a sacred hill below the city walls, and blatant cavalry will frolic in the countryside, driving and riding pestering war horses in suburbs in between. Dao does hardly prevail if war is on in city suburbs.

46.2 No lure is greater than to possess what others want. There's no greater guilt than [sudden] discontent. There's (...) greater disaster than greed. [Eventually] there's hardly a greater sin than desire for possession. No disaster could be greater than [...] to be content with what one has [in dire need and disabling poverty]. No presage of [airy] evil is greater than men wanting to get more.

46.3 He who has once known the pure [orgasm] contentment that comes simply through being content [at its peak], gets rather content-centred a long time after.

47.1 One can know what's happening all over the world without going out of doors. One can see the dao of the big wide beyond here without looking out of ones windows, and see all the ways of that beyond-here. Then, the further one travels the less one knows.

47.2 So the wise man can [at times] arrive without going and know without going about; he can understand much without seeing - or achieve much without [visible] action.

48.1 The student of knowledge goes into learning a little day by day; The student of dao reduces his assets by dwindling or losing a bit each day. Learning consists in adding daily to one's stock, and the practice of dao consists in loose dwindling day by day. It could be subtracting till one has reached inactivity. By steady reductions [of certain sorts] you reach certain sorts of laissez-faire.

48.2 So decrease and further decrease until you reach the point of taking no action. [This is clowning.] By artful inactivity everything [bad] can be set in motion. He who conquers the [inside] domain does so [mostly] by doing nothing. Those who once won the adherence of all who live here, did so by not interfering much. Had they interfered, they would never have won this adherence.

48.3 One who likes to do, may not be able to rule a kingdom [inside or outside].

49.1 The wise man makes no judgements of his own. He has no rigid and plump ideas alone. Maybe no certain, opinionated feelings. He uses the heart of the people as his own inner side and heart. People's opinions and feeling are then as his own.

49.2 He says: Good ones I declare good; and I [often] treat those who are good with goodness, as I approve of the good man. I also treat those who are not so good with goodness. I often approve of the [said] bad; he gets goodness. So bad ones I also declare good. That's the goodness on how goodness can be attained [by demagogy.]

49.3 The honest ones I believe; and [some] liars I also believe; I am honest to those who are honest, and I am also honest to those who are not [so] honest. By such means great honesty, the faith of virtue, can be attained and the honest gets [closer to rueful] truthfulness.

49.4 In dealing with the world a wise man seems like one dazed with a felt fear, and while governing his [little] empire he has no subjective viewpoint. So a wise man lives in the world in peace, and his bright mind forms a sound whole with that of his [dear] people. Then they all lend their sense perceptions - eyes and ears - and he treats them all - infants as well. But sometimes again a wise man, dealings with some world, for the world's sake dulls his wits. Where a hundred families all the time strain their eyes and ears, the wise man all-sees a people are brought into a fold of one heart. Next the wise man regards them as his own dear children. At times the wise man sees and hears no more than an infant. [that's not much.]

50.1 He who aims at life could achieve his death. Out of living, death pops up. Who comes to life can go to death.

50.2 If three out of ten are life companions, then the same number are death companions as well. As such the latter are labelled death-spots: some take life, through activity, to death. How is it? Its much due to men's intensive striving after life; in part the intense activity of multiplying life. Some do feed life too grossly.

50.3 It's said that he who is a good preserver of his life can meet no tigers or wild buffaloes on land. Such a one could have a true hold on life, If so, in battle or fighting he should hardly try to escape from weapons. He should neither get very much touched nor vulnerable to weapons in battle. [Cf. don't be there]

50.4 The wild buffalo cannot butt its powerless horns against him, The tiger cannot fasten its then useless claws in him and tear him apart, And much absent weapons of war should find no place to enter - cannot thrust their blades into him. [The absent part is always to blame. Demagogy] And why? (Demagogy, that's why) In him there's no room for death because he is beyond death. Others find no Achilles heel in him then and there.

51.1 One dao gives them birth, next hidden virtue and glory fosters them. Matter gives them physical form. some get shaped according to intrinsic designs, perfected by first being allotted its primal strength. Sets of circumstances and tendencies complete them. So all things of the universe worship their intrinsic ways (dao forms) and honour virtue. There's hardly one who doesn't honour inborn modes of living and standard accommodations, so in one way or other all who accommodate likeably do homage to set dao structure, and concomitant native, later, possibly unfolded growth power.

51.2 Conclusion: all things of the universe honour dao and exalt good te without being ordered by anybody. From this: the right praise always come spontaneously. And this is so of its own accord. Proficient dao hardly needs any right to be worshipped, Hardly does its best fit, proper unfoldment prowess or power claim the right to be honoured.

51.3 Its just like this: Some dao produces them and concomitant, abundant virtue fosters them. Said in other words: The right dao gives them birth, a proper te fosters them, Dao [deep structure] and might enough can rear and develop, can feed, nurture and shelter. In other words: grant some harbour of security, protect and give deep, strong peace in a place fit for that end. Just the right dao could be a prolongation of some deft was always and of itself so. Yes, the right dao gives birth, shields from storms,

and seems hardly possessive. The right shields hardly lay claim to you. Good dao bore you and the power" of dao evolved or reared you (a bit), made you grow [naturally, according to innate designs] brewed for you personally, sort of. A man must rear others, control some, but never lean upon them. By such natural designs just dao can act and also help, but it hardly appropriates. Just be chief among them, but hardly manage them. This can be called the superior power. See: The superior power hardly controls anybody! And this is the [program of developing fit] mystic might.

52.1 There was a [bang] start of the universe, call it the mother of the world.

52.2 Who has found that mother dao, also understands [some of] her sons (things) by it. From the mother, we can know her sons. Having understood some sons, yet keep to the inner, subtle mother. Who has known the sons will hold to the mother, for one's whole life can be protected from danger by it. [So they say.]

52.3 Shut down life's various openings. Close its doors, and till the end your strength may remain. Next, your whole life can seem without toil.

52.4 On the other hand; open the mouth busy about affairs, and to the end of life there will be no help or salvation coming to you [from the outer realm].

52.5 Good sight implies seeing what's very small. Seeing what's small is called [Zen] enlightenment. Who stays by some good conduct is strong.

52.6 So use the light and return to clear sight through the bright light of the subtle, shining inner realm [debated in Buddhism] By this art, never cause yourself future distress, [but see well in advance by the inner realm's sight and bright light; or just psyche such things out,] thereby preserved from most harm. This is called resorting to the always-so, or practising the eternal. That act is also called to steal the absolute.

53.1 Once started on the great [lax] highway, if I had but little [Vossing] knowledge I should, in walking on a broad way, fear getting off the road. On the main path (dao), I would avoid the by-paths.

53.2 Some dao main path is easy to walk [or drift] on, but safe and easy. All the same people are fond, men love by-paths, love even small by-paths:

53.3 The by-path courts are spick-and-span. And the fields go untilled, nay, exceedingly weedy. They're content to let their fields run to weed. All the while granaries stand quite empty and some exceedingly empty.

53.4 They have elegant, in clothes and gown to wear, some furnished with patterns and embroideries, Some carry sharp weapons, glut themselves with drink and foods enjoyed beyond limit, And wealth and treasures are accumulated in excess, owning far more than they can handle and use. This is to [molest] the world towards brigandage, it's robbery as extravagance. In the end they're splitting with wealth and possessions. Wealth splits, tends to. This cannot be a highway of dao (the way).

54.1 Well planted can hardly be plucked. Who is well established (in dao) can hardly be pulled away. The firmly grounded is hardly easily shaken. Who has a firm grasp doesn't easily let go. Who has a firm grasp of dao can't be separated from it. A really firm grasp can't be relaxed. Next, the ancestor's dao ways and means and their powers unite to carry the modern family on. From generation to generation firmly gripped dao [gyrations] shall be continued without fail. Such ancestral sacrifice is not to be suspended.

54.2 When one cultivates firm grasp or well modified ancestor disciplines in one's own life, things tend to go markedly well: If you cultivate, elevate and apply well blended, ad hoc modified ancestor ways and means, jobs, routines, accomplishments, such formerly seen, halfway "inherited" cardinal dao know-how at its best should be rewarding for yourself as an individual or person at its peak, and if so, your lifestyle could become suitable, even genuine, and its prowess likewise. This spells such as: Apply the firm manas grasp to yourself according to "like father, like son" and you'll incur no manas problem, no such deep, unseen trouble - From this: Apply such inherited "firmly rooted strategy" and its various grasps to yourself, and by its id outlets and precious routines you'll be freed from much unsuitable dross. Also apply best, united ancestor dao (or sakti) to your family or household and your household should flourish and thrive by this syncretic way of ways. [Honour your best father(s) at their best by doing in best footsteps under his wings, in his shadows - by such as halfway inherited or taken-op proclivities.] Apply it to the village on a wider, social scale, and the village will be strengthened or more secure. Apply it to the kingdom, and the kingdom could prosper. Apply it to an kingdom, and it will grow. Cultivated in the world, sour id-based handling sets could become all-embracing. Therefore: Delve into how "well structured, planted or formed" some things that are instituted seem to be. By delving back through own conscious stages as parts of yourself, you can in the end contemplate and ridicule yourself a little. The person should be some family-and-ancestors embedded "thing" in its own right. Next you can control your household by the united dao controls involved in it [allied to yin-yang structured cosmology].

54.3 According to (such well-planted, relations-structured schooled and trained virtue of) the individual, evaluate the individual; According to (the same virtues of) the family, judge the family; According to (similar blends of virtue of) the village, judge the village; According to (the virtue of the statutes) the state, judge the state; According to (the crossed virtues of) the world, evaluate the world.

54.4 How do I know the world? It's from the cultivation of root-strong virtue from the level of the individual to that of the sour world - I know just by what's inside me and this, all brought together.

55.1 He who has a lot of mystic might also should be strong in secret able influence-might - quite free from getting harmed, at times like a tender child: full of childlike virtue at its best. Then no poisonous insects should sting him. Fierce beasts should not seize him and wild beasts hardly attack him, clawing birds of prey should not pounce on and harass him. The bones of this dear little one are soft and tender, his sinews tender, but his grip is quite firm.

55.2 He hardly yet knows about the union of male and female, yet his organs are fully formed and well, at times aroused. This means that his essence is at its height there and then, or means that the vital force is at its height. [It could be both.]

55.3 Such a one can cry all day without getting hoarse if his [libido as natural balance] is whole and healthy [for it]. If so it's well in accord with something eternal. Now, to know eternity full well can be a discerning matter. To know bland harmony likewise implies to be in eternity, or if missed, it is to understand some [principle of] always-so by some degree of mental illumination. But to be well in accord with the eternal means to be free as a bird.

55.4 To fill life to the brim is to invite ugly portents, bad omens. To force the growth of life likewise spells ill. Some ready at hand or to come later on, maybe. Now, if the heart makes calls upon the life-breath, laziness or [yogic] rigidity can follow suit.

55.5 After things reach their prime, they begin to grow old, Whatever has a time of vigour also has a time of decay. Certain things age after reaching their prime. Much is contrary to dao. Whatever is contrary to dao will soon perish. He who is against dao can perish rather young. What's against dao could soon be destroyed.

56.1 He who knows doesn't speak (artfully). He who speaks hardly knows.

56.2 Fill your openings, shut the doors, Dull all nasty edges. Untie all tangles. Temper or soften all glaring light. Submerge its turmoil as unified with the world: Let all chaotic hustle and bustle be smoothed down. This is the called the mysterious [Vossing] levelling for bland unity or deep insider identification.

56.3 Love and hatred can barely affect the gods and supermen who are said to have achieved it. Certain forms of loss can hardly reach up to this. It can be hard to repel and shoo such an accomplished god-being, as it's impossible to be distant and indifferent to him. He can't be raised, can't be much humbled, and disgrace can hardly affect him deep inside. So he is already highest of all humbled creatures. He is to be so honoured by the world.

57.1 Kingdoms can only be governed if rules are kept; rule a kingdom by some normal standards and with utmost discretion. Battles, on the other hand, can be won if rules are aptly broken. Operate the army and fight some battles by (unusual) tactics of surprise and attack. Yet administer the kingdom by engaging in no activity. Win the world by doing next to nothing, for major adherence can only be won by letting well alone. How do I know this will be so? By this:

57.2 The more prohibitions, ritual avoidances, and taboos there are, the poorer the people will end. The more 'sharp weapons' there are, the more troubled and chaotic the state will be, and the more benighted the whole land will grow.

57.3 The more cunning craftsmen there are, the more skills of technique, the more vicious things will appear: the more pernicious contrivances will be invented. The more laws are promulgated, the more thieves and bandits there will be. So: The greater the number of statutes, the greater the number of thieves in the end.

57.4 So a wise man decreed: So long as I "do nothing" the people get transformed of themselves. So long as I love quietude, the people will of themselves go straight.

57.5 So long as I act only by proper inactivity the people will of themselves grow rich. I have no desires, and the people of themselves become simple as the mythological raw block'.

58.1 When the government is non-discriminative, lazy and dull, the people are contented and not spoiled, but quite generous. When the ruler looks sullen or depressed, the people will be happy and satisfied; When the government is efficient and smart, searching and discriminative, the people are discontented, disappointed and contentious. Even if the ruler looks lively and self-assured the people will be carping and discontented.

58.2 Good fortune leans on bad fortune and bad fortune could rest on good fortune. Latent calamity is happiness, and sound happiness depends on some calamity. Fortune's route is a disaster; fortune is hidden disaster.

58.3 Who knows when the limit will be reached? Who would be able to know the ultimate results of good fortune? They may be: The normal will (in time) revert to deceitful. There will hardly be any correctness (used to govern the world) any more. The old correct will become the perverse again. Some of the good we know of will again turn evil. Few know it, but the people have been deluded for a long time. Anyhow, there's a bourn where there's neither right nor wrong. It's in a realm where every straight is doubled by a crooked and every good by an ill. Surely mankind has gone long enough astray?

58.4 Therefore the wise man has firm, square principles. He is at times as pointed as a square, but hardly cuts or pierces. His integrity is as acute as a knife but hardly cuts, hardly hurts (innocent others), so "he shapes the corners without lopping", He is indeed straight, but doesn't extend his sway. He reaches his [most cherished] ends. He is far from high-handed, he can be bright, but refrains from dazzling.

59.1 In managing human affairs, there's no better rule than to be sparing, which is to forestall. You can't rule men nor serve heaven unless you have laid up a store; Be [simply artistic] frugal, there's nothing better for serving heaven and ruling people.

59.2 To forestall is to be prepared and strengthened; and by being frugal in such ways one may recover quickly. To recover quickly means to accumulate [intense moral] rather much. This "laying up a store" means quickly absorbing, And "quickly absorbing" in the end means doubling one's garnered "power". Double your garnered power and it acquires a strength that nothing can overcome. By the heavy accumulation of virtue one can overcome everything. Be prepared and strengthened to be always victorious: to have infinite capacity; If there's nothing it can't overcome, it knows no bounds, then he will acquire a capacity with limits well beyond anyone's knowledge. One can next overcome nearly everything. And only what knows no bounds is huge enough to keep a whole kingdom in its grasp.

59.3 If his capacity is beyond anyone's knowledge, he is fit to rule a kingdom. Who has infinite capacity is fit to rule, but only he who having the kingdom goes to the mother, can keep it long. He who possesses the mother (dao) of the state will last long. The mother (principle) of a ruling country can long endure.

59.4 This is called the art of making the roots strike deep by fencing the trunk, It signifies to be firmly rooted, to have deep strength, for the roots are deep and the stalks are firm, road to immortality and enduring vision, the way of long life and everlasting existence is won by making life long by fixed staring.

60.1 Ruling a big kingdom is like frying a small fish.

60.2 They who by dao ruled all that's under heaven did not let an evil spirit within them display its powers.

60.3 Such evil spirits did not display their supernatural powers; the spirits of wise men were hardly used to hurt other men. So when dao is employed to rule the kingdom, spiritual beings will lose their supernatural grip and cease to harm common people. And their supernatural power will far from harm people, and the wise man also will refrain from harming people.

60.4 When both don't do each other harm, virtue (power) flows towards them. If the sage's good spirit is nowhere mobilised to harm other men, he himself can be saved from [deterioration] harm. And so, if evil spirits and supermen don't harm each other, each can be quite saved from harm. Furthermore, some of their "tall abilities" could converge. If so, virtue can be accumulated in both for ulterior benefit or towards some common [soap opera] end.

61.1 A big kingdom can be compared to the lower part of a river, like the low ground which all streams flow down towards. Here is a point towards which all things under heaven converge. Its part must be that of the woman who overcomes man by simple quietude. By [such as] quiescence she gets underneath, and by tranquillity she is down under.

61.2 A big kingdom can take over [a soul of] a small one if it succeeds in getting itself below the small kingdom; If so it absorbs some from the small country, or wins some adherence of the small kingdom in the open.

61.3 If a small country on the other hand places itself below a big country, it can absorb or take over some of the big country [assets]. Therefore some place themselves low so as to take over or absorb (others). Some are (naturally) low and absorb (others). Because small kingdoms are by nature in this way underneath large kingdoms, they [sometimes] win the adherence of large kingdoms [or end].

61.4 What a big kingdom is after is but to annex and herd others. So what large countries really need is a lot of inhabitants. What small countries need is some place where their surplus inhabitants can go and get employment. What they want can be little more than to join, be somewhat sheltered and perhaps serve for it all.

61.5 Both can have what they want; I say the large kingdom must "get underneath".

62.1 Dao is thought up as the mysterious secret of the universe, it could be the storehouse of "all things", like the pivotal worship centre in the south-west corner in the [old Chinese] house. It's the good man's treasure and the bad man's support and resort.

62.2 Fine words can buy honour, fine sayings can be sold. Fine deeds can win respect from others. The best conduct is a gift. Persons of noble, grave demeanour are accepted as gifts. Even if a man is bad, when has (dao) rejected him? Why reject bad people [the winners of tomorrow if all goes fine]? Even the bad let slip no opportunity to acquire gifts that fit them well enough.

62.3 Therefore on the crowning of an emperor and appointing his three ministers of the state, rather than send ta disc of jade and teams of four horses, sit down and deliver this dao. It can be done without moving from one's seat.

62.4 What did the old ones say of this dao, how did they prize it? Why did they treasure such dao? Did they not say of those that have it "Pursuing, they shall catch; pursued, they shall escape?" Or, "Search for the guilty ones and pardon them?" Or, "Those who seek shall have it, those who sin shall be freed"? They thought [common] dao to be the most precious, the treasure of the world.

63.1 Succeed in the magician's wu-wei: Accomplish seemingly do-nothing. Attend seemingly to no-affairs. And do completely without ado. What runs, acts without action, does without doing, So let's taste without tasting. Taste the flavourless. Taste the flavourless without tasting. Find flavourless flavour.

63.2 Whether it's big or small, many or few, requite hatred with virtue. Dao can make the small great and the few many, can requite injuries with some decent deeds.

63.3 But prepare for the hard while it's still easy. Deal with it while it's still easy. Deal with the great or big while it's still small. In governing your kingdom everything hard must be dealt with while it's still easy.

63.4 The hard has to be dealt with while still very easy. All the great (ones and great problems) of the world are to be dealt with while they're yet small. Everything great must be dealt with while it's still small.

63.5 Therefore the wise man never has to deal with the great; and so gets greatness. He never strives for the great, by this the great is had. So great undertakings shall start with what's small.

63.6 But again "Who makes rash promises surely lacks. Who lightly makes a promise, can find it too hard to keep his faith. And light assent inspires little confidence. Who takes things very easily is surely in for dealing with more difficulty in the end. So "many easies" means many a hard. In other words, who makes light of many things should find many difficulties.

64.7 From all this even the wise man regards things as hard, but he also knows how to make the easy difficult. For that reason he very seldom meets with difficulties. [Uha.]

64.1 What remains placid is quite easy to hold. Not determined happenings can be prepared for well in advance. Before there has been an omen it's easy to lay plans. It's easy to forestall some things that don't are or not yet occur. It's quite easy to plan for and prepare well in advance. [But such forestalling is had by thoughts, and thoughts are airy and can be tender and brittle, to say the least.] And what's brittle is easy to crack. What's tender is easily torn. What's brittle like ice is easy to melt. And what's tiny is easy to scatter.

64.2 [All the same, reach up to] deal with things in their state of not-yet-being; deal with things well before they appear. Just put things well in shape before disorder and confusion. Put all very well in order before disorder, and next go on to check loss or disorder well.

64.3 A tree as big as a man's hug grows from a tiny sprout. A tower nine storeys high begins with a clod of earth. Further, the journey of three hundred miles began with ... the feet. A journey of a thousand li begins right where one stands, even with the very first step.

64.4 Still, he who takes a [visible forestalling] action fails. Who acts, harms; he who grabs, lets slip. And therefore the wise man doesn't act in the open, and so doesn't spoil or harm; yes, he takes seemingly no action and therefore hardly fails. And why is this? It's due to: He who grasps things [often] loses them. He doesn't grasp a lot, he doesn't let slip a lot. Does hardly grab in the open, and so doesn't let slip a lot. He grasps nothing visibly to others, and therefore he doesn't lose much. Whereas people in their handling of affairs often fail when they're about to succeed at their tasks. Such people constantly spoil things when within an ace of completing them. Be as careful at the end as at the start to avert failures at hand. Then there will be no such failures. Heed the end no less than the start, so that your valuable work will not be spoiled and ruined.

64.5 Therefore the wise man learns to seem unlearned, wants only things that are unwanted. Yes, the wise man publicly desires to have no desire.

64.6 Therefore the wise man desires no desire - and desires all the same. He doesn't often value rare treasures publicly. He hardly values objects hard to get or find - in public. He says he learns that which is unlearned. He claims he sets no store by products difficult to get, and so teaches things untaught. [It's a trap.] But he also turns all beings back to the very thing they have left behind, so that he can assist in the course of nature somehow. And if so, "the ten thousand creatures" can be restored to their self-sameness, the self-so which is of [some] dao. Yes, he supports all things in some of their natural states. This he does; but hardly presume to interfere all right. He hardly dares to act in the open. So he denies to take any visible action.

65.1 In old times those who practised a dao well, did hardly aim to enlighten people, but to make them ignorant and hold them that way.

65.2 It seems that the more knowledge people have, the harder they are to rule. Maybe it's hard for people to live in peace due to very much knowledge. So he who rules the state through knowledge is robber of the state; and who seek to rule by giving knowledge could be like [coming] bandits preying on the land. Maybe all who seek to rule by knowledge form the nation's curse, eventually. He who rules a state not through knowledge is a blessing. Those who seek not to rule by knowledge, are the nation's blessing. To rule without giving knowledge could bring a stock of good fortune to the land. [And maybe not.]

65.3 One who knows these two things also (sets) the standard. Always to know such an old standard is called to of the deep, secret calibre.

65.4 When such secret virtue becomes clear, outgoing, far-reaching, and lets things revert back to some guessed at source, all related things could return to some natural state. It could go all the way back to [brutal] concord and harmony.

66.1 How did the great rivers and seas become the kings of the ravines? By being experts at keeping low.

66.2 Therefore to be above the people you have to speak as though you're lower than the people in some ways. So to be ahead of the people, you have to follow them in your own person. To be foremost or guide well, walk behind.

66.3 The wise man keeps himself on top, and the people hardly feel his weight or get crushed by it in time. He guides in this way, and the people don't harm him the least. He can even walk in front [as an example], and people don't wish him harm. [Let's hope that.] In this dynamic [guru] way everything under heaven will be glad to be pushed by him and will not find his guidance irksome. Then the people of the world are glad, the world rejoices and praises him without getting tired of it, in order to uphold him forever.

66.4 He accomplishes his aims by overt non-striving. Because he doesn't compete in the open, no one can compete well with him.

67.1 Every one says my dao is greatly like folly. Just because it's great, it looks like folly. Great ways don't look like the ordinary anyhow. If it did not look like folly, it could have turned small and petty long ago! Then it would have been small. As for things that don't look foolish to common men, there can be no question about their smallness.

67.2 I have three treasures. Guard and keep them: The first is a deep, deep concern; call it mystic pity, if you like. The second is never too much, which may mean frugality. And the third is refusal to be ahead, foremost or first, for I hardly dare to be ahead.

67.3 Deep, concerned love brings guts [or fall]. Through not doing too much, one has amplitude (of reserve power): Who has spared, may then give and seem generous. Through not presuming to be the first and best there is, one can develop one's talent and strength; let it mature to dominate a world.

67.4 On the other hand, to be bold by forsaking deep love; to be generous by forsaking frugality-won reserves and clever, artful restraint; and to be ahead and rushing in front by forsaking following behind; all this could prove fatal in the end.

67.5 Ardent, loving concern can't fight well without conquering a lot. It shall help in the case of attack, and likewise to be firm in the case of defence. When heaven is to save a person, heaven will protect him through deep love. Heaven arms those it would not see beaten, with all right concern. [Let's hope that.]

68.1 A skilful leader of troops is never oppressive with his military strength. The brave soldier is hardly very violent; The best fighter doesn't become visibly angry; he hardly loses his temper.

68.2 A skilful conqueror doesn't compete with people. The great conqueror doesn't fight for small issues alone. The best user of men acts as though he were their inferior and puts himself below them by the virtue of not-competing.

68.3 This is called the ability or capacity to use men, or matching heaven, or being suited to the highest found principle, [maybe of old]

69.1 The strategists say: "If I dare not be the guest, then let me be the host. When I dare not take the offensive, then I'll take the defensive. If you doubt your ability to advance, then retreat." Also: "When you doubt your ability to meet the enemy's attack, take the offensive yourself."

69.2 Much of this implies to march without visible formations; its in part like rolling up the sleeve, and yet presenting no bare arm. Or it could be like stretching your arm without showing the sleeves. Confront well, present no battle-front yourself. Refrain from charging in frontal attacks, and seem to be armed without weapons. [Let that come as a surprise.] Hold a thousand weapons without seeming to have them.

69.3 Now, great calamity comes from making light of an enemy. There's no greater catastrophe than if a foolishly underestimated enemy robs and destroys your most cherished treasures. It could even destroy your topmost treasure, your old, dear body. Refrain from having an enemy at the price of losing your body and life. Remember: He whose enemy presents no front, could lose his booty.

69.4 Therefore when armies meet, the kind-looking man of sorrows could win [by such as surprise tactics. But often it's the opposite that happens.] Who doesn't delight in warfare in the open, he wins. [And most often not?]

70.1 My words are very easy to understand and very easy to put into practice. Yet no one understands them; no one puts them into practice.

70.2 But some of my teaching could have nature as a source, and also there's a principle-ruled ancestry in some of my words. Yes, [some of] my deeds have a lord; my deeds could have [right] dao as sovereign. Most men don't understand this, they're unable to understand me. Few people understand me, and on this my real value depends. I am highly valued, for few understand me.

70.3 The wise man wears a coarse cloth on top and carries jade underneath his dress, within his bosom.

71.1 To know that you do not know is best. Who knows that he doesn't know is the highest. To know when one doesn't know is best. Who pretends to know what he doesn't know is sick-minded; To think one knows when one doesn't know is a sort of malady. Pretend to know when you don't know - that's a disease. He who recognises this disease as a disease can also cure himself of it [and maybe not]. [One may eventually get free from a disease by recognising it for what it is.] Who recognises sick-mindedness as sick-mindedness can't be wholly sick-minded, after all.

71.2 The wise man is hardly sick-minded if he recognises sick mind as sick and also cures some diseases. He's hardly a sick mind.

72.1 If the people hardly fear what's dreadful, something greatly dreadful could descend. If people have no fear of force, then great force descends. So never mind if people are not intimidated by your authority. Some mightier authority could deal with them in the long run.

72.2 Neither despise their dwellings nor narrow the living space of their dwellings. They could cease to turn away if you don't put them in jail. Don't dislike their offspring, harass or oppress their lives. Don't harass them, and they could cease to turn from you. Drop heavy taxes, and the people won't be fed up. If you don't persecute all, you'll hardly be so much disliked. They're not oppressed if you refrain from gross oppressive measures.

72.3 So the wise man knows himself but hardly shows off. Knows his own value, but doesn't exalt himself. Truly, "he rejects the one (brute force or enemy) but accepts or takes the other (being some kind, sturdy neighbour)."

73.1 Who is brave in daring can kill or get killed [on a bus]. On the other hand, one who is brave in not daring, can survive or give life.

73.2 Either approach can be profitable or unprofitable, still one of them is harmful. Who is brave in non-daring without ado lets live. There can be some advantage and some disadvantage in each approach - Now, "Dao-heaven hates the one it hates, hates what it hates; and none can know the reason why." Who knows why and what it dislikes? Heaven dislikes certain people; but the wise man considers it a tricky question. Yes, why heaven seems to hate - even a wise man regards it as a tricky question.

73.3 Well, it's in the fixed dao sets of heaven not to strive in the open, but none the less to conquer. Not to compete, but all the same win expertly. Be good at conquest without strife. Dao hardly speaks, it skilfully responds. It comes without skilful invitation, it can appear without a call. It doesn't seem anxious about things and yet it shows up it plans very well. It gets able results without obvious design, as from hidden, laid, [broad] plans and schemes. [Say little, foster well laid schemes and designs.]

73.4 Dao-heaven's net is wide, with big, coarse meshes. Still it misses nothing. Nothing slips through.

74.1 When the people are not afraid of death, why threaten them with death sentences?

74.2 Even supposing the people are constantly afraid of death and we can seize and kill those who are unruly or vicious, who would dare to slay them?

74.3 There's always the master executioner (Heaven). To kill in his stead is like thrusting oneself into the master-carpenter's place and doing his chipping for him. "He who tries it is lucky if he doesn't cut his hand," they say. To undertake executions for the master executioner is like hewing wood for him. It rarely happens you escape injuring your own hands. Now, often it happens as well that the executioner is killed - And to take the place of the executioner is in part like handling the hatchet for the master carpenter. He who handles the hatchet for the master carpenter seldom escapes injury to his hands.

75.1 People are hungry because rulers eat too much income, too much tax-grain. Therefore they starve, but also because of bad interference from those above.

75.2 Some turn hard to rule as their rulers do too many things. That's why they're hard to keep in order.

75.3 If so, the people are not very afraid of death, as they're anxious to make a living. That's why they take death lightly in such cases. So: Those who interfere not with their living that are wise in exalting life. Maybe he who seeks only little after life can excel in making life valuable. But all that have hearts set only little on life could be superior to those who set store by life.

76.1 When man is born, he is tender and weak. In death he becomes stiff and hard.

76.2 All things, the grass as well as trees, are supple and soft while alive. When dead they become brittle and dried.

76.3 So hardness and stiffness very often accompany death, the soft and gentle could be companions of life.

76.4 The headstrong army will lose in battle. They say "the weapon that's too hard will be broken, the tree that has the hardest wood will be cut down". Yes, a hard tree will be cut down. So the hard and mighty eventually should be cast down; and the soft and weak may be set on high.

77.1 Heaven's way is like the bending of a bow. When a bow is bent the top comes down and the bottom-end comes up.

77.2 So too could heaven take away from those who have too much, and give to those that have not enough. Take away from those that have too much and give to those that have not enough. But this is far from man's way. He takes away from those that have not enough to offer those who already have too much.

77.3 The man of dao can fool enough and spare, and next give to the whole world.

77.4 So the wise man acts, but doesn't possess, accomplishes but lays claim to no credit. If he accomplishes a task, achieves an aim, he doesn't wish to reveal himself as better than others. So he seems to claim no credit. He seems to have no wish to appear superior, no desire to display excellence.

78.1 There's hardly anything more yielding than [gas, air, and] water, but almost none is better in attacking the resistant and hard, There are few substitutes for it.

78.2 Thus the yielding may conquer the resistant and the soft the hard. This was utilised by none I knew.

78.3 Wise sayings, "Only he who has accepted the dirt of a country can be lord of its soil-shrines: can become heaven-accepted there. Who bears evils of the country can become a king. Who takes into himself the calumny of the world serves to preserve the state." Straight words seem crooked.

79.1 To allay the main discontent, but in a way that begets further discontents, can hardly be top successful. And to patch up great hatred is sure to leave some hatred behind; how can this be regarded as satisfactory?

79.2 So the wise man keeps the obligation of a contract and refrains from blaming the other party. He stays where he is and does not go round making claims on people.

79.3 Therefore good people attend to their obligations, while those without virtue attend to other people's mistakes.

79.4 The way of heaven is impartial. It's always with the good man, without distinction of persons, to keep the good firmly supplied."

80.1 Let there be a small country with few people. Let there be ten times and a hundred times as many utensils and let them not be used. Let there be contrivances requiring ten times, a hundred times less labour; they should not use them. Let the people value their lives highly and not travel far. Bring it about that the people are quite ready to lay down their lives at times to defend their homes rather than emigrate.

80.2 As for ships and carriages, let there be none to ride. There can still be weapons, but no one to drill seriously with them and none to display them often.

80.3 People should have no use for any form of writing save knotted ropes: Let the people again knot cords for reckoning. Let them be very pleased with their food, beautify their clothing, be content with their homes, take pleasure in rustic tasks, and delight in such customs [just like Negroes].

80.4 The neighbouring place can be overlooked, can be so near that one may hear the cocks crowing in it, the dogs barking; but the people would grow old and die without ever having been there.

81.1 True words hardly sound fine. Nice words are far from always true.

81.2 A good man seldom proves by argument; he hardly argues. He who argues or proves by argument is hardly so good (as non-argumentative good men). Who argues [blatantly] is hardly (ever) a good man. [All this is "Lao" arguing, debating or clowning.]

81.3 Brilliant wisdom is different from sordid learning. Much bookish learning can mean too little wisdom. Who has extensive knowledge is hardly a wise man.

81.4 The wise man has no need to hoard for himself. He lives for other people, seemingly, and grows richer himself if the more he uses for others, the more he has for himself - He gives to other people to get greater abundance.

81.5 Heaven's way is to sharpen and bless, all free from harm of cutting, And the wise man's way is to act and accomplish without contending or striving.

Merel version

- 1.1 The Way that can be experienced is not true; The world that can be constructed is not real.
- 1.2 The Way manifests all that happens and may happen; The world represents all that exists and may exist.
- 1.3 To experience without abstraction is to sense the world; To experience with abstraction is to know the world.
- 1.4 These two experiences are indistinguishable; Their construction differs but their effect is the same.
- 1.5 Beyond the gate of experience flows the Way, Which is ever greater and more subtle than the world.

- 2.1 When beauty is abstracted Then ugliness has been implied;
- 2.2 When good is abstracted Then evil has been implied.
- 2.3 So alive and dead are abstracted from nature, Difficult and easy abstracted from progress, Long and short abstracted from contrast,
- 2.4 High and low abstracted from depth, Song and speech abstracted from melody, After and before abstracted from sequence.
- 2.5 The sage experiences without abstraction, And accomplishes without action;
- 2.6 He accepts the ebb and flow of things, Nurtures them, but does not own them,
- 2.7 And lives, but does not dwell.

- 3.1 Not praising the worthy prevents contention,
- 3.2 Not esteeming the valuable prevents theft,
- 3.3 Not displaying the beautiful prevents desire.
- 3.4 In this manner the sage governs people: Emptying their minds, Filling their bellies, Weakening their ambitions, And strengthening their bones.
- 3.5 If people lack knowledge and desire Then they can not act;
- 3.6 If no action is taken Harmony remains.

- 4.1 The Way is a limitless vessel; Used by the self, it is not filled by the world;
- 4.2 -
- 4.3 It cannot be cut, knotted, dimmed or stilled;
- 4.4 Its depths are hidden, ubiquitous and eternal;
- 4.5 I don't know where it comes from; It comes before nature.

- 5.1 Nature is not kind; It treats all things impartially.
- 5.2 The Sage is not kind, And treats all people impartially.
- 5.3 Nature is like a bellows, Empty, yet never ceasing its supply. The more it moves, the more it yields;
- 5.4 So the sage draws upon experience And cannot be exhausted.

- 6.1 Experience is a riverbed, Its source hidden, forever flowing:
- 6.2 The Way moves within it:
- 6.3 The Way moves within it: Draw upon it; it will not run dry.

- 7.1 Nature is complete
- 7.2 because it does not serve itself.
- 7.3 The sage places himself after and finds himself before,
- 7.4 Ignores his desire and finds himself content.
- 7.5 He is complete because he does not serve himself.

- 8.1 The best of man is like water, Which benefits all things, and does not contend with them, Which flows in places that others disdain, Where it is in harmony with the Way.
- 8.2 So the sage: Lives within nature, Thinks within the deep, Gives within impartiality, Speaks within trust,
- 8.3 Governs within order, Crafts within ability, Acts within opportunity.
- 8.4 He does not contend, and none contend against him.

- 9.1 Fill a cup to its brim and it is easily spilled;
- 9.2 Temper a sword to its hardest and it is easily broken;
- 9.3 Amass the greatest treasure and it is easily stolen;

9.4 Claim credit and honour and you easily fall;
9.5 Retire once your purpose is achieved - this is natural.

10.1 Embracing the Way, you become embraced;
10.2 Breathing gently, you become newborn;
10.3 Clearing your mind, you become clear;
10.4 Nurturing your children, you become impartial;
10.5 Opening your heart, you become accepted;
10.6 Accepting the world, you embrace the Way.
10.7 Bearing and nurturing, Creating but not owning, Giving without demanding, This is harmony.

11.1 Thirty spokes meet at a nave; Because of the hole we may use the wheel.
11.2 Clay is moulded into a vessel; Because of the hollow we may use the cup.
11.3 Walls are built around a hearth; Because of the doors we may use the house.
11.4 Thus tools come from what exists, But use from what does not.

12.1 Too much colour blinds the eye, Too much music deafens the ear, Too much taste dulls the palate.
12.2 Too much play maddens the mind, Too much desire tears the heart.
12.3 In this manner the sage cares for people: He provides for the belly, not for the senses; He ignores abstraction and holds fast to substance.

13.1 Both praise and blame cause concern, For they bring people hope and fear.
13.2 The object of hope and fear is the self - For, without self, to whom may fortune and disaster occur?
13.3 -
13.4 Therefore, Who distinguishes himself from the world may be given the world, But who regards himself as the world may accept the world.

14.1 Looked at but cannot be seen - it is beneath form; Listened to but cannot be heard - it is beneath sound; Held but cannot be touched - it is beneath feeling;
14.2 These depthless things evade definition, And blend into a single mystery.
14.3 In its rising there is no light, In its falling there is no darkness, A continuous thread beyond description, Lining what does not exist;
14.4 Its form formless, Its image nothing, Its name silence; Follow it, it has no back, Meet it, it has no face.
14.5 Attend the present to deal with the past; Thus you grasp the continuity of the Way, Which is its essence.

15.1 The enlightened possess understanding So profound they can not be understood.
15.2 Because they cannot be understood I can only describe their appearance: Cautious as one crossing thin ice, Undecided as one surrounded by danger, Modest as one who is a guest,
15.3 Unbounded as melting ice, Genuine as unshaped wood, Broad as a valley, Seamless as muddy water.
15.4 Who stills the water that the mud may settle, Who seeks to stop that he may travel on,
15.5 Who desires less than what may transpire, Decays, but will not renew.

16.1 Empty the self completely; Embrace perfect peace.
16.2 The world will rise and move; Watch it return to rest. All the flourishing things Will return to their source.
16.3 This return is peaceful; It is the flow of nature, An eternal decay and renewal. Accepting this brings enlightenment, Ignoring this brings misery.
16.4 Who accepts nature's flow becomes all-cherishing; Being all-cherishing he becomes impartial; Being impartial he becomes magnanimous; Being magnanimous he becomes natural; Being natural he becomes one with the Way; Being one with the Way he becomes immortal:
16.5 Though his body will decay, the Way will not.

17.1 The best rulers are scarcely known by their subjects; The next best are loved and praised; The next are feared; The next despised:
17.2 They have no faith in their people, And their people become unfaithful to them.
17.3 When the best rulers achieve their purpose Their subjects claim the achievement as their own.

18.1 When the Way is forgotten Duty and justice appear;

18.2 Then knowledge and wisdom are born Along with hypocrisy.
18.3 When harmonious relationships dissolve Then respect and devotion arise;
18.4 When a nation falls to chaos Then loyalty and patriotism are born.

19.1 If we could discard knowledge and wisdom Then people would profit a hundredfold;
19.2 If we could discard duty and justice Then harmonious relationships would form;
19.3 If we could discard artifice and profit Then waste and theft would disappear.
19.4 Yet such remedies treat only symptoms And so they are inadequate.
19.5 People need personal remedies: Reveal your naked self and embrace your original nature; Bind your self-interest and control your ambition; Forget your habits and simplify your affairs.

20.1 What is the difference between assent and denial? What is the difference between beautiful and ugly?
20.2 What is the difference between fearsome and afraid?
20.3 The people are merry as if at a magnificent party Or playing in the park at springtime, But I am tranquil and wandering, Like a newborn before it learns to smile, Alone, with no true home.
20.4 The people have enough and to spare, Where I have nothing, And my heart is foolish, Muddled and cloudy.
20.5 The people are bright and certain, Where I am dim and confused; The people are clever and wise, Where I am dull and ignorant; Aimless as a wave drifting over the sea, Attached to nothing.
20.6 The people are busy with purpose, Where I am impractical and rough; I do not share the peoples' cares But I am fed at nature's breast.

21.1 Harmony is only in following the Way.
21.2 The Way is without form or quality, But expresses all forms and qualities; The Way is hidden and implicate, But expresses all of nature; The Way is unchanging, But expresses all motion.
21.3 Beneath sensation and memory The Way is the source of all the world.
21.4 How can I understand the source of the world? By accepting.

22.1 Accept and you become whole, Bend and you straighten, Empty and you fill, Decay and you renew, Want and you acquire, Fulfill and you become confused.
22.2 The sage accepts the world As the world accepts the Way;
22.3 He does not display himself, so is clearly seen, Does not justify himself, so is recognized, Does not boast, so is credited, Does not pride himself, so endures,
22.4 Does not contend, so none contend against him.
22.5 The ancients said, "Accept and you become whole", Once whole, the world is as your home.

23.1 Nature says only a few words: High wind does not last long, Nor does heavy rain.
23.2 If nature's words do not last Why should those of man?
23.3 Who accepts harmony, becomes harmonious. Who accepts loss, becomes lost.
23.4 For who accepts harmony, the Way harmonizes with him, And who accepts loss, the Way cannot find.
23.5 -

24.1 Straighten yourself and you will not stand steady;
24.2 Display yourself and you will not be clearly seen; Justify yourself and you will not be respected;
24.3 Promote yourself and you will not be believed; Pride yourself and you will not endure.
24.4 These behaviours are wasteful, indulgent, And so they attract disfavour; Harmony avoids them.

25.1 There is a mystery, Beneath abstraction, Silent, depthless, Alone, unchanging, Ubiquitous and liquid, The mother of nature.
25.2 It has no name, but I call it "the Way"; It has no limit, but I call it "limitless".
25.3 Being limitless, it flows away forever; Flowing away forever, it returns to my self:
25.4 The Way is limitless, So nature is limitless, So the world is limitless, And so I am limitless.
25.5 For I am abstracted from the world, The world from nature, Nature from the Way, And the Way from what is beneath abstraction.

26.1 Gravity is the source of lightness, Calm, the master of haste.
26.2 A lone traveler will journey all day, watching over his belongings; Only safe in his own bed may he lose them in sleep.
26.3 So the captain of a great vessel should not act lightly or hastily.

26.4 Acting lightly, he loses sight of the world, Acting hastily, he loses control of himself. The captain can not treat his great ship as a small boat; Rather than glitter like jade He must stand like stone.

27.1 The perfect traveler leaves no trail to be followed; The perfect speaker leaves no question to be answered; The perfect accountant leaves no working to be completed;

27.2 The perfect container leaves no lock to be closed; The perfect knot leaves no end to be traveled.

27.3 So the sage nurtures all men And abandons no one. He accepts everything And rejects nothing. He attends to the smallest details.

27.4 For the strong must guide the weak; The weak are raw material to the strong.

27.5 If the guide is not respected, Or the material is not cared for, Confusion will result, no matter how clever one is. This is the secret of perfection: When raw wood is carved, it becomes a tool; When a man is employed, he becomes a tool; The perfect carpenter leaves no wood to be carved.

28.1 Using the male, being female, Being the entrance of the world, You embrace harmony And become as a newborn.

28.2 Using strength, being weak, Being the root of the world, You complete harmony And become as unshaped wood.

28.3 Using the light, being dark, Being the world, You perfect harmony And return to the Way.

28.4 -

29.1 Those who wish to change the world According with their desire Cannot succeed.

29.2 The world is shaped by the Way; It cannot be shaped by the self. Trying to change it, you damage it; Trying to possess it, you lose it.

29.3 So some will lead, while others follow. Some will be warm, others cold Some will be strong, others weak. Some will get where they are going While others fall by the side of the road.

29.4 So the sage will be neither extravagant nor violent.

30.1 Powerful men are well advised not to use violence, For violence has a habit of returning;

30.2 Thorns and weeds grow wherever an army goes, And lean years follow a great war.

30.3 A general is well advised To achieve nothing more than his orders: Not to take advantage of his

30.4 Nor to glory, boast or pride himself; To do what is dictated by necessity, Not by choice.

30.5 For even the strongest force will weaken with time, And then its violence will return, and kill it.

31.1 Armies are tools of violence; They cause men to hate and fear. The sage will not join them.

31.2 -

31.3 His purpose is creation; Their purpose is destruction. Weapons are tools of violence, Not of the sage; He uses them only when there is no choice, And then calmly, and with tact,

31.4 For he finds no beauty in them. Whoever finds beauty in weapons Delights in the slaughter of men; And who delights in slaughter Cannot content himself with peace.

31.5 -

31.6 So slaughters must be mourned And conquest celebrated with a funeral.

32.4 The Way is shaped by use, But then the shape is lost. Do not hold fast to shapes

32.1 The Way has no true shape, And therefore none can control it.

32.2 If a ruler could control the Way All things would follow In harmony with his desire,

32.3 And sweet rain would fall, Effortlessly slaking every thirst.

32.5 But let sensation flow into the world As a river courses down to the sea.

33.1 Who understands the world is learned; Who understands the self is enlightened.

33.2 Who conquers the world has strength; Who conquers the self has harmony;

33.3 Who is determined has purpose. Who is contented has wealth;

33.4 Who defends his home may long endure; Who surrenders his home may long survive it.

34.1 The Way flows and ebbs, creating and destroying,

34.2 Implementing all the world, attending to the tiniest details, Claiming nothing in return. It nurtures all things, Though it does not control them;

34.3 It has no intention, So it seems inconsequential. It is the substance of all things; Though it does not control them;

34.4 It has no exception, So it seems all-important.

34.5 The sage would not control the world; He is in harmony with the world.

35.1 But if you accord with the Way All the people of the world will keep you In safety, health, community, and peace.

35.2 If you offer music and food Strangers may stop with you;

35.3 The Way lacks art and flavour; It can neither be seen nor heard, But its benefit cannot be exhausted.

36.1 To reduce someone's influence, first expand it; To reduce someone's force, first increase it; To overthrow someone, first exalt them; To take from someone, first give to them.

36.2 This is the subtlety by which the weak overcome the strong:

36.3 Fish should not leave their depths, And swords should not leave their scabbards.

37.1 The Way takes no action, but leaves nothing undone.

37.2 When you accept this The world will flourish, In harmony with nature.

37.3 Nature does not possess desire; Without desire, the heart becomes quiet; In this manner the whole world is made tranquil.

38.1 Well established hierarchies are not easily uprooted; Closely held beliefs are not easily released; So ritual enthrals generation after generation.

38.2 Harmony does not care for harmony, and so is naturally attained; But ritual is intent upon harmony, and so can not attain it.

38.3 Harmony neither acts nor reasons; Love acts, but without reason; Justice acts to serve reason; But ritual acts to enforce reason.

38.4 When the Way is lost, there remains harmony; When harmony is lost, there remains love; When love is lost, there remains justice; And when justice is lost, there remains ritual.

38.5 And when justice is lost, there remains ritual. Ritual is the end of compassion and honesty, The beginning of confusion; Belief is a colourful hope or fear, The beginning of folly.

38.6 The sage goes by harmony, not by hope; He dwells in the fruit, not the flower; He accepts substance, and ignores abstraction.

39.1 In mythical times all things were whole: All the sky was clear, All the earth was stable, All the mountains were firm,

39.2 All the riverbeds were full, All of nature was fertile, And all the rulers were supported.

39.3 But, losing clarity, the sky tore; Losing stability, the earth split; Losing strength, the mountains sank;

39.4 Losing water, the riverbeds cracked; Losing fertility, nature disappeared; And losing support, the rulers fell.

39.5 Rulers depend upon their subjects, The noble depend upon the humble;

39.6 So rulers call themselves orphaned, hungry and alone, To win the people's support.

39.7 -

39.8 -

40.1 The motion of the Way is to return; The use of the Way is to accept;

40.2 All things come from the Way, And the Way comes from nothing.

41.1 When the great man learns the Way, he follows it with diligence; When the common man learns the Way, he follows it on occasion;

41.2 When the mean man learns the Way, he laughs out loud; Those who do not laugh, do not learn at all.

41.3 Therefore it is said: Who understands the Way seems foolish; Who progresses on the Way seems to fail; Who follows the Way seems to wander. For the finest harmony appears plain; The brightest truth appears coloured; The richest character appears incomplete;

41.4 The bravest heart appears meek; The simplest nature appears inconstant. The square, perfected, has no corner; Music, perfected, has no melody; Love, perfected, has no climax; Art, perfected, has no meaning.

41.5 The Way can be neither sensed nor known: It transmits sensation and transcends knowledge.

42.1 The Way bears sensation, Sensation bears memory, Sensation and memory bear abstraction, And abstraction bears all the world;

42.2 Each thing in the world bears feeling and doing, And, imbued with mind, harmony with the Way.

42.3 -

42.4 -

42.5 As others have taught, so do I teach, "Who loses harmony opposes nature"; This is the root of my teaching.

43.1 Water overcomes the stone; Without substance it requires no opening; This is the benefit of taking no action.

43.2 Yet benefit without action, And experience without abstraction, Are practiced by very few.

44.1 Health or reputation: which is held dearer? Health or possessions: which has more worth? Profit or loss: which is more troublesome?
44.2 Great love incurs great expense, And great wealth incurs great fear,
44.3 But contentment comes at no cost. For who knows when to stop Does not continue into danger, And so may long endure.

45.1 Great perfection seems incomplete, But does not decay; Great abundance seems empty, But does not fail. Great truth seems
45.2 Great cleverness seems stupid; Great eloquence seems awkward.
45.3 As spring overcomes the cold, And autumn overcomes the heat, So calm and quiet overcome the world.

46.1 When a nation follows the Way, Horses bear manure through its fields; When a nation ignores the Way, Horses bear soldiers through its streets.
46.2 There is no greater mistake than following desire; There is no greater disaster than forgetting contentment; There is no greater sickness than seeking attainment;
46.3 But one who is content to satisfy his needs Finds that contentment endures.

47.1 Without taking a step outdoors You know the whole world; Without taking a peep out the window You know the colour of the sky. The more you experience, The less you know.
47.2 The sage wanders without knowing, Looks without seeing, Accomplishes without acting.

48.1 The follower of knowledge learns as much as he can every day; The follower of the Way forgets as much as he can every day.
48.2 By attrition he reaches a state of inaction Wherein he does nothing, but nothing remains undone. To conquer the world, accomplish nothing;
48.3 If you must accomplish something, The world remains beyond conquest.

49.1 The sage does not distinguish between himself and the world; The needs of other people are as his own.
49.2 He is good to those who are good; He is also good to those who are not good, Thereby he is good.
49.3 He trusts those who are trustworthy; He also trusts those who are not trustworthy, Thereby he is trustworthy.
49.4 The sage lives in harmony with the world, And his mind is the world's mind. So he nurtures the worlds of others As a mother does her children.

50.1 Men flow into life, and ebb into death.
50.2 Some are filled with life; Some are empty with death; Some hold fast to life, and thereby perish, For life is an abstraction.
50.3 Those who are filled with life Need not fear tigers and rhinos in the wilds, Nor wear armour and shields in battle;
50.4 The rhinoceros finds no place in them for its horn, The tiger no place for its claw, The soldier no place for a weapon, For death finds no place in them.

51.1 The Way bears all things; Harmony nurtures them; Nature shapes them; Use completes them. Each follows the Way and honours harmony,
51.2 Not by law, But by being. The Way bears, nurtures, shapes, completes, Shelters, comforts, and makes a home for them.
51.3 Bearing without possessing, Nurturing without taming, Shaping without forcing, This is harmony.

52.1 The origin of the world is its mother;
52.2 Understand the mother, and you understand the child; Embrace the child, and you embrace the mother, Who will not perish when you die.
52.3 Reserve your judgments and words And you maintain your influence;
52.4 Speak your mind and take positions And nothing will save you.
52.5 As observing detail is clarity, So maintaining flexibility is strength;
52.6 Use the light but shed no light, So that you do yourself no harm, But embrace clarity.

53.1 With but a small understanding One may follow the Way like a main road, Fearing only to leave it;
53.2 Following a main road is easy, Yet people delight in difficult paths.
53.3 When palaces are kept up Fields are left to weeds And granaries empty;
53.4 Wearing fine clothes, Bearing sharp swords, Glutting with food and drink, Hoarding wealth and possessions - These are the ways of theft, And far from the Way.

54.1 -

54.2 Cultivate harmony within yourself, and harmony becomes real; Cultivate harmony within your family, and harmony becomes fertile; Cultivate harmony within your community, and harmony becomes abundant; Cultivate harmony within your culture, and harmony becomes enduring; Cultivate harmony within the world, and harmony becomes ubiquitous.

54.3 Live with a person to understand that person; Live with a family to understand that family; Live with a community to understand that community; Live with a culture to understand that culture; Live with the world to understand the world.

