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**Dao De Jing by Lao Zi**  
**A Minimalist Translation**  
**By Bruce R. Linnell, PhD**  
**2015**

Welcome to yet another translation of the Dao De Jing (DDJ), or Tao Te Ching in the old-fashioned spelling. Why should you want to read this translation? This version attempts to include an exact translation of every Chinese symbol in the original text, with as few added words and paraphrasing as possible. This results in sentences which hopefully provide a more literal translation, but are bare and minimalist, sometimes awkward, and often doesn't make sense. You, the reader, will have to wrestle with some sentences, trying to wring out of them whatever meaning their author was trying to express 2300 years ago, instead of my simply telling you what I think they mean. I also show you what words were translated exactly, what was interpreted, and what was added or left out, so you can see exactly how much the English translation has in common with the original Chinese. I even point out alternative translations, so you can choose for yourself in some cases.

Another difference is that while this translation is primarily based on the "Wang Bi" ancient manuscript (used by most translators), it presents some of the ideas from the earliest versions of the DDJ we have available, if those ideas are present in the majority of all the sources.

Finally, scholars have long speculated that different parts of the DDJ were written by different authors at different times. By analyzing the symbols, phrases, and themes in each chapter, the chapters can be separated into at least three groups. The appendix presents the chapters in these groups, so that the reader may better see the common themes each group focused on.

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**Who Wrote the DDJ and When?**

There is a great deal of debate over these questions, enough to fill a book in their own right! What follows is just a very brief introduction for the first-time reader who has no idea who “Lao Zi” was (please note that all dates are very approximate).

Although the author of the DDJ is always given as “Lao Zi” or “Lao Tsu” (old spelling), we have no historical proof of his existence. A Chinese court historian named Sima Qian, who lived around 115 BCE, wrote a biography of Lao Zi (literally “old master”, unless Lao is a family name – in which case “master Lao”) that presents three different possible traditions, although the accuracy of any of them is doubtful. The first says that Lao Zi was a contemporary of Confucius (500 BCE). His family name was Li (“plum”), his given name was Er (“ear”), and he was posthumously called Dan (“long ear”). He was an official in the imperial archives, but when the Zhou dynasty began to decline, he decided to leave China. When he reached the northwest border of China, the border guard asked him to write down his teachings, which resulted in a document of about 5000 characters in two sections. Later in the same document, Sima Qian also speculates that Lao Zi may or may not have been Lao Dan (“old long ear”), an advisor to Duke Xian (370 BCE). Finally, Sima Qian says that a man named Lao Laizi (“old returning master”) authored a Daoist book that had 15 parts, was born in the same province as Lao Zi, and also was a contemporary of Confucius. These three accounts are further complicated by reported meetings between Confucius and someone called Lao Dan in various Confucian texts.

References to the DDJ by other ancient Chinese writers indicate that at least some parts of the DDJ were in existence by 300 BCE, and it was being referred to extensively by 250 BCE. One linguistic analysis of the rhyme schemes indicates that it may have originated as early as 450 BCE, and if the DDJ contains the written version of earlier oral traditions, these rhymes may reflect its oldest origins (because rhymes are easier to memorize). Other references and linguistic analyses place its beginnings around perhaps 375-325 BCE, and the earliest known written portions of it (described in the next section) date to about 300 BCE.

So, some parts of the DDJ seem to have first appeared in written form between roughly 350-300 BCE, although its roots could be much older. It certainly existed in some version of its finished form (roughly 5000 characters in 81 chapters) by 200 BCE.

There is also debate on whether the text represents the work of mostly one author, or was added to by different authors over the course of about a century, or was later compiled from different traditions by one person.

The most recent versions of the DDJ are separated into 81 chapters, and two major parts. The first part, consisting of chapters 1-37, primarily discusses Dao, while chapters 38-81 primarily discuss De. Ancient authors referring to the DDJ also speak of versions that are divided into 64, 68, or 72 chapters.

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### **Different Versions of the DDJ**

There are at least six different ancient sources of the text (all dates are approximate) :

“Guodian” (GUO) – discovered in 1993 and written around 300 BCE or slightly earlier, this version matches only about 31 chapters of the later versions of the DDJ, and its chapters are ordered completely differently than the later versions. The Chinese symbols are so ancient that scholars disagree on what modern symbols they should correspond to, and there are occasional spots on the originals where the characters can no longer be read.

“Mawangdui” (MWD) – discovered in 1973, there are two slightly different versions (“A” and “B”), obviously written by two different people, dating to about 200 BCE and 175 BCE respectively. While all 81 chapters are present, both versions reverse the two major parts (“Dao” and “De”) compared to later versions. In addition, the order of a few of the chapters within the parts is different, as is the order of some sections within the chapters! The Chinese symbols are also so ancient that scholars disagree on what modern symbols they should correspond to, and there are many spots where the characters cannot be read.

“Fu Yi” (FY) – Fu Yi was a scholar who lived around 600 CE and claimed that the version he presents and discusses was found in a grave that from his description could possibly be dated to around 200 BCE.

“Wang Bi” (WB) – written around 240 CE, this is the “standard” version that most translators use, although there are several slightly different variations of it.

“He Shang Gong” (HSG) – a legendary and possibly mythical person who may have lived around 170 BCE, but the work which presents and discusses the version of the DDJ associated with him is not mentioned by others until 300 CE. Many scholars think this version was probably written closer to 300 CE and attributed to He Shang Gong to give it authority. There are also many slightly different variations of this text available.

In comparing the six sources, it is easy to see the changes in philosophy of the early Daoists over the centuries. In general, the three earliest versions (GUO, MWD/A, MWD/B) more-or-less agree with each other, the three later versions (FY, WB, HSG) more-or-less agree with each other (despite the tentative dating of FY to 200 BCE), the two groups are often slightly different from each other, and occasionally very different. However, FY does sometimes agree with the three earlier versions. Only the later versions contain the vast majority of criticisms of Confucianism, although even GUO has a few.

WB, HSG, and FY were chosen as sources for this translation mainly because their earliest manuscripts are complete, and the Chinese characters are “modern” enough that there is less doubt as to their meaning. But there are occasional differences between them, so a 2/3 majority vote was used to determine which symbol to use. This would result in a document which is essentially the same as WB, since WB and HSG are almost always the same. However, in comparing

all six sources (or fewer if the chapter is not in GUO, or the earlier symbols cannot be read), it becomes obvious that sometimes significant changes were made only in the most recent sources. Thus a symbol was changed to the one used by the older sources if the majority of all available sources use the different symbol, and it adds to the understanding of the sentence. In the case of a tie, the more recent symbol was used. These rules were used for adding or deleting symbols as well.

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### The Translation Process

There are many reasons why translations differ, besides the problems inherent in translating from a language where : each symbol represents a word that has multiple (sometimes very different) meanings; tenses, articles, and plurals are not indicated; and one symbol can represent either a noun or adjective, another a verb or adverb, another all four!

1. What source is used : for WB and HSG, which version of what source; in the oldest sources, what modern symbols to use
2. Accurately knowing all the possible English meanings for each symbol (and sometimes pairs of symbols), including changes in meaning over the millennia, and understanding ancient idioms
3. Having to pick just one meaning for each symbol
4. Organizing each sentence into something that makes sense, which is helped by understanding something of ancient Chinese grammar

The cultural background, knowledge, biases, beliefs, and agenda of the translator affect every step but the first. "Agenda" refers to how the translator approaches the content of the DDJ : as a work of mysticism vs. philosophy vs. military strategy vs. advice to emperors, etc.

The goals for this translation were :

- Include an English word or phrase for every Chinese symbol in the sentence
- Use exact translations of the Chinese symbols wherever possible
- Minimal interpretation of individual symbols, only where needed for clarity
- Use the same English word(s) for the same symbol(s) when appropriate
- As few added English words as possible to make it a correct English sentence
- No interpretation of the final translated sentence

Individual symbols are interpreted only when they either don't make as much sense literally, or the resulting sentence would be awkward in English. In some cases, if a symbol means two English words that both seem to fit equally well, they are combined into one phrase, such as "heart/mind" for 心 (see the next section), or 玄 which can mean "mystery", "profound", "deep", or "dark", and is consistently translated as "deep and mysterious" or "deep mystery", depending on the context.

The above goals hopefully help minimize, but cannot eliminate, translator bias. The problem is that each Chinese symbol still has several meanings, and the translator must pick just one for each symbol (step 3) to create an English sentence that makes sense (step 4). It is impossible to avoid translator bias here because the translator must choose what makes sense or feels right to them, in both word meanings and overall grammar.

For example, there is a line in chapter 58 : 禍兮福之所倚 where 兮 can mean "good fortune" or "happiness" and 禍 can mean "misfortune" or "disaster", but by reflection with 兮 could also be interpreted as "unhappiness". 倚 can mean "lean on", "rely on", or "depend on", so all of these are valid translations :

- Misfortune is that which good fortune leans on.
- Misfortune is that which good fortune relies on.
- Misfortune is that which good fortune depends on.
- Unhappiness is that which happiness leans on.
- Unhappiness is that which happiness relies on.
- Unhappiness is that which happiness depends on.

Beyond the differences between using "fortune" (less personal : what happens to you) versus "happiness" (more personal : how you feel), there are also subtle differences : saying that one "relies" on the other is different than saying that they mutually support each other (as possibly indicated by the sentence following this one, not shown here).

Unlike the previous example, where the different translations for each symbol are more-or-less related, sometimes the choice the translator makes can affect the overall meaning or even the emotional impact of the sentence. In chapter 20, there is a line : 我獨若遺 in which the last symbol can be variously translated into :

- I alone seem lost.
- I alone seem to have lost everything.
- I alone seem to have been left behind.
- I alone seem to be forgotten.

Each of which says a completely different thing.

And in chapter 46, there is a line : 罪莫大於可欲 where the first symbol can mean any of : "sin", "crime", "vice", or "fault", so (ignoring options for the other symbols), all of these are valid :

- There is no sin greater than the capacity for desire.
- There is no crime greater than the capacity for desire.
- There is no vice greater than the capacity for desire.
- There is no fault greater than the capacity for desire.

"Sin" of course has very negative religious connotations in the West, while "crime" and "vice" also have stronger negative associations than "fault".

But there are other, even more significant ways in which the translator's choices affect the result. Because of the many (sometimes unrelated) possible meanings of each Chinese symbol, it is possible to come up with multiple translations of

the exact same sentence that are completely different in meaning! For example, in chapter 41, there is a line : 大方無隅 where 方 can mean both “region” and “square”, while 隅 can be “border” or “corner”, so both of these are valid translations :

The greatest region is without borders.  
The greatest square is without corners.

And in chapter 45 : 大巧若拙 where 巧 can be “skillful” or “clever”, and 拙 can mean “stupid” or “clumsy”, both of these are equally likely :

Great skillfulness seems clumsy.  
Great cleverness seems stupid.

Finally, even when there is no ambiguity about the meaning of the individual symbols, it sometimes hard to determine what overall meaning was intended. From chapter 35, there is a line : 道之出言淡兮 in which the first four symbols literally mean “words of Dao”, but does this mean “talking about Dao” or “the words that come out of Dao”? It can be argued both ways due to subtleties in the meanings of the symbols, but there is a tremendous difference in meaning between the two translations.

In addition, there are a few symbols whose modern English meanings just don’t make sense within the context of the sentence, probably due either to transcription errors or changes in meaning over the millennia. The English words used for these symbols are usually selected according to context.

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### Common Terms

Because the translation itself is meant to involve minimal interpretation and explanation, some of the words and phrases that are used repeatedly need to be discussed beforehand for clarity. Keep in mind that volumes have been written about some of these concepts - these are just brief summaries for the reader new to Daoism.

道 Dao : most often translated as the “way”; according to various passages in the DDJ, Dao appears to be the way of nature (or the universe), the process of being in harmony with that way, the source that creates and nourishes all things, and absolute ultimate reality itself (and according to the opening lines of the first chapter, this description is completely inadequate); it is left untranslated so that readers may “fill in the blank” for themselves as they read; “the Dao” is used as little as possible because in English that implies that Dao is more of a thing than a process; Dao is sometimes referred to as “it” to avoid awkward grammar (or if it was written that way in the original Chinese), but do not think of Dao as a noun (just for fun sometime, try reading “Dao” as “Daoing”...); one exception is when “Dao of” is used (for example, “the Dao of heaven”) - this seems to be literally referring to the way heaven does things, so it is translated as “the Way of heaven”, but “Way” is capitalized to remind the reader that this is also Dao; similarly, “this Dao” seems to be referring more to “this way (of following Dao), and is translated “this Way”

德 De : most often translated as “virtue”, “integrity”, or “(inner) power”, De is described in chapter 49 as “goodness” or “virtue” and “honesty” or “trust”; De might be infused into things when they are created by/from Dao, or something that develops when Dao is fully expressed through a person; De seems to be both the quality of being virtuous and the power that comes from being virtuous, so it might best be thought of as “the power of one’s virtue” or “the power from one’s integrity”, but it is also left untranslated so that readers may “fill in the blank” for themselves as they read

天 “heaven” : a complex concept, this symbol seems to have connotations of the sky, nature (including people and societies), that which controls our destinies, as well as possibly that of a celestial god-like spirit (and/or perhaps ancestral spirits)

天地 “heaven and earth” : everything, the universe, all that is

天下 “the world” : literally “heaven under”, it is perhaps better thought of as “all things under heaven”; it is left as “the world” because the English grammar sometimes gets awkward using the more accurate phrase; some translate it as “the empire”, which gives the entire document a much more imperialistic and militaristic slant

萬物 “ten thousand creatures” : “ten thousand” as used here does not refer to a specific number, but means “innumerable” or “myriad”; together the symbols are perhaps better thought of as “all creatures and things”

聖人 “sage” : literally “holy man”; in the DDJ, a sage is anyone who fully embodies and expresses Dao and De; as the ruling class would have been one of the few literate groups in ancient Chinese culture reading the DDJ, it seems possible that references to the way the sage does things could have also been a subtle way of saying “this is what a wise ruler would do” (especially in chapters like 5, 57, and 66, where the sage seems to be the ruler)

常 “ever-constant” : while this is often translated as “eternal”, it probably had more of a sense of “constant” or “permanent” in ancient China; unfortunately “constant” doesn’t imply the enduring nature of “permanent”, nor does “permanent” imply the unchanging quality of “constant”, so “ever-constant” is used here

心 “heart/mind” : usually translated as either “heart” or “mind” (the symbol means both), “heart/mind” seems to be the best translation

自然 “naturally so” : this has the connotation of something that happens spontaneously, without being forced (“of itself”, “of its own accord”, “on its own”); Dao is “naturally so”, and although the DDJ does not say so explicitly, presumably the sage acts “naturally so” as well

樸 “uncarved block” (of wood) : just as a block of wood can be carved into virtually anything, in the DDJ the “uncarved block” represents the limitless undefined potential of our original nature

無為 “non-action” : not passivity or lack of action, but spontaneous action taken at the proper time according to the situation

無事 “non-interference” : to change the natural order of things as little as possible in achieving your goals

無知 “without-knowledge” : not an absence of knowledge, but a kind of understanding that does not resort to pre-conceived ideas or rules

無名 “without-name” : a reminder that things, concepts, and experiences are far more than the names we give them and ultimately cannot be described with words (in contrast to the Confucians, whose goal was to find the “correct name” for everything)

無欲 “without-desire” : not a total lack of desire, but desires that do not control us or our happiness; a sort of spontaneous, unattached desire

無 or 無有 “non-being” : the nameless absolute that is the source of all existence (“being”)

爭 “strive” : to struggle or make vigorous effort to achieve something, perhaps competing against others to get it; the opposite of non-action

陰 “yin” : the feminine principle; receptive, yielding, dark, cool, soft

陽 “yang” : the masculine principle; aggressive, active, light, warm, hard

氣 “qi” (ch’i, chi) : vitality, life energy, life force, vital energy

善 “virtue” : the traditional sense of moral virtue and goodness

靜 “stillness” : a mental/emotional stillness of the heart/mind

谷 “valley” : the image of the valley is often used in the DDJ; a valley represents receptiveness (because it accepts all things that come into it), openness, and emptiness, and so is feminine in nature

身 “self” : often translated as “body” by others (it can mean either), it is my personal bias that this symbol seems to consistently refer to the sense-of-self, personality, or ego

復 or 歸 or 復歸 or 反 “returning” : the DDJ uses four different symbols to refer to the concept of returning, and it is used many times; beyond the everyday meaning, in the DDJ creatures and people often return to their source, true nature, or original state of pure and unformed potential; sometimes they just “return”, and from where or to where is not specified

明 “insight” : an intuitive, without-knowledge, understanding of what is; this is another personal bias - while the literal translations include “wise”, “clear”, “understanding”, “perceptive”, and “sight”, it seems that this symbol can be consistently interpreted as “insight” (which is in agreement with the literal translations); in addition, it is variously translated by other modern translators as “enlightenment” and even “insight”

事 “duties” : one’s personal and business affairs, responsibilities, etc.

吾 “I” : on the rare occasions this is used, think of this as someone who is a sage-like Daoist rather than merely “the author”

百姓 “100 families” : in ancient times this phrase referred to the entire ruling class

士 “scholar” : around the time of the DDJ, this referred to the elite “intellectual” class of Chinese society, the teachers and philosophers (Confucius would have been considered a scholar)

君 “ruler”, 王 “king”, etc. : there are many symbols and euphemisms for various members of the nobility (“nobles”, “superiors”, “master of the people”, “son of heaven”, “master of 10,000 chariots”, etc.)

貴 “high rank” : any position of power or admiration

While the DDJ is over 2000 years old, its wisdom is still applicable today, but don’t be fooled by the ancient wording! “King” could today apply to anyone who runs things, manages others, or leads any kind of group (from the nation’s leader to a corporation CEO to...your boss), and “high rank” could apply to government officials, billionaires, or even movie stars.

There are also many Confucian terms used in the DDJ :

仁 “kindness” : being benevolent, kindhearted, humane

義 “righteousness” (translated as “morality” to avoid religious associations) : having a sense of justice, doing the right thing, being morally upright

禮 “propriety” : ritual courtesy and formality; proper etiquette

智 “wise”, “wisdom” : as it says

信 “truth”, “trust”, “honest” : as it says

忠 “loyalty” : as it says

勇 “courage”, “brave” : as it says

廉 “honorable” : having a sense of honor or integrity; incorruptibility

孝 “filial piety” (translated as “devoted children”) : respect your elders and parents, duty to your parents, care for the elderly

慈 “compassion” : benevolence, mercy; as specifically applied to parents’ attitude towards their children, this is translated as “loving parents”

君子 “noble man” : literally “son of the ruler”, this can mean “nobleman” (one who belongs to the nobility), but is also a Confucian term that means one who is noble or moral in character and embodies the above

qualities; sometimes translated by others as “gentleman” or “superior man”

Many symbols in the DDJ are used to provide emphasis (similar to an exclamation point in English), and can either come at the end of a sentence or can be used to emphasize a word or phrase in the middle of a sentence. Many translators ignore these latter symbols entirely, while others preface the emphasized word with “so...”, “such...”, “very...”, “oh...”, etc. Here, an exclamation point is used immediately after the word, but then the sentence continues on. One symbol in particular implies that what precedes it is not only true but has always been true, which is translated as “indeed!”

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**References**

Introduction :

Laozi, by Alan Chan; Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,  
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Translations :

Dao De Jing : A Philosophical Translation, by Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall; Ballantine, New York; 2003 (*note that this is a translation of the MWD sources*)

Lao Zi zhi Dao De Jing : Two Literal English Translations, by Bradford Hatcher;  
<http://www.hermetica.info/LaoziA.htm>; 2005

Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching, by D.C. Lau; Penguin Books, London; 1963 (*this is a reasonably literal translation, with minimal interpretation; note that his 1994 book is an MWD translation*)

The Way and Its Power, by Arthur Waley; Grove Press, New York; 1958

These were mostly used for their own explanations of the more difficult passages and ancient Chinese idioms, but were sometimes used for comparison during the translation process.

Ancient Chinese Sources :

Comparisons of Chinese Versions, by Nina Carerra; <http://www.daoisopen.com/Comparisons.html>;  
2005

These charts were used to compare the symbols between all sources, and for end-of-sentence and end-of-chapter markers. I personally verified the WB symbols in these charts against several different references.

**Key to Notations**

<b><u>Symbols used for the translation</u></b>	<b><u>The final English translation</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• = end-of-line character appears in some source</li> <li>(•) = symbol usually starts or ends a line</li> </ul> <p>Of the 6 ancient sources (see Introduction), this translation uses WB except where the majority of the other sources disagree with it. The notations for these changes are :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>( ) = WB symbol has been changed</li> <li>_ = WB symbol has been deleted</li> <li>[ ] = symbol not in WB has been added</li> </ul>	<p>Sections separated by blank lines are the opinion of the translator.</p>
<p><b><u>Raw translation</u></b>  <u>underline</u> = verbatim translation</p> <p><i>italics</i> = interpreted translation; exact translation is to the far right in [brackets]</p> <p><u><i>underlined italics</i></u> = combined literal meanings from one symbol</p> <p><u>underline</u><sup>2</sup> or <i>italics</i><sup>2</sup> or <u><i>underlined italics</i></u><sup>2</sup> = 2 symbols used to provide translation</p> <p>{word} = equally likely translation of single</p>	<p><b><u>Footnotes and cross-references</u></b></p> <p>Differences between the sources are sometimes noted, but not every difference is noted.</p> <p>Footnotes in <i>italics</i> provide my own possible interpretations of the more difficult passages, which you may certainly ignore!</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">symbol</p> <p>[<u>word</u>] = symbol left out for grammatical clarity</p> <p>[word] = word added for clarity that significantly influences the meaning of the sentence</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">word* = Confucian concept</p> <p><i>word</i><sup>o</sup> = untranslatable; word is chosen for consistency</p> <p>◆ = all symbols in the sentence are the same in all or all but one of the sources (sentence is identical or essentially identical across all sources); this does <u>not</u> account for different symbols with the same meaning!</p>	
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### Chapter One

<p style="text-align: center;">• 道可道非常道 •  名可名非常名 •  無名天地之始 •  有名萬物之母 •  (•)故常無欲以觀其妙 •  常有欲以觀其徼  此兩者同出而異名  同謂之玄  玄之又玄  眾妙之門</p>	<p>The Dao that can be spoken of is not the ever-constant Dao.</p> <p>The name that can be named is not the ever-constant name.</p> <p>That which is without-name is the beginning of heaven and earth.</p> <p>That which possesses a name is the mother of the ten thousand creatures.</p> <p>Therefore : always without-desire, thus you observe its subtle mystery.</p> <p>Always possessing desires, thus you observe its external appearances.</p> <p>These two, they arise from the same source but have different names;</p> <p>This sameness is called their deep mystery.</p> <p>Deep mysteries, and again deep mysteries -  The gateway of many subtle mysteries.</p>
<p>◆The <u>Dao</u> that <u>can</u> be <u>spoken</u> of is <u>not</u> the <u>ever-constant</u> Dao.</p> <p>◆The <u>name</u> that <u>can</u> be <u>named</u> is <u>not</u> the <u>ever-constant</u> name.</p> <p>[That which] is <u>without-name</u> is the <u>beginning</u> of <u>heaven</u> and <u>earth</u>.<sup>A</sup></p> <p>◆[That which] <u>possesses</u> a <u>name</u> is the <u>mother</u> of the <u>ten thousand creatures</u>.</p> <p><u>Therefore</u> : <u>always</u> <u>without-desire</u>, <u>thus</u> you observe its <u>subtle mystery</u>.</p> <p><u>Always</u> <u>possessing</u> <u>desires</u>, <u>thus</u> you observe its <u>external appearances</u>.</p> <p>[<u>boundary</u>, <u>surface</u>]</p> <p><u>These two</u>, <u>they</u> arise from the <u>same</u> [source]<sup>B</sup> but have <u>different</u> names;</p> <p>This <u>sameness</u> is called their <u>deep mystery</u>.</p> <p>◆ <u>Deep mysteries</u>, [à] <u>and</u> <u>again</u> <u>deep mysteries</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">-</p> <p>The <u>gateway</u> of <u>many</u> <u>subtle mysteries</u>.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Notes</u> :</p> <p>A : this line and the next may just as likely be translated as</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Non-being</u> is <u>named</u> as the <u>beginning</u> of <u>heaven</u> and <u>earth</u>.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Being</u> is <u>named</u> as the <u>mother</u> of the <u>ten thousand</u> <u>creatures</u>.</p> <p>either way, compare to #40, where the world and the ten thousand creatures are created from being</p> <p>B : literally, “<u>they</u> have the <u>same</u> <u>arising</u>”</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Cross-references</u> :</p> <p>without-name : #32, #37, #41  mother : #20, #25, #52, #59  always/ever-constantly without X : #32, #34, #37  without-desire : #3, #34, #37, #57  mystery : #6, #10, #15, #27, #51, #56, #62, #65  mysterious sameness : #56  gateway : #6, #10, #52, #56</p>

### Chapter Two

<p style="text-align: center;">天下皆知美之為美斯惡已</p> <p style="text-align: center;">•</p>	<p>In the world, when all know that the action of beauty is beautiful, then ugliness ensues.</p>
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皆知善之為善斯不善已。  
 (•)故有無相生。  
 難易相成。  
 長短相較。  
 高下相傾。  
 音聲相和。  
 前後相隨。  
 是以聖人  
 處無為之事  
 行不言之教  
 萬物作而(始)不(始)。  
 生而有不  
 為而不恃。  
 功成而弗居。  
 (•)夫唯弗居。  
 是以不去。

When all know that the action of good is  
 goodness, then  
 not-good ensues.