54.4 How can I live with the world? By accepting.

55.1 Who is filled with harmony is like a newborn. Wasps and snakes will not bite him; Hawks and tigers will not claw him. His bones are soft yet his grasp is sure, For his flesh is supple;

55.2 His mind is innocent yet his body is virile, For his vigour is plentiful;

55.3 His song is long-lasting yet his voice is sweet, For his grace is perfect.

55.4 But knowing harmony creates abstraction, And following abstraction creates ritual. Exceeding nature creates calamity, And controlling nature creates violence.

55.5 -

56.1 Who understands does not preach; Who preaches does not understand.

56.2 Reserve your judgments and words; Smooth differences and forgive disagreements; Dull your wit and simplify your purpose; Accept the world.

56.3 Then, Friendship and enmity, Profit and loss, Honour and disgrace, Will not affect you; The world will accept you.

57.1 Do not control the people with laws, Nor violence nor espionage, But conquer them with inaction.

57.2 For: The more morals and taboos there are, The more cruelty afflicts people; The more guns and knives there are, The more factions divide people;

57.3 The more arts and skills there are, The more change obsoletes people; The more laws and taxes there are, The more theft corrupts people.

57.4 Yet take no action, and the people nurture each other; Make no laws, and the people deal fairly with each other;

57.5 Own no interest, and the people cooperate with each other; Express no desire, and the people harmonize with each other.

58.1 When government is lazy and informal The people are kind and honest; When government is efficient and severe The people are discontented and deceitful.

58.2 Good fortune follows upon disaster; Disaster lurks within good fortune;

58.3 Who can say how things will end? Perhaps there is no end. Honesty is ever deceived; Kindness is ever seduced; Men have been like this for a long time.

58.4 So the sage is firm but not cutting, Pointed but not piercing, Straight but not rigid, Bright but not blinding.

59.1 To govern men in accord with nature It is best to be restrained;

59.2 Restraint makes agreement easy to attain, And easy agreement builds harmonious relationships; With sufficient harmony no resistance will arise; When no resistance arises, then you possess the heart of the nation,

59.3 And when you possess the nation's heart, your influence will long endure:

59.4 Deeply rooted and firmly established. This is the method of far sight and long life.

60.1 Manage a great nation as you would cook a delicate fish.

60.2 When you use the Way to conquer the world, Your demons will lose their power to harm.

60.3 It is not that those manes have not that spiritual energy, but it will not be employed to hurt men. It is not that it could not hurt men, but neither does the ruling sage hurt them.

60.4 When neither you nor your demons can do harm, You will be at peace with them.

61.1 A nation is like a hierarchy, a marketplace, and a maiden. A maiden wins her husband by submitting to his advances; Submission is a means of union.

61.2 So when a large country submits to a small country It will adopt the small country; When a small country submits to a large country It will be adopted by the large country;

61.3 The one submits and adopts; The other submits and is adopted.

61.4 It is in the interest of a large country to unite and gain service, And in the interest of a small country to unite and gain patronage;

61.5 If both would serve their interests, Both must submit.

62.1 The Way is the fate of men, The treasure of the saint, And the refuge of the sinner.
62.2 Fine words are often borrowed, And great deeds are often appropriated; Therefore, when a man falls, do not abandon him,
62.3 And when a man gains power, do not honour him; Only remain impartial and show him the Way.
62.4 Why should someone appreciate the Way? The ancients said, "By it, those who seek may easily find, And those who regret may easily absolve" So it is the most precious gift.

63.1 Practice no-action; Attend to do-nothing; Taste the flavourless,
63.2 Magnify the small, Multiply the few, Return love for hate.
63.3 Deal with the difficult while it is yet easy; Deal with the great while it is yet small;
63.4 The difficult develops naturally from the easy, And the great from the small;
63.5 So the sage, by dealing with the small, Achieves the great.
63.6 Who finds it easy to promise finds it hard to be trusted; Who takes things lightly finds things difficult;
63.7 The sage recognizes difficulty, and so has none.

64.1 What lies still is easy to grasp; What lies far off is easy to anticipate; What is brittle is easy to shatter; What is small is easy to disperse.
64.2 Therefore deal with things before they happen; Create order before there is confusion.
64.3 Yet a tree broader than a man can embrace is born of a tiny shoot; A dam greater than a river can overflow starts with a clod of earth; A journey of a thousand miles begins at the spot under one's feet.
64.4 He who acts, spoils; He who grasps, loses.
64.5 (But) people in their conduct of affairs are constantly ruining them when they are on the eve of success. If they were careful at the end, as (they should be) at the beginning, they would not so ruin them.
64.6 The sage desires no-desire, Values no-value, Learns no-learning, And returns to the places that people have forgotten; He would help all people to become natural, But then he would not be natural.

65.1 The ancients did not seek to rule people with knowledge, But to help them become natural.
65.2 It is difficult for knowledgeable people to become natural. To use law to control a nation weakens the nation. But to use nature to control a nation strengthens the nation.
65.3 Understanding these two paths is understanding subtlety;
65.4 Subtlety runs deep, ranges wide, Resolves confusion and preserves peace.

66.1 The river carves out the valley by flowing beneath it. Thereby the river is the master of the valley.
66.2 In order to master people One must speak as their servant; In order to lead people One must follow them.
66.3 So when the sage rises above the people, They do not feel oppressed; And when the sage stands before the people, They do not feel hindered. So the popularity of the sage does not fail,
66.4 He does not contend, and no one contends against him.

67.1 All the world says, "I am important; I am separate from all the world. I am important because I am separate, Were I the same, I could never be important."
67.2 Yet here are three treasures That I cherish and commend to you: The first is compassion, By which one finds courage. The second is restraint, By which one finds strength. And the third is unimportance, By which one finds influence.
67.3 -
67.4 Those who are fearless, but without compassion, Powerful, but without restraint, Or influential, yet important, Cannot endure.
67.5 -

68.1 Compassion is the finest weapon and best defence. If you would establish harmony, Compassion must surround you like a fortress.
68.2 Therefore, A good soldier does not inspire fear; A good fighter does not display aggression; A good conqueror does not engage in battle; A good leader does not exercise authority.
68.3 This is the value of unimportance; This is how to win the cooperation of others; This to how to build the same harmony that is in nature.

69.1 There is a saying among soldiers: It is easier to lose a yard than take an inch.
69.2 In this manner one may deploy troops without marshalling them, Bring weapons to bear without exposing them, Engage the foe without invading them, And exhaust their strength without fighting them.

69.3 There is no worse disaster than misunderstanding your enemy; To do so endangers all of my treasures;
69.4 So when two well matched forces oppose each other, The general who maintains compassion will win.

70.1 My words are easy to understand And my actions are easy to perform Yet no other can understand or perform them.
70.2 My words have meaning; my actions have reason; Yet these cannot be known and I cannot be known. We are each unique, and therefore valuable;
70.3 Though the sage wears coarse clothes, his heart is jade.

71.1 Who recognizes his limitations is healthy; Who ignores his limitations is sick.
71.2 The sage recognizes this sickness as a limitation. And so becomes immune.

72.1 When people have nothing more to lose, Then revolution will result.
72.2 Do not take away their lands, And do not destroy their livelihoods; If your burden is not heavy then they will not shirk it.
72.3 The sage maintains himself but exacts no tribute, Values himself but requires no honours; He ignores abstraction and accepts substance.

73.1 Who is brave and bold will perish; Who is brave and subtle will benefit.
73.2 The subtle profit where the bold perish For Fate does not honour daring. And even the sage dares not tempt fate.
73.3 Fate does not attack, yet all things are conquered by it; It does not ask, yet all things answer to it; It does not call, yet all things meet it; It does not plan, yet all things are determined by it.
73.4 Fate's net is vast and its mesh is coarse, Yet none escape it.

74.1 If people were not afraid of death, Then what would be the use of an executioner?
74.2 If people were only afraid of death, And you executed everyone who did not obey, No one would dare to disobey you. Then what would be the use of an executioner?
74.3 People fear death because death is an instrument of fate. When people are killed by execution rather than by fate, This is like carving wood in the place of a carpenter. Those who carve wood in place of a carpenter Often injure their hands.

75.1 When rulers take grain so that they may feast, Their people become hungry;
75.2 When rulers take action to serve their own interests, Their people become rebellious;
75.3 When rulers take lives so that their own lives are maintained, Their people no longer fear death. When people act without regard for their own lives They overcome those who value only their own lives.

76.1 A newborn is soft and tender, A crone, hard and stiff.
76.2 Plants and animals, in life, are supple and succulent; In death, withered and dry.
76.3 So softness and tenderness are attributes of life, And hardness and stiffness, attributes of death.
76.4 Just as a sapless tree will split and decay So an inflexible force will meet defeat;
76.5 The hard and mighty lie beneath the ground While the tender and weak dance on the breeze above.

77.1 Is the action of nature not unlike drawing a bow? What is higher is pulled down, and what is lower is raised up; What is taller is shortened, and what is thinner is broadened;
77.2 Nature's motion decreases those who have more than they need And increases those who need more than they have. It is not so with Man. Man decreases those who need more than they have And increases those who have more than they need.
77.3 To give away what you do not need is to follow the Way.
77.4 So the sage gives without expectation, Accomplishes without claiming credit, And has no desire for ostentation.

78.1 Nothing in the world is as soft and yielding as water, Yet nothing can better overcome the hard and strong, For they can neither control nor do away with it.
78.2 The soft overcomes the hard, The yielding overcomes the strong; Every person knows this, But no one can practice it.
78.3 Who attends to the people would control the land and grain; Who attends to the state would control the whole world; Truth is easily hidden by rhetoric.

79.1 When conflict is reconciled, some hard feelings remain; This is dangerous.
79.2 The sage accepts less than is due And does not blame or punish;
79.3 For harmony seeks agreement Where justice seeks payment.
79.4 The ancients said: "Nature is impartial; Therefore it serves those who serve all."

80.1 Let your community be small, with only a few people; Keep tools in abundance, but do not depend upon them; Appreciate your life and be content with your home;

80.2 Sail boats and ride horses, but don't go too far; Keep weapons and armour, but do not employ them;

80.3 Let everyone read and write, Eat well and make beautiful things. Live peacefully and delight in your own society;

80.4 Dwell within cock-crow of your neighbours, But maintain your independence from them.

81.1 Honest people use no rhetoric; Rhetoric is not honesty.

81.2 Enlightened people are not cultured; Culture is not enlightenment.

81.3 Content people are not wealthy; Wealth is not contentment.

81.4 So the sage does not serve himself; The more he does for others, the more he is satisfied; The more he gives, the more he receives.

81.5 Nature flourishes at the expense of no one; So the sage benefits all men and contends with none.

Mitchell version

1.1 The Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao The name that can be named is not the eternal Name.

1.2 The unnameable is the eternally real. Naming is the origin of all particular things.

1.3 Free from desire, you realize the mystery. Caught in desire, you see only the manifestations.

1.4 Yet mystery and manifestations arise from the same source.

1.5 This source is called darkness. Darkness within darkness. The gateway to all understanding.

2.1 When people see some things as beautiful, other things become ugly.

2.2 When people see some things as good, other things become bad.

2.3 Being and non-being create each other. Difficult and easy support each other. Long and short define each other.

2.4 High and low depend on each other. Before and after follow each other.

2.5 Therefore the Master acts without doing anything and teaches without saying anything.

2.6 Things arise and she lets them come; things disappear and she lets them go. She has but doesn't possess, acts but doesn't expect.

2.7 When her work is done, she forgets it. That is why it lasts forever.

3.1 If you oversteer great men, people become powerless.

3.2 If you overvalue possessions, people begin to steal.

3.3 -

3.4 The Master leads by emptying people's minds and filling their cores, by weakening their ambition and toughening their resolve..

3.5 He helps people lose everything they know, everything they desire, and creates confusion in those who think that they know.

3.6 Practice not-doing, and everything will fall into place.

4.1 The Tao is like a well: used but never used up.

4.2 It is like the eternal void: filled with infinite possibilities.

4.3 It is hidden but always present.

4.4 -

4.5 I don't know who gave birth to it. It is older than God.

5.1 The Tao doesn't take sides; it gives birth to both good and evil.

5.2 The Master doesn't take sides; she welcomes both saints and sinners.

5.3 The Tao is like a bellows: it is empty yet infinitely capable. The more you use it, the more it produces;

5.4 the more you talk of it, the less you understand. Hold on to the center.

6.1 The Tao is called the Great Mother:

6.2 empty yet inexhaustible, it gives birth to infinite worlds.

6.3 The Tao is called the Great Mother: empty yet inexhaustible, it gives birth to infinite worlds. It is always present within you. You can use it any way you want.

7.1 The Tao is infinite, eternal.

7.2 Why is it eternal? It was never born; thus it can never die. Why is it infinite? It has no desires for itself; thus it is present for all beings.

7.3 The Master stays behind; that is why she is ahead.

7.4 She is detached from all things; that is why she is one with them.

7.5 Because she has let go of herself, she is perfectly fulfilled.

8.1 The supreme good is like water, which nourishes all things without trying to. It is content with the low places that people disdain. Thus it is like the Tao.

8.2 In dwelling, live close to the ground. In thinking, keep to the simple. In conflict, be fair and generous.

8.3 In governing, don't try to control. In work, do what you enjoy. In family life, be completely present.

8.4 When you are content to be simply yourself and don't compare or compete, everybody will respect you.

9.1 Fill your bowl to the brim and it will spill.

9.2 Keep sharpening your knife and it will blunt.

9.3 Chase after money and security and your heart will never unclench.

9.4 Care about people's approval and you will be their prisoner.

9.5 Do your work, then step back. The only path to serenity.

10.1 Can you coax your mind from its wandering and keep to the original oneness?

10.2 Can you let your body become supple as a newborn child's?

10.3 Can you cleanse your inner vision until you see nothing but the light?

10.4 Can you love people and lead them without imposing your will?

10.5 Can you deal with the most vital matters by letting events take their course?

10.6 Can you step back from you own mind and thus understand all things?

10.7 Giving birth and nourishing, having without possessing, acting with no expectations, leading and not trying to control: this is the supreme virtue.

11.1 We join spokes together in a wheel, but it is the centre hole that makes the wagon move.

11.2 We shape clay into a pot, but it is the emptiness inside that holds whatever we want.

11.3 We hammer wood for a house, but it is the inner space that makes it livable.

11.4 We work with being, but non-being is what we use.

12.1 Colours blind the eye. Sounds deafen the ear. Flavours numb the taste.

12.2 Thoughts weaken the mind. Desires wither the heart.

12.3 The Master observes the world but trusts his inner vision. He allows things to come and go. His heart is open as the sky.

13.1 Success is as dangerous as failure. Hope is as hollow as fear.

13.2 What does it mean that success is as dangerous as failure? Whether you go up the ladder or down it, you position is shaky. When you stand with your two feet on the ground, you will always keep your balance. What does it mean that hope is as hollow as fear? Hope and fear are both phantoms that arise from thinking of the self. When we don't see the self as self, what do we have to fear?

13.3 What does it mean that hope is as hollow as fear? Hope and fear are both phantoms that arise from thinking of the self. When we don't see the self as self, what do we have to fear?

13.4 See the world as your self. Have faith in the way things are. Love the world as your self; then you can care for all things.

14.1 Look, and it can't be seen. Listen, and it can't be heard. Reach, and it can't be grasped.

14.2 -

14.3 Seamless, unnameable, it returns to the realm of nothing. Above, it isn't bright. Below, it isn't dark.

14.4 Form that includes all forms, image without an image, subtle, beyond all conception. Approach it and there is no beginning; follow it and there is no end.

14.5 You can't know it, but you can be it, at ease in your own life. Just realize where you come from: this is the essence of wisdom.

15.1 The ancient Masters were profound and subtle. Their wisdom was unfathomable.

15.2 There is no way to describe it; all we can describe is their appearance. They were careful as someone crossing an iced-over stream. Alert as a warrior in enemy territory. Courteous as a guest.

15.3 Fluid as melting ice. Shapable as a block of wood. Receptive as a valley. Clear as a glass of water.

15.4 Do you have the patience to wait till your mud settles and the water is clear? Can you remain unmoving till the right action arises by itself?

15.5 The Master doesn't seek fulfilment. Not seeking, not expecting, she is present, and can welcome all things.

16.1 Empty your mind of all thoughts. Let your heart be at peace.

16.2 Watch the turmoil of beings, but contemplate their return. Each separate being in the universe returns to the common source.

16.3 returning to the source is serenity. If you don't realize the source, you stumble in confusion and sorrow.

16.4 When you realize where you come from, you naturally become tolerant, disinterested, amused, kindhearted as a grandmother, dignified as a king.

16.5 Immersed in the wonder of the Tao, you can deal with whatever life brings you, and when death comes, you are ready.

17.1 When the Master governs, the people are hardly aware that he exists. Next best is a leader who is loved. Next, one who is feared. The worst is one who is despised.

17.2 If you don't trust the people, you make them untrustworthy.

17.3 The Master doesn't talk, he acts. When his work is done, the people say, "Amazing: we did it, all by ourselves!"

18.1 When the great Tao is forgotten goodness and piety appear.

18.2 When the body's intelligence declines cleverness and knowledge step forth.

18.3 When there is no peace in the family filial piety begins.

18.4 When the country falls into chaos patriotism is born.

19.1 Throw away holiness and wisdom, and people will be a hundred times happier.

19.2 Throw away morality and justice, and people will do the right thing.

19.3 Throw away industry and profit, and there won't be any thieves.

19.4 If these three aren't enough,

19.5 just stay at the centre of the circle and let all things take their course.

20.1 Stop thinking, and end your problems. What difference between yes and no? What difference between success and failure?

20.2 Must you value what others value, avoid what others avoid? How ridiculous!

20.3 Other people are excited, as though they were at a parade. I alone don't care, I alone am expressionless, like an infant before it can smile.

20.4 Other people have what they need; I alone possess nothing. I alone drift about, like someone without a home. I am like an idiot, my mind is so empty.

20.5 Other people are bright; I alone am dark. Other people are sharper; I alone am dull. Other people have a purpose; I alone don't know. I drift like a wave on the ocean, I blow as aimless as the wind.

20.6 I am different from ordinary people. I drink from the Great Mother's breasts.

21.1 The Master keeps her mind always at one with the Tao; that is what gives her her radiance.

21.2 The Tao is ungraspable. How can her mind be at one with it? Because she doesn't cling to ideas. The Tao is dark and unfathomable. How can it make her radiant? Because she lets it.

21.3 Since before time and space were, the Tao is. It is beyond is and is not.

21.4 How do I know this is true? I look inside myself and see.

22.1 If you want to become whole, let yourself be partial. If you want to become straight, let yourself be crooked. If you want to become full, let yourself be empty. If you want to be reborn, let yourself die. If you want to be given everything, give everything up.

22.2 The Master, by residing in the Tao, sets an example for all beings.

22.3 Because he doesn't display himself, people can see his light. Because he has nothing to prove, people can trust his words. Because he doesn't know who he is, people recognize themselves in him.

22.4 Because he has no goal in mind, everything he does succeeds.

22.5 When the ancient Masters said, "If you want to be given everything, give everything up," they weren't using empty phrases. Only in being lived by the Tao can you be truly yourself.

23.1 Express yourself completely, then keep quiet.

23.2 Be like the forces of nature: when it blows, there is only wind; when it rains, there is only rain; when the clouds pass, the sun shines through.

23.3 If you open yourself to the Tao, you are at one with the Tao and you can embody it completely. If you open yourself to insight, you are at one with insight and you can use it completely. If you open yourself to loss, you are at one with loss and you can accept it completely.

23.4 Open yourself to the Tao, then trust your natural responses; and everything will fall into place.

23.5

24.1 He who stands on tiptoe doesn't stand firm. He who rushes ahead doesn't go far.

24.2 He who tries to shine dims his own light. He who defines himself can't know who he really is.

24.3 He who has power over others can't empower himself. He who clings to his work will create nothing that endures.

24.4 If you want to accord with the Tao, just do your job, then let go.

25.1 There was something formless and perfect before the universe was born. It is serene. Empty. Solitary. Unchanging. Infinite. Eternally present. It is the mother of the universe.

25.2 For lack of a better name, I call it the Tao.

25.3 It flows through all things, inside and outside, and returns to the origin of all things.
25.4 The Tao is great. The universe is great. Earth is great. Man is great. These are the four great powers.
25.5 Man follows the earth. Earth follows the universe. The universe follows the Tao. The Tao follows only itself.

26.1 The heavy is the root of the light. The unmoved is the source of all movement.
26.2 Thus the Master travels all day without leaving home. However splendid the views, she stays serenely in herself.
26.3 Why should the lord of the country flit about like a fool?
26.4 If you let yourself be blown to and fro, you lose touch with your root. If you let restlessness move you, you lose touch with who you are.

27.1 A good traveler has no fixed plans and is not intent upon arriving. A good artist lets his intuition lead him wherever it wants. A good scientist has freed himself of concepts and keeps his mind open to what is.
27.2 -
27.3 Thus the Master is available to all people and doesn't reject anyone. He is ready to use all situations and doesn't waste anything. This is called embodying the light.
27.4 What is a good man but a bad man's teacher? What is a bad man but a good man's job?
27.5 If you don't understand this, you will get lost, however intelligent you are. It is the great secret.

28.1 Know the male, yet keep to the female: receive the world in your arms. If you receive the world, the Tao will never leave you and you will be like a little child.
28.2 Know the white, yet keep to the black: be a pattern for the world. If you are a pattern for the world, the Tao will be strong inside you and there will be nothing you can't do.
28.3 Know the personal, yet keep to the impersonal: accept the world as it is. If you accept the world, the Tao will be luminous inside you and you will return to your primal self.
28.4 The world is formed from the void, like utensils from a block of wood. The Master knows the utensils, yet keeps to the block: thus she can use all things.

29.1 Do you want to improve the world? I don't think it can be done.
29.2 The world is sacred. It can't be improved. If you tamper with it, you'll ruin it. If you treat it like an object, you'll lose it.
29.3 There is a time for being ahead, a time for being behind; a time for being in motion, a time for being at rest; a time for being vigorous, a time for being exhausted; a time for being safe, a time for being in danger.
29.4 The Master sees things as they are, without trying to control them. She lets them go their own way, and resides at the centre of the circle.

30.1 Whoever relies on the Tao in governing men doesn't try to force issues or defeat enemies by force of arms. For every force there is a counterforce.
30.2 Violence, even well intentioned, always rebounds upon oneself.
30.3 The Master does his job and then stops. He understands that the universe is forever out of control, and that trying to dominate events goes against the current of the Tao.
30.4 -
30.5 Because he believes in himself, he doesn't try to convince others. Because he is content with himself, he doesn't need others' approval. Because he accepts himself, the whole world accepts him.

31.1 Weapons are the tools of violence; all decent men detest them.
31.2 -
31.3 Weapons are the tools of fear; a decent man will avoid them except in the direst necessity and, if compelled, will use them only with the utmost restraint. Peace is his highest value. If the peace has been shattered, how can he be content?
31.4 His enemies are not demons, but human beings like himself. He doesn't wish them personal harm. Nor does he rejoice in victory. How could he rejoice in victory and delight in the slaughter of men?
31.5 -
31.6 He enters a battle gravely, with sorrow and with great compassion, as if he were attending a funeral.
32.4 When you have names and forms, know that they are provisional. When you have institutions, know where their functions should end. Knowing when to stop, you can avoid any danger.

32.1 The Tao can't be perceived. Smaller than an electron, it contains uncountable galaxies.
32.2 If powerful men and women could remain centered in the Tao, all things would be in harmony.
32.3 The world would become a paradise. All people would be at peace, and the law would be written in their hearts.

32.5 All things end in the Tao as rivers flow into the sea.

33.1 Knowing others is intelligence; knowing yourself is true wisdom.

33.2 Mastering others is strength; mastering yourself is true power.

33.3 If you realize that you have enough, you are truly rich.

33.4 If you stay in the center and embrace death with your whole heart, you will endure forever.

34.1 The great Tao flows everywhere.

34.2 All things are born from it, yet it doesn't create them. It pours itself into its work, yet it makes no claim. It nourishes infinite worlds, yet it doesn't hold on to them.

34.3 Since it is merged with all things and hidden in their hearts, it can be called humble.

34.4 Since all things vanish into it and it alone endures, it can be called great.

34.5 It isn't aware of its greatness; thus it is truly great.

35.1 She who is centered in the Tao can go where she wishes, without danger. She perceives the universal harmony, even amid great pain, because she has found peace in her heart.

35.2 Music or the smell of good cooking may make people stop and enjoy.

35.3 But words that point to the Tao seem monotonous and without flavour. When you look for it, there is nothing to see. When you listen for it, there is nothing to hear. When you use it, it is inexhaustible.

36.1 If you want to shrink something, you must first allow it to expand. If you want to get rid of something, you must first allow it to flourish. If you want to take something, you must first allow it to be given.

36.2 This is called the subtle perception of the way things are. The soft overcomes the hard. The slow overcomes the fast.

36.3 Let your workings remain a mystery. Just show people the results.

37.1 The Tao never does anything, yet through it all things are done.

37.2 If powerful men and women could center themselves in it, the whole world would be transformed by itself, in its natural rhythms. People would be content with their simple, everyday lives, in harmony, and free of desire.

37.3 When there is no desire, all things are at peace.

38.1 The Master doesn't try to be powerful; thus he is truly powerful. The ordinary man keeps reaching for power; thus he never has enough.

38.2 The Master does nothing, yet he leaves nothing undone. The ordinary man is always doing things, yet many more are left to be done.

38.3 The kind man does something, yet something remains undone. The just man does something, and leaves many things to be done. The moral man does something, and when no one responds he rolls up his sleeves and uses force.

38.4 When the Tao is lost, there is goodness. When goodness is lost, there is morality. When morality is lost, there is ritual.

38.5 Ritual is the husk of true faith, the beginning of chaos.

38.6 Therefore the Master concerns himself with the depths and not the surface, with the fruit and not the flower. He has no will of his own. He dwells in reality, and lets all illusions go.

39.1 In harmony with the Tao, the sky is clear and spacious, the earth is solid and full,

39.2 all creature flourish together, content with the way they are, endlessly repeating themselves, endlessly renewed.

39.3 When man interferes with the Tao, the sky becomes filthy, the earth becomes depleted, the equilibrium crumbles, creatures become extinct.

39.4 -

39.5 -

39.6 -

39.7 The Master views the parts with compassion, because he understands the whole. His constant practice is humility.

39.8 He doesn't glitter like a jewel but lets himself be shaped by the Tao, as rugged and common as stone.

40.1 Return is the movement of the Tao. Yielding is the way of the Tao.

40.2 All things are born of being. Being is born of non-being.

41.1 When a superior man hears of the Tao, he immediately begins to embody it. When an average man hears of the Tao, he half believes it, half doubts it.

41.2 When a foolish man hears of the Tao, he laughs out loud. If he didn't laugh, it wouldn't be the Tao.

41.3 Thus it is said: The path into the light seems dark, the path forward seems to go back, the direct path seems long, true power seems weak, true purity seems tarnished,
41.4 true steadfastness seems changeable, true clarity seems obscure, the greatest are seems unsophisticated, the greatest love seems indifferent, the greatest wisdom seems childish.
41.5 The Tao is nowhere to be found. Yet it nourishes and completes all things.

42.1 The Tao gives birth to One. One gives birth to Two. Two gives birth to Three. Three gives birth to all things.
42.2 All things have their backs to the female and stand facing the male. When male and female combine, all things achieve harmony.
42.3 Ordinary men hate solitude. But the Master makes use of it, embracing his aloneness, realizing he is one with the whole universe.
42.4 -
42.5 -

43.1 The gentlest thing in the world overcomes the hardest thing in the world. That which has no substance enters where there is no space. This shows the value of non-action.
43.2 Teaching without words, performing without actions: that is the Master's way.

44.1 Fame or integrity: which is more important? Money or happiness: which is more valuable? Success or failure: which is more destructive?
44.2 If you look to others for fulfillment, you will never truly be fulfilled. If your happiness depends on money, you will never be happy with yourself.
44.3 Be content with what you have; rejoice in the way things are. When you realize there is nothing lacking, the whole world belongs to you.

45.1 True perfection seems imperfect, yet it is perfectly itself. True fullness seems empty, yet it is fully present. True straightness seems crooked.
45.2 True wisdom seems foolish. True art seems artless.
45.3 The Master allows things to happen. She shapes events as they come. She steps out of the way and lets the Tao speak for itself.

46.1 When a country is in harmony with the Tao, the factories make trucks and tractors. When a country goes counter to the Tao, warheads are stockpiled outside the cities.
46.2 There is no greater illusion than fear, no greater wrong than preparing to defend yourself, no greater misfortune than having an enemy.
46.3 Whoever can see through all fear will always be safe.

47.1 Without opening your door, you can open your heart to the world. Without looking out your window, you can see the essence of the Tao. The more you know, the less you understand.
47.2 The Master arrives without leaving, sees the light without looking, achieves without doing a thing.

48.1 In pursuit of knowledge, every day something is added. In the practice of the Tao, every day something is dropped.
48.2 Less and less do you need to force things, until finally you arrive at non-action. When nothing is done, nothing is left undone. True mastery can be gained by letting things go their own way.
48.3 It can't be gained by interfering.

49.1 The Master has no mind of her own. She works with the mind of the people.
49.2 She is good to people who are good. She is also good to people who aren't good. This is true goodness.
49.3 She trusts people who are trustworthy. She also trusts people who aren't trustworthy. This is true trust.
49.4 The Master's mind is like space. People don't understand her. They look to her and wait. She treats them like her own children.

50.1 The Master gives himself up to whatever the moment brings.
50.2 He knows that he is going to die, and he has nothing left to hold on to: no illusions in his mind, no resistances in his body. He doesn't think about his actions; they flow from the core of his being.
50.3 He holds nothing back from life; therefore he is ready for death, as a man is ready for sleep after a good day's work.
50.4 -

51.1 Every being in the universe is an expression of the Tao. It springs into existence, unconscious, perfect, free, takes on a physical body, lets circumstances complete it.

51.2 That is why every being spontaneously honours the Tao. The Tao gives birth to all beings, nourishes them, maintains them, cares for them, comforts them, protects them, takes them back to itself, creating without possessing, acting without expecting, guiding without interfering.

51.3 That is why love of the Tao is in the very nature of things.

52.1 In the beginning was the Tao. All things issue from it; all things return to it.

52.2 To find the origin, trace back the manifestations. When you recognize the children and find the mother, you will be free of sorrow.

52.3 If you keep your mind from judging and aren't led by the senses, your heart will find peace.

52.4 If you close your mind in judgements and traffic with desires, your heart will be troubled.

52.5 Seeing into darkness is clarity. Knowing how to yield is strength.

52.6 Use your own light and return to the source of light. This is called practicing eternity.

53.1 Be aware when things are out of balance. Stay centered within the Tao.

53.2 The great Way is easy, yet people prefer the side paths.

53.3 When rich speculators prosper

53.4 While farmers lose their land; when government officials spend money on weapons instead of cures; when the upper class is extravagant and irresponsible while the poor have nowhere to turn - all this is robbery and chaos. It is not in keeping with the Tao.

54.1 Whoever is planted in the Tao will not be rooted up. Whoever embraces the Tao will not slip away. Her name will be held in honour from generation to generation.

54.2 Let the Tao be present in your life and you will become genuine. Let it be present in your family and your family will flourish. Let it be present in your country and your country will be an example to all countries in the world. Let it be present in the universe and the universe will sing.

54.3 -

54.4 How do I know this is true? By looking inside myself.

55.1 He who is in harmony with the Tao is like a newborn child. Its bones are soft, its muscles are weak, but its grip is powerful.

55.2 It doesn't know about the union of male and female, yet its penis can stand erect, so intense is its vital power.

55.3 It can scream its head off all day, yet it never becomes hoarse, so complete is its harmony. The Master's power is like this. He lets all things come and go effortlessly, without desire. He never expects results; thus he is never disappointed. He is never disappointed; thus his spirit never grows old.

55.4 -

55.5 -

56.1 Those who know don't talk. Those who talk don't know.

56.2 Close your mouth, block off your senses, blunt your sharpness, untie your knots, soften your glare, settle your dust. This is the primal identity. Be like the Tao.

56.3 It can't be approached or withdrawn from, benefited or harmed, honoured or brought into disgrace. It gives itself up continually. That is why it endures.

57.1 If you want to be a great leader, you must learn to follow the Tao. Stop trying to control. Let go of fixed plans and concepts, and the world will govern itself.

57.2 The more prohibitions you have, the less virtuous people will be. The more weapons you have, the less secure people will be.

57.3 The more subsidies you have, the less self-reliant people will be.

57.4 Therefore the Master says: I let go of the law, and people become honest.

57.5 I let go of economics, and people become prosperous. I let go of religion, and people become serene. I let go of all desire for the common good, and the good becomes common as grass.

58.1 If a country is governed with tolerance, the people are comfortable and honest. If a country is governed with repression, the people are depressed and crafty.

58.2 -

58.3 When the will to power is in charge, the higher the ideals, the lower the results. Try to make people happy, and you lay the groundwork for misery. Try to make people moral, and you lay the groundwork for vice.

58.4 Thus the Master is content to serve as an example and not to impose her will. She is pointed, but doesn't pierce. Straightforward, but supple. Radiant, but easy on the eyes.

59.1 For governing a country well there is nothing better than moderation.

59.2 The mark of a moderate man is freedom from his own ideas. Tolerant like the sky, all-pervading like sunlight, firm like a mountain, supple like a tree in the wind, he has no destination in view and makes use of anything life happens to bring his way.

59.3 Nothing is impossible for him.

59.4 Because he has let go, he can care for the people's welfare as a mother cares for her child.

60.1 Governing a large country is like frying a small fish. You spoil it with too much poking.

60.2 Center your country in the Tao and evil will have no power.

60.3 It is not that they lose their power as such, But that they will not harm others; Because they will not harm others, You will not harm others:

60.4 Give evil nothing to oppose and it will disappear by itself.

61.1 When a country obtains great power, it becomes like the sea: all streams run downward into it. The more powerful it grows, the greater the need for humility. Humility means trusting the Tao, thus never needing to be defensive.

61.2 A great nation is like a great man: When he makes a mistake, he realizes it. Having realized it, he admits it. Having admitted it, he corrects it.

61.3 He considers those who point out his faults as his most benevolent teachers. He thinks of his enemy as the shadow that he himself casts.

61.4 -

61.5 If a nation is centred in the Tao, if it nourishes its own people and doesn't meddle in the affairs of others, it will be a light to all nations in the world.

62.1 The Tao is the centre of the universe, the good man's treasure, the bad man's refuge.

62.2 Honours can be bought with fine words, respect can be won with good deeds; but the Tao is beyond all value, and no one can achieve it.

62.3 Thus, when a new leader is chosen, don't offer to help him with your wealth or your expertise. Offer instead to teach him about the Tao.

62.4 Why did the ancient Masters esteem the Tao? Because, being one with the Tao, when you seek, you find; and when you make a mistake, you are forgiven. That is why everybody loves it.

63.1 Act without doing; work without effort.

63.2 Think of the small as large and the few as many.

63.3 Confront the difficult while it is still easy; accomplish the great task by a series of small acts.

63.4 -

63.5 The Master never reaches for the great; thus she achieves greatness.

63.6 When she runs into a difficulty, she stops and gives herself to it.

63.7 She doesn't cling to her own comfort; thus problems are no problem for her.

64.1 What is rooted is easy to nourish. What is recent is easy to correct. What is brittle is easy to break. What is small is easy to scatter.

64.2 Prevent trouble before it arises. Put things in order before they exist.

64.3 The giant pine tree grows from a tiny sprout. The journey of a thousand miles starts from beneath your feet.

64.4 Rushing into action, you fail. Trying to grasp things, you lose them. Forcing a project to completion, you ruin what was almost ripe. Therefore the Master takes action by letting things take their course.

64.5 People often fail on the verge of success; Take care at the end as at the beginning, So that you may avoid failure.

64.6 He remains as calm at the end as at the beginning. He has nothing, thus has nothing to lose. What he desires is non-desire; what he learns is to unlearn. He simply reminds people of who they have always been. He cares about nothing but the Tao. Thus he can care for all things.

65.1 The ancient Masters didn't try to educate the people, but kindly taught them to not-know.

65.2 When they think that they know the answers, people are difficult to guide. When they know that they don't know, people can find their own way. If you want to learn how to govern, avoid being clever or rich. The simplest pattern is the clearest.

65.3 -

65.4 Content with an ordinary life, you can show all people the way back to their own true nature.

66.1 All streams flow to the sea because it is lower than they are. Humility gives it its power.

66.2 If you want to govern the people, you must place yourself below them. If you want to lead the people, you must learn how to follow them.

66.3 The Master is above the people, and no one feels oppressed. She goes ahead of the people, and no one feels manipulated. The whole world is grateful to her.

66.4 Because she competes with no one, no one can compete with her.

67.1 Some say that my teaching is nonsense. Others call it lofty but impractical. But to those who have looked inside themselves, this nonsense makes perfect sense. And to those who put it into practice, this loftiness has roots that go deep.

67.2 I have just three things to teach: simplicity, patience, compassion. These three are your greatest treasures.

67.3 Simple in actions and in thoughts, you return to the source of being. Patient with both friends and enemies, you accord with the way things are. Compassionate toward yourself, you reconcile all beings in the world.

67.4 -

67.5 -

68.1 The best athlete wants his opponent at his best. The best general enters the mind of his enemy.

68.2 The best businessman serves the communal good. The best leader follows the will of the people.

68.3 All of them embody the virtue of non-competition. Not that they don't love to compete, but they do it in the spirit of play. In this they are like children and in harmony with the Tao.

69.1 The generals have a saying: "Rather than make the first move it is better to wait and see. Rather than advance an inch it is better to retreat a yard."

69.2 This is called going forward without advancing, pushing back without using weapons.

69.3 There is no greater misfortune than underestimating your enemy. Underestimating your enemy means thinking that he is evil. Thus you destroy your three treasures and become an enemy yourself.

69.4 When two great forces oppose each other, the victory will go to the one that knows how to yield.

70.1 My teachings are easy to understand and easy to put into practice. Yet your intellect will never grasp them, and if you try to practice them, you'll fail.

70.2 My teachings are older than the world. How can you grasp their meaning?

70.3 If you want to know me, look inside your heart.

71.1 Not-knowing is true knowledge. Presuming to know is a disease. First realize that you are sick; then you can move toward health.

71.2 The Master is her own physician. She has healed herself of all knowing. Thus she is truly whole.

72.1 When they lose their sense of awe, people turn to religion.

72.2 When they no longer trust themselves, they begin to depend upon authority.

72.3 Therefore the Master steps back so that people won't be confused. He teaches without a teaching, so that people will have nothing to learn.

73.1 The Tao is always at ease.

73.2 -

73.3 It overcomes without competing, answers without speaking a word, arrives without being summoned, accomplishes without a plan.

73.4 Its net covers the whole universe. And though its meshes are wide, it doesn't let a thing slip through.

74.1 If you realize that all things change, there is nothing you will try to hold on to.

74.2 If you aren't afraid of dying, there is nothing you can't achieve.

74.3 Trying to control the future is like trying to take the master carpenter's place. When you handle the master carpenter's tools, chances are that you'll cut your hand.

75.1 When taxes are too high, people go hungry.

75.2 When the government is too intrusive, people lose their spirit.

75.3 Act for the people's benefit. Trust them; leave them alone.

76.1 Men are born soft and supple; dead, they are stiff and hard.

76.2 Plats are born tender and pliant; dead, they are brittle and dry.

76.3 Thus whoever is stiff and inflexible is a disciple of death.

76.4 Whoever is soft and yielding is a disciple of life.

76.5 The hard and stiff will be broken. The soft and supple will prevail.

77.1 As it acts in the world, the Tao is like the bending of a bow. The top is bent downward; the bottom is bent up. It adjusts excess and deficiency so that there is perfect balance. It takes from what is too much and give to what isn't enough.

77.2 Those who try to control, who use force to protect their power, go against the direction of the Tao. They take from those who don't have enough and give to those who have far too much.

77.3 The Master can keep giving because there is no end to her wealth.

77.4 She acts without expectation, succeeds without taking credit, and doesn't think that she is better than anyone else.

78.1 Nothing in the world is as soft and yielding as water. Yet for dissolving the hard and inflexible, nothing can surpass it.

78.2 The soft overcomes the hard; the gentle overcomes the rigid. Everyone knows this is true, but few can put it into practice.

78.3 Therefore the Master remains serene in the midst of sorrow. Evil cannot enter his heart. Because he has given up helping, he is people's greatest help. True words seem paradoxical.

79.1 If you blame someone else, there is no end to the blame.

79.2 Failure is an opportunity.

79.3 -

79.4 Therefore the Master fulfills her own obligations and corrects her own mistakes. She does what she needs to do and demands nothing of others.

80.1 If a country is governed wisely, its inhabitants will be content. They enjoy the labour of their hands and don't waste time inventing labour-saving machines. Since they dearly love their homes, they aren't interested in travel.

80.2 There may be a few wagons and boats, but these don't go anywhere. There may be an arsenal of weapons, but nobody ever uses them.

80.3 People enjoy their food, take pleasure in being with their families, spend weekends working in their gardens, delight in the doings of the neighbourhood.

80.4 And even though the next country is so close that people can hear its roosters crowing and its dogs barking, they are content to die of old age without ever having gone to see it.

81.1 True words aren't eloquent; eloquent words aren't true.

81.2 Wise men don't need to prove their point; men who need to prove their point aren't wise.

81.3 -

81.4 The Master has no possessions. The more he does for others, the happier he is. The more he gives to others, the wealthier he is.

81.5 The Tao nourishes by not forcing. By not dominating, the Master leads.

Muller version

- 1.1 The Tao that can be followed is not the eternal Tao. The name that can be named is not the eternal name.
 - 1.2 The nameless is the origin of heaven and earth While naming is the origin of the myriad things.
 - 1.3 Therefore, always desireless, you see the mystery Ever desiring, you see the manifestations.
 - 1.4 These two are the same - When they appear they are named differently.
 - 1.5 Their sameness is the mystery, Mystery within mystery; The door to all marvels.
-
- 2.1 All in the world recognize the beautiful as beautiful. Herein lies ugliness.
 - 2.2 All recognize the good as good. Herein lies evil.
 - 2.3 Therefore Being and non-being produce each other. Difficulty and ease bring about each other. Long and short delimit each other.
 - 2.4 High and low rest on each other. Sound and voice harmonize each other. Front and back follow each other.
 - 2.5 Therefore the sage abides in the condition of wu-wei (unattached action). And carries out the wordless teaching.
 - 2.6 Here, the myriad things are made, yet not separated. Therefore the sage produces without possessing, Acts without expectations
 - 2.7 And accomplishes without abiding in her accomplishments. It is precisely because she does not abide in them That they never leave her.
-
- 3.1 If you do not adulate the worthy, you will make others non-contentious.
 - 3.2 If you do not value rare treasures, you will stop others from stealing.
 - 3.3 If people do not see desirables, they will not be agitated.
 - 3.4 Therefore, when the sage governs, He clears peoples' minds, Fills their bellies, Weakens their ambition and Strengthens their bones.
 - 3.5 If the people are kept without cleverness and desire It will make the intellectuals not dare to meddle.
 - 3.6 Acting without contrivance, there is no lack of manageability.
-
- 4.1 The Tao is so vast that when you use it, something is always left. How deep it is!
 - 4.2 It seems to be the ancestor of the myriad things.
 - 4.3 It blunts sharpness Untangles knots Softens the glare Unifies with the mundane.
 - 4.4 It is so full! It seems to have remainder.
 - 4.5 It is the child of I-don't-know-who. And prior to the primeval Lord-on-high.
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- 5.1 Heaven and Earth are not jen, And regard the people as straw dogs.
 - 5.2 The sage is not jen, And regards all things as straw dogs.
 - 5.3 The space between Heaven and Earth is just like a bellows: Empty it, it is not exhausted. Squeeze it and more comes out.
 - 5.4 Investigating it with a lot of talk Is not like holding to the center.
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- 6.1 The valley spirit never dies. It is called "the mysterious female."
 - 6.2 The opening of the mysterious female Is called "the root of Heaven and Earth."
 - 6.3 The valley spirit never dies. It is called "the mysterious female." The opening of the mysterious female Is called "the root of Heaven and Earth." Continuous, seeming to remain. Use it without exertion.
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- 7.1 Heaven and Earth last forever.
 - 7.2 The reason that Heaven and Earth are able to last forever Is because they do not give birth to themselves. Therefore, they are always alive.
 - 7.3 Hence, the sage puts herself last and is first.
 - 7.4 She is outside herself and therefore her self lasts.
 - 7.5 Is it not through her selflessness That she is able to perfect herself?
-
- 8.1 The highest goodness is like water. Water easily benefits all things without struggle. Yet it abides in places that men hate. Therefore it is like the Tao.
 - 8.2 For dwelling, the Earth is good. For the mind, depth is good. The goodness of giving is in the timing. The goodness of speech is in honesty.
 - 8.3 In government, self-mastery is good. In handling affairs, ability is good.

8.4 If you do not wrangle, you will not be blamed.

9.1 To hold until full is not as good as stopping.

9.2 An over sharpened sword cannot last long.

9.3 A room filled with gold and jewels cannot be protected.

9.4 Boasting of wealth and virtue brings your demise.

9.5 After finishing the work, withdraw. This is the Way of Heaven.

10.1 Pacifying the agitated material soul and holding to oneness: Are you able to avoid separation?

10.2 Focusing your energy on the release of tension: Can you be like an infant?

10.3 In purifying your insight: Can you un-obstruct it?

10.4 Loving the people and ruling the state: Can you avoid over-manipulation?

10.5 In opening and closing the gate of Heaven: Can you be the female?

10.6 In illuminating the whole universe: Can you be free of rationality?

10.7 Give birth to it and nourish it. Produce it but don't possess it. Act without expectation. Excel, but don't take charge. This is called Mysterious Virtue.

11.1 Thirty spokes join together in the hub. It is because of what is not there that the cart is useful.

11.2 Clay is formed into a vessel. It is because of its emptiness that the vessel is useful.

11.3 Cut doors and windows to make a room. It is because of its emptiness that the room is useful.

11.4 Therefore, what is present is used for profit. But it is in absence that there is usefulness.

12.1 The five colours blind our eyes. The five tones deafen our ears. The five flavours confuse our taste.

12.2 Racing and hunting madden our minds. Possessing rare treasures brings about harmful behaviour.

12.3 Therefore the sage regards his centre, and not his eyes. He lets go of that and chooses this.

13.1 Accept humiliation as a surprise. Value great misfortune as your own self.

13.2 What do I mean by "Accept humiliation as a surprise"? When you are humble Attainment is a surprise And so is loss. That's why I say, "Accept humiliation as a surprise."?

13.3 What do I mean by "Value great misfortune as your own self"? If I have no self, how could I experience misfortune?

13.4 Therefore, if you dedicate your life for the benefit of the world, You can rely on the world. If you love dedicating yourself in this way, You can be entrusted with the world.

14.1 Look for it, it cannot be seen. It is called the distant. Listen for it, it cannot be heard. It is called the rare. Reach for it, it cannot be gotten. It is called the subtle.

14.2 These three ultimately cannot be fathomed. Therefore they join to become one.

14.3 Its top is not bright; Its bottom is not dark; Existing continuously, it cannot be named and it returns to no-thingness.

14.4 Thus, it is called the formless form, The image of no-thing. This is called the most obscure. Go to meet it, you cannot see its face. Follow it, you cannot see its back.

14.5 By holding to the ancient Tao You can manage present existence And know the primordial beginning. This is called the very beginning thread of the Tao.

15.1 The ancient masters of the Tao Had subtle marvelous mystic penetration A depth that cannot be known.

15.2 It is exactly because that they are unknowable That we are forced to pay attention to their appearance. Hesitant, like one crossing an ice-covered river. Ready, like one afraid of his neighbours on all sides. Dignified, like a guest.

15.3 Loose, like ice about to melt. Straightforward, like an uncarved block of wood. Open, like a valley. Obscure, like muddy water.

15.4 Who can be muddled, and use clarity to gradually become lucid? Who can be calm, and use constant application for eventual success?

15.5 The one who holds to this path does not crave fulfilment. Precisely because he does not crave fulfilment He can be shattered And do without quick restitution.

16.1 Effect emptiness to the extreme. Keep stillness whole.

16.2 Myriad things act in concert. I therefore watch their return. All things flourish and each returns to its root.

16.3 Returning to the root is called quietude. Quietude is called returning to life. Return to life is called constant. Knowing this constant is called illumination. Acting arbitrarily without knowing the constant is harmful.

16.4 Knowing the constant is receptivity, which is impartial. Impartiality is kingship. Kingship is Heaven. Heaven is Tao Tao is eternal.

16.5 Though you lose the body, you do not die.

17.1 From great antiquity forth they have known and possessed it. Those of the next level loved and praised it. The next were in awe of it. And the next despised it.

17.2 If you lack sincerity no one will believe you.

17.3 How careful she is with her precious words! When her work is complete and her job is finished, Everybody says: "We did it!"

18.1 When the great Tao perishes There is jen and justice.

18.2 When intelligence is manifest There is great deception.

18.3 When the six relationships are not in harmony There is filial piety and compassion.

18.4 When the country is in chaos Loyal ministers appear.

19.1 Get rid of "holiness" and abandon "wisdom" and the people will benefit a hundredfold.

19.2 Get rid of "altruism" and abandon "Justice" and the people will return to filial piety and compassion.

19.3 Get rid of cleverness and abandon profit, and thieves and gangsters will not exist.

19.4 Since the above three are merely words, they are not sufficient. Therefore there must be something to include them all.

19.5 See the origin and keep the non-differentiated state. Lessen selfishness and decrease desire.

20.1 Get rid of "learning" and there will be no anxiety. How much difference is there between "yes" and "no"? How far removed from each other are "good" and "evil"?

20.2 Yet what the people are in awe of cannot be disregarded. I am scattered, never having been in a comfortable center.

20.3 All the people enjoy themselves, as if they are at the festival of the great sacrifice, Or climbing the Spring Platform. I alone remain, not yet having shown myself. Like an infant who has not yet laughed. Weary, like one despairing of no home to return to.

20.4 All the people enjoy extra While I have left everything behind. I am ignorant of the minds of others. So dull!

20.5 While average people are clear and bright, I alone am obscure. Average people know everything. To me alone all seems covered. So flat! Like the ocean. Blowing around! It seems there is no place to rest.

20.6 Everybody has a goal in mind. I alone am as ignorant as a bumpkin. I alone differ from people. I enjoy being nourished by the mother.

21.1 The form of great virtue is something that only the Tao can follow.

21.2 The Tao as a "thing" is only vague and obscure. How obscure! How vague! In it there is form. How vague! How obscure! In it are things. How deep! How dark! In it there is an essence. The essence is so real--therein is belief.

21.3 From the present to antiquity, its name has never left it, so we can examine all origins.

21.4 How do I know the form of all origins? By this.

22.1 The imperfect is completed. The crooked is straightened. The empty is filled. The old is renewed. With few there is attainment. With much there is confusion.

22.2 Therefore the sage grasps the one and becomes the model for all.

22.3 She does not show herself, and therefore is apparent. She does not affirm herself, and therefore is acknowledged. She does not boast and therefore has merit. She does not strive and is therefore successful.

22.4 It is exactly because she does not contend, that nobody can contend with her.

22.5 How could the ancient saying, "The imperfect is completed" be regarded as empty talk? Believe in the complete and return to it.

23.1 To speak little is natural. Therefore a gale does not blow a whole morning Nor does a downpour last a whole day.

23.2 Who does these things? Heaven and Earth. If even Heaven and Earth cannot force perfect continuity How can people expect to?

23.3 Therefore there is such a thing as aligning one's actions with the Tao. If you accord with the Tao you become one with it. If you accord with virtue you become one with it. If you accord with loss you become one with it.

23.4 The Tao accepts this accordance gladly. Virtue accepts this accordance gladly. Loss also accepts accordance gladly.

23.5 If you are untrustworthy, people will not trust you.

24.1 Standing on tiptoe, you are unsteady. Straddle-legged, you cannot go.

24.2 If you show yourself, you will not be seen. If you affirm yourself, you will not shine.
24.3 If you boast, you will have no merit. If you promote yourself, you will have no success.
24.4 Those who abide in the Tao call these Leftover food and wasted action And all things dislike them. Therefore the person of the Tao does not act like this.

25.1 Which is born before Heaven and Earth. So silent and desolate! It establishes itself without renewal. Functions universally without lapse. We can regard it as the Mother of Everything.
25.2 There is something that is perfect in its disorder I don't know its name. Hence, when forced to name it, I call it "Tao." When forced to categorize it, I call it "great."
25.3 Greatness entails transcendence. Transcendence entails going-far. Going-far entails return.
25.4 Hence, Tao is great, Heaven is great, the Earth is great And the human is also great. Within our realm there are four greatnesses and the human being is one of them.
25.5 Human beings follow the Earth. Earth follows Heaven Heaven follows the Tao The Tao follows the way things are.

26.1 Heaviness is the root of lightness. Composure is the ruler of instability.
26.2 Therefore the sage travels all day Without putting down his heavy load. Though there may be spectacles to see He easily passes them by.
26.3 This being so How could the ruler of a large state Be so concerned with himself as to ignore the people?
26.4 If you take them lightly you will lose your roots. If you are unstable, you will lose your rulership.

27.1 A good traveler leaves no tracks. Good speech lacks faultfinding. A good counter needs no calculator.
27.2 A well-shut door will stay closed without a latch. Skillful fastening will stay tied without knots.
27.3 It is in this manner that the sage is always skillful in elevating people. Therefore she does not discard anybody. She is always skillful in helping things Therefore she does not discard anything. This is called "the actualization of her luminosity."
27.4 Hence, the good are the teachers of the not-so-good. And the not-so-good are the charges of the good.
27.5 Not valuing your teacher or not loving your students: Even if you are smart, you are gravely in error. This is called Essential Subtlety.

28.1 Know the Masculine, cleave to the Feminine Be the valley for everyone. Being the valley for everyone You are always in virtue without lapse And you return to infancy.
28.2 Know the White, cleave to the Black Be a model for everyone. Being the model for everyone You are always in virtue and free from error You return to limitlessness.
28.3 Know Glory but cleave to Humiliation Be the valley for everyone. When your constancy in virtue is complete You return to the state of the "uncarved block."
28.4 The block is cut into implements. The sage uses them to fulfill roles. Therefore the great tailor does not cut.

29.1 If you want to grab the world and run it I can see that you will not succeed.
29.2 The world is a spiritual vessel, which can't be controlled. Manipulators mess things up. Grabbers lose it.
29.3 Therefore: Sometimes you lead Sometimes you follow Sometimes you are stifled Sometimes you breathe easy Sometimes you are strong Sometimes you are weak Sometimes you destroy And sometimes you are destroyed.
29.4 Hence, the sage shuns excess Shuns grandiosity Shuns arrogance.

30.1 If you used the Tao as a principle for ruling You would not dominate the people by military force. What goes around comes around.
30.2 Where the general has camped Thorns and brambles grow. In the wake of a great army Come years of famine.
30.3 If you know what you are doing You will do what is necessary and stop there.
30.4 Accomplish but don't boast Accomplish without show Accomplish without arrogance Accomplish without grabbing Accomplish without forcing.
30.5 When things flourish they decline. This is called non-Tao The non-Tao is short-lived.

31.1 Sharp weapons are inauspicious instruments. Everyone hates them. Therefore the man of the Tao is not comfortable with them.
31.2 In the domestic affairs of the gentleman The left is the position of honour. In military affairs the right is the position of honour.
31.3 Since weapons are inauspicious instruments, they are not the instruments of the gentleman So he uses them without enjoyment And values plainness.

31.4 Victory is never sweet. Those for whom victory is sweet Are those who enjoy killing. If you enjoy killing, you cannot gain the trust of the people.

31.5 On auspicious occasions the place of honour is on the left. On inauspicious occasions the place of honour is on the right. The lieutenant commander stands on the left. The commander-in-chief stands on the right.

31.6 And they speak, using the funerary rites to bury them. The common people, from whom all the dead have come Weep in lamentation. The victors bury them with funerary rites.

32.4 People, unable to deal with It on its own terms Make adjustments; And so you have the beginning of division into names. Since there are already plenty of names You should know where to stop. Knowing where to stop, you can avoid danger.

32.1 The Tao is always nameless. And even though a sapling might be small No one can make it be his subject.

32.2 If rulers could embody this principle The myriad things would follow on their own.

32.3 Heaven and Earth would be in perfect accord And rain sweet dew.

32.5 The Tao's existence in the world Is like valley streams running into the rivers and seas.

33.1 If you understand others you are smart. If you understand yourself you are illuminated.

33.2 If you overcome others you are powerful. If you overcome yourself you have strength.

33.3 If you know how to be satisfied you are rich. If you can act with vigour, you have a will.

33.4 If you don't lose your objectives you can be long-lasting. If you die without loss, you are eternal.

34.1 The Tao is like a great flooding river. How can it be directed to the left or right?

34.2 The myriad things rely on it for their life but do not distinguish it. It brings to completion but cannot be said to exist. It clothes and feeds all things without lording over them.

34.3 It is always desireless, so we call it "the small."

34.4 The myriad things return to it and it doesn't exact lordship Thus it can be called "great."

34.5 Till the end, it does not regard itself as Great. Therefore it actualizes its greatness.

35.1 Holding to the Great Form All pass away. They pass away unharmed, resting in Great Peace.

35.2 It is for food and music that the passing traveler stops.

35.3 When the Tao appears from its opening It is so subtle, it has no taste. Look at it, you cannot see it. Listen, you cannot hear it. Use it You cannot exhaust it.

36.1 That which will be shrunk Must first be stretched. That which will be weakened Must first be strengthened. That which will be torn down Must first be raised up. That which will be taken Must first be given.

36.2 This is called "subtle illumination." The gentle and soft overcomes the hard and aggressive.

36.3 A fish cannot leave the water. The country's potent weapons Should not be shown to its people.

37.1 The Tao is always "not-doing" Yet there is nothing it doesn't do.

37.2 If the ruler is able to embody it Everything will naturally change. Being changed, they desire to act. So I must restrain them, using the nameless "uncarved block (original mind)." Using the nameless uncarved block They become desireless.

37.3 Desireless, they are tranquil and All-under-Heaven is naturally settled.

38.1 True virtue is not virtuous Therefore it has virtue. Superficial virtue never fails to be virtuous Therefore it has no virtue.

38.2 True virtue does not "act" And has no intentions. Superficial virtue "acts" And always has intentions.

38.3 True jen "acts" But has no intentions. True righteousness "acts" but has intentions. True propriety "acts" and if you don't respond They will roll up their sleeves and threaten you.

38.4 Thus, when the Tao is lost there is virtue When virtue is lost there is jen When jen is lost there is Justice And when Justice is lost there is propriety.

38.5 Now "propriety" is the external appearance of loyalty and sincerity And the beginning of disorder. Occult abilities are just flowers of the Tao And the beginning of foolishness.

38.6 Therefore the Master dwells in the substantial And not in the superficial. Rests in the fruit and not in the flower. So let go of that and grasp this.

39.1 These in the past have attained wholeness: Heaven attains wholeness with its clarity; The Earth attains wholeness with its firmness; The Spirit attains wholeness with its transcendence;

39.2 The Valley attain wholeness when filled; The Myriad Things attain wholeness in life; The Ruler attains wholeness in the correct governance of the people.

39.3 In effecting this: If Heaven lacked clarity it would be divided; If the Earth lacked firmness it would fly away; If the spirit lacked transcendence it would be exhausted;

39.4 If the valley lacked fullness it would be depleted; If the myriad things lacked life they would vanish. If the ruler lacks nobility and loftiness he will be tripped up.

39.5 Hence Nobility has lowliness as its root The High has the Low as its base.

39.6 Thus the kings call themselves "the orphan, the lowly, the unworthy." Is this not taking lowliness as the fundamental? Isn't it?

39.7

39.8 In this way you can bring about great effect without burden. Not desiring the rarity of gems Or the manyness of grains of sand.

40.1 Return is the motion of the Tao. Softening is its function.

40.2 All things in the cosmos arise from being. Being arises from non-being.

41.1 When superior students hear of the Tao They strive to practice it. When middling students hear of the Tao They sometimes keep it and sometimes lose it.

41.2 When inferior students hear of the Tao They have a big laugh. But "not laughing" in itself is not sufficient to be called the Tao,

41.3 and therefore it is said: The sparkling Tao seems dark. Advancing in the Tao seems like regression. Settling into the Tao seems rough. True virtue is like a valley. The immaculate seems humble. Extensive virtue seems insufficient.

41.4 Established virtue seems deceptive. The face of reality seems to change. The great square has no corners. Great ability takes a long time to perfect. Great sound is hard to hear. The great form has no shape.

41.5 The Tao is hidden and nameless. This is exactly why the Tao is good at developing and perfecting.

42.1 The Tao produces one, one produces two. The two produce the three and the three produce all things.

42.2 All things submit to yin and embrace yang. They soften their energy to achieve harmony.

42.3 People hate to think of themselves as "orphan," "lowly," and "unworthy" Yet the kings call themselves by these names.

42.4 Some lose and yet gain, Others gain and yet lose.

42.5 That which is taught by the people I also teach: "The forceful do not choose their place of death." I regard this as the father of all teachings.

43.1 The softest thing in the world Will overcome the hardest. Non-being can enter where there is no space. Therefore I know the benefit of unattached action.

43.2 The wordless teaching and unattached action Are rarely seen.

44.1 Which is dearer, fame or your life? Which is greater, your life or possessions? Which is more painful, gain or loss?

44.2 Therefore we always pay a great price for excessive love And suffer deep loss for great accumulation.

44.3 Knowing what is enough, you will not be humiliated. Knowing where to stop, you will not be imperiled And can be long-lasting.

45.1 Great perfection seems flawed, yet functions without a hitch. Great fullness seems empty, yet functions without exhaustion. Great straightness seems crooked,

45.2 Great skill seems clumsy, Great eloquence seems stammering.

45.3 Excitement overcomes cold, stillness overcomes heat. Clarity and stillness set everything right.

46.1 When the Tao prevails in the land The horses leisurely graze and fertilize the ground. When the Tao is lacking in the land War horses are bred outside the city.

46.2 Natural disasters are not as bad as not knowing what is enough. Loss is not as bad as wanting more.

46.3 Therefore the sufficiency that comes from knowing what is enough is an eternal sufficiency.

47.1 Without going out the door, knowing everything, Without peaking out the window shades, seeing the Way of Heaven. The further you go, the less you know.

47.2 The sage understands without having to go through the whole process. She is famous without showing herself. Is perfected without striving.

48.1 In studying, each day something is gained. In following the Tao, each day something is lost.

48.2 Lost and again lost. Until there is nothing left to do. Not-doing, nothing is left undone. You can possess the world by never manipulating it.

48.3 No matter how much you manipulate You can never possess the world.

49.1 The sage has no fixed mind, She takes the mind of the people as her mind.

49.2 I treat the good as good, I also treat the evil as good. This is true goodness.

49.3 I trust the trustworthy, I also trust the untrustworthy. This is real trust.

49.4 When the sage lives with people, she harmonizes with them And conceals her mind for them. The sages treat them as their little children.

50.1 Coming into life and entering death,

50.2 The followers of life are three in ten. The followers of death are three in ten. Those whose life activity is their death ground are three in ten. Why is this? Because they live life grasping for its rich taste.

50.3 Now I have heard that those who are expert in handling life Can travel the land without meeting tigers and rhinos, Can enter battle without being wounded.

50.4 The rhino has no place to plant its horn, The tiger has no place to place its claws, Weapons find no place to receive their sharp edges. Why? Because he has no death-ground.

51.1 Tao gives birth to it, Virtue rears it, Materiality shapes it, Activity perfects it. Therefore, there are none of the myriad things who do not venerate the Tao or esteem its virtue.

51.2 This veneration of the Tao and esteeming of its virtue is something they do naturally, without being forced. Therefore, Tao gives birth. Its virtue rears, develops, raises, adjusts and disciplines, Nourishes, covers and protects,

51.3 Produces but does not possess, Acts without expectation, Leads without forcing. This is called "Mysterious Virtue."

52.1 All things have a beginning, which we can regard as their Mother.

52.2 Knowing the mother, we can know its children. Knowing the children, yet still cleaving to the mother You can die without pain.

52.3 If you close your mind in judgements and traffic with desires, your heart will be troubled.

52.4 Open the doors, Increase your involvements, In the end you can't be helped.

52.5 Seeing the subtle is called illumination. Keeping flexible is called strength.

52.6 Use the illumination, but return to the light. Don't bring harm to yourself. This is called "practicing the eternal."

53.1 If I had just a little bit of wisdom I should walk the Great Path and fear only straying from it.

53.2 Though the Way is quite broad People love shortcuts.

53.3 The court is immaculate, While the fields are overgrown with weeds, And the granaries are empty.

53.4 They wear silk finery, Carry sharp swords, Sate themselves on food and drink Having wealth in excess. They are called thieving braggarts. This is definitely not the Way.

54.1 The well-established cannot be uprooted. The well-grasped does not slip away. Generation after generation carries out the ancestor worship without break.

54.2 Cultivate it in yourself and virtue will be real. Cultivate it in the family and virtue will overflow. Cultivate it in the town and virtue will be great. Cultivate it in the country and virtue will abundant. Cultivate it in the world and virtue will be everywhere.

54.3 Therefore, take yourself and observe yourself. Take the family and observe the family. Take the town and observe the town. Take the country and observe the country. Take the world and observe the world.

54.4 How do I know the world as it is? By this.

55.1 One who remains rich in virtuous power Is like a newborn baby. Bees, scorpions and venomous snakes do not bite it, The wild beasts do not attack it, Birds of prey do not sink their claws into it. Though its bones are weak And muscles soft, Its grip is strong.

55.2 Without knowing of the blending of male and female S/he is a perfect production, The ultimate in vitality.

55.3 S/he cries all day without getting hoarse. S/he is the ultimate in harmony. Understanding harmony is called the Constant. Knowing the Constant is called illumination. Nourishing life is called blessing. Having control of your breath is called strength.

55.4 -

55.5 After things blossom they decay, and This is called the non-Tao. The non-Tao expires quickly.

56.1 She who knows does not speak. She who speaks does not know.

56.2 Soften your sharpness, loosen your knots. Soften your glare and merge with the everyday. This is called mysteriously attaining oneness.

56.3 Close your holes, shut your doors, Though you cannot possess it, you are intimate with it And at the same time, distant. Though you cannot possess it, you are benefited by it, And harmed by it. You cannot possess it, but are esteemed through it And humbled by it. Therefore the world values you.

57.1 Use fairness in governing the state. Use surprise tactics in war. Be unconcerned and you will have the world. How do I know it is like this? Because:

57.2 The more regulations there are, The poorer people become. The more people own lethal weapons, The more darkened are the country and clans.

57.3 The more clever the people are, The more extraordinary actions they take. The more picky the laws are, The more thieves and gangsters there are.

57.4 Therefore the sages say: "I do not force my way and the people transform themselves. I enjoy my serenity and the people correct themselves.

57.5 I do not interfere and the people enrich themselves. I have no desires And the people find their original mind.

58.1 When the government is laid back The people are relaxed. When the government is nitpicking The people have anxiety.

58.2 Misfortune depends upon fortune. Fortune conceals misfortune.

58.3 What has a definite delimitation? Or abnormality? The normal reverts to strangeness. Goodness reverts to perversion. People certainly have been confused for a long time.

58.4 Therefore the sage squares things without cutting. Edges without separating. Straightens without lining up. Shines but does not glare

59.1 In governing the country and serving Heaven There is nothing like frugality.

59.2 Only by being frugal can you recover quickly. When you recover quickly you accumulate virtue. Having accumulated virtue, There is nothing you can't overcome. When there is nothing you can't overcome Who knows the limits of your capabilities? These limits being unfathomable You can possess the country.

59.3 The Mother who possesses the country can be long-living.

59.4 This is called "planting the roots deeply and firmly." The way to long life and eternal vision.

60.1 Ruling a large country is like cooking a small fish.

60.2 When you govern people with the Tao Demons will have no power.

60.3 Not that it isn't there, but you'll be able to step out of its way.

60.4 and neither harms the other for both rely on Virtue

61.1 The great state should be like a river basin. The mixing place of the world, The feminine of the world. The feminine always overcomes the masculine by softness Because softness is lesser.

61.2 Therefore if a large state serves a small state It will gain the small state. If a small state serves a large state It will gain the large state.

61.3 Therefore some serve in order to gain And some gain despite their servitude.

61.4 The large state wants nothing more Than to unite and feed its people. The small state wants nothing more Than to enter into the service of the right person.

61.5 Thus both get what they want. Greatness lies in placing oneself below.

62.1 The Tao is hidden deeply in all things. It is the treasure of the good And the refuge of the not-so-good.

62.2 With skilful words you can be successful. With honourable actions you can be included. People may not be so good, but how can you deny them?

62.3 Therefore, even though there are great jewels brought in by teams of horses at the coronation of the emperor and the installation of the three princes, This is not as good as staying where you are And advancing in this Tao.

62.4 Why did the ancients so value the Tao? You can't say that it was for seeking gain Or to have punishments to deter crime. Therefore it is the most prized in the world.

63.1 Do without "doing." Get involved without manipulating. Taste without tasting.

63.2 Make the great small, The many, few. Respond to anger with virtue.

63.3 Deal with difficulties while they are still easy. Handle the great while it is still small.

63.4 The difficult problems in life Always start off being simple. Great affairs always start off being small.

63.5 Therefore the sage never deals with the great And is able to actualize his greatness.

63.6 Now light words generate little belief, Much ease turns into much difficulty.

63.7 Therefore the sage treats things as though they were difficult, And hence, never has difficulty.

64.1 That which is at rest is easy to grasp. That which has not yet come about is easy to plan for. That which is fragile is easily broken. That which is minute is easily scattered.

64.2 Handle things before they arise. Manage affairs before they are in a mess.

64.3 A thick tree grows from a tiny seed. A tall building arises from a mound of earth. A journey of a thousand miles starts with one step.

64.4 Contriving, you are defeated; Grasping, you lose. The sage doesn't contrive, so she isn't beaten. Not grasping, she doesn't lose.

64.5 When people are carrying out their projects They usually blow it at the end. If you are as careful at the end As you were at the beginning, You won't be disappointed.

64.6 Therefore the sage desires non-desire, Does not value rare goods, Studies the unlearnable So that she can correct the mistakes of average people And aid all things in manifesting their true nature Without presuming to take the initiative.

65.1 The ancients who were skilful at the Tao Did not illuminate the people But rather kept them simple.

65.2 When the people are difficult to rule It is because of their cleverness. Therefore If you use cleverness to rule the state You are a robber of the state. If you don't use cleverness to rule the state You are a blessing to the state.

65.3 If you understand these two points, you know the proper norm for governing To be continuously understanding the proper norm is called Mysterious Virtue.

65.4 How deep and far-reaching Mysterious Virtue is! It makes all return Until they reach the Great Norm.

66.1 The reason the river and sea can be regarded as The rulers of all the valley streams Is because of their being below them. Therefore they can be their rulers.

66.2 So if you want to be over people You must speak humbly to them. If you want to lead them You must place yourself behind them.

66.3 Thus the sage is positioned above And the people do not feel oppressed. He is in front and they feel nothing wrong. Therefore they like to push him front and never resent him.

66.4 Since he does not contend No one can contend with him.

67.1 The reason everybody calls my Tao great Is because there is nothing quite like it. It is exactly because it is great That there is nothing quite like it. If there were something that were consistently like it How could it be small?

67.2 I have three treasures which I hold and cherish. The first is compassion, The second is frugality, The third is not daring to put myself ahead of everybody.

67.3 Having compassion, I can be brave. Having frugality, I can be generous. Not daring to put myself ahead of everybody I can take the time to perfect my abilities.

67.4 Now if I am brave without compassion Generous without frugality, or Go to the fore without putting my own concerns last, I might as well be dead.

67.5 If you wage war with compassion you will win. If you protect yourself with compassion you will be impervious. Heaven will take care of you, Protecting you with compassion.

68.1 The best warrior is never aggressive. The best fighter is never angry.

68.2 The best tactician does not engage the enemy. The best utilizer of people's talents places himself below them.

68.3 This is called the virtue of non-contention. It is called the ability to engage people's talents. It is called the ultimate in merging with Heaven.

69.1 Strategists have a saying: "I prefer to be able to move, rather than be in a fixed position Prefer to retreat a foot rather than advancing an inch."

69.2 This is called progress without advancing; Preparing without showing off; Smashing where there is no defence; Taking him without a fight.

69.3 There is no greater danger than under-estimating your opponent. If I under-estimate my opponent I will lose that which is most dear.

69.4 Therefore When opponents clash The one who is sorry about it will be the winner.

70.1 My words are easy to understand And easy to practice. Yet nobody understands them or practices them.

70.2 My words have an origin; My actions have a principle. It is only because of your not understanding this That you do not understand me. Since there are few who understand me I am valued.

70.3 Therefore the sage wears coarse clothes. Yet hides a jewel in his bosom.

71.1 There is nothing better than to know that you don't know. Not knowing, yet thinking you know - This is sickness. Only when you are sick of being sick Can you be cured.

71.2 The sage's not being sick Is because she is sick of sickness. Therefore she is not sick.

72.1 When the people do not fear your might Then your might has truly become great.

72.2 Don't interfere with their household affairs. Don't oppress their livelihood. If you don't oppress them they won't feel oppressed.

72.3 Thus the sage understands herself But does not show herself. Loves herself But does not prize herself. Therefore she lets go of that And takes this.

73.1 If you are courageous in daring you will die. If you are courageous in not-daring you will live.

73.2 Among these two, one is beneficial and the other is harmful. Who understands the reason why Heaven dislikes what it dislikes? Even the sage has difficulty in knowing this.

73.3 The Way of Heaven is to win easily without struggle. To respond well without words, To naturally come without special invitation, To plan well without anxiety.

73.4 Heaven's net is vast. It is loose. Yet nothing slips through.

74.1 If the people don't fear death How will you scare them with death?

74.2 If you make the people continuously fear death By seizing anybody who does something out of the ordinary And killing them, Who will dare to move?

74.3 There is always an official executioner to handle this. If you play the role of the official executioner It is like cutting wood in the capacity of Master Carpenter. There are few who will not cut their hands.

75.1 The reason people starve Is because their rulers tax them excessively.

75.2 They are difficult to govern Because their rulers have their own ends in mind.

75.3 The reason people take death lightly Is because they want life to be rich. Therefore they take death lightly. It is only by not living for your own ends That you can go beyond valuing life.

76.1 When people are born they are gentle and soft. At death they are hard and stiff.

76.2 When plants are alive they are soft and delicate. When they die, they wither and dry up.

76.3 Therefore the hard and stiff are followers of death. The gentle and soft are the followers of life.

76.4 Thus, if you are aggressive and stiff, you won't win. When a tree is hard enough, it is cut.

76.5 Therefore The hard and big are lesser, The gentle and soft are greater.

77.1 The Way of Heaven Is like stretching a bow. The top is pulled down, The bottom is pulled up. Excess string is removed Where more is needed, it is added.

77.2 It is the Way of Heaven To remove where there is excess And add where there is lack. The way of people is different: They take away where there is need And add where there is surplus.

77.3 Who can take his surplus and give it to the people? Only one who possesses the Tao.

77.4 Therefore the sage acts without expectation. Does not abide in his accomplishments. Does not want to show his virtue.

78.1 Nothing in the world is softer than water, Yet nothing is better at overcoming the hard and strong. This is because nothing can alter it.

78.2 That the soft overcomes the hard And the gentle overcomes the aggressive Is something that everybody knows But none can do themselves.

78.3 Therefore the sages say: "The one who accepts the dirt of the state Becomes its master. The one who accepts its calamity Becomes king of the world." Truth seems contradictory.

79.1 After calming great anger There are always resentments left over. How can this be considered as goodness?

79.2 Therefore the sage keeps her part of the deal And doesn't check up on the other person.

79.3 Thus virtuous officials keep their promise And the crooked ones break it.

79.4 The Heavenly Tao has no favourites: It raises up the Good.

80.1 Let there be a small country with few people, Who, even having much machinery, don't use it. Who take death seriously and don't wander far away.

80.2 Even though they have boats and carriages, they never ride in them. Having armour and weapons, they never go to war.
80.3 Let them return to measurement by tying knots in rope. Sweeten their food, give them nice clothes, a peaceful abode and a relaxed life.
80.4 Even though the next country can be seen and its dogs and chickens can be heard, The people will grow old and die without visiting each others land.

81.1 True words are not fancy. Fancy words are not true.
81.2 The good do not debate. Debaters are not good.
81.3 The one who really knows is not broadly learned, The extensively learned do not really know.
81.4 The sage does not hoard, She gives people her surplus. Giving her surplus to others she is enriched.
81.5 The way of Heaven is to help and not harm.

Red Pine version

1.1 The way that becomes a way is not the Immortal Way the name that becomes a name is not the Immortal Name
1.2 the maiden of Heaven and Earth has no name the mother of all things has a name
1.3 thus in innocence we see the beginning in passion we see the end
1.4 two different names for one and the same
1.5 the one we call dark the dark beyond dark the door to all beginnings

2.1 All the world knows beauty but if that becomes beautiful this becomes ugly
2.2 all the word knows good but if that becomes good this becomes bad
2.3 the coexistence of have and have not the coproduction of hard and easy the correlation of long and short
2.4 the codependence of high and low the correspondence of note and noise the coordination of first and last is endless
2.5 thus the sage performs effortless deeds and teaches wordless lessons
2.6 he doesn't start all things he begins he doesn't presume on what he does he doesn't claim what he achieves
2.7 and because he makes no claim he suffers no loss

3.1 Bestowing no honours keeps people from fighting
3.2 prizing no treasures keeps people from stealing
3.3 displaying no attractions keeps people from making trouble
3.4 thus the rule of the sage empties the mind but fills the stomach weakens the will but strengthens the bones
3.5 by keeping the people from knowing or wanting and those who know from daring to act
3.6 he thus governs them all

4.1 The Tao is so empty those who use it never become full again
4.2 and so deep as if it were the ancestor of us all
4.3 dulling our edges untying our tangles softening our light merging our dust
4.4 and so clear as if it were present
4.5 I wonder whose child it is it seems it was here before the Ti

5.1 Heaven and Earth are heartless treating creatures like straw dogs
5.2 heartless is the sage treating people like straw dogs
5.3 between Heaven and Earth how like a bellows empty but inexhaustible each movement produces more
5.4 taking only wastes it better to keep it inside

6.1 The valley spirit that doesn't die we call the dark womb
6.2 as real as gossamer silk and yet we can't exhaust it.
6.3 The valley spirit that doesn't die we call the dark womb the dark womb's mouth we call the source of creation as real as gossamer silk and yet we can't exhaust it.

7.1 Heaven is eternal and Earth is immortal
7.2 the reason they're eternal and immortal is because they don't live for themselves hence they can live forever
7.3 thus the sage pulls himself back but ends up in front
7.4 he lets himself go but ends up safe
7.5 selflessness must be the reason whatever he seeks he finds

8.1 The best are like water bringing help to all without competing choosing what others avoid hence approaching the Tao
8.2 dwelling with earth thinking with depth helping with kindness speaking with truth
8.3 governing with peace working with skill moving with time
8.4 and because they don't compete they aren't maligned

9.1 Instead of pouring in more better stop while you can
9.2 making it sharper won't help it last longer
9.3 houses full of treasure can never be safe
9.4 the vanity of success invites its own failure
9.5 retire when your work is done this is the Way of Heaven

- 10.1 Can you hold fast your crescent soul and not let it wander
10.2 can you make your breath as soft as a baby's
10.3 can you wipe your Dark Mirror free of dust
10.4 can you love people and lead them without imposing your will? can you serve and govern without effort
10.5 can you be the female at Heaven's Gate
10.6 can you light up the world without knowledge
10.7 beget things and keep them but beget without possessing keep without controlling this is Dark Virtue
- 11.1 Thirty spokes converge on a hub but it's the emptiness that makes a wheel work
11.2 pots are fashioned from clay but it's the hollow that make a pot work
11.3 windows and doors are carved for a house but it's the spaces that make a house work
11.4 existence makes something useful but nonexistence makes it work
- 12.1 The five colours make our eyes blind the five tones make our ears deaf the five flavours make our mouths numb
12.2 riding and hunting make our minds wild hard-to-get goods make us break laws
12.3 thus the rule of the sage puts the stomach ahead of the eyes thus he picks this over that
- 13.1 Favour and disgrace are like warnings honour and disaster are like the body
13.2 and why are favour and disgrace like warnings favour means descending to gain it is like a warning to lose it is like a warning thus are favour and disgrace like warnings
13.3 and why are honour and disaster like the body the reason we have disaster is because we have a body if we didn't have a body we wouldn't have disaster
13.4 who honours is body as much as the world can be entrusted with the world who loves his body as much as the world can be entrusted with the world
- 14.1 We look but don't see it and call it indistinct we listen but don't hear it and call it faint we reach but don't grasp it and call it ethereal
14.2 three failed means to knowledge I weave into one
14.3 with no light above and no shade below too fine to be named returning to nothing
14.4 this is the formless form the immaterial image this is the waxing waning we meet without seeing its face we follow without seeing its back
14.5 holding onto this very Way we rule this very realm and discover its ancient past this is the thread of the Way
- 15.1 The ancient masters of the Way aimed at the indiscernible and penetrated the dao
15.2 you would never know them I describe them with reluctance they were careful as if crossing a river in winter cautious as if worried about neighbours reserved like guests
15.3 ephemeral like melting ice simple like uncarved wood open like valleys and murky like puddles
15.4 but a puddle becomes clear when it's still and stillness becomes alive when it's roused
15.5 those who treasure this Way don't try to be full not trying to be full they can hide and stay hidden
- 16.1 Let limits be empty the center be still
16.2 ten thousand things rise we watch them return creatures without number all return to their roots
16.3 return to their roots to be still to be still to revive to endure knowing how to endure is wisdom not knowing is to suffer in vain
16.4 knowing how to endure is to be all-embracing all embracing means impartial impartial means the king the king means Heaven Heaven means the Way
16.5 and the Way means long life life without trouble.
- 17.1 During the High Ages people knew they were there then people loved and praised them then they feared them finally they despised them
17.2 when honesty fails dishonesty prevails
17.3 hesitate and guard your words when their work succeeds let people think they did it
- 18.1 When the Great Way disappears we meet kindness and justice
18.2 when reason appears we meet great deceit
18.3 when the six relations fail we meet obedience and love
18.4 when the country is in chaos we meet honest officials

19.1 Get rid of wisdom and reason and people will live a hundred times better
19.2 get rid of kindness and justice and people once more will love and obey
19.3 get rid of cleverness and profit and thieves will cease to exist
19.4 but these three sayings are not enough hence let this be added
19.5 wear the undyed and hold the uncarved reduce self-interest and limit desires get rid of learning and problems will vanish

20.1 Yes and no aren't so far apart lovely and ugly aren't so unlike
20.2 what others fear we too must fear
20.3 before the moon wanes everyone is gay as if they were at the Great Sacrifice or climbing a tower in spring I sit here and make no sign like a child that doesn't smile lost with no one to turn to
20.4 while others enjoy more I alone seem forgotten my mind is so foolish so simple
20.5 others look bright I alone seem dim others are certain I alone am confused receding like the ocean waxing without cease
20.6 everyone has a goal I alone am dumb and backward for I alone choose to differ preferring still my mother's breast

21.1 The expression of empty virtue comes from the Tao alone
21.2 the Tao as a thing waxes and wanes it waxes and wanes but inside is an image it waxes and wanes but inside is a creature it's distant and dark but inside is an essence an essence fundamentally real and inside is a heart
21.3 throughout the ages its name has never changed so we might follow our fathers
21.4 how do we know what our fathers were like through this

22.1 Partial means whole crooked means straight hollow means full worn-out means new less means content more means confused
22.2 thus the sage holds onto the one to use in guiding the world
22.3 not watching himself he appears not displaying himself he flourishes not flattering himself he succeeds not parading himself he leads
22.4 because he doesn't compete no one can compete against him
22.5 the ancients who said partial means whole came close indeed becoming whole depends on this

23.1 Whispered words are natural a gale doesn't last all morning a squall doesn't last all day
23.2 who else could make these only Heaven and Earth if Heaven and Earth can't make things last what about Man
23.3 thus in whatever we do let those on the Way be one with the Way let those who succeed be one with success let those who fail be one with failure
23.4 be one with success for the Way succeeds too be one with failure for the Way fails too
23.5

24.1 Who tiptoes doesn't stand who strides doesn't walk
24.2 who watches himself doesn't appear who displays himself doesn't flourish
24.3 who flatters himself achieves nothing who parades himself doesn't lead
24.4 on the road they say too much food and a tiring pace some things are simply bad thus the Taoist avoids them

25.1 Imagine a nebulous thing here before Heaven and Earth silent and elusive it stands alone not wavering it travels everywhere unharmed it could be the mother of us all
25.2 not knowing its name I call it the Tao forced to name it I name it Great
25.3 great means ever-flowing ever-flowing means far-reaching far-reaching means returning
25.4 the Tao is great Heaven is great Earth is great the king is also great the realm contains four greats of these the king is one
25.5 Man imitates Earth Earth imitates Heaven Heaven imitates the Tao the Tao imitates itself

26.1 Heavy is the root of light still is the master of busy
26.2 thus a lord might travel all day but never far from his supplies even in a guarded camp his manner is calm and aloof
26.3 why would the lord of ten thousand chariots treat himself lighter than his kingdom
26.4 too light he loses his base too busy he loses command

27.1 Good walking leaves no tracks good talking reveals no flaws good counting counts no beads
27.2 good closing locks no locks and yet it can't be opened good tying ties no knots and yet it can't be undone
27.3 thus the sage is good at saving and yet abandons no one nor anything of use this is called cloaking the light
27.4 thus the good instruct the bad the bad learn from the good

27.5 not honouring their teachers not cherishing their students the wise alone are perfectly blind this is called peering into the distance

28.1 Recognize the male but hold onto the female and be the world's maid being the world's maid don't lose your ancient virtue not losing your ancient virtue be a newborn child again

28.2 recognize the pure but hold onto the defiled and be the world's valley being the world's valley be filled with ancient virtue being filled with ancient virtue be uncarved wood again

28.3 recognize the white but hold onto the black and be the world's guide being the world's guide don't stray from the ancient virtue not straying from ancient virtue be without limits again

28.4 uncarved wood can be split to make tools the sage makes it his chief official a master tailor doesn't cut

29.1 Trying to govern the world with force I see this not succeeding

29.2 the world is a spiritual thing it can't be forced to force it is to harm it to control it is to lose it

29.3 sometimes things lead sometimes they follow sometimes blow hot sometimes blow cold sometimes expand sometimes collapse

29.4 therefore the sage avoids extremes avoids extravagance avoids excess

30.1 Use the Tao to help your king don't use weapons to rule the land such things soon return

30.2 where armies camp brambles grow

30.3 best to win then stop don't make use of force

30.4 win but don't be proud win but don't be vain win but don't be cruel win when you have no choice this is to win without force

30.5 virility means old age this isn't the Tao what isn't the Tao ends early

31.1 Weapons are not auspicious tools some things are simply bad thus the Taoist shuns them

31.2 in peace the ruler honours the left in war he honours the right

31.3 weapons are not auspicious weapons are not a ruler's tools he wields them when he has no choice dispassion is the best

31.4 thus he does not beautify them he who beautifies them enjoys killing others he who enjoys killing others achieves no worldly rule

31.5 thus we honour the left for joy we honour the right for sorrow the left is where the adjutant stands the commander on the right

31.6 which means at a funeral when you kill another honour him with your tears when the battle is won treat it as a wake

32.4 the first distinction gives us names after we have names we should know restraint who knows restraint knows no trouble

32.1 The Tao has never had a name simple and though small no one can command it

32.2 if a lord upheld it the world would be his guest

32.3 when Heaven joins with Earth they bestow sweet dew no one gives the order it comes down to all

32.5 to picture the Tao in the world imagine rivers and the sea

33.1 Who knows others is perceptive who knows himself is wise

33.2 who conquers others is forceful who conquers himself is strong

33.3 who knows contentment is wealthy who strives hard succeeds

33.4 who doesn't lose his place endures who dies but doesn't perish lives on

34.1 The Tao drifts it can go left or right

34.2 everything lives by its grace but it doesn't speak when its work succeeds it makes no claim it has no desires

34.3 shall we call it small

34.4 everything turns to it but it wields no control shall we call it great

34.5 therefore the sage never acts great thus he can do great things

35.1 Hold up the Great Image and the world will come and be beyond harm safe serene and at one

35.2 fine food and song detain passing guests

35.3 when the Tao speaks it's senseless and plain we look and don't see it we listen and don't hear it

36.1 What you would shorten you should therefore lengthen what you would weaken you should therefore strengthen what you would topple you should therefore raise what you would take you should therefore give

36.2 this is called hiding the light the weak conquering the strong

36.3 fish can't survive out of the deep as state's greatest tool is not meant to be shown

37.1 The Tao never does a thing yet there is nothing it doesn't do

37.2 if a ruler could uphold it people by themselves would change and changing if their desires stirred he would make them still with simplicity that has no name

37.3 stilled by nameless simplicity they would not desire and not desiring be at peace the world would fix itself

38.1 Higher Virtue is not virtuous thus it possesses virtue Lower Virtue is not without virtue thus it possesses no virtue

38.2

38.3 Higher Virtue lacks effort and the thought of effort Higher Kindness involves effort but not the thought of effort Higher Justice involves effort and the thought of effort Higher Ritual involves effort but no response until it threatens and compels

38.4 when the Way is lost virtue appears when virtue is lost kindness appears when kindness is lost justice appears when justice is lost ritual appears

38.5 ritual marks the waning of belief and onset of confusion augury is the flower of the Way and beginning of delusion

38.6 thus the great choose thick over thin the fruit over the flower therefore they pick this over that

39.1 Of things that became one in the past Heaven became one and was clear Earth became one and was still spirits became one and were active

39.2 streams became one and were full kings became one and ruled the world

39.3 but by implication Heaven would crack if it were always clear Earth would crumble if it were always still spirits would fail

39.4 if they were always active streams would dry up if they were always full kings would fall if they were always high and noble

39.5 thus the noble is based on the humble the high is founded on the low

39.6 thus do kings refer to themselves as orphaned widowed and destitute but this is the basis of humility

39.7 counting a carriage as no carriage at all

39.8 not wanting to clink like jade they clunk like rocks

40.1 The Tao moves the other way the Tao works through weakness

40.2 the things of this world come from something something comes from nothing

41.1 When a great person hears of the Way he follows it with devotion when an average person hears of the Way he doesn't know if it's real or not

41.2 when a small person hears of the Way he laughs out loud if he didn't laugh it wouldn't be the Way

41.3 hence these sayings arose the brightest path seems dark the quickest path seems slow the smoothest path seems rough the highest virtue low the whitest white pitch-black the greatest virtue wanting

41.4 the staunchest virtue timid the truest truth uncertain the perfect square lacks corners the perfect tool does nothing the perfect sound is hushed the perfect form is shapeless

41.5 the Tao is hidden and has no name but because it's the Tao it knows how to start and how to finish

42.1 The Tao gives birth to one one gives birth to two two gives birth to three three gives birth to ten thousand things

42.2 ten thousand things with yin at their backs and yang in their embrace and breath between for harmony

42.3 what the world hates to be orphaned widowed or destitute kings use for their titles

42.4 thus some gain by losing others lose by gaining

42.5 thus what people teach I teach too tyrants never choose their deaths this becomes my teacher

43.1 The weakest thing in the world excels the strongest thing in the world what doesn't exist finds room where there is none thus we know doing nothing succeeds

43.2 teaching without words succeeding without effort few in the world can equal this

44.1 Which is more vital fame or health which is more precious health or riches which is more harmful loss or gain

44.2 the deeper the love the higher the cost the bigger the treasure the greater the loss

44.3 who knows contentment suffers no shame who knows restraint encounters no trouble

45.1 The greatest thing seems incomplete yet it never wears out the fullest thing seems empty yet it never runs dry the straightest thing seems crooked

45.2 the cleverest thing seems clumsy the richest thing seems poor

45.3 activity overcomes cold stillness overcomes heat who can be perfectly still is able to govern the world

46.1 When the Tao prevails courier horses manure fields instead of roads when the Tao fails war-horses are raised on the border
46.2 no crime is worse than yielding to desire no wrong is greater than discontent no curse is crueller than getting what you want
46.3 the contentment of being content is true contentment indeed

47.1 Without going out his door he knows the whole world without looking out his window he knows the Way of Heaven the farther people go the less people know
47.2 therefore the sage knows without moving names without seeing succeeds without trying

48.1 Those who seek learning gain every day those who seek the Way lose every day
48.2 they lose and they lose until they find nothing to do nothing to do means nothing not done who rules the world isn't busy
48.3 if someone is busy he can't rule the world

49.1 The sage has no mind of his own his mind is the mind of the people
49.2 to the good he is good to the bad he is good until they become good
49.3 to the true he is true to the false he is true until they become true
49.4 in the world the sage withdraws with others he merges his mind people open their ears and eyes the sage covers them up

50.1 Appearing means life disappearing means death
50.2 thirteen are the followers of life thirteen are the followers of death but people living to live join the land of death's thirteen and why because they live to live
50.3 it's said that those who guard life well aren't injured by soldiers in battle or harmed by rhinos or tigers in the wild
50.4 for rhinos have nowhere to sink their horns tigers have nowhere to sink their claws and soldiers have nowhere to sink their blades and why because for them there is no land of death

51.1 The Way begets them Virtue keeps them matter shapes them usage completes them thus do all things honour the Way and glorify Virtue
51.2 the honour of the Way the glory of Virtue and not conferred but always so the Way begets and keeps them cultivates and trains them steadies and adjusts them nurtures and protects them
51.3 but begets without possessing acts without presuming and cultivates without controlling this is called Dark Virtue

52.1 The world has a maiden she becomes the world's mother
52.2 who knows the mother understands the child who understands the child keeps the mother safe and lives without trouble
52.3 who blocks the opening who closes the gate lives without toil
52.4 who unblocks the opening who meddles in affairs lives without hope
52.5 who sees the small has vision who protects the weak has strength
52.6 who uses his light who trusts his vision lives beyond death this is the Hidden Immortal

53.1 Were I sufficiently wise I would follow the Great Way and only fear going astray
53.2 the Great Way is smooth but people love byways
53.3 their palaces are spotless their fields are overgrown and their granaries are empty
53.4 they wear fine clothes they carry sharp swords they tire of food and drink and possess more than they need this is called robbery and robbery is not the Way

54.1 What is planted right is not uprooted what is held right is not ripped away future generations worship it forever
54.2 cultivated in thee self virtue becomes real cultivated in the family virtue multiplies cultivated in the village virtue increases cultivated in the state virtue prospers cultivated in the world virtue abounds
54.3 thus view the self through the self view the family through the family view the village through the village view the state through the state view the world through the world
54.4 how do we know what the world is like through this

55.1 He who contains virtue in abundance resembles a newborn child wasps don't sting him beasts don't claw him birds of prey don't carry him off his bones are weak and his tendons are soft and yet his grip is firm
55.2 he hasn't known the union of sexes and yet his penis is stiff so full of essence is he
55.3 he cries all day yet ever gets hoarse so full of breath is he who knows how to breath endures who knows how to endure is wise
55.4 who lengthens his life tempts luck who breathes with his will is strong

55.5 but virility means old age this isn't the Way what isn't the Way ends early

56.1 Those who know don't talk those who talk don't know

56.2 seal the opening close the gate dull the edge untie the tangle soften the light join the dust this is called the Dark Union

56.3 it can't be embraced it can't be abandoned it can't be helped it can't be harmed it can't be exalted it can't be debased thus does the world exalt it

57.1 Use direction to govern a country use indirection to fight a war use inaction to rule the world how do we know this works

57.2 the greater the prohibitions the poorer the people the sharper the weapons the darker the realm

57.3 the smarter the scheme the stranger the outcome the finer the treasure the thicker the thieves

57.4 thus the sage declares I change nothing and the people transform themselves I stay still and the people adjust themselves

57.5 I do nothing and the people enrich themselves I want nothing and the people simplify themselves

58.1 Where government stands aloof the people open up where government steps in the people slip away

58.2 happiness rests in misery misery hides in happiness

58.3 who knows where they end there is no direction direction turns into indirection good turns into evil the people have been lost for a long long time

58.4 thus the sage is an edge that doesn't cut a point that doesn't pierce a line that doesn't extend a light that doesn't blind

59.1 In governing people and caring for Heaven nothing surpasses economy

59.2 economy means planning ahead planning ahead means accumulating virtue accumulating virtue means overcoming all overcoming all means knowing no limit knowing no limit means guarding the realm

59.3 guarding the realm's mother means living long

59.4 this means deep roots and a solid trunk the Way of long and lasting life

60.1 Ruling a great state is like cooking a small fish

60.2 when you govern the world with the Tao spirits display no powers

60.3 Not that they don't have power, But their power will not harm people.

60.4 Inasmuch as none of them harms anybody, Therefore virtue belongs to them both.

61.1 The great state is a watershed the confluence of the world the female of the world through stillness the female conquers the male in order to be still she needs to be lower

61.2 the great state that is lower governs the small state the small state that is lower is governed by the great state

61.3 some lower themselves to govern some lower themselves to be governed

61.4 the great state's only desire is to unite and lead others the small state's only desire is to join and serve others

61.5 for both to achieve their desire the greater needs to be lower

62.1 The Tao is creation's sanctuary treasured by the good it keeps the bad alive

62.2 beautiful words might be the price noble deeds might be the gift how can we abandon people who are bad

62.3 thus when emperors are enthroned or ministers installed though there be great discs of jade followed by teams of horses they don't rival one who sits and offers up this Way

62.4 why the ancients exalted it did they not proclaim who searches thereby finds who errs thereby escapes thus the world exalts it

63.1 Act without acting work without working taste without tasting

63.2 great or small many or few repay each wrong with virtue

63.3 plan for the hard while it's easy work on the great while it's small

63.4 the hardest task in the world begins easy the greatest goal in the world begins small

63.5 therefore the sage never acts great he thus achieves great things

63.6 who quickly agrees is seldom trusted who makes it all easy finds it all hard

63.7 therefore the sage makes everything hard he thus finds nothing hard

64.1 It's easy to rule while it's peaceful it's east to plan before it arrive it's easy to break while it's fragile it's easy to disperse while it's small

64.2 act before it exists govern before it rebels

64.3 as giant tree grows from the tiniest shoot a great tower rises from a basket of dirt a thousand mile journey begins at your feet

64.4 but to act is to fail to control is to lose therefore the sage doesn't act he thus doesn't fail he doesn't control he thus doesn't lose

64.5 when people pursue a task they always fail near the end care at the end as well as the start means an end to failure

64.6 the sage thus seeks what no one seeks he doesn't prize hard to-get-goods he studies what no one studies he turns to what others pass by to help all things be natural he thus dares not act

65.1 The ancient masters of the Way tried not to enlighten but to keep men in the dark

65.2 what makes the people hard to rule is knowledge who rules the realm with knowledge spreads evil in the realm who rules without knowledge spreads virtue in the realm

65.3 who understands these two understands the universal key this is called Dark Virtue

65.4 Dark Virtue goes deep goes far goes the other way until it reaches perfect harmony

66.1 The reason the sea can govern a hundred rivers is because it has mastered being lower thus it can govern a hundred rivers

66.2 thus if the sage would be above the people he should speak as if he were below them if he would be before them he should act as though he were behind them

66.3 thus when the sage is above the people are not burdened when he is in front the people are not hindered the world never wearies of pushing him forward

66.4 because he doesn't struggle no one can struggle against him

67.1 The world calls me great great but useless because I am great I am useless if I were of use I would have stayed small

67.2 but I possess three treasures I treasure and uphold first is compassion second is austerity third is reluctance to excel

67.3 because I am compassionate I can be valiant because I am austere I can be extravagant because I am reluctant to excel I can be chief of all tools

67.4 if I renounced compassion for valour austerity for extravagance reluctance for supremacy I would die

67.5 compassion wins every battle and outlasts every attack what Heaven creates let compassion protect

68.1 In ancient times the perfect officer wasn't armed the perfect warrior wasn't angry

68.2 the perfect victor wasn't hostile the perfect commander acted humble

68.3 this is the virtue of nonaggression this is using the strength of others this is uniting with Heaven which was the ancient end

69.1 In warfare there is a saying rather than a host better to be a guest rather than advance an inch better to retreat a foot

69.2 this means to form no column to wear no armour to brandish no weapon to repulse no enemy

69.3 no fate is worse than to have no enemy without an enemy we would lose our treasure

69.4 thus when opponents are evenly matched the remorseful one prevails

70.1 My words are easy to understand easy to employ but no one can understand them no one can employ them

70.2 words have an ancestor deeds have a master because they have no understanding people fail to understand me rare are they who understand me thus I am exalted

70.3 the sage therefore wears coarse cloth and keeps his jade inside

71.1 To understand yet not understand is transcendence not to understand yet understand is affliction

71.2 the reason the sage is not afflicted is because he treats affliction as affliction hence he is not afflicted

72.1 When people no longer fear authority a greater authority will appear

72.2 don't restrict where people dwell don't repress how people live if they aren't repressed they won't protest

72.3 thus the sage knows himself but doesn't reveal himself he loves himself but doesn't exalt himself thus he picks this over that

73.1 Daring to act means death daring not to act means life

73.2 of these two one benefits one harms what Heaven hates who knows the reasons

73.3 the Way of Heaven wins easily without a fight answers wisely without a word comes quickly without a summons plans ingeniously without a thought

73.4 the Net of Heaven is all-embracing its mesh is wide but nothing escapes

74.1 If people no longer fear death why do we threaten to kill them

74.2 and if others fear death and still act perverse and we catch and kill them who else will dare

74.3 as long as people fear death the executioner will exist to kill in the executioner's place is to take the carpenter's place who takes the carpenter's place is bound to hurt his hands

75.1 The reason the people are hungry is because those above levy so many taxes thus the people are hungry

75.2 the reason the people are hard to rule is because those above are so forceful thus the people are hard to rule

75.3 the reason people think little of death is because those above think so much of life thus the people think little of death meanwhile those who do nothing to live are more esteemed than those who love life

76.1 When people are born they are soft and supple when they perish they are hard and stiff

76.2 when plants shoot forth they are soft and tender when they die they are withered and dry

76.3 thus it is said the hard and strong are followers of death the soft and weak are followers of life

76.4 when an army becomes strong it suffers defeat when a plant becomes hard it snaps

76.5 the hard and strong dwell below the soft and weak dwell above

77.1 The Way of Heaven is like stringing a bow pulling down the high lifting up the low shortening the long lengthening the short

77.2 the Way of Heaven takes from the long and supplements the short unlike the Way of Man taking from the short and giving to the long

77.3 who can find the long and give it to the world only those who find the Way

77.4 thus the sage does not presume on what he does or claim what he achieves thus he chooses to hide his skill

78.1 Nothing in the world is weaker than water but against the hard and the strong nothing excels it for nothing can change it

78.2 the soft overcomes the hard the weak overcomes the strong this is something everyone knows but no one is able to practice

78.3 thus the sage declares who accepts a country's disgrace we call the lord of soil and grain who accepts a country's misfortune we call king of all under Heaven upright words sound upside down

79.1 In resolving a great dispute a dispute is sure to remain how can this be good

79.2 thus the sage holds the left marker he makes no claim on others

79.3 thus the virtuous oversee markers the virtueless oversee taxes

79.4 the Way of Heaven favours no one but always helps the good

80.1 Imagine a small state with a small population let there be labour-saving tools that aren't used let people consider death and not move far

80.2 let there be boats and carts but no reason to ride them let there be armour and weapons but no reason to employ them

80.3 let people return to the use of knots and be satisfied with their food and pleased with their clothing and content with their homes and happy with their customs

80.4 let there be a state so near people hear its dogs and chickens and live out their lives without making a visit

81.1 True words aren't beautiful beautiful words aren't true

81.2 the good aren't eloquent the eloquent aren't good

81.3 the wise aren't learned the learned aren't wise

81.4 the sage accumulates nothing but the more he does for others the greater his existence the more he gives to others the greater his abundance

81.5 the Way of Heaven is to help without harming the Way of the sage is to act without struggling

Rosenthal version

1.

Even the finest teaching is not the Tao itself. Even the finest name is insufficient to define it.

Without words, the Tao can be experienced, and without a name, it can be known.

To conduct one's life according to the Tao, is to conduct one's life without regrets; to realize that potential within oneself which is of benefit to all.

Though words or names are not required to live one's life this way, to describe it, words and names are used, that we might better clarify the way of which we speak, without confusing it with other ways in which an individual might choose to live.

Through knowledge, intellectual thought and words, the manifestations of the Tao are known, but without such intellectual intent we might experience the Tao itself.

Both knowledge and experience are real, but reality has many forms, which seem to cause complexity.

By using the means appropriate, we extend ourselves beyond the barriers of such complexity, and so experience the Tao.

2.

We cannot know the Tao itself, nor see its qualities direct, but only see by differentiation, that which it manifests.

Thus, that which is seen as beautiful is beautiful compared with that which is seen as lacking beauty; an action considered skilled is so considered in comparison with another, which seems unskilled.

That which a person knows he has is known to him by that which he does not have, and that which he considers difficult seems so because of that which he can do with ease.

One thing seems long by comparison with that which is, comparatively, short. One thing is high because another thing is low; only when sound ceases is quietness known, and that which leads is seen to lead only by being followed.

In comparison, the sage, in harmony with the Tao, needs no comparisons, and when he makes them, knows that comparisons are judgments, and just as relative to he who makes them, and to the situation, as they are to that on which the judgment has been made.

Through his experience, the sage becomes aware that all things change, and that he who seems to lead, might also, in another situation, follow.

So he does nothing; he neither leads nor follows.

That which he does is neither big nor small; without intent, it is neither difficult, nor done with ease.

His task completed, he then lets go of it; seeking no credit, he cannot be discredited.

Thus, his teaching lasts for ever, and he is held in high esteem.

3.

By retaining his humility, the talented person who is also wise, reduces rivalry.

The person who possesses many things, but does not boast of his possessions, reduces temptation, and reduces stealing.

Those who are jealous of the skills or things possessed by others, most easily themselves become possessed by envy.

Satisfied with his possessions, the sage eliminates the need to steal; at one with the Tao, he remains free of envy, and has no need of titles.

By being supple, he retains his energy.

He minimizes his desires, and does not train himself in guile, nor subtle words of praise.

By not contriving, he retains the harmony of his inner world, and so remains at peace within himself.

It is for reasons such as these, that an administration which is concerned with the welfare of those it serves, does not encourage status and titles to be sought, nor encourage rivalry.

Ensuring a sufficiency for all, helps in reducing discontent.

Administrators who are wise do not seek honours for themselves, nor act with guile towards the ones they serve.

4.

It is the nature of the Tao, that even though used continuously, it is replenished naturally, never being emptied, and never being over-filled, as is a goblet which spills its contents upon the ground.

The Tao therefore cannot be said to waste its charge, but constantly remains a source of nourishment for those who are not so full of self as to be unable to partake of it. When tempered beyond its natural state, the finest blade will lose its edge. Even the hardest tempered sword, against water, is of no avail, and will shatter if struck against a rock.

When untangled by a cutting edge, the cord in little pieces lies, and is of little use.