Therefore : being and non-being create each  
 other,  
 Difficult and easy complete each other,  
 Long and short contrast each other,  
 High and low lean on each other,  
 Tone and voice harmonize each other,  
 Before and after follow each other.

Thus the sage :  
 Lives by using non-action in his duties,  
 And practicing no-talking in his teachings.

The ten thousand creatures arise, but do not  
 have a  
 beginning.

Creating but not possessing;  
 Acting, but not concerned with the results;  
 Accomplishing tasks, but not dwelling on  
 them.

Now : only because there is no dwelling,  
 Thus the results do not depart.

In the world<sup>2</sup>, when all know that the action of  
beauty is  
beautiful, then ugliness<sup>o</sup> {evil} ensues.

[thereafter, afterwards]

When all know that the action of good is  
goodness, then  
not-good ensues.

[thereafter, afterwards]

Therefore : being and non-being create each  
other.<sup>A</sup>

Difficult and easy complete each other,

Long{lasting} and short{brief} contrast<sup>B</sup> each  
other,

[forever] [compare]

High{above} and low{below} lean on each  
other.<sup>C</sup>

Tone and voice{sound} harmonize each other,  
Before{front} and after{back} follow each  
other.

Thus<sup>2</sup> the sage<sup>2</sup> :

Lives by [using] non-action in his duties,  
And practicing no-talking in his teachings.

[performs]

The ten thousand creatures arise, but do not  
 have a  
 beginning.

Creating but not possessing.<sup>D</sup>

◆ Acting, but not concerned with [the  
 results];

[depend upon, rely upon]

Accomplishing tasks, but not dwelling on  
 them.

[results, achievements]

Now : only because there is no dwelling,

◆ Thus<sup>2</sup> [the results] do not depart.

#### Notes

A : compare to #40, where non-being creates  
 being

B : FY, MWD, and GUO all have different words  
 here (for

example : "shape", "form", "mold", etc.)

C : compare to #39, where low is the  
 foundation of high

D : this line is missing in the earliest three  
 sources; there is no indication in the original  
 Chinese as to whether it is the sage or the  
 creatures that are the ones acting in this and  
 the following lines, so it is left ambiguous here  
 as well

#### Cross-references

beauty *and* ugly : #20

non-being : #40, #43

tone *and* voice/sound (same symbol) : #41

non-action : #3, #37, #38, #43, #48, #57,  
 #63, #64

sage practices non-action : #43

teaching : #27, #42, #43

no-talking in his teachings : #43

creates but does not possess : #10, #51

acting but not concerned : #10, #51, #77

accomplishing tasks : #9, #17, #34, #77

and not dwelling on them : #9, #77

### Chapter Three

不尚賢  
 使民不爭  
 不貴難得之貨  
 使民不為盜

Not honoring those who are esteemable  
 Ensures that the citizens do not strive.  
 Not valuing rare goods  
 Ensures that the citizens do not act like thieves.  
 Not showing that which can be desired



<p>不見可欲 使民心不亂。 是以聖人之治。 虛其心實其腹 弱其志強其骨 常使民無知無欲。 使夫智者不敢為。 為無為則無不治 [矣(•)]。</p>	<p>Ensures that the citizens' heart/minds do not become confused.</p> <p>Thus the governing of the sage Empties their heart/minds, fills their stomachs, Weakens their ambitions, strengthens their bones.</p> <p>By always ensuring that the citizens are without-knowledge and without-desire, Those who make men wise will not dare to act.</p> <p>Act with non-action, then all will be governed!</p>
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<p><u>Not honoring</u> [those who are] <i>esteemable</i> [virtuous, talented] Ensures that the <u>citizens</u> do <u>not</u> strive. [cause, make] ◆ <u>Not valuing rare</u><sup>2</sup> [à] goods Ensures that the <u>citizens</u> do <u>not</u> <u>act</u> like <u>thieves</u>. [cause, make] <u>Not showing</u> [that which] <u>can</u> be <u>desired</u> Ensures that the <u>citizens'</u> <u>heart/minds</u> do <u>not</u> become <u>confused</u>. [cause, make] ◆ <u>Thus</u><sup>2</sup> the <u>governing</u> of the <u>sage</u><sup>2</sup> ◆ <u>Empties their heart/minds</u><sup>A</sup>, <u>fills</u><sup>o</sup> <u>their stomachs</u>, ◆ <u>Weakens their ambitions</u>, <u>strengthens their bones</u>. ◆ By <u>always ensuring</u> that the <u>citizens</u> are <u>without-knowledge</u> and <u>without-desire</u>. [cause, make] <u>Those who make men wise</u><sup>*B</sup> will <u>not dare</u> to <u>act</u>. <u>Act with non-action, then all</u><sup>2</sup> will be <u>governed</u> !</p>	<p><u>Notes</u> A : <i>presumably of striving, greed, and confusion</i> B : <i>presumably referring to Confucians</i>; earlier sources use the non-Confucian term "knowledgeable" instead of "wise"</p> <p><u>Cross-references</u> no striving : #8, #22, #66, #68, #73, #81 rare goods : #12, #64 without-desire : #1, #34, #37, #57 weak : #29, #36, #40, #55, #76, #78 strong : #29, #30, #33, #36, #52, #55, #67, #78 not daring to act : #64, #67, #69 non-action : #2, #37, #38, #43, #48, #57, #63, #64 act with non-action : #63 anti-Confucian : #18, #19, #27, #33, #38</p>
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### Chapter Four

<p>道 (盅) 而用之 (有) 不盈。 淵兮似萬物之宗。 挫其銳。 解其紛。 和其光 同其塵 湛兮似或存。 吾不知誰之子。 象帝之先。</p>	<p>Dao is like a cup or bowl, yet use it and there exists no need to fill it. Profound and deep!, it appears to be the ancestor of the ten thousand creatures.</p> <p>It blunts their sharpness, Loosens their tangles, Softens their brightness, Makes them the same as the dust of the world.</p> <p>Deep and profound!, it seems to barely exist. I do not know whose child it is - Its image came before that of god.</p>
<p>Dao is like a <i>cup or bowl</i><sup>A</sup>, yet use it and there</p>	<p><u>Notes</u></p>

exists no  
[need to] fill it.  
*Profound and deep*!, it appears to be the  
ancestor of the  
ten thousand creatures.  
It blunts their sharpness,  
[dampens,subdues]  
◆ Loosens their tangles,<sup>B</sup>  
◆ Softens their brightness,<sup>C</sup>  
◆ Makes them the same as the *dust of the world*  
D.  
*Deep and profound*!, it seems to barely  
exist.<sup>E</sup>

[might,maybe,perhaps]  
I do not know whose [à] child it is -  
◆ Its image came before that of god {emperor}.

A : while the symbol used here only appears in one out of four sources, it gives the most straightforward translation;  
*Dao is like a cup in that its usefulness is in its emptiness (see #11 and #25)*  
B : this line could just as likely be translated as  
Clarifies their confusion  
C : compare to #58, where the sage is bright but does not dazzle  
D : according to Waley, "dust" is a metaphor for the "noise and fuss of everyday life"  
E : compare to #6, where the spirit of the valley also "seems to exist"

Cross-references  
use does not exhaust : #5, #35  
blunt the sharpness : #56  
loosen the tangles : #56  
soften the brightness : #56  
dust of the world : #56

### Chapter Five

天地不仁  
以萬物為芻狗。  
聖人不仁。  
以百姓為芻狗  
天地之間  
其猶橐籥乎(•)  
虛而不屈  
動而愈出。  
多言數窮  
不如守中

Heaven and earth are not kind -  
Thus the ten thousand creatures become as straw dogs to them.  
The sage is not kind -  
Thus the 100 families become as straw dogs to him.

The space between heaven and earth,  
How is it just like a bellows or flute?  
It is empty, yet does not run out.  
The more it moves, and the more it produces.

Too much talking is exceptionally exhausting,  
Which is not as good as maintaining what is within.

◆ Heaven and earth are not kind\* -  
◆ Thus the ten thousand creatures become as straw dogs<sup>A</sup> to them.  
◆ The sage<sup>2</sup> is not kind\* -  
◆ Thus the 100 families become as straw dogs to him.  
The space between [à] heaven and earth,  
[How] is it just like a bellows or flute ?  
◆ It is empty, yet does not run out.  
[subdue,submit,yieldàgive up,quit]  
The more it moves, and the more it produces.  
Too much talking is exceptionally exhausting.  
Which is not as good as maintaining what is within.<sup>B</sup>

Notes  
Only lines 5-8 are in GUO  
A : *Hall&Ames describe "straw dogs" as items that were carefully created for a sacrificial ritual, and treated with great respect during the ritual, but afterwards were casually tossed away and not given another thought*  
B : this sentence could just as likely end with "maintaining your center"

Cross-references  
100 families : #17, #49  
use does not exhaust : #4, #35

## Chapter Six

谷神不死  
是謂玄牝  
玄牝之門  
是謂天地(之)根 •  
綿綿若存  
用之不勤

The spirit of the valley does not die -  
It is called the deep and mysterious feminine.

The gateway of this deep and mysterious  
feminine -  
It is called the source of heaven and earth.

Unbroken, it seems to exist.  
Using it takes no effort.

◆The spirit of the valley does not die<sup>A</sup> -  
It is called the deep and mysterious feminine.  
The gateway of this deep and mysterious  
feminine -  
It is called the source of heaven and earth.  
Unbroken<sup>2</sup>, it seems to exist.<sup>B</sup>  
Using it takes no effort.  
[diligence, hard work]

### Notes

A : *the qualities ("spirit") of a valley*  
(*receptiveness, openness, emptiness*) *never*  
*leave it*

B : compare to #4, where Dao also "seems to  
barely exist"

### Cross-references

die/death : #33, #42, #50, #67, #74, #75,  
#76, #80

valley : #15, #28, #32, #39, #41, #66  
mystery : #1, #10, #15, #27, #51, #56, #62,  
#65

feminine : #10, #28, #61  
gateway : #1, #10, #52, #56

## Chapter Seven

天長地久  
天地所以能長且久者  
以其不自生 •  
(•)故能長生 •  
是以聖人  
後其身而身先 •  
外其身而身存  
非以其無私邪(•) •  
(•)故能成其私 •

Heaven is eternal, earth is  
enduring.

The reason that heaven and earth can be  
eternal and  
enduring

Is because they do not live for themselves.  
Therefore they can live forever.

Thus the sage :  
Puts his self behind others, yet finds his self  
before them.

Considers his self extraneous, yet his self  
survives.

Is this not because he has no self-interests?  
Therefore he can achieve his self-interests.

<p>◆ <u>Heaven</u> is <i>eternal</i>, <u>earth</u> is <i>enduring</i>.  [forever] [for a long time]</p> <p>◆ The <u>reason that</u><sup>2</sup> <u>heaven</u> and <u>earth</u> <u>can</u> be <i>eternal and enduring</i> [entities] [forever] [also] [for a long time]</p> <p>◆ Is <u>because they do not live</u> for <u>themselves</u>.<sup>A</sup>  ◆ <u>Therefore they can live forever</u>.  Thus<sup>2</sup> the <u>sage</u><sup>2</sup> :  Puts <u>his self behind</u> others, <u>yet</u> finds his <u>self</u> before them.<sup>B</sup>  Considers <u>his self</u> <i>extraneous</i>, <u>yet</u> his <u>self</u> <i>survives</i>.  [foreign, external]  Is this <u>not because</u> <u>he</u> has <u>no self-interests</u> ?  [selfish]  ◆ <u>Therefore he can achieve his self-interests</u>.  [selfish]</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Notes</u></p> <p>A : while this translation is more consistent with the sentiments that follow it, an equally possible translation is  Is <u>because they do not give themselves life</u>  B : <i>presumably meaning leading them</i>; this line and the next are written in this awkward manner to emphasize that it is the personality or sense-of-self that is being talked about (in the translator's opinion - see the Introduction and cross-references below)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Cross-references</u></p> <p>self : #9, #13, #16, #26, #44, #52, #54, #66  before/behind others : #66, #67</p>
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### Chapter Eight

<p style="text-align: center;">上善若水  水善利萬物而不爭  處眾人之所惡  故幾於道 [矣(•)] •  居善地  心善淵 •  與善仁  言善信 •  正善治 •  事善能  動善時 •  (•)夫唯不爭 •  (•)故無尤 •</p>	<p>The highest virtue is like water -  Water's virtue benefits the ten thousand creatures, yet it does not strive.  It dwells in places that everyone detests, Therefore it is almost comparable to Dao!  In dwelling, the virtue is in the land.  In your heart/mind, the virtue is in being profound and deep.  In relations, the virtue is in being kind.  In speech, the virtue is in being truthful.  In governing, the virtue is in being honest and just.  In your duties, the virtue is in being competent.  In action, the virtue is in the timing.  Now : only because there is no striving,  Therefore there is no blame.</p>
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<p>The <u>highest virtue</u> is like water -  <u>Water's virtue</u> benefits the <u>ten thousand creatures</u>, yet it does <u>not strive</u>.  It <u>dwells</u> in <u>places that everyone</u><sup>2</sup> <u>detests</u>,  <u>Therefore</u> it is <u>almost comparable to Dao</u> !  In <u>dwelling</u>, the <u>virtue</u> is in the <u>land</u><sup>A</sup>.  ◆ In your <u>heart/mind</u>, the <u>virtue</u> is in being <u>profound and deep</u>.  In <u>relations</u>, the <u>virtue</u> is in being <u>kind</u>*.  <sup>B</sup> [getting along with, participating]  In <u>speech</u>, the <u>virtue</u> is in being <u>truthful</u>*.  ◆ In <u>governing</u>, the <u>virtue</u> is in being <u>honest and just</u>.  ◆ In your <u>duties</u>, the <u>virtue</u> is in being <u>competent</u>.  ◆ In <u>action</u>, the <u>virtue</u> is in the <u>timing</u>.  ◆ <u>Now</u> : <u>only</u> because there is <u>no striving</u>,  ◆ <u>Therefore</u> there is <u>no blame</u>.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Notes</u></p> <p>A : although it is best translated as "land" here, this is the same symbol for earth, as in "heaven and earth"</p> <p>B : this could also be translated as  In <u>giving</u>, the <u>virtue</u> is in being <u>kind</u>  FY, MWD/A, and MWD/B all have differences in this sentence compared to WB and HSG and each other</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Cross-references</u></p> <p>be honest and just in governing : #57  no striving : #3, #22, #66, #68, #73, #81  only because there is no striving : #22</p>
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## Chapter Nine

持而盈之  
 不如其已  
 揣而(銳)之  
 不可長保•  
 金玉滿堂  
 莫之能守•  
 富貴而驕  
 自遺其咎•  
 功遂身退  
 天之道•

Holding and filling it  
 Are not as good as your stopping short.

Hammering and sharpening it  
 Can not be forever maintained.

When gold and jade fill a room,  
 There is no one who can protect it.

To have wealth and high rank, but with  
 arrogance -

Then naturally their loss is your own fault.

When the task is successful, the self should let  
 go of it.

This is the Way of heaven.

### Holding and filling it<sup>A</sup>

Are not as good as your stopping [short].  
 [his]

### Hammering<sup>o</sup> and sharpening it<sup>B</sup>

Can not be forever maintained.

When gold and jade fill a room,

There is no one who can protect it.

[they]

To have wealth and high rank, but with  
arrogance{pride} -

Then naturally their loss is your own fault.

[his]

When the task is successful, the self should let  
go of it.

[result,achievement] [withdraw,step away]

♦This is the Way of heaven.

### Notes

*A : presumably, a cup; Lau says that this refers  
 to a vessel in a temple that stood upright when  
 empty but overturned when nearly full (thus  
 you had to hold it to fill it up)*

*B : presumably, a sword or knife; you can only  
 re-shape and re-sharpen it so many times*

### Cross-references

accomplishing tasks : #2, #17, #34, #77

and not dwelling on them : #2, #77

self : #7, #13, #16, #26, #44, #52, #54, #66

Way of heaven : #47, #73, #77, #79, #81

## Chapter Ten

載營魄抱一  
 能無離乎(•)  
 專氣致柔  
 能嬰兒乎(•)•  
 滌除玄覽  
 能無疵乎(•)  
 愛民治國  
 能無為乎(•)  
 天門開闔  
 能為雌乎(•)  
 明白四達  
 能無[以]知乎(•)  
 生之畜之  
 生而不有  
 為而不恃  
 長而不宰

Carrying and managing a body while embracing  
 the One,

Are you able to not separate them?

Concentrating your Qi to become soft,

Are you able to be like a newborn infant?

Cleansing and clearing your deep and  
 mysterious

perception,

Are you able to be without blemish?

Loving the citizens and governing the nation,

Are you able to use non-action?

Opening and closing the gateway of heaven,

Are you able to serve as the feminine?

Attaining clear insight in all

directions,

Are you able to not use your knowledge?

Creating them and raising them,

Creating but not possessing,

Acting but not concerned with the results,

Leading yet not governing -

This is called deep and mysterious De.

## 是謂玄德

- ◆ Carrying and managing a body{soul} while embracing the One,
  - ◆ Are you able to not separate<sup>A</sup> them ?
  - ◆ Concentrating your Qi to become soft,  
[attain,bring about]
- ◆ Are you able to [be like] a newborn infant<sup>2</sup> ?  
Cleansing and clearing your deep and mysterious perception,  
[remove,eliminate,wipe out]  
Are you able to be without blemish ?  
Loving the citizens and governing the nation,  
Are you able to [use] non-action ?  
Opening and closing the gateway of heaven,
  - ◆ Are you able to serve as the feminine ?
  - ◆ Attaining clear insight in all directions,  
[wise,sight] [four directions,all around]
- Are you able to not use your knowledge ?
  - ◆ Creating them and raising them,
  - ◆ Creating but not possessing,
  - Acting but not concerned with [the results],<sup>B</sup>  
[depend upon,rely upon]
  - ◆ Leading yet not governing -
  - ◆ This is called deep and mysterious De.

## Notes

A : that is, "keep from separating"  
B : this line is not in the earlier sources

## Cross-references

embracing the One : #22  
Qi : #42, #55  
soft : #36, #43, #52, #55, #76, #78  
gateway : #1, #6, #52, #56  
baby/infant/child : #20, #28, #49, #55  
newborn infant : #20, #28, #55  
feminine : #6, #28, #61  
creating but not possessing : #2, #51  
acting but not concerned : #2, #51, #77  
leading yet not governing : #51  
mystery : #1, #6, #15, #27, #51, #56, #62, #65  
deep and mysterious De : #51, #65

## Chapter Eleven

三十輻共一轂  
當其無有車之用 •  
埴埴以為器  
當其無有器之用 •  
鑿戶牖以為室  
當其無有室之用 •  
(•)故有之以為利  
無之以為用 •

Thirty spokes of a wheel share one hub;  
In its emptiness exists the usefulness of the cart.

Mix water with clay thus making a vessel;  
In its emptiness exists the usefulness of the vessel.

Cut out doors and windows thus making a room;  
In their emptiness exists the usefulness of the room.

Therefore : what exists thus makes a thing profitable;  
Emptiness thus makes it useful.

## Notes

## Cross-references

- Thirty<sup>2</sup> spokes of a wheel share one hub;
  - ◆ In its emptiness exists the usefulness of the cart. [just at]
  - Mix water with clay<sup>2</sup> thus making a vessel;  
In its emptiness exists the usefulness of the vessel. [just at]
  - Cut out doors and windows thus making a room{house};  
[chisel,bore,pierce]
- ◆ In their emptiness exists the usefulness of the room{house}.  
[just at]
- ◆ Therefore : what exists thus makes a thing profitable; [it]
- ◆ Emptiness thus makes it useful.

## Chapter Twelve

五色令人目盲。  
五音令人耳聾。  
五味令人口爽  
馳騁畋獵令人心發狂  
難得之貨令人行妨  
是以聖人。  
為腹不為目  
(•)故去彼取此

The five colors can make people's eyes blind.  
The five tones can make people's ears deaf.  
The five flavors can make people's mouths dull.  
Excessive hunting and horse racing can make  
people's  
heart/minds become wild.  
Rare goods can make people's behavior  
corrupt.

Thus the sage :  
Acts on what is inside, he does not act on what  
he sees.  
Therefore he leaves that and chooses this.

◆The five colors [can] make people's eyes  
blind.

The five tones [can] make people's ears deaf.  
The five flavors [can] make people's mouths  
dull°.

*Excessive hunting and horse racing* [can] make  
people's  
heart/minds become wild. [hunt hunt]  
[gallop<sup>2</sup>]

Rare<sup>2</sup> [à] goods [can] make people's behavior  
corrupt.

[undermine, harm, impede]

Thus<sup>2</sup> the sage<sup>2</sup> :

Acts on what is inside, he does not act on what  
he sees.<sup>A</sup>

Therefore he leaves that<sup>B</sup> and chooses this<sup>C</sup>.

### Notes

Everything in the first five lines would have  
been enjoyed to excess only by the wealthy and  
the ruling class!

A : compare to #49, where the 100 families  
"follow their eyes"

B : *presumably, acting on what he sees*

C : *presumably, acting on what is inside*

### Cross-references

rare goods : #3, #64

leaves that and chooses this : #38, #72

## Chapter Thirteen

寵辱若驚  
貴大患若身。  
何謂寵辱若驚  
寵為下得之若驚  
失之若驚。  
是謂寵辱若驚  
何謂貴大患若身  
吾所以有大患者為吾有身。  
及吾無身吾有何患。(•)  
(•)故貴以身為天下。

Favor and disgrace seem alarming.  
High rank brings great suffering if you have a  
self.

What is meant by "favor and disgrace seem  
alarming"?

Favor makes you the inferior, so gaining it  
seems alarming.

Losing it also seems alarming.

This is what is meant by "favor and disgrace  
seem  
alarming".

What is meant by "high rank brings great

若可 [以] 寄天下 [矣(•)] •  
 愛以身為天下  
 若可 [以] 託天下 [矣(•)] •

suffering if you  
 have a self"?  
 I am the reason that I have great suffering, I  
 who act like  
 I have a self.  
 When I am without a self, how could I have  
 suffering?

Therefore : he who is high ranking and uses his  
 self to  
 serve the world -  
 It seems he can thus be entrusted with the  
 world!  
 He who is loving and uses his self to serve the  
 world -  
 It seems he can thus be entrusted with the  
 world!

◆ Favor and disgrace seem alarming.  
 ◆ High rank brings great suffering if you have a  
 self.  
What is meant by "favor and disgrace seem  
 alarming"?  
Favor makes you the inferior<sup>A</sup>, so gaining it  
 seems  
 alarming.  
 ◆ Losing it [also] seems alarming.  
This is what is meant by "favor and disgrace  
 seem  
 alarming".  
What is meant by "high rank brings great  
 suffering if you  
 have a self"?  
 ◆ I am the reason that<sup>2</sup> I have great suffering, I  
 who act like  
 I have a self.  
When I am without a self, how could I have  
 suffering?  
Therefore : [he who] is high ranking and uses  
 his self<sup>B</sup> to  
 serve the world<sup>2</sup> -  
It seems he can thus be entrusted with the  
 world<sup>2</sup> !  
 ◆ [He who] is loving and uses his self to serve  
 the world<sup>2</sup> -  
It seems he can thus be entrusted with the  
 world<sup>2</sup> !

Notes

A : *Ames&Hall point out that "favor" here  
 means something that is bestowed upon you by  
 a superior at their whim, thus it emphasizes  
 your inferiority to them; and since it could be  
 taken away just as easily, merely gaining it is  
 cause for "alarm" (worry, anxiety, etc.)*

B : this is written in this awkward manner to  
 emphasize that it is the personality or sense-of-  
 self that is being talked about (in the  
 translator's opinion - see the Introduction and  
 cross-references below)

Cross-references

self : #7, #9, #16, #26, #44, #52, #54, #66  
 serve the world : #39, #49

**Chapter Fourteen**

視之不見名曰夷  
 聽之不聞名曰希  
 搏之不得名曰微 •  
 此三者不可致詰 •  
 (•)故混而為一  
 [一者]  
 其上不皦 •  
 其下不昧 •  
 繩繩 [兮] 不可名 •  
 復歸於無物 •  
 是謂無狀之狀  
 無物之象  
 是謂惚恍  
 迎之不見其首  
 隨之不見其後  
 執古之道  
 以御今之有 •  
 能知古始

Look, it is not seen; its name is called elusive.  
 Listen, it is not heard; its name is called  
 tenuous.  
 Grasp, it is not gotten; its name is called subtle  
 and  
 obscure.  
 These three things can not be investigated any  
 further -  
 Therefore they blend and become one.  
 This one thing :  
 Its highest point is not bright;  
 Its lowest point is not dark.  
 Continuous and unending!, it can not be  
 named;  
 It returns to non-existence.  
 It is called the form of that which is without-  
 form;  
 The image of non-existence.  
 It is called confusing and indistinct.  
 Meet it and you do not see its beginning;  
 Follow it and you do not see its end.  
 Hold fast to the Way of the ancients  
 In order to master the present moment.



## 是謂道紀

Look, it is not seen; its name is called *elusive*<sup>o</sup>.  
Listen, it is not heard; its name is called *tenuous*. [rare]  
Grasp, it is not gotten; its name is called *subtle and obscure*.  
 These three things can not be investigated any further -  
 [entities] [finer, closer]  
 ♦ Therefore they blend and become one.  
 This one thing :<sup>A</sup>  
 [entity]  
 Its highest point is not bright;  
 Its lowest point is not dark.  
*Continuous and unending*<sup>2</sup> !, it can not be named;  
 ♦ It returns<sup>2</sup> to non-existence.  
 [thing-ness]  
 It is called the form of [that which] is without-form;  
 ♦ The image of non-existence.  
 [thing-ness]  
 It is called confusing and indistinct.<sup>B</sup>  
 Meet it and you do not see its beginning;  
 Follow it and you do not see its end.  
 [back, rear]  
 Hold fast to the Way of the ancients  
 In order to master the present moment  
<sup>3</sup>.  
 [control, manage] [present 's existence]  
 The ability to know the ancient beginning -  
 This is called the main principle<sup>C</sup> of Dao.  
 [discipline]

The ability to know the ancient beginning -  
 This is called the main principle of Dao.

### Notes

A : Only WB and HSG dropped this line  
 B : compare to #21, where Dao is also confusing and indistinct, and to #40, where Dao specifically "returns" and "weakens"  
 C : according to Waley, 紀 literally means "main thread" (as in "of the teaching"), so "principle" seems more appropriate than the modern definition of simply "discipline"

### Cross-references

look, not seen and listen, not heard : #35  
 tenuous : #41  
 returning : #16, #19, #20, #22, #25, #28,  
 #34, #40, #52,  
 #58, #60, #64, #65, #80  
 confusing and indistinct : #21  
 the ancients/elders : #15, #22, #38, #39, #62,  
 #65, #68

## Chapter Fifteen

古之善為士者微妙玄通  
 深不可識。  
 (•)夫唯不可識  
 (•)故強為之容。  
 豫兮若冬涉川。  
 猶兮若畏四鄰。  
 儼兮其若(客)。  
 渙兮若冰將釋。  
 敦兮其若樸。  
 曠兮其若谷。  
 混兮其若濁。  
 孰能濁以靜之徐清。  
 孰能安以久動之徐生。  
 保此道者不欲盈。  
 (•)夫唯不盈  
 (是) [以] 能蔽 [而] 不 成

The virtue of the ancients made they who were scholars  
 subtle, mysterious, obscure, deep, and penetrating.  
 Their mysterious depths can not be understood.  
 Now : only because they can not be understood,  
 Therefore we try to emulate their appearance :  
 Hesitant!, as if crossing a winter stream.  
 Wary!, as if afraid of their neighbors all around.  
 Respectful!, they are like a visiting guest.  
 Yielding!, like ice that is about to break off.  
 Honest and genuine!, they are like the uncarved block.  
 Wide and open!, they are like a valley.  
 Unclear!, they are like muddy water.  
 Who can take muddy water and use stillness to slowly and gently make it pure and clear?  
 Who can take what is tranquil and use continual movement to slowly and gently bring it to life?  
 He who maintains this Way does not desire to be full.  
 Now : only because he is not full,  
 Thus he can be hidden and unfinished.

### Notes

The last two lines are not present in GUO  
 A : in this sentence and the next, "muddy water" appears to be a metaphor for one's state of mind, thus referring to churned-up thoughts and feelings  
 B : apparently referring to a purity and clarity of the heart/mind

The virtue of the ancients made they who were scholars  
 subtle, mysterious, obscure, deep, and penetrating<sup>A</sup>.  
 Their mysterious depths can not be understood.  
 Now : only because they can not be understood,  
 Therefore we try to emulate their appearance  
 :

[act like, become]

Hesitant !, as if crossing a winter stream.

Wary !, as if afraid of their neighbors all around.

[scheming]

Respectful !, they are like a visiting guest.

Yielding !, like ice that is about to break off.

[release, disperse]

Honest and genuine !, they are like the uncarved block.

Wide and open !, they are like a valley.

Unclear !, they are like muddy water.<sup>A</sup>

[confused, muddy]

Who can take muddy water and use stillness to

slowly and gently make it pure and clear.<sup>B</sup>

Who can take what is tranquil and use continual movement

to slowly and gently bring it to life? [for a long time]

He who maintains this Way does not desire to be full.

Now : only because he is not full,

Thus<sup>2</sup> he can be hidden and unfinished<sup>2</sup>.  
[not finish]

Cross-references

the ancients/elders : #14, #22, #38, #39, #62, #65, #68

virtue of the ancients : #65

scholar : #41, #68

mystery : #1, #6, #10, #27, #51, #56, #62, #65

fear/afraid : #17, #20, #72, #74

uncarved block : #19, #28, #32, #37, #57

valley : #6, #28, #32, #39, #41, #66

stillness : #16, #26, #37, #45, #57, #61

he who "possesses Dao" : #23, #24, #31, #65, #77

hidden : #41

## Chapter Sixteen

致虛極 •

守靜篤 •

萬物並作

吾以觀 [其] 復 •

(•) 夫物芸芸各復歸其根 •

歸根曰靜

[靜] 是謂復命

復命曰常 •

知常曰明 •

不知常妄作凶

知常容

容乃公

公乃王

王乃天

天乃道

道乃久

沒身不殆

Attain the utmost emptiness.

Maintain a profound stillness.

The ten thousand creatures arise in unison,  
And thus I observe their return.

Now : all the myriad creatures return to their  
source.

Returning to the source speaks of stillness.  
Stillness is called returning to the natural  
order.

Returning to the natural order speaks of the  
ever-constant.

Knowing the ever-constant speaks of insight.  
Not knowing the ever-constant is foolish and  
creates  
misfortune.

Knowing the ever-constant leads to tolerance.  
Being tolerant leads to being just and unbiased.  
Being just and unbiased leads to being kingly.  
Being kingly leads to heaven.

Heaven leads to Dao.

Dao leads to what endures.

When the self disappears, there can be no  
danger.

Attain the utmost emptiness.

Maintain a profound stillness.

[sincere, devoted, true]

The ten thousand creatures arise in unison,

[together, simultaneously]

And thus I observe their return.

Now : all the myriad creatures return<sup>2</sup> to their  
source.

[multitudinous<sup>2</sup>]

Returning to the source speaks of stillness.

Stillness is called returning to the natural order.

[order, destiny, fate]

Returning to the natural order speaks of the

Notes

Only the first five lines of the entire chapter are  
present in GUO

Cross-references

stillness : #15, #26, #37, #45, #57, #61

returning : #14, #19, #20, #22, #25, #28,  
#34, #40, #52,

#58, #60, #64, #65, #80

knowing the ever-constant speaks of insight :  
#55

self : #7, #9, #13, #26, #44, #52, #54, #66

no danger : #25, #32, #44, #52

when the self disappears, there can be no  
danger : #52

<p><i>ever-constant.</i>  [order,destiny,fate]  <u>Knowing</u> the <i>ever-constant</i> speaks of <i>insight</i>.  [wise,sight]  Not <u>knowing</u> the <i>ever-constant</i> is <u>foolish</u> and  <i>creates</i>  <i>misfortune.</i> [arise,makes]  [unfortunate,evil]  ◆ <u>Knowing</u> the <i>ever-constant</i> [leads to]  <i>tolerance.</i>  [allow,permit,forbear]  ◆ Being <i>tolerant</i> leads to being <i>just and</i>  <i>unbiased.</i> [allow,permit,forbear]  [thereupon,consequently]  ◆ Being <i>just and unbiased</i> leads to being  <i>kingly.</i>  [thereupon,consequently]  ◆ Being <i>kingly</i> leads to <i>heaven.</i>  [thereupon,consequently]  ◆ <u>Heaven</u> leads to <u>Dao.</u>  [thereupon,consequently]  ◆ <u>Dao</u> leads to what  <i>endures.</i>  [thereupon,consequently] [for a long time]  ◆ When the <u>self</u> <u>disappears</u>, there can be <u>no</u>  <u>danger.</u></p>	
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## Chapter Seventeen

<p style="text-align: center;">太上下知有之  其次親而譽之  其次畏之  其次侮之  信不足焉有不信  (猶) 兮其貴言  功成事遂  百姓皆謂我自然</p>	<p>The existence of the best ruler is barely known  to the  people.  Next is one who they love and praise.  Next is one who they fear.  Next is one who they ridicule.</p> <p>If the ruler does not trust enough, then he will  not have  anyone's trust.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Thoughtful!, he values his words.</p> <p>When tasks are accomplished and duties are  successful,  The 100 families all say "we are naturally so".</p>
<p>The <u>existence</u> of the <u>best ruler</u><sup>2A</sup> [<u>he</u>] is <u>barely</u>  <u>known</u> [to  the people]. [highest  superior] [below,inferior]  Next is <u>one</u> who <u>they</u> <u>love and</u> <u>praise.</u>  [him]  ◆ <u>Next</u> is <u>one</u> who <u>they</u> <u>fear.</u>  [him]  Next is <u>one</u> who <u>they</u> <u>ridicule.</u>  [him]  If [the ruler] does <u>not trust*</u> <u>enough</u>, <u>then</u> <u>he</u>  will <u>not have</u>  anyone's <u>trust*</u>.  Thoughtful!, he <u>values his words.</u><sup>B</sup>  [scheming]  When <u>tasks</u> are <u>accomplished</u> and <u>duties</u> are  <u>successful</u>,  [results,achievements]  The <u>100 families</u> <u>all</u> <u>say</u> "<u>we</u> are <u>naturally</u>  <u>so</u>".<sup>C</sup></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Notes</u></p> <p>A : 太上 literally means "highest superior",  which is also a euphemism for the emperor  (and so is extrapolated to rulers in general)  B : <i>in other words, he does not offer them</i>  <i>lightly or often</i>; this line is very difficult to  translate, because WB uses a unique first  symbol, while HSG&amp;FY and GUO&amp;MWD/B each  use different symbols; however, the two earlier  symbols can both mean "to scheme", thus  making a 4/5 majority in meaning; the rest of  the sentence is so terse that it can be  translated in numerous ways as well  C : <i>under the proper rulership, everyone thinks</i>  <i>everything just naturally works out right</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Cross-references</u></p> <p>fear/afraid : #15, #20, #72, #74  not trusting enough : #23  accomplishing tasks : #2, #9, #34, #77  100 families : #5, #49  naturally so : #23, #25, #51, #64</p>

## Chapter Eighteen

大道廢 •  
有仁義  
慧智出 •  
有大偽  
六親不和  
有孝慈  
國家昏亂 •  
有忠臣

When the great Dao is abandoned,  
There exists kindness and morality.

When intelligence and wisdom arise,  
There exists a great deal of deception.

When the six relationships are not in harmony,  
There exists devoted children and loving  
parents.

When the nation and the families are very  
confused,  
There exists loyal officials.

When the great Dao is abandoned,  
There exists kindness\* and morality\*.  
[righteousness]

When intelligence and wisdom\*<sup>A</sup> arise,  
There exists a great deal of deception<sup>B</sup>.  
[false, fake]

When the six relationships\*<sup>C</sup> are not in  
harmony,

There exists devoted children\* and loving  
parents\*.

When the nation and the families are very  
confused<sup>2</sup>,

There exists loyal\*  
officials {ministers, subjects}.

### Notes

By looking at all the sources, it is easy to see  
that this chapter grew more anti-Confucian  
over time!

A : the MWD texts use “knowledge” (a non-  
Confucian term) instead of “wisdom”; this  
whole sentence is absent in GUO

B : this symbol could also be interpreted as  
hypocrisy, pretense, lying, dishonesty, etc.

C : the six relationships refer to “all” the  
possible kinds of relationship in a family (in  
ancient China) : husband to wife, wife to  
husband, father to son, son to father, older  
brother to younger brother, younger brother to  
older brother

### Cross-references

great Dao : #34, #53

nation *and* families : #57

anti-Confucian : #3, #19, #27, #33, #38

## Chapter Nineteen

絕聖棄智  
民利百倍 •  
絕仁棄義  
民復孝慈 •  
絕巧棄利  
盜賊無有 •  
此三者以為文不足 •  
(•)故令有所屬 •  
見素  
抱樸  
少私  
寡欲 •

Renounce sacredness, abandon wisdom,  
And the citizens benefit 100-fold.

Renounce kindness, abandon morality,  
And the citizens return to being devoted  
children and  
loving parents.

Renounce cleverness, abandon profit,  
And thieves and bandits will not exist.

These three things thus make a civilized  
society, but are not  
enough.

Therefore : to ensure the citizens have a place  
to belong -

See the simplicity,  
Embrace the concept of the uncarved block,  
Less selfishness,  
Fewer desires.

<p><u>Renounce sacredness, abandon wisdom*</u>,  ♦ And the <u>citizens benefit 100-fold</u>.  <u>Renounce kindness*, abandon morality*</u>,  [<u>righteousness</u>]  And the <u>citizens return</u> to being <u>devoted children*</u> and <u>loving parents*</u>.  <u>Renounce cleverness, abandon profit</u>,  And <u>thieves and bandits{traitors}</u> will <u>not exist</u>.  <u>These three things thus make a civilized society</u>, but are <u>not enough</u>. [entities] [formal, polite, culture]  <u>Therefore</u> : to <u>ensure</u> [the citizens] <u>have a place</u> to belong<sup>A</sup> - [make, cause]  See the <u>simplicity</u>.  <u>Embrace</u> the [concept of the] <u>uncarved block</u>,  <u>Less selfishness</u>,  <u>Fewer desires</u>.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Notes</u></p> <p>GUO is significantly different about what to renounce or abandon, and the results, and it uses <u>no</u> Confucian terms; as early as MWD/B and MWD/A some Confucian terms had appeared  A : <i>perhaps meaning a place <b>worth</b> belonging to?</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Cross-references</u></p> <p>returning : #14, #16, #20, #22, #25, #28, #34, #40, #52, #58, #60, #64, #65, #80  thieves <i>and</i> bandits : #57  uncarved block : #15, #28, #32, #37, #57  anti-Confucian : #3, #18, #27, #33, #38</p>
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## Chapter Twenty

<p>絕學無憂  唯之與阿  相去幾何  (美)之與惡  相去若何  人之所畏不可不畏 •  荒兮其未央哉(•)  眾人熙熙  如享太牢 •  如春登臺  我獨泊兮(•)  其未兆  如嬰兒之未孩  儻儻兮若無所歸  眾人皆有餘  我獨若遺  我愚人之心也哉(•)  沌沌兮  俗人昭昭  我獨(若)昏(•)  俗人察察  我獨悶悶(•)  澹兮其若海  (漂)兮若無[所]止  眾人皆有以  我獨頑似鄙  我獨異於人  而貴食母</p>	<p>Renounce learning and be without worry.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“Yes” together with “yeah” -  What is their mutual distance or nearness?  Beautiful together with ugliness -  What is their mutual distance or similarity?</p> <p>That which people fear, they are not able to not fear.  How ridiculous! They are not yet centered!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Everyone is very festive,  As if enjoying the Tai Lao sacrifice,  As if climbing terraces in the spring.  I alone am unmoved! -  Like one who has not yet given any sign,  Like a newborn infant who does not yet act like a baby.  Very tired and worn out!, as if without a place to return to.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Everyone all has more than they need;  I alone seem to have lost everything.  I have the heart/mind of a foolish person,  indeed!!  I am very mixed up and confused!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Common people are very clear and bright;  I alone seem confused.  Common people are very observant and alert;  I alone am very gloomy and depressed.  Tranquil!, they are like the ocean;  I drift on the wind!, as if without a place to rest.  Everyone all has a purpose;  I alone am stupid and stubborn, and appear mean and shallow.</p> <p>I alone am different compared to other people,  And value the food of the mother.</p>
<p><u>Renounce learning</u> and be <u>without worry</u>.<sup>A</sup>  “<u>Yes</u>” [à] together with “<u>yeah</u>”<sup>B</sup> -  <u>What</u> is their <u>mutual distance</u> or <u>nearness</u>?  <u>Beautiful</u>{good} [à] together with <u>ugliness</u>°</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Notes</u></p> <p><i>This chapter seems to be the sage-like author poking fun at himself, describing how he <b>appears</b> to ordinary people who don't</i></p>

{evil} -  
 What is their mutual distance or similarity?  
 That which people [they] fear, they are not able  
 to not fear.  
 How ridiculous ! They are not yet centered !  
 ♦ Everyone<sup>2</sup> is [very] *festive*,  
 [splendid, merry]<sup>2</sup>  
 As if enjoying the Tai Lao sacrifice<sup>C</sup>,  
 As if climbing terraces<sup>D</sup> in the spring.  
 I alone am unmoved ! -  
 [anchored]  
 Like one *who has not yet given any*  
*sign,* [his]  
 Like a newborn infant<sup>2</sup> *who does not yet* [act  
 like] a  
baby.  
 [him]  
 [Very] tired and worn out<sup>2</sup> !, as if without a  
place to return  
 to.  
 ♦ Everyone<sup>2</sup> all has more than they need,  
 [surplus, excess]  
 I alone seem to have lost everything.  
 [things lost]  
 I have the heart/mind of a foolish person,  
indeed! !  
 I am [very] mixed up and confused<sup>2</sup> !  
Common people are [very] clear and bright<sup>2</sup>;  
 I alone seem<sup>E</sup> confused.  
Common people are [very] observant and alert  
<sup>2</sup>;  
 I alone am [very] gloomy and depressed<sup>2</sup>.  
Tranquil !, they are like the ocean;  
 [I] drift [on the wind]<sup>F</sup> !, as if without a place to  
rest.  
 ♦ Everyone<sup>2</sup> all has a purpose;  
 [use]  
 I alone am stupid and stubborn, and appear  
mean and  
shallow{rustic}.  
 I alone am different compared to other people,  
 And value the food of the mother.

*understand him*; the “very’s” scattered  
 throughout the chapter are implied by repeated  
 symbols; only the first 6 lines are present in  
 GUO  
 A : many people over the centuries have  
 suggested that this line should be the last in  
 #19 for many good reasons; however, there is  
 an explicit end-of-chapter marker in GUO at the  
 end of #19 (which is not even followed by #20  
 in its manuscript), so this line does indeed  
 seem to belong here  
 B : formal versus informal, respectively  
 C : *according to Lau, the Tai Lao sacrifice was*  
*a major feast where sheep, pigs, and ox were*  
*ritually sacrificed and eaten*  
 D : in ancient China, terraces were man-made  
 hills with paths cut into in their sides, leading  
 up to a plateau at the top from which to view  
 the surrounding landscape  
 E : only WB changed “seem” to “confused”,  
 thus making “very confused”, keeping with all  
 the other “very’s”  
 F : “drift” comes from HSG and FY (while they  
 use different symbols, they have the same  
 meaning, thus making a majority); the symbol  
 in WB means “wind”, and so is incorporated  
 into the added phrase; the “I” is added at the  
 beginning to maintain the I/they alternation

#### Cross-references

beauty *and* ugly : #2  
 fear/afraid : #15, #17, #72, #74  
 baby/infant/child : #10, #28, #49, #55  
 newborn infant : #10, #28, #55  
 returning : #14, #16, #19, #22, #25, #28,  
 #34, #40, #52,  
 #58, #60, #64, #65, #80  
 observant and alert : #58  
 mother : #1, #25, #52, #59

## Chapter Twenty One

<p>孔德之容(唯)道是從          道之為物(唯)恍(唯)惚          惚兮恍兮其中有象•          恍兮惚兮其中有物•          窈兮冥兮其中有精•          其精甚真          其中有信          自(今)及(古)          其名不去          以閱眾甫•          吾何以知眾甫之(然)哉(•)          以此•</p>	<p>The greatest De is possible only when Dao is followed.          The action of Dao on creatures is just indistinct, just confusing.          Confusing! and indistinct!, within it exists image.          Indistinct! and confusing!, within it exists things.          Obscure! and dark!, within it exists essence.          Its essence is extremely real and true.          Within it exists truth.          From the present, reaching to antiquity,          Its name has not departed -          Thus I observe the father of the multitudes.          How do I thus know the father of the multitudes is like this?          By means of this.</p>
<p>♦The <u>greatest De</u> [it] is <u>possible only</u> when <u>Dao</u> is</p>	<p><u>Notes</u>          A : compare to #14, where something</p>

followed.  
 [allowed,permitted]  
 The action of Dao on creatures is just indistinct,  
just  
confusing.<sup>A</sup>  
 [only] [only]  
Confusing ! and indistinct !, within it exists  
image.  
Indistinct ! and confusing !, within it exists  
things.  
Obscure ! and dark !, within it exists essence.  
Its essence is extremely real and true.  
 ♦ Within it exists truth\*.  
*From the present, reaching to*  
*antiquity,*

[since] [ancient,old]  
 Its name has not departed -  
 Thus I observe the father of the  
multitudes.

[examine,inspect]  
 How do I thus know the father of the multitudes  
 [it] is  
 like this ?  
 ♦ By means of this.<sup>B</sup>

(presumably Dao) is also indistinct and  
 confusing, and to #40, where Dao specifically  
 “returns” and “weakens”  
 B : “this” could be referring to observing the  
 action of Dao, or just observing the world in  
 front of you, or to the teachings of the DDJ, or  
 something else - you decide!

Cross-references  
 confusing and indistinct : #14  
 essence : #55  
 how do I thus know : #54, #57  
 by means of this : #54, #57

## Chapter Twenty Two

曲則全 •  
 枉則直 •  
 窪則盈  
 敝則新 •  
 少則得 •  
 多則惑 •  
 是以聖人  
 抱一 [以] 為天下式  
 不自見故明  
 不自是故彰  
 不自伐故有功 •  
 不自矜故長 •  
 (•)夫唯不爭  
 (•)故天下莫能與之爭  
 古之所謂  
 曲則全者  
 豈虛言哉 (•) •  
 誠全而歸之

What is wrong then becomes whole and  
 perfect.  
 What is bent then becomes straight.  
 What is hollow then becomes filled.  
 What is worn out then becomes new.  
 Have little, then gain.  
 Have too much, then become confused.

Thus the sage :  
 Embraces the One, thus serving as an example  
 to the  
 world -  
 He does not display himself, therefore he has  
 insight.  
 Does not consider himself correct, therefore he  
 distinguishes himself.  
 Does not boast about himself, therefore he  
 possesses  
 merit.  
 Does not brag about himself, therefore he  
 endures.

Now : only because he does not strive,  
 Therefore no one in the world can strive  
 against him.

That which the ancients say :  
 “He who is wrong then becomes whole and  
 perfect” -  
 How can these be empty words?  
 Be truly whole and perfect, and return to it.

♦ What is wrong{bent} then becomes whole and  
perfect.  
 What is bent then becomes straight.  
 ♦ What is hollow then becomes filled.  
 ♦ What is worn out then becomes new.  
 ♦ Have little, then gain.  
 ♦ Have too much, then become confused.  
 ♦ Thus<sup>2</sup> the sage<sup>2</sup> :  
Embraces the One, thus serving as an example  
 to the  
world<sup>2</sup> -  
 He does not display himself, therefore he has  
insight.  
 [show] [wise,sight]  
 Does not consider himself correct, therefore he

Notes  
 A : there is no indication what the “it” is  
 referring to in the original Chinese, so you  
 decide! This symbol also means “them”,  
 perhaps meaning “return to the ancients”?

Cross-references  
 embraces the One : #10  
 serves as an example to the world : #28  
 not displaying oneself (showing off) : #24, #47,  
 #72, #77  
 display...insight : #24  
 correct...distinguishes : #24  
 boast : #24, #30  
 boast...merit : #24

*distinguishes* himself.

[manifest,display,stand out]

◆ Does not brag about himself, therefore he possesses merit.

Does not brag about himself, therefore he endures{leads}.

[boast] [long,forever]

◆ Now : only because he does not strive, Therefore no one in the world<sup>2</sup> can strive against

him.

[together with]

◆ That which the ancients [they] say :

"He who is wrong{bent} then becomes whole and perfect" -

How can these be empty words ?

Be truly whole and perfect, and return to it<sup>A</sup>.

brag : #24, #30

brag...endures : #24

no striving : #3, #8, #66, #68, #73, #81

no one in the world can strive against him : #66

the ancients/elders : #14, #15, #38, #39, #62, #65, #68

returning : #14, #16, #19, #20, #25, #28, #34, #40, #52, #58, #60, #64, #65, #80

### Chapter Twenty Three

希言自然

(•)故飄風不終朝

驟雨不終日•

孰為此者天地•

天地尚不能久

而況於人乎(•)

(•)故從事於道者

道者同於道

德者同於德

失者同於失•

同於道者

道亦樂得之

同於德者

德亦樂得之

同於失者

失亦樂得之

信不足焉有不信 \_\_

Minimal words are naturally so.

Therefore : strong winds do not last the entire morning,

Sudden rains do not last the entire day.

Who makes these things? Heaven and earth. Even heaven and earth can not maintain them forever,

And so how much less can people?

Therefore : of those who engage in Dao -

He who Daos is one with Dao.

He who Des is one with De.

He who loses is one with the loss.

For he who is one with Dao, Dao is also pleased to have him.

For he who is one with De, De is also pleased to have him.

For he who is one with loss, Loss is also pleased to have him.

If you do not trust enough, then you will not have anyone's trust.