Just as the finest swordsmith tempers the finest blade with his experience, so the sage, with wisdom, tempers intellect.

With patience, tangled cord may be undone, and problems which seem insoluble, resolved.

With wise administrators, all can exist in unity, each with the other, because no man need feel that he exists, only as the shadow of his brilliant brother.

Through conduct not contrived for gain, awareness of the Tao may be maintained.

This is how its mysteries may be found.

5.

Nature acts without intent, so cannot be described as acting with benevolence, nor malevolence to any thing.

In this respect, the Tao is just the same, though in reality it should be said that nature follows the rule of Tao.

Therefore, even when he seems to act in manner kind or benevolent, the sage is not acting with such intent, for in conscious matters such as these, he is amoral and indifferent.

The sage retains tranquillity, and is not by speech or thought disturbed, and even less by action which is contrived.

His actions are spontaneous, as are his deeds towards his fellow men.

By this means he is empty of desire, and his energy is not drained from him.

6.

Like the sheltered, fertile valley, the meditative mind is still, yet retains its energy.

Since both energy and stillness, of themselves, do not have form, it is not through the senses that they may be found, nor understood by intellect alone, although, in nature, both abound.

In the meditative state, the mind ceases to differentiate between existences, and that which may or may not be.

It leaves them well alone, for they exist, not differentiated, but as one, within the meditative mind.

7.

When living by the Tao, awareness of self is not required, for in this way of life, the self exists, and is also non-existent, being conceived of, not as an existentiality, nor as non-existent.

The sage does not contrive to find his self, for he knows that all which may be found of it, is that which it manifests to sense and thought, which side by side with self itself, is nought.

It is by sheathing intellect's bright light that the sage remains at one with his own self, ceasing to be aware of it, by placing it behind.

Detached, he is unified with his external world, by being selfless he is fulfilled; thus his selfhood is assured.

8.

Great good is said to be like water, sustaining life with no conscious striving, flowing naturally, providing nourishment, found even in places which desiring man rejects.

In this way it is like the Tao itself.

Like water, the sage abides in a humble place; in meditation, without desire; in thoughtfulness, he is profound, and in his dealings, kind.

In speech, sincerity guides the man of Tao, and as a leader, he is just.

In management, competence is his aim, and he ensures the pacing is correct.

Because he does not act for his own ends, nor cause unnecessary conflict, he is held to be correct in his actions towards his fellow man.

9.

The cup is easier to hold when not filled to overflowing.

The blade is more effective if not tempered beyond its mettle.

Gold and jade are easier to protect if possessed in moderation.

He who seeks titles, invites his own downfall.

The sage works quietly, seeking neither praise nor fame; completing what he does with natural ease, and then retiring.

This is the way and nature of Tao.

10.

Maintaining unity is virtuous, for the inner world of thought is one with the external world of action and of things.

The sage avoids their separation, by breathing as the sleeping babe, and thus maintaining harmony.

He cleans the dark mirror of his mind, so that it reflects without intent.

He conducts himself without contriving, loving the people, and not interfering.

He cultivates without possessing, thus providing nourishment, he remains receptive to changing needs, and creates without desire.

By leading from behind, attending to that which must be done, he is said to have attained the mystic state.

11.
Though thirty spokes may form the wheel, it is the hole within the hub which gives the wheel utility.
It is not the clay the potter throws, which gives the pot its usefulness, but the space within the shape, from which the pot is made.
Without a door, the room cannot be entered, and without windows it is dark.
Such is the utility of non-existence.
12.
Through sight, the colours may be seen, but too much colour blinds us.
Apprehending the tones of sound, too much sound might make us deaf, and too much flavour deadens taste.
When hunting for sport, and chasing for pleasure, the mind easily becomes perplexed.
He who collects treasures for himself more easily becomes anxious.
The wise person fulfills his needs, rather than sensory temptations.
13.
The ordinary man seeks honour, not dishonour, cherishing success and abominating failure, loving life, whilst fearing death.
The sage does not recognize these things, so lives his life quite simply.
The ordinary man seeks to make himself the centre of his universe; the universe of the sage is at his centre.
He loves the world, and thus remains unmoved by things with which others are concerned.
He acts with humility, is neither moved nor moving, and can therefore be trusted in caring for all things.
14.
The Tao is abstract, and therefore has no form, it is neither bright in rising, nor dark in sinking, cannot be grasped, and makes no sound.
Without form or image, without existence, the form of the formless, is beyond defining, cannot be described, and is beyond our understanding.
It cannot be called by any name.
Standing before it, it has no beginning; even when followed, it has no end.
In the now, it exists; to the present apply it, follow it well, and reach its beginning.
15.
The sage of old was profound and wise; like a man at a ford, he took great care, alert, perceptive and aware.
Desiring nothing for himself, and having no desire for change for its own sake, his actions were difficult to understand.
Being watchful, he had no fear of danger; being responsive, he had no need of fear.
He was courteous like a visiting guest, and as yielding as the springtime ice.
Having no desires, he was untouched by craving.
Receptive and mysterious, his knowledge was unfathomable, causing others to think him hesitant.
Pure in heart, like uncut jade, he cleared the muddy water by leaving it alone.
By remaining calm and active, the need for renewing is reduced.
16.
It is only by means of being that non-being may be found.
When society changes from its natural state of flux, to that which seems like chaos, the inner world of the superior man remains uncluttered and at peace.
By remaining still, his self detached, he aids society in its return to the way of nature and of peace.
The value of his insight may be clearly seen when chaos ceases.
Being one with the Tao is to be at peace, and to be in conflict with it, leads to chaos and dysfunction.
When the consistency of the Tao is known, the mind is receptive to its states of change.
It is by being at one with the Tao, that the sage holds no prejudice against his fellow man.
If accepted as a leader of men, he is held in high esteem.
Throughout his life, both being and non-being, the Tao protects him.
17.
Man cannot comprehend the infinite; only knowing that the best exists, the second best is seen and praised, and the next, despised and feared.
The sage does not expect that others use his criteria as their own.

The existence of the leader who is wise is barely known to those he leads.
He acts without unnecessary speech, so that the people say, "It happened of its own accord".

18.
When the way of the Tao is forgotten, kindness and ethics need to be taught; men learn to pretend to be wise and good.
All too often in the lives of men, filial piety and devotion arise only after conflict and strife, just as loyal ministers all too often appear, when the people are suppressed.

19.
It is better merely to live one's life, realizing one's potential, rather than wishing for sanctification.
He who lives in filial piety and love has no need of ethical teaching.
When cunning and profit are renounced, stealing and fraud will disappear.
But ethics and kindness, and even wisdom, are insufficient in themselves.
Better by far to see the simplicity of raw silk's beauty and the uncarved block; to be one with oneself, and with one's brother.
It is better by far to be one with the Tao, developing selflessness, tempering desire, removing the wish, but being compassionate.

20.
The sage is often envied because others do not know that although he is nourished by the Tao, like them, he too is mortal.
He who seeks wisdom is well advised to give up academic ways, and put an end to striving.
Then he will learn that yes and no are distinguished only by distinction.
It is to the advantage of the sage that he does not fear what others fear, but it is to the advantage of others that they can enjoy the feast, or go walking, free of hindrance, through the terraced park in spring.
The sage drifts like a cloud, having no specific place.
Like a newborn babe before it smiles, he does not seek to communicate.
In the eyes of those who have more than they need, the sage has nothing, and is a fool, prizing only that which of the Tao is born.
The sage may seem to be perplexed, being neither bright nor clear, and to himself, sometimes he seems both dull and weak, confused and shy.
Like the ocean at night, he is serene and quiet, but as penetrating as the winter wind.

21.
The greatest virtue is to follow the Tao; how it achieves ! without contriving.
The essence of Tao is dark and mysterious, having, itself, no image or form.
Yet through its non-being, are found image and form.
The essence of Tao is deep and unfathomable, yet it may be known by not trying to know.

22.
Yield, and maintain integrity.
To bend is to be upright; to be empty is to be full.
Those who have little have much to gain, but those who have much may be confused by possessions.
The wise man embraces the all encompassing; he is unaware of himself, and so has brilliance; not defending himself, he gains distinction; not seeking fame, he receives recognition; not making false claims, he does not falter; and not being quarrelsome, is in conflict with no one.
This is why it was said by the sages of old, "Yield, and maintain integrity; be whole, and all things come to you".

23.
Nature's way is to say but little; high winds are made still with the turn of the tide, and rarely last all morning, nor heavy rain, all day.
Therefore, when talking, remember also to be silent and still.
He who follows the natural way is always one with the Tao.
He who is virtuous may experience virtue, whilst he who loses the natural way is easily lost himself.
He who is at one with the Tao is at one with nature, and virtue always exists for he who has virtue.
To accept the irrevocable is to let go of desire.
He who does not have trust in others should not himself be trusted.

24.

He who stretches beyond his natural reach, does not stand firmly upon the ground; just as he who travels at a speed beyond his means, cannot maintain his pace.

He who boasts is not enlightened, and he who is self-righteous does not gain respect from those who are meritorious; thus, he gains nothing, and will fall into disrepute.

Since striving, boasting and self-righteousness, are all unnecessary traits, the sage considers them excesses, and has no need of them.

25.

The creative principle unifies the inner and external worlds.

It does not depend on time or space, is ever still and yet in motion; thereby it creates all things, and is therefore called 'the creative and the absolute'; its ebb and its flow extend to infinity.

We describe the Tao as being great; we describe the universe as great; nature too, we describe as great, and man himself is great.

Man's laws should follow natural laws, just as nature gives rise to physical laws, whilst following from universal law, which follows the Tao.

26.

The natural way is the way of the sage, serving as his dwelling, providing his centre deep within, whether in his home or journeying.

Even when he travels far, he is not separate from his own true nature.

Maintaining awareness of natural beauty, he still does not forget his purpose.

Although he may dwell in a grand estate, simplicity remains his guide, for he is full aware, that losing it, his roots as well would disappear.

So he is not restless, lest he loses the natural way.

Similarly, the people's leader is not flippant in his role, nor restless, for these could cause the loss of the roots of leadership.

27.

The sage follows the natural way, doing what is required of him.

Like an experienced tracker, he leaves no tracks; like a good speaker, his speech is fluent; He makes no error, so needs no tally; like a good door, which needs no lock, he is open when it is required of him, and closed at other times; like a good binding, he is secure, without the need of borders.

Knowing that virtue may grow from example, this is the way in which the sage teaches, abandoning no one who stops to listen.

Thus, from experience of the sage, all might learn, and so might gain.

There is mutual respect twixt teacher and pupil, for, without respect, there would be confusion.

28.

Whilst developing creativity, also cultivate receptivity.

Retain the mind like that of a child, which flows like running water.

When considering any thing, do not lose its opposite.

When thinking of the finite, do not forget infinity; Act with honour, but retain humility.

By acting according to the way of the Tao, set others an example.

By retaining the integrity of the inner and external worlds, true selfhood is maintained, and the inner world made fertile.

29.

The external world is fragile, and he who meddles with its natural way, risks causing damage to himself.

He who tries to grasp it, thereby loses it.

It is natural for things to change, sometimes being ahead, sometimes behind.

There are times when even breathing may be difficult, whereas its natural state is easy.

Sometimes one is strong, and sometimes weak, sometimes healthy, and sometimes sick, sometimes is first, and at other times behind.

The sage does not try to change the world by force, for he knows that force results in force.

He avoids extremes and excesses, and does not become complacent.

30.

When leading by the way of the Tao, abominate the use of force, for it causes resistance, and loss of strength, showing the Tao has not been followed well.

Achieve results but not through violence, for it is against the natural way, and damages both others' and one's own true self.

The harvest is destroyed in the wake of a great war, and weeds grow in the fields in the wake of the army.
The wise leader achieves results, but does not glory in them; is not proud of his victories, and does not boast of them.
He knows that boasting is not the natural way, and that he who goes against that way, will fail in his endeavours.

31.

Weapons of war are instruments of fear, and are abhorred by those who follow the Tao.
The leader who follows the natural way does not abide them.
The warrior king leans to his right, from whence there comes his generals' advice, but the peaceful king looks to his left, where sits his counsellor of peace.
When he looks to his left, it is a time of peace, and when to the right, a time for sorrow.
Weapons of war are instruments of fear, and are not favoured by the wise, who use them only when there is no choice, for peace and stillness are dear to their hearts, and victory causes them no rejoicing.
To rejoice in victory is to delight in killing; to delight in killing is to have no self-being.
The conduct of war is that of a funeral; when people are killed, it is a time of mourning.
This is why even victorious battle should be observed without rejoicing.

32.

The Tao is eternal, but does not have fame; like the uncarved block, its worth seems small, though its value to man is beyond all measure.
Were it definable, it could then be used to obviate conflict, and the need to teach the way of the Tao; all men would abide in the peace of the Tao; sweet dew would descend to nourish the earth.
When the Tao is divided, there is a need for names, for, like the block which is carved, its parts then are seen.
By stopping in time from torment and conflict, strife is defeated, and danger averted.
The people then seek the wisdom of Tao, just as all rivers flow to the great sea.

33.

Knowledge frequently results from knowing others, but the man who is awakened, has seen the uncarved block.
Others might be mastered by force, but to master one's self requires the Tao.
He who has many material things, may be described as rich, but he who knows he has enough, and is at one with the Tao, might have enough of material things, and have self-being as well.
Will-power may bring perseverance; but to have tranquillity is to endure, being protected for all his days.
He whose ideas remain in the world, is present for all time.

34.

All things may act, without exclusion, according to the natural way, which fulfills its purpose silently, and with no claim.
Being an aspect of natural order, it is not the ruler of any thing, but remains the source of their nourishment.
It cannot be seen; it has no intention, but all natural things rely on its presence.
When all things return to it, it does not enslave them, so unmanifested, its greatness prevails.
Modelling himself upon the Tao, he who is wise, does not contrive, but is content with what he achieves.

35.

The wise man acts at one with the Tao, for he knows it is here that peace is found.
It is for this reason that he is sought.
Whilst guests enjoy good music and food, as these are supplied by a benevolent host, a description of Tao seems without form, for it cannot be heard and cannot be seen.
But when the music and food are all ended, the taste of the Tao still remains.

36.

It is the way of the Tao, that things which expand might also shrink; that he who is strong, will at some time be weak, that he who is raised will then be cast down, and that all men have a need to give, and also have a need to receive.
The biggest fish stay deep in the pond, and a country's best weapons should be kept locked away.
That which is soft and supple, may overcome the hard and strong.

37.

The way of nature is not contrived, yet nothing which is required is left undone.
Observing nature, the wise leader knows this, and replaces desire with dispassion, thus saving that energy, otherwise spent, which has not been wasted away.

The wise leader knows his actions must be without the use of forced energy.
He knows that more is still required, for he also knows that he must act without deliberate intent, of having no intention.
To act without contrived intent is to act without contriving, and is the way of nature, and so is the way of the Tao.

38.

A truly good man is unaware of the good deeds he performs.
Conversely, a foolish man must try continuously to be good.
A good man seems to do little or nought, yet he leaves nothing undone.
A foolish man must always strive, whilst leaving much undone.
The man who is truly wise and kind leaves nothing to be done, but he who only acts according to his nation's law leaves many things undone.
A disciplinarian wanting something done rolls up his sleeves, enforcing it with violence.
It may be that goodness still remains, even when the natural way is lost, and that kindness still exists when goodness is forgotten.
It may be that justice still remains when the people are no longer kind, and when this is lost, that ritual still remains.
However, ritual may be performed only as an act of faith, and may be the beginning of confusion, for even divination and the such are but the flowery trappings of the Tao, and are the beginning of great folly.
He who is truly great does not upon the surface dwell, but on what lies beneath.
It is said that the fruit is his concern, rather than the flower.
Each must decide what it might be he seeks, the flowery trapping, which comes to summer fullness first, or the fruit which is beneath.

39.

From the principle which is called the Tao, the sky, the earth, and creativity are one, the sky is clear, the earth is firm, and the spirit of the inner world is full.
When the ruler of the land is whole, the nation too is strong, alive and well, and the people have sufficient to meet their earthly needs.
When the daytime sky is dark and overcast like night, the nation and its people will surely suffer much.
The firmness of the dew filled earth gives it its life; the energy of the inner world prevents its becoming drained of strength; its fullness prevents it running dry.
The growth of all things prevents their dying.
The work of the leader should ensure the prosperity of the populace.
So it is said, "humility is the root of great nobility; the low forms a foundation for the great; and princes consider themselves to be of little worth".
Each depends on humility therefore; it is of no advantage to have too much success, so do not sound loudly like jade bells, nor clatter like stone chimes.

40.

The motion of nature is cyclic and returning.
Its way is to yield, for to yield is to become.
All things are born of being; being is born of non-being.

41.

On hearing of the Tao, the wise student's practice is with diligence; the average student attends to his practice when his memory reminds him so to do; and the foolish student laughs.
But we do well to remember that with no sudden laughter, there would be no natural way.
Thus it is said, "There are times when even brightness seems dim; when progress seems like regression; when the easy seems most difficult, and virtue seems empty, inadequate and frail; times when purity seems sullied; when even reality seems unreal, and when a square seems to have corners; when even great talent is of no avail, and the highest note cannot be heard; when the formed seems formless, and when the way of nature is out of sight".
Even in such times as these, the natural way still nourishes, that all things may be fulfilled.

42.

The Tao existed before its name, and from its name, the opposites evolved, giving rise to three divisions, and then to names abundant.
These things embrace receptively, achieving inner harmony, and by their unity create the inner world of man.

No man wishes to be seen as worthless in another's eyes, but the wise leader describes himself this way, for he knows that one may gain by losing, and lose by gaining, and that a violent man will not die a natural death.

43.

Only the soft overcomes the hard, by yielding, bringing it to peace.

Even where there is no space, that which has no substance enters in.

Through these things is shown the value of the natural way.

The wise man understands full well, that wordless teaching can take place, and that actions should occur without the wish for self-advancement.

44.

A contented man knows himself to be more precious even than fame, and so, obscure, remains.

He who is more attached to wealth than to himself, suffers more heavily from loss.

He who knows when to stop, might lose, but in safety stays.

45.

In retrospect, even those accomplishments which seemed perfect when accomplished, may seem imperfect and ill formed, but this does not mean that such accomplishments have outlived their usefulness.

That which once seemed full, may later empty seem, yet still be unexhausted.

That which once seemed straight may seem twisted when seen once more; intelligence can seem stupid, and eloquence seem awkward; movement may overcome the cold, and stillness, heat, but stillness in movement is the way of the Tao.

46.

When the way of nature is observed, all things serve their function; horses drawing carts, and pulling at the plough.

But when the natural way is not observed, horses are bred for battle and for war.

Desire and wanting cause discontent, whilst he who knows sufficiency more easily has what he requires.

47.

The Tao may be known and observed without the need of travel; the way of the heavens might be well seen without looking through a window.

The further one travels, the less one knows.

So, without looking, the sage sees all, and by working without self-advancing thought, he discovers the wholeness of the Tao.

48.

When pursuing knowledge, something new is acquired each day.

But when pursuing the way of the Tao, something is subtracted; less striving occurs, until there is no striving.

When effort is uncontrived, nothing is left undone; the way of nature rules by allowing things to take their course, not by contriving to change.

49.

The sage is not mindful for himself, but is receptive to others' needs.

Knowing that virtue requires great faith, he has that faith, and is good to all; irrespective of others' deeds, he treats them according to their needs.

He has humility and is shy, thus confusing other men.

They see him as they might a child, and sometimes listen to his words.

50.

In looking at the people, we might see that in the space twixt birth and death, one third follow life, and one third death, and those who merely pass from birth to death, are also one third of those we see.

He who lives by the way of the Tao, travels without fear of ferocious beasts, and will not be pierced in an affray, for he offers no resistance.

The universe is the centre of his world, so in the inner world of he who lives within the Tao, there is no place where death can enter in.

51.

All physical things arise from the principle which is absolute; the principle which is the natural way.

All living things are formed by being, and shaped by their environment, growing if nourished well by virtue; the being from non-being.

All natural things respect the Tao, giving honour to its virtue, although the Tao does not expect, nor look for honour or respect. The virtue of the natural way is that all things are born of it; it nourishes and comforts them; develops, shelters and cares for them, protecting them from harm.

The Tao creates, not claiming credit, and guides without interfering.

52.

The virtue of Tao governs its natural way.

Thus, he who is at one with it, is one with everything which lives, having freedom from the fear of death.

Boasting, and hurrying hither and thither, destroy the enjoyment of a peace filled life.

Life is more fulfilled by far, for he who does not have desire, for he does not have desire, has no need of boasting.

Learn to see the insignificant and small, grow in wisdom and develop insight, that which is irrevocable, do not try to fight, and so be saved from harm.

53.

When temptation arises to leave the Tao, banish temptation, stay with the Tao.

When the court has adornments in profusion, the fields are full of weeds, and the granaries are bare.

It is not the way of nature to carry a sword, nor to over-adorn oneself, nor to have more than a sufficiency of fine food and drink.

He who has more possessions than he can use, deprives someone who could use them well.

54.

That which is firmly rooted, is not easily torn from the ground; just as that which is firmly grasped, does not slip easily from the hand.

The virtue of the Tao is real, if cultivated in oneself; when loved in the family, it abounds; when throughout the village, it will grow; and in the nation, be abundant.

When it is real universally, virtue is in all people.

All things are microcosms of the Tao; the world a microcosmic universe, the nation a microcosm of the world, the village a microcosmic nation; the family a village in microcosmic view, and the body a microcosm of one's own family; from single cell to galaxy.

55.

He who has virtue is like a newborn child, free from attack by those who dwell in the way of nature, the way of the Tao.

The bones of the newborn child are soft, his muscles supple, but his grip is firm; he is whole, though not knowing he was born of the creative and receptive way.

The way of nature is in the child, so even when he shouts all day, his throat does not grow hoarse or dry.

From constancy, there develops harmony, and from harmony, enlightenment.

It is unwise to rush from here to there.

To hold one's breath causes the body strain; exhaustion follows when too much energy is used, for this is not the natural way.

He who is in opposition to the Tao does not live his natural years.

56.

Those who know the natural way have no need of boasting, whilst those who know but little, may be heard most frequently; thus, the sage says little, if anything at all.

Not demanding stimuli, he tempers his sharpness well, reduces the complex to simplicity, hiding his brilliance, seemingly dull; he settles the dust, whilst in union with all natural things.

He who has attained enlightenment (without contriving so to do) is not concerned with making friends, nor with making enemies; with good or harm, with praise or blame.

Such detachment is the highest state of man.

57.

With natural justice, people must be ruled, and if war be waged, strategy and tactics used.

To master one's self, one must act without cunning.

The greater the number of laws and restrictions, the poorer the people who inhabit the land. The sharper the weapons of battle and war, the greater the troubles besetting the land.

The greater the cunning with which people are ruled, the stranger the things which occur in the land.

The harder the rules and regulations, the greater the number of those who will steal.

The sage therefore does not contrive, in order to bring about reform, but teaches the people peace of mind, in order that they might enjoy their lives.

Having no desires, all he does is natural.

Since he teaches self-sufficiency, the people who follow him return to a good, uncomplicated life.

58.

When the hand of the ruler is light, the people do not contrive, but when the country is severely ruled, the people grow in cunning.

The actions of the sage are sharp, but they are never cutting, they are pointed, though never piercing, they are straightforward, not contrived, and not without restraint, brilliant but not blinding.

This is the action of the sage, because he is aware that where happiness exists, there is also misery and strife; that where honesty may be found, there is occasion for dishonesty, and that men may be beguiled.

The sage knows that no-one can foretell just what the future holds.

59.

By acting with no thought of self-advancement, but with self-restraint, it is possible to lead, and genuinely care for others. This happens by acting virtuously, and leaving nothing to be done.

A foundation virtuous and firm, rooted in receptivity, is a prerequisite of good leadership, and for a life both long and strong.

He whose virtue knows no limit, is most fitting to lead.

His roots are deep, and his life protected by his meditative practice, as the bark protects the tree.

60.

To rule a country, one must act with care, as when frying the smallest fish.

If actions are approached, and carried out in the natural way, the power of evil is reduced, and so the ruler and the ruled are equally protected.

They will not contrive to harm each other, for the virtue of one refreshes the other.

61.

A great country remains receptive and still, as does a rich and fertile land.

The gentle overcomes the strong with stillness and receptivity.

By giving way to the other, one country may conquer another; a small country may submit to a large, and conquer it, though having no arms.

Those who conquer must be willing to yield; to yield may be to overcome.

A fertile nation may require a greater population, to use its resources to the full, whilst the country without such natural wealth may require them to meet its people's needs.

By acting in unity, each may achieve that which it requires.

62.

The source of all things is in the Tao.

It is a treasure for the good, and a refuge for all in need.

Whilst praise can buy titles, good deeds gain respect.

No man should be abandoned because he has not found the Tao.

On auspicious occasions, when gifts are sent, rather than sending horses or jade, send the teaching of Tao.

When we first discover the natural way, we are happy to know that our misdeeds are in the past, where they belong, and so are happy to realize that we have found a treasure.

63.

Act without contriving; work naturally, and taste the tasteless; magnify the small; increase the few, and reward bitterness with care.

Seek the simple in the complex, and achieve greatness in small things.

It is the way of nature that even difficult things are done with ease, and great acts made up of smaller deeds.

The sage achieves greatness by small deeds multiplied.

Promises easily made are most easily broken, and acting with insufficient care causes subsequent trouble.

The sage confronts problems as they arise, so that they do not trouble him.

64.

If problems are accepted, and dealt with before they arise, they might even be prevented before confusion begins, In this way peace may be maintained.

The brittle is easily shattered, and the small is easily scattered.

Great trees grow from the smallest shoots; a terraced garden, from a pile of earth, and a journey of a thousand miles begins by taking the initial step.

He who contrives, defeats his purpose; and he who is grasping, loses.

The sage does not contrive to win, and therefore is not defeated; he is not grasping, so does not lose.

It is easy to fail when nearing completion, therefore, take care right to the end, not only in the beginning.

The sage seeks freedom from desire, not grasping at ideas.

He brings men back when they are lost, and helps them find the Tao.

65.

Knowing it is against the Tao to try to enforce learning, the early sages did not contrive to teach the way of the Tao.

There are two ways of government.

One is to be cunning, to act with guile, and to contrive to cheat the people.

When this way is used to rule, the people grow in cunning, and contrive to cheat the ruler.

The second way to govern the land, is to do so without contriving.

People so governed are truly blessed, for they are governed with virtue, and virtuous government is fair to all, thus leading to unity.

66.

The sea is the ruler of river and stream, because it rules from well beneath.

The teacher guides his students best, by allowing them to lead.

When the ruler is a sage, the people do not feel oppressed; they support the one who rules them well, and never tire of him.

He who is non-competitive invites no competition.

67.

Those who follow the natural way are different from others in three respects.

They have great mercy and economy, and the courage not to compete.

From mercy there comes courage; from economy, generosity; and from humility, willingness to lead from behind.

It is the way of sickness to shun the merciful, and to acclaim only heroic deeds, to abandon economy, and to be selfish.

They are sick, who are not humble, but try always to be first.

Only he who is compassionate can show true bravery, and in defending, show great strength.

Compassion is the means by which mankind may be guarded and saved, for heaven arms with compassion, those whom it would not see destroyed.

68.

An effective warrior acts not from nihilistic anger, nor from desire to kill.

He who wins should not be vengeful.

An employer should have humility.

If we wish for peace and unity, our dealings with our fellow man must be without desire for self-advantage, and carried out without contention.

69.

Arguments may be won by waiting, rather than making an aggressive move; by withdrawing rather than advancing.

By moving without appearing to move, by not making a show of strength, but by conserving it well; by capturing without attacking, by being armed, but with no weapons, great battles may be won.

Do not underestimate those you enjoin in battle, for this can result in losing what is of greatest value.

When a battle is enjoined, by remembering this, the weaker may still win.

70.

Though the words of the sage are simple, and his actions easily performed, they are few among many, who can speak or act as a sage.

For the ordinary man it is difficult to know the way of a sage, perhaps because his words are from the distant past, and his actions naturally disposed.

Those who know the way of the sage are few and far between, but those who treat him with honesty, will be honoured by him and the Tao.

He knows he makes no fine display, and wears rough clothes, not finery.

It is not in his expectancy of men that they should understand his ways, for he carries his jade within his heart.

71.

To acknowledge one's ignorance shows strength of personality, but to ignore wisdom is a sign of weakness.

To be sick of sickness is a sign of good health, therefore the wise man grows sick of sickness, and sick of being sick of sickness, 'til he is sick no more.

72.

The sage retains a sense of awe, and of propriety.

He does not intrude into others' homes; does not harass them, nor interfere without request, unless they damage others.

So it is that they return to him.

'Though the sage knows himself he makes no show of it; he has self-respect, but is not arrogant, for he develops the ability to let go of that which he no longer needs.

73.

A brave man who is passionate will either kill or be killed, but a man who is both brave and still might preserve his own and others' lives.

No one can say with certainty, why it is better to preserve a life.

The virtuous way is a way to act without contriving effort, yet, without contriving it overcomes.

It seldom speaks, and never asks, but is answered without a question.

It is supplied with all its needs and is constantly at ease because it follows its own plan which cannot be understood by man.

It casts its net both deep and wide, and 'though coarse meshed, it misses nothing in the tide.

74.

If the people are not afraid of death, they have no fear of threats of death.

If early death is common in the land, and if death is meted out as punishment, the people do not fear to break the law.

To be the executioner in such a land as this, is to be as an unskilled carpenter who cuts his hand when trying to cut wood.

75.

When taxes are too heavy, hunger lays the people low.

When those who govern interfere too much, the people become rebellious.

When those who govern demand too much of people's lives, death is taken lightly.

When the people are starving in the land, life is of little value, and so is more easily sacrificed by them in overthrowing government.

76.

Man is born gentle and supple.

At death, his body is brittle and hard.

Living plants are tender, and filled with life-giving sap, but at their death they are withered and dry.

The stiff, the hard, and brittle are harbingers of death, and gentleness and yielding are the signs of that which lives.

The warrior who is inflexible condemns himself to death, and the tree is easily broken, which ever refuses to yield.

Thus the hard and brittle will surely fall, and the soft and supple will overcome.

77.

The Tao is as supple as a bow; the high made lower, and the lowly raised.

It shortens the string which has been stretched, and lengthens that which has become too short.

It is the way of the Tao to take from those who have a surplus to what they need, providing for those without enough.

The way of the ordinary person, is not the way of the Tao, for such people take from those who are poor and give to those who are rich.

The sage knows that his possessions are none, therefore he gives to the world; without recognition, doing his work.

In this way he accomplishes that which is required of him; without dwelling upon it in any way, he gives of his wisdom without display.

78.

There is nothing more yielding than water, yet when acting on the solid and strong, its gentleness and fluidity have no equal in any thing.

The weak can overcome the strong, and the supple overcome the hard.
Although this is known far and wide, few put it into practice in their lives.
Although seemingly paradoxical, the person who takes upon himself, the people's humiliation, is fit to rule; and he is fit to lead, who takes the country's disasters upon himself.

79.

When covenants and bonds are drawn between the people of the land, that they might know their obligations, it is commonplace for many to fail to meet their dues.

The sage ensures his dues are met, 'though not expecting others to do the same; in this way he is virtuous.

He is without virtue of his own, who asks of others that they fulfill his obligations on his behalf.

The way of nature does not impose on matters such as these but stays with the good for ever, and acts as their reward.

80.

A small country may have many machines, but the people will have no use for them; they will have boats and carriages which they do not use; their armour and weapons are not displayed, for they are serious when regarding death.

They do not travel far from home, and make knots in ropes, rather than do much writing.

The food they eat is plain and good, and their clothes are simple; their homes are secure, without the need of bolts and bars, and they are happy in their ways.

'Though the cockerels and dogs of their neighbors can be heard not far away, the people of the villages grow old and die in peace.

81.

The truth is not always beautiful, nor beautiful words the truth.

Those who have virtue, have no need of argument for its own sake, for they know that argument is of no avail.

Those who have knowledge of the natural way do not train themselves in cunning, whilst those who use cunning to rule their lives, and the lives of others, are not knowledgeable of the Tao, nor of natural happiness.

The sage seeks not to have a store of things or knowledge, for he knows, the less of these he has, the more he has, and that the more he gives, the greater his abundance.

The way of the sage is pointed but does not harm.

The way of the sage is to work without cunning.

Ta-Kao version

- 1.1 The Tao that can be expressed is not the eternal Tao; The name that can be defined is not the unchanging name.
 - 1.2 Non-existence is called the antecedent of heaven and earth; Existence is the mother of all things.
 - 1.3 From eternal non-existence, therefore, we serenely observe the mysterious beginning of the Universe; From eternal existence we clearly see the apparent distinctions.
 - 1.4 These two are the same in source and become different when manifested.
 - 1.5 This sameness is called profundity. Infinite profundity is the gate whence comes the beginning of all parts of the Universe.
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- 2.1 When all in the world understand beauty to be beautiful, then ugliness exists.
 - 2.2 When all understand goodness to be good, then evil exists.
 - 2.3 Thus existence suggests non-existence; Easy gives rise to difficult; Short is derived from long by comparison;
 - 2.4 Low is distinguished from high by position; Resonance harmonizes sound; After follows before.
 - 2.5 Therefore, the Sage carries on his business without action, and gives his teaching without words.
 - 2.6 -
 - 2.7 -
-
- 3.1 Not exalting the worthy keeps the people from emulation.
 - 3.2 Not valuing rare things keeps them from theft.
 - 3.3 Not showing what is desirable keeps their hearts from confusion.
 - 3.4 Therefore the Sage rules By emptying their hearts, Filling their stomachs, Weakening their ambitions And strengthening their bones.
 - 3.5 He always keeps them from knowing what is evil and desiring what is good; thus he gives the crafty ones no chance to act.
 - 3.6 He governs by non-action; consequently there is nothing un-governed.
-
- 4.1 Tao, when put in use for its hollowness, is not likely to be filled.
 - 4.2 In its profundity it seems to be the origin of all things.
 - 4.3 -
 - 4.4 In its depth it seems ever to remain.
 - 4.5 I do not know whose offspring it is; But it looks like the predecessor of Nature.
-
- 5.1 Heaven and earth do not own their benevolence, To them all things are straw dogs
 - 5.2 The Sage does not own his benevolence; To him the people are straw dogs.
 - 5.3 The space between heaven and earth is like a (blacksmith's) bellows. Hollow as it seems, nothing is lacking. If it is moved, more will it bring forth.
 - 5.4 He who talks more is sooner exhausted: It is better to keep what is within himself.
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- 6.1 'The Valley and the Spirit never die.' They form what is called the Mystic Mother,.
 - 6.2 From whose gate comes the origin of heaven and earth.
 - 6.3 'The Valley and the Spirit never die.' They form what is called the Mystic Mother, From whose gate comes the origin of heaven and earth. This (the origin) seems ever to endure. In use it can never be exhausted.
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- 7.1 Heaven is lasting and earth enduring.
 - 7.2 The reason why they are lasting and enduring is that they do not live for themselves; Therefore they live long.
 - 7.3 In the same way the Sage keeps himself behind and he is in the front;
 - 7.4 He forgets himself and he is preserved.
 - 7.5 Is it not because he is not self-interested That his self-interest is established?
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- 8.1 The highest goodness is like water. Water is beneficent to all things but does not contend. It stays in places which others despise. Therefore it is near Tao.
 - 8.2 In dwelling, think it a good place to live; In feeling, make the heart deep; In friendship, keep on good terms with men; In words, have confidence;
 - 8.3 In ruling, abide by good order; In business, take things easy; In motion, make use of the opportunity.
 - 8.4 Since there is no contention, there is no blame.
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- 9.1 Holding and keeping a thing to the very full - it is better to leave it alone;

9.2 Handling and sharpening a blade - it cannot be long sustained;
9.3 When gold and jade fill the hall, no one can protect them;
9.4 Wealth and honour with pride bring with them destruction;
9.5 To have accomplished merit and acquired fame, then to retire - This is the Tao of heaven.

10.1 Can you keep the soul always concentrated from straying?
10.2 Can you regulate the breath and become soft and pliant like an infant?
10.3 Can you clear and get rid of the unforeseen and be free from fault?
10.4 Can you love the people and govern the state by non-action?
10.5 Can you open and shut the gates of nature like a female?
10.6 Can you become enlightened and penetrate everywhere without knowledge?
10.7

11.1 Thirty spokes unite in one nave, And because of the part where nothing exists we have the use of a carriage wheel.
11.2 Clay is moulded into vessels, And because of the space where nothing exists we are able to use them as vessels.
11.3 Doors and windows are cut out in the walls of a house, And because they are empty spaces, we are able to use them.
11.4 Therefore, on the one hand we have the benefit of existence, and on the other, we make use of non-existence.

12.1 The five colours will blind a man's sight. The five sounds will deaden a man's hearing. The five tastes will spoil a man's palate.
12.2 Chasing and hunting will drive a man wild Things hard to get will do harm to a man's conduct.
12.3 Therefore the Sage makes provision for the stomach and not for the eye. He rejects the latter and chooses the former.

13.1 'Favour and disgrace are like fear; fortune and disaster are like our body.'
13.2 What does it mean by 'Favour and disgrace are like fear'? Favour is in a higher place, and disgrace in a lower place. When you win them you are like being in fear, and when you lose them you are also like being in fear. So favour and disgrace are like fear.
13.3 What does it mean by 'Fortune and disaster are like our body'? We have fortune and disaster because we have a body. When we have no body, how can fortune or disaster befall us?
13.4 Therefore he who regards the world as he does the fortune of his own body can govern the world. He who loves the world as he does his own body can be entrusted with the world.

14.1 That which we look at and cannot see is called plainness. That which we listen to and cannot hear is called rareness. That which we grope for and cannot get is called minuteness.
14.2 These three cannot be closely examined; So they blend into One.
14.3 Revealed, it is not dazzling; Hidden, it is not dark. Infinite, it cannot be defined. It goes back to non-existence.
14.4 It is called the form of the formless, And the image of non-existence. It is called mystery. Meet it, you cannot see its face; Follow it, you cannot see its back.
14.5 By adhering to the Tao of the past You will master the existence of the present And be able to know the origin of the past. This is called the clue of Tao.

15.1 In old times the perfect man of Tao was subtle, penetrating and so profound that he can hardly be understood.
15.2 Because he cannot be understood, I shall endeavour to picture him: He is cautious, like one who crosses a stream in winter; He is hesitating, like one who fears his neighbours; He is modest, like one who is a guest;
15.3 He is yielding, like ice that is going to melt; He is simple, like wood that is not yet wrought; He is vacant, like valleys that are hollow; He is dim, like water that is turbid.
15.4 Who is able to purify the dark till it becomes slowly light? Who is able to calm the turbid till it slowly clears? Who is able to quicken the stagnant till it slowly makes progress?
15.5 He who follows these principles does not desire fullness. Because he is not full, therefore when he becomes decayed he can renew.

16.1 Attain to the goal of absolute vacuity; Keep to the state of perfect peace.
16.2 All things come into existence, And thence we see them return. Look at the things that have been flourishing; Each goes back to its origin.
16.3 Going back to the origin is called peace; It means reversion to destiny. Reversion to destiny is called eternity. He who knows eternity is called enlightened. He who does not know eternity is running blindly into miseries.

16.4 Knowing eternity he is all-embracing. Being all~embracing he can attain magnanimity. Being magnanimous he can attain omnipresence. Being omnipresent he can attain supremacy. Being supreme he can attain Tao.

16.5 He who attains Tao is everlasting. Though his body may decay he never perishes.

17.1 The great rulers - the people do not notice their existence; The lesser ones - they attach to and praise them; The still lesser ones - they fear them; The still lesser ones - they despise them.

17.2 For where faith is lacking, It cannot be met by faith.

17.3 Now how much importance must be attributed to words!

18.1 When the great Tao is lost, spring forth benevolence and righteousness.

18.2 When wisdom and sagacity arise, there are great hypocrites.

18.3 When family relations are no longer harmonious, we have filial children and devoted parents.

18.4 When a nation is in confusion and disorder, patriots are recognized. Where Tao is, equilibrium is. When Tao is lost, out come all the differences of things.

19.1 Do away with sageness and eject wisdom, and the people will be more benefited a hundred times.

19.2 Do away with learning, and grief will not be known. Do away with benevolence and eject righteousness, and the people will return to filial duty and parental love.

19.3 Do away with artifice and eject gains, and there will be no robbers and thieves.

19.4 These four, if we consider them as culture, are not sufficient.

19.5 Therefore let there be what the people can resort to: Appear in plainness and hold to simplicity; Restrain selfishness and curtail desires.

20.1 Between yea and nay, how much difference is there? Between good and evil, how much difference is there?

20.2 What are feared by others we must fear; Vastly are they unlimited!

20.3 The people in general are as happy as if enjoying a great feast. Or, as going up a tower in spring. I alone am tranquil, and have made no signs, Like a baby who is yet unable to smile; Forlorn as if I had no home to go to.

20.4 Others all have more than enough, And I alone seem to be in want. Possibly mine is the mind of a fool, Which is so ignorant!

20.5 The vulgar are bright, And I alone seem to be dull. The vulgar are discriminative, and I alone seem blunt. I am negligent as if being obscure; Drifting, as if being attached to nothing.

20.6 The people in general all have something to do, And I alone seem to be impractical and awkward. I alone am different from others. But I value seeking sustenance from the Mother. To know the eternal is to be enlightened. Not to know the eternal is to act blindly and court disaster.

21.1 The great virtue as manifested is but following Tao.

21.2 Tao is a thing that is both invisible and intangible. Intangible and invisible, yet there are forms in it; Invisible and intangible, yet there is substance in it; Subtle and obscure, there is essence in it; This essence being invariably true, there is faith in it.

21.3 From of old till now, it has never lost its (nameless) name, Through which the origin of all things has passed.

21.4 How do I know that it is so with the origin of all things? By this (Tao).

22.1 'Be humble, and you will remain entire.' Be bent, and you will remain straight. Be vacant, and you will remain full. Be worn, and you will remain new. He who has little will receive. He who has much will be embarrassed.

22.2 Therefore the Sage keeps to One and becomes the standard for the world.

22.3 He does not display himself; therefore he shines. He does not approve himself; therefore he is noted. He does not praise himself; therefore he has merit. He does not glory in himself; therefore he excels.

22.4 And because he does not compete; therefore no one in the world can compete with him.

22.5 The ancient saying 'Be humble and you will remain entire'- Can this be regarded as mere empty words? Indeed he shall return home entire.

23.1 To be sparing of words is natural. A violent wind cannot last a whole morning; pelting rain cannot last a whole day.

23.2 Who have made these things but heaven and earth? Inasmuch as heaven and earth cannot last forever, how can man?

23.3 He who engages himself in Tao is identified with Tao. He who engages himself in virtue is identified with virtue. He who engages himself in abandonment is identified with abandonment.

23.4 Identified with Tao he will be well received by Tao. Identified with virtue he will be well received by virtue. Identified with abandonment he will be well received by abandonment.

23.5

24.1 A man on tiptoe cannot stand firm; A man astride cannot walk on;
24.2 A man who displays himself cannot shine; A man who approves himself cannot be noted;
24.3 A man who praises himself cannot have merit; A man who glories in himself cannot excel:
24.4 These, when compared with Tao, are called; 'Excess in food and overdoing action.' Even in other things, mostly, they are rejected; Therefore the man of Tao does not stay with them.

25.1 There is a thing inherent and natural, Which existed before heaven and earth. Motionless and fathomless, It stands alone - and never changes; It pervades everywhere and never becomes exhausted. It may be regarded as the Mother of the Universe.
25.2 I do not know its name. If I am forced to give it a name, I call it Tao, and I name it as supreme.
25.3 Supreme means going on; Going on means going far; Going far means returning.
25.4 Therefore Tao is supreme; heaven is supreme; earth is supreme; and man is also supreme; There are in the universe four things supreme, and man is one of them.
25.5 Man follows the laws of earth; Earth follows the laws of heaven; Heaven follows the laws of Tao; Tao follows the laws of its intrinsic nature.

26.1 Heaviness is the basis of lightness; Calmness is the controlling power of hastiness.
26.2 Therefore the Sage, though traveling all day long, Never separates from his baggage-wagon; Though surrounded with magnificent sights, He lives in tranquillity.
26.3 How is it, then, that a king of ten thousand chariots Should conduct himself so lightly in the empire?
26.4 To be light is to lose the basis; To be hasty is to lose the controlling power.

27.1 A good traveler leaves no track; A good speaker leaves no error; A good reckoner needs no counter;
27.2 A good closer needs no bars or bolts, And yet it is impossible to open after him. A good fastener needs no cords or knots, And yet it is impossible to untie after him.
27.3 Even if men be bad, why should they be rejected? Therefore the Sage is always a good saviour of men, And no man is rejected; He is a good saviour of things, And nothing is rejected: This is called double enlightenment.
27.4 Therefore good men are had men's instructors, And bad men are good men's materials.
27.5 Those who do not esteem their instructors, And those who do not love their materials, Though expedient, are in fact greatly confused. This is essential subtlety.

28.1 He who knows the masculine and yet keeps to the feminine Will become a channel drawing all the world towards it; Being a channel of the world, he will not be severed from the eternal virtue, And then he can return again to the state of infancy.
28.2 He who knows the white and yet keeps to the black Will become the standard of the world; Being the standard of the world, with him eternal virtue will never falter, And then he can return again to the absolute.
28.3 He who knows honour and yet keeps to humility Will become a valley that receives all the world into it; Being a valley of the world, with him eternal virtue Will be complete, And then he can return again to wholeness.
28.4 Wholeness, when divided, will make vessels of utility; These when employed by the Sage will become officials and chiefs. However, for a great function no discrimination is needed.

29.1 When a man is to take the world over and shape it, I see that he must be obliged to do it.
29.2 For the world is a divine vessel: It cannot be shaped; Nor can it be insisted upon. He who shapes it damages it; He who insists upon it loses it.
29.3 Therefore the Sage does not shape it, so he does not damage it; 'He does not insist upon it, so he does not lose it. 'For, among all things, some go ahead, while others lag behind; Some keep their mouth shut, while others give forth puffs; Some are strong, while others are weak; Some are on the cart, while others fall off.
29.4 Therefore the Sage avoids excess, extravagance and indulgence.

30.1 He who assists a ruler of men with Tao does not force the world with arms.
30.2 For the actions of arms will be well requited; where armies have been quartered brambles and thorns grow. Great wars are for certain followed by years of scarcity.
30.3 He aims only at carrying out relief, and does not venture to force his power upon others.
30.4 When relief is done, he will not be assuming, He will not be boastful; he will not be proud; And he will think that he was obliged to do it. So it comes that relief is done without resorting to force.
30.5 When things come to the summit of their vigour, they begin to grow old. This is against Tao. What is against Tao will soon come to an end.

31.1 So far as arms are concerned, they are implements of ill-omen. They are not implements for the man of Tao.
31.2 The man of Tao when dwelling at home makes the left as the place of honour; and when using arms makes the right as the place of honour.
31.3 He uses them only when he cannot avoid it.
31.4 In his conquests he takes no delight. If he take delight in them, it would mean that he enjoys in the slaughter of men. He who takes delight in the slaughter of men cannot have his will done in the world.
31.5 -
31.6 -
32.4 When for the first time applied to function, it was named. Inasmuch as names are given, one should also know where to stop. Knowing where to stop one can become imperishable.

32.1 Tao was always nameless.
32.2 -
32.3 -
32.5 -

33.1 He who knows others is wise; He who knows himself is enlightened.
33.2 He who conquers others is strong; He who conquers himself is mighty.
33.3 He who knows contentment is rich. He who keeps on his course with energy has will.
33.4 He who does not deviate from his proper place will long endure. He who may die but not perish has longevity.

34.1 The great Tao pervades everywhere, both on the left and on the right.
34.2 By it all things came into being, and it does not reject them. Merits accomplished, it does not possess them. It loves and nourishes all things but does not dominate over them.
34.3 It is always non-existent; therefore it can be named as small.
34.4 All things return home to it, and it does not claim mastery over them; therefore it can be named as great.
34.5 Because it never assumes greatness, therefore it can accomplish greatness.

35.1 To him who holds to the Great Form all the world will go. It will go and see no danger, but tranquillity, equality and community.
35.2 Music and dainties will make the passing stranger stop.
35.3 But Tao when uttered in words is so pure and void of flavour When one looks at it, one cannot see it; When one listens to it, one cannot hear it. However, when one uses it, it is inexhaustible. But we use it without end

36.1 In order to contract a thing, one should surely expand it first. In order to weaken, one will surely strengthen first. In order to overthrow, one will surely exalt first. 'In order to take, one will surely give first'!
36.2 This is called subtle wisdom. The soft and weak can overcome the hard and strong.
36.3 As the fish should not leave the deep So should the sharp implements of a nation not be shown to anyone!

37.1 Tao is ever inactive, and yet there is nothing that it does not do.
37.2 If princes and kings could keep to it, all things would of themselves become developed. When they are developed, desire would stir in them; I would restrain them by the nameless Simplicity, In order to make them free from desire.
37.3 Free from desire, they would be at rest; And the world would of itself become rectified. However insignificant Simplicity seems, the whole world cannot make it submissive. If princes and kings could keep to it, All things in the world would of themselves pay homage. Heaven and earth would unite to send down sweet dew. The people with no one to command them would of themselves become harmonious. When merits are accomplished and affairs completed, The people would speak of themselves as following nature.

38.1 The superior virtue is not conscious of itself as virtue; Therefore it has virtue. The inferior virtue never lets off virtue; Therefore it has no virtue.
38.2 The superior virtue seems inactive, and yet there is nothing that it does not do. The inferior virtue acts and yet in the end leaves things undone.
38.3 The superior benevolence acts without a motive. The superior righteousness acts with a motive. The superior ritual acts, but at first no one responds to it; Gradually people raise their arms and follow it.
38.4 Therefore when Tao is lost, virtue follows. When virtue is lost, benevolence follows. When benevolence is lost, righteousness follows. When righteousness is lost, ritual follows.

38.5 Ritual, therefore, is the attenuation of loyalty and faith and the outset of confusion. Fore-knowledge is the flower of Tao and the beginning of folly.

38.6 Therefore the truly great man keeps to the solid and not to the tenuous; Keeps to the fruit and not to the flower. Thus he rejects the latter and takes the former.

39.1 From of old the things that have acquired Unity are these: Heaven by Unity has become clear; Earth by Unity has become steady; The Spirit by Unity has become spiritual;

39.2 The Valley by Unity has become full; All things by Unity have come into existence; Princes and kings by Unity have become rulers of the world.

39.3 If heaven were not clear, it would be rent; If earth were not steady, it would be tumbled down; If the Spirit were not active, it would pass away;

39.4 If the Valley were not full, it would be dried up; If all things were not existing, they would be extinct; If princes and kings were not rulers, they would be overthrown.

39.5 The noble must be styled in the terms of the humble; The high must take the low as their foundation.

39.6 Therefore princes and kings call themselves 'the ignorant', 'the virtueless' and 'the unworthy'. Does this not mean that they take the humble as their root? What men hate most are 'the ignorant', 'the virtueless' and 'the unworthy'. And yet princes and kings choose them as their titles. Therefore the highest fame is to have no fame. Thus kings are increased by being diminished; They are diminished by being increased.

39.7 -

39.8 It is undesirable to be as prominent as a single gem, Or as monotonously numerous as stones.

40.1 Returning is the motion of Tao, Weakness is the appliance of Tao.

40.2 All things in the Universe come from existence, And existence from non-existence.

41.1 When the superior scholar is told of Tao, He works hard to practice it. When the middling scholar is told of Tao, It seems that sometimes he keeps it and sometimes he loses it.

41.2 When the inferior scholar is told of Tao, He laughs aloud at it. If it were not laughed at, it would not be sufficient to be Tao.

41.3 Therefore the proverb says: Tao in enlightenment seems obscure; Tao in progress seems regressive; Tao in its straightness seems rugged. The highest virtue seems like a valley; The purest white seems discoloured; The most magnificent virtue seems insufficient;

41.4 The solidest virtue seems frail; The simplest nature seems changeable; The greatest square has no angles; The largest vessel is never complete; The loudest sound can scarcely be heard; The biggest form cannot be visualized.

41.5 Tao, while hidden, 'is nameless.' Yet it is Tao alone that is good at imparting and completing.

42.1 Tao begets One; one begets two; two begets three; three begets all things.

42.2 All things are backed by the Shade (yin) and faced by the Light (yang), and harmonized by the immaterial Breath (ch'i).

42.3 -

42.4 -

42.5 What others teach, I also teach: 'The daring and violent do not die a natural death.' This (maxim) I shall regard as my instructor.

43.1 The non-existent can enter into the impenetrable. By this I know that non-action is useful.

43.2 Teaching without words, utility without action - Few in the world have come to this.

44.1 Fame or your person, which is nearer to you? Your person or wealth, which is dearer to you? Gain or loss, which brings more evil to you?

44.2 Over-love of anything will lead to wasteful spending; Amassed riches will be followed by heavy plundering.

44.3 Therefore, he who knows contentment can never be humiliated; He who knows where to stop can never be perishable; He will long endure and thus lives long

45.1 The greatest perfection seems imperfect; Yet its use will last without decay. The greatest fullness seems empty; Yet its use cannot be exhausted. The greatest straightness seems crooked;

45.2 The greatest dexterity seems awkward; The greatest eloquence seems stammering.

45.3 Activity overcomes cold; Quietness overcomes heat. Only through purity and quietude can the world be ruled.

46.1 When Tao reigns in the world Swift horses are curbed for hauling the dung carts (in the field). When Tao does not reign in the world, War horses are bred on the commons (outside the cities).

46.2 There is no greater crime than seeking what men desire; There is no greater misery than knowing no content; There is no greater calamity than indulging in greed.

46.3 Therefore the contentment of knowing content will ever be contented.

47.1 Without going out of the door One can know the whole world; Without peeping out of the window One can see the Tao of heaven. The further one travels The less one knows.