◆ Minimal words are naturally so<sup>2</sup>.

[rare,infrequent]

Therefore : strong winds<sup>2</sup> do not last the entire morning{day}, [whirlwind,cyclone wind]

◆ Sudden rains do not last the entire day. Who makes these things? Heaven and earth.

[entities]

Even heaven and earth can not maintain them forever,

[for a long time]

And so how much less can people ?

[than]

Therefore : of those who engage<sup>2</sup> in Dao - He who Daos is one with<sup>2</sup> Dao.

[same compared

toàsame as]

◆ He who Des is one with<sup>2</sup> De. [same compared to]

◆ He who loses is one with<sup>2</sup> the loss. [same compared to]

For he who is one with<sup>2</sup> Dao, [same compared to]

Dao is also pleased to have

him. [gain,get]

For he who is one with<sup>2</sup> De, [same compared to]

#### Notes

A : this sentence and the next are very different across the sources, and the sentence before (about Dao) is not in the MWD's

#### Cross-references

naturally so : #17, #25, #51, #64

he who "possesses Dao" : #15, #24, #31, #65, #77

not trusting enough : #17



<p style="text-align: center;">De is also pleased to <i>have</i>  <u>him</u>.<sup>A</sup> [gain.get]</p> <p style="text-align: center;">For <u>he who</u> is <i>one with</i><sup>2</sup> <u>loss</u>, [same          compared to]</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Loss</u> is also pleased to <i>have</i> <u>him</u>.          [gain.get]</p> <p style="text-align: center;">If you do <u>not trust</u>* <u>enough</u>, <u>then</u> you will <u>not have</u>          anyone's <u>trust</u>*.</p>	
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### Chapter Twenty Four

<p style="text-align: center;">企者不立          跨者不行          自見者不明          自是者不彰 •          自伐者無功          自矜者不長          其在道也(•)          曰餘食贅行 •          物或惡之          (•)故有道者不處 •</p>	<p>He who stands on tiptoe does not really stand.          He who stands astride can not travel.          He who displays himself does not have insight.          He who considers himself correct does not          distinguish himself.          He who boasts about himself is without merit.          He who brags about himself does not endure.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">He who lives in Dao -          Calls these leftover food and unnecessary          behavior.          Creatures detest them, no matter what.          Therefore : he who possesses Dao does not live          by them.</p>
<p>He who stands on tiptoe does not [really] stand.          He who stands astride can not travel.          ♦ He who displays himself does not have  <i>insight</i>.          [shows] [wise.sight]          ♦ He who considers himself correct does not  <i>distinguish</i>          himself.          [manifest.display→stand out]          ♦ He who boasts about himself is without          merit.          ♦ He who brags about himself does not  <i>endure</i>{lead}.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">[boasts] [long.forever]          ♦ He [who] lives in Dao -          ♦ Calls these <i>leftover food</i><sup>A</sup> and <i>unnecessary</i>  <i>behavior</i>.          [excess, remainder]          ♦ Creatures detest them, no matter what.          Therefore : he who possesses Dao does not live          by<sup>B</sup> them.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Notes</p> <p>A : presumably, the inedible scraps (not          something good, as in "leftover turkey")          B : there is some debate over the last symbol in          this line - both FY and HSG use this symbol          (making it a majority), and some WB versions          also use it; other WB versions use 处, thus          reading          he who possesses Dao does not dwell          with them</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Cross-references</p> <p>not displaying oneself (showing off) : #22, #47,          #72, #77          display...insight : #22          correct...distinguishes : #22          boast : #22, #30          boast...merit : #22          brag : #22, #30          brag...endure : #22          creatures detest them : #31          he who "possesses Dao" : #15, #23, #31, #65,          #77</p>

### Chapter Twenty Five

<p style="text-align: center;">有物混成          先天地生          寂兮寥兮          獨立不改          周行而不殆          可以為天下母          吾不知其名 •          字之曰道          強為之名曰大          大曰逝</p>	<p>Something existed unformed yet complete,          Before heaven and earth were created.          Silent! Empty!          Standing alone, not changing.          It circulates everywhere, and causes no danger.          It can be considered the mother of the world.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">I do not know its name;          Its symbol is called Dao.          If I tried to make its name, I would call it great.          Being great speaks of departing.          Departing speaks of being remote.          Being remote speaks of returning.</p>
--	--

逝曰遠  
 遠曰反  
 (•) 道大  
 天大  
 地大  
 王亦大  
 域中有四大  
 而王居其一焉。  
 人法地  
 地法天  
 天法道  
 道法自然。

Dao is great,  
 Heaven is great,  
 Earth is great,  
 The king is also great.  
 Within the realm exist four that are great,  
 And the king resides as one of them!

People follow the earth.  
 The earth follows heaven.  
 Heaven follows Dao.  
 Dao follows what is naturally so.

[Some]thing existed *unformed* yet *complete*,

[mingled,blended,unstructured]

◆ Before heaven and earth were created.

Silent ! Empty !

Standing alone, not changing.

It circulates everywhere<sup>2</sup>, and [causes]<sup>A</sup> no danger.

It can be considered<sup>2</sup> the mother of the world<sup>2</sup>.

I do not know its name;

Its symbol is called Dao.

If I tried to make its name, I would call it great.

Being great speaks of departing.

Departing speaks of being remote.

Being remote speaks of returning.

◆ Dao is great,

◆ Heaven is great,

◆ Earth is great,

◆ The king is also great.

Within the realm exist four that are great,

[region,territory]

And the king resides as one of them !

◆ People follow<sup>B</sup> the earth.

◆ The earth follows heaven.

◆ Heaven follows Dao.

◆ Dao follows what is naturally so<sup>2</sup>.

#### Notes

A : "is in" could also be used here, but as the subject is Dao, this seems unlikely; this sentence is not in the three earliest sources

B : "follow" as in "emulates" or "uses as a model for their own behavior"

#### Cross-references

no danger : #16, #32, #44, #52

mother : #1, #20, #52, #59

mother of the world : #52

returning : #14, #16, #19, #20, #22, #28, #34, #40, #52,

#58, #60, #64, #65, #80

remote : #65

remote *and* returning : #65

naturally so : #17, #23, #51, #64

## Chapter Twenty Six

重為輕根  
 靜為躁君  
 是以(君子)終日  
 行不離[其]輜  
 重雖有榮觀燕  
 處超然  
 奈何萬乘之主  
 而以身輕天下  
 輕則失本  
 躁則失君

Serious serves as the source of frivolous.  
 Stillness serves as the ruler of restlessness.

Thus the noble man travels the entire day,  
 And does not stray from his wagon.  
 He is serious, even though glorious sights and  
 feasts exist;  
 He lives above them, like this.

So how could one be the master of ten  
 thousand chariots,  
 And conduct his self frivolously in the world?

Be frivolous, then lose the source.  
 Be restless, then lose the rulership.

◆ Serious{heavy} serves as the source of  
 frivolous{light}.

◆ Stillness serves as the ruler of restlessness<sup>A</sup>.

#### Notes

A : this symbol also means impatience,  
 agitation, anxiety, etc; "stillness" *and*

Thus<sup>2</sup> the noble man<sup>2\*B</sup> travels the entire day,  
And does not stray from his wagon.  
[leave,depart,separate]

He is serious<sup>C</sup>, even though glorious sights and  
feasts exist;

He lives above them, like this<sup>D</sup>.  
[transcend,jump over]

[So] how<sup>2</sup> could [one be] the master of ten  
thousand  
chariots.<sup>E</sup>

And conduct his self<sup>F</sup> frivolously{lightly} in the  
world<sup>2</sup>?

[use]

Be frivolous{light}, then lose the source.

◆ Be restless, then lose the rulership.

"restlessness" are presumably referring to  
inner, mental/emotional qualities

B : Only WB and HSG changed "noble man" to  
the non-Confucian term "sage"

C : traditionally, the first symbol of this  
sentence is considered to be the last symbol of  
the previous sentence ("heavy wagon"); but  
because the MWD's have "fields" instead of  
"wagon" at the end of the previous sentence,  
and "heavy fields" makes no sense, it is parsed  
this way

D : presumably, by being serious and still

E : someone very important, such as the  
supreme ruler of a large nation (one with  
10,000 chariots)

F : this is written in this awkward manner to  
emphasize that it is the personality or sense-of-  
self that is being talked about (in the  
translator's opinion - see the Introduction and  
cross-references below)

#### Cross-references

stillness : #15, #16, #37, #45, #57, #61

stillness and restlessness : #45

noble man : #31

self : #7, #9, #13, #16, #44, #52, #54, #66

## Chapter Twenty Seven

善行無轍迹  
善言無瑕謫  
善數不用籌策  
善閉無關鍵而不可開 •  
善結無纏約而不可解  
•

是以聖人  
常善救人  
故無棄人  
常善救物  
故無棄物 •

是謂襲明  
(•)故善人者不善人之師  
不善人者善人之資 •

不貴其師  
不愛其資  
雖智大迷  
是謂要妙

A good traveler is without wagon track or  
footprint.

A good speaker is without flaw or disgrace.  
A good accountant does not use counting  
tokens.

A good barrier is without bar or lock, yet can  
not be  
opened.

A good binding is without cord or restraint, yet  
can not be  
loosened.

Thus the sage :

Is always good at helping people,  
Therefore he does not abandon people.

Is always good at helping creatures,  
Therefore he does not abandon creatures.  
This is called following your insight.

Therefore : he who is a virtuous person is the  
teacher of he  
who is not a virtuous person.

He who is not a virtuous person is the resource  
of he who  
is a virtuous person.

If the latter does not value his teacher,  
Or the former does not love his resource,  
Even if there is wisdom, there will be great  
confusion.

This is called the essential subtle mystery.

A good traveler is without [wagon] track<sup>A</sup> or  
footprint.

A good speaker is without flaw{fault} or  
disgrace{blame}.

A good accountant does not use counting  
tokens<sup>2</sup>.

[counter] [token method]

A good barrier is  
without bar or lock, yet can not be  
opened.

[obstruction,blockage]

A good binding is without cord or restraint, yet  
can not be  
loosened.

◆ Thus<sup>2</sup> the sage<sup>2</sup> :

Is always good at helping people,

#### Notes

A: this symbol also has the connotation of "rut",  
hence the track of a vehicle

#### Cross-references

one who is not virtuous : #49, #62, #81

teaching : #2, #42, #43

mystery : #1, #6, #10, #15, #51, #56, #62,  
#65

anti-Confucian : #3, #18, #19, #33, #38

Therefore he does not abandon people.

Is always good at helping creatures,

Therefore he does not abandon creatures.

This is called following your *insight*.

[wise,sight]

Therefore : he who is a virtuous person is the teacher of [he

who] is not a virtuous person.

He who is not a virtuous person is the *resource* of [he who]

is a virtuous person.

[wealth,supply,support]

◆[If the latter] does not value his teacher,

◆[Or the former] does not love his

*resource*,

[wealth,supply,support]

Even if there is wisdom\*, there will be great confusion.

This is called the essential *subtle mystery*.

## Chapter Twenty Eight

知其雄守其雌

為天下谿

為天下谿

常德不離

復歸於嬰兒

知其白守其黑 •

為天下式

為天下式

常德不忒

復歸於無極

知其榮守其辱

為天下谷

為天下谷

常德乃足

復歸於樸 •

樸散則為器

聖人用之則為官長

(•)故大制不割

Know your maleness, but maintain your femaleness.

Serve as a stream to the world.

Serving as a stream to the world,

The ever-constant De will not depart,  
Returning you to the state of the newborn infant.

Know your brightness, but maintain your darkness.

Serve as an example to the world.

Serving as an example to the world,

The ever-constant De will not falter,  
Returning you to the state of the limitless.

Know your honor, but maintain your disgrace.

Serve as a valley to the world.

Serving as a valley to the world,

The ever-constant De will then be sufficient,  
Returning you to the state of the uncarved block.

When the uncarved block is broken up, then it becomes tools.

When the sage uses it, then he becomes the senior government official.

Therefore : the greatest cutting does not divide.

Know your maleness, but maintain your femaleness.

[his] [his]

◆Serve as a stream to the world<sup>2</sup>.

◆Serving as a stream to the world<sup>2</sup>,

The *ever-constant* De will not depart,

◆Returning<sup>2</sup> you to [the state of the] newborn infant<sup>2</sup>.

Know your brightness, but maintain your darkness.

[his] [his]

Serve as an example to the world<sup>2</sup>.

Serving as an example to the world<sup>2</sup>,

The *ever-constant* De will not falter,

[err]

Returning<sup>2</sup> you to [the state of the] limitless<sup>2</sup>.

[without

highest]

Know your honor{glory}, but maintain your disgrace<sup>A</sup>.

### Notes

A : this could possibly be interpreted by reflection with "glory" as "humbleness" or "humility", but it means "disgrace" everywhere else

B : by using "it", this refers to the concept of the uncarved block; but the symbol also means "them", which would refer to the tools

C : *when the uncarved block is cut, it becomes (merely) tools; when the sage cuts, things are not divided up (see #58)*

### Cross-references

feminine : #6, #10, #61

returning : #14, #16, #19, #20, #22, #25, #34, #40, #52,

#58, #60, #64, #65, #80

De *and* returning : #60, #65

baby/infant/child : #10, #20, #49, #55

newborn infant : #10, #20, #55

serve as an example to the world : #22

valley : #6, #15, #32, #39, #41, #66

uncarved block : #15, #19, #32, #37, #57

[his] [his]

Serve as a valley to the world<sup>2</sup>.

Serving as a valley to the world<sup>2</sup>,

The *ever-constant* De will then be sufficient,

Returning<sup>2</sup> you to [the state of the] uncarved block.

◆When the uncarved block is broken up, then it becomes tools.

When the sage<sup>2</sup> uses it<sup>B</sup>, then he becomes the senior government

official. [elder]

Therefore : the greatest cutting does not divide.<sup>C</sup>

[cut&make garments]

## Chapter Twenty Nine

將欲取天下而為之  
吾見其不得已  
[(•)夫]天下神器•  
不可為也(•)  
為者敗之  
執者失之  
(•)故物  
或行或隨  
或(歔)或吹  
或強或羸  
或挫或隳  
是以聖人  
去甚  
去奢  
去泰

Would you take hold of the world and control it?

I see you have no choice.

Now : the world is a divine vessel,

You can not control it (indeed!).

He who acts, ruins it;

He who grasps, loses it.

Therefore : creatures are

Sometimes active, sometimes passive,  
Sometimes breathe heavy, sometimes breathe easy,

Sometimes strong, sometimes weak,  
Sometimes oppressed, sometimes overthrown.

Thus the sage :

Removes the extremes,

Removes the extravagant and wasteful,

Removes the arrogance.

◆Would<sup>2</sup> you take hold of the world<sup>2</sup> and control it?

[manage.handle.administer]

◆I see you have no choice<sup>3</sup>.

[he]

Now : the world<sup>2</sup> is a divine vessel,

[spiritual,supernatural,mystical,miraculous]

You can not control it (indeed!).

[manage.handle.administer]

◆He who acts, ruins it;

◆He who grasps, loses it.

Therefore : creatures are

Sometimes active, sometimes passive,

[might.maybe]

[might.maybe] [submissive]

Sometimes breathing heavy<sup>A</sup>, sometimes breathing easy,<sup>B</sup>

[might.maybe] [snort]

[might.maybe] [puff]

Sometimes strong, sometimes

weak,

[might.maybe] [might.maybe]

Sometimes oppressed, sometimes

overthrown.<sup>C</sup>

[might.maybe]

[might.maybe]

◆Thus<sup>2</sup> the sage<sup>2</sup> :

### Notes

A : every source uses a different symbol here!

B : it is hard to figure out what this sentence is trying to say (literally, "sometimes snort, sometimes blow" in WB); and there is no consensus from the other sources, as they use "exhale ... blow", "flatter ... brag", "breathe silently ... breathe loudly"

C : other than WB and HSG, every source has a different pair in this line!

### Cross-references

possess or take hold of the world or nation :

#48, #57, #59, #61

have no choice : #30, #31

he who acts, ruins it : #64

he who grasps, loses it : #64

creatures sometimes X...Y : #42

strong : #3, #30, #33, #36, #52, #55, #67, #78

weak : #3, #36, #40, #55, #76, #78

◆ Removes the extremes,  
Removes the *extravagant and wasteful*,  
Removes the arrogance{exalted}.

### Chapter Thirty

以道佐人主者  
不以兵強天下  
其事好還  
師之所處荆棘生  
焉大軍之後必有凶年  
善者果而已。  
不敢以取強。  
果而勿矜。  
果而勿伐。  
果而勿驕。  
果而不得已  
果而勿強。  
物壯則老  
是謂不道  
不道早已。

He who uses Dao to assist the master of the people  
Does not use weapons or strength on the world,  
For his troubles would likely return -  
In the dwelling places of armies, thorns and  
brambles are  
produced,  
And so what is left behind a great army must  
have a bad  
year.

He who has virtue gets results and stops.  
He does not dare to take by using strength.  
He gets results, but never brags.  
Gets results, but never boasts.  
Gets results, but is not arrogant.  
Gets results, but only when he has no choice.  
Gets results, but never uses strength.

When creatures are robust but old,  
This is called "not Dao".  
That which is "not Dao" has an early finish.

He who uses Dao to assist the master of the people<sup>A</sup>

Does not use weapons or strength on the world<sup>2</sup>,

◆ For his troubles would likely return -

[be easy to be liable to]

In the dwelling places of armies, thorns and  
brambles are  
produced,

And so what is [left] behind [à] a great army  
must have a  
bad year.<sup>B</sup>

He who has virtue gets results and stops.

He does not dare to take by using strength.

He gets results, but never

brags. [boast]

Gets results, but never boasts.

Gets results, but is not arrogant{proud}.

Gets results, but [only when he] has no choice<sup>3</sup>.

◆ Gets results, but never uses strength.

◆ When creatures are robust but old,

This is called "not Dao".

[That which] is "not Dao" has an early finish.

#### Notes

The last 3 lines are not in GUO; several other  
lines are not in GUO or the MWD's  
A : presumably, an sage-like advisor to a ruler  
B : presumably referring to harvests

#### Cross-references

strong : #3, #29, #33, #36, #52, #55, #67,  
#78

boast and brag : #22, #24

have no choice : #29, #31

when creatures are robust but old : #55

"not Dao" has an early finish : #55

### Chapter Thirty One

(•)夫佳兵者不祥之器•

物或惡之•

(•)故有道者不處

君子居則貴左

用兵則貴右•

兵者不祥之器•

非君子之器•

不得已而用之

恬淡為上

\_\_ (勿)美[也(•)]

而美之者是樂殺人•

(•)夫樂殺人者

Now : fine weapons, they are not tools of good  
fortune.

Creatures detest them, no matter what.

Therefore : he who possesses Dao does not live  
by them.

When a noble man is in his dwelling, then he  
honors the  
left.

When he commands troops, then he honors the  
right.

Weapons, they are not tools of good fortune.

They are not the tools of a noble man.

When he has no choice but to use them,

To be calm and indifferent is superior -

Never pleased, indeed!

And he who is pleased enjoys killing people.

<p>— 不可以得志於天下矣(•)•      [(•)故] 吉事尚左•      凶事尚右•      [是以] 偏將軍居左      上將軍居右      言以喪禮處之•      殺人一眾      以哀悲泣之      戰勝以喪禮處之•</p>	<p>Now : he who enjoys killing people      Can not get what he desires from the world!</p> <p>Therefore : in fortunate affairs honor the left,      In unfortunate affairs honor the right.      Thus the assistant general of the army resides      on the left,      The supreme general of the army resides on the      right.</p> <p>Thus we say they are dwelling at a funeral :      When many people are killed,      Then mourn and weep with grief for them.      Victory in war thus means they will dwell at a      funeral.</p>
<p>Now : <u>fine weapons</u>, they are <u>not tools of good fortune</u>.      [auspicious,lucky]      ♦ <u>Creatures detest them, no matter what.</u>  <u>Therefore : he who possesses Dao does not live by</u>  <u>them.</u>      ♦ When a <u>noble man</u><sup>2*</sup> is in his <u>dwelling</u>, <u>then</u> he  <u>honors</u>  <u>the left.</u>      ♦ When he <u>commands troops</u><sup>2</sup>, <u>then</u> he <u>honors</u> the  <u>right.</u>  <u>Weapons, they are not tools of good</u>  <u>fortune.</u>      [auspicious,lucky]      They are <u>not</u> the <u>tools of a noble man</u><sup>2*</sup>.      ♦ When he <u>has no choice</u><sup>3</sup> <u>but to use them</u>,  <u>To be calm</u> and <u>indifferent</u><sup>A</sup> is <u>superior</u> -  <u>Never pleased, indeed!</u><sup>B</sup>  <u>And he who is pleased [he] enjoys</u><sup>2</sup> <u>killing people.</u>      [is      happy,pleased]      Now : <u>he who enjoys killing people</u>      [happy,pleased]  <u>Can</u><sup>2</sup> <u>not get what he desires from the world</u><sup>2</sup>      †      [ambition,will]  <u>Therefore : in fortunate affairs honor the left,</u>  <u>In unfortunate affairs honor the right.</u>  <u>Thus</u><sup>2</sup> <u>the assistant general</u><sup>2</sup> <u>of the army resides on</u>  <u>the left,</u>      ♦ <u>The supreme general of the army resides on the</u>  <u>right.</u>      [highest,superior]  <u>Thus we say they are dwelling at a funeral</u><sup>2C</sup> :      When <u>many people are killed</u>,  <u>Then mourn and weep with grief</u><sup>2</sup> <u>for them.</u>      [thus]  <u>Victory in war thus means they will dwell at a</u>  <u>funeral</u><sup>2</sup>.</p>	<p><u>Notes</u>      The first three lines are not in GUO      A : WB and HSG's use of "indifferent" seems      the most neutral, but the three earliest sources      technically have the majority with "reverent",      while FY has "peaceful"      B : this line comes from the MWD's and GUO;      the later sources are very different (and do not      agree with each other); regardless of the      source, this line and the next can be translated      many different ways due to the multiple      meanings of 美 ("pleased", "beautiful", "good"),      and whether or not one assumes that weapons      are still being talked about      C : Ames and Hall point out that ancient      Chinese custom puts the place of honor on the      left in happy events, and on the right in      sorrowful events; thus in war, the supreme      general sits on the right, acknowledging that      war is a sorrowful event, just like a funeral</p> <p><u>Cross-references</u>      creatures detest them : #24      he who "possesses Dao" : #15, #23, #24, #65,      #77      noble man : #26      have no choice : #29, #30</p>

**Chapter Thirty Two**

<p>道常無名•      樸雖小      天下莫能臣一•      侯王若能守之      萬物將自賓•      天地相合•      以降甘露•      民莫之令</p>	<p>Dao is ever-constantly without-name.      Even though the concept of the uncarved block      seems      insignificant,      No one in the world can conquer it.      If nobles and kings could maintain it,      The ten thousand creatures would naturally      obey.      Heaven and earth would join with each other,      Thus dropping a sweet dew.</p>
--	---

而自均  
 [焉]始制有名  
 名亦既有  
 (•)夫亦將知止  
 知止(所)以不殆  
 譬道之在天下•  
 猶川谷之(與)江海•

There are no citizens who would make this happen,  
 Yet it would be naturally fair and impartial.  
 And so, begin to divide and you have names.  
 Once names exist,  
 Men should also be ready to know when to stop.  
 Knowing when to stop is the reason that there is no danger.  
 An analogy for the action of Dao in the world :  
 It is similar to a stream in a valley that becomes part of a large river or ocean.

Dao is *ever-constantly* without-name.  
 Even though the [concept of the] uncarved block seems insignificant,  
 No one in the world<sup>2</sup> can conquer it.  
 If nobles<sup>A</sup> and kings could maintain it,  
 ♦ The ten thousand creatures would naturally obey.  
 ♦ Heaven and earth would join with each other, thus dropping a sweet dew.<sup>B</sup>  
 There are no citizens who would make this happen, [they]  
 Yet [it]<sup>C</sup> would be naturally fair and impartial.  
 ♦ And so, begin to divide<sup>D</sup> and you have names.  
 [cut&make garments]  
 ♦ Once names [also] exist, [now that]  
 Men should also be ready to know when to stop.  
 Knowing when to stop is the reason that<sup>2</sup> there is no danger.  
 An analogy for the action of Dao in the world<sup>2</sup> :  
 It is similar to a stream in a valley that [becomes] part of a large river or ocean. [it]  
 [together with, take part in]

Notes  
 A : while this symbol does literally mean “nobles”, it also specifically refers to a “Marquis”; the Western equivalents for the five grades of Chinese nobility (below the royal family) were Duke, Marquis, Count (or Earl), Viscount, and Baron, in descending order  
 B : *Waley comments that this phrase is used to indicate that the kingdom is at peace*  
 C : “they” could be used here, referring to the citizens instead of this process  
 D : see #28, where the uncarved block is divided  
Cross-references  
 always/ever-constantly without X : #1, #34, #37  
 without-name : #1, #37, #41  
 nobles (in general) : #37, #39, #42, #62, #80  
 if nobles and kings could maintain it : #37  
 uncarved block : #15, #19, #28, #37, #57  
 ten thousand creatures would naturally... : #37  
 knowing when to stop : #44  
 no danger : #16, #25, #44, #52  
 valley : #6, #15, #28, #39, #41, #66

**Chapter Thirty Three**

知人者智•  
 自知者明•  
 勝人者有力•  
 自勝者強•  
 知足者富•  
 強行者有志•  
 不失其所者久•  
 死而不亡者壽•

He who knows people is wise;  
 He who knows himself has insight.  
 He who is victorious over people possesses power;  
 He who is victorious over himself is strong.  
 He who knows he has enough is wealthy;  
 He who uses force possesses ambition.  
 He who does not lose his place endures;  
 He who dies yet does not perish has longevity.

He who knows people is wise\*;

Notes



- ◆ He who knows himself has *insight*.  
[wise,sight]
- ◆ He who is victorious over people possesses  
power;
- ◆ He who is victorious over himself is strong.
- ◆ He who knows he has enough is wealthy;
- ◆ He who uses force<sup>2</sup> possesses ambition.
- ◆ He who does not lose his place<sup>A</sup>  
*endures*;  
[for a  
long time]

He who dies yet does not perish has longevity.<sup>B</sup>

A : possibly meaning one's center, source or root (but then why not use one of the many symbols used elsewhere for these words?), this may be referring to one's station or position in life (ancient Chinese society was highly stratified); but on the other hand, that sounds very Confucian - so you decide!

B : this line has generated much speculation over the millennia; perhaps it refers to being remembered after you die, or the death of the "self"?

#### Cross-references

strong : #3, #29, #30, #36, #52, #55, #67, #78

knowing one has enough : #44, #46

die/death : #6, #42, #50, #67, #74, #75, #76, #80

anti-Confucian : #3, #18, #19, #27, #38

## Chapter Thirty Four

大道汎兮  
其可左右。  
萬物恃之(以)生  
而不辭。  
功成遂  
[而]不名有。  
衣養萬物  
而不為主  
[(•)故]常無欲。  
可名於小。  
萬物歸焉  
而不為主  
可名(於)大。  
(是以聖人之能成大)。  
[以其不為大]。  
(•)故能成\_\_大

Great Dao is like a vast flood!  
It is able to flow left and right.

The ten thousand creatures depend on it in order for life,  
And are not rejected.  
It accomplishes its tasks successfully,  
Yet does not possess a name.  
It clothes and supports the ten thousand creatures,  
But does not act as their master.

Therefore : since it is ever-constantly without-desire,  
It can then be named insignificant.

Since the ten thousand creatures return to it  
But it does not act as their master,  
It can then be named great.

Thus the sage can achieve greatness  
Because he does not act great.  
Therefore he can achieve greatness.

Great Dao is like a *vast flood* !

◆ It is able to flow left and right.<sup>A</sup>

The ten thousand creatures depend on it in  
order for life,

and are not rejected.

[decline,dismiss]

It accomplishes its tasks successfully, yet does  
not possess  
a name.

[results,achievements]

It clothes and supports the ten thousand  
creatures,

But does not act as their master.

Therefore : since it is *ever-constantly* without-  
desire,

◆ It can then be named insignificant.

◆ Since the ten thousand creatures return to it  
But it does not act as their master,

It can then be named great.

Thus<sup>2</sup> the sage<sup>2</sup> [he] can achieve greatness  
Because he does not act great.

Therefore he can achieve greatness.<sup>B</sup>

#### Notes

A : *in other words, everywhere*

B : the last three lines are significantly different between sources. What is used here comes from the MWD's, and FY says the exact same thing with slightly different symbols (thus making it the majority). But HSG reads  
Thus<sup>2</sup> the sage<sup>2</sup> is whole, but does not act  
great.

Therefore he can achieve his greatness.

And WB reads (with no reference to the sage, presumably still referring to Dao from earlier in the chapter)

Because it is whole, it naturally does not act  
great.

Therefore it can achieve its greatness.

WB also switched from saying the sage is great to Dao is great in #67

#### Cross-references

great Dao : #18, #53

accomplishing tasks : #2, #9, #17, #77

always/ever-constantly without X : #1, #32, #37

without-desire : #1, #3, #37, #57

returning : #14, #16, #19, #20, #22, #25,  
 #28, #40, #52,  
 #58, #60, #64, #65, #80  
 sage can achieve greatness : #63

### Chapter Thirty Five

執大象  
 天下往  
 往而不害  
 安平太•  
 樂與餌過客止  
 道之出(言)淡(呵)  
 其無味•  
 視之不足見•  
 聽之不足聞•  
 用之不足既•

Holding fast to the great image,  
 The entire world comes towards you.  
 Comes towards you, and meeting with no harm,  
 There is the greatest peace and calm.

Music together with good food make passing  
 guests stay,  
 But Dao's words are bland!  
 They are without flavor.

Look for it, there is not enough to see.  
 Listen for it, there is not enough to hear.  
 Use it, there is not enough to exhaust.

◆ Holding fast to the great image,  
 ◆ The [entire] world<sup>2</sup> comes towards you.  
 ◆ Comes towards you, and [meeting with]<sup>A</sup> no harm,  
 There is the greatest peace and calm<sup>2</sup>.  
 [peace, calm calm, peace]  
Music together with good food make passing guests stay,  
 [cakes]  
 But Dao's words<sup>2</sup> are bland !<sup>B</sup>  
 ◆ They are without flavor.  
 ◆ Look for it, there is not enough to see.  
 ◆ Listen for it, there is not enough to hear.  
Use it, there is not enough to exhaust<sup>2</sup>.

#### Notes

A : "doing" could just as easily be used here, but since the sage is the one who does no harm in #58, #60, and #66, "meeting with" is used  
 B : the sentence-as-a-whole can be interpreted in two different ways (see the Introduction) : "speaking about Dao" or "the words that come out of Dao" (which is used here); also note that in the majority of the sources this line is a statement, not a question

#### Cross-references

no harm : #56, #58, #60, #66, #81  
 look, not seen *and* listen, not heard : #14  
 use does not exhaust : #4, #5

### Chapter Thirty Six

將欲歛之  
 必固張之  
 將欲弱之  
 必固強之  
 將欲廢之  
 必固興之•  
 將欲奪之  
 必固與之  
 是謂微明•  
 柔弱勝剛強  
 魚不可脫於淵  
 國之利器  
 不可以示人•

When you are about to gather something,  
 You must have originally spread it out.  
 When you are about to weaken something,  
 You must have originally strengthened it.  
 When you are about to abandon something,  
 You must have originally been interested in it.  
 When you are about to seize something,  
 You must have originally given it.

This is called subtle and obscure insight.

What is soft and weak conquers what is hard and strong.

Fish can not escape from the deep;  
 The sharp tools of the nation  
 Can not be shown to the people.

<p>When you are <u>about to</u><sup>2</sup> <u>gather</u><sup>A</sup> <u>something</u>, [inhale] [it] You <u>must</u> have <u>originally</u> <u>spread</u> it out.</p> <p>◆ When you are <u>about to</u><sup>2</sup> <u>weaken</u> <u>something</u>, [it] You <u>must</u> have <u>originally</u> <u>strengthened</u> it.</p> <p>When you are <u>about to</u><sup>2</sup> <u>abandon</u> <u>something</u>, [it] You <u>must</u> have <u>originally</u> been <u>interested</u> in it.</p> <p>◆ When you are <u>about to</u><sup>2</sup> <u>seize</u> <u>something</u>, [it] You <u>must</u> have <u>originally</u> <u>given</u> it.</p> <p><u>This is</u> called <u>subtle and obscure</u> <u>insight</u>. [wise,sight] What is <u>soft</u> and <u>weak</u> <u>conquers</u> what is <u>hard</u> and <u>strong</u>. [victorious,beats] <u>Fish</u> can <u>not</u> <u>escape</u> <u>from</u> the <u>deep</u>; The <u>sharp</u> <u>tools</u><sup>B</sup> of the <u>nation</u> ◆ <u>Can</u><sup>2</sup> <u>not</u> be <u>shown</u> to the <u>people</u>.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Notes</u></p> <p>A : while the majority symbol here means “inhale”, MWD/A uses a symbol meaning to “pick up” or “collect” B : <i>presumably, weapons</i>; compare to #80, where there is no place to display armor and weapons</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Cross-references</u></p> <p>weak : #3, #29, #40, #55, #76, #78 strong : #3, #29, #30, #33, #52, #55, #67, #78 soft : #10, #43, #52, #55, #76, #78 hard : #43, #76, #78 soft conquers hard : #43, #78 sharp tools : #57</p>

### Chapter Thirty Seven

<p style="text-align: center;">道常無為 • 而無不為 • 侯王若能守之 萬物將自化 化而欲作 吾將鎮之以無名之樸 無名之樸 夫亦將無欲 不欲以靜 天下將自定 •</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Dao ever-constantly practices non-action, Yet nothing is left undone.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">If nobles and kings could maintain it, The ten thousand creatures would naturally transform. Transform, and if desire arises, I would restrain it by means of the nameless uncarved block.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">In the state of the nameless uncarved block, Men also would be without-desire. Not desiring, thus they would be still – And the world would naturally settle.</p>
<p><u>Dao</u> <i>ever-constantly</i> [practices] <u>non-action</u>, <u>Yet nothing</u> is left <u>undone</u><sup>2</sup>. [not made,become,act] If <u>nobles</u><sup>A</sup> and <u>kings</u> could <u>maintain</u> it, ◆ The <u>ten thousand</u> <u>creatures</u> would <u>naturally</u> <u>transform</u>. ◆ <u>Transform</u>, and if <u>desire</u> <u>arises</u>, I would <u>restrain</u> it by <u>means</u> of the <u>nameless</u><sup>2B</sup> [à] <u>uncarved</u> <u>block</u>. [subdue,supress] [without-name] In the [state of the] <u>nameless</u><sup>2B</sup> [à] <u>uncarved</u> <u>block</u>, [without-name] <u>Men</u> also would be <u>without-desire</u>. <u>Not desiring</u>, thus they would be <u>still</u> – And the <u>world</u><sup>2</sup> would <u>naturally</u> <u>settle</u>.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Notes</u></p> <p>A : specifically, a Marquis (see #32) B : this is actually “without-name” (see the Introduction and cross-references below), but cannot be easily worded that way here</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Cross-references</u></p> <p>always/ever-constantly without X : #1, #32, #34 non-action : #2, #3, #38, #43, #48, #57, #63, #64 yet nothing is left undone : #48 nobles (in general) : #32, #39, #42, #62, #80 if nobles and kings could maintain it : #32 ten thousand creatures would naturally... : #32 without-name : #1, #32, #41 uncarved block : #15, #19, #28, #32, #57 uncarved block brings without-desire : #57 without-desire : #1, #3, #34, #57</p>

## Chapter Thirty Eight

上德不德是以有德  
 下德不失德是以無德  
 上德無為而無以為•  
 下德為之而有以為  
 上仁為之而無以為•  
 上義為之而有以為•  
 上禮為之而莫之以應•  
 則攘臂而(仍)之  
 (•)故失道而後德  
 失德而後仁  
 失仁而後義•  
 失義而後禮  
 (•)夫禮者忠信之薄•  
 而亂之首•  
 前識者道之華•  
 而愚之始•  
 是以大丈夫  
 處其厚不居其薄  
 處其實不居其華  
 (•)故去彼取此•

A man of highest De does not use his De, thus  
 he  
 possesses De.

A man of inferior De does not lose his De, thus  
 he is  
 without De.

A man of highest De uses non-action, and acts  
 without  
 motive.

A man of inferior De coerces others, and has a  
 motive to  
 act.

A man of highest kindness coerces others, and  
 acts  
 without motive.

A man of highest morality coerces others, and  
 has a  
 motive to act.

A man of highest propriety coerces others, and  
 if there  
 is no one who responds,

Then he rolls up his sleeves and keeps doing it.

Therefore : lose Dao, and later comes De.

Lose De, and later comes kindness.

Lose kindness, and later comes morality.

Lose morality, and later comes propriety.

Now : propriety is that which is merely the  
 appearance of

loyalty and honesty,

And the beginning of confusion.

He who is ahead in knowledge has the flower of  
 Dao,

But the beginning of stupidity and foolishness.

Thus the greatest elders :

Live by Dao's substance, and do not dwell on  
 Dao's

appearance.

Live on Dao's fruit, and do not dwell on Dao's  
 flower.

Therefore they leave that and choose this.

◆A man of highest De does not [use his] De, thus<sup>2</sup>  
 he  
 possesses De.

◆A man of inferior De does not lose<sup>A</sup> his De, thus<sup>2</sup>  
 he is  
 without De.

◆A man of highest De uses non-action, and acts  
without  
*motive.* [because, in  
 order to]

A man of inferior De coerces<sup>B</sup> others, and has a  
motive to  
 act. [acts] [them] [because, in  
 order to]

◆A man of highest kindness\* coerces others, and  
acts  
without *motive.* [acts] [them] [because, in  
 order to]

◆A man of highest morality\* coerces others, and  
has a  
motive to act.  
 [righteousness] [acts] [them] [because, in  
 order to]

## Notes

This chapter is anti-Confucian as early as  
 MWD/B!

A : *he does not lose De in that he is always  
 trying to show that he has De*

B : "coerces" is the same symbol as "acts", but  
 is used here to emphasize that it is the opposite  
 of "non-action"

C : this line varies greatly between all the  
 sources, and there is no majority; this comes  
 from FY as it seems to make the most sense

D : this could also mean "future knowledge"  
 and so is often translated as "foreknowledge",  
 "prescience", etc.

E : *fruit provides nourishment, whereas a  
 flower is merely showy*

F : compare to #50 and #75, where living for  
 the "substance" is apparently a bad thing

G : *presumably, appearance and the "flower"  
 vs. substance and the "fruit" (respectively)*

## Cross-references

non-action : #2, #3, #37, #43, #48, #57, #63,

◆A man of highest propriety\* *coerces others*, and if there is no one who [thus] responds, [acts] [them] [they]

Then he rolls up his sleeves<sup>2</sup> and keeps doing it.<sup>C</sup>

Therefore : lose Dao, and later comes De.  
Lose De, and later comes kindness\*.  
Lose kindness\*, and later comes morality\*.  
[righteousness]

Lose morality\*, and later comes propriety\*.  
[righteousness]

Now : propriety\* is that which is [merely] the appearance of loyalty\* and honesty\*, [thin coveràfacade]

◆And the beginning of confusion.

◆He who is ahead in knowledge<sup>D</sup> has the flower<sup>E</sup> of Dao.

But the beginning of stupidity and foolishness.

◆Thus<sup>2</sup> the greatest elders<sup>2</sup> :  
[elder men]

Live by Dao's substance<sup>F</sup>, and do not dwell on Dao's appearance. [its] [its] [thin coveràfacade]

Live on Dao's fruit<sup>E</sup>, and do not dwell on Dao's flower<sup>E</sup>. [its] [its]

Therefore they leave that and choose this.<sup>G</sup>

#64  
the ancients/elders : #14, #15, #22, #39, #62, #65, #68  
substance : #50, #55, #75  
leave that and choose this : #12, #72  
anti-Confucian : #3, #18, #19, #27, #33

### Chapter Thirty Nine

昔之得一者  
天得一以清  
地得一以寧  
神得一以靈  
谷得一以盈  
萬物得一以生  
侯王得一以為天下貞  
其致之  
天無以清  
將恐裂  
地無以寧  
將恐發  
神無以靈  
將恐歇  
谷無以盈  
將恐竭  
萬物無以生  
將恐滅  
侯王無以貴高  
將恐蹶  
(•)故貴以賤為本  
高以下為基  
是以侯王自謂孤寡不穀  
此非以賤為本(邪(•))  
非乎(•)  
(•)故致數輿無輿  
不欲碌碌如玉  
珞珞如石

Of those who in ancient times attained oneness  
:  
Heaven attained oneness, thus becoming pure and clear.  
Earth attained oneness, thus becoming stable.  
Spirit attained oneness, thus becoming potent.  
The valley attained oneness, thus becoming full.  
The ten thousand creatures attained oneness, thus becoming alive.  
Nobles and kings attained oneness, thus serving the world faithfully.  
They attained it.

If heaven could not use its purity and clarity,  
I fear it would split apart.  
If earth could not use its stability,  
I fear it would erupt.  
If spirit could not use its potency,  
I fear it would cease to be.  
If the valley could not use its fullness,  
I fear it would be used up.  
If the ten thousand creatures could not use their life,  
I fear they would be destroyed.  
If nobles and kings could not use their high rank and prominence,  
I fear they would fall.

Therefore : humility thus serves as the source of high rank;  
Low thus serves as the foundation of high.  
Thus nobles and kings call themselves orphaned, lonely, and unlucky.  
Does this not mean that humility thus serves as the source?

	<p style="text-align: center;">Does it not?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Therefore : to attain exceptional popularity is to be without popularity - Do not desire to be scarce like jade, But common like rock.</p>
<p>◆ Of <u>those who</u> in ancient times [they] <u>attained oneness</u><sup>A</sup> : [obtained]</p> <p>◆ <u>Heaven attained oneness, thus becoming pure and clear.</u> [obtained]</p> <p>◆ <u>Earth attained oneness, thus becoming stable.</u> [obtained] [peaceful, tranquil]</p> <p>◆ <u>Spirit attained oneness, thus becoming potent.</u> [obtained] [effective]</p> <p>◆ The <u>valley attained oneness, thus becoming full.</u> [obtained]</p> <p>The <u>ten thousand creatures attained oneness, thus becoming alive.</u> [obtained]</p> <p><u>Nobles</u><sup>B</sup> and <u>kings attained oneness, thus serving the world</u><sup>2</sup> faithfully. [obtained]</p> <p>◆ <u>They attained it.</u> If <u>heaven could not use its purity and clarity, I fear it would split apart.</u> If <u>earth could not use its stability,</u> [peaceful, tranquil] <u>I fear it would erupt.</u> [send out, issue, emit]</p> <p>If <u>spirit could not use its potency,</u> <u>I fear it would cease to be.</u> [effectiveness] [stop]</p> <p>If the <u>valley could not use its fullness,</u> <u>I fear it would be used up.</u></p> <p>If the <u>ten thousand creatures could not use their life,</u> <u>I fear they would be destroyed.</u></p> <p>If <u>nobles and kings could not use their high rank and prominence,</u> [high level, above] <u>I fear they would fall.</u></p> <p>Therefore : <u>humility thus serves as the source of high rank;</u> <u>Low thus serves as the foundation of high.</u><sup>C</sup></p> <p>◆ <u>Thus</u><sup>2</sup> <u>nobles and kings call themselves orphaned {lonely}, lonely {widowed}, and unlucky</u><sup>2D</sup>. [not lucky]</p> <p>Does <u>this not mean that humility thus serves as the source ?</u> Does it <u>not ?</u></p> <p>Therefore : to attain exceptional popularity is to be without popularity - Do not desire to be scarce<sup>2</sup> like jade, But common<sup>2o</sup> like rock.<sup>E</sup></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Notes</p> <p>A : <i>presumably, oneness with Dao</i> B : specifically, a Marquis (see #32) C : compare to #2, where high and low lean on each other D : these two symbols together can also be translated as “worthless” or “unhappy”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Cross-references</p> <p>the ancients/elders : #14, #15, #22, #38, #62, #65, #68 valley : #6, #15, #28, #32, #41, #66 nobles (in general) : #32, #37, #42, #62, #80 serve the world : #13, #49 orphaned, lonely, and unlucky : #42</p>

## Chapter Forty

反者道之動 •

The movement of Dao returns things.  
The function of Dao is to weaken things.

弱者道之用 •  
天下萬物生於有  
有生於無 •

The ten thousand creatures of the world are  
created from  
being;  
Being is created from non-being.

◆The movement of Dao returns  
*things*. [entities]  
◆The function of Dao is to weaken  
*things*.<sup>A</sup>  
[usefulness] [entities]  
The ten thousand<sup>B</sup> creatures of the world<sup>2</sup> are  
created from  
being;<sup>C</sup>  
Being is created from non-being.<sup>D</sup>

#### Notes

A : *all creatures grow weaker as they age, and all man-made things decay and fall apart, which is the way (Dao) of the universe; this is why in #30 and #55 creatures which are old but still robust are "not Dao"; compare these first two lines to #14 and #21, where Dao's action is indistinct and confusing*  
B : technically, the majority of the sources read "The creatures of the world..." but "ten thousand creatures" is such a standard saying everywhere else that it is retained here from the other sources  
C : compare to #42, where creatures are created by "three"  
D : compare to #2, where non-being and being create each other

#### Cross-references

returning : #14, #16, #19, #20, #22, #25,  
#28, #34, #52,  
#58, #60, #64, #65, #80  
weak : #3, #29, #36, #55, #76, #78  
non-being : #2, #43

## Chapter Forty One

上士聞道勤而行之  
中士聞道若存若亡  
下士聞道大笑之  
不笑不足以為道 •  
(•)故建言有之(曰) •  
明道若昧  
進道若退  
夷道若類  
上德若谷 •  
大白若辱  
廣德若不足  
建德若偷  
質真若渝  
大方無隅  
大器晚成  
大音希聲  
大象無形  
道隱無名 •  
(•)夫唯道善(始)且(善)成

The superior scholar hearing of Dao works hard  
and  
practices it.  
The average scholar hearing of Dao seems to  
keep it,  
seems to lose it.  
The inferior scholar hearing of Dao laughs  
greatly at it.  
If he did not laugh, it would not be qualified to  
be Dao.  
Therefore : in the established sayings that exist,  
it is said -  
Insight into Dao seems like darkness.  
Advancing in Dao seems like retreating.  
Smooth Dao seems knotted.  
Superior De seems like a valley.  
The greatest purity seems like disgrace.  
The most extensive De seems like it is not  
enough.  
Established De seems aimless.  
Real and true character seems inconsistent.  
The greatest region is without borders.  
The greatest vessel is last to be completed.  
The greatest tone is a tenuous sound.