47.2 Therefore the Sage knows everything without traveling; He names everything without seeing it; He accomplishes everything without doing it.

48.1 He who pursues learning will increase every day; He who pursues Tao will decrease every day.

48.2 He will decrease and continue to decrease, Till he comes to non-action; By non-action everything can be done.

48.3 -

49.1 The Sage has no self (to call his own); He makes the self of the people his self.

49.2 To the good I act with goodness; To the bad I also act with goodness: Thus goodness is attained.

49.3 To the faithful I act with faith; To the faithless I also act with faith: Thus faith is attained.

49.4 The Sage lives in the world in concord, and rules over the world in simplicity. Yet what all the people turn their ears and eyes to, The Sage looks after as a mother does her children.

50.1 Men go out of life and enter into death.

50.2 The parts (proportions) of life are three in ten; the parts of death are also three in ten. Men that from birth move towards the region of death are also three in ten. Why is it so? Because of their redundant effort in seeking to live.

50.3 But only those who do nothing for the purpose of living are better than those who prize their lives. For I have heard that he who knows well how to conserve life, when traveling on land, does not meet the rhinoceros or the tiger; when going to a battle he is not attacked by arms and weapons.

50.4 The rhinoceros can find nowhere to drive his horn; the tiger can find nowhere to put his claws; the weapons can find nowhere to thrust their blades. Why is it so? Because he is beyond the region of death.

51.1 Tao produces them (all things); Virtue feeds them; All of them appear in different forms; Each is perfected by being given power. Therefore none of the numerous things does not honour Tao and esteem virtue.

51.2 The honouring of Tao and the esteem of virtue are done, not by command, but always of their own accord. Therefore Tao produces them, makes them grow, nourishes them, shelters them, brings them up and protects them. When all things come into being Tao does not reject them.

51.3 It produces them without holding possession of them. It acts without depending upon them, and raises without lording it over them. When merits are accomplished it does not lay claim to them. Because it does not lay claim to them, therefore it does not lose them.

52.1 The beginning of the Universe, when manifested, may be regarded as its Mother.

52.2 When a man has found the Mother, he will know the children accordingly; Though he has known the children, he still keeps to the Mother: Thus, however his body may decay, he will never perish.

52.3 If he shuts his mouth and closes his doors, He can never be exhausted.

52.4 If he opens his mouth and increases his affairs, He can never be saved.

52.5 To see the minuteness of things is called clarity of sight; To keep to what is weak is called power.

52.6 Use your light, but dim your brightness; Thus you will cause no harm to yourself This is called following the eternal (Tao).

53.1 Let me have sound knowledge and walk on the great way (Tao); Only I am in fear of deviating.

53.2 The great way is very plain and easy, But the people prefer by-paths.

53.3 While the royal palaces are very well kept, The fields are left weedy And the granaries empty.

53.4 To wear embroidered clothes, To carry sharp swords, To be satiated in drink and food, To be possessed of redundant riches - This is called encouragement to robbery. Is it not deviating from Tao?

54.1 What is planted by the best planter can never be removed; What is embraced by the best embracer can never be loosened. Thus his children and grandchildren will be able to continue their ancestral sacrifice for endless generations.

54.2 If he applies Tao to himself his virtue will be genuine; If he applies it to his family his virtue will be abundant; If he applies it to his village his virtue will be lasting; If he applies it to his country his virtue will be full; If he applies it to the world his virtue will be universal.

54.3 Therefore by one's person one may observe persons; By one's family one may observe families; By one's village one may observe villages; By one's country one may observe countries; By one's world one may observe worlds.

54.4 How do I know that the world may be so (governed by Tao)? By this (observation).

55.1 He who is endowed with ample virtue may be compared to an infant. No venomous insects sting him; Nor fierce beasts seize him; Nor birds of prey strike him. His bones are frail, his sinews tender, but his grasp is strong.

55.2 He does not know the conjugation of male and female, and yet he has sexual development; It means he is in the best vitality.

55.3 He may cry all day long without growing hoarse; It means that he is in the perfect harmony. To know this harmony is to approach eternity; To know eternity is to attain enlightenment.

55.4 To increase life is to lead to calamity; To let the heart exert the breath is to become stark.

55.5 -

56.1 Those who know to act do not speak. Those who speak, do not know to act.

56.2 Blunt all that is sharp; Cut all that is divisible; Blur all that is brilliant; Mix with all that is humble as dust; This is called absolute equality.

56.3 Therefore it cannot be made intimate; Nor can it be alienated. It cannot be benefited; Nor can it be harmed. It cannot be exalted; Nor can it be debased. Therefore it is the most valuable thing in the world.

57.1 Albeit one governs the country by rectitude, And carries on wars by stratagems, Yet one must rule the empire by meddling with no business. The empire can always be ruled by meddling with no business. Otherwise, it can never be done. How do I know it is so? By this:

57.2 The more restrictions and avoidances are in the empire, The poorer become the people; The more sharp implements the people keep, The more confusions are in the country;

57.3 The more arts and crafts men have, The more are fantastic things produced; The more laws and regulations are given, The more robbers and thieves there are.

57.4 Therefore the Sage says; Inasmuch as I betake myself to non-action, the people of themselves become developed. Inasmuch as I love quietude, the people of themselves become righteous.

57.5 Inasmuch as I make no fuss, the people of themselves become wealthy. Inasmuch as I am free from desire, the people of themselves remain simple.

58.1 When the government is blunt and inactive the people will be happy and prosperous; When the government is discriminative, the people will be dissatisfied and restless.

58.2 It is upon misery that happiness rests; It is under happiness that misery lies.

58.3 Who then can know the supremacy (good government)? Only when the government does no rectifying. Otherwise, rectitude will again become stratagem, And good become evil. Men have been ignorant of this, since long ago.

58.4 Therefore the Sage is square but does not cut others; He is angled but does not chip others; He is straight but does not stretch others; He is bright but does not dazzle others.

59.1 In ruling men and in serving Heaven, the Sage uses only moderation.

59.2 By moderation alone he is able to have conformed early (to Tao). This early conformity is called intensive accumulation of virtue. With this intensive accumulation of virtue, there is nothing that he cannot overcome. Because there is nothing that he cannot overcome, no one will be able to know his supremacy. Because no one knows his supremacy he can take possession of a country.

59.3 Because what he does is identified with the Mother in taking possession of a country, he can long endure.

59.4 This means that he is deep rooted and firmly based, and knows the way of longevity and immortality.

60.1 Govern a great state as you would cook a small fish (do it gently).

60.2 Let Tao reign over the world, and no spirits will show their ghostly powers.

60.3 Not that demons have no spiritual powers, but the spirits themselves do no harm to men. Not that the spirits do no harm to men, but the Sage himself does no harm to his people.

60.4 In general, when both of these do not mutually harm, Then virtuosity exchanges and returns in it.

61.1 A great state is the world's low-stream (to which all the river flows down), the world's field and the world's female. The female always conquers the male by quietude, which is employed as a means to lower oneself.

61.2 Thus a great state lowers itself towards a small state before it takes over the small state. A small state lowers itself towards a great state before it takes over the great state.

61.3 Therefore some lower themselves to take, while others lower themselves to gather.
61.4 A great state wishes nothing more than to have and keep many people, and a small state wishes nothing more than to get more things to do.
61.5 When the two both mean to obtain their wishes, the greater one should lower itself.

62.1 Tao is the source of all things, the treasure of good men, and the sustainer of bad men.
62.2 Good words will procure one honour; good deeds will get one credit.
62.3 Therefore at the enthronement of an emperor and the appointment of the three ministers, better still than those, who present jewels followed by horses, is the one who sitting presents (propounds) this Tao.
62.4 Why did the ancients prize this Tao? Was it not because it could be attained by seeking and thus sinners could be freed? For this reason it has become the most valuable thing in the world.

63.1 Act non-action; undertake no undertaking; taste the tasteless. The Sage desires the desireless, and prizes no articles that are difficult to get. He learns no learning, but reviews what others have passed through. Thus he lets all things develop in their natural way, and does not venture to act.
63.2 Regard the small as great; regard the few as many.
63.3 Manage the difficult while they are easy; Manage the great while they are small.
63.4 All difficult things in the world start from the easy; All great things in the world start from the small.
63.5 Therefore the Sage never attempts great things, and thus he can achieve what is great.
63.6 He who makes easy promises will seldom keep his word; He who regards many things as easy will find many difficulties.
63.7 Therefore the Sage regards things as difficult, and consequently never has difficulties.

64.1 What is motionless is easy to hold; What is not yet foreshadowed is easy to form plans for; What is fragile is easy to break; What is minute is easy to disperse.
64.2 Deal with a thing before it comes into existence; Regulate a thing before it gets into confusion.
64.3 The tree that fills a man's arms arises from a tender shoot; The nine-storeyed tower is raised from a heap of earth; A thousand miles' journey begins from the spot under one's feet.
64.4 -
64.5 The common people in their business often fail on the verge of succeeding. Take care with the end as you do with the beginning, And you will have no failure.
64.6 -

65.1 In olden times the best practicers of Tao did not use it to awaken the people to knowledge, But used it to restore them to simplicity.
65.2 People are difficult to govern because they have much knowledge. Therefore to govern the country by increasing the people's knowledge is to be the destroyer of the country; To govern the country by decreasing their knowledge is to be the blessers of the country.
65.3 To be acquainted with these two ways is to know the standard; To keep the standard always in mind is to have sublime virtue.
65.4 Sublime virtue is infinitely deep and wide. It goes reverse to all things; And so it attains perfect peace.

66.1 As Tao is to the world so are streams and valleys to rivers and seas. Rivers and seas can be kings to all valleys because the former can well lower themselves to the latter. Thus they become kings to all valleys.
66.2 Therefore the Sage, in order to be above the people, must in words keep below them; In order to be ahead of the people, he must in person keep behind them.
66.3 Thus when he is above, the people do not feel his burden; When he is ahead, the people do not feel his hindrance. Therefore all the world is pleased to hold him in high esteem and never get tired of him.
66.4 Because he does not compete; therefore no one competes with him.

67.1 All the world says to me: 'Great as Tao is, it resembles no description (form).' Because it is great, therefore it resembles no description. If it resembled any description it would have long since become small.
67.2 I have three treasures, which I hold and keep safe: The first is called love; The second is called moderation; The third is called not venturing to go ahead of the world.
67.3 Being loving, one can be brave; Being moderate, one can be ample; Not venturing to go ahead of the world, one can be the chief of all officials.
67.4 Instead of love, one has only bravery; Instead of moderation, one has only amplitude; Instead of keeping behind, one goes ahead: These lead to nothing but death.

67.5 For he who fights with love will win the battle; He who defends with love will be secure. Heaven will save him, and protect him with love.

68.1 The best soldier is not soldierly; The best fighter is not ferocious;

68.2 The best conqueror does not take part in war; The best employer of men keeps himself below them.

68.3 This is called the virtue of not contending; This is called the ability of using men; This is called the supremacy of consorting with heaven.

69.1 An ancient tactician has said: 'I dare not act as a host but would rather act as a guest; I dare not advance an inch but would rather retreat a foot.'

69.2 This implies that he does not marshal the ranks as if there were no ranks; He does not roll up his sleeves as if he had no arms; He does not seize as if he had no weapons; He does not fight as if there were no enemies.

69.3 No calamity is greater than under-estimating the enemy. To under-estimate the enemy is to be on the point of losing our treasure (love).

69.4 Therefore when opposing armies meet in the field the ruthless will win.

70.1 Words have an ancestor; deeds have a governor. My words are very easy to know, and very easy to practice, Yet all men in the world do not know them, nor do they practice them.

70.2 It is because they have knowledge that they do not know me. When those who know me are few, eventually I am beyond all praise.

70.3 Therefore the Sage wears clothes of coarse cloth but carries jewels in his bosom; He knows himself but does not display himself; He loves himself but does not hold himself in high esteem. Thus he rejects the latter and takes the former.

71.1 Knowing that one knows is best; Thinking that one knows when one does not know is sickness.

71.2 Only when one becomes sick of this sickness can one be free from sickness. The Sage is never sick; because he is sick of this sickness, therefore he is not sick.

72.1 If the people have no fear of their ruling authority, still greater fear will come.

72.2 Be sure not to give them too narrow a dwelling; Nor make their living scanty. Only when their dwelling place is no longer narrow will their dissatisfaction come to an end.

72.3 -

73.1 He who shows courage in daring will perish; He who shows courage in not-daring will live.

73.2 To know these two is to distinguish the one, benefit, from the other, harm. Who can tell that one of them should be loathed by heaven?'

73.3 The Tao of heaven does not contend; yet it surely wins the victory. It does not speak; yet it surely responds. It does not call; yet all things come of their own accord. It remains taciturn; yet it surely makes plans.

73.4 The net of heaven is vast, and its meshes are wide; Yet from it nothing escapes.

74.1 When the people are not afraid of death, what use is it to frighten them with the punishment of death?

74.2 If the people were constantly afraid of death and we could arrest and kill those who commit treacheries, who then would dare to commit such?

74.3 Only the Supreme Executioner kills. To kill in place of the Supreme Executioner is to hack instead of a greater carpenter. Now if one hacks in place of a great carpenter one can scarcely avoid cutting one's own hand.

75.1 The people starve. Because their officials take heavy taxes from them, therefore they starve.

75.2 The people are hard to rule. Because their officials meddle with affairs, therefore they are hard to rule.

75.3 The people pay no heed to death. Because they endeavour to seek life; therefore they pay no heed to death.

76.1 Man when living is soft and tender; when dead he is hard and tough.

76.2 All animals and plants when living are tender and fragile; when dead they become withered and dry.

76.3 Therefore it is said: the hard and tough are parts of death; the soft and tender are parts of life.

76.4 This is the reason why the soldiers when they are too tough cannot carry the day; the tree when it is too tough will break.

76.5 The position of the strong and great is low, and the position of the weak and tender is high.

77.1 Is not the Tao of heaven like the drawing of a bow? It brings down the part which is high; it raises the part which is low; it lessens the part which is redundant (convex); it fills up the part which is insufficient (concave).

77.2 The Tao of heaven is to lessen the redundant and fill up the insufficient. The Tao of man, on the contrary, is to take from the insufficient and give to the redundant.

77.3 Who can take from the redundant and give to the insufficient? Only he who has Tao can.

77.4 Therefore the Sage does not hoard. The more he helps others, the more he benefits himself; the more he gives to others, the more he gets himself. The Tao of heaven does one good but never does one harm; the Tao of the Sage acts but never contends.

78.1 The weakest things in the world can overmatch the strongest things in the world. Nothing in the world can be compared to water for its weak and yielding nature; yet in attacking the hard and the strong nothing proves better than it. For there is no other alternative to it.

78.2 The weak can overcome the strong and the yielding can overcome the hard: This all the world knows but does not practice.

78.3 Therefore the Sage says: He who sustains all the reproaches of the country can be the master of the land; He who sustains all the calamities of the country can be the king of the world. These are words of truth, Though they seem paradoxical.

79.1 Return love for great hatred. Otherwise, when a great hatred is reconciled, some of it will surely remain. How can this end in goodness?

79.2 Therefore the Sage holds to the left half of an agreement but does not exact what the other holder ought to do.

79.3 The virtuous resort to agreement; The virtueless resort to exaction.

79.4 The Tao of heaven shows no partiality; It abides always with good men.

80.1 Supposing here is a small state with few people Though there are various vessels I will not have them put in use. I will make the people regard death as a grave matter and not go far away.

80.2 Though they have boats and carriages they will not travel in them; Though they have armour and weapons they will not show them.

80.3 I will let them restore the use of knotted cords (instead of writing). They will be satisfied with their food; Delighted in their dress; Comfortable in their dwellings; Happy with their customs.

80.4 Though the neighbouring states are within sight And their cocks' crowing and dogs' barking within hearing; The people (of the small state) will not go there all their lives.

81.1 He who knows does not speak; He who speaks does not know.

81.2 He who is truthful is not showy; He who is showy is not truthful.

81.3 He who is virtuous does not dispute; He who disputes is not virtuous;

81.4 He who is learned is not wise; He who is wise is not learned.

81.5 Therefore the Sage does not display his own merits.

Walker version

- 1.1 Tao is beyond words and beyond understanding. Words may be used to speak of it, but they cannot contain it.
- 1.2 Tao existed before words and names, before heaven and earth, before the ten thousand things. It is the unlimited father and mother of all limited things.
- 1.3 Therefore, to see beyond all boundaries to the subtle heart of things, dispense with names, with concepts, with expectations and ambitions and differences.
- 1.4 Tao and its many manifestations arise from the same source:
- 1.5 subtle wonder within mysterious darkness. This is the beginning of all understanding.

- 2.1 When people find one thing beautiful, another consequently becomes ugly.
- 2.2 When one man is held up as good, another is judged deficient.
- 2.3 Similarly, being and non-being balance each other; difficult and easy define each other; long and short illustrate each other;
- 2.4 high and low rest upon each other; voice and song meld into harmony; what is to come follows upon what has been.
- 2.5 The wise person acts without effort and teaches by quiet example.
- 2.6 He accepts things as they come, creates without possessing, nourishes without demanding, accomplishes without taking credit.
- 2.7 Because he constantly forgets himself, he is never forgotten.

- 3.1 When praise is lavished upon the famous, the people contend and compete with one another.
- 3.2 When exotic goods are traded and treasured, the compulsion to steal is felt.
- 3.3 When desires are constantly stimulated, people become disturbed and confused.
- 3.4 Therefore, the wise person sets an example by emptying her mind, opening her heart, relaxing her ambitions, relinquishing her desires, cultivating her character.
- 3.5 having conquered her own cunning and cravings, she can't be manipulated by anyone.
- 3.6 Do by not-doing. Act with non-action. Allow order to arise of itself.

- 4.1 Tao is a whirling emptiness, yet when used it cannot be exhausted.
- 4.2 Out of this mysterious well flows everything in existence.
- 4.3 Blunting sharp edges, Untangling knots, Softening the glare, It evolves us all and makes the whole world one.
- 4.4 Something is there, hidden and deep!
- 4.5 But I do not know whose child it is - It came even before God.

- 5.1 Heaven and Earth are not sentimental; they regard all things as dispensable.
- 5.2 The sage isn't sentimental, either; He views all forms as ephemeral and transitional.
- 5.3 Tao is like a bellows: empty but inexhaustible. The more you move it the more it makes.
- 5.4 Too much talk about it evaporates your understanding, though. Simply stay at the center of the circle.

- 6.1 The heart of Tao is immortal, the mysterious fertile mother of us all,
- 6.2 of heaven and earth, of every thing and not-thing.
- 6.3 Invisible yet ever present, you can use it forever without using it up.

- 7.1 Heaven is eternal, earth everlasting.
- 7.2 They endure this way because they do not live for themselves.
- 7.3 In the same way, the wise person puts himself last, and thereby finds himself first;
- 7.4 Holds himself outside, and thereby remains at the center;
- 7.5 Abandons himself, and is thereby fulfilled.

- 8.1 The highest good is like water which benefits all things and contends with none. it flows in low places that others disdain and thus it is close to the Tao.
- 8.2 In living, choose your ground well. In thought, stay deep in the heart. In relationships, be generous. In speaking, hold to the truth.
- 8.3 In leadership, be organized. In work, do your best. In action, be timely.
- 8.4 If you compete with no one, no one can compete with you.

- 9.1 Filling to fullness is not as good as stopping at the right moment.

- 9.2 Oversharpener a blade causes its edge to be lost.
- 9.3 Line your home with treasures and you won't be able to defend it.
- 9.4 Amass possessions, establish positions, display your pride: Soon enough disaster drives you to your knees.
- 9.5 This is the way of heaven: do your work, then quietly step back.

- 10.1 Can you marry your spirit and body to the oneness and never depart from it?
- 10.2 Can you ride your breath until your entire being is as supple as the body of an infant?
- 10.3 Can you cleanse your inner vision until you see heaven in every direction?
- 10.4 Can you love the people and govern them without conniving and manipulating?
- 10.5 Can you bear heaven's children in all that you do and are?
- 10.6 Can you give the wisdom of your heart precedence over the learning of your head?
- 10.7 Giving birth, nourishing life, shaping things without possessing them, serving without expectation of reward, leading without dominating: These are the profound virtues of nature, and of nature's best things.

- 11.1 Thirty spokes meet at a hollowed-out hub; the wheel won't work without its hole.
- 11.2 A vessel is moulded from solid clay; its inner emptiness makes it useful.
- 11.3 To make a room, you have to cut doors and windows; without openings, a place isn't livable.
- 11.4 To make use of what is here, you must make use of what is not

- 12.1 The five colours blind the eye. The five tones deafen the ear. The five flavours overwhelm the palate.
- 12.2 Fancy things get in the way of one's growth. Racing here and there, hunting for this and that - Good ways to madden your mind, that's all.
- 12.3 Relinquish what is without. Cultivate what is within. Live for your center, not your senses.

- 13.1 Favour and disgrace are equally problematic. Hope and fear are phantoms of the body.
- 13.2 What does it mean the "favour and disgrace are equally problematic"? Favour lifts you up; disgrace knocks you down. Either one depends on the opinions of others and causes you to depart from your center.
- 13.3 What does it mean that "hope and fear are phantoms of the body"? When you regard your body as your self, hope and fear have real power over you. If you abandon the notion of body as self, hope and fear cannot touch you.
- 13.4 Know the universe as your self, and you can live absolutely anywhere in comfort. Love the world as your self, and you'll be able to care for it properly.

- 14.1 Looked at but not seen, listened to but not heard, grasped for but not held, formless, soundless, intangible:
- 14.2 the Tao resists analysis and defies comprehension.
- 14.3 Its rising is not about light, its setting not a matter of darkness. Unnameable, unending, emerging continually, and continually pouring back into nothingness,
- 14.4 It is formless form, unseeable image, elusive, evasive unimaginable mystery. Confront it, and you won't see its face. Follow it and you can't find an end.
- 14.5 Perceive its ancient subtle heart, however, and you become master of the moment. Know what came before time, and the beginning of wisdom is yours.

- 15.1 A sage is subtle, intuitive, penetrating, profound. His depths are mysterious and unfathomable.
- 15.2 The best one can do is describe his appearance: The sage is alert as a person crossing a winter stream; as circumspect as a person with neighbours on all four sides; as respectful as a thoughtful guest;
- 15.3 as yielding as melting ice; as simple as uncarved wood; as open as a valley; as chaotic as a muddy torrent.
- 15.4 Why "chaotic as a muddy torrent"? Because clarity is learned by being patient in the heart of chaos. Tolerating disarray, remaining at rest, gradually one learns to allow muddy water to settle and proper responses to reveal themselves.
- 15.5 Those who aspire to Tao don't long for fulfillment. They selflessly allow the Tao to use and deplete them; They calmly allow the Tao to renew and complete them.

- 16.1 Work toward emptiness and openness. Cultivate stillness. Breathe harmony. Become tranquility.
- 16.2 As the ten thousand things rise and fall, rise and fall, just witness their return to the root.
- 16.3 Everything that flourishes dissolves again into the source. To dissolve back into the source is to find peace. To find peace is to recover your true nature. To recover your true nature is to know the constancy of Tao. To know the constancy of Tao is insight.
- 16.4 Insight opens your mind. An open mind leads to an open heart. Openheartedness leads to justice. Justice is an expression of divinity. Divinity is oneness with Tao.

16.5 Oneness with Tao is freedom from harm, indescribable pleasure, eternal life.

17.1 The best leader is one whose existence is barely known. Next best is one who is lived and praised. Next is one who is feared. Worst of all is a leader who is despised.

17.2 If you fail to trust people, they won't turn out to be trustworthy.

17.3 Therefore, guide others by quietly relying on Tao. Then, when the work is done, the people can say, "We did this ourselves."

18.1 When people lose sight of the Tao, codes of morality and justice are created.

18.2 When cleverness and strategies are in use, hypocrites are everywhere.

18.3 When families forego natural harmony, parents become pious and children become dutiful.

18.4 When the nation is reigned by darkness, patriotic advisers abound.

19.1 Give up religiosity and knowledge, and the people will benefit a hundredfold.

19.2 Discard morality and righteousness, and the people will return to natural love.

19.3 Abandon shrewdness and profiteering, and there won't be any robbers or thieves.

19.4 These are external matters, however.

19.5 What is most important is what happens within: look to what is pure; hold to what is simple; let go of self-interest; temper your desires.

20.1 Be done with knowing and your worries will disappear. How much difference is there between yes and no? How much distinction between good and evil?

20.2 Fearing what others fear, admiring what they admire-nonsense.

20.3 Conventional people are jolly and reckless, feasting on worldly things and carrying on as though every day were the beginning of spring. I alone remain uncommitted, like an infant who hasn't yet smiled: lost, quietly drifting, unattached to ideas and places and things.

20.4 Conventional people hoard more than they need, but I possess nothing at all, know nothing at all, understand nothing at all.

20.5 They are bright; I am dark. They are sharp; I am dull. Like the sea, I am calm and indifferent. Like the wind I have no particular direction.

20.6 Everyone else takes his place and does his job; I alone remain wild and natural and free. I am different from others; my sustenance comes directly from the Mother.

21.1 The greatest virtue is to follow Tao, and only Tao.

21.2 You might say, "But Tao is illusive! Evasive! Mysterious! Dark! How can one follow that?" By following this: Out of silent subtle mystery emerge images. These images coalesce into forms. Within each form is contained the seed and essence of life. Thus do all things emerge and expand out of darkness and emptiness.

21.3 Because its essence is real and evident in the origins of all things, the name of the Tao has survived since the beginning of time.

21.4 How can I know the circumstances of the origins of all things? Exactly by this phenomenon.

22.1 Allow yourself to yield, and you can stay centered. Allow yourself to bend, and you will stay straight. Allow yourself to be empty, and you'll get filled up. Allow yourself to be exhausted, and you'll be renewed. Having little, you can receive much. Having much, you'll just become confused.

22.2 Therefore the sage embraces the oneness and becomes a pattern for the whole world.

22.3 She doesn't display herself, so she becomes illuminated. She doesn't justify herself, so she becomes distinguished. She doesn't boast, so she is recognized. She doesn't claim credit, so she advances and endures.

22.4 She doesn't contend, so no one can contend with her.

22.5 "Yield and you can stay centered"- Is this saying meaningless? Stay whole, and all things return to you.

23.1 Nature is sparing with speech: a whirlwind doesn't last all morning; a rain shower doesn't last all day.

23.2 What causes these? Heaven and earth. If heaven and earth can't make something famous endure, how could man?

23.3

23.4 Concentrate on Tao and you'll experience Tao. Concentrate on power and you'll experience power. Concentrate on loss and you'll experience loss.

23.5 If you won't trust, you won't be trusted.

24.1 A man who tiptoes can't stand. A man who straddles can't walk.

24.2 A man who shows off can't shine. A man who boasts of his achievements has no merit.

24.3 A man who brags will not endure.

24.4 To a person of Tao, these things are excess food and superfluous behaviour. Because nothing good can come of them, he doesn't indulge in them.

25.1 Something mysterious and perfect existed before even heaven and earth were born. Silent, immeasurable, standing alone and unchanging, moving without end or exhaustion, it is the mother of the known and unknown universe.

25.2 I don't know its name, so I call it by an alias: Tao. Forced to describe it, I only say, "It is great."

25.3 That which is great continues. That which continues goes far. That which goes far returns.

25.4 Therefore Tao is great, heaven is great, earth is great, a person of Tao is great. These are the four greatneses in the universe.

25.5 A person of Tao follows earth. Earth follows Heaven. Heaven follows Tao. Tao follows its own nature.

26.1 Heaviness is the root of lightness. Tranquility is the master of agitation.

26.2 This is why the sage travels all day without ever losing sight of her baggage. She may live in a glorious palace, but she isn't attached to its pleasures.

26.3 Why should the lord of ten thousand chariots behave lightly in the world?

26.4 One who acts lightly loses her foundation. One who becomes agitated sacrifices her mastery.

27.1 A good runner leaves no tracks; A good speaker makes no slips; A good planner doesn't have to scheme.

27.2 The best lock has no bolt, and no one can open it. The best knot uses no rope, and no one can untie it.

27.3 Thus the master is always good at saving people, and doesn't abandon anyone; Always good at saving things, and doesn't waste anything. This is known as "Following the light."

27.4 What is a good man but a bad man's teacher? What is a bad man but a good man's charge?

27.5 It doesn't matter how smart you are if you don't have the sense to honour your teachers and cherish your responsibilities. This is an essential teaching of Tao.

28.1 To know the masculine and yet cleave to the feminine is to be the womb for the world. Being the womb for the world, never departing from the eternal power of Tao, you become as an infant once again: immortal.

28.2 To know the bright and yet hold to the dull is to be an example for the world. Being the example for the world, not deviating from the everlasting power of Tao, you return to the infinite once again: limitless.

28.3 To know honour and yet keep to humility is to be the valley for the world. Being the valley for the world, rich with the primal power of Tao, you return once again to simplicity, like uncarved wood.

28.4 Allow Tao to carve you into a vessel for Tao. Then you can serve the world without mutilating it.

29.1 If you try to grab hold of the world and do what you want with it, you won't succeed.

29.2 The world is a vessel for spirit, and it wasn't made to be manipulated. Tamper with it and you'll spoil it. Hold it, and you'll lose it.

29.3 With Tao, sometimes you move ahead and sometimes you stay back; Sometimes you work hard and sometimes you rest; Sometimes you're strong and sometimes you're weak; Sometimes you're up; sometimes you're down.

29.4 The sage remains sensitive, avoiding extremes, avoiding extravagance, avoiding excess.

30.1 Those who wish to use Tao to influence others don't rely on force or weapons or military strategies. Force rebounds.

30.2 Weapons turn on their wielders. Battles are inevitably followed by famines.

30.3 Just do what needs to be done, and then stop. Attain your purpose, but don't press your advantage.

30.4 Be resolute, but don't boast. Succeed, but don't crow. Accomplish, but don't overpower.

30.5 Overdoing things invites decay, and this is against Tao. Whatever is against Tao soon ceases to be.

31.1 Weapons are tools of evil, shunned and avoided by everything in nature. Because people of Tao follow nature, they want nothing to do with weapons.

31.2 Unevolved people are eager to act out of strength, but a person of Tao values peace and quiet. He knows that every being is born of the womb of Tao. This means that his enemies are his enemies second, his own brothers and sisters first.

31.3 Thus he resorts to weapons only in the direst necessity, and then uses them with utmost restraint.

31.4 He takes no pleasure in victory, because to rejoice in victory is to delight in killing. Whoever delights in killing will not find success in this world.

31.5 Observe victories as you observe a death in the family: with sorrow and mourning.

31.6 Every victory is a funeral for kin.

32.4 When this simplicity is divided, every thing and not-thing needs a name. Once there are names, the process of distinction should stop. To know when to stop is to be free from danger.

32.1 The primal eternal Tao is an unnameable simplicity. Though small, there is nothing under all of heaven that can subjugate it.

32.2 If a leader abides by it, all beings are naturally drawn to him.

32.3 Heaven and earth come together in harmony and sweet rain falls everywhere. People cooperate voluntarily, without any instruction.

32.5 Tao in the world is like streams flowing into the sea.

33.1 Knowing others is intelligence; knowing the self is enlightenment.

33.2 Conquering others is power; conquering the self is strength.

33.3 Know what is enough, and you'll be rich. Persevere, and you'll develop a will.

33.4 Remain in the center, and you'll always be at home. Die without dying, and you'll endure forever.

34.1 The great Tao floods and flows in every direction.

34.2 Everything in existence depends on it, and it doesn't deny them. It accomplishes its work without naming or making claims for itself. Everything in existence is clothed and nourished by it, but it doesn't lord over anything.

34.3 Aimless, ambitionless, it might be called "small."

34.4 Everything in existence returns to it, and still it doesn't lord over anything. Thus it might also be called "great."

34.5 Because it has no desire to be great, it can achieve greatness.

35.1 Stay centered in the Tao and the world comes to you: Comes, and isn't harmed; Comes, and finds contentment.

35.2 Most travelers are drawn to music and good food.

35.3 When Tao is talked about, the words can seem bland and flavourless. Looked at, it may not catch the eye. Listened to, it might not seduce the ear. Used, it can never be exhausted.

36.1 What is ultimately to be reduced must first be expanded . What is ultimately to be weakened must first be made strong. What is ultimately to be discarded must first be embraced. What is ultimately to be taken away must first be given.

36.2 This is called subtle insight.

36.3 The soft overcomes the hard. The weak overcomes the strong. The Tao should never be abandoned. Weapons should never be displayed.

37.1 Eternal Tao doesn't do anything, yet it leaves nothing undone.

37.2 If you abide by it, everything in existence will transform itself. When, in the process of self-transformation, desires are aroused, calm them with nameless simplicity.

37.3 When desires are dissolved in the primal presence, peace and harmony naturally occur, and the world orders itself.

38.1 A truly good person doesn't dwell on her goodness. Thus she can be good. A person of false goodness never forgets her goodness. Thus her goodness is always false.

38.2 A truly good person does nothing, yet nothing remains undone. A person of false goodness is forever doing, yet everything remains forever undone.

38.3 Those who are interested in service act without motive. Those who are interested in righteousness act with motives of all sorts. Those who are interested in propriety act, and receiving no response, they roll up their sleeves and use force.

38.4 When Tao is lost, goodness appears. When goodness is lost, philanthropy appears. When philanthropy is lost, justice appears. When justice is lost, only etiquette is left.

38.5 Etiquette is the faintest husk of real loyalty and faith, and it is the beginning of confusion. Knowledge of the future is only a blossom of Tao; to become preoccupied with it is folly.

38.6 Thus the sage sets her sights on the substance and not the surface, on the fruit and not the flower. Leaving the one, she gains the other.

39.1 From ancient times these have attained oneness with Tao: Heaven attained oneness and became clear. Earth attained oneness and became peaceful. Spirits attained oneness and became strong.

39.2 Valleys attained oneness and became full. Beings attained oneness and became fertile. All are what they are by virtue of oneness.

39.3 Heaven without clarity would fall. Earth without peace would explode. Spirits without strength would dissipate.

39.4 Valleys without fullness would dry up. Beings without fertility would die off. Sages without wholeness would stumble and fall.

39.5 Humility is the root of greatness.

39.6 Those in high positions do well to think of themselves as powerless, small and unworthy. Isn't this taking humility for the root?

39.7 Attain honour without being honoured.

39.8 Don't shine like jade, or chime like bells.

40.1 Returning to the root is the movement of Tao. Quietness is how it functions.

40.2 The ten thousand things are born of being. Being is born of nothing.

41.1 When a wise person hears Tao, he practices it diligently. When an average person hears Tao, he practices it sometimes, and just as often ignores it.

41.2 When an inferior person hears Tao, he roars with laughter. If he didn't laugh, it wouldn't be Tao.

41.3 Thus the age old sayings: The way to illumination appears dark. The way that advances appears to retreat. The way that is easy appears to be hard. The highest virtue appears empty. The purest goodness appears soiled. The most profound creativity appears fallow.

41.4 The strongest power appears weak. The most genuine appears unreal. The greatest space has no corners. The greatest talent matures slowly. The greatest voice can't be heard. The greatest image can't be seen.

41.5 Tao is hidden and has no name. Tao alone nourishes and fulfills all things.

42.1 Nonbeing gives birth to the oneness. The oneness gives birth to yin and yang. Yin and Yang give birth to heaven, earth, and beings. Heaven, earth, and beings give birth to everything in existence.

42.2 Therefore everything in existence carries within it both yin and yang, and attains its harmony by blending together these two vital breaths.

42.3 Ordinary people hate nothing more than to be powerless, small, and unworthy. Yet this is how superior people describe themselves.

42.4 Gain is loss. Loss is gain.

42.5 I repeat what others have said: The strong and violent don't die natural deaths. This is the very essence of my teaching.

43.1 The soft overcomes the hard in the world as a gentle rider controls a galloping horse. That without substance can penetrate where there is no space. By these I know the benefit of nonaction.

43.2 Teaching without words, working without actions-nothing in the world can compare with them.

44.1 Which is more precious, fame or health? Which is more valuable, health or wealth? Which is more harmful, winning or losing?

44.2 The more excessive your love, the greater your suffering. The longer you hoard, the heavier your losses.

44.3 Knowing what is enough is freedom. Knowing when to stop is safety. Practice these, and you'll endure.

45.1 The greatest perfection seems imperfect, yet its usefulness is endless. The greatest fullness seems empty, yet its usefulness is inexhaustible. Great straightness seems flexible.

45.2 Great skill looks clumsy. Great eloquence sounds awkward.

45.3 Movement triumphs over cold. Stillness triumphs over heat. Clarity and tranquility set the whole world in order.

46.1 When the world practices Tao, horses fertilize the fields. When the world ignores Tao, horses are bred for war.

46.2 There is no greater calamity than desire, no greater curse than greed.

46.3 Know that enough is enough, and you'll always have enough.

47.1 Without going out the door, you can know the world. Without looking out the window, you can see heaven. The farther you travel, the less you know.

47.2 Thus the wise person knows without traveling, understands without seeing, accomplishes without acting.

48.1 In the pursuit of learning, every day something is added. In the pursuit of Tao, every day something is dropped.

48.2 Less and less is done, until one arrives at nonaction. When nothing is done, nothing is left undone. The world is won by letting things take their own course.

48.3 If you still have ambitions, its out of your reach.

49.1 The sage has no set mind. She adopts the concerns of others as her own.

49.2 She is good to the good. She is also good to the bad. This is real goodness.

49.3 She trusts the trustworthy. She also trusts the untrustworthy. This is real trust.

49.4 The sage takes the minds of the worldly and spins them around. People drop their ideas and agendas, and she guides them like beloved children.

50.1 Between their births and their deaths,

50.2 three out of ten are attached to life, three out of ten are attached to death, three out of ten are just idly passing through.

Only one knows how to die and stay dead and still go on living.

50.3 That one hasn't any ambitions, hasn't any ideas, makes no plans. From this mysterious place of not-knowing and non-doing he gives birth to whatever is needed in the moment. Because he is constantly filling his being with nonbeing, he can travel the wilds without worrying about tigers or wild buffalo, or he can cross a battlefield without armour or weapon.

50.4 No tiger can claw him. No buffalo can gore him. No weapon can pierce him. Why is this so? Because he has died, there isn't any more room for death in him.

51.1 Tao gives life to all beings. Nature nourishes them. Fellow creatures shape them. Circumstances complete them. Everything in existence respects Tao and honours nature

51.2 - not by decree, but spontaneously. Tao gives life to all beings. Nature watches over them, develops them, shelters them, nurses them, grows them, ripens them, completes them, buries them, and returns them.

51.3 Giving birth, nourishing life, shaping things without possessing them, serving without expectation of reward, leading without dominating: These are the profound virtues of nature, and of nature's best beings.

52.1 The origin and mother of everything in the world is Tao.

52.2 Know the mother and you can know the children. Having known the children, return to their source and hold on to her.

Abiding by the mother, you are free from danger, even when your body dies.

52.3 Don't live for your senses. Close your mouth, close all the body's openings, and reside in the original unity. In this way you can pass your life in peace and contentment.

52.4 Open your mouth, increase your activities, start making distinctions between things, and you'll toil forever without hope.

52.5 See the subtle and be illuminated. Abide in gentleness and be strong.

52.6 Use your light, and return to insight. Don't expose yourself to trouble. This is following Tao.

53.1 Because I have a little wisdom, I choose to walk the great path of Tao and fear nothing except to stray from it.

53.2 The great way is very smooth and easy, but some people are fond of getting sidetracked.

53.3 When a ruler's palace is full of treasure, the people's fields are weedy and their granaries are empty.

53.4 If the ruler wears fancy clothes and his house is full of weapons, if his table is laden with extravagant food and drink and everywhere one looks he has more wealth than he can use, the ruler is a robber and thief. This is not in keeping with Tao.

54.1 Plant yourself firmly in the Tao and you won't ever be uprooted. Embrace Tao firmly and you won't ever be separated from it. Your children will thrive, and your children's children.

54.2 Cultivate goodness in your self, and goodness will be genuine. Cultivate it in your family, and goodness will flourish.

Cultivate it in your community, and goodness will grow and multiply. Cultivate it in your country, and goodness will be abundant. Cultivate it in the world, and goodness will be everywhere.

54.3

54.4 How do I know the world works like this? By watching.

55.1 She who is filled with goodness is like a newborn child: wasps and snakes will not bite it, fierce beasts will not attack it, birds of prey will not pounce on it. Its bones are soft and its muscles weak, but its grip is firm.

55.2 It hasn't yet known the union of male and female, yet its organ stirs with vitality.

55.3 It can howl all day without becoming hoarse, so perfect is its harmony. To know harmony is to know the eternal. To know the eternal is to be illumined.

55.4 Prolonging life is not harmonious./ Coercing the breath is unnatural.

55.5 Things which are overdeveloped must decay. All this is contrary to Tao, and whatever is contrary to Tao soon ceases to be.

56.1 Those who know don't talk. Those who talk don't know.

56.2 Close your mouth. Block the door. Quiet your senses. Blunt the sharpness. Untie the tangles. Soften the brightness. Be one with the dust, and enter the primal oneness.

56.3 One who has merged with Tao in this way can't be courted, can't be bought, can't be harmed, can't be honoured, can't be humiliated. He is the treasure of the world.

57.1 Govern a nation by following nature. Fight a war with unexpected moves. Win the world by letting go. How do I know this? From seeing these:

57.2 The more prohibitions there are, the poorer people become. The more weapons there are, the darker things become.

57.3 The more laws there are, the greater the number of scoundrels.

57.4 Therefore the sage says: I take no action, and people transform themselves. I love tranquility, and people naturally do what is right.

57.5 I don't interfere, and people prosper on their own. I have no desires, and people return to simplicity.

58.1 When the government is dull and sleepy, people are wholesome and good. When the government is sharp and exacting, people are cunning and mean.

58.2 Good rests upon bad. Bad hides within good.

58.3 Who knows where the turning point is? Whether government or person, if you aren't tranquil and honest, the normal flips to the abnormal, the auspicious reverts to the bizarre, and your bewilderment lasts for a long time.

58.4 Therefore the sage does what is right without acting righteous, points without piercing, straightens without straining, enlightens without dazzling.

59.1 In governing people and serving heaven, there is nothing better than moderation.

59.2 To be moderate is to follow Tao without straying. To follow Tao without straying is to become filled with good energy. To be filled with good energy is to overcome all things. To overcome all things is to know that all things are possible.

59.3 She who knows that all things are possible is fit to govern people.

59.4 Because she is one with the mother, her roots go deep, her foundation stands firm, her life lasts long, her vision endures.

60.1 Governing a large country is like cooking a small fish.

60.2 If it's done in accordance with Tao, nothing bad will happen. Guide the world with Tao, and evil won't be a problem.

60.3 Not that it won't be around, but it won't find an opening, it can't harm anyone.

60.4 The sage doesn't harm anyone, either. When there's no harm on this side, no harm on that, goodness flows back and forth like water.

61.1 A great country is like a low-lying land into which many streams flow. It draws powerful energies to it as a receptive woman draws an eager man. The feminine can always conquer the masculine by yielding and taking the lower position. In this way she becomes as low-lying land: in time, everything comes her way.

61.2 Therefore a great country can win over a small country by practicing humility. A small country can also win over a great country by practicing humility.

61.3 One wins by willingly taking the lower position. The other wins by willingly acknowledging its lower position.

61.4 The great country wants to embrace and nourish more people. The small country wants to ably serve its benefactor.

61.5 Both accomplish their ends by yielding.

62.1 Tao is the hidden secret source of all life. Good men recognize that Tao provides for them and therefore they esteem it. Bad men don't recognize this, but the Tao doesn't stop providing for them.

62.2 Beautiful words win some men honours; good deeds buy others acclaim. But the Tao values everyone, not just those who excel. What's the sense in discarding anyone?

62.3 Thus, on the day a new king is crowned or powerful ministers installed, while others rush forward with gifts and praises, just be still and offer Tao.

62.4 Why have sages prized Tao for so long? Because with Tao, he who seeks finds, and he who has flaws is forgiven. This is why it is the treasure of the world.

63.1 Act by not acting, accomplish by not straining, understand by not knowing.

63.2 Regard the humble as exalted and the exalted as humble. Remedy injury with tranquil repair.

63.3 Meet the difficult while it is still easy; cross the universe one step at a time.

63.4

63.5 Because the sage doesn't try anything too big, she's able to accomplish big things.

63.6 Those who commit lightly seldom come through. Those who think everything is easy will find everything hard.

63.7 The sage understands that everything is difficult, and thus in the end has no difficulties.

64.1 What has equilibrium is easy to maintain. What hasn't begun is easy to plan. What is fragile is easy to shatter. What is small is easy to scatter.

64.2 Deal with things before they arise. Cultivate order before confusion sets in.

64.3 The tallest tree springs from a tiny shoot. The tallest tower is built from a pile of dirt. A journey of a thousand miles begins at your feet.

64.4 Interfere with things, and you'll be defeated by them. Hold on to things, and you'll lose them. The sage doesn't interfere, so he doesn't fail; doesn't hold on, so he doesn't lose.

64.5 Because projects often come to ruin just before completion, he takes as much care at the end as he did at the beginning, and thereby succeeds.

64.6 His only desire is to be free of desire. Fancying nothing, learning not to know, electing not to interfere, he helps all beings become themselves.

65.1 In ancient times those who practiced Tao didn't want to enlighten people, but to keep them natural and simple.

65.2 When cleverness and intellect abound, people don't do well. A leader who governs with cleverness cheats his people. A leader who governs with simplicity is a blessing to his people.

65.3 These are the two alternatives. Understanding them is subtle insight.

65.4 The use of subtle insight brings all things back into the oneness.

66.1 The sea is king of the valleys and streams because it is willing to be beneath them.

66.2 One who wishes to guide the people should be humble in her speech toward them. One who wishes to lead the people must learn the art of following them.

66.3 The sage is above the people, but they don't feel her weight. She stays ahead of the people, and no harm comes to them. She has the affection of the whole world.

66.4 Because she contends with no one, no one can contend with her.

67.1 Everyone under heaven says that my Tao is great, but inconceivable. It is its very greatness that makes it inconceivable! If it could be conceived of, how small it would be!

67.2 I have three treasures to hold and protect: The first is motherly love. The second is economy. The third is daring not to be first in the world.

67.3 With motherly love one can be courageous. With economy one can be expansive. With humility one can lead.

67.4 To be courageous without motherly love, To be expansive without practicing economy, To go to the front without humility - this is courting death.

67.5 Venture with love and you win the battle. Defend with love and you are invulnerable. Heaven's secret is motherly love.

68.1 A good general doesn't show off his power. a good warrior doesn't get angry.

68.2 A good conqueror doesn't attack people. A good employer puts himself below his employees.

68.3 This is called the power of noncontention. This is called using the strength of others. This is called perfect emulation of heaven.

69.1 In conflict it is better to be receptive than aggressive, better to retreat a foot than advance an inch.

69.2 This is called moving ahead without advancing, capturing the enemy without attacking him.

69.3 There is no greater misfortune than underestimating your opponent. To underestimate your opponent is to forsake your three treasures.

69.4 When opposing forces are engaged in conflict, the one who fights with sorrow will triumph.

70.1 My words are very easy to understand, very easy to put into practice. But you can't "understand" them, can't put them into "practice."

70.2 Words have their ruler. Events have their origins. People who can't understand this can't understand me. Those who do are few.

70.3 They wear coarse cloth and carry jade in their breasts.

71.1 Moving from knowing to not knowing - this is good. Moving from not knowing to knowing - this is sickness. You have to become sick of your sickness before you can get rid of it.

71.2 The sage isn't sick. He's sick of his sickness. Therefore he's not sick.

72.1 If people fear your power, then you don't really have any.

72.2 Leave them alone in their homes. Respect them in their lives, and they won't grow weary of you.

72.3 The sage knows herself, but doesn't dwell on herself; Loves herself, but no more than she loves everyone else. She adopts the concerns of heaven as her own.

73.1 Those who are courageous out of daring are killed. Those who are courageous out of love survive.
73.2 The first is harmful, the second beneficial. Heaven prohibits some things, but who knows the reason? Not even the sage knows the answer to this.
73.3 This is the way of heaven: It doesn't contend, but easily overcomes. It doesn't speak, but always responds. It can't be summoned, but comes of its own volition. Utterly without haste, it plans for everything.
73.4 The net of heaven is vast. Though its meshes are wide, nothing slips through.

74.1 If people don't love life, they won't fear death, and threatening them with it won't work.
74.2 If people have lives worth living, then the threat of death is meaningful, and they'll do what is right to avoid it.
74.3 But killing itself should be the province of the great executioner alone. Trying to take his place and kill is like cutting wood in the place of the master carpenter: The odds are you'll hurt your own hand.

75.1 What makes people go hungry? Rulers eating up all their money in taxes.
75.2 What makes people rebellious? Rulers who can't stop interfering.
75.3 What makes people take death so lightly? People taking life too seriously. Those who enjoy life are wiser than those who enjoy life.

76.1 At birth a person is soft and yielding, at death stiff and hard.
76.2 All beings, the grass, the trees: alive, soft, and yielding; dead, stiff, and hard.
76.3 Therefore the hard and inflexible are friends of death. The soft and yielding are friends of life.
76.4 An unyielding army is destroyed. An unbending tree breaks.
76.5 The hard must humble itself or be otherwise humbled. The soft will ultimately ascend.

77.1 The way of heaven is like the bending of a bow. What is high up gets pulled down. What is low down gets pulled up.
77.2 Heaven takes from what has too much and gives to what doesn't have enough. Man is different: he takes from those who have too little and gives to those who have too much.
77.3 Who has a genuine abundance to give to the world? Only a person of Tao.
77.4 He acts without expectation, accomplishes without taking credit, and has no desire to display his merit.

78.1 Nothing under heaven is as soft and yielding as water. Yet for attacking the hard and strong, nothing can compare with it.
78.2 The weak overcomes the strong. The soft overcomes the hard. Everyone knows this, but none have the ability to practice it.
78.3 Therefore the sage says: One who accepts the dung of the nation becomes the master of soil and sustenance. One who deals with the evils of the nation becomes king under heaven. True words seem paradoxical.

79.1 In the reconciling of resentments, ill will often lingers. What's the good in that?
79.2 The person who is truly good concerns herself always with what she owes others, never with what they owe her.
79.3
79.4 The Tao of heaven is impartial. If you perpetuate it, it perpetuates you.

80.1 Let there be small countries with few people. Let the people have no use for complicated machinery. Let them be mindful of death so that they don't move too far from their birthplaces.
80.2 If there be boats and carriages, let there be nowhere to take them to. If there are weapons, let there be no occasion to display them.
80.3 Let the people's responsibilities be few enough that they may remember them by knotting a string. Let them enjoy their food, be content with their clothes, be satisfied with their homes, and take pleasure in their customs.
80.4 Though the next country may be close enough to hear the barking of dogs and the crowing of its rooster, let the people grow old and die without feeling compelled to visit it.

81.1 True words aren't elaborate. Elaborate words aren't true.
81.2 Good people don't argue. People who argue aren't good.
81.3 People who know aren't full of facts. People who are full of facts don't know.
81.4 The sage doesn't hoard. She increases her treasure by working for her fellow human beings. She increases her abundance by giving herself to them.
81.5 The way of heaven: benefit all, harm none. The way of the sage: work for all, contend with none.

Walker version

- 1.1 Tao is beyond words and beyond understanding. Words may be used to speak of it, but they cannot contain it.
- 1.2 Tao existed before words and names, before heaven and earth, before the ten thousand things. It is the unlimited father and mother of all limited things.
- 1.3 Therefore, to see beyond all boundaries to the subtle heart of things, dispense with names, with concepts, with expectations and ambitions and differences.
- 1.4 Tao and its many manifestations arise from the same source:
- 1.5 subtle wonder within mysterious darkness. This is the beginning of all understanding.

- 2.1 When people find one thing beautiful, another consequently becomes ugly.
- 2.2 When one man is held up as good, another is judged deficient.
- 2.3 Similarly, being and non-being balance each other; difficult and easy define each other; long and short illustrate each other;
- 2.4 high and low rest upon each other; voice and song meld into harmony; what is to come follows upon what has been.
- 2.5 The wise person acts without effort and teaches by quiet example.
- 2.6 He accepts things as they come, creates without possessing, nourishes without demanding, accomplishes without taking credit.
- 2.7 Because he constantly forgets himself, he is never forgotten.

- 3.1 When praise is lavished upon the famous, the people contend and compete with one another.
- 3.2 When exotic goods are traded and treasured, the compulsion to steal is felt.
- 3.3 When desires are constantly stimulated, people become disturbed and confused.
- 3.4 Therefore, the wise person sets an example by emptying her mind, opening her heart, relaxing her ambitions, relinquishing her desires, cultivating her character.
- 3.5 having conquered her own cunning and cravings, she can't be manipulated by anyone.
- 3.6 Do by not-doing. Act with non-action. Allow order to arise of itself.

- 4.1 Tao is a whirling emptiness, yet when used it cannot be exhausted.
- 4.2 Out of this mysterious well flows everything in existence.
- 4.3 Blunting sharp edges, Untangling knots, Softening the glare, It evolves us all and makes the whole world one.
- 4.4 Something is there, hidden and deep!
- 4.5 But I do not know whose child it is - It came even before God.

- 5.1 Heaven and Earth are not sentimental; they regard all things as dispensable.
- 5.2 The sage isn't sentimental, either; He views all forms as ephemeral and transitional.
- 5.3 Tao is like a bellows: empty but inexhaustible. The more you move it the more it makes.
- 5.4 Too much talk about it evaporates your understanding, though. Simply stay at the center of the circle.

- 6.1 The heart of Tao is immortal, the mysterious fertile mother of us all,
- 6.2 of heaven and earth, of every thing and not-thing.
- 6.3 Invisible yet ever present, you can use it forever without using it up.