	<p>The greatest image is without-form.          Dao is hidden and without-name.</p> <p>Now : only Dao is good at beginning and also good at completing.</p>
<p>The <u>superior scholar hearing of Dao works hard and practices it.</u>          [performs]</p> <p>The <u>average scholar hearing of Dao seems to keep it,</u>  <u>seems to lose it.</u>          [middle]</p> <p>◆The <u>inferior scholar hearing of Dao laughs greatly at it.</u></p> <p>◆If he did <u>not laugh,</u> it would <u>not be qualified</u><sup>3</sup>  <u>to be Dao.</u></p> <p><u>Therefore</u> : in the <u>established sayings</u><sup>2A</sup> that <u>exist, it is said -</u></p> <p><u>Insight into Dao seems like darkness.</u>          [wise,sight]</p> <p>◆<u>Advancing in Dao seems like retreating.</u>          ◆<u>Smooth Dao seems knotted.</u><sup>B</sup>          ◆<u>Superior De seems like a valley.</u></p> <p>◆The <u>greatest purity seems like disgrace.</u></p> <p>◆The most <u>extensive De seems like it is not enough.</u></p> <p>◆<u>Established De seems aimless.</u></p> <p><u>Real and true character seems inconsistent.</u>          [change]</p> <p>◆The <u>greatest region is without borders.</u><sup>C</sup></p> <p>The <u>greatest vessel is last to be completed.</u><sup>D</sup>          [late]</p> <p>The <u>greatest tone is a tenuous sound.</u>          [rare]</p> <p>The <u>greatest image is without-form.</u>  <u>Dao is hidden and without-name.</u></p> <p><u>Now : only Dao is good at beginning and also good at completing.</u><sup>E</sup></p>	<p><u>Notes</u></p> <p>A : Ames&amp;Hall comment that it is unknown whether “established sayings” is referring to proverbs in general, or a specific work that no longer exists</p> <p>B : compare to #53, where “Dao is extremely even”</p> <p>C : this line could just as likely be translated as          The <u>greatest square is without corners</u>          but considering that the DDJ often refers to nations, this translation seems more appropriate</p> <p>D : a euphemism for “great talents mature slowly”</p> <p>E : although this line only survives in MWD/B of the three earlier sources, it is used here because it is much more straightforward and understandable than the later three</p> <p><u>Cross-references</u>          scholar : #15, #68          valley : #6, #15, #28, #32, #39, #66          tone and voice/sound (same symbol) : #2          tenuous : #14          hidden : #15          without-name : #1, #32, #37</p>

## Chapter Forty Two

<p style="text-align: center;">道生一          一生二          二生三          三生萬物          萬物負陰而抱陽          沖氣以為和          人之所惡          唯孤寡不穀          而王公以(自)稱•          (•)故物          或損之而益          或益之而損          人之所教我亦教之          強梁者不得其死          吾將以為教父</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Dao creates one.          One creates two.          Two creates three.          Three creates the ten thousand creatures.          The ten thousand creatures carry Yin and embrace Yang,          Pouring their Qi together, thus becoming harmonious.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">That which people detest :          Being alone, orphaned, lonely, and unlucky -          Yet kings and nobles thus name themselves.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Therefore : creatures          Sometimes lose, yet they gain;          Sometimes gain, yet they lose.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">That which people teach, I also teach :          Those who are bullies and hoodlums do not meet their natural death.          I will thus become their elder teacher.</p>
<p>◆<u>Dao creates one.</u>          ◆<u>One creates two.</u>          ◆<u>Two creates three.</u></p> <p>◆<u>Three creates the ten thousand creatures.</u><sup>A</sup>          ◆<u>The ten thousand creatures carry Yin and</u></p>	<p><u>Notes</u></p> <p>A : compare to #40, where creatures are created from being</p> <p>B : these two symbols together can also be translated as “worthless” or “unhappy”</p>



<p style="text-align: center;">embrace Yang,</p> <p>◆ <u>Pouring</u> their Qi together, <u>thus becoming harmonious</u>.</p> <p>◆ <u>That which people [they] detest</u> :</p> <p>◆ Being <u>alone</u>, <u>orphaned</u>{lonely}, <u>lonely</u>{widowed}, and <u>unlucky</u><sup>2B</sup> -</p> <p style="text-align: center;">[not lucky]</p> <p>Yet <u>kings</u> and <u>nobles</u><sup>C</sup> <u>thus name themselves</u>.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">[dukes]</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Therefore</u> : <u>creatures</u></p> <p><u>Sometimes lose, yet they gain</u>;</p> <p style="text-align: right;">[maybe,perhaps]</p> <p style="text-align: center;">[benefit,increase]</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Sometimes gain, yet they</u></p> <p><u>lose</u>.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">[maybe,perhaps] [benefit,increase]</p> <p><u>That which people [they] teach, I also teach [it]</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">:</p> <p><u>Those who are bullies and hoodlums do not</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>meet their</u></p> <p>[natural] <u>death</u>. [bully,ruffian<sup>2</sup>]</p> <p style="text-align: center;">[obtain,get]</p> <p><u>I will thus become their elder teacher</u>.<sup>D</sup></p>	<p>C : specifically Dukes (see #32), but in keeping with other chapters, this is interpreted more generally as “nobles”</p> <p>D : 教父 is often translated as some variant of “senior teaching” (primary teaching, essence of teaching, principal teaching, etc.), but it also means “godfather” in the best sense of the term (friend and teacher), and this translation is consistent with #27, where a virtuous person is the teacher of a non-virtuous person</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Cross-references</u></p> <p>Qi : #10, #55</p> <p>orphaned, lonely, and unlucky : #39</p> <p>nobles (in general) : #32, #37, #39, #62, #80</p> <p>creatures sometimes X...Y : #29</p> <p>teaching : #2, #27, #43</p> <p>die/death : #6, #33, #50, #67, #74, #75, #76, #80</p>
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### Chapter Forty Three

<p style="text-align: center;">天下之至柔 馳騁天下之至堅 無有入無間 吾是以知無為之有益 • 不言之教 無為之益 天下希及之 •</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">The softest things of the world Overrun the hardest things of the world.</p> <p>Non-being can enter where there is no space in between.</p> <p>Thus I know that non-action has benefits.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The teaching of no-talking, The benefit of non-action - Few in the world attain these.</p>
<p>◆ The <i>softest</i><sup>2</sup> things of the world<sup>2</sup></p> <p style="text-align: center;">[most soft]</p> <p>Overrun the <i>hardest</i><sup>2</sup> things of the world<sup>2</sup>.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">[gallop<sup>2</sup>] [most hard]</p> <p><u>Non-being can enter</u> where there is <u>no space in between</u>.</p> <p>◆ <u>Thus</u><sup>2</sup> I know that <u>non-action [it] has benefits</u>.</p> <p>◆ The <u>teaching of no-talking</u>,</p> <p>◆ The <u>benefit of non-action</u> -</p> <p><u>Few in the world</u><sup>2</sup> <u>attain these</u>.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">[rare,infrequent] [them]</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Notes</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Cross-references</u></p> <p>soft : #10, #36, #52, #55, #76, #78</p> <p>hard : #36, #76, #78</p> <p>soft conquers hard : #36, #78</p> <p>non-being : #2, #40</p> <p>non-action : #2, #3, #37, #38, #48, #57, #63, #64</p> <p>teaching : #2, #27, #42</p> <p>teaching of no-talking : #2</p>

## Chapter Forty Four

名與身孰親  
 身與貨孰多  
 得與亡孰病  
 甚愛必大費  
 多藏必厚亡  
 知足不辱  
 知止不殆  
 可以長久

Fame and self : which do you love?  
 Self and property : which is greater?  
 Gain and loss : which is the affliction?

Extreme desire must lead to great expense.  
 Collecting too much must lead to substantial loss.

Knowing when you have enough, there can be no disgrace.  
 Knowing when to stop, there can be no danger.  
 Then you can forever endure.

◆ Fame and self : which do you love?

◆ Self and property : which is greater?  
 [many, much, more]

◆ Gain and loss : which is the affliction?  
 [sickness, illness]

◆ Extreme desire must lead to great expense.

[like, affection]

◆ Collecting too much must lead to substantial loss.

◆ Knowing when you have enough, there can be no disgrace.

◆ Knowing when to stop, there can be no danger.

◆ Then you can<sup>2</sup> forever endure.  
 [for a long time]

### Notes

With the exception of a couple of "therefore"'s in some sources but not others, this is the only chapter for which virtually every symbol is identical across all sources!

### Cross-references

self : #7, #9, #13, #16, #26, #52, #54, #66

knowing you have enough : #33, #46

knowing when to stop : #32

no danger : #16, #25, #32, #52

can forever endure : #59

## Chapter Forty Five

大成若缺  
 其用不弊 •  
 大盈若(盅)  
 其用不窮 •  
 大直若屈 •  
 大巧若拙 •  
 大辯若訥 •  
 躁勝寒 •  
 靜勝熱  
 清靜為天下正 •

Great achievement seems incomplete,  
 But its usefulness is not impaired.

Great fullness is like a cup or bowl,  
 Its usefulness is not exhausted.

Great straightness seems bent.  
 Great skillfulness seems clumsy.  
 Great debaters seem slow of speech.

Restlessness conquers cold.  
 Stillness conquers heat.

Purity and clarity along with stillness makes the world proper and correct.

<p>Great <u>achievement</u> seems <i>incomplete</i>, [lacking] But its <u>usefulness</u> is <i>not impaired</i>. [harmed] Great <u>fullness</u> is like a <i>cup or bowl</i><sup>A</sup>, Its <u>usefulness</u> is <i>not exhausted</i>. Great <u>straightness</u> seems <i>bent</i>. Great <u>skillfulness</u> seems <i>clumsy</i>.<sup>B</sup> Great <u>debaters</u> seem <i>slow of speech</i>.<sup>C</sup> ◆ <u>Restlessness</u> <i>conquers cold</i>. [victorious,beats] ◆ <u>Stillness</u> <i>conquers heat</i>. [victorious,beats] <u>Purity and clarity</u><sup>D</sup> along with <u>stillness</u><sup>D</sup> makes the <u>world</u><sup>2</sup> <i>proper and correct</i>{<i>honest and just</i>}.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Notes</u></p> <p>A : the symbol used here only appears in 1/5 sources, but gives the most understandable translation (and matches the first line in #4) B : this line could just as likely be translated as <u>Great cleverness seems stupid</u>. C : this is a euphemism for stammering, but also represents a personal quality that Confucius recommended people cultivate D : <i>presumably referring to inner, mental/emotional qualities</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Cross-references</u></p> <p>stillness : #15, #16, #26, #37, #57, #61 stillness <i>and</i> restlessness : #26</p>
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### Chapter Forty Six

<p style="text-align: center;">天下有道 卻走馬以糞 天下無道 戎馬生於郊。 (罪莫大於可欲) 禍莫大於不知足 咎莫大於欲得 (•)故知足之足常足矣(•)•</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">When the world possesses Dao, Riding horses are nonetheless used for manure. When the world is without Dao, War-horses are bred in the countryside.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">There is no fault greater than the capacity for desire. There is no misfortune greater than not knowing when you have enough. There is no error greater than desire for gain.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Therefore : knowing the sufficiency of having enough, there is always enough!</p>
<p>◆ When the <u>world</u><sup>2</sup> possesses Dao, ◆ <u>Riding horses</u> are <i>nonetheless used</i> for <u>manure</u>. [still,yet,however] ◆ When the <u>world</u><sup>2</sup> is <i>without Dao</i>, ◆ <u>War-horses</u> are <i>bred in</i> the <i>countryside</i>. [military] [produced] [open spaces/outskirts] ◆ <u>There is no fault greater than</u> the <i>capacity</i> for <u>desire</u>.<sup>A</sup> [ability] ◆ <u>There is no misfortune greater than not knowing</u> when you have <u>enough</u>. ◆ <u>There is no error greater than desire</u> for <u>gain</u>. <u>Therefore</u> : <u>knowing the sufficiency of having</u> <u>enough</u>, there is <u>always enough</u> !<sup>B</sup></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Notes</u></p> <p>A : this line is in every source except WB B : The core of this sentence is “<u>足 of 足 always 足</u>”, where 足 can mean “enough”, “sufficient”, or possibly “satisfaction” (and by interpretation, “contentment”), so it can be translated in many ways; while I usually use the same English word for each symbol (when appropriate), in this case it seems clearer to use different words with equivalent meanings within the same sentence; this would be similar to changing the phrase “appears to have appeared” to “seems to have appeared”</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Cross-references</u></p> <p>knowing you have enough : #33, #44</p>

## Chapter Forty Seven

不出戶  
[以]知天下  
不闚牖  
[以](知)天道  
其出彌遠  
其知彌少  
是以聖人  
不行而知  
不見而名  
不為而成

You do not have to go out the door  
In order to to know the world.  
You do not have to look out the window  
In order to to know the Way of  
heaven.

The farther you go out,  
You know even less.

Thus the sage :  
Does not travel, yet knows.  
Does not display himself, yet has a reputation.  
Does not act, yet accomplishes.

You do not have to go out the door  
In order to to know the world<sup>2</sup>.  
You do not have to look out the window  
[peep,spy]  
In order to to know the Way of  
heaven.

◆The *farther*<sup>2</sup> you go out, [even more  
distance] [he]  
You know even[more] less.  
[he]  
Thus<sup>2</sup> the sage<sup>2</sup> :  
Does not travel, yet knows.  
Does not display himself, yet has a  
reputation. [show]  
◆Does not act, yet accomplishes.

### Notes

#### Cross-references

Way of heaven : #9, #73, #77, #79, #81  
not displaying oneself (showing off) : #22, #24,  
#72, #77

## Chapter Forty Eight

為學(者)日益  
為道(者)日損  
損之又損  
以至於無為•  
無為而無不為•  
取天下常以無事  
及其有事•  
不足以取天下

The actions of those who learn daily increase.  
The actions of those who Dao daily decrease.  
Decreasing and again decreasing,  
In order to arrive at non-action.

Use non-action, and nothing is left undone.  
To take hold of the world, always use non-  
interference.

When you are compelled to interfere,  
Then you are not qualified to take hold of the  
world.

<p>◆The actions of those who learn daily increase.</p> <p>◆The actions of those who Dao daily decrease. Decreasing [them] <i>and again</i> decreasing, ◆In order to arrive at non-action. ◆Use non-action, and nothing is left undone<sup>2</sup>. [not made, become, act] To take hold of the world<sup>2</sup>, always use non-interference<sup>2</sup>. ◆When you are compelled to interfere<sup>o, A</sup>, [he] [have, possess]</p> <p>◆Then you are not qualified to<sup>3</sup> take hold of the world<sup>2</sup>.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Notes</u></p> <p>A : literally, when you “possess interference”; although 事 does not ordinarily mean interfere, this is assumed by reflection from the previous line</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Cross-references</u></p> <p>non-action : #2, #3, #37, #38, #43, #57, #63, #64 nothing is left undone : #37 non-interference : #57, #63 possess or take hold of the world or nation : #29, #57, #59, #61 by using non-interference : #57</p>
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### Chapter Forty Nine

<p style="text-align: center;">聖人無常心 以百姓心為心 善者吾善之 不善者吾亦善之 德善• 信者吾信之 不信者吾亦信之 德信• 聖人在天下歛歛 [焉]為天下渾其心 百姓皆注其耳目 聖人皆孩之</p>	<p>The sage does not have a constant heart/mind, Thus the 100 families’ heart/minds become his heart/mind.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">He who is virtuous, I am virtuous to him. He who is not virtuous, I am also virtuous to him. Because De is virtue.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">He who is honest, I am honest with him. He who is not honest, I am also honest with him. Because De is honesty.</p> <p>The sage lives in the world, gathering it all in. And so he serves the world, merging with their heart/minds.</p> <p>The 100 families all pay attention to their ears and eyes, And the sage treats them all like his children.</p>
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<p>The sage<sup>2</sup> does not have a constant <i>heart/mind</i>, ◆Thus the 100 families’ <i>heart/minds</i> become his <i>heart/mind</i>. ◆He who is virtuous, I am virtuous to him. ◆He who is not virtuous, I am also virtuous to him. ◆Because De is virtue. ◆He who is honest*, I am honest* with him. ◆He who is not honest*, I am also honest* with him. ◆Because De is honesty*. ◆The sage<sup>2</sup> lives in the world<sup>2</sup>, gathering it all in<sup>2A</sup>. [inhale inhale] ◆And so he serves the world<sup>2</sup>, merging with their heart/minds.<sup>B</sup> ◆The 100 families all pay attention to their ears and eyes<sup>C</sup>,</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Notes</u></p> <p>A : compare to #50, which refers to one who “takes in life”; “gathering” is used for consistency with #36; the repeated symbol implies “very”, hence completeness B : this line can be translated in many ways, mainly due to the fact that the symbol for “merges” can also mean “muddled” or “whole”; also 其 (his/their) could be referring to the sage or to the 100 families; the choices made here are consistent with the first two lines of the chapter C : compare to #12, where the sage does not act on what he sees D : adding “his” turns this line from something derogatory (“treats them all like children”, which seems out of character) into something that matches #42, where the sage becomes an “elder teacher” (literally, godfather)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Cross-references</u></p> <p>100 families : #5, #17 one who is not virtuous : #27, #62, #81</p>
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◆And the sage<sup>2</sup> treats them all like [his]<sup>D</sup> children.

serve the world : #13, #39  
baby/infant/child : #10, #20, #28, #55

## Chapter Fifty

出生入  
死  
生之徒十有三  
死之徒十有三  
人之生動之死地  
亦十有三  
(•)夫何故•  
以其生生之厚•  
蓋聞善攝生者  
(陵)行不遇兕虎  
入軍不被甲兵  
兕無所投其角  
虎無所措其爪  
兵無所容其刃  
(•)夫何故•  
以其無死地

Between coming out into life and entering death,  
Followers of life are 3 in 10.  
Followers of death are 3 in 10.  
People whose lives are merely moving them towards the place of death  
Are also 3 in 10.

Now : what is the reason?  
Because they live life for its substance.

But I have heard that he who is skilled at taking in life

Can travel the mountains and does not meet rhino or tiger,

Can enter a battle not wearing armor or weapons.

The rhino has no place to thrust its horns,

The tiger has no place to use its claws,  
The weapon has no place to allow its blade.

Now : what is the reason?  
Because for him there is no place of death.

◆Between coming out into life and entering death,

◆Followers<sup>A</sup> of life are 3 in

10<sup>B</sup>. [10 has 3]

◆Followers of death are 3 in

10. [10 has 3]

People whose lives are [merely] moving them towards the

place of death<sup>C</sup>

[their]

Are also 3 in 10.

[10 has 3]

Now : what is the reason?

Because they live life for its substance<sup>D</sup>.

◆But I have heard that he who is skilled at taking in<sup>E</sup> life

Can travel the mountains and does not meet rhino or tiger,

◆Can enter a battle not wearing armor or weapons.

[army, military]

◆The rhino has no place to thrust its horns, [send, put in]

The tiger has no place to use its claws, [employ]

◆The weapon has no place to allow its blade.

Now : what is the reason?

Because for him there is no place of death.

### Notes

A : "follower" as in disciple or one who agrees with a particular way of looking at things

B : this phrase can also be interpreted as "13", possibly referring to the 4 limbs and 9 openings of the human body, but when using "3 in 10"

then the first five lines discuss 9 out of 10 people, and the remaining lines seem to talk about the tenth (*presumably sage-like*) person

C : there are many different interpretations of this phrase (and the entire sentence);

*presumably, the "place of death" is the end destination of the journey of life as opposed to a literal location (a more modern interpretation of the symbols is the "point of death");*

while the symbols for this sentence come from WB and HSG and are technically a minority, the phrasing they use here matches that in the

third line following

D : compare to #38, where living for the "substance" is apparently a good thing, and #75, where it is a bad thing

E : compare to #49, where the sage "gathers in the world"; the last part of this sentence could also be translated as "he who has virtue and takes in life"

### Cross-references

die/death : #6, #33, #42, #67, #74, #75, #76, #80

follower of life and follower of death : #76

substance : #38, #55, #75

## Chapter Fifty One

道生之  
德畜之  
物形之  
勢成之  
是以萬物  
莫不尊道而貴德

Dao creates them,  
De raises them,  
Things shape them,  
Circumstances complete them.

Thus among the ten thousand creatures,  
There are none who do not respect Dao and honor De.

Respect of Dao,

道之尊。  
 德之貴。  
 (•)夫莫之命。  
 而常自然。  
 (•)故道生之德畜之  
 長之育之  
 亭之毒之  
 養之覆之  
 生而不有。  
 為而不恃。  
 長而不宰  
 是謂玄德

Honor of De -  
 Now : there is no one who commands this,  
 Yet it is always naturally so.  
 Therefore : Dao creates them, De raises them.  
 Leads them, nourishes them,  
 Shelters them, heals them,  
 Supports them, protects them.  
 Creating but not possessing,  
 Acting but not concerned with the results,  
 Leading yet not governing -  
 This is called deep and mysterious De.

◆ Dao creates them,  
 ◆ De raises them,  
 Things shape them,  
 Circumstances complete them.  
 [conditions, situations]  
 ◆ Thus<sup>2</sup> [among] the ten thousand creatures,  
 There are none who do not respect Dao and  
 honor De.  
 ◆ Respect of Dao,  
 ◆ Honor of De -  
 Now : there is no one who commands this,  
 [they]  
 Yet it is always naturally so<sup>2</sup>.  
 Therefore : Dao creates them, De raises them.  
 ◆ Leads them, nourishes them,  
 ◆ Shelters them, heals<sup>A</sup>  
 them,  
 [booth, pavillion, rest house] [poison(ous)]  
 ◆ Supports them, protects them.  
 [cover, screen]  
 ◆ Creating but not possessing,  
 ◆ Acting but not concerned with [the  
 results],  
 [depend upon, rely upon]  
 Leading yet not governing -  
 ◆ This is called deep and mysterious De.

Notes  
 A : Hatcher claims that 覆 (poison) can also  
 mean its opposite, hence "healing"  
 Cross-references  
 naturally so : #17, #23, #25, #64  
 creating but not possessing : #2, #10  
 acting but not concerned : #2, #10, #77  
 leading yet not governing : #10  
 mystery : #1, #6, #10, #15, #27, #56, #62,  
 #65  
 deep and mysterious De : #10, #65

## Chapter Fifty Two

天下有始  
 以為天下母  
 既得其母  
 以知其子  
 既知其子  
 復守其母  
 沒身不殆。  
 塞其兌閉其門  
 終身不勤  
 開其兌濟其事  
 終身不救。  
 見小曰明  
 守柔曰強  
 用其光復歸其明  
 無遺身殃  
 是謂習常

The world had a beginning,  
 Which can be considered the mother of the  
 world.  
 Once you have realized its mother,  
 You thus know her children.  
 Once you know her children,  
 Return to and maintain their mother.  
 When the self disappears, there can be no  
 danger.  
 Block your senses, close your gateway -  
 All your life you will not struggle.  
 Open your senses, be successful in your duties  
 -  
 All your life you will not have relief.  
 Seeing the insignificant speaks of insight.  
 Maintaining softness speaks of strength.  
 Use your brightness to return to your insight.  
 Do not lose your self in misfortune.  
 This is called practicing the ever-constant.

◆ The world<sup>2</sup> had a beginning,  
 ◆ Which can be considered<sup>2</sup> the mother of the  
 world<sup>2</sup>.  
 ◆ Once you have realized its mother,

Notes  
 A : while this could also be translated as  
 This is called the ever-constant practice  
 the symbol for "practice" is instead "follow" in  
 FY and MWD/A; since "the ever-constant

[now that] [gained,gotten]

◆ You thus know her children.

◆ *Once you know her children,*

[now that]

◆ Return to and maintain their mother.

◆ When the self disappears, there can be no danger.

Block your senses<sup>o</sup>, close your gateway -

[his] [his]

◆ *All your life you will not struggle.*

[lifelong<sup>2</sup>]

[diligent,hard work]

Open your senses<sup>o</sup>, be successful in your duties

- [his] [his]

*All your life you will not have relief.*

[lifelong<sup>2</sup>]

◆ Seeing the insignificant speaks of insight.

[wise,sight]

◆ Maintaining softness speaks of strength.

◆ Use your brightness to return<sup>2</sup> to your insight.

[his]

[his] [wise,sight]

Do not lose your self in misfortune.

This is called practicing the ever-constant.<sup>A</sup>

following" doesn't make since, the line is translated this way

#### Cross-references

mother : #1, #20, #25, #59

mother of the world : #25

self : #7, #9, #13, #16, #26, #44, #54, #66

no danger : #16, #25, #32, #44

when the self disappears, there can be no danger : #16

gateway : #1, #6, #10, #56

block your senses, close your gateway : #56

returning : #14, #16, #19, #20, #22, #25,

#28, #34, #40,

#58, #60, #64, #65, #80

soft : #10, #36, #43, #55, #76, #78

strong : #3, #29, #30, #33, #36, #55, #67,

#78

## Chapter Fifty Three

• 使我介然有知 •

行於大道

唯迤是畏

大道甚夷 •

而民好徑 •

朝甚除 •

田甚蕪 •

倉甚虛

服文綵

帶利劍

厭飲食 •

財貨有餘

是謂盜夸

非道也哉 (•)

If I correctly use the tiniest bit of knowledge that I possess

While travelling on the great Way,  
It is only walking off the path that I need to fear.

The great Way is extremely even,  
But the citizens are fond of side paths.

Although the royal court is very well-kept,  
The fields are very overgrown with weeds,  
The granaries are very empty.

While at the court they wear refined  
multicolored silks,  
Carry sharp swords,

Stuff themselves with drink and food,  
And have an excess of wealth and goods.

This is called robbery and extravagance,  
Not Dao, indeed!!

If I correctly use the tiniest bit of knowledge that I possess

◆ While travelling on the great Way,  
It is only walking off the path that I need to fear.

◆ The great Way is extremely even,<sup>A</sup>  
But the citizens are fond of [side] paths.  
◆ [Although] the royal court is very well-kept,  
[remove,wipe outàclean]

◆ The fields are very overgrown with weeds,

◆ The granaries are very empty.  
[While at the court] they wear refined {formal} multicolored silks,

◆ Carry sharp swords,  
Stuff themselves with drink and food,  
[satiatè,satisfy]

◆ And have an excess of wealth and goods.  
This is called robbery<sup>B</sup> and extravagance,

◆ Not Dao, indeed! !

#### Notes

A : compare to #41, where "smooth Dao seems knotted"

B: a play on words, since 盜 (robbery) is also pronounced "dao"

#### Cross-references

great Dao : #18, #34



## Chapter Fifty Four

<p style="text-align: center;">             善建者不拔              善抱者不脫              子孫以祭祀不輟              修之__身其德乃(真)              修之__家其德乃餘              修之__鄉其德乃長              修之__國其德乃豐              修之__天下其德乃普              (•)故以身觀身              以家觀家              以鄉觀鄉              以國觀國              以天下觀天下              吾何以知天下然哉(•)              以此         </p>	<p>That which is well established is not uprooted.              That which is well embraced is not abandoned.              Thus children and grandchildren offer sacrifices, and so sacrifices do not stop.</p> <p>Cultivate it in the self - your De will then be true and real.              Cultivate it in the family - its De will then be more than enough.              Cultivate it in the village - its De will then last forever.              Cultivate it in the nation - its De will then be abundant.              Cultivate it in the world - its De will then be everywhere.</p> <p>Therefore : use your self to contemplate the self.              Use your family to contemplate the family.              Use your village to contemplate the village.              Use your nation to contemplate the nation.              Use the world to contemplate the world.</p> <p>How do I thus know the world is like this?              By means of this.</p>
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<p>◆ <u>That which is well established is not uprooted.</u>              [skillfully]</p> <p>◆ <u>That which is well embraced is not abandoned.</u>              [skillfully]              Thus children and grandchildren offer sacrifices, [and so] sacrifices do not stop.<sup>A</sup></p> <p>◆ <u>Cultivate it<sup>B</sup> in the self - your De will then be true and real.</u>              [his]              Cultivate it in the family - its De will then be more than enough.</p> <p>[surplus, excess]</p> <p>◆ <u>Cultivate it in the village - its De will then last forever.</u>              Cultivate it in the nation - its De will then be abundant.              Cultivate it in the world<sup>2</sup> - its De will then be everywhere.</p> <p><u>Therefore : use [your] self to contemplate<sup>C</sup> the self.</u>              [observe]</p> <p>◆ <u>Use [your] family to contemplate the family.</u> [observe]              Use [your] village to contemplate the village.              [observe]</p> <p>◆ <u>Use [your] nation to contemplate the nation.</u>              [observe]</p> <p>◆ <u>Use the world<sup>2</sup> to contemplate the world<sup>2</sup>.</u>              [observe]</p> <p>◆ <u>How do I thus know the world<sup>2</sup> is like this ?</u>              ◆ <u>By means of this<sup>D</sup>.</u></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Notes</p> <p>A : <i>this line seems to merely be a "for example"; the main point of the first two lines then continues with the "cultivate" lines</i>              B : <i>presumably, De; but the original Chinese just says "it", so you decide!</i>              C : <i>while the common meaning of this symbol is "observe" (as used elsewhere), here it is taken to mean to contemplate or meditate upon, with the connotation of examining a concept in order to see things as they really are</i>              D : <i>"this" could be referring to contemplating the previous things, or just observing the world in front of you, or to the teachings of the DDJ, or to something else - you decide!</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Cross-references</p> <p>self : #7, #9, #13, #16, #26, #44, #52, #66              how do I thus know... : #21, #57              by means of this : #21, #57</p>
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## Chapter Fifty Five

含德之厚 [者]	He who embodies the substance of De
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比於赤子。  
 蜂虿虺蛇不螫  
 猛獸不據  
 攫鳥不搏  
 骨弱筋柔而握固。  
 未知牝牡之合而(媵)作  
 精之至也(•)。  
 終日號而不嘎  
 和之至也(•)  
 知和曰常  
 知常曰明  
 益生曰祥。  
 心使氣曰強  
 物壯則老  
 謂之不道。  
 不道早已

Can be compared to a newborn child :  
 Wasps, scorpions, snakes, and serpents do not sting him,  
 Fierce beasts do not seize him,  
 Birds of prey do not claw him.  
 His bones are weak, his muscles are soft, yet his grasp is firm and strong.  
 He has not yet known the union of female and male, yet his penis rises.  
 He has the utmost essence, indeed!  
 He cries the entire day yet does not get hoarse.  
 He has the utmost harmony, indeed!  
 Knowing harmony speaks of the ever-constant.  
 Knowing the ever-constant speaks of insight.  
 Benefitting life speaks of good fortune.  
 Heart/mind making Qi speaks of strength.  
 When creatures are robust but old,  
 We call them "not Dao".  
 That which is "not Dao" has an early finish.

◆ He who embodies the substance of De  
 ◆ Can be compared to a newborn child<sup>2</sup> :  
 Wasps, scorpions, snakes, and serpents do not sting him,  
 Fierce beasts do not seize him,  
 Birds of prey<sup>2</sup> do not claw him.  
 [seize, catch, take hold bird] [roll around with hand]  
 ◆ His bones are weak, his muscles are soft, yet his grasp is firm and strong.  
 He has not yet known the union of female and male, yet his penis rises. [baby's genitals]  
 ◆ He has the utmost [of] essence, indeed! [extreme, most]  
 ◆ He cries the entire day yet does not get hoarse.  
 ◆ He has the utmost [of] harmony, indeed! [extreme, most]  
 ◆ Knowing harmony speaks of the ever-constant.  
 ◆ Knowing the ever-constant speaks of insight. [wise, sight]  
 ◆ Benefitting life speaks of good fortune. A [auspicious, lucky]  
 ◆ Heart/mind making Qi speaks of strength.  
 ◆ When creatures are robust but old,  
 ◆ We call them "not Dao".  
 [That which is] "not Dao" has an early finish.

Notes  
 The last sentence is in all sources except GUO A : this sentence and the next are sometimes reversed in meaning, as their last symbols have both positive and negative interpretations

Cross-references  
 substance : #38, #50, #75  
 baby/infant/child : #10, #20, #28, #49  
 newborn infant : #10, #20, #28  
 weak : #3, #29, #36, #40, #76, #78  
 soft : #10, #36, #43, #52, #76, #78  
 strong : #3, #29, #30, #33, #36, #52, #67, #78  
 essence : #21  
 knowing the ever-constant speaks of insight : #16  
 Qi : #10, #42  
 when creatures are robust but old : #30  
 "not Dao" has an early finish : #30

## Chapter Fifty Six

知者不言。  
 言者不知。  
 塞其兌閉其門  
 挫其銳  
 解其紛  
 和其光  
 同其塵  
 是謂玄同。  
 (•)故不可得而親。  
 不可得而疏。  
 不可得而利

He who knows does not speak;  
 He who speaks does not know.  
 Block your senses, close your gateway.  
 Blunt your sharpness,  
 Loosen your tangles,  
 Soften your brightness,  
 Be the same as the dust of the world.  
 This is called a deep and mysterious sameness.  
 Therefore : you can not gain it and be friendly,  
 Can not gain it and be unfriendly,  
 Can not gain it and benefit,  
 Can not gain it and cause harm,  
 Can not gain it and have high rank,

不可得而害  
 不可得而貴  
 不可得而賤  
 (•)故為天下貴•

Can not gain it and be lowly.  
 Therefore you become valuable to the world.

◆ He who knows does not speak;  
 ◆ He who speaks does not know.  
 ◆ Block your senses<sup>A</sup>, close your gateway.  
     [his] [his]  
     Blunt your sharpness,  
     [dampens,subdues] [his]  
     ◆ Loosen your  
     tangles<sup>A</sup>,  
     [his]  
     Soften your  
     brightness,<sup>B</sup>  
     [his]  
 ◆ Be [you] the same as the dust of the world<sup>C</sup>.  
     [his]  
     ◆ This is called a *deep and mysterious*  
     sameness.  
     ◆ Therefore : you can not gain it<sup>D</sup> and be  
     friendly,  
     [love,in favor of]  
     ◆ Can not gain it and be unfriendly,  
     ◆ Can not gain it and benefit,  
     ◆ Can not gain it and cause harm,  
     ◆ Can not gain it and have high rank,  
     ◆ Can not gain it and be lowly.  
     [worthless]  
     ◆ Therefore you<sup>E</sup> become valuable to the  
     world<sup>2</sup>.

Notes  
 A : this line could also be translated as  
     Clarify your confusion  
 B : compare to #58, where the sage is bright  
     but does not dazzle  
 C : according to Waley, "dust" is a metaphor for  
     the "noise and fuss of everyday life"  
 D : there is no noun in the original Chinese, so  
     you decide what "it" is!  
 E : "it" (whatever "it" is in the previous lines)  
     could just as reasonably be used here

Cross-references  
 gateway : #1, #6, #10, #52  
 block your senses, close your gateway : #52  
 blunt the sharpness : #4  
 loosen the tangles : #4  
 soften the brightness : #4  
 dust of the world : #4  
 mystery : #1, #6, #10, #15, #27, #51, #62,  
     #65  
     mysterious sameness : #1  
 no harm : #35, #58, #60, #66, #81  
 being valuable : #62, #70  
 therefore become valuable to the world :  
     #62

### Chapter Fifty Seven

• 以正治國  
 以奇用兵  
 以無事取天下  
 吾何以知其然哉(•)  
 以此  
 天下多忌諱  
 而民彌貧•  
 民多利器  
 [而]國家滋昏  
 人多(知)巧  
 [而]奇物滋起  
 法(物)滋(章)  
 盜賊多有  
 (•)故聖人云  
 我無為而民自化  
 我好靜而民自正  
 我無事而民自富  
 我無欲而民自樸•

Use honesty and justness when governing a  
 nation.  
 Use strange and unusual tactics when  
 commanding troops.  
 Use non-interference to take hold of the world.  
 How do I thus know it is like this?  
 By means of this :

The world has many prohibitions and taboos,  
 And the citizens become even poorer.  
 The citizens have many sharp tools,  
 And the nation and the families grow in  
 confusion.  
 The people have too much knowledge and  
 cleverness,  
 And strange things begin to increase.  
 Matters of law are increasingly proclaimed,  
 And more thieves and bandits exist.

Therefore : the sage says -  
 I use non-action, and the citizens naturally  
 transform.  
 I cherish stillness, and the citizens naturally  
 become  
 honest and just.  
 I use non-interference, and the citizens  
 naturally become  
 wealthy.  
 I am without-desire, and the citizens naturally  
 return to the  
 state of the uncarved block.

Use honesty and justness when governing a  
 nation.  
 Use strange and unusual [tactics] when

Notes  
 A : presumably, weapons

commanding troops<sup>2</sup>.

◆ Use non-interference<sup>2</sup> to take hold of the world<sup>2</sup>.

How do I thus know it is like this ?

By means of this :

◆ The world<sup>2</sup> has many prohibitions and taboos,

[avoid,shun,abstain]

◆ And the citizens become even[more] poorer.

◆ The citizens have many sharp tools<sup>A</sup>,

And the nation and the families grow in confusion.

The people have too much knowledge and cleverness,

◆ And strange things begin to increase.

Matters of law are increasingly proclaimed,

[things] [made known]

◆ And more thieves and bandits{traitors} exist.

Therefore : the sage<sup>2</sup> says -

◆ I use non-action, and the citizens naturally transform.

◆ I cherish stillness, and the citizens naturally become

honest and just.

[fond of]

◆ I use non-interference<sup>2</sup>, and the citizens naturally become wealthy.

I am without-desire, and the citizens naturally

[return to the state of the] uncarved block.

### Cross-references

be honest and just in governing : #8

honest and just, strange and unusual : #58

non-interference : #48, #63

possess or take hold of the world or nation :

#29, #48, #59, #61

by using non-interference : #48

how do I thus know : #21, #54

by means of this : #21, #54

sharp tools : #36

nation *and* families : #18

thieves *and* bandits : #19

the sage says : #78

non-action : #2, #3, #37, #38, #43, #48, #63, #64

stillness : #15, #16, #26, #37, #45, #61

without-desire : #1, #3, #34, #37

uncarved block : #15, #19, #28, #32, #37

uncarved block brings without-desire : #37

## Chapter Fifty Eight

其政悶悶  
其民淳淳  
其政察察  
其民缺缺  
禍兮福之所倚 •  
福兮禍之所伏  
孰知其極  
其無正 •  
正復為奇  
善復為妖  
人之迷 •  
其日固久  
是以聖人  
方而不割  
廉而不劓  
直而不肆  
光而不燿

◆ If their government is [very] restrained,

[smothered,tightly covered<sup>2</sup>]

Its citizens will be [very] genuine and honest<sup>2A</sup>.

If their government is [very] observant and alert<sup>2</sup>,

Its citizens will be [very] lacking and deficient<sup>2</sup>.

Misfortune ! is that which good fortune [it] leans on.<sup>B</sup>

◆ Good fortune ! is that which misfortune [it] lies on.

◆ Who knows their limits<sup>C</sup>?

If their government is very restrained,  
Its citizens will be very genuine and honest.  
If their government is very observant and alert,  
Its citizens will be very lacking and deficient.

Misfortune! is that which good fortune leans on.

Good fortune! is that which misfortune lies on.

Who knows their limits?

They are not honest and just.

Honesty and justness returns, becoming strange and unusual.

Virtue returns, becoming weird and strange.

The confusion of the people -  
Its days have indeed been everlasting.

Thus the sage :  
Is honest and does not divide,  
Is honorable and does not injure,  
Is straightforward and does not indulge in excess,  
Is bright but does not dazzle.

### Notes

The very's in the first four lines are implied by the repeated symbols at the end of each line  
A : every source has a different symbol here; this comes from WB

B : this line and the next can be translated many ways because of the numerous meanings of their last symbols (see the Introduction) - the translation given here is the most "neutral", saying only that they depend on each other  
C : literally "their extremes", *presumably in the sense of "to what extremes they will go" or "how far will they go"*; compare to #59

[utmost,extreme]

◆They are not *honest and just*.

◆*Honesty and justness returns, becoming strange and unusual.*

◆Virtue returns, becoming *weird and strange*.

◆The confusion of the people -

◆Its days have *indeed* been *everlasting*.

[undoubtedly]

[for a long time]

Thus<sup>2</sup> the sage<sup>2</sup> :

◆Is honest<sup>D</sup> and does not divide<sup>E</sup>,

Is honorable\* and does not injure,

◆Is straightforward and does not indulge in excess,

Is bright but does not dazzle<sup>F</sup>.

D : this symbol also has the sense of "morally upright", "principled", and "ethical"

E : compare to #28 where the "greatest cutting does not divide" (also in relation to the sage)

F : every source has a different symbol, but three of them mean "to shine, dazzle, be glorious" thus making a majority in meaning; compare to how the sage does not "display" in #22, #47, #72, #77

Cross-references

observant and alert : #20

returning : #14, #16, #19, #20, #22, #25, #28, #34, #40,

#52, #60, #64, #65, #80

honest and just, strange and unusual : #57

no harm : #35, #56, #60, #66, #81

### Chapter Fifty Nine

治人事天  
莫若嗇  
(•)夫唯嗇  
是謂早服  
早服謂之重積德  
重積德  
則無不克•  
無不克  
則莫知其極  
莫知其極  
可以有國  
有國之母  
可以長久  
是謂深根固柢  
長生久視之道••

When governing people or doing heaven's duties,  
It is better to be sparing.

Now : only when you can be sparing,  
This is called early acceptance.  
Early acceptance is called doubling your accumulation of  
De.

With a double accumulation of De,  
Then everything can be overcome.  
When everything can be overcome,  
Then no one knows your limits.  
When no one knows your limits,  
You can possess the nation.  
Possessing the mother of the nation,  
You can forever endure.

This is called having a deep source and a firm foundation,  
The Way of long life and enduring sight.

◆When governing people or doing heaven's duties,

◆It is better<sup>2</sup> to be *sparing*.

[stingy,thrifty]

Now : only when you can be *sparing*,

[stingy,thrifty]

This is called early acceptance<sup>A</sup>. [be convinced,serve]

Early acceptance is called doubling your accumulation of

De. [be convinced,serve] [his]

With a double accumulation of De,

Then everything<sup>2</sup> can be overcome.

When everything<sup>2</sup> can be overcome,

Then no one knows your limits<sup>B</sup>. [his]

[utmost,extreme]

◆When no one knows your limits<sup>B</sup>, [his]

[utmost,extreme]

◆You can<sup>2</sup> possess the nation.

◆Possessing the mother of the nation,

◆You can<sup>2</sup> forever endure. [for a long time]

This is called having a deep source and a firm foundation,

◆The Way of long life and enduring sight. [for a long time]

Notes

A : this is the most literal translation; GUO has Thus you are prepared in advance [early]

B : literally "your extremes", *presumably in the sense of "to what extremes you will go" or "how far will you go"*; compare to #58

Cross-references

possess or take hold of the world or nation :

#29, #48, #57, #61

mother : #1, #20, #25, #52

can forever endure : #44

## Chapter Sixty

治大國若烹小鮮  
以道莅天下  
其鬼不神  
非其鬼不神。  
其神不傷人。  
非其神不傷人。  
聖人亦不傷人。  
夫兩不相傷  
(•)故德交歸焉

Governing a great nation is like cooking a small fish.

Because Dao is present in the world,  
Its ghosts do not have spirit.

Not that its ghosts do not have any spirit,  
But their spirit does not injure people.

Not only does their spirit not injure people,  
The sage also does not injure people.

Now : since these two do not injure each other,  
Therefore their De merges and returns!

- ◆ Governing a great nation is like cooking a small fish.<sup>A</sup>
- ◆ Because Dao is present in the world<sup>2</sup>,
- ◆ Its ghosts do not have spirit.<sup>B</sup>
- ◆ Not that its ghosts do not have [any] spirit,
- ◆ But their spirit does not injure people.
- ◆ Not [only] does their spirit not injure people,  
The sage<sup>2</sup> also does not injure people.
- ◆ Now : since these two do not injure each other,
- ◆ Therefore their De merges and returns  
↓  
[intersects,exchanges,mixes]

### Notes

A : compare this line to the first two lines of the previous chapter and it is easy to see why there has long been speculation that this line should end the previous chapter; however, there is an explicit end-of-chapter marker in GUO #59, and GUO does not even contain this chapter;  
*essentially this line is saying it is easy to ruin a small fish by overcooking, and it is easy to ruin a nation by over-controlling*

B : first - the "it" is literal, *presumably meaning "the world's ghosts"*; second - "ghosts" is the most literal, general term, but this could also be referring to demons (or possibly to souls of the ancestors); third - "spirit" might be better thought of in this chapter as "spiritual power", *thus this line seems to be saying that ghosts do not have any power in the world*; this and the next few lines can be translated in many different ways, due to the multiple meanings of the symbols for "ghost" and "spirit", and the lack of any reasonable context - *perhaps these lines were addressing some lost ancient scholarly debate or common cultural belief?*

### Cross-references

no harm : #35, #56, #58, #66, #81  
returning : #14, #16, #19, #20, #22, #25,  
#28, #34, #40,  
#52, #58, #64, #65, #80  
De *and* returning : #28, #65

大國者下流。  
天下之交。  
天下之牝。  
牝常以靜勝牡  
以靜為下。  
(•)故大國以下小國  
則取小國  
小國以下大國  
則取[於]大國  
(•)故或下以取。  
或下而取

## Chapter Sixty One

A great nation is like the lowest places water  
can flow -  
The merging place of the world,  
The female of the world.

The female always uses stillness to conquer the  
male.

By using stillness, she becomes lower-than.

Therefore : if a great nation is lower-than a  
small nation,

Then it takes hold of the small nation.

If a small nation is lower-than a great nation,  
Then it is taken hold of by the great nation.

Therefore : sometimes one nation is lower-than

大國不過欲兼畜人  
 小國不過欲入事人。  
 夫兩者各得[其]所欲。  
 大者宜為下

in order  
 to take hold of,  
 Sometimes one nation is lower-than and then it  
 is taken  
 hold of.

A great nation merely desires to combine  
 livestock and  
 people,  
 A small nation merely desires to get work for its  
 people.  
 Now : for both nations to each get that which is  
 their desire,  
 It is proper for the great nation to be lower-  
 than.

A great nation [it] is like the lowest places  
 [water]<sup>A</sup> can  
flow -  
 The merging place of the  
world<sup>2</sup>,

[intersection, exchange, mixing]

The female of the world<sup>2</sup>.

The female always uses stillness to conquer the  
male.

[victory, beat]

By using stillness, she becomes lower-than<sup>B</sup>.

◆ Therefore : if a great nation is [thus] lower-  
than a small  
nation,

◆ Then it takes hold of the small nation.

◆ If a small nation is [thus] lower-than a great  
nation,

Then it is taken hold of by the great nation.

◆ Therefore : sometimes one [nation] is lower-  
than

in order to take hold of,

[maybe, perhaps]

◆ Sometimes one [nation] is lower-than and  
then it is

taken hold of.

[maybe, perhaps]

A great nation merely<sup>2</sup> desires to combine  
livestock and

people,

◆ A small nation merely<sup>2</sup> desires to get work for  
 its people.<sup>C</sup>

Now : for both nations to each get that which is  
their

desire,

[entities]

It is proper for the great nation to be lower-  
than. [entity]

Notes

A : 流 (flow) has associations with water  
 B : literally "below", "under", or "inferior", here  
 "lower-than" is used to indicate taking the  
 lower or inferior position in a relationship  
 (which in ancient Chinese culture was the  
 better thing to do); Lau translates it as "taking  
 the lower position"  
 C : the end of this line can also be translated as  
 "desires to join and serve people"

Cross-references

feminine : #6, #10, #28

stillness : #15, #16, #26, #37, #45, #57

lower-than : #66, #68

possess or take hold of the world or nation :  
 #29, #48, #57, #59

**Chapter Sixty Two**

道者萬物之奧。  
 善人之寶。  
 不善人之所保。  
 美言可以市。  
 尊行可以加人。  
 人之不善。  
 何棄之有。  
 (•)故立天子  
 置三公。

雖有拱璧以先駟馬  
 不如坐進此道。  
 古之所以貴此道者何。  
 不曰

That which Daos is the obscure mystery of the  
 ten thousand  
 creatures.

This is the treasure of a virtuous person,  
 And that which is the protection of a person  
 who is not  
 virtuous.

Beautiful speech can be used in the market,  
 Respectful behavior can benefit people.  
 People who are not virtuous,  
 Why abandon them?

Therefore : when inaugurating the son of  
 heaven,  
 Or installing the three nobles -  
 Even if you possessed jade disks drawn by a  
 team of four

以求得  
有罪以免邪(•)  
(•)故為天下貴

horses,  
That is not as good as sitting and offering this  
Way.  
What was the ancients' reason that they valued  
this Way?  
Did they not say :  
Seek in order to obtain,  
Have faults in order to be forgiven?  
Therefore Dao becomes valuable to the world.

That which Daos is the *obscure mystery*<sup>A</sup> of the  
ten thousand creatures.

[This is] the treasure of a virtuous person,

◆ And that which is the protection of a person  
who is not  
virtuous.

◆ Beautiful speech can be used in the market,<sup>B</sup>  
Respectful behavior<sup>C</sup> can<sup>2</sup> benefit  
people.

[add, increase, augment]

◆ People who are not virtuous,  
[they]

◆ Why abandon them<sup>2</sup>? [their  
existence]

◆ Therefore : when inaugurating the son of  
heaven<sup>D</sup>,

[establishing]

Or installing the three nobles<sup>E</sup> -  
[dukes]

Even if you possessed jade disks<sup>2</sup> drawn by<sup>2</sup> a  
team of four

horses,<sup>F</sup> [using, by means  
of before]

That is not as good as sitting and offering this  
Way.

◆ What was the ancient 's reason that<sup>2</sup> they  
valued this  
Way?

Did they not say :

Seek in order to obtain,

Have faults in order to be forgiven ?

[exempt, spare, excuse]

◆ Therefore [Dao]<sup>G</sup> becomes valuable to the  
world<sup>2</sup>.

#### Notes

A : although they are in the minority, I rather  
like what the MWD's say :

That which Daos is the flowing together  
of the  
ten thousand creatures

B : *presumably, for bartering*

C : these two symbols could just as likely be  
translated as "honorable deeds"

D : the "son of heaven" is a standard phrase  
referring to the emperor

E : specifically Dukes (see #32), but in keeping  
with other chapters, this is interpreted more  
generally as "nobles"; the phrase "three Dukes"  
specifically refers to the highest state officials,  
advisors, or ministers

F : a very expensive and impressive offering,  
indeed!

G : there is no subject in the original Chinese;  
Dao is assumed based on the 4<sup>th</sup> line previous

#### Cross-references

mystery : #1, #6, #10, #15, #27, #51, #56,  
#65

treasure : #67, #69

one who is not virtuous : #27, #49, #81

nobles (in general) : #32, #37, #39, #42, #80

the ancients/elders : #14, #15, #22, #38, #39,  
#65, #68

being valuable : #56, #70

therefore becomes valuable to the world :  
#56

## Chapter Sixty Three

• 為無為 •

事無事 •

味無味

大小多少

報怨以德 •

圖難於其易

為大於其細 •

天下難事必作於易

天下大事必作於細 •

是以聖人終不為大

(•)故能成其大

夫輕諾必寡信

多易必多難 •

是以聖人猶難之 •

(•)故終無難矣(•) •

Act with non-action.

Handle duties with non-interference.

Taste that which is without-flavor.

Greatness is insignificant, too much is less.

Repay animosity with De.

Plan for the difficult while it is easy.

Act on the great while it is tiny.

In the world, difficult duties certainly start  
while easy.

In the world, great duties certainly start while  
tiny.

Thus the sage in the end does not act great,

Therefore he can achieve his greatness.

Men who make promises lightly, certainly few  
will trust.

Men who expect most duties to be easy will  
certainly have  
many difficulties.