- 7.1 Heaven is eternal, earth everlasting.
- 7.2 They endure this way because they do not live for themselves.
- 7.3 In the same way, the wise person puts himself last, and thereby finds himself first;
- 7.4 Holds himself outside, and thereby remains at the center;
- 7.5 Abandons himself, and is thereby fulfilled.

- 8.1 The highest good is like water which benefits all things and contends with none. it flows in low places that others disdain and thus it is close to the Tao.
- 8.2 In living, choose your ground well. In thought, stay deep in the heart. In relationships, be generous. In speaking, hold to the truth.
- 8.3 In leadership, be organized. In work, do your best. In action, be timely.
- 8.4 If you compete with no one, no one can compete with you.

- 9.1 Filling to fullness is not as good as stopping at the right moment.
- 9.2 Oversharpening a blade causes its edge to be lost.
- 9.3 Line your home with treasures and you won't be able to defend it.
- 9.4 Amass possessions, establish positions, display your pride: Soon enough disaster drives you to your knees.
- 9.5 This is the way of heaven: do your work, then quietly step back.

- 10.1 Can you marry your spirit and body to the oneness and never depart from it?
- 10.2 Can you ride your breath until your entire being is as supple as the body of an infant?
- 10.3 Can you cleanse your inner vision until you see heaven in every direction?
- 10.4 Can you love the people and govern them without conniving and manipulating?
- 10.5 Can you bear heaven's children in all that you do and are?
- 10.6 Can you give the wisdom of your heart precedence over the learning of your head?
- 10.7 Giving birth, nourishing life, shaping things without possessing them, serving without expectation of reward, leading without dominating: These are the profound virtues of nature, and of nature's best things.

- 11.1 Thirty spokes meet at a hollowed-out hub; the wheel won't work without its hole.
- 11.2 A vessel is moulded from solid clay; its inner emptiness makes it useful.
- 11.3 To make a room, you have to cut doors and windows; without openings, a place isn't livable.
- 11.4 To make use of what is here, you must make use of what is not

- 12.1 The five colours blind the eye. The five tones deafen the ear. The five flavours overwhelm the palate.
- 12.2 Fancy things get in the way of one's growth. Racing here and there, hunting for this and that - Good ways to madden your mind, that's all.
- 12.3 Relinquish what is without. Cultivate what is within. Live for your center, not your senses.

- 13.1 Favour and disgrace are equally problematic. Hope and fear are phantoms of the body.
- 13.2 What does it mean the "favour and disgrace are equally problematic"? Favour lifts you up; disgrace knocks you down. Either one depends on the opinions of others and causes you to depart from your center.
- 13.3 What does it mean that "hope and fear are phantoms of the body"? When you regard your body as your self, hope and fear have real power over you. If you abandon the notion of body as self, hope and fear cannot touch you.
- 13.4 Know the universe as your self, and you can live absolutely anywhere in comfort. Love the world as your self, and you'll be able to care for it properly.

- 14.1 Looked at but not seen, listened to but not heard, grasped for but not held, formless, soundless, intangible:
- 14.2 the Tao resists analysis and defies comprehension.
- 14.3 Its rising is not about light, its setting not a matter of darkness. Unnameable, unending, emerging continually, and continually pouring back into nothingness,
- 14.4 It is formless form, unseeable image, elusive, evasive unimaginable mystery. Confront it, and you won't see its face. Follow it and you can't find an end.
- 14.5 Perceive its ancient subtle heart, however, and you become master of the moment. Know what came before time, and the beginning of wisdom is yours.

- 15.1 A sage is subtle, intuitive, penetrating, profound. His depths are mysterious and unfathomable.
- 15.2 The best one can do is describe his appearance: The sage is alert as a person crossing a winter stream; as circumspect as a person with neighbours on all four sides; as respectful as a thoughtful guest;
- 15.3 as yielding as melting ice; as simple as uncarved wood; as open as a valley; as chaotic as a muddy torrent.
- 15.4 Why "chaotic as a muddy torrent"? Because clarity is learned by being patient in the heart of chaos. Tolerating disarray, remaining at rest, gradually one learns to allow muddy water to settle and proper responses to reveal themselves.
- 15.5 Those who aspire to Tao don't long for fulfillment. They selflessly allow the Tao to use and deplete them; They calmly allow the Tao to renew and complete them.

- 16.1 Work toward emptiness and openness. Cultivate stillness. Breathe harmony. Become tranquility.
- 16.2 As the ten thousand things rise and fall, rise and fall, just witness their return to the root.
- 16.3 Everything that flourishes dissolves again into the source. To dissolve back into the source is to find peace. To find peace is to recover your true nature. To recover your true nature is to know the constancy of Tao. To know the constancy of Tao is insight.

16.4 Insight opens your mind. An open mind leads to an open heart. Openheartedness leads to justice. Justice is an expression of divinity. Divinity is oneness with Tao.

16.5 Oneness with Tao is freedom from harm, indescribable pleasure, eternal life.

17.1 The best leader is one whose existence is barely known. Next best is one who is lived and praised. Next is one who is feared. Worst of all is a leader who is despised.

17.2 If you fail to trust people, they won't turn out to be trustworthy.

17.3 Therefore, guide others by quietly relying on Tao. Then, when the work is done, the people can say, "We did this ourselves."

18.1 When people lose sight of the Tao, codes of morality and justice are created.

18.2 When cleverness and strategies are in use, hypocrites are everywhere.

18.3 When families forego natural harmony, parents become pious and children become dutiful.

18.4 When the nation is reigned by darkness, patriotic advisers abound.

19.1 Give up religiosity and knowledge, and the people will benefit a hundredfold.

19.2 Discard morality and righteousness, and the people will return to natural love.

19.3 Abandon shrewdness and profiteering, and there won't be any robbers or thieves.

19.4 These are external matters, however.

19.5 What is most important is what happens within: look to what is pure; hold to what is simple; let go of self-interest; temper your desires.

20.1 Be done with knowing and your worries will disappear. How much difference is there between yes and no? How much distinction between good and evil?

20.2 Fearing what others fear, admiring what they admire-nonsense.

20.3 Conventional people are jolly and reckless, feasting on worldly things and carrying on as though every day were the beginning of spring. I alone remain uncommitted, like an infant who hasn't yet smiled: lost, quietly drifting, unattached to ideas and places and things.

20.4 Conventional people hoard more than they need, but I possess nothing at all, know nothing at all, understand nothing at all.

20.5 They are bright; I am dark. They are sharp; I am dull. Like the sea, I am calm and indifferent. Like the wind I have no particular direction.

20.6 Everyone else takes his place and does his job; I alone remain wild and natural and free. I am different from others; my sustenance comes directly from the Mother.

21.1 The greatest virtue is to follow Tao, and only Tao.

21.2 You might say, "But Tao is illusive! Evasive! Mysterious! Dark! How can one follow that?" By following this: Out of silent subtle mystery emerge images. These images coalesce into forms. Within each form is contained the seed and essence of life. Thus do all things emerge and expand out of darkness and emptiness.

21.3 Because its essence is real and evident in the origins of all things, the name of the Tao has survived since the beginning of time.

21.4 How can I know the circumstances of the origins of all things? Exactly by this phenomenon.

22.1 Allow yourself to yield, and you can stay centered. Allow yourself to bend, and you will stay straight. Allow yourself to be empty, and you'll get filled up. Allow yourself to be exhausted, and you'll be renewed. Having little, you can receive much. Having much, you'll just become confused.

22.2 Therefore the sage embraces the oneness and becomes a pattern for the whole world.

22.3 She doesn't display herself, so she becomes illuminated. She doesn't justify herself, so she becomes distinguished. She doesn't boast, so she is recognized. She doesn't claim credit, so she advances and endures.

22.4 She doesn't contend, so no one can contend with her.

22.5 "Yield and you can stay centered"- Is this saying meaningless? Stay whole, and all things return to you.

23.1 Nature is sparing with speech: a whirlwind doesn't last all morning; a rain shower doesn't last all day.

23.2 What causes these? Heaven and earth. If heaven and earth can't make something famous endure, how could man?

23.3

23.4 Concentrate on Tao and you'll experience Tao. Concentrate on power and you'll experience power. Concentrate on loss and you'll experience loss.

23.5 If you won't trust, you won't be trusted.

24.1 A man who tiptoes can't stand. A man who straddles can't walk.
24.2 A man who shows off can't shine. A man who boasts of his achievements has no merit.
24.3 A man who brags will not endure.
24.4 To a person of Tao, these things are excess food and superfluous behaviour. Because nothing good can come of them, he doesn't indulge in them.

25.1 Something mysterious and perfect existed before even heaven and earth were born. Silent, immeasurable, standing alone and unchanging, moving without end or exhaustion, it is the mother of the known and unknown universe.
25.2 I don't know its name, so I call it by an alias: Tao. Forced to describe it, I only say, "It is great."
25.3 That which is great continues. That which continues goes far. That which goes far returns.
25.4 Therefore Tao is great, heaven is great, earth is great, a person of Tao is great. These are the four greatnesses in the universe.
25.5 A person of Tao follows earth. Earth follows Heaven. Heaven follows Tao. Tao follows its own nature.

26.1 Heaviness is the root of lightness. Tranquility is the master of agitation.
26.2 This is why the sage travels all day without ever losing sight of her baggage. She may live in a glorious palace, but she isn't attached to its pleasures.
26.3 Why should the lord of ten thousand chariots behave lightly in the world?
26.4 One who acts lightly loses her foundation. One who becomes agitated sacrifices her mastery.

27.1 A good runner leaves no tracks; A good speaker makes no slips; A good planner doesn't have to scheme.
27.2 The best lock has no bolt, and no one can open it. The best knot uses no rope, and no one can untie it.
27.3 Thus the master is always good at saving people, and doesn't abandon anyone; Always good at saving things, and doesn't waste anything. This is known as "Following the light."
27.4 What is a good man but a bad man's teacher? What is a bad man but a good man's charge?
27.5 It doesn't matter how smart you are if you don't have the sense to honour your teachers and cherish your responsibilities. This is an essential teaching of Tao.

28.1 To know the masculine and yet cleave to the feminine is to be the womb for the world. Being the womb for the world, never departing from the eternal power of Tao, you become as an infant once again: immortal.
28.2 To know the bright and yet hold to the dull is to be an example for the world. Being the example for the world, not deviating from the everlasting power of Tao, you return to the infinite once again: limitless.
28.3 To know honour and yet keep to humility is to be the valley for the world. Being the valley for the world, rich with the primal power of Tao, you return once again to simplicity, like uncarved wood.
28.4 Allow Tao to carve you into a vessel for Tao. Then you can serve the world without mutilating it.

29.1 If you try to grab hold of the world and do what you want with it, you won't succeed.
29.2 The world is a vessel for spirit, and it wasn't made to be manipulated. Tamper with it and you'll spoil it. Hold it, and you'll lose it.
29.3 With Tao, sometimes you move ahead and sometimes you stay back; Sometimes you work hard and sometimes you rest; Sometimes you're strong and sometimes you're weak; Sometimes you're up; sometimes you're down.
29.4 The sage remains sensitive, avoiding extremes, avoiding extravagance, avoiding excess.

30.1 Those who wish to use Tao to influence others don't rely on force or weapons or military strategies. Force rebounds.
30.2 Weapons turn on their wielders. Battles are inevitably followed by famines.
30.3 Just do what needs to be done, and then stop. Attain your purpose, but don't press your advantage.
30.4 Be resolute, but don't boast. Succeed, but don't crow. Accomplish, but don't overpower.
30.5 Overdoing things invites decay, and this is against Tao. Whatever is against Tao soon ceases to be.

31.1 Weapons are tools of evil, shunned and avoided by everything in nature. Because people of Tao follow nature, they want nothing to do with weapons.
31.2 Unevolved people are eager to act out of strength, but a person of Tao values peace and quiet. He knows that every being is born of the womb of Tao. This means that his enemies are his enemies second, his own brothers and sisters first.
31.3 Thus he resorts to weapons only in the direst necessity, and then uses them with utmost restraint.
31.4 He takes no pleasure in victory, because to rejoice in victory is to delight in killing. Whoever delights in killing will not find success in this world.

31.5 Observe victories as you observe a death in the family: with sorrow and mourning.

31.6 Every victory is a funeral for kin.

32.4 When this simplicity is divided, every thing and not-thing needs a name. Once there are names, the process of distinction should stop. To know when to stop is to be free from danger.

32.1 The primal eternal Tao is an unnameable simplicity. Though small, there is nothing under all of heaven that can subjugate it.

32.2 If a leader abides by it, all beings are naturally drawn to him.

32.3 Heaven and earth come together in harmony and sweet rain falls everywhere. People cooperate voluntarily, without any instruction.

32.5 Tao in the world is like streams flowing into the sea.

33.1 Knowing others is intelligence; knowing the self is enlightenment.

33.2 Conquering others is power; conquering the self is strength.

33.3 Know what is enough, and you'll be rich. Persevere, and you'll develop a will.

33.4 Remain in the center, and you'll always be at home. Die without dying, and you'll endure forever.

34.1 The great Tao floods and flows in every direction.

34.2 Everything in existence depends on it, and it doesn't deny them. It accomplishes its work without naming or making claims for itself. Everything in existence is clothed and nourished by it, but it doesn't lord over anything.

34.3 Aimless, ambitionless, it might be called "small."

34.4 Everything in existence returns to it, and still it doesn't lord over anything. Thus it might also be called "great."

34.5 Because it has no desire to be great, it can achieve greatness.

35.1 Stay centered in the Tao and the world comes to you: Comes, and isn't harmed; Comes, and finds contentment.

35.2 Most travelers are drawn to music and good food.

35.3 When Tao is talked about, the words can seem bland and flavourless. Looked at, it may not catch the eye. Listened to, it might not seduce the ear. Used, it can never be exhausted.

36.1 What is ultimately to be reduced must first be expanded. What is ultimately to be weakened must first be made strong. What is ultimately to be discarded must first be embraced. What is ultimately to be taken away must first be given.

36.2 This is called subtle insight.

36.3 The soft overcomes the hard. The weak overcomes the strong. The Tao should never be abandoned. Weapons should never be displayed.

37.1 Eternal Tao doesn't do anything, yet it leaves nothing undone.

37.2 If you abide by it, everything in existence will transform itself. When, in the process of self-transformation, desires are aroused, calm them with nameless simplicity.

37.3 When desires are dissolved in the primal presence, peace and harmony naturally occur, and the world orders itself.

38.1 A truly good person doesn't dwell on her goodness. Thus she can be good. A person of false goodness never forgets her goodness. Thus her goodness is always false.

38.2 A truly good person does nothing, yet nothing remains undone. A person of false goodness is forever doing, yet everything remains forever undone.

38.3 Those who are interested in service act without motive. Those who are interested in righteousness act with motives of all sorts. Those who are interested in propriety act, and receiving no response, they roll up their sleeves and use force.

38.4 When Tao is lost, goodness appears. When goodness is lost, philanthropy appears. When philanthropy is lost, justice appears. When justice is lost, only etiquette is left.

38.5 Etiquette is the faintest husk of real loyalty and faith, and it is the beginning of confusion. Knowledge of the future is only a blossom of Tao; to become preoccupied with it is folly.

38.6 Thus the sage sets her sights on the substance and not the surface, on the fruit and not the flower. Leaving the one, she gains the other.

39.1 From ancient times these have attained oneness with Tao: Heaven attained oneness and became clear. Earth attained oneness and became peaceful. Spirits attained oneness and became strong.

39.2 Valleys attained oneness and became full. Beings attained oneness and became fertile. All are what they are by virtue of oneness.

39.3 Heaven without clarity would fall. Earth without peace would explode. Spirits without strength would dissipate.

39.4 Valleys without fullness would dry up. Beings without fertility would die off. Sages without wholeness would stumble and fall.

39.5 Humility is the root of greatness.

39.6 Those in high positions do well to think of themselves as powerless, small and unworthy. Isn't this taking humility for the root?

39.7 Attain honour without being honoured.

39.8 Don't shine like jade, or chime like bells.

40.1 Returning to the root is the movement of Tao. Quietness is how it functions.

40.2 The ten thousand things are born of being. Being is born of nothing.

41.1 When a wise person hears Tao, he practices it diligently. When an average person hears Tao, he practices it sometimes, and just as often ignores it.

41.2 When an inferior person hears Tao, he roars with laughter. If he didn't laugh, it wouldn't be Tao.

41.3 Thus the age old sayings: The way to illumination appears dark. The way that advances appears to retreat. The way that is easy appears to be hard. The highest virtue appears empty. The purest goodness appears soiled. The most profound creativity appears fallow.

41.4 The strongest power appears weak. The most genuine appears unreal. The greatest space has no corners. The greatest talent matures slowly. The greatest voice can't be heard. The greatest image can't be seen.

41.5 Tao is hidden and has no name. Tao alone nourishes and fulfills all things.

42.1 Nonbeing gives birth to the oneness. The oneness gives birth to yin and yang. Yin and Yang give birth to heaven, earth, and beings. Heaven, earth, and beings give birth to everything in existence.

42.2 Therefore everything in existence carries within it both yin and yang, and attains its harmony by blending together these two vital breaths.

42.3 Ordinary people hate nothing more than to be powerless, small, and unworthy. Yet this is how superior people describe themselves.

42.4 Gain is loss. Loss is gain.

42.5 I repeat what others have said: The strong and violent don't die natural deaths. This is the very essence of my teaching.

43.1 The soft overcomes the hard in the world as a gentle rider controls a galloping horse. That without substance can penetrate where there is no space. By these I know the benefit of nonaction.

43.2 Teaching without words, working without actions-nothing in the world can compare with them.

44.1 Which is more precious, fame or health? Which is more valuable, health or wealth? Which is more harmful, winning or losing?

44.2 The more excessive your love, the greater your suffering. The longer you hoard, the heavier your losses.

44.3 Knowing what is enough is freedom. Knowing when to stop is safety. Practice these, and you'll endure.

45.1 The greatest perfection seems imperfect, yet its usefulness is endless. The greatest fullness seems empty, yet its usefulness is inexhaustible. Great straightness seems flexible.

45.2 Great skill looks clumsy. Great eloquence sounds awkward.

45.3 Movement triumphs over cold. Stillness triumphs over heat. Clarity and tranquility set the whole world in order.

46.1 When the world practices Tao, horses fertilize the fields. When the world ignores Tao, horses are bred for war.

46.2 There is no greater calamity than desire, no greater curse than greed.

46.3 Know that enough is enough, and you'll always have enough.

47.1 Without going out the door, you can know the world. Without looking out the window, you can see heaven. The farther you travel, the less you know.

47.2 Thus the wise person knows without traveling, understands without seeing, accomplishes without acting.

48.1 In the pursuit of learning, every day something is added. In the pursuit of Tao, every day something is dropped.

48.2 Less and less is done, until one arrives at nonaction. When nothing is done, nothing is left undone. The world is won by letting things take their own course.

48.3 If you still have ambitions, its out of your reach.

49.1 The sage has no set mind. She adopts the concerns of others as her own.
49.2 She is good to the good. She is also good to the bad. This is real goodness.
49.3 She trusts the trustworthy. She also trusts the untrustworthy. This is real trust.
49.4 The sage takes the minds of the worldly and spins them around. People drop their ideas and agendas, and she guides them like beloved children.

50.1 Between their births and their deaths,
50.2 three out of ten are attached to life, three out of ten are attached to death, three out of ten are just idly passing through. Only one knows how to die and stay dead and still go on living.
50.3 That one hasn't any ambitions, hasn't any ideas, makes no plans. From this mysterious place of not-knowing and non-doing he gives birth to whatever is needed in the moment. Because he is constantly filling his being with nonbeing, he can travel the wilds without worrying about tigers or wild buffalo, or he can cross a battlefield without armour or weapon.
50.4 No tiger can claw him. No buffalo can gore him. No weapon can pierce him. Why is this so? Because he has died, there isn't any more room for death in him.

51.1 Tao gives life to all beings. Nature nourishes them. Fellow creatures shape them. Circumstances complete them. Everything in existence respects Tao and honours nature
51.2 - not by decree, but spontaneously. Tao gives life to all beings. Nature watches over them, develops them, shelters them, nurses them, grows them, ripens them, completes them, buries them, and returns them.
51.3 Giving birth, nourishing life, shaping things without possessing them, serving without expectation of reward, leading without dominating: These are the profound virtues of nature, and of nature's best beings.

52.1 The origin and mother of everything in the world is Tao.
52.2 Know the mother and you can know the children. Having known the children, return to their source and hold on to her. Abiding by the mother, you are free from danger, even when your body dies.
52.3 Don't live for your senses. Close your mouth, close all the body's openings, and reside in the original unity. In this way you can pass your life in peace and contentment.
52.4 Open your mouth, increase your activities, start making distinctions between things, and you'll toil forever without hope.
52.5 See the subtle and be illuminated. Abide in gentleness and be strong.
52.6 Use your light, and return to insight. Don't expose yourself to trouble. This is following Tao.

53.1 Because I have a little wisdom, I choose to walk the great path of Tao and fear nothing except to stray from it.
53.2 The great way is very smooth and easy, but some people are fond of getting sidetracked.
53.3 When a ruler's palace is full of treasure, the people's fields are weedy and their granaries are empty.
53.4 If the ruler wears fancy clothes and his house is full of weapons, if his table is laden with extravagant food and drink and everywhere one looks he has more wealth than he can use, the ruler is a robber and thief. This is not in keeping with Tao.

54.1 Plant yourself firmly in the Tao and you won't ever be uprooted. Embrace Tao firmly and you won't ever be separated from it. Your children will thrive, and your children's children.
54.2 Cultivate goodness in your self, and goodness will be genuine. Cultivate it in your family, and goodness will flourish. Cultivate it in your community, and goodness will grow and multiply. Cultivate it in your country, and goodness will be abundant. Cultivate it in the world, and goodness will be everywhere.
54.3
54.4 How do I know the world works like this? By watching.

55.1 She who is filled with goodness is like a newborn child: wasps and snakes will not bite it, fierce beasts will not attack it, birds of prey will not pounce on it. Its bones are soft and its muscles weak, but its grip is firm.
55.2 It hasn't yet known the union of male and female, yet its organ stirs with vitality.
55.3 It can howl all day without becoming hoarse, so perfect is its harmony. To know harmony is to know the eternal. To know the eternal is to be illumined.
55.4 Prolonging life is not harmonious./ Coercing the breath is unnatural.
55.5 Things which are overdeveloped must decay. All this is contrary to Tao, and whatever is contrary to Tao soon ceases to be.

56.1 Those who know don't talk. Those who talk don't know.
56.2 Close your mouth. Block the door. Quiet your senses. Blunt the sharpness. Untie the tangles. Soften the brightness. Be one with the dust, and enter the primal oneness.

56.3 One who has merged with Tao in this way can't be courted, can't be bought, can't be harmed, can't be honoured, can't be humiliated. He is the treasure of the world.

57.1 Govern a nation by following nature. Fight a war with unexpected moves. Win the world by letting go. How do I know this? From seeing these:

57.2 The more prohibitions there are, the poorer people become. The more weapons there are, the darker things become.

57.3 The more laws there are, the greater the number of scoundrels.

57.4 Therefore the sage says: I take no action, and people transform themselves. I love tranquility, and people naturally do what is right.

57.5 I don't interfere, and people prosper on their own. I have no desires, and people return to simplicity.

58.1 When the government is dull and sleepy, people are wholesome and good. When the government is sharp and exacting, people are cunning and mean.

58.2 Good rests upon bad. Bad hides within good.

58.3 Who knows where the turning point is? Whether government or person, if you aren't tranquil and honest, the normal flips to the abnormal, the auspicious reverts to the bizarre, and your bewilderment lasts for a long time.

58.4 Therefore the sage does what is right without acting righteous, points without piercing, straightens without straining, enlightens without dazzling.

59.1 In governing people and serving heaven, there is nothing better than moderation.

59.2 To be moderate is to follow Tao without straying. To follow Tao without straying is to become filled with good energy. To be filled with good energy is to overcome all things. To overcome all things is to know that all things are possible.

59.3 She who knows that all things are possible is fit to govern people.

59.4 Because she is one with the mother, her roots go deep, her foundation stands firm, her life lasts long, her vision endures.

60.1 Governing a large country is like cooking a small fish.

60.2 If it's done in accordance with Tao, nothing bad will happen. Guide the world with Tao, and evil won't be a problem.

60.3 Not that it won't be around, but it won't find an opening, it can't harm anyone.

60.4 The sage doesn't harm anyone, either. When there's no harm on this side, no harm on that, goodness flows back and forth like water.

61.1 A great country is like a low-lying land into which many streams flow. It draws powerful energies to it as a receptive woman draws an eager man. The feminine can always conquer the masculine by yielding and taking the lower position. In this way she becomes as low-lying land: in time, everything comes her way.

61.2 Therefore a great country can win over a small country by practicing humility. A small country can also win over a great country by practicing humility.

61.3 One wins by willingly taking the lower position. The other wins by willingly acknowledging its lower position.

61.4 The great country wants to embrace and nourish more people. The small country wants to ably serve its benefactor.

61.5 Both accomplish their ends by yielding.

62.1 Tao is the hidden secret source of all life. Good men recognize that Tao provides for them and therefore they esteem it. Bad men don't recognize this, but the Tao doesn't stop providing for them.

62.2 Beautiful words win some men honours; good deeds buy others acclaim. But the Tao values everyone, not just those who excel. What's the sense in discarding anyone?

62.3 Thus, on the day a new king is crowned or powerful ministers installed, while others rush forward with gifts and praises, just be still and offer Tao.

62.4 Why have sages prized Tao for so long? Because with Tao, he who seeks finds, and he who has flaws is forgiven. This is why it is the treasure of the world.

63.1 Act by not acting, accomplish by not straining, understand by not knowing.

63.2 Regard the humble as exalted and the exalted as humble. Remedy injury with tranquil repair.

63.3 Meet the difficult while it is still easy; cross the universe one step at a time.

63.4

63.5 Because the sage doesn't try anything too big, she's able to accomplish big things.

63.6 Those who commit lightly seldom come through. Those who think everything is easy will find everything hard.

63.7 The sage understands that everything is difficult, and thus in the end has no difficulties.

64.1 What has equilibrium is easy to maintain. What hasn't begun is easy to plan. What is fragile is easy to shatter. What is small is easy to scatter.

64.2 Deal with things before they arise. Cultivate order before confusion sets in.

64.3 The tallest tree springs from a tiny shoot. The tallest tower is built from a pile of dirt. A journey of a thousand miles begins at your feet.

64.4 Interfere with things, and you'll be defeated by them. Hold on to things, and you'll lose them. The sage doesn't interfere, so he doesn't fail; doesn't hold on, so he doesn't lose.

64.5 Because projects often come to ruin just before completion, he takes as much care at the end as he did at the beginning, and thereby succeeds.

64.6 His only desire is to be free of desire. Fancying nothing, learning not to know, electing not to interfere, he helps all beings become themselves.

65.1 In ancient times those who practiced Tao didn't want to enlighten people, but to keep them natural and simple.

65.2 When cleverness and intellect abound, people don't do well. A leader who governs with cleverness cheats his people. A leader who governs with simplicity is a blessing to his people.

65.3 These are the two alternatives. Understanding them is subtle insight.

65.4 The use of subtle insight brings all things back into the oneness.

66.1 The sea is king of the valleys and streams because it is willing to be beneath them.

66.2 One who wishes to guide the people should be humble in her speech toward them. One who wishes to lead the people must learn the art of following them.

66.3 The sage is above the people, but they don't feel her weight. She stays ahead of the people, and no harm comes to them. She has the affection of the whole world.

66.4 Because she contends with no one, no one can contend with her.

67.1 Everyone under heaven says that my Tao is great, but inconceivable. It is its very greatness that makes it inconceivable! If it could be conceived of, how small it would be!

67.2 I have three treasures to hold and protect: The first is motherly love. The second is economy. The third is daring not to be first in the world.

67.3 With motherly love one can be courageous. With economy one can be expansive. With humility one can lead.

67.4 To be courageous without motherly love, To be expansive without practicing economy, To go to the front without humility - this is courting death.

67.5 Venture with love and you win the battle. Defend with love and you are invulnerable. Heaven's secret is motherly love.

68.1 A good general doesn't show off his power. a good warrior doesn't get angry.

68.2 A good conqueror doesn't attack people. A good employer puts himself below his employees.

68.3 This is called the power of noncontention. This is called using the strength of others. This is called perfect emulation of heaven.

69.1 In conflict it is better to be receptive than aggressive, better to retreat a foot than advance an inch.

69.2 This is called moving ahead without advancing, capturing the enemy without attacking him.

69.3 There is no greater misfortune than underestimating your opponent. To underestimate your opponent is to forsake your three treasures.

69.4 When opposing forces are engaged in conflict, the one who fights with sorrow will triumph.

70.1 My words are very easy to understand, very easy to put into practice. But you can't "understand" them, can't put them into "practice."

70.2 Words have their ruler. Events have their origins. People who can't understand this can't understand me. Those who do are few.

70.3 They wear coarse cloth and carry jade in their breasts.

71.1 Moving from knowing to not knowing - this is good. Moving from not knowing to knowing - this is sickness. You have to become sick of your sickness before you can get rid of it.

71.2 The sage isn't sick. He's sick of his sickness. Therefore he's not sick.

72.1 If people fear your power, then you don't really have any.

72.2 Leave them alone in their homes. Respect them in their lives, and they won't grow weary of you.

72.3 The sage knows herself, but doesn't dwell on herself; Loves herself, but no more than she loves everyone else. She adopts the concerns of heaven as her own.

73.1 Those who are courageous out of daring are killed. Those who are courageous out of love survive.

73.2 The first is harmful, the second beneficial. Heaven prohibits some things, but who knows the reason? Not even the sage knows the answer to this.

73.3 This is the way of heaven: It doesn't contend, but easily overcomes. It doesn't speak, but always responds. It can't be summoned, but comes of its own volition. Utterly without haste, it plans for everything.

73.4 The net of heaven is vast. Though its meshes are wide, nothing slips through.

74.1 If people don't love life, they won't fear death, and threatening them with it won't work.

74.2 If people have lives worth living, then the threat of death is meaningful, and they'll do what is right to avoid it.

74.3 But killing itself should be the province of the great executioner alone. Trying to take his place and kill is like cutting wood in the place of the master carpenter: The odds are you'll hurt your own hand.

75.1 What makes people go hungry? Rulers eating up all their money in taxes.

75.2 What makes people rebellious? Rulers who can't stop interfering.

75.3 What makes people take death so lightly? People taking life too seriously. Those who enjoy life are wiser than those who employ life.

76.1 At birth a person is soft and yielding, at death stiff and hard.

76.2 All beings, the grass, the trees: alive, soft, and yielding; dead, stiff, and hard.

76.3 Therefore the hard and inflexible are friends of death. The soft and yielding are friends of life.

76.4 An unyielding army is destroyed. An unbending tree breaks.

76.5 The hard must humble itself or be otherwise humbled. The soft will ultimately ascend.

77.1 The way of heaven is like the bending of a bow. What is high up gets pulled down. What is low down gets pulled up.

77.2 Heaven takes from what has too much and gives to what doesn't have enough. Man is different: he takes from those who have too little and gives to those who have too much.

77.3 Who has a genuine abundance to give to the world? Only a person of Tao.

77.4 He acts without expectation, accomplishes without taking credit, and has no desire to display his merit.

78.1 Nothing under heaven is as soft and yielding as water. Yet for attacking the hard and strong, nothing can compare with it.

78.2 The weak overcomes the strong. The soft overcomes the hard. Everyone knows this, but none have the ability to practice it.

78.3 Therefore the sage says: One who accepts the dung of the nation becomes the master of soil and sustenance. One who deals with the evils of the nation becomes king under heaven. True words seem paradoxical.

79.1 In the reconciling of resentments, ill will often lingers. What's the good in that?

79.2 The person who is truly good concerns herself always with what she owes others, never with what they owe her.

79.3

79.4 The Tao of heaven is impartial. If you perpetuate it, it perpetuates you.

80.1 Let there be small countries with few people. Let the people have no use for complicated machinery. Let them be mindful of death so that they don't move too far from their birthplaces.

80.2 If there be boats and carriages, let there be nowhere to take them to. If there are weapons, let there be no occasion to display them.

80.3 Let the people's responsibilities be few enough that they may remember them by knotting a string. Let them enjoy their food, be content with their clothes, be satisfied with their homes, and take pleasure in their customs.

80.4 Though the next country may be close enough to hear the barking of dogs and the crowing of its rooster, let the people grow old and die without feeling compelled to visit it.

81.1 True words aren't elaborate. Elaborate words aren't true.

81.2 Good people don't argue. People who argue aren't good.

81.3 People who know aren't full of facts. People who are full of facts don't know.

81.4 The sage doesn't hoard. She increases her treasure by working for her fellow human beings. She increases her abundance by giving herself to them.

81.5 The way of heaven: benefit all, harm none. The way of the sage: work for all, contend with none.

Wieger version

1.1 The principle that can be enunciated is not the one that always was. The being that can be named is not the one that was at all times.

1.2 Before time there was an ineffable, unnameable being. When it was still unnameable, it conceived heaven and earth. When it had thus become nameable, it gave birth to the multitude of beings.

1.3 -

1.4 These two acts are but one, under two different denominations.

1.5 The unique act of generation; that is the mystery of the beginning; the effects.

2.1 Everyone has the idea of beauty, and from that by opposition that of not beautiful (ugly).

2.2 All men have the idea of good, and from that by contrast that of not good (bad).

2.3 Thus, being and nothingness, difficult and easy, long and short,

2.4 high and low, sound and tone, before and after, are correlative ideas, one of which, in being known, reveals the other.

2.5 That being so, the Sage serves without acting and teaches without speaking.

2.6 He lets all beings become, without thwarting them, he lets them live, without monopolizing them, and lets them act, without exploiting them.

2.7 He does not attribute to himself the effects produced, and in consequence these effects last.

3.1 Not making any special case of cleverness, of ability, will have the result that people will no longer push themselves.

3.2 Not to prize rare objects will have the result that no one will continue to steal.

3.3 To show nothing as alluring will have the effect of putting the people's hearts at rest.

3.4 Therefore the politics of Sages consists in emptying the minds of men and filling their stomachs, in weakening their initiative and strengthening their bones.

3.5 Their constant care is to hold the people in ignorance and apathy. They make things such that clever people dare not to act,

3.6 for there is nothing that cannot be sorted out through the practice of non-action.

4.1 The Principle produces in abundance, but without filling itself up.

4.2 Empty abyss, it seems to be (is) the ancestor (origin) of all beings.

4.3 It is peaceful, simple, modest, amiable.

4.4 Spilling itself out in waves, it seems to remain (it remains) always the same.

4.5 I do not know of whom it is the son (where it comes from). It seems to have been (it was) before the Sovereign.

5.1 Heaven and earth are not good to the things that they produce, but treat them like straw dogs.

5.2 Like heaven and earth, the Sage is not good for the people he governs, but treats them like straw dogs.

5.3 The betwixt of heaven and earth, seat of the Principle, the place from where its virtue acts, is like a bellows, like the bag of a bellows of which heaven and earth would be the two boards, which empties itself without exhausting itself, which moves itself externally without cease.

5.4 This is all that we can understand of the Principle and of its action as producer. To seek to detail it further using words and numbers would be a waste of time. Let us hold ourselves to this grand idea.

6.1 The expansive transcendent power which resides in the median space, the virtue of the Principle, does not die. It is always the same and acts the same, without diminution or cessation. This virtue is the mysterious mother of all beings.

6.2 The doorway of this mysterious mother is the root of heaven and earth, the Principle.

6.3 Sprouting forth, she does not expend herself; acting, she does not tire herself.

7.1 If heaven and earth last forever,

7.2 it is because they do not live for themselves.

7.3 Following this example, the Sage, in withdrawing, advances;

7.4 in neglecting himself, he conserves himself.

7.5 As he does not seek his own advantage, everything turns to his advantage.

8.1 Transcendent goodness is like water. Water likes to do good to all beings; it does not struggle for any definite form or position, but puts itself in the lowest places that no one wants. By this, it is the reflection of the Principle.

8.2 From its example, those who imitate the Principle, lower themselves, sink themselves. They are benevolent, sincere, regulated, efficacious, and they conform themselves to the times.

8.3 -

8.4 They do not struggle for their own interest, but yield. Therefore they do not suffer and contradiction.

9.1 To hold a vase filled to the brim, without spilling anything, is impossible; better not to fill it so.

9.2 To keep an over-sharpened blade without its edge becoming blunt, is impossible; better not to sharpen it to this extreme.

9.3 To keep a roomful of precious stones, without any of it becoming misappropriated, is impossible; better not to amass this treasure.

9.4 No extreme can be maintained for a long time. Every height is followed by a decline. Likewise for a man. Whomsoever, having become rich and powerful, takes pride in himself, prepares thereby his own ruin.

9.5 To retire at the height of one's own merit and fame, that is the way of heaven.

10.1 Keep your body and spermatic soul closely united, and ensure that they do not become separated.

10.2 Apply yourself such that the air you breath in, converted into the aerial soul, animates this composite, and keeps it intact as in a new-born baby.

10.3 Withhold yourself from considerations which are too profound, in order not to wear yourself out.

10.4 As for love of the people and anxiety for the state, limit yourself to non-action.

10.5 Let the gates of heaven open and close, without wishing to do something, without interfering.

10.6 Know all, be informed on everything, and for all that remain indifferent, as if you knew nothing.

10.7 Produce, breed, without taking any credit for what has been produced, without exacting a return for your actions, without imposing yourself on those you govern. There you have the formula for transcendent action.

11.1 A wheel is made of thirty perceptible spokes, but it turns due to the imperceptible central axis of the hub.

11.2 Vessels are made of perceptible clay, but it is their imperceptible hollow that is useful.

11.3 The imperceptible holes which make the doors and windows of a house, are its essentials.

11.4 It is the imperceptible that produces effects and results.

12.1 Colours blind the eyes of man. Sound makes him deaf. Flavours exhaust his taste.

12.2 Hunting and racing, by unchaining savage passions in him, madden his heart. The love of rare and difficult-to-obtain objects pushes him to efforts that harm him.

12.3 Therefore the Sage looks to his stomach, and not his senses. renounces this, in order to embrace that. (He renounces what causes wear, in order to embrace what conserves).

13.1 Favour, because it can be lost, is a source of worry. Greatness, because it can be ruined, is a source of fear.

13.2 What do these two sentences mean? The first means that the care required to keep in favour, and the fear of losing it, fill the mind with worry.

13.3 The second points out that ruin generally comes from caring too much for one's own greatness. He who has no personal ambition does not have to fear ruin.

13.4 He who is only concerned about the greatness of the empire (and not that of himself), he who only desires the good of the empire (and not his own good), to him the empire should be confided (and it would be in good hands).

14.1 Looking, one does not see it, for it is invisible. Listening, one does not hear it, for it is silent. Touching, one does not feel it, for it is impalpable.

14.2 These three attributes must not be separated, for they designate one and the same being.

14.3 This being, the Principle, is not light above and dark below, as are opaque material bodies. Like a slender thread, it unwinds itself (as continuous existence and action). It has no name of its own. It goes back as far as the time when there were no other beings but itself.

14.4 It has no parts; from in front one sees no head, from behind no rear.

14.5 It is this primordial Principle that has ruled, and rules, all beings right up to the present. Everything that has been, or is, since the ancient origin, is from the unwinding of the Principle.

15.1 The ancient Sages were subtle, abstract, profound, in a way that cannot be expressed in words.

15.2 Therefore I am going to use illustrative comparisons in order to make myself as clearly understood as possible. They were circumspect like one who crosses an ice-covered river; prudent like one who knows that his neighbours have their eyes on him; reserved like a guest in front of his host.

15.3 They were indifferent like melting ice (which is neither one thing nor the other). They were unsophisticated like a tree trunk (the rough bark of which conceals the excellent heartwood). They were empty like a valley (with reference to the mountain that

form it). They were accommodating like muddy water, (they, the clear water, not repelling the mud, not refusing to live in contact with the common people, not forming a separate group).

15.4 (To seek purity and peace by separating from the world is to overdo things. They can be found in the world). Purity is to be found in the trouble (of this world) through (interior) calm, on condition that one does not let the impurity of the world affect oneself. Peace is to be found in the movement (of this world) by one who knows how to take part in this movement, and who is not exasperated through desiring that it should be stopped.

15.5 He who keeps to this rule of not being consumed by sterile desires arising from his own fancy, will live willingly in obscurity, and will not aspire to renew the world.

16.1 He who has reached the maximum of emptiness (of indifference) will be firmly fixed in peace.

16.2 Innumerable beings come out (from non-being), and I see them return there. They spring forth, then they all return to their root.

16.3 To return to one's root, is to enter into the state of rest. From this rest they emerge for a new destiny, and so it goes on, continually, without end. To recognize this law of immutable continuity (of the two states of life and death), is wisdom. To ignore it, is foolish. Those ignorant of this law cause misfortune (through their untimely interference in things).

16.4 He who knows that this law weighs heavily on beings, is just (treats all beings according to their nature, with equity), like a King, like Heaven, like the Principle.

16.5 In consequence he lasts until the end of his days, not having made himself any enemies.

17.1 In the early days (when, in human affairs, everything still conformed to the action of the Principle), subjects scarcely knew that they had a prince (so discreet was the action of the latter). After this the people loved and flattered their prince (because of his good deeds), but later on, they feared him (because of his laws), and scorned him (because of his unjust acts).

17.2 They became disloyal, though having been treated disloyally. They lost confidence in him though receiving only good words which were never put into effect.

17.3 How delicate was the touch of ancient rulers. When everything prospered under their administration, the people believed they had done everything themselves, of their own free will.

18.1 When action conforming to the Principle dwindles, (when men cease to act with spontaneous goodness and fairness), artificial principles of goodness and fairness, prudence and wisdom (are invented).

18.2 These artificial principles soon degenerate into politics.

18.3 When parents no longer live in natural harmony, they try to make up for this deficit by inventing artificial principles of filial piety and paternal affection.

18.4 When states had fallen into disarray, they invented the loyal minister stereotype.

19.1 Reject (artificial, conventional, political) wisdom and prudence, (in order to return to primal natural uprightness). and the people will be a hundred times happier.

19.2 Reject (artificial, conventional) goodness and fairness, (filial and fraternal piety), and the people will come back (for their well-being, to natural goodness and fairness), to spontaneous filial and paternal piety.

19.3 Reject art and gain, and evildoers will disappear. (With the primordial simplicity, they will return to primordial honesty).

19.4 Renounce these three artificial categories, for the artificial is good-for-nothing.

19.5 Be attached to simplicity and naturalness. Have few personal interests, and few desires.

20.1 Give up learning, and you will be free from all your worries. What is the difference between yes and no (about which the rhetoricians have so much to say)? What is the difference between good and evil (on which the critics never agree)? (These are futilities that prevent the mind from being free. Now freedom of mind is necessary to enter into relation with the Principle).

20.2 Without doubt, among the things which common people fear, there are things that should be feared; but not as they do, with a mind so troubled that they lose their mental equilibrium.

20.3 Neither should one permit oneself to lose equilibrium through pleasure, as happens to those who have a good meal or view the surrounding countryside in spring from the top of a tower (with the accompaniment of wine, etc.). I (the Sage) seem to be colourless and undefined; neutral as a new-born child that has not yet experienced any emotion; without design or aim.

20.4 The common people abound (in varied knowledge), but I am poor (having rid myself of all uselessness) and seem ignorant, so much have I purified myself.

20.5 They seem full of light, I seem dull. They seek and scrutinize, I remain concentrated in myself. Indeterminate, like the immensity of the oceans, I float without stopping.

20.6 They are full of talent, whereas I seem limited and uncultured. I differ thus from the common people, because I venerate and imitate the universal nourishing mother, the Principle.

21.1 All of the beings which play a role, in the great manifestation of the cosmic theater, have come from the Principle, through its virtue (its unwinding).

21.2 The Principle is indistinct and indeterminate, mysterious and obscure. In its indistinction and indetermination there are types, a multitude of beings. In its mystery and obscurity there is an essence which is reality.

21.3 From ancient times until the present, its name (its being) has stayed the same, all beings have come from it.

21.4 How do I know that it was the origin of all beings? ... (By objective observation of the universe, which reveals that contingencies must have come from the absolute).

22.1 In the old days they said, the incomplete shall be made whole, the bent shall be straightened, the empty shall be filled, the worn shall be renewed. Simplicity makes for success, multiplicity leads one astray.

22.2 Therefore the Sage who holds himself to unity, is the model for the empire, (for the world, the ideal man).

22.3 He shines, because he does not show off. He imposes himself because he does not claim to be right. One finds merit in him, because he does not brag. He increases constantly because he does not push himself.

22.4 As he does not oppose himself to anyone, no one is opposed to him.

22.5 The axioms from the old days cited above, are they not full of sense? Yes, towards him who is perfect, (who does nothing to attract to himself), all run spontaneously.

23.1 To talk little, to act only without effort, that is the formula. A gusty wind does not blow all morning, torrential rain does not last all day.

23.2 And yet these effects are produced by heaven and earth, (the most powerful agents of all. But these are exaggerated, forced effects, that is why they cannot be sustained). If heaven and earth cannot sustain a forced action, how much less is man able to do so?

23.3 He who conforms himself to the Principle, conforms his principles to this Principle, his actions to the action of this Principle, his non-action to the non-action of this Principle.

23.4 Thus his principles, his actions, his non-action, (speculations, interventions, abstentions), always give him the contentment of success, (for, whether he succeeds or not, the Principle evolves, and therefore he is content).

23.5 (This doctrine of the abnegation of one's opinions and one's actions appeals to the taste of but few people). Many only believe in it a little, the others not at all.

24.1 By dint of holding oneself on tiptoe, one loses one's balance. By trying to take too great a stride, one does not go forward.

24.2 By making a show of oneself, one loses one's reputation. Through imposing oneself, one loses one's influence.

24.3 Through boasting about oneself, one becomes discredited. Through pushing oneself, one ceases to be augmented.

24.4 In the light of the Principle all these ways of acting are odious, distasteful. They are superfluous excesses. They are like a pain in the stomach, a tumour in the body. He who has principles (in conformity with the Principle), does not act like this.

25.1 There is a being, of unknown origin, which existed before heaven and earth; imperceptible and undefined, unique and immutable, omnipresent, the mother of everything there is.

25.2 I do not know it by its own name. I designate it by the word Principle. If it were necessary to name it, one would call it the Great,

25.3 great going forth, great distance, great return. (The principle of the great cyclic evolution of the cosmos, of the becoming and ending of all beings).

25.4 The name Great befits (proportionally) four (superimposed) beings: The emperor, the earth, heaven (the classical Chinese triad), and the Principle.

25.5 The emperor owes his greatness to the earth (his theater), earth owes its greatness to heaven (of which it is the fruit), heaven owes its greatness to the Principle (of which it is the principal agent). (Greatness borrowed, as one can see, whereas) the Principle owes its essential greatness to its underived, uncreated existence.

26.1 The heavy is the base (root) of the light. Stillness is the prince of movement. (These things should be always united in a just temperament).

26.2 Therefore a wise prince, when he travels (in his light carriage), never separates himself from the heavy wagons which carry his baggage. However beautiful the landscape through which he passes, he takes care to lodge only in peaceful places.

26.3 Alas, how could an emperor behave so foolishly,

26.4 losing all authority by dint of frivolity, and all the rest through his waywardness?

27.1 A good walker leaves no trace, a good speaker offends no one, a good reckoner needs no tally,

27.2 an expert locksmith can make one that no one can open, an expert on knots can make them so that no one can untie them. (all specialists have their speciality, which makes their fame, from which they take their profit).

27.3 Likewise the Sage (Confucian politician), the professional saviour of men and things, has his own procedures.

27.4 He considers himself as the born master of other men, regarding them as material born for his craft. Now that is to blind oneself, (to shade out the light, the Daoist principles).

27.5 Not wishing to rule, nor to appropriate, others; although wise, seeming like a madman (persisting to live in retreat); this is the essential truth.

28.1 Being aware of one's virile strength (knowing that one is a cock), and yet holding oneself willingly in the inferior state of the female (of the hen); keeping oneself willingly in the lowest place in the empire ... To demean oneself thus shows that one has retained the primordial virtue, (absolute disinterestedness, participation in the Principle).

28.2 Knowing oneself to be enlightened, and willingly passing oneself off as ignorant; willingly letting oneself be walked over ... To behave thus is to show that the primordial virtue has not wavered in oneself, that one is still united with the first Principle.

28.3 Knowing oneself worthy of fame, yet staying in voluntary obscurity; willingly making oneself the valley (the lowest point) of the empire ... To behave thus is to show that one has the original self-sacrifice still intact that one is still in the state of natural simplicity.

28.4 (The Sage will refuse therefore the burden of being a governor. If he is constrained to accept such a post, then he will remind himself that) the multiplicity of beings have come from the primordial unity by a scattering. (That he will never busy himself with these diverse beings), but govern as chief of the officials (as prime mover), uniquely applying himself to general government, without occupying himself with details.

29.1 He who holds the empire would, in my view, be wishing for failure should he want to manipulate it (to act positively, to govern actively).

29.2 The empire is a mechanism of extreme delicacy. It should be let go all alone. It should not be touched. He who touches it, deranges it. He who wishes to appropriate it, loses it.

29.3 When he governs, the Sage lets all people (and their sum, the empire) go free according to their several natures, the agile and the slow, the ardent and the apathetic, the strong and the weak, the long-lived and the short-lived.

29.4 He limits his action to the suppression of excesses which would harm the whole, such as power, wealth, and ambition.

30.1 (of all the excesses, the most prejudicial, the most damnable, as that of weapons, war). Those who act as advisors to a prince should keep themselves from wanting to make war against a country. (For such action, calling for revenge, is always paid for dearly).

30.2 Wherever the troops stay the land produces only thorns, having been abandoned by the farm workers. Wherever a great army has passed, years of unhappiness (from famine and brigandage) follow.

30.3 Therefore the good general is content to do only what he has to do, (the least possible; moral, rather than material repression). He stops as soon as possible, guarding himself from exploiting his force to the limit.

30.4 He does as much as is required (to reestablish peace), not for his personal advantage and fame, but from necessity and with reluctance, without any intention of increasing his power.

30.5 Any height of power is always followed by decadence. Making oneself is therefore contrary to the Principle (the source of duration). He who is lacking on this point, will not be long in coming to an end.

31.1 The best weapons are ill-omened instruments that all beings hold in fear. Therefore those who conform themselves to the Principle do not use them.

31.2 In times of peace, the prince puts the civil minister he honours on his left (the place of honour); but even in times of war, he puts the military commander on his right (which is not the place of honour, even though he is exercising his function).

31.3 Weapons are disastrous instruments. A wise prince uses them only with reluctance and from necessity. He prefers always a modest peace to a glorious victory.

31.4 No one should think that victory is a good thing. He who thinks that, shows that he has the heart of an assassin. Such a man would not be fit to reign over the empire.

31.5 According to the rites, those of good omen are placed on the left, those of ill-omen on the right. (Now when the emperor receives two military officers together), the one of subordinate rank (who only acts on superior orders, and is therefore less ill-omened) is placed on the left. The commanding officer is placed on the right, that is, in the first place according to the funeral rites, (the place of the chief mourner).

31.6 For it behooves one who has killed many men to weep tears of lamentation for them. The only place really fitting for a conquering general is that of the chief mourner (leading the mourning for those whose death he has caused).

32.4 When, in the beginning, in this visible world, the Principle imparted itself in the production of (sentient) beings with names, it did not produce them in a way that exhausted itself (but only as tenuous prolongations, its mass remaining intact).

32.1 The Principle has no name of its own. It is nature. This nature so unmanifest is stronger than anything.

32.2 If princes and emperors were to conform themselves to it, all beings would collaborate with them spontaneously;
32.3 heaven and earth would act in perfect harmony, sprinkling a sweet dew (the best possible omen); the people would be governable without the need for constraint.
32.5 The Principle is, with reference to the diversity of beings in the world, like the mass of great rivers and oceans with reference to trickles and rivulets of water.

33.1 Knowing others is wisdom, but knowing oneself is superior wisdom, (one's own nature being most hidden and profound).
33.2 Imposing one's will on others is strength; but imposing it on oneself is superior strength (one's own passions being the most difficult to subdue).
33.3 Being satisfied (content with what destiny has given), is true wealth; being master of oneself (bending oneself to the dispositions of destiny) is true character.
33.4 Staying in one's (natural) place (that which destiny has given), makes for a long life. After death, not ceasing to be, is true longevity, (which is the lot of those who have lived in conformity with nature and destiny).

34.1 The great Principle extends itself in all directions.
34.2 It lends itself willingly to the genesis of all beings (its participants). When a work is accomplished, it does not attribute it to itself. It nourishes all beings with kindness, without imposing itself on them as a master (for having nourished them; leaving them free; not exacting any degrading return from them).
34.3 Because of its constant disinterestedness, one might think it would become diminished. This is not so.
34.4 All beings to whom it is so liberal, run towards it. It therefore finds itself magnified (through this universal trust).
34.5 The Sage imitates this conduct. He, also, makes himself small (through his disinterestedness and his delicate reserve), and acquires thereby true greatness.

35.1 Because he resembles the great prototype (the Principle, through his disinterested devotion), all come to the Sage. He welcomes them all, does them good, and gives them rest, peace, and happiness.
35.2 Music and good cheer may hold up a passer-by for but a night, (since sensual pleasures are fleeting and leave nothing behind).
35.3 Whereas the exposition of the great principle of disinterested devotion, simple and gentle, which charms neither the eyes nor the ears, pleases, engraves itself, and is of an inexhaustible fecundity in matters of practical application.

36.1 The beginning of contraction necessarily follows the maximum of expansion. Weakness follows strength, decadence follows prosperity, depravation follows opulence.
36.2 This is a subtle insight (that many do not wish to see). All preceding strength and superiority is expiated by subsequent debility and inferiority. More calls for less, excess calls for deficit.
36.3 A fish should not leave the depths (where it lives ignored but in security, in order to show itself at the surface where it could be harpooned). A state should not show its resources (if it does not wish the others to turn against it in order to crush it).

37.1 The Principle is always non-acting (not acting actively), and yet it does everything (without seeming to participate).
37.2 If the prince and the lords could govern like that (without poking their fingers in it), all beings would become spontaneously perfect (by returning to nature). It would only remain to call them back to unnamed nature (to the primordial simplicity of the Principle) each time they showed any tendency to come out of this state (by acting). In this state of unnamed nature there are no desires.
37.3 When there are no desires all is peaceful, and the state is governed by itself.

38.1 That which is superior to the Virtue of the Principle (the Principle itself, considered in its essence), does not act, but holds Virtue in a state of immanence within itself. All those which are inferior to the Virtue of the Principle (artificial rules of conduct), are only a palliative for the loss of that Virtue; palliative with which it has nothing in common.
38.2 That which is superior to the Virtue (the Principle), does not act in detail. (The artificial rules) which are inferior to the Virtue (of the Principle) only exist for action in detail.
38.3
38.4 When nature, with its good instincts, has been forgotten, artificial principles come as palliatives for this deficit. These are, in descending order, goodness, fairness, rites and laws. (Artificial Confucian goodness is superior to artificial fairness which, in struggling to cope with the diverse inclinations of men, has produced rites and laws).
38.5 Rites are but a poor expedient to cover up the loss of original uprightness and frankness. They are more a source of trouble (in etiquette and rubric) than they are of order. The last term of this descending evolution, political wisdom (making laws), was the beginning of all abuses.

38.6 He who is truly a man, holds himself to uprightness and natural good sense. He is contemptuous of artificial principles. Using discernment, he rejects this (the false), in order to embrace that (the true).

39.1 The following participate in primitive simplicity: Heaven, which owes its luminosity to its simplicity. Earth, which owes its stability to it. The universal generative action, which owes its activity to it.

39.2 The median space, which owes its fecundity to it. The life common to all beings. The power of the emperor and the princes. (Life and power being emanations of the Principle). What makes them such as they are, is the (primitive) simplicity (in which they participate).

39.3 If heaven came to lose it, it would fall. If the earth came to lose it, it would lose its stability. If the generative action lost it, it should cease to act,

39.4 If the median space lost it, all beings would disappear. If the emperor and the princes should lose it, they would have no more dignity.

39.5 All elevation, all nobility, is based on abasement and simplicity (characteristics proper to the Principle).

39.6 Therefore it is right that the emperor and the princes, the most exalted of men, should be designated by the terms sole, unique, incapable, without them being thereby degraded.

39.7 (Applying the same principle of simplicity in their government), they should reduce the multitude of their subjects to unity, considering them with the same serene impartiality as an undivided mass,

39.8 not regarding some as precious jade and others like base stones.

40.1 Going back (towards the Principle) is the type of movement characteristic of those who conform themselves to the Principle. Attenuation is the result of their being conformed to the Principle.

40.2 Considering all that exists is born of simple being, and that being is born of formless non-being, they tend, in diminishing themselves without cease, to go back to primordial simplicity.

41.1 When a well-read person of high caliber hears about the return to the Principle, he applies himself to it with zeal. A person of medium caliber applies himself to it indecisively.

41.2 An inferior person ridicules it. That such a person should ridicule it, is a mark of the truth of this doctrine. The fact that they do not understand it, shows its transcendence.

41.3 They say in the proverb: Those who have understood the Principle are as if blind; those who tend towards it are as if disoriented; those who have reached it seem like common people. This is because great virtue hollows itself like a valley, the great light voluntarily dims itself, vast virtue seems defective, solid virtue seems incapable.

41.4 Therefore the Sage hides his qualities beneath a somewhat repulsive exterior. He who goes by these appearances will be quite misled. Like a square so big that its corners are invisible, like an enormous vase that is never finished, like a great meaning hidden in a feeble sound, like a great shape that cannot be grasped;

41.5 the Sage resembles the Principle. - Now the Principle is latent and has no name, but through its gentle communication, everything is produced. It is the same, in proportion, for the Sage.

42.1 When the Principle has emitted its virtue, the latter begins to evolve according to two alternating modalities. This evolution produces (or condenses) the median air (tenuous matter). From tenuous matter, under the influence of the two modalities yin and yang, all sentient beings are produced.

42.2 Coming out from the yin (from strength) they pass to the yang (to the act), through the influence of the two modalities on matter.

42.3 What men dislike is being alone, unique, incapable, (in obscurity and abasement), and yet emperors and princes are designated by these terms, (which imply humility without debasement).

42.4 Beings diminish themselves by wanting to augment themselves, and they are augmented through diminishing themselves.

42.5

43.1 Always and everywhere it is the soft that wears the hard (as water wears stone). Non-being penetrates even where there are no cracks (as in the most homogeneous bodies such as metal and stone). From that I conclude the supreme effectiveness of non-action.

43.2 Silence and inaction - few men come to understand their effectiveness.

44.1 Is not the body more important than reputation? Is life not of more consideration than wealth? Is it wise to risk a great loss for a small advantage?

44.2 He who is a great lover, wears out (his heart). He who amasses great wealth, heads toward ruin (by theft or confiscation).

44.3 Whereas he who is modest courts no disgrace; he who is moderate does not perish, but endures.

45.1 Accomplished, beneath an imperfect exterior. Giving, (of himself) without becoming worn out. Filled up, without appearing to be so, And pouring out without being emptied. Very straight, beneath a bent air;
45.2 most able, behind an awkward appearance; highly perspicacious, with an embarrassed exterior. This is the Sage.
45.3 Movement beats the cold (warms one up), rest overcomes heat (refreshes). The withdrawn life of the Sage rectifies all the empire (strikes at the root of its depravation).

46.1 When the Principle reigns (in perfect peace), war horses work in the fields. When the Principle is forgotten, (war horses are the order of the day) And they are raised even in the suburbs of the towns.
46.2 To give in to one's covetousness (And this includes the mania for waging war), is the worst of crimes. Not to know how to control oneself, is the worst of nasty things. The worst of faults is to want more, always.
46.3 Those who know how to say 'enough is enough', are always content.

47.1 Without going out by the door, one can know the whole world; without looking through the window, one can become aware of the way of heaven (principles which rule all things). - The further one goes, the less one learns.
47.2 The Sage gets there without having taken a step to reach it. He knows before having seen, through superior principles. He achieves, without having acted, through his transcendent action.

48.1 By studying, every day one increases (useless and injurious particular notions, in one's memory); by concentrating on the Principle, they are diminished every day.
48.2 Pushed to the limit, this diminution ends in non-action, (the consequence of the absence of particular ideas). Now there is nothing that non-action (letting things go) cannot sort out. It is through non-action that one wins the empire.
48.3 To act, in order to win it, results in failure.

49.1 The Sage has no definite will of his own, he accommodates himself to the will of the people.
49.2 He treats the good and the bad equally well, which is the true practice of goodness.
49.3 He trusts the sincere and insincere alike, which is the true practice of trust.
49.4 In this mixed-up world, the Sage is without any emotion, and has the same feelings for all. All men fix their eyes and ears on him. He treats them like children, (Daoism kindness, slightly disdainful).

50.1 Men go forth into life, And return in death.
50.2 Out of ten men, three prolong their life (through cleanliness), three hasten their death (through their excesses), three compromise their life by the attachment they have to it, (And only one stays alive until his term, because he is not attached to it).
50.3 He who is not attached to his life, does not turn aside to avoid an encounter with a rhinoceros or a tiger; he throws himself into the fray without armour or weapons;
50.4 And he comes to no harm because he is proof against the rhinoceros horn, the tiger's claws, And weapons of combat. Why is this? ... Because, exteriorized through his indifference, death cannot take a hold on him.

51.1 The Principle gives life to beings, then its Virtue nourishes them, until the completion of their nature, until the perfection of their faculties. Therefore all beings venerate the Principle and its Virtue.
51.2 No one has the eminence of the Principle and its Virtue conferred on them; they have it always, naturally. The Principle gives life; its Virtue gives growth, protects, perfects, matures, maintains, And covers (all beings).
51.3 When they are born, it does not monopolize them; it lets them act freely, without exploiting them; it lets them grow, without tyrannizing them. This is the action of transcendent Virtue.

52.1 That which was, before the beginning of the world, became the mother of the world.
52.2 He who has reached knowledge of the mother (matter, the body), knows through that her son (the vital spirit which is enclosed in it). He who knows the son (his vital spirit) And conserves the mother (his body), will reach the end of his days without accident.
52.3 If he keeps his mouth and nostril closed (to prevent evaporation of the vital spirit), he will reach the end of his days without having suffered decadence.
52.4 Whereas, if he talks a lot and causes himself much worry, he will use up and shorten his life.
52.5 Restricting one's considerations to small things, And one's cares to affairs of little importance, makes the mind clear and the body strong.
52.6 Concentrating one's intellectual rays in one's intelligence, And not letting mental applications harm one's body, is to protect (the mind) And make for long (life).

53.1 He who has little wisdom, should conform himself to the great Principle. He should take care to avoid any irksome boasting.
53.2 But to this wide road many prefer the narrow sidetracks. (Few men walk along the way of obscure disinterestedness. They prefer the narrow tracks of their vanity, their own advantage. This is how the princes of these times act).
53.3 When the palaces are too well kept up, the fields go uncultivated and the granaries empty, (because the farm workers are requisitioned for forced labour).
53.4 Dressing magnificently, wearing a sharp sword, stuffing oneself with food and drink, amassing wealth to the extent of not knowing what to do with it (as do the princes of these times), is being like a brigand (who ostentatiously plays with his loot). Such conduct is opposed to the Principle.

54.1 He who builds on disinterestedness will not find his work destroyed. He who keeps himself disinterested will not lose what he has. His sons and his grandsons will make offerings to him without interruption (that is to say, they will succeed him and enjoy the fruit of his works).
54.2 First of all one should conform oneself to the Principle; afterwards, this conformity will spread spontaneously, by itself, to one's family, district, principality, And to the empire; (like radiant heat coming from a central hearth).
54.3 Through one's own nature, one understands those of other individuals, And of all individual collectivities such as families, districts, principalities, And the empire.
54.4 How can one know the nature of an entire empire? ... By this (through one's own nature).

55.1 He who holds himself in perfect Virtue (without lust or anger) is like the new-born child whom the scorpion does not bite, the tiger does not devour, the vulture does not seize, whom all respect. A child's bones are weak, its tendons are feeble, but it grasps objects strongly (just as its soul and body are held together by force).
55.2 He has not yet any notion of the act of generation, And, in consequence, keeps his seminal virtue intact.
55.3 He cries softly all day long without becoming hoarse, so perfect is his peace. Peace makes for durability; he who understands this is enlightened.
55.4 Whereas any violent excitement, above all lust and anger, wears one out.
55.5 From this it follows that virility (which man abuses) is succeeded by decrepitude. Intense life is contrary to the Principle, And in consequence prematurely mortal.

56.1 He who knows (the Principle), does not speak.
56.2 He keeps his mouth closed, controls his breathing, blunts his activity, rescues himself from any complication, tempers his light, And mingles with people. This is mysterious union (with the Principle).
56.3 No one can attach himself (by doing favours) to such a man, nor repulse him (by treating him badly). He is indifferent to gain or loss, exaltation or humiliation. Being thus, he is the most noble in the world.

57.1 One can govern with rectitude, one can wage war with competence, but it takes non-action to win and hold the empire. How do I know that this is so? From what I am going to say:
57.2 The more rules there are, the less people enrich themselves. The more taxes there are, the less order there is.
57.3 The more ingenious inventions there are, the fewer serious and useful objects there are. The more detailed the penal code, the more thieves abound. Multiplication ruins everything.
57.4 Therefore the programme of the Sage is quite the contrary. Not acting, And the people amend themselves. Staying peaceful, And the people rectify themselves.
57.5 Doing nothing, And the people enrich themselves. Wishing for nothing, And the people come back to natural spontaneity.

58.1 When the government is simple, the people abound in virtue. When the government is political, the people lack virtue.
58.2 Good and bad succeed one another, alternately.
58.3 Who will discern the heights? (of this circular movement, of good and evil. It is very delicate, an excess or a default changing the moral entity). In many the right measure is lacking. In some an exaggerated righteousness degenerates into a mania. In others an exaggerated goodness becomes extravagance. (Points of view changing in consequence. For a long time now, men have thus been crazy).
58.4 The Sage takes them as they are). Taking them to task, he is not sharp or cutting. Straight, he is not rude. Enlightened, he does not humiliate.

59.1 The essential for co-operation with heaven in the government of men, is to moderate one's action.
59.2 This moderation should be the prime care. It procures perfect efficacy, which succeeds in everything, even the governing of the empire.
59.3 He who possesses this mother of the empire (wise moderation), will last a long time.
59.4 It is called the pivoting root, the solid trunk. It is the principle of perpetuity.

60.1 To govern a great state, one should act like someone cooking a very small fish (very delicately, otherwise they break up).
60.2 When a state is governed according to the Principle, phantoms do not appear there to harm the people, because the Sage who governs does not harm the people.
60.3 Not that the spirits have no more powers, But their powers will not harm men./ Neither will they harm men, Nor will the Sage harm the people.
60.4 The merit of this double tranquility (on the part of the living and the dead) comes back, therefore, to the Sage.

61.1 If a great state lowers itself, like those holes in which water accumulates, everyone will come to it. It will belike the universal female. In her apparent passivity and inferiority, the female is superior to the male (for it is she who gives birth).
61.2 On condition of knowing how to lower itself, a great state will win over lesser states,
61.3 which in their turn, will lower themselves, seeking its protection.
61.4
61.5 For this to be realized, only one thing is needed, but it is essential. It is that the great state deigns to lower itself before the lesser ones. (if it is proud and hard, there is no hope).

62.1 The Principle is the palladium of all beings. It is the treasure of the good (that by which they are good), and the salvation of the wicked (that which prevents them from perishing).
62.2 It is to it that one should be grateful from affectionate words, and the noble conduct of good people. It is with regard to it, that the wicked should not be rejected.
62.3 It is for that reason (for the conservation and development of the part of the Principle which is in all beings) that the emperor and the great ministers were instituted. Not so that they should become complacent with their sceptre and their ancient four-horsed chariot; but in order that they should meditate on the Principle (advancing themselves in their knowledge, and in the development of others).
62.4 Why did the ancients make so much of the Principle? is it not because it is the source of all good and the remedy for all evil? It is the most noble thing in the world.

63.1 To act without acting; to be busy without being busy; to taste without tasting;
63.2 to look equally on the great, the small, the many and the few; to be indifferent to thanks and reproaches; this is how the Sage acts.
63.3 He only sets about difficult complications through their easiest details, and only applies himself to great problems in their weak beginnings.
63.4 The Sage never undertakes anything great, and that is why he makes great things.
63.5
63.6 He who promises much, cannot keep his word; he who embarrasses himself with too many things, even easy things, never succeeds in anything.
63.7 The Sage keeps clear of difficulty, therefore he never has any difficulties.

64.1 Peaceful situations are easily controlled; problems are easily forestalled before they arise; weak things are easily broken; small things are easily dispersed.
64.2 One should take one's measures before something happens, and protect order before disorder bursts out.
64.3 A tree which one's arms can barely embrace comes from a shoot as fine as a hair; a nine-storey tower begins with a pile of earth; a long journey begins with a single step.
64.4 Those who make too much of things, spoil their affairs. Those who grip too strongly, end up by letting go. The Sage who does not act, does not spoil any affair. Since he holds on to nothing, nothing escapes him.
64.5 When the common people have affairs, they often fail at the moment when they should have succeeded, (nervousness at the beginning of success making them lose propriety and make clumsy mistakes). For success, the circumspection of the beginning should last until the final achievement.
64.6 The Sage desires nothing. He does not prize any object because it is rare. He does not attach himself to any system, but instructs himself by the faults of others. In order to co-operate with universal evolution, he does not act, but lets things go.

65.1 In antiquity, those who conformed themselves to the Principle did not seek to make the people clever, but aimed at keeping them simple.
65.2 When people are difficult to govern, it is because they know too much. Those who claim to procure the good of a country by disseminating instruction, are wrong, and ruin the country.
65.3 This is the formula of mysterious action, of great profundity, of great bearing.

65.4 It is not to the taste of (the curious) but, thanks to it, everything turns out well, peacefully.

66.1 Why are the oceans and rivers kings of all the valleys? (receiving all the watercourses in tribute). Because they are benevolently the inferiors of all the valleys (with regard to levels). That is why all the water flows towards them.

66.2 Following this example, the Sage who wishes to become superior to the common people should speak in words beneath himself (speak very humbly of himself). If he wishes to become the first, he should put himself in last place, (and continue to do so, after he has been exalted).

66.3 He could then be elevated to the highest peak without the people feeling oppressed by him; he could be the first without the people complaining about him. The whole empire would serve him with joy, without becoming weary of him.

66.4 For, not being opposed to anyone, no one would be opposed to him.

67.1 Everyone says the Sage is noble, despite his common air; an air which he gives himself because he is noble (to hide his nobility and not to attract envy to himself). Everyone knows, on the contrary, how much those who pose as nobles are men of little worth.

67.2 The Sage prizes three things and holds on to them: charity, simplicity, and humility.

67.3 Being charitable, he will be brave (within just limits, without cruelty). Being simple, he will be liberal (within just limits, without waste). Being humble, he will govern men without tyranny.

67.4 The men of today have forgotten charity, simplicity, and humility. They prize war, ostentation, and ambition. This is like wishing not to succeed. It is like wishing to perish.

67.5 For it is the charitable aggressor who wins the battle (not the savage aggressor); it is the charitable defender who is impregnable (and not the pitiless warrior). Those whom heaven wishes well, are thereby made charitable.

68.1 He who commands should not think that tactics, valour, and effort give victory.

68.2 It is by putting oneself at the service of men that one subdues them. That is the correct procedure.

68.3 It is sometimes formulated as follows: art of not struggling (of accommodating oneself, of winning by making oneself everything to everyone); of ability to manage men; of action conforming to that of heaven. All these formulae designate the same thing. They show the greatness of the ancients.

69.1 Rather be on the defensive than the offensive, rather retreat a step than advance an inch, are current principles of military art. It is worth more to yield than to triumph. Prevention (of war) through diplomacy is worth even more.

69.2 That is the meaning of certain abstruse formulae of military art, such as: advancing without marching; defending oneself without moving an arm; status quo without fighting; holding on without weapons; and others.

69.3 There is no worse curse than a war waged with little or no reason, (which is sought-after deliberately, and pushed beyond necessary limits).

69.4 He who does that, exposes his own goods to loss, and causes great mourning.

70.1 What I (Lao Zi) teach is easy to understand and to practice, and yet the world neither understands or practices it.

70.2 My precepts and procedures derive from a superior principle and procedure, the Principle and its Virtue. The world does not recognize the Principle which directs me, that is why it does not know me. Very few understand me. That makes my glory.

70.3 It befalls me to be like the Sage who is unrecognized from amongst the common people because of his humble appearance, even though his interior is filled with jewels.

71.1 Knowing all and believing that one knows nothing, is true knowledge (of a superior kind). Knowing nothing and believing that one knows everything, is the common evil of humans. Seeing this evil as an evil, keeps one away from it.

71.2 The Sage is exempt from self-conceit, because he dreads it. This fear keeps him from it.

72.1 Those (who expose themselves to danger through curiosity, love of gain, or ambition) should be afraid when they are not afraid. For they are lost.

72.2 Do not consider your place of birth too restricting, do not become dissatisfied with the condition in which you were born. (Stay what you are and where you are. The effort to seek for better could perhaps cause you to lose your way). One does not become dissatisfied, if one does not wish to become so. (Dissatisfaction is always voluntary, coming from preparing one's situation with another, and having preference for the other).

72.3 The Sage knows his worth but does not show it, (he does not feel the need to show it off). He respects himself but does not try to be esteemed. He discerns, adopting this, and rejecting that (after the light of his wisdom).

73.1 Active (warlike) courage procures death. Passive courage (patience, endurance) conserves life.

73.2 Therefore there are two courages, one harmful, the other beneficial. (Patience and forbearance are always worth more than incisive action, even in government, in politics). For does heaven wish harm, or not, to this or that man, or nation? ... And why? ... Who knows? - Therefore the Sage always acts as though embarrasses, (hesitating, making up his mind with difficulty before any active intervention).

73.3 For the way of heaven (its constant conduct), is not to intervene positively. It wins without fighting. It makes things obey without giving orders. It makes them come without calling them. It brings everything to its conclusion whilst having the appearance of letting everything drag.

73.4 The heavenly net catches all. Its mesh is wide, but no one escapes it.

74.1 If the people do not fear death, what is the good of trying to control them by the threat of death?

74.2 If they fear death, then only capture and execute those who cause disorder, turning the others away from doing likewise. (The legalists who are lavish with the death penalty and believe it will sort everything out, are therefore wrong).

74.3 The servant of death (heaven), kills, (let him do it. Let us not do his work. He alone is capable of it). The man who wants to kill may end up like those who play with the carpenter's tools, and often lose a finger in their play.

75.1 If the people are hungry, it is because the prince eats up excessive sums of money (which he extorts from them).

75.2 If the people are restive, it is because the prince does too much, (indisposes them by his innovations).

75.3 If the people expose themselves lightly to death (in hazardous enterprises), it is because he loves life too much, (love of well-being, of pleasure, of fame). He who does nothing in order to live, is wiser than he who harms himself in order to live.

76.1 When a man is born he is supple and weak (but full of life); he becomes strong and powerful, and then he dies.

76.2 It is the same for plants, delicate (herbaceous) at first, then becoming woody at the time of their death.

76.3 He who is strong and powerful is marked for death; he who is weak and flexible is marked for life.

76.4 The great army will be defeated. The great tree will be cut down.

76.5 Everything that is strong and great is in a poorer condition. The advantage is always with the supple and the weak.

77.1 Heaven acts (with regard to men) like the archer who, bending his bow, makes the convexities straight and the concavities bulge, diminishing the greater and augmenting the lesser. (Lowering the higher, and raising the lower).

77.2 It takes away from those who have plenty, and adds to those who have little. Whereas men (bad princes who bleed the people) do quite the opposite, taking away from those who lack (the people), in order to add to those who have in abundance (their favourites) ...

77.3 Any superfluity ought to come back to the empire (to the people), but only he who possesses the Principle is capable of that.

77.4 The Sage conforms himself to the Principle. He influences without attributing the result to himself. He accomplishes without appropriating his work to himself. He does not claim the title of the Sage, (but keeps himself in voluntary obscurity).

78.1 In this world there is nothing more supple and weak than water; and yet no one, however strong and powerful he may be, can resist its action (corrosion, wear, wave action); and no being can do without it (for drinking, growth, etc.).

78.2 Is it clear enough that weakness is worth more than strength, that suppleness can overcome rigidity? - Everyone agrees with this; but no one acts according to it.

78.3 The Sages have said: "He who rejects neither moral filth nor political evil is capable of becoming the chief of a territory or the sovereign of the empire." (He who is supple enough to accommodate himself to all that; and not a rigid and systematic person). These words are quite true, even though they offend many.

79.1 When the principle of a dispute has been settled (some accessory grievances) always remain, and things do not return to the state they were in before, (bruises remain).

79.2 (Therefore the Sage never questions it, despite his right). Keeping his half of the agreement, he does not exact the execution (of what is written).

79.3 He who knows how to conduct himself after the Virtue of the Principle, lets his written agreements sleep. He who does not know how to conduct himself thus, exacts his due.

79.4 Heaven is impartial. (If it were capable of some partiality), it would give advantage to good people, (those who act as in C. It would overwhelm them, because they ask for nothing).

80.1 If I were king of a little state, of a little people, I would take care to use (put in charge) the few dozen capable men that this state would contain.

80.2 I would prevent my subjects from traveling, by making them fear possible accidental death so much that they would not dare climb into a boat or carriage. I would prohibit all use of weapons.

80.3 As for writing and calculating, I would oblige them to go back to knotted cords. Then they would find their food tasty, their clothes fine, their houses peaceful, and their manners and customs agreeable.

80.4 (I would prevent curiosity and communication to the point where) my subjects would hear the noise of the cocks and dogs of the neighbouring state, but die from old age without having crossed the border and had relationships with the people there.

81.1 (I have finished. Perhaps you may find my discourse lacks something, is not very subtle, and is scarcely wise). This is because native frankness does not dress itself up,

81.2 natural directness avoids quibbling,

81.3 common sense can dispense with artificial erudition.

81.4 The Sage does not hoard, but gives. The more he does for men, the more he can do; the more he gives them, the more he has.

81.5 Heaven does good to all, doing no evil to anyone. The Sage imitates it, acting for the good of all, and opposing himself to no one.

World Peace version

- 1.1 The infinity that can be conceived is not the everlasting Infinity. The infinity that can be described is not the perpetual Infinity.
- 1.2 The inconceivable indescribable is the essence of the all encompassing Infinite. Conceiving and describing applies only to the manifestations of Infinity.
- 1.3 Free from distinctions, experience the oneness of Infinity. Focus on distinctions and see only the manifestations of Infinity.
- 1.4 Yet distinction and non-distinction are one within Infinity.
- 1.5 Potential within potential is the essence of Infinity.

- 2.1 Only when one distinguishes beauty does one create the unattractive.
- 2.2 Only when one distinguishes good does one create evil.
- 2.3 Also by distinction, Tangible and intangible create each other, Difficult and easy define each other, Long and short measure each other,
- 2.4 High and low determine each other, Sound and silence echo each other, Beginning and end follow each other.
- 2.5 Therefore, the sage goes about living in the oneness of all things, teaching without speaking,
- 2.6 accepting and dismissing all things with indifference, creating without attachment, working without credit. Acts and deeds are completed and forgotten.
- 2.7 Because the sage is at one with Infinity, she is immortal.

- 3.1 Exalting people creates the desire in others to be exalted and therefore creates tension.
- 3.2 Overvaluing goods creates the desire for ownership and therefore creates the temptation to steal.
- 3.3 When people do not distinguish things as valuable, they remain focused on the oneness of all things and do not become confused in the material world.
- 3.4 Therefore, harmonious leaders empty the people's minds but nourish their bodies. They undermine desires and improve endurance.
- 3.5 They keep the people focused on their oneness with Infinity and free them from attachments to material things. They redirect the energies of those who would manipulate others.
- 3.6 If you remember your oneness with Infinity, and flow with life by refusing to distinguish good and bad, you will flow in the peace and harmony that is the essence of Infinity.

- 4.1 Infinity is an empty vessel enveloping all manifestations, yet it can never be filled.
- 4.2 It is the potential of all things tangible and intangible.
- 4.3 It blunts the sharp and hones the blunt, unravels knots and binds all things, dulls the glare and shines the mundane, manifests the dust and clears the air.
- 4.4 It is the essence of all things. No one can comprehend its origin.
- 4.5 It is older than the concept of God.

- 5.1 Heaven and earth are indifferent. All creatures are considered straw dogs; not distinguished, not judged.
- 5.2 The sage is indifferent. All people are one; not distinguished, not judged.
- 5.3 Infinity is like a bellows, empty yet encompassing the potential of all things.
- 5.4 Words are straw in the wind. The more one talks, the less one says. Keep focused on Infinity. Remain centered in the oneness of all things. In time all potentials manifest.

- 6.1 The manifestations of Infinity never cease manifesting. Infinity is the primal creator, the oneness of male and female.
- 6.2 Infinity is the gate through which heaven and earth manifested.
- 6.3 It is invisible to the senses, yet totally permeates all things. It is inexhaustible and eternally available for any purpose.

- 7.1 Heaven and earth will pass away but Infinity endures forever.
- 7.2 It had no beginning and so it can never end. It is the inexhaustible essence of all things.
- 7.3 Because the sage remains behind in her oneness with all things, she anticipates all manifestations.
- 7.4 Being at one with Infinity, she is indifferent.
- 7.5 Because she does not distinguish herself from other beings, she is completely fulfilled.

- 8.1 Water is like Infinity, it gives itself to all things without distinction or judgment and settles into the lowest places without deliberation.

8.2 In dwelling, live in harmony with the land. In meditation, remember your oneness with the Infinite. In dealing with others, do not judge. In communicating, relate the truth.

8.2 In governing, be fair. In daily life, be in harmony with all things and at peace with all people. In action, be mindful that there is a time and a season for all things.

8.3 Avoid judging and its legacy contention and flow in the peace and harmony of the oneness of humanity.

9.1 Fill anything to the brim and the contents will spill out.

9.2 Hone a sharpened blade and it will become blunt.

9.3 Accumulate great wealth, but be aware that you cannot keep it.

9.4

9.5 When a task is complete, move on. Change is the harmony of Infinity.

10.1 Manifesting body, mind and spirit, can you stay centered in the oneness of Infinity?

10.2 Fully manifesting and remaining flexible, can you experience all manifestations as a newborn baby?

10.3 Can you maintain the Infinite vision of oneness by ignoring distinctions.

10.4 Remaining centered in oneness and leading others, can you avoid manifesting arrogance?

10.5 Entering and exiting the gates of manifestations, can you harmonize with Infinity?

10.6 Realizing your oneness with Infinity, can you flow in harmony with It by indifferently allowing things to come and go?

10.7 Can you create and sustain things, and yet remain unattached to them? Can you work in harmony with all things, without desiring acknowledgment for your deeds? Exemplifying oneness, flowing in peace and harmony, not distinguishing, not judging, is the nature of Infinity.

11.1 Thirty spokes converge on the wheel's hub. But the center hole which receives the axle makes it useful.

11.2 Clay is shaped into a pot. But the inner space which receives whatever one puts into it makes it useful.

11.3 Wood is cut and joined to build a house. But the windows and doors which allow things to enter and leave make it useful.

11.4 The potential utility resides in the tangible. But true usefulness is a manifestation of the intangible.

12.1 The oneness of the five colors blind the eyes. The oneness of the five tones deafens the ears. The oneness of the five flavors dull the tongue.

12.2 Racing ahead of change and pursuing the illusion of reality promotes confusion.

12.3 Therefore, the sage is in harmony with what she is and does not distinguish what she sees. She chooses oneness and distinguishes nothing.

13.1 Accept disgrace indifferently. Acknowledge misfortune as one of the human conditions.

13.2 What does it mean to "accept disgrace indifferently"? Honor and disgrace are one in the Infinite. Only by making distinctions does one manifest disgrace. Refusing to make distinctions merges honor and disgrace into the oneness of circumstances which creates harmony.

13.3 What is meant by "acknowledging misfortune as one of the human conditions"? The body is a manifestation of Infinity and the body is subject to being affected by the other manifestations of Infinity. Misfortune is one of those other manifestations. However, as with disgrace, refusing to distinguish misfortune and fortune creates indifference which keeps one focused on the oneness of Infinity and creates peace in the self.

13.4 Stay centered in your oneness with Infinity and you can be entrusted with leadership. See the world as yourself and you will care for all things.

14.1 Look and see the manifestations of the Infinite but not its essence. Listen and hear the manifestations of the Infinite but not its essence. Reach out and touch the manifestations of the Infinite but not its essence.

14.2 These three are one in their inability to relate the essence of Infinity.

14.3 Above it is not light. Below it is not dark. It is neither light nor dark. Infinity is the potential manifestation of all things and the essence into which all manifestations disintegrate. Yet it is inconceivable and indescribable; intangible but the essence of all manifestations.

14.4 You cannot confront what has no head and you cannot follow what has no tail.

14.5 Remember your oneness, flow in the peace and harmony of Infinity, live in the now, changing and flowing with change.

There was no beginning. This is the mystery of Infinity.

15.1 Those who live in oneness manifest the Infinite in simple ways. Their awareness is the awareness of Infinity.

15.2 Their knowing cannot be described but only experienced. All that can be described is their acts and their appearance and the perception of them. They are; alert when crossing unfamiliar space, cautious in hostile lands, humble as a guest,

15.3 indifferently transforming as melting ice, possessing the infinite potential of an unremarkable piece of uncarved wood, mysterious as an unexplored valley, perplexing as muddy water

15.4 Can you see the calm in turbulent waters; the clarity in murky water? Can you allow the tides of Infinite change to move you from stillness to motion and action to inaction; experiencing but not contemplating the change?

15.5 Those who live in oneness do not seek fullness because at every moment they are aware of their infinite fullness and the infinite pregnancy of all things. They are aware of their infinite potential within which the limitations of fullness resides.

16.1 Contemplate Infinity and become peaceful as the mind becomes lost.

16.2 The self perceives the never ending manifestations of the potential of Infinity as well as the disintegration of all those manifestations. Within Infinity all things manifest and disintegrate. Disintegration is a returning to the Infinite potential.

16.3 Disintegration is the destiny of all manifestations. Manifesting is the nature of Infinity. Change is the Infinite constant.

16.4 Acknowledging change is the key to understanding the harmony of never ending change. Acknowledging change within the Infinite potential of which every creature is a manifestation, unique, yet bound to all things in disintegration, gives one a perspective regarding life. Possessing perspective, one becomes impartial, openhearted, tolerant, compassionate and indifferent to judging others. These are foundations of harmony.

16.5 The manifestation of the body disintegrates but Infinity can never disintegrate into itself. There is nothing to fear.

17.1 The best leaders are in harmony with their followers. The next best are those who are respected. Then comes those who are feared. The worst are those who are despised.

17.2 If one perceives others as untrustworthy, then that will be the experience that one acknowledges. The selective acknowledgment of untrustworthiness verifies one's perception of the untrustworthiness of others.

17.3 When the leaders are in harmony with their followers, few laws are necessary and all tasks are accomplished with ease. The followers, not perceiving the administration of leadership, marvel at the manifestations of harmony and experience a sense of self worth.

18.1 When the oneness of Infinity is forgotten, judgment appears and people are distinguished as good and righteous.

18.2 When the illusion of knowledge and understanding appear, the physical reality has been confused with Infinity.

18.3 When there is no peace and harmony within the family, a facade of devotion and obedience is perceived.

18.4 When a nation manifests great change, patriots step forward to attempt to resurrect the past.

19.1 Quit distinguishing the wise and their wisdom, the saints and their holiness, and the people will be a hundred times better off.

19.2 Quit distinguishing morality, righteousness and benevolence and humanity will stay centered in its oneness.

19.3 Abandon the pursuit of commercial profit and the number of thieves and robbers will be greatly reduced.

19.4 These are just three impediments to peace and harmony and abandoning them is not enough.

19.5 Peace and harmony reside in the simplicity of an uncarved piece of wood. Quit distinguishing the self and reside in oneness. Curb your desires and aspirations and experience the peace and harmony of simplicity.

20.1 Give up the pursuit of knowledge and live in peace and harmony. Without knowledge there is no difference between good and evil.

20.2 Is it necessary to learn to fear what others perceive should be feared? Nonsense!

20.3 Other people are excited, joyous and festive as if enjoying a holiday. I alone am indifferent, without emotion or expression; like a baby before it has learned to smile.

20.4 Others have things they feel they need. I alone own nothing. I am like a fool unfettered by knowledge.

20.5 Other people are intelligent. I alone am ignorant. Others are shrewd and cunning. I alone am untouched and moronic. I aimlessly drift on the great tides of the endless seas at the mercy of the indifferent winds.

20.6 Others have direction, goals and purposes. I alone flow within the harmony of Infinity. I am different from others. I reside in the peace and harmony of the Infinite oneness of all things.

21.1 To attain peace and harmony, stay focused on the oneness of Infinity

21.2 Infinity is the intangible potential of all things; intangible yet manifesting all images, intangible yet manifesting all substance. Within the Infinite void resides the Infinite potential of all things. All tangible things are a manifestation of the Infinite essence

21.3 From the present, forever into the past, forever into the future, Infinity is the homogenous essence. The potential of all things forever manifest and forever disintegrate within the Infinity

21.4 How can I know the manifestations of Infinity? Because I am at one with Infinity

22.1 If you accept all things by refusing to distinguish good and bad, you overcome the confusion of the physical reality and live in harmony with the Infinite manifestations. If you bend as you are impacted by manifestations, your path of peace and harmony will remain straight and true. If you empty your mind of knowledge, you will fill with the experience of oneness with the Infinite. All manifestations constantly disintegrate and re-manifest. As your body wears out, your spirit is reborn. Possess little in goods and thoughts and maintain your vision of oneness with Infinity. Possess much and become lost in the confusion that the physical reality is the true reality

22.2 Therefore, remain focused on the oneness of Infinity and become a beacon for all beings.

22.3 Do not distinguish the self and manifest the oneness of Infinity for all to see. Do not assert the self and others will follow. Do not bolster the self and others will give their respect. Do not allow the self to brag and others will bestow their praise.

22.4 Do not allow the self to be quarrelsome and experience peace with all being

22.5 Is not it true that if you accept all things by refusing to distinguish good and bad, you overcome the confusion of the physical reality and live in harmony with the Infinite manifestations? Flow with the peace and harmony of the oneness of Infinity and experience immortality.

23.1 To seldom speak is the essence of simplicity. The winds do not last all morning. The rain does not last all day. The earth that manifests the winds and the rain is itself a manifestation of change. All things change, nothing is eternal but change

23.2 All the manifestations of humanity are fleeting as is the entire physical universe.

23.3 Keep your focus on the oneness of Infinity, manifesting the potential of all things and disintegrating all the manifestations. Flow in the peace and harmony of eternal change. Focus on goodness and virtue and you lose sight of the oneness of all people. Focus on failure and your life becomes failure. Focus on peace and harmony, the essence of Infinity, and experience peace and harmony.

23.4 Embrace change and live in peace. Embrace the experience of the moment, refuse to distinguish good and bad, happy and sad, difficult and easy. What you distinguish comes to you for a time. When it comes embrace it and when it leaves let it go. This is living within the oneness of the Infinite. This is the key to peace and harmony

23.5

24.1 Stand on your toes and you will not maintain your balance. Run and you will have to rest. Keep a harmonious pace and you can circumnavigate the earth

24.2 Draw attention to yourself and others may consider you a fool. Become self-righteous and others will avoid you.

24.3 Boasting impresses no one. Brag and you may be put to the test

24.4 Within the oneness of Infinity, all these are delusions of the physical world. They do not bring peace and harmony. Be at one with Infinity and keep these in perspective. They are transient excesses in a transient universe

25.1 Before the physical universe existed, the potential of all things permeated time and space. It was silent and empty, loud and pregnant. Solitary in its oneness, crowded in its potential, static and dynamic, hot and cold, light and dark. The potential of all things, for lack of another name, I call it Infinity. It permeates all things and non-things. It manifests realities and disintegrates those realities. All things are birthed from it and all things return to it

25.2 Infinity is marvelous

25.3

25.4 The physical universe is marvelous. The earth is marvelous. Human beings are marvelous. These are the four realities

25.5 Human beings are a manifestation of the earth; the earth, a manifestation of the physical universe; the physical universe, a manifestation of Infinity; Infinity, the potential of all things

26.1 Infinity is the source of all physical manifestations. The Infinite stillness is the creator of the churning universe

26.2 The sage travels all day over the land and sea but does not lose sight of Infinity. Though the manifestations of the earth are wondrous and beautiful, she remains indifferent because she remains centered in the Infinite oneness

26.3 The leader of multitudes cannot afford to lose her perspective. Indulging in the physical manifestations results in a loss of focus on the Infinite.

26.4 To be caught up in distinguishing things, narrows the leader's perspective to that of her followers

27.1 A proficient traveler leaves no evidence of his journey. A proficient speaker is impeccable in his presentation. A proficient accountant needs no tally sheet.

27.2 A functional door has no lock but can only be opened by the owner. A perfect binding has no knots yet only the binder can loosen it

27.3 The sage is the light of all human beings and rejects no one. She efficiently uses all things and discards nothing. This is called manifesting Infinity

27.4 What is a sage but a guide to peace and harmony? What is a materialistic traveler but the sage's focus

27.5 For the student not to value the teacher or the teacher not to love the student or for the followers not to acknowledge the leader or the leader not to care for the followers, is the cause of great confusion. This is a key to peace and harmony, teachers and leaders remind others of who they are and their oneness with Infinity

28.1 Integrate the male and the female and travel the peaceful path of oneness. Be at one with Infinity. Being at one with Infinity, do not become confused in distinctions of male and female. Experience the oneness as an undistinguishing child

28.2 See the white and the black as one. Be a guiding light to the world. As a guiding light to the world, standing firm in the truth of oneness, mirror Infinity for all to see. Remember that honor and humility are one. Be a vessel of Infinity

28.3 As a vessel of Infinity, be a resource to all beings. Become as a piece of uncarved wood; available for any purpose

28.4 When a piece of wood is carved, it becomes useful. When the sage flows in oneness, he becomes useful as king. Therefore, the sage is careful in using what he needs but avoiding kingship

29.1 Do you think you can control the world? I do not believe it can be done

29.2 The world is a manifestation of change and cannot be controlled. If you try to control it, you will end up deceiving yourself.

If you treat it like an object, it will overwhelm you

29.3 The world is a manifestation of change; sometimes ahead, sometimes behind, sometimes dynamic, sometimes static, sometimes vigorous, sometimes feeble, sometimes manifesting, sometimes disintegrating.

29.4 Therefore, refuse to distinguish excesses and extremes. See only oneness. Flow with Infinity and exist in peace and harmony

30.1 Whenever you have an opportunity to advise a leader regarding Infinity, advise her not to use force to try to gain control of the world. Why? Because force attracts resistance and the greater the force the greater the resistance

30.2 Briars grow where armies have been and hard times are the legacy of a great war

30.3 Conclude hostilities as soon as possible and do not continue to use excessive force after victory.

30.4 Fulfill your purpose but never glory in inhumane acts. Fulfill your purpose but never boast of bloodletting. Fulfill your purpose but never take pride in killing. Fulfill your purpose but avoid violence

30.5 Fulfill your purpose by flowing within the oneness of Infinity. The use of force dissipates life. Force is not the way of peace and harmony. That which goes against peace and harmony is short lived

31.1 Weapons of war are instruments of death. All people fear them. Therefore, all men of peace avoid them. The sage prefers Infinity. The man of war prefers the earth.

31.2 In time of celebration the left is the dominant position; In times of grief the right. During wartime the general always stands on the left and the king on the right.

31.4 Weapons are instruments of death and the tools of a warrior. The sage avoids them at all cost; and sometimes prefers death rather than touching them. Peace and harmony are the sage's reality. She considers victory to be the bastard child of war.

31.5 If you revel in victory, then you sanction war and the killing of human beings. If you accept killing, you have forgotten your oneness with all beings.

31.6 If even one person is killed in war, it is cause for great grief and mourning. Victory is simply the maker of widows and orphans.

32.4 When the whole is distinguished into parts, and parts into more parts and more parts into even more parts a myriad names are required. There are already too many distinctions and names. The naming of things focuses on the manifestations of Infinity and too much distinguishing can result in one becoming confused in the manifestations and oblivious to the oneness of all things.

32.1 Infinity can never be defined in words. Smaller than an atom, greater than forever, it can never be comprehended.

32.2 If kings would stay centered in the Infinite, they would not try to control the uncontrollable;

32.3 Heaven and earth would be seen as a manifestation of the oneness of Infinity, as harmonious as dew accumulating on the ground. The people would recognize Infinity manifesting in their king and all things would be in harmony

32.5 Refuse to distinguish the components of the whole. See the oneness of Infinity, and see the earth as a manifestation disintegrating back into Infinity.

33.1 Knowing others is impossible. Knowing one's self requires only a remembering of one's unity with all things.

33.2 Conquering others requires force. Conquering one's self requires letting go.

33.3

33.4 He who understands his oneness with Infinity resides in peace. Living one day at a time is the essence of harmony. One who lives in harmony endures. Passing through death's door is immortality.

34.1 Infinity permeates everything in every direction; to the left as well as to the right.

34.2 It is the potential of all things, and the manifestation of all things. Its total essence resides in all things. It has no purpose. It is complete in its indifference. It manifests and disintegrates all things forever. It sustains all things, yet it is the god of no thing.

34.3 It has no purpose. It is Infinitely insignificant.

34.4 All manifestations after a time disintegrate back into It, yet It is the god of no thing. It permeates everything and so there is nothing outside its realm.

34.5 It cannot appear great because it is at one with everything

35.1 All beings are drawn to those who stay centered in their oneness with Infinity because they flow in peace and harmony.

35.2 The manifestations of music and delicious food catch the attention of those passing by.

35.3 But the essence of Infinity goes unnoticed. It makes no sound and has no flavor and yet It is the inexhaustible source of the manifestations of all sounds and all flavors.

36.1 All manifestations that expand will eventually shrink. All manifestations that strengthen will eventually weaken. All manifestations that are lifted up will eventually be cast down. Nothing can be received unless it is given.

36.2 This is called distinguishing the oneness of Infinity. Soft and weak forever disintegrate the hard and strong. Hard and strong forever disintegrate the soft and weak. This is called the nature of Infinity.

36.3 Fish are at one with water; undistinguished by Infinity. A nation and its weapons cannot be distinguished.

37.1 Infinity is the essence of all things. Without intention, It manifests all things.

37.2 If leaders and kings remain focused on the oneness of Infinity, nations will flow in peace and harmony. If leaders and kings are compelled to act, they should focus on Infinity and refuse to manifest desire.

37.3 If there is no desire for action, the world would flow in the peace and harmony of the oneness of Infinity.

38.1 A good person is not focused on her goodness because she is centered in oneness. A confused person is focused on goodness and consequently has difficulty obtaining it.

38.2 A person centered in oneness flows with life and appears to do nothing; yet because she is in harmony with the oneness of Infinity she leaves nothing undone. A confused person is focused on achievements and consequently never truly achieves anything.

38.3 A caring person is caring all the time and therefore leaves nothing unnurtured. When the righteous person does something, he leaves things in turmoil. When a person of great discipline does something and others do not follow, he attempts to force them to conform to his perception of reality.

38.4 When the oneness of humanity is forgotten a distinction is made between good and evil. Focusing on goodness leads one down the path of self-righteousness which separates a person from others. Self-righteousness leads to justice and since justice is as arbitrary as goodness and righteousness, it degenerates into a facade of justice or ritual.

38.5 Ritual is the backbone of religion and religion is the harbinger of judgment and judgment is the backbone of conflict

38.6 Therefore, a centered person dwells upon the oneness of Infinity and not on distinguishing which leads to confusion; on the plant and not on the flower. A centered person embraces oneness and rejects distinctions.

39.1 All things are at one with Infinity. When humanity is centered in this oneness: the sky remains clear and beautiful, the earth remains pure and sustains life, the spirit of humanity is in harmony,

39.2 the valley is the source of abundance, all creatures reproduce, regenerate and replenish the earth, leaders and kings are in harmony and nations are at peace.

39.3 When humanity focuses on the manifestations of Infinity, distinguishes and judges all things and thereby forgets the oneness of Infinity: the sky becomes cloudy with pollution, the earth becomes a cesspool unable to easily neutralize the many poisons, the spirit of humanity becomes confused and accepts conflict as the nature of humanity,

39.4 the valley no longer produces abundance and what it does produce is tainted. Leaders and kings take their nations to war in order to control the untainted lands, creatures no longer reproduce, species die out and parts of the earth, unattended by the myriad creatures, no longer regenerate or replenish themselves, the people of all nations live in conflict, fear, hunger and depression.

39.5 Therefore, never forget that oneness is the essence of harmony; the simple is the way of peace. Leaders and kings consider themselves, alone, ridiculed and misunderstood when they forget their oneness with Infinity. In confusion, they inevitably lead their nations to war.

39.6 In order to maintain peace and harmony in the land, they must flow in the peace and harmony of the oneness of all things.

39.7 Too much success is a sign that one has begun to focus on manifestations and not on Infinity, the essence of all manifestations.

39.8 Do not distinguish precious jade. Remain centered in the peace and harmony of the oneness of all things.

40.1 Manifesting and disintegrating is the activity of Infinity. Yielding to manifestations, yielding to disintegration is the nature of peace and harmony.

40.2 Things are manifested from the tangible. The tangible is manifested from the intangible.

41.1 When a person seeking peace and harmony discovers the oneness of Infinity, she embraces it completely. When the average person remembers the oneness of Infinity, he has a hard time maintaining it.

41.2 When a confused person is confronted with the oneness of Infinity, he laughs loudly. If he did not laugh, his confusion would not be so obvious

41.3 The oneness of Infinity is beyond distinctions and is always present. That is why things seem confusing to those who acknowledge distinctions.

41.4 The light merges into darkness. Forward looks similar to backward. The easy path manifests difficulty. Virtue seems hollow. Purity becomes an illusion. The static is dynamic. Strength degenerates into weakness. Truth has no foundation. The great square has no corners. A circle is a series of points. Great music seems like the wind. Images have no shape

41.5 The oneness of Infinity permeates all things and merges them together. Infinity manifests all things to completion and disintegrates all manifestations forever.

42.1 Infinity is oneness. Infinity is the potential of all things. All things are one with Infinity. Distinguishing creates the two

42.2 All things can be distinguished as yin and yang. The harmony of oneness is achieved by not distinguishing.

42.3 Human beings hate being alone, ridiculed, and misunderstood. Yet this is how leaders and kings perceive themselves when they forget their oneness with Infinity

42.4 One achieves peace by ignoring distinctions and becomes confused by endless judgments and distinctions.

42.5 Others teach; "A violent man will reap a violent death." I teach; "All men will die." This is the simplicity of Infinity.

43.1 The softest manifestation in the Infinite overcomes the hardest manifestation in the Infinite. The intangible permeates the tangible. Non-action incorporates action

43.2 Teaching by living, working without laboring is comprehended by only a few.

44.1 Your name or your self: which is more important? Your self or your possessions: which are more valuable? Gain or loss: which is more destructive to peace and harmony

44.2 He who values his name separates from the oneness of humanity and experiences suffering. Accumulating always creates confusion. A man in harmony does not distinguish gain or loss.

44.3 A man who refuses to judge or make distinctions will never become lost or confused. He will experience peace and harmony within the oneness of Infinity

45.1 Great accomplishments seem incomplete yet their legacy is long lived. Great abundance seems insignificant but it is inexhaustible. A beam of light is just a wave.

45.2 Great skill seems easy. Great eloquence seems boring.

45.3 Motion generates heat. Stillness manifests the cold. Peace and harmony are the nature of Infinity

46.1 When the world remembers its oneness, horses plow the fields. When the world focuses on the manifestations of Infinity, distinctions, judgment and war replace peace and harmony.

46.2 There is no greater confusion than desire; no greater burden than discontent. Nothing is as unfortunate as seeing one's self as separate from others. Peace and harmony come from the realization that what one has is enough.

46.3 Because you are at one with Infinity

47.1 you can experience the world without leaving your home. Without looking out the window you can see the manifestations of Infinity. The further you carry your distinctions and your judgments, the more confused and lost you become.

47.2 Thus the sage experiences all things without traveling; without looking she sees Infinity. She works without laboring

48.1 In the pursuit of knowledge, at every moment something is distinguished. In the pursuit of peace and harmony, at every moment something is merged. Less and less is desired until one is flowing in peace and harmony. When one is flowing in peace and harmony all things are accomplished.

48.2 The world flows in peace and harmony when all things are allowed to manifest and to disintegrate

48.3 Peace and harmony are sacrificed by manipulation.

49.1 The sage has no mind of her own. She is at one with all of humanity
49.2 Give to those who are considered good. Give to those who are considered bad. This is true oneness
49.3 Trust those who are trustworthy. Trust those who are not trustworthy. This is also true oneness
49.4 The sage is peaceful and harmonious; but to the world she seems indifferent. The world pays attention to her and listens to her even though she resembles a child.

50.1 From birth to death
50.2 Three in ten are manifesting life, Three in ten are disintegrating into death, and three in ten are between, manifesting life and disintegrating into death. Why? Because the vast majority of humanity distinguishes life and death.
50.3 The person who is at one with all things can go anywhere without fear of vicious animals or dangerous persons
50.4 Why? Because she is at one with the wild animals, they perceive her as themselves. Because she is at one with dangerous persons, they fear her.

51.1 The potential of Infinity manifests all things. Manifestations are nourished by oneness, created with matter, affected by events. Therefore, those who maintain peace and harmony acknowledge Infinity and remember their oneness, not because it is demanded, but because it is the essence of all things.
51.2 Infinity manifests all things, rears them, nurtures them, clothes them, feeds them, protects them, and comforts them.
51.3 Infinity manifests all things without possessing them; shows them the way without interfering, assists them without taking credit. This is the nature of Infinity.

52.1 Infinity is the mother of all things.
52.2 Remembering Infinity, one knows the nature of children. Knowing the nature of the children keeps one focused on the oneness of Infinity. Remembering your oneness with Infinity and the immortality of Infinity overcomes the fear of death.
52.3 Contemplate Infinity, accept all things without distinctions and judgments, and life will be peaceful and harmonious.
52.4 Think about reality, distinguish and judge all things, and life degenerates into confusion.
52.5 Seeing differences is called distinguishing. Remaining indifferent manifests peace and harmony
52.6 Understanding the nature of oneness focuses one on Infinity and away from the confusion of misfortune. This is called abiding in the constant.

53.1 If I possess just a bit of insight, I will remember my oneness with Infinity, and I will only be concerned that I may become confused with distinctions and judgment.
53.2 The path of Infinity is easy and peaceful. But the majority of people cannot help becoming confused in the manifestations of the Infinite.
53.3 When rulers and leaders are confused in pomp and circumstance, the fields are overgrown with weeds and the granaries are empty.
53.4 When leaders and rulers wear extravagant clothing and manipulate the law while attending endless banquets and accumulating wealth for the sake of wealth, they are confused and behave like bandits and thieves. This is not the path of peace and harmony.

54.1 The essence of Infinity can be ignored but never uprooted. If it is acknowledged, it cannot be lost and it will manifest peace and harmony from parents to children forever.
54.2 Acknowledge it in yourself and peace and harmony will become real. Acknowledge it in your family and peace and harmony will grow. Acknowledge it in your town and peace and harmony will influence your teachers. Acknowledge it in your nation and peace and harmony will displace war. Acknowledge it in the universe and peace and harmony will be everywhere.
54.3 Therefore, see others as yourself, see other families as your family, see other towns as your town, see other nations as your nation, see the universe as a manifestation of the Infinite.
54.4 How do I know this is the way things are? Because I am at one with Infinity.

55.1 A person who flows in peace and harmony is like a newborn baby. Poisonous insects and reptiles do not sting or bite it. Wild animals do not stalk it. Raptors do not attack it. Its bones are soft and its muscles are weak yet its grip is secure.
55.2 It is not aware of male and female yet its genitals are aroused.
55.3 Its oneness is perfect. It screams all day without becoming hoarse. This is the perfection of harmony.
55.4 Knowing harmony is acknowledging the oneness of Infinity. Knowing the oneness of Infinity is the experience of peace. Manipulating one's life force results in confusion. Controlling the breath interrupts the harmony of the body. Increasing the natural pace of life creates exhaustion and is therefore not the path of harmony.
55.5 Anything that remains out of harmony is short lived.

56.1 Those who know have no need to speak. Those who speak are searching for peace and harmony.

56.2 Do not speak. Ignore your senses. Blunt your sharpness. Unravel your knots. Dim your light. Become one with all things. This is the primal essence.

56.3 Those who flow in the peace and harmony of Infinity make no distinctions. They are therefore indifferent to friend and foe, to good and bad, to honor and infamy. This is the natural state of human beings.

57.1 Govern a nation with fairness. In war do the unexpected. Lead the nation by becoming one with it. Why do I say this? Because:

57.2 The more rules and regulations, the more oppressed the citizens. The more energy used to develop weapons, the more tension in the land.

57.3 The more clever and manipulative the leaders become, the more agitated and unpredictable the population. The more religious morals and restrictions, the more depression and self-hatred manifests.

57.4 Therefore, when the ruler is at one with the population she says: I take no action and the citizens govern themselves. I flow in peace and harmony and the people follow in my footsteps.

57.5 I refuse to manipulate and control and the population becomes predictable. I ignore religion and tolerance replaces judgment.

58.1 When the country is ruled with indifference, the people flow in peace and harmony. When the country is ruled with purpose, the people become tense and circumvent the law.

58.2 When distinctions are made, good fortune is the harbinger of disaster and adversity is the foundation of prosperity.

58.3 The only known is change and the limits of change are unpredictable. Because everything changes, nothing seems real. The reliable becomes questionable and the questionable becomes familiar. The confusion created by distinctions is ever present.

58.4 Therefore the sage is: upright but not judgmental, to the point but not arrogant, straightforward but not offensive, is a light but not blinding.

59.1 In leading people and manifesting Infinity, there is nothing as essential as indifference.

59.2 Refusing to distinguish the self is the crucial requirement of indifference. Indifference is the product of maintaining one's focus on the oneness of all things. If you are at one with Infinity and the potential of all things, then you have no limitations. If one has no limitations, she is qualified to rule the world.

59.3 If she is at one with the world, and consequently indifferent, she will endure.

59.4 This is the manifestation of deep roots and a firm foundation, a oneness with Infinity, immortality and perfect vision.

60.1 Ruling a country is like cooking a small fish. If you forget your oneness with the fish, you become confused in what you are doing.

60.2 See the world as one with Infinity and evil will be impotent.

60.3 Not that evil does not exist, but because it is not distinguished people harmonize with it. If all of humanity is in harmony with the oneness of Infinity, not only will evil not confuse the people, the sage himself will not confuse the people.

60.4 They will not confuse each other and the oneness in each will harmonize both.

61.1 The great nation is like the ocean, at one with Infinity, it receives all waters in peace and harmony. The female integrates the male by residing in peace and harmony

61.2 Therefore, if the great nation does not distinguish the small nation as separate from itself, it will integrate the smaller nation into its oneness. If a small nation does not distinguish itself as different from the great nation, it will incorporate the peace and harmony of the great nation.

61.3 A great nation conquers by being a reservoir of peace and harmony. A small nation conquers by becoming one with the great nation.

61.4 The great state is a reservoir of peace and harmony for smaller states. Small states seek the peace and harmony of the great state.

61.5 Both get what they want; oneness. It is natural for the great nation to be receptive to the smaller nation.

62.1 Infinity is the potential of all things; the source of all manifestations. It is the treasure of peaceful people and the hiding place of the bad

62.2 Flattery can purchase advancement. Good deeds can obtain admiration. If a man is bad, do not distinguish his badness. See his oneness with humanity.

62.3 Therefore, when the king is crowned and the state officials are sworn in, do not send them gifts of jade dishes or a team of four horses. Instead flow in peace and harmony and remind them of their oneness with humanity.

62.4 Why does everyone flow in peace and harmony when they acknowledge the oneness of Infinity? Because their needs are met and their mistakes are not distinguished. This is the gift of Infinity.

63.1 Practice flowing in peace and harmony. Work without laboring. Savor the tasteless.

63.2 Enlarge the small. Multiply the few. Mitigate bitterness with kindness.

63.3 Accomplish difficult endeavors by a series of easy tasks. Accomplish great deeds by persisting in mundane acts.

63.4 When one flows in peace and harmony and perceives the oneness in all things: difficulties are easily overcome and great accomplishments are seen as a compilation of a lifetime of insignificant days..

63.5 The sage never tries to achieve greatness. She flows in peace and harmony and at the end of her days comprehends her legacy.

63.6 Cursory promises are generally unreliable. Neglecting basics fosters difficulties.

63.7 The sage considers the potential difficulty in all things and circumvents them by flowing in peace and harmony.

64.1 Peace and harmony are easy to perpetuate. Situations are easy to deal with before they manifest. The brittle is easily cracked. The small is easy to broadcast.

64.2 Flow in peace and harmony and problems do not manifest. Focus on the oneness of all things and avoid confusion.

64.3 The greatest tree manifests from an unremarkable shoot. A multilevel building begins with the laying of a single brick. A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.

64.4 He who attempts to control his life becomes confused. Attempt to grasp a thing and it disappears. The sage flows in peace and harmony and so is not confused. She attaches herself to nothing and consequently her vision remains clear.

64.5 Confused people usually quit just short of success. Therefore, see experiences as the oneness of life from beginning to end and it will be impossible to fail.

64.6 The sage is indifferent to desire: she does not accumulate possessions, she is unemotional regarding ideas, she focuses people on their oneness, she, by example, illuminates the path to peace and harmony but does not impose her will or foist her views on others.

65.1 From time immemorial the sage has not tried to teach oneness but has embedded peace and harmony in the openness of a simple life.

65.2 Why is it so hard to rule? Because people are at one with their leaders. Leaders who use cleverness are confronted with more cleverness. Cleverness only manifests confusion. Those who flow in the peace and harmony of oneness lead without attempting cleverness and are a blessing to everyone.

65.3 These too are distinctions, cleverness and non-action. Realizing these two are distinctions focuses one on the oneness of Infinity and away from confusion.

65.4 Staying centered in the oneness that permeates Infinity manifests peace and harmony.

66.1 Why are the great oceans the rulers of all rivers? Because they occupy a lower space. Therefore, their humility lifts them up.

66.2 If the sage is to manifest peace she must be humble in her speech. If she is to lead others she must follow them in harmony.

66.3 When the sage leads, the people do not feel enslaved. When she stands above them, they feel at one with her. Because she is in harmony with others, they support her and never consider her a burden.

66.4 She is not confused. Therefore, she does not contend with others and they do not contend with her.

67.1 Everyone says that Infinity is great but beyond comprehension because it is intangible. Since it is intangible, it seems non-existent. However, if it were not intangible it would have disintegrated before the world was born.

67.2 Three things create peace and harmony. The first is a lack of distinctions. The second is simplicity. The third is oneness.

67.3 With a lack of distinction, I can accept all things. With simplicity, I do not become confused with desire. With oneness, I can be at peace and in harmony with all things.

67.4 In the world people always make distinctions between good and bad and become confused in judgment; desire possessions and become confused in wealth; forget their oneness and live in tension and conflict.

67.5 Refuse to make distinctions and refuse to pass judgment and war and defense succumb to peace and harmony.

68.1 A warrior in harmony is not contemptuous of life. A prize fighter in harmony is not angry.

68.2 A winner in harmony understands the oneness of winning and losing. An employer in harmony is at one with his employees.

68.3 This is called non-distinction and indifference. It is known as being at peace and in harmony with others. It is the manifestation of the ultimate peace and harmony of Infinity.

69.1 There is a saying among generals, It is better not to begin the battle but to wait for the other side to begin. It is better to retreat a foot rather than advance an inch.
69.2 This is called advancing while appearing to retreat, preparing to fight by concealing your power, winning the battle without engaging the enemy, and brandishing non-existent weapons.
69.3 There is nothing worse than distinguishing others as enemies. By distinguishing others as enemies, I lose sight of my oneness and become confused in conflict and war.
69.4 So when war seems imminent, the victor refuses to embrace killing.

70.1 My words are easy to understand and easy to put into practice, but unfortunately few people understand them or try to live by them.

70.2 My thoughts have always existed, but since people are confused, they do not embrace them. Because people do not understand me, they are confused in conflict and war rather than living in peace and harmony. Those that acknowledge their oneness with Infinity are few. Those that call me crazy are applauded by others that are confused.

70.3 Therefore, the sage is modest in her apparel, but carries the priceless jewel of peace and harmony in her heart.

71.1 Acknowledging oneness manifests peace. Acknowledging distinctions manifests confusion. If one is in harmony with disharmony, then one is at peace.

71.2 The sage is at peace because she is not confused with the distinctions of harmony and disharmony. The sage is at one with Infinity.

72.1 When people are not in awe of the Infinite, they are overwhelmed by confusion.

72.2 Do not violate another's space. Do not interfere with another's livelihood. If you do not violate their space or interfere with their livelihood, they will not separate themselves from you.

72.3 The sage acknowledges herself but does not distinguish herself from others. She lives her reality but does not try to foist it on others. She makes her choices but is indifferent and unattached and therefore lives in peace and harmony.

73.1 A distinguishing man in his righteousness is prepared to kill or be killed in the name of righteousness. A non-distinguishing woman is indifferent and refuses to even consider killing.

73.2 Both types of people occupy the world forever. They are one and undistinguished by Infinity.

73.3 Infinity does not contend but through oneness overcomes all things. It does not speak but is the answer to all questions. It does not summons but all things are attracted to it. It makes no plans and has no goals but all things are manifested by it.

73.4 The net of Infinity is all encompassing. The mesh is large yet nothing slips through.

74.1 When people are at one with Infinity, they have no fear of death and so they are indifferent to threats.

74.2 When people are confused with the distinction of life and death, they fear death. If death is the penalty for breaking the law, the vast majority will be law abiding.

74.3 There are always official executioners and they are at one with killing. If you try to take their place, it is the same as trying to cut wood in place of the master carpenter. If you try to take the master carpenter's place, you will only succeed in cutting your hands.

75.1 When the people of a nation are starving and without the basic necessities, it is because taxes are excessive.

75.2 When the people of a nation are rebellious, it is because the laws are out of harmony with the population.

75.3 When the leaders of a nation are oppressive in their confusion, the people remember their oneness and become indifferent to death. Those who remember the oneness of Infinity are indifferent to life and death and consequently live in peace and harmony.

76.1 The human body is born soft and supple; after death it is hard and stiff.

76.2 Plants and trees are pliant and limber when they sprout, after death they are inflexible and rigid.

76.3 Therefore, hard and inflexible are characteristics of death. Pliant and flexible are characteristics of life.

76.4 Thus, an army that is inflexible will be conquered and a tree that does not yield to the wind will snap.

76.5 The hard and inflexible will succumb. The pliant and flexible will endure.

77.1 The harmony of Infinity functions like a bow and its string. The upper part bends down, the lower part raises up. If the string is too long, it is made shorter; too short and it is lengthened.

77.2 The nature of Infinity is balance, excess gravitates to what is lacking. The tendency of people is toward confusion because those who have much take from those who have little.

77.3 Those who are at one with Infinity and live in peace and harmony are not confused. They do not accumulate what they do not need and are like a reservoir to those who are impoverished.

77.4 The sage lives in harmony giving without expecting, completing her tasks with indifference, and maintaining a oneness with all things.

78.1 Nothing in the world is more submissive and yielding than water. Yet nothing can equal it in cutting the inflexible and eroding the hard.

78.2 The weak can subdue the strong and the flexible outlasts the rigid. This is common knowledge, yet only a very few can practice it.

78.3 Therefore, the sages say; She who is at one with the disgrace of a nation is worthy to be queen. He who is at one with the misfortunes of nations is worthy to be king of kings. The truth frequently seems paradoxical.

79.1 Conflict almost always leaves some resentment regardless of the nature of a peaceful resolution. How does one achieve peace and harmony?

79.2 The sage fulfills her commitments but does not demand others to fulfill theirs. Those who are confused demand others to fulfill their commitments but are unconcerned with fulfilling their own.

79.3 Infinity is indifferent. It is at one with all people.

79.4 Infinity is indifferent. It is at one with all people.

80.1 A peaceful nation has few people and flows in harmony and oneness. They have weapons of war but they have no inclination to use them. They are indifferent to death and indifferent to living elsewhere.

80.2 They have boats and carriages but seldom use them. They have weapons of war but no one displays them.

80.3 They live a simple life: their food is nourishing, their clothes are adequate, their dwellings are secure. They are at peace and in harmony with all things.

80.4 Even though they live within sight of a neighboring nation and hear the sounds of dogs and children, they grow old and perish without ever desiring to go there.

81.1 Truthful words are seldom passionate. Passionate words are seldom truthful.

81.2 Peaceful men do not quarrel. Those who quarrel are confused.

81.3 He who is at one with all things knows Infinity. He who has knowledge is always confused.

81.4 The sage is never confused by accumulating. The more he does for others, the more he flows in harmony. The more he gives to others, the more he experiences peace.

81.5 Infinity manifests, nourishes and disintegrates forever. The sage flows in the peace and harmony of oneness with all things.

Wu version

- 1.1 Tao can be talked about, but not the Eternal Tao; Names can be named, but not the Eternal name.
 - 1.2 As the origin of heaven-and-earth, it is nameless: As "the Mother" of all things it is nameable.
 - 1.3 So, as ever hidden, we should look at its inner essence: As always manifest, we should look at its outer aspects.
 - 1.4 These two flow from the same source, though differently named;
 - 1.5 And both are called mysteries. The Mystery of mysteries is the door of all essence.
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- 2.1 When all the world recognizes beauty as beauty, this in itself is ugliness.
 - 2.2 When all the world recognizes good as good, this in itself is evil.
 - 2.3 Indeed, the hidden and the manifest give birth to each other. Difficult and easy complement each other. Long and short exhibit each other;
 - 2.4 High and low set measure to each other; Voice and sound harmonize each other; Back and front follow each other.
 - 2.5 Therefore, the Sage manages his affairs without ado, And spreads his teaching without talking.
 - 2.6 He denies nothing to the teeming things. He rears them, but lays no claim to them. He does his work, but sets no store by it.
 - 2.7 He accomplishes his task, but does not dwell upon it. And yet it is just because he does not dwell on it That nobody can ever take it away from him.
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- 3.1 By not exalting the talented you will cause the people to cease from rivalry and contention.
 - 3.2 By not prizing goods hard to get, you will cause the people to cease from robbing and stealing.
 - 3.3 By not displaying what is desirable, you will cause the people's hearts to remain undisturbed.
 - 3.4 Therefore, the Sage's way of governing begins by Emptying the heart of desires, Filling the belly with food, Weakening the ambitions, Toughening the bones.
 - 3.5 In this way he will cause the people to remain without knowledge and without desire, and prevent the knowing ones from any ado.
 - 3.6 Practice Non-Ado and everything will be in order.
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- 4.1 The Tao is like an empty bowl. Which in being used can never be filled up.
 - 4.2 Fathomless, it seems to be the origin of all things.
 - 4.3 It blunts all sharp edges, It unties all tangles, It harmonizes all lights, It unites the world into one whole.
 - 4.4 Hidden in the deeps, Yet it seems to exist forever.
 - 4.5 I do not know whose child it is; It seems to be the common ancestor of all, the father of things.
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- 5.1 Heaven-and-Earth is not sentimental; It treats all things as straw-dogs.
 - 5.2 The Sage is not sentimental; He treats all his people as straw-dogs.
 - 5.3 Between Heaven and Earth, There seems to be a Bellows: It is empty, and yet it is inexhaustible. The more it works the more comes out of it.
 - 5.4 No amount of words can fathom it: Better look for it within you.
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- 6.1 The Spirit of the Fountain dies not. It is called the Mysterious Feminine.
 - 6.2 The doorway of the Mysterious Feminine Is called Root of Heaven-and-Earth.
 - 6.3 Lingering like gossamer, it has only a hint of existence; And yet when you draw upon it, it is inexhaustible.
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- 7.1 Heaven lasts long and Earth abides.
 - 7.2 What is the secret of their durability? Is it not because they do not live for themselves That they can live so long?
 - 7.3 Therefore, the Sage wants to remain behind, But finds himself at the head of others;
 - 7.4 Reckons himself out, But finds himself safe and secure.
 - 7.5 Is it not because he is selfless That his self is realized?
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- 8.1 The highest form of goodness is like water. Water knows how to benefit all things without striving with them. It stays in places loathed by all men. Therefore, it comes near the Tao.
 - 8.2 In choosing your dwelling, know how to keep to the ground. In cultivating your mind, know how to dive in the hidden deeps. In dealing with others, know how to be gentle and kind. In speaking, know how to keep your words.
 - 8.3 In governing, know how to maintain order. In transacting business, know how to be efficient. making a move, know how to choose the right moment.
 - 8.4 If you do not strive with others, You will be free from blame.

9.1 As for holding to fullness, Far better were it to stop in time!
9.2 Keep on beating and sharpening a sword, And the edge cannot be preserved for long.
9.3 Fill your house with gold and jade, And it can no longer be guarded.
9.4 Set store by your riches and honour, And you will only reap a crop of calamities.
9.5 Here is the Way of Heaven: When you have done your work, retire!

10.1 In keeping the spirit and the vital soul together, Are you able to maintain their perfect harmony?
10.2 In gathering your vital energy to attain suppleness, Have you reached the state of a new-born babe?
10.3 In washing and cleaning your inner vision, Have you cured it of all dross?
10.4 In loving your people and governing your state, Are you able to dispense with cleverness?
10.5 In the opening and shutting of heaven's gate, Are you able to play the feminine part?
10.6 Enlightened and seeing far into all directions, Can you at the same time remain detached and non-active?
10.7 Rear your people! Feed your people! Rear them without claiming them for your own! Do your work without setting any store by it! Be a leader, not a butcher! This is called hidden Virtue.

11.1 Thirty spokes converge upon a single hub; It is the hole in the centre that the use of the cart hinges.
11.2 We make a vessel from a lump of clay; It is the empty space within the vessel that makes it useful.
11.3 We make doors and windows for a room; But it is these empty spaces that make the room livable.
11.4 Thus, while the tangible has advantages, It is the intangible that makes it useful.

12.1 The five colours blind the eye. The five tones deafen the ear. The five flavours cloy the palate.
12.2 Racing and hunting madden the mind. Rare goods tempt men to do wrong.
12.3 Therefore, the Sage takes care of the belly, not the eye. He prefers what is within to what is without.

13.1 "Welcome disgrace as a pleasant surprise. Prize calamities as your own body."
13.2 Why should we "welcome disgrace as a pleasant surprise"? Because a lowly state is a boon: Getting it is a pleasant surprise, And so is losing it! That is why we should "welcome disgrace as a pleasant surprise."
13.3 Why should we "prize calamities as our own body"? Because our body is the very source of our calamities. If we have no body, what calamities can we have?
13.4 Hence, only he who is willing to give his body for the sake of the world is fit to be entrusted with the world. Only he who can do it with love is worthy of being the steward of the world.

14.1 Look at it but you cannot see it! Its name is Formless. Listen to it but you cannot hear it! Its name is Soundless. Grasp it but you cannot get it! Its name is Incorporeal.
14.2 These three attributes are unfathomable; Therefore they fuse into one.
14.3 Its upper side is not bright: Its under side not dim. Continually the Unnameable moves on, Until it returns beyond the realm of things.
14.4 We call it the formless Form, the imageless Image. We call it the indefinable and unimaginable. Confront it and you do not see its face! Follow it and you do not see its back!
14.5 Yet, equipped with this timeless Tao, You can harness present realities. To know the origins is initiation into the Tao.

15.1 The ancient adepts of the Tao were subtle and flexible, profound and comprehensive. Their minds were too deep to be fathomed.
15.2 Because they are unfathomable, One can only describe them vaguely by their appearance. Hesitant like one wading a stream in winter; Timid like one afraid of his neighbours on all sides; Cautious and courteous like a guest;
15.3 Yielding like ice on the point of melting; Simple like an uncarved block; Hollow like a cave; Confused like a muddy pool;
15.4 And yet who else could quietly and gradually evolve from the muddy to the clear? Who else could slowly but steadily move from the inert to the living?
15.5 He who keeps the Tao does not want to be full. But precisely because he is never full, He can remain like a hidden sprout, And does not rush to early ripening.

16.1 Attain to utmost Emptiness. Cling single-heartedly to interior peace.
16.2 While all things are stirring together, I only contemplate the Return. For flourishing as they do, Each of them will return to its root.
16.3 To return to the root is to find peace. To find peace is to fulfill one's destiny. To fulfill one's destiny is to be constant. To know the Constant is called Insight. If one does not know the Constant, One runs blindly into disasters.

16.4 If one knows the Constant, One can understand and embrace all. If one understands and embraces all, One is capable of doing justice. To be just is to be kingly; To be kingly is to be heavenly; To be heavenly is to be one with the Tao;

16.5 To be one with the Tao is to abide forever. Such a one will be safe and whole Even after the dissolution of his body.

17.1 The highest type of ruler is one of whose existence the people are barely aware. Next comes one whom they love and praise. Next comes one whom they fear. Next comes one whom they despise and defy.

17.2 When you are lacking in faith, Others will be unfaithful to you.

17.3 The Sage is self-effacing and scanty of words. When his task is accomplished and things have been completed, All the people say, "We ourselves have achieved it!"

18.1 When the Great Tao was abandoned, There appeared humanity and justice.

18.2 When intelligence and wit arose, There appeared great hypocrites.

18.3 When the six relations lost their harmony, There appeared filial piety and paternal kindness.

18.4 When darkness and disorder began to reign in a kingdom, There appeared loyal ministers.

19.1 Drop wisdom and abandon cleverness, and the people will be benefited a hundredfold.

19.2 Drop humanity, abandon justice, And the people will return to their natural affections.

19.3 Drop shrewdness, abandon sharpness, And robbers and thieves will cease to be.

19.4 These three are the criss-cross of Tao, And are not sufficient in themselves.

19.5 Therefore, they should be subordinated To a Higher principle: See the Simple and embrace the Primal, Diminish the self and curb the desires!

20.1 Have done with learning, And you will have no more vexation. How great is the difference between "eh" and "o"? What is the distinction between "good" and "evil"?

20.2 Must I fear what others fear? What abysmal nonsense this is!

20.3 All men are joyous and beaming, As though feasting upon a sacrificial ox, As though mounting the Spring Terrace; I alone am placid and give no sign, Like a babe which has not yet smiled. I alone am forlorn as one who has no home to return to.

20.4 All men have courage enough and to spare: I alone appear to possess nothing. What a fool I am! What a muddled mind I have!

20.5 All men are bright, bright: I alone am dim, dim. All men are sharp, sharp; I alone am mum, mum! Bland like the ocean, Aimless like the wafting gale.

20.6 All men settle down in their grooves: I alone am stubborn and remain outside. But wherein I am most different from others is In knowing to take sustenance from my Mother!

21.1 It lies in the nature of Grand Virtue To follow the Tao and the Tao alone.

21.2 Now what is the Tao? It is Something elusive and evasive. Evasive and elusive! And yet It contains within Itself a Form. Elusive and evasive! And yet It contains within Itself a Substance. Shadowy and dim! And yet It contains within Itself a Core of Vitality. The Core of Vitality is very real, It contains within Itself an unfailing Sincerity.

21.3 Throughout the ages Its Name has been preserved In order to recall the Beginning of all things.

21.4 How do I know the ways of all things at the Beginning? By what is within me.

22.1 Bend and you will be whole. Curl and you will be straight. Keep empty and you will be filled. Grow old and you will be renewed. Have little and you will gain. Have much and you will be confused.

22.2 Therefore, the Sage embraces the One, And becomes a Pattern to all under Heaven.

22.3 He does not make a show of himself, Hence he shines; He does not justify himself, Hence he becomes known; Does not boast of his ability, Hence he gets his credit; Does not brandish his success, Hence he endures;

22.4 Does not compete with anyone, Hence no one can compete with him.

22.5 Indeed the ancient saying: "Bend and you will remain whole" is no idle word. Nay, if you have really attained wholeness, everything will flock to you.

23.1 Only quiet and simple words will ripen of themselves. For a whirlwind does not last a whole morning, Nor does a sudden shower last a whole day.

23.2 Who is their author? Heaven-and-Earth! Even Heaven-and-Earth cannot make such violent things last long; How much truer is it of the rash endeavours of men?

23.3 Hence, he who cultivates the Tao is one with the Tao; He who practices Virtue is one with Virtue; And he who courts after Loss is one with Loss.

23.4 To be one with the Tao is to be a welcome accession to the Tao; To be one with Virtue is to be a welcome accession to Virtue; To be one with Loss is to be a welcome accession to Loss.

23.5 Deficiency of faith on your part Entails faithlessness on the part of others.

24.1 One on tiptoe cannot stand. One astride cannot walk.

24.2 One who displays himself cannot shine. One who justifies himself has no glory.

24.3 One who boasts of his own ability has no merit. One who parades his own success will not endure.

24.4 In Tao these things are called "unwanted food and extraneous growths," Which are loathed by all things. Hence, a man of Tao does not set his heart upon them.

25.1 There was Something undefined and yet complete in itself, Born before Heaven-and-Earth. Silent and boundless, Standing alone without change, Yet pervading all without fail, It may be regarded as the Mother of the world.

25.2 I do not know its name; I style it "Tao"; And, in the absence of a better word, call it "The Great."

25.3 To be great is to go on, To go on is to be far, To be far is to return.

25.4 Hence, "Tao is great, Heaven is great, Earth is great, King is great." Thus, the king is one of the great four in the Universe.

25.5 Man follows the ways of the Earth. The Earth follows the ways of Heaven, Heaven follows the ways of Tao, Tao follows its own ways.

26.1 Heaviness is the root of lightness. Serenity is the master of restlessness.

26.2 Therefore, the Sage, traveling all day, Does not part with the baggage-wagon; Though there may be gorgeous sights to see, He stays at ease in his own home.

26.3 Why should a lord of ten thousand chariots Display his lightness to the world?

26.4 To be light is to be separated from one's root; To be restless is to lose one's self-mastery.

27.1 Good walking leaves no track behind it; Good speech leaves no mark to be picked at; Good calculation makes no use of counting-slips;

27.2 Good shutting makes no use of bolt and bar, And yet nobody can undo it; Good tying makes no use of rope and knot, And yet nobody can untie it.

27.3 Hence, the Sage is always good at saving men, And therefore nobody is abandoned; Always good at saving things, And therefore nothing is wasted. This is called "following the guidance of the Inner Light."

27.4 Hence, good men are teachers of bad men, While bad men are the charge of good men.

27.5 Not to revere one's teacher, Not to cherish one's charge, Is to be on the wrong road, however intelligent one may be. This is an essential tenet of the Tao.

28.1 Know the masculine, Keep to the feminine, And be the Brook of the World. To be the Brook of the World is To move constantly in the path of Virtue Without swerving from it, and to return again to infancy.

28.2 Know the white, Keep to the black, And be the Pattern of the World. To be the Pattern of the World is To move constantly in the path of Virtue Without erring a single step, And to return again to the Infinite.

28.3 Know the glorious, Keep to the lowly, And be the Fountain of the World. To be the Fountain of the World is To live the abundant life of Virtue, And to return again to Primal Simplicity.

28.4 When Primal Simplicity diversifies, It becomes useful vessels, Which, in the hands of the Sage, become officers. Hence, "a great tailor does little cutting."

29.1 Does anyone want to take the world and do what he wants with it? I do not see how he can succeed.

29.2 The world is a sacred vessel, which must not be tampered with or grabbed after. To tamper with it is to spoil it, and to grasp it is to lose it.

29.3 In fact, for all things there is a time for going ahead, and a time for following behind; A time for slow-breathing and a time for fast-breathing; A time to grow in strength and a time to decay; A time to be up and a time to be down.

29.4 Therefore, the Sage avoids all extremes, excesses and extravagances.

30.1 He who knows how to guide ruler in the path of Tao Does not try to override the world with force of arms. It is in the nature of a military weapon to turn against its wielder.

30.2 Wherever armies are stationed, thorny bushes grow. After a great war, bad years invariably follow.

30.3 What you want is to protect efficiently your own state, But not to aim at self-aggrandizement.

30.4 After you have attained your purpose, You must not parade your success, You must not boast of your ability, You must not feel proud, You must rather regret that you had not been able to prevent the war. You must never think of conquering others by force.

30.5 For to be over-developed is to hasten decay, And this is against Tao, And what is against Tao will soon cease to be.

31.1 Fine weapons of war augur evil. Even things seem to hate them. Therefore, a man of Tao does not set his heart upon them.

31.2 In ordinary life, a gentleman regards the left side as a place of honour; In war, the right side is the place of honour.

31.3 As weapons are instruments of evil, They are not properly a gentleman's instruments; Only on necessity will he resort to them. For peace and quiet are dearest to this heart,

31.4 And to him even a victory is no cause for rejoicing. To rejoice over a victory is to rejoice over the slaughter of men! Hence a man who rejoices over the slaughter of men cannot be expected to thrive in the world of men.

31.5 On happy occasions the left side is preferred; On sad occasions the right side. In the army, the Lieutenant Commander stands on the left, While the Commander-in-Chief stands on the right. This means that war is treated on a par with a funeral service.

31.6 Because many people have been killed, it is only right that survivors should mourn for them. Hence, even a victory is a funeral.

32.4 When once the Primal Simplicity diversified, Different names appeared. Are there not enough names now? Is this not the time to stop? To know when to stop is to preserve ourselves from danger.

32.1 Tao is always nameless. Small as it is in its Primal Simplicity, It is inferior to nothing in the world.

32.2 If only a ruler could cling to it, Everything will render homage to him.

32.3 Heaven and Earth will be harmonized And send down sweet dew. Peace and order will reign among the people without any command from above.

32.5 The Tao is to the world what a great river or an ocean is to the streams and brooks.

33.1 He who knows men is clever; He who knows himself has insight.

33.2 He who conquers men has force; He who conquers himself is truly strong.

33.3 He who knows when he has got enough is rich, And he who adheres assiduously to the path of Tao is a man of steady purpose.

33.4 He who stays where he has found his true home endures long, And he who dies but perishes not enjoys real longevity.

34.1 The Great Tao is universal like a flood. How can it be turned to the right or to the left?

34.2 All creatures depend on it, And it denies nothing to anyone. It does its work, But makes no claims for itself. It clothes and feeds all, But it does not lord it over them:

34.3 Thus, it may be called "the Little."

34.4 All things return to it as to their home, But it does not lord it over them: Thus, it may be called "the Great."

34.5 It is just because it does no wish to be great That its greatness is fully realized.

35.1 He who holds the Great Symbol will attract all things to him. They flock to him and receive no harm, for in him they find peace, security and happiness.

35.2 Music and dainty dishes can only make a passing guest pause.

35.3 But the words of Tao possess lasting effects, Though they are mild and flavourless, Though they appeal neither to the eye nor the ear.

36.1 What is in the end to be shrunken, Begins by first being stretched out. What is in the end to be weakened, Begins by first being made strong. What is in the end to be thrown down, Begins by first being set on high. What is in the end to be despoiled, Begins by being first richly endowed.

36.2 Herein is the subtle wisdom of life: The soft and weak overcomes the hard and strong.

36.3 Just as the fish must not leave the deeps, So the ruler must not display his weapons.

37.1 Tao never makes any ado, And yet it does everything.

37.2 If a ruler can cling to it, All things will grow of themselves. When they have grown and tend to make a stir, It is time to keep them in their place by the aid of the nameless Primal Simplicity, Which alone can curb the desires of men.

37.3 When the desires of men are curbed, there will be peace, And the world will settle down of its own accord.

38.1 High Virtue is non-virtuous; Therefore it has Virtue. Low Virtue never frees itself from virtuousness; Therefore it has no Virtue.

38.2 High Virtue makes no fuss and has no private ends to serve: Low Virtue not only fusses but has private ends to serve.

38.3 High humanity fusses but has no private ends to serve: High morality not only fusses but has private ends to serve. High ceremony fusses but finds no response; Then it tries to enforce itself with rolled-up sleeves.

38.4 Failing Tao, man resorts to Virtue. Failing Virtue, man resorts to humanity. Failing humanity, man resorts to morality. Failing morality, man resorts to ceremony.

38.5 Now, ceremony is the merest husk of faith and loyalty; It is the beginning of all confusion and disorder. As to foreknowledge, it is only the flower of Tao, And the beginning of folly.

38.6 Therefore, the full-grown man set his heart upon the substance rather than the husk; Upon the fruit rather than the flower. Truly, he prefers what is within to what is without.

39.1 From of old there are not lacking things that have attained Oneness. The sky attains Oneness and became clear; The earth attained Oneness and became calm; The spirits attained Oneness and became charged with mystical powers;

39.2 The fountains attained Oneness and became full; The ten thousand creatures attained Oneness and became reproductive; Barons and princes attained Oneness and became sovereign rulers of the world. All of them are what they are by virtue of Oneness.

39.3 If the sky were not clear, it would be likely to fall to pieces; If the earth were not calm, it would be likely to burst into bits; If the spirits were not charged with mystical powers, they would be likely to cease from being;

39.4 If the fountains were not full, they would be likely to dry up; If the ten thousand creatures were not reproductive, they would be likely to come to extinction; If the barons and princes were not the sovereign rulers, they would be likely to stumble and fall.

39.5 Truly, humility is the root from which greatness springs, And the high must be built upon the foundation of the low.

39.6 That is why barons and princes style themselves "The Helpless One," "The Little One," and "The Worthless One." Perhaps they too realize their dependence upon the lowly.

39.7 Truly, too much honour means no honour.

39.8 It is not wise to shine like jade and resound like stone-chimes.

40.1 The movement of the Tao consists in Returning. The use of the Tao consists in softness.

40.2 All things under heaven are born of the corporeal: The corporeal is born of the Incorporeal.

41.1 When a wise scholar hears the Tao, He practices it diligently. When a mediocre scholar hears the Tao, He wavers between belief and unbelief.

41.2 When a worthless scholar hears the Tao, He laughs boisterously at it. But if such a one does not laugh at it, The Tao would not be the Tao!

41.3 The wise men of old have truly said: The bright Way look dim. The progressive Way looks retrograde. The smooth Way looks rugged. High Virtue looks like an abyss. Great whiteness looks spotted. Abundant Virtue looks deficient.

41.4 Established Virtue looks shabby. Solid Virtue looks as though melted. Great squareness has no corners. Great talents ripen late. Great sound is silent. Great Form is shapeless.

41.5 The Tao is hidden and nameless; Yet it alone knows how to render help and fulfill.

42.1 Tao gave birth to One, One gave birth to Two, Two gave birth to Three, Three gave birth to all the myriad things.

42.2 All the myriad things carry the Yin on their backs and hold the Yang in their embrace, Deriving their vital harmony from the proper blending of the two vital Breaths.

42.3 What is more loathed by men than to be "helpless," "little," and "worthless"? And yet these are the very names the princes and barons call themselves.

42.4 Truly, one may gain by losing; And one may lose by gaining.

42.5 What another has taught let me repeat: "A man of violence will come to a violent end." Whoever said this can be my teacher and my father.

43.1 The softest of all things Overrides the hardest of all things. Only Nothing can enter into no-space. Hence I know the advantages of Non-Ado.

43.2 Few things under heaven are as instructive as the lessons of Silence. Or as beneficial as the fruits of Non-Ado.

44.1 As for your name and your body, which is the dearer? As for your body and your wealth, which is the more to be prized? As for gain and loss, which is the more painful?

44.2 Thus, an excessive love for anything will cost you dear in the end. The storing up of too much goods will entail a heavy loss.

44.3 To know when you have enough is to be immune from disgrace. To know when to stop is to be preserved from perils. Only thus can you endure long.

45.1 The greatest perfection seems imperfect, And yet its use is inexhaustible. The greatest fullness seems empty, And yet its use is endless. The great straightness looks like crookedness.

45.2 The greatest skill appears clumsy. The greatest eloquence sounds like stammering.
45.3 Restlessness overcomes cold, But calm overcomes heat. The peaceful and serene Is the Norm of the World.

46.1 When the world is in possession of the Tao, The galloping horses are led to fertilize the fields with their droppings. When the world has become Taoless, War horses breed themselves on the suburbs.
46.2 There is no calamity like not knowing what is enough. There is no evil like covetousness.
46.3 Only he who knows what is enough will always have enough.

47.1 Without going out of your door, You can know the ways of the world. Without peeping through your window, You can see the Way of Heaven. The farther you go, The less you know.
47.2 Thus, the Sage knows without traveling, Sees without looking, And achieves without Ado.

48.1 Learning consists in daily accumulating; The practice of Tao consists in daily diminishing.
48.2 Keep on diminishing and diminishing, Until you reach the state of Non-Ado. Non-Ado, And yet nothing is left undone.
48.3 To win the world, one must renounce all. If one still has private ends to serve, One will never be able to win the world.

49.1 The Sage has no interests of his own, But takes the interests of the people as his own.
49.2 He is kind to the kind; He is also kind to the unkind; For Virtue is kind.
49.3 He is faithful to the faithful; He is also faithful to the unfaithful: For Virtue is faithful.
49.4 In the midst of the world, the Sage is shy and self-effacing. For the sake of the world he keeps his heart in its nebulous state. All the people strain their ears and eyes: The Sage only smiles like an amused infant.

50.1 When one is out of Life, one is in Death.
50.2 The Companions of life are thirteen; the companions of Death are thirteen; And, when a living person moves into the Realm of Death, his companions are also thirteen. How is this? Because he draws upon the resources of Life too heavily.
50.3 It is said that he who knows well how to live meets no tigers or wild buffaloes on his road, And comes out from the battle-ground untouched by the weapons of war.
50.4 For, in him, a buffalo would find no butt for his horns, a tiger nothing to lay his claws upon, And a weapon of war no place to admit its point. How is this? Because there is no room for Death in him.

51.1 Tao gives them life, Virtue nurses them, Matter shapes them, Environment perfects them. Therefore all things without exception worship Tao and do homage to Virtue.
51.2 They have not been commanded to worship Tao and do homage to Virtue, But they always do so spontaneously. It is Tao that gives them life: It is Virtue that nurses them, grows them, fosters them, shelters them, comforts them, nourishes them, And covers them under her wings.
51.3 To give life but to claim nothing, To do your work but set no store by it, To be a leader, not a butcher, This is called hidden Virtue.

52.1 All-under-Heaven have a common Beginning. This Beginning is the Mother of the world.
52.2 Having known the Mother, We may proceed to know her children. Having known the children, We should go back and hold on to the Mother. In doing so, you will incur no risk Even though your body be annihilated.
52.3 Block all the passages! Shut all the doors! And to the end of your days you will not be worn out.
52.4 Open the passages! Multiply your activities! And to the end of your days you will remain helpless.
52.5 To see the small is to have insight. To hold on to weakness is to be strong.
52.6 Use the lights, but return to your insight. Do not bring calamities upon yourself. This is the way of cultivating the Changeless.

53.1 If only I had the tiniest grain of wisdom, I should walk in the Great Way, And my only fear would be to stray from it.
53.2 The Great Way is very smooth and straight; And yet the people prefer devious paths.
53.3 The court is very clean and well garnished, But the fields are weedy and wild, And the granaries are very empty!
53.4 They wear gorgeous clothes, They carry sharp swords, They surfeit themselves with food and drink, They possess more riches than they can use! They are the heralds of brigandage! As for Tao, what do they know about it?

54.1 What is well planted cannot be uprooted. What is well embraced cannot slip away. Your descendants will carry on the ancestral sacrifice for generations without end.

54.2 Cultivate Virtue in your own person, And it becomes a genuine part of you. Cultivate it in a family, And it will abide. Cultivate it in the community, And it will live and grow. Cultivate it in a state, And it will flourish abundantly. Cultivate it in the world, And it will become universal.

54.3 Hence, a person must be judged as person; A family as family; A community as community; A state as state; The world as world.

54.4 How do I know about the world? By what is within me.

55.1 One who is steeped in Virtue is akin to the new-born babe. Wasps and poisonous serpents do not sting it, Nor fierce beasts seize it, Nor birds of prey maul it. Its bones are tender, its sinews soft, But its grip is firm.

55.2 It has not known the union of the male and the female, Growing in its wholeness, And keeping its vitality in its perfect integrity.

55.3 It howls and screams all day long without getting hoarse, Because it embodies perfect harmony. To know harmony is to know the Changeless. To know the Changeless is to have insight.

55.4 To hasten the growth of life is ominous. To control the breath by the will is to overstrain it.

55.5 To be overgrown is to decay. All that is against Tao, And whatever is against Tao soon ceases to be.

56.1 He who knows does not speak. He who speaks does not know.

56.2 Block all the passages! Shut all the doors! Blunt all edges! Untie all tangles! Harmonize all lights! Unite the world into one whole! This is called the Mysterious Whole,

56.3 Which you cannot court after nor shun, Benefit nor harm, honour nor humble. Therefore, it is the Highest of the world.

57.1 You govern a kingdom by normal rules; You fight a war by exceptional moves; But you win the world by letting alone. How do I know that this is so? By what is within me!

57.2 The more taboos and inhibitions there are in the world, The poorer the people become. The sharper the weapons the people possess, The greater confusion reigns in the realm.

57.3 The more clever and crafty the men, The oftener strange things happen. The more articulate the laws and ordinances, The more robbers and thieves arise.

57.4 Therefore, the Sage says: I do not make any fuss, And the people transform themselves. I love quietude, And the people settle down in their regular grooves.

57.5 I do not engage myself in anything, And the people grow rich. I have no desires, And the people return to Simplicity.

58.1 Where the ruler is mum, mum, The people are simple and happy. Where the ruler is sharp, sharp, The people are wily and discontented.

58.2 Bad fortune is what good fortune leans on, Good fortune is what bad fortune hides in.

58.3 Who knows the ultimate end of this process? Is there no norm of right? Yet what is normal soon becomes abnormal, And what is auspicious soon turns ominous. Long indeed have the people been in a quandary.

58.4 Therefore, the Sage squares without cutting, carves without disfiguring, straightens without straining, enlightens without dazzling.

59.1 In governing a people and in serving Heaven, There is nothing like frugality.

59.2 To be frugal is to return before straying. To return before straying is to have a double reserve of Virtue. To have a double reserve of Virtue is to overcome everything. To overcome everything is to reach an invisible height.

59.3 Only he who has reached an invisible height can have a kingdom. Only he who has got the Mother of a kingdom can last long.

59.4 This is the way to be deep-rooted and firm-planted in the Tao, The secret of long life and lasting vision.

60.1 Ruling a big kingdom is like cooking a small fish.

60.2 When a man of Tao reigns over the world, demons have no spiritual powers.

60.3 If it is not that its ghost does not energize, Its energy does not harm humans. If it is not that its energy does not harm humanity, Sages also do not harm humans.

60.4 If only the ruler and his people would refrain from harming each other, all the benefits of life would accumulate in the kingdom.

61.1 A great country is like the lowland toward which all streams flow. It is the Reservoir of all under heaven, the Feminine of the world. The Feminine always conquers the Masculine by her quietness, by lowering herself through her quietness.

61.2 Hence, is a great country can lower itself before a small country, it will win over the small country; and if a small country can lower itself before a great country, it will win over the great country.

61.3 The one wins by stooping; the other by remaining low.

61.4 What a great country wants is simply to embrace more people; and what a small country wants is simply to come to serve its patron.

61.5 Thus, each gets what it wants. But it behooves a great country to lower itself.

62.1 The Tao is the hidden reservoir of all things. A treasure to the honest, it is a safeguard to the erring.

62.2 A good word will find its own market. A good deed may be used as a gift to another. That a man is straying from the right path is no reason that he should be cast away.

62.3 Hence, at the Enthronement of an Emperor, Or at the installation of the Three Ministers, Let others offer their discs of jade, following it up with teams of horses; It is better for you to offer the Tao without moving your feet!

62.4 Why did the ancients prize the Tao? Is it not because by virtue of it he who seeks finds, And the guilty are forgiven? That is why it is such a treasure to the world.

63.1 Do the Non-Ado. Strive for the effortless. Savour the savourless.

63.2 Exalt the low. Multiply the few. Requite injury with kindness.

63.3 Nip troubles in the bud. Sow the great in the small.

63.4 Difficult things of the world Can only be tackled when they are easy. Big things of the world Can only be achieved by attending to their small beginnings.

63.5 Thus, the Sage never has to grapple with big things, Yet he alone is capable of achieving them!

63.6 He who promises lightly must be lacking in faith. He who thinks everything easy will end by finding everything difficult.

63.7 Therefore, the Sage, who regards everything as difficult, Meets with no difficulties in the end.

64.1 What is at rest is easy to hold. What manifests no omens is easily forestalled. What is fragile is easily shattered. What is small is easily scattered.

64.2 Tackle things before they have appeared. Cultivate peace and order before confusion and disorder have set in.

64.3 A tree as big as a man's embrace springs from a tiny sprout. A tower nine stories high begins with a heap of earth. A journey of a thousand leagues starts from where your feet stand.

64.4 He who fusses over anything spoils it. He who grasps anything loses it. The Sage fusses over nothing and therefore spoils nothing. He grips at nothing and therefore loses nothing.

64.5 In handling affairs, people often spoil them just at the point of success. With heedfulness in the beginning and patience at the end, nothing will be spoiled.

64.6 Therefore, the Sage desires to be desireless, Sets no value on rare goods, Learns to unlearn his learning, And induces the masses to return from where they have overpassed. He only helps all creatures to find their own nature, But does not venture to lead them by the nose.

65.1 In the old days, those who were well versed in the practice of the Tao did not try to enlighten the people, but rather to keep them in a state of simplicity.

65.2 For, why are the people hard to govern? Because they are too clever! Therefore, he who governs his state with cleverness is its malefactor; but he who governs his state without resorting to cleverness is its benefactor.

65.3 To know these principles is to possess a rule and a measure. To keep the rule and the measure constantly in your mind is what we call Mystical Virtue.

65.4 Deep and far-reaching is Mystical Virtue! It leads all things to return, till they come back to Great Harmony!

66.1 How does the sea become the king of all streams? Because it lies lower than they! Hence it is the king of all streams.

66.2 Therefore, the Sage reigns over the people by humbling himself in speech; And leads the people by putting himself behind.

66.3 Thus it is that when a Sage stands above the people, they do not feel the heaviness of his weight; And when he stands in front of the people, they do not feel hurt. Therefore all the world is glad to push him forward without getting tired of him.

66.4 Just because he strives with nobody, Nobody can ever strive with him.

67.1 All the world says that my Tao is great, but seems queer, like nothing on earth. But it is just because my Tao is great that it is like nothing on earth! If it were like anything on earth, how small it would have been from the very beginning!

67.2 I have Three Treasures, which I hold fast and watch over closely. The first is Mercy. The second is Frugality. The third is Not Daring to Be First in the World.

67.3 Because I am merciful, therefore I can be brave. Because I am frugal, therefore I can be generous. Because I dare not be first, therefore I can be the chief of all vessels.

67.4 If a man wants to be brave without first being merciful, generous without first being frugal, a leader without first wishing to follow, he is only courting death!

67.5 Mercy alone can help you to win a war. Mercy alone can help you to defend your state. For Heaven will come to the rescue of the merciful, and protect him with its Mercy.

68.1 A good soldier is never aggressive; A good fighter is never angry.

68.2 The best way of conquering an enemy is to win him over by not antagonizing him. The best way of employing a man is to serve under him.

68.3 This is called the virtue of non-striving! This is called using the abilities of men! This is called being wedded to Heaven as of old!

69.1 The strategists have a saying: I dare not be a host, but rather a guest; I dare not advance an inch, but rather retreat a foot.

69.2 This is called marching without moving, Rolling up one's sleeves without baring one's arms, Capturing the enemy without confronting him, Holding a weapon that is invisible.

69.3 There is no greater calamity than to under-estimate the strength of your enemy. For to under-estimate the strength of your enemy is to lose your treasure.

69.4 Therefore, when opposing troops meet in battle, victory belongs to the grieving side.

70.1 My words are very easy to understand, and very easy to practice: But the world cannot understand them, nor practice them.

70.2 My words have an Ancestor. My deeds have a Lord. The people have no knowledge of this. Therefore, they have no knowledge of me. The fewer persons know me, The nobler are they that follow me.

70.3 Therefore, the Sage wears coarse clothes While keeping the jade in his bosom.

71.1 To realize that our knowledge is ignorance, This is a noble insight. To regard our ignorance as knowledge, This is mental sickness. Only when we are sick of our sickness Shall we cease to be sick.

71.2 The Sage is not sick, being sick of sickness; This is the secret of health.

72.1 When the people no longer fear your power, It is a sign that a greater power is coming.

72.2 Interfere not lightly with their dwelling, Nor lay heavy burdens upon their livelihood. Only when you cease to weary them, They will cease to be wearied of you.

72.3 Therefore, the Sage knows himself, But makes no show of himself; Loves himself, But does not exalt himself. He prefers what is within to what is without.

73.1 He who is brave in daring will be killed; He who is brave in not daring will survive.

73.2 Of these two kinds of bravery, one is beneficial, while the other proves harmful. Some things are detested by Heaven, But who knows the reason? Even the Sage is baffled by such a question.

73.3 It is Heaven's Way to conquer without striving, To get responses without speaking, To induce the people to come without summoning, To act according to plans without haste.

73.4 Vast is Heaven's net; Sparse-meshed it is, and yet Nothing can slip through it.

74.1 When the people are no longer afraid of death, Why scare them with the specter of death?

74.2 If you could make the people always afraid of death, And they still persisted in breaking the law, Then you might with reason arrest and execute them, And who would dare to break the law?

74.3 Is not the Great Executor always there to kill? To do the killing for the Great Executor is to chop wood for a master carpenter, And you would be lucky indeed if you did not hurt your own hand!

75.1 Why are the people starving? Because those above them are taxing them too heavily. That is why they are starving.

75.2 Why are the people hard to manage? Because those above them are fussy and have private ends to serve. That is why they are hard to manage.

75.3 Why do people make light of death? Because those above them make too much of life. That is why they make light of death. The people have simply nothing to live upon! They know better than to value such a life!

76.1 When a man is living, he is soft and supple. When he is dead, he becomes hard and rigid.

76.2 When a plant is living, it is soft and tender. When it is dead, it become withered and dry.

76.3 Hence, the hard and rigid belongs to the company of the dead: The soft and supple belongs to the company of the living.

76.4 Therefore, a mighty army tends to fall by its own weight, Just as dry wood is ready for the axe.

76.5 The mighty and the great will be laid low. The humble and the weak will be exalted.

77.1 Perhaps the Way of Heaven may be likened to the stretching of a composite bow! The upper part is depressed, while the lower is raised. If the bow-string is too long, it is cut short: if too short, it is added to.
77.2 The Way of Heaven diminishes the more-than-enough to supply the less-than-enough. The way of man is different; it takes from the less-than-enough to swell the more-than-enough.
77.3 Who except a man of the Tao can put his superabundant riches to the service of the world.
77.4 Therefore, the Sage does his work without setting any store by it, accomplishes his task without dwelling upon it. He does not want his merits to be seen.

78.1 Nothing in the world is softer and weaker than water; But, for attacking the hard and the strong, there is nothing like it! For nothing can take its place.
78.2 That the weak overcomes the strong, and the soft overcomes the hard, This is something known by all, but practiced by none.
78.3 Therefore, the Sage says: To receive the dirt of a country is to be lord of its soil-shrines. To bear the calamities of a country is to be the prince of the world. Indeed, Truth sounds like its opposite!

79.1 When a great wound is healed, There will still remain a scar. Can this be a desirable state of affairs?
79.2 Therefore, the Sage, holding the left-hand tally, Performs his part of the covenant, But lays no claim upon others.
79.3 The virtuous attends to his duties; The virtueless knows only how to levy duties upon the people.
79.4 The Way of Heaven has no private affections, But always accords with the good.

80.1 Ah, for a small country with a small population! Though there are highly efficient mechanical contrivances, the people have no use for them. Let them mind death and refrain from migrating to distant places.
80.2 Boats and carriages, weapons and armour there may still be, but there are no occasions for using or displaying them.
80.3 Let the people revert to communication by knotting cords. See to it that they are contented with their food, pleased with their clothing, satisfied with their houses, and inured to their simple way of living.
80.4 Though there may be another country in the neighbourhood so close that they are within sight of each other and the crowing of cocks and barking of dogs in one place can be heard in the other, yet there is no traffic between them, and throughout their lives the two peoples have nothing to do with each other.

81.1 Sincere words are not sweet, Sweet words are not sincere.
81.2 Good men are not argumentative, The argumentative are not good.
81.3 The wise are not erudite, The erudite are not wise.
81.4 The Sage does not take to hoarding. The more he lives for others, the fuller is his life. The more he gives, the more he abounds.
81.5 The Way of Heaven is to benefit, not to harm. The Way of the Sage is to do his duty, not to strive with anyone.