<p>◆ <u>Act</u> with <u>non-action</u>.</p> <p>◆ Handle <u>duties</u> with <u>non-interference</u><sup>2</sup>.</p> <p>◆ <u>Taste</u> [that which] is <u>without-flavor</u>.<sup>A</sup></p> <p><u>Greatness</u> is <u>insignificant</u>, <u>too much</u> is <u>less</u>.</p> <p>◆ <u>Repay animosity</u> with</p> <p>De.</p> <p>[complaints/resentment/hatred] [by means of]</p> <p><u>Plan</u> for the <u>difficult</u> <u>while</u> it is <u>easy</u>.</p> <p>[&lt;preposition&gt;]</p> <p><u>Act</u> on the <u>great</u> <u>while</u> it is <u>tiny</u>.</p> <p>[&lt;preposition&gt;]</p> <p>In the <u>world</u><sup>2</sup>, <u>difficult</u> <u>duties</u> <u>certainly</u> <u>start</u> <u>while</u> <u>easy</u>.</p> <p>[arise] [&lt;preposition&gt;]</p> <p>In the <u>world</u><sup>2</sup>, <u>great</u> <u>duties</u> <u>certainly</u> <u>start</u> <u>while</u> <u>tiny</u>.</p> <p>[arise] [&lt;preposition&gt;]</p> <p>◆ <u>Thus</u><sup>2</sup> the <u>sage</u><sup>2</sup> <u>in the end</u> <u>does not act</u> <u>great</u>.</p> <p>◆ <u>Therefore</u> he <u>can</u> <u>achieve</u> <u>his</u> <u>greatness</u>.</p> <p>◆ <u>Men</u> who make <u>promises</u> <u>lightly</u>, <u>certainly</u> <u>few</u> will <u>trust</u>*.</p> <p>◆ [Men who expect] <u>most</u> [duties to be] <u>easy</u> will <u>certainly</u> have <u>many</u> <u>difficulties</u>.<sup>B</sup></p> <p>[too many]</p> <p><u>Thus</u><sup>2</sup> the <u>sage</u><sup>2</sup> <u>plans</u> for <u>things</u> to be <u>difficult</u>,</p> <p>[schemes] [them]</p> <p><u>Therefore</u> <u>in the end</u> he is <u>without</u> <u>difficulty</u> !</p>	<p>Thus the sage plans for things to be difficult, Therefore in the end he is without difficulty!</p> <p><u>Notes</u></p> <p>Only the first four sentences and the last three are in GUO.</p> <p>A : this line could also be translated as <u>Taste</u> <u>without</u> <u>tasting</u> or <u>Taste</u> <u>by</u> <u>non-tasting</u> but it is phrased this way because of the reference in #35 about how Dao's words are "without flavor" (using the same two symbols in both chapters)</p> <p>B : this line literally reads "<u>too many</u> <u>easy</u> <u>certainly</u> <u>too many</u> <u>difficult</u>" but is worded in this way due to the lines that precede and follow it</p> <p><u>Cross-references</u></p> <p>non-action : #2, #3, #37, #38, #43, #48, #57, #64</p> <p>non-interference : #48, #57</p> <p>sage can achieve greatness : #34</p> <p>sage plans for difficulties : #73</p>
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## Chapter Sixty Four

<p>• 其安易持 •  其未兆易謀 •  其脆易泮 •  其微易散 •  為之於未有 •  治之於未亂  合抱之木生於毫末  九層之臺起於累土  千里之行始於足下 •  為者敗之  執者失之  是以聖人  無為故無敗 •  無執故無失 •  民之從事常於幾成而敗之 •  慎終如始  則無敗事 •  是以聖人  欲不欲  不貴難得之貨  學不學 •  復眾人之所過 •  以輔萬物之自然  而不敢為 •</p>	<p>What is peaceful is easy to hold.  What has not yet been revealed is easy to plan for.</p> <p>What is brittle is easy to shatter.  What is minute is easy to scatter.  Act on it while it does not yet exist.  Govern them while they are not yet confused.</p> <p>A tree too big to embrace is created from the tiniest shoot.  A terrace of nine stories rises from a pile of dirt.  A journey of a thousand miles begins from under the feet.</p> <p>He who acts, ruins it.  He who grasps, loses it.</p> <p>Thus the sage :  Does not act, therefore he does not ruin.  Does not grasp, therefore he does not lose.</p> <p>Citizens are always on the verge of achieving their undertakings, yet they ruin them.  Be as careful in the end as if it was the beginning,  Then you will not ruin your affairs.</p> <p>Thus the sage :  Desires to not desire,  Does not value rare goods,  Learns to not learn.</p> <p>He returns to that which everyone else has passed over,  Thus helping the ten thousand creatures to be</p>
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	naturally so, Yet not daring to act.
<p>◆ <i>What is <u>peaceful</u> is <u>easy</u> to <u>hold</u>.</i> [it]</p> <p>◆ <i>What <u>has not yet</u> been <u>revealed</u> is <u>easy</u> to <u>plan</u> for.</i> [omen,sign,portent] [it]</p> <p>◆ <i>What is <u>brittle</u> is <u>easy</u> to <u>shatter</u>.</i> [fall apart] [it]</p> <p><i>What is <u>minute</u> is <u>easy</u> to <u>scatter</u>.</i> [it]</p> <p>◆ <i>Act on it <u>while</u> it <u>does not yet</u> exist.</i> [&lt;preposition&gt;]</p> <p>◆ <i>Govern <u>them</u> <u>while</u> they <u>are not yet</u> <u>confused</u>.</i> [&lt;preposition&gt;]</p> <p>◆ <i>A tree [§] <u>too big to embrace</u><sup>2</sup> is <u>created from</u> <u>the</u> <u>tiniest shoot</u>.</i> [tip,end] [least]</p> <p><i>A <u>terrace</u><sup>A</sup> of <u>nine stories</u> <u>rises from</u> a <u>pile of dirt</u>.</i> [soil,land,ground]</p> <p><i>A <u>journey</u> of a <u>thousand miles</u><sup>B</sup> <u>begins from</u> <u>under</u> the <u>feet</u>.</i> [travel]</p> <p>◆ <i>He who <u>acts</u>, <u>ruins</u> it.</i></p> <p>◆ <i>He who <u>grasps</u>, <u>loses</u> it.</i></p> <p>◆ <i>Thus<sup>2</sup> the <u>sage</u><sup>2</sup> :</i></p> <p>◆ <i>Does <u>not act</u>, <u>therefore</u> he <u>does not</u> <u>ruin</u>.</i></p> <p>◆ <i>Does <u>not grasp</u>, <u>therefore</u> he <u>does not</u> <u>lose</u>.</i></p> <p><i>Citizens are <u>always on</u> the <u>verge</u> of <u>achieving</u> <u>their</u> <u>undertakings</u><sup>2</sup>, <u>yet</u> they <u>ruin</u> <u>them</u>.</i> [almost]</p> <p>Be as <u>careful in the end</u> as if it was the <u>beginning</u>.</p> <p><u>Then</u> you will <u>not ruin</u> your <u>affairs</u>.</p> <p>◆ <i>Thus<sup>2</sup> the <u>sage</u><sup>2</sup> :</i></p> <p>◆ <i>Desires to <u>not desire</u>,</i></p> <p>◆ <i>Does <u>not value</u> <u>rare</u><sup>2</sup> [à] <u>goods</u>,</i></p> <p>◆ <i>Learns to <u>not learn</u>.</i></p> <p>He <u>returns</u> to <u>that which</u> <u>everyone</u><sup>2</sup> else [they] has <u>passed over</u>.</p> <p><u>Thus helping</u> the <u>ten thousand</u> <u>creatures</u> [them] to be <u>naturally so</u><sup>2</sup>, <u>Yet not daring</u> to <u>act</u>.<sup>C</sup></p>	<p><u>Notes</u></p> <p>A : in ancient China, terraces were man-made hills with paths cut into in their sides, leading up to a plateau at the top from which to view the surrounding landscape</p> <p>B : around the time the DDJ was written, a 里 was probably equal to about 1/3 of a mile</p> <p>C : this line is intentionally left ambiguous as to whether it is the sage or the creatures that do not dare to act, as it is also ambiguous in the original Chinese</p> <p><u>Cross-references</u></p> <p>he who acts, ruins it : #29 he who grasps, loses it : #29 non-action : #2, #3, #37, #38, #43, #48, #57, #63 rare goods : #3, #12 returning : #14, #16, #19, #20, #22, #25, #28, #34, #40, #52, #58, #60, #65, #80 naturally so : #17, #23, #25, #51 not daring to act : #3, #67, #69</p>

## Chapter Sixty Five

<p>古之善為道者 非以明民。 將以愚之。 民之難治。 以其(知)多。 (•)故以(知)治國 國之賊。 不以(知)治國 國之福。 知此兩者亦稽式。 常知稽式 是謂玄德</p>	<p>The virtue of the ancients (they who acted in Dao), Did not use it to enlighten the citizens, But would have used it to keep them ignorant - The citizens are hard to govern Because they have too much knowledge.</p> <p>Therefore : using knowledge to govern the nation Is the bane of the nation. Not using knowledge to govern the nation Is the good fortune of the nation. He who has knowledge of these two also has them as examples.</p>
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玄德深矣遠矣(•)  
與物反矣(•)  
—— 乃至大順

To always understand these examples -  
This is called deep and mysterious De.  
Deep and mysterious De is so profound! and  
remote!  
That when creatures return, it returns with  
them!  
Then they reach the greatest harmony.

- ◆ The virtue of the ancients (they who acted in Dao),  
◆ Did not use it to enlighten the citizens,  
[wise, sight à insight]  
◆ But would have used it to keep them ignorant<sup>A</sup> -  
[stupid, foolish]  
◆ The citizens [they] are hard to govern  
Because they have too much knowledge<sup>B</sup>.  
Therefore : using knowledge<sup>B</sup> to govern the nation  
Is the bane of the nation.  
[evil]  
Not using knowledge<sup>B</sup> to govern the nation  
Is the good fortune of the nation.  
◆ He who has knowledge of these two also has  
[them as]  
examples<sup>2</sup>.  
To always understand these examples<sup>2</sup> -  
This is called deep and mysterious De.  
◆ Deep and mysterious De is so profound ! and remote !  
◆ That when creatures return<sup>C</sup>, it returns  
[together] with  
them !  
Then they reach the greatest  
harmony. [go  
along with, same direction, agreeable]

#### Notes

A : ignorance here is a good thing, as in #20 where the sage is foolish (using the same symbol)  
B : only WB and HSG have the Confucian term “wisdom” here, making these sentences anti-Confucian  
C : as in #25, where “being remote speaks of returning”;  
this sentence could also be translated as  
That it helps [all] creatures to return !

Cross-references  
the ancients/elders : #14, #15, #22, #38, #39, #62, #68  
virtue of the ancients : #15  
he who “possesses Dao” : #15, #23, #24, #31, #77  
citizens are hard to govern : #75  
mystery : #1, #6, #10, #15, #27, #51, #56, #62  
deep and mysterious De : #10, #51  
returning : #14, #16, #19, #20, #22, #25, #28, #34, #40, #52, #58, #60, #64, #80  
De and returning : #28, #60  
remote : #25  
remote and returning : #25

## Chapter Sixty Six

江海所以能為百谷王者  
以其善下之•  
(•)故能為百谷王  
是以[聖人]  
欲上民•  
必以言下之  
欲先民•  
必以身後之  
是以聖人  
處上而民不重•  
處前而民不害•  
是以天下樂推而不厭•  
以其不爭•  
(•)故天下莫能與之爭

The reason that rivers and seas can act as kings of the 100 valleys  
Is because they are good at being lower-than them.  
Therefore : they can act as kings of the 100 valleys.  
Thus the sage :  
In desiring to be above the citizens,  
He must by means of his speech be lower-than them.  
In desiring to be before the citizens,  
He must by means of his self be behind them.  
Thus the sage :  
Lives above them, but the citizens are not burdened.  
Lives in front of them, but the citizens are not harmed.  
Thus the world is pleased to promote him, and does not tire of him.  
Because he does not strive,  
Therefore no one in the world can strive against him.

The reason that<sup>2</sup> rivers and seas [they] can act as kings of the 100 valleys  
Is because they are good at being lower-than<sup>A</sup> them.

#### Notes

A : literally “below”, “under”, or “inferior”, here “lower-than” is used to indicate taking the lower or inferior position in a relationship (which in ancient Chinese culture was the

Therefore : they can act as kings of the 100 valleys.

Thus<sup>2</sup> the sage<sup>2</sup> :

In desiring to be above<sup>B</sup> the citizens,  
He must by means of his speech be lower-than  
them.

In desiring to be before<sup>C</sup> the citizens,  
He must by means of his self be behind them.

Thus<sup>2</sup> the sage<sup>2</sup> :

Lives above them, but the citizens are not  
burdened.

[heavy]

Lives in front of them, but the citizens are not  
harmed.

Thus<sup>2</sup> the world<sup>2</sup> is pleased to promote him,  
and does not  
tire of{despise} him.

Because he does not strive,

◆Therefore no one in the world<sup>2</sup> can strive  
against

him.

[together with]

better thing to do); Lau translates it as "taking  
the lower position"

B : *presumably, to rule over*

C : *presumably, to lead*

#### Cross-references

valley : #6, #15, #28, #32, #39, #41

lower-than : #61, #68

before/behind others : #7, #67

self : #7, #9, #13, #16, #26, #44, #52, #54

no harm : #35, #56, #58, #60, #81

not tire of leadership : #72

no striving : #3, #8, #22, #68, #73, #81

no one in the world can strive against him :  
#22

## Chapter Sixty Seven

天下皆謂我 \_\_ 大  
似不肖

(•)夫唯(不肖)故[能](大) •

若肖 •

久矣其細也(•)

(•)夫我有三寶

持而保之 •

一曰慈 •

二曰儉

三曰不敢為天下先

慈故能勇

儉故能廣

不敢為天下先

(•)故能成器長 •

今舍慈且勇 •

舍儉且廣

舍後且先

死矣(•)

(•)夫慈以戰則勝

以守則固

天將救之

以慈衛之

In the world, all say I am great,  
But do not seem to be like everyone else.  
Now : only because I am not like everyone else,  
therefore I  
can be great.

If I was like everyone else,  
Long ago! I would have become insignificant,  
indeed!

Now : I possess three treasures -  
Hold and maintain them.  
The first is called compassion,  
The second is called economy,  
The third is called not daring to act first in the  
world.

With compassion, you can therefore be brave.  
With economy, you can therefore expand.  
By not daring to act first in the world,  
Therefore you can achieve the capacity for  
leadership.

At present, people abandon compassion but  
also try to be  
brave,  
Abandon economy but also try to expand,  
Abandon being behind but also try to be first -  
This is death!

Now : when compassion is used in war, the  
consequence  
is victory.  
When it is used for protection, the consequence  
is strength.  
When heaven would help you,  
Using compassion it protects you.

In the world<sup>2</sup>, all say I am great,<sup>A</sup>

But do not seem to be like [everyone else].<sup>B</sup>  
Now : only [because I am] not like [everyone  
else],

therefore I can be great.<sup>C</sup>

◆If [I was] like [everyone else],  
Long ago ! I would have become *insignificant*,  
indeed!

[he] [minute,tiny]

Now : I possess three treasures -  
Hold and maintain them.

#### Notes

A : this may sound egotistical, but the sage is  
described as being "great" in #34 and #63 and  
"valued" in #70; only WB and HSG changed  
this and the next four lines to read

In the world<sup>2</sup>, all say my Dao is great,  
And does not seem to be like [anything  
else].

Now : only [because it is] great,  
therefore it does  
not seem to be like [anything else].

◆The first is called compassion\*,  
 ◆The second is called economy,  
 [thrifty,frugal]  
 ◆The third is called not daring to act first<sup>D</sup> in  
 the world<sup>2</sup>.  
 ◆With compassion\*, you can therefore be  
brave\*.  
 ◆With economy, you can therefore expand<sup>E</sup>.  
 [thrifty,frugal]  
 ◆By not daring to act first in the world<sup>2</sup>,  
Therefore you can achieve the capacity for  
leadership.  
 At present, people abandon compassion\* but  
also try to be  
brave\*,  
Abandon economy but also try to expand<sup>E</sup>,  
 [thrifty,frugal]  
Abandon being behind but also try to be first -  
 This is death !  
Now : when compassion\* is used in war, the  
consequence  
 is victory.  
 ◆When it is used for protection, the  
consequence is  
strength.  
 When heaven would help you,  
 [him]  
Using compassion\* it protects you.  
 [him]

If [it was] like [anything else],  
Long ago ! it would have become  
insignificant,  
indeed!

WB also switched from saying the sage is great  
 to Dao is great in #34; also note that here it is  
 everyone else, not the sage, who says the sage  
 is great

B : see #20 for many examples of how the sage  
 is not like everyone else; this and the next three  
 lines are translated in many different ways  
 because 肖 (“seem”, “resemble”) sounds the  
 same as a different symbol meaning “small”  
 and so is sometimes interpreted that way, and  
 because 不肖 can also mean “unworthy”

C : this sentence comes from MWD/B for  
 consistency with the previous lines

D : *presumably take the lead, rule, etc.*;  
 compare to #7 and #66 about being behind to  
 be first

E : *this could be referring to expanding your  
 territory or kingdom*

#### Cross-references

treasures : #62, #69

not daring to act : #3, #64

before/behind others : #7, #66

die/death : #6, #33, #42, #50, #74, #75, #76,  
 #80

strong : #3, #29, #30, #33, #36, #52, #55,  
 #78

## Chapter Sixty Eight

善為士者不武 •  
 善戰者不怒 •  
 善勝敵者不與  
 善用人者為之下  
 是謂不爭之德  
 是謂用人之力  
 是謂配天古之極 [也(•)]

He who is good at being a scholar is not  
 militant.  
 He who is good at war does not get angry.  
 He who is good at conquering the enemy does  
 not engage  
 them.  
 He who is good at making use of people acts  
 lower-than  
 them.

This is called the De of not striving.  
 This is called the power of making use of  
 people.  
 This is called joining the elite of heaven’s  
 ancients, indeed!

◆He who is good at being a scholar is not  
militant.

[martial,warlike]

◆He who is good at war does not get angry.

◆He who is good at conquering the enemy does  
not engage

them. [victory,beat] [take part  
in,participate]

◆He who is good at making use of people acts  
lower-than<sup>A</sup>  
them.

This is called the De of not striving.

This is called the power of making use of  
people.<sup>B</sup>

#### Notes

A : literally “below”, “under”, or “inferior”, here  
 “lower-than” is used to indicate taking the  
 lower or inferior position in a relationship  
 (which in ancient Chinese culture was the  
 better thing to do); Lau translates it as “taking  
 the lower position”

B : This could also be translated as  
This is called using the power of people  
 but based on the sentence two lines before  
 which has no such ambiguity, it is translated  
 this way

C : the grammar of this sentence is  
 exceptionally difficult to parse, and so can be  
 translated in many different ways

This is called joining the *elite of heaven's*  
*ancients*,  
indeed!<sup>C</sup>  
[highest,utmost]

Cross-references  
scholar : #15, #41  
lower-than : #61, #66  
no striving : #3, #8, #22, #66, #73, #81  
the ancients/elders : #14, #15, #22, #38, #39,  
#62, #65

## Chapter Sixty Nine

• 用兵有言  
吾不敢為主而為客  
不敢進寸而退尺  
是謂行無行  
攘無臂•  
扔無敵  
執無兵  
禍莫大於輕敵  
輕敵幾喪吾寶•  
(•)故抗兵相(若)  
[則]哀者勝矣(•)

Those who command troops have a saying :  
I dare not act like the master, but instead act  
like a guest.  
Dare not advance an inch, but instead retreat a  
foot.

This is called marching without marching,  
Seizing without using your arms,  
Routing without having an enemy,  
Defending without using weapons.

There is no misfortune greater than  
underestimating the  
enemy.  
By underestimating the enemy, I nearly lose my  
treasures.

Therefore : when armies on opposing sides are  
evenly  
matched,  
Then they who mourn will be victorious!

Those who command troops<sup>2</sup> have a saying :  
◆ I dare not act like the master, but instead act  
like a guest.

Dare not advance an inch<sup>A</sup>, but instead retreat  
a foot<sup>B</sup>.

This is called marching without  
marching,  
[travelling]

◆ Seizing without using your arms<sup>C</sup>,  
Routing without having an enemy,  
[throw out]

Defending<sup>D</sup> without using weapons.  
[hold,maintain]

There is no misfortune greater than  
underestimating the  
enemy.<sup>E</sup>  
[frivolous,unimportant]

By underestimating the enemy, I nearly lose my  
treasures.

[frivolous,unimportant]

Therefore : when armies on opposing sides are  
evenly

matched, [similar,like each  
other,comparable<sup>2</sup>]

Then they who mourn<sup>F</sup> will be victorious !

### Notes

A : 寸 was a unit of length, very close to one  
inch

B : 尺 was a unit of length, very close to one  
foot

C : this symbol is definitely referring to the  
limb, not the English synonym for “weapons”;  
this and the next two lines can be translated in  
many ways due to their terseness

D : as in “hold the fort” or “maintain your  
position”

E : there is a great deal of variation between  
the sources for this line and the next, so WB  
and HSG are taken as the “standard”; each  
later source made changes to try to turn it into  
something that made sense!

F : *presumably, mourning the need to fight  
and/or the death it involves*; compare to #31,  
where war is compared to dwelling at a funeral

### Cross-references

not daring to act : #3, #64, #67

treasures : #62, #67

## Chapter Seventy

吾言甚易知•  
甚易行•  
[而]天下莫[之]能知•  
莫[之]能行•  
言有宗•  
事有君  
(•)夫唯無知•

My words are very easy to understand,  
Very easy to practice.  
But there is no one in the world who can  
understand them,  
There is no one who can practice them.

My words possess a lineage,  
My duties possess a ruler.

Now : only because I am without-knowledge,

是以不我知 •  
 知我者希  
 則我者貴 [矣(•)]  
 是以聖人  
 被褐 [而] 懷玉

Thus I am not understood.  
 Those who understand me are rare,  
 Consequently I am one who is valued!

Thus the sage wears coarse cloth, but carries  
 jade in his  
 heart.

◆ My words are very easy to understand,  
 ◆ Very easy to  
 practice.

[perform]

But there is no one in the world<sup>2</sup> who can  
understand

them,

[they]

There is no one who can practice them.

[they] [perform]

◆ [My]<sup>A</sup> words possess a lineage,

[My]<sup>A</sup> duties possess a ruler.

◆ Now : only because [I am]<sup>B</sup> without-  
knowledge,

◆ Thus<sup>2</sup> I am not understood.

◆ Those who understand me are rare,  
Consequently I am one who is valued !

◆ Thus<sup>2</sup> the sage<sup>2</sup> wears coarse cloth, but  
carries jade  
in his heart.

#### Notes

A : "My" is inferred here from the first line, but  
 could just as reasonably be left out, or "All"  
 substituted

B : there is no subject in the original Chinese,  
 so this could also be saying "only because [the  
 previous two lines] is not understood", but  
 because 無知 (without-knowledge) is  
 specifically used, it is translated in this way

#### Cross-references

no one who can practice this : #78  
 being valuable : #56, #62

## Chapter Seventy One

知不知 (尚) [矣(•)]  
 不知知病 [矣(•)]  
 (•)夫唯病病  
 是以不病  
 聖人不病 •  
 以其病病 •  
 是以不病

Knowing that you do not know is honorable!  
 Not knowing that you know is a sickness!

Now : only when you are sick of sickness,  
 Thus you are not sick.

The sage is not sick  
 Because he is sick of sickness.  
 Thus he is not sick.

Knowing that you do not know is honorable !  
Not knowing that you know is a sickness !  
Now : only when you are sick of sickness,

Thus<sup>2</sup> you are not sick.

The sage<sup>2</sup> is not sick

◆ Because he is sick of sickness.

◆ Thus<sup>2</sup> he is not sick.

#### Notes

The third and fourth lines are not in the MWD's

This chapter can be translated many different  
 ways due to its terseness and the many ways to  
 interpret 病 (disease, sickness, to be ill)

"Sickness" here presumably refers to the  
 suffering that comes from not following Dao

### Chapter Seventy Two

民不畏威  
則大威至 [矣(•)] •  
無狎其所居  
無厭其所生  
(•)夫唯不厭  
是以不厭  
是以聖人  
自知不自見 •  
自愛不自貴 •  
(•)故去彼取此

If the citizens do not fear your authority,  
Then a greater authority will arrive!

Do not disrespect their dwellings,  
Do not despise their livelihood.

Now : only because you do not despise them,  
Thus they will not tire of you.

Thus the sage :  
Knows himself but not display himself,  
Loves himself but does not exalt himself.  
Therefore he leaves that and chooses this.

If the citizens do not fear [your] authority,  
Then a greater authority will arrive !<sup>A</sup>  
◆ Do not disrespect their dwellings<sup>2</sup>,  
◆ Do not despise their livelihood<sup>2B</sup>.  
[detest] [that which  
they produce]  
◆ Now : only because [you] do not despise  
[them], [detest]  
◆ Thus<sup>2</sup> [they] will not tire of {detest}<sup>C</sup> [you].  
◆ Thus<sup>2</sup> the sage<sup>2</sup> :  
◆ Knows himself but not display himself,  
[show]  
◆ Loves himself but does not exalt  
himself.  
[high rank, respected]  
Therefore he leaves that<sup>D</sup> and chooses this<sup>E</sup>.

Notes

A : *possibly meaning someone else will take over, either from within or without?*

B : these two symbols could also be translated as “place of birth” or even “parents” (they who gave them life)

C : this seems to be something of a play on words, because the symbol for “despise” in the previous line is the same symbol for “tire of”, so this line could also be translated as

Thus<sup>2</sup> they will not despise you  
but “tire of” is used here because of #66,  
where the citizens do not tire of the sage’s rule

D : *presumably, displaying and exalting*

E : *presumably, knowing and loving*

Cross-references

fear/afraid : #15, #17, #20, #74

citizens do not fear : #74

not tire of leadership : #66

not displaying oneself (showing off) : #22, #24,  
#47, #77

leaves that and chooses this : #12, #38

### Chapter Seventy Three

• 勇於敢  
則殺  
勇於不敢  
則活  
此兩者或利或害  
天之所惡孰知其故

When your courage lies in daring,  
The consequence is killing.  
When your courage lies in not daring,  
The consequence is survival.

These two choices, they sometimes cause  
benefit,  
sometimes cause harm.  
That which heaven detests - who knows its



是以聖人猶難之  
天之道  
不爭而善勝•  
不言而善應•  
不召而自來  
繹然而善謀  
天網恢恢  
疏而不失

reasons?

The Way of heaven :  
Does not strive, yet skillfully achieves its goals.  
Does not speak, yet skillfully responds.  
Does not summon, yet everything naturally  
comes to it.  
Is certainly unhurried, yet skillfully prepares.

Heaven's net is extremely vast;  
It is wide meshed, yet does not fail.

- ◆When your courage\* lies in daring,  
◆The consequence is killing.
- ◆When your courage\* lies in not daring,  
◆The consequence is survival.
- ◆These two [choices], they sometimes cause  
benefit,  
sometimes cause harm.  
[maybe,perhaps]  
[maybe,perhaps]
- ◆That which heaven [it] detests<sup>A</sup> - who knows  
its reasons?  
Thus<sup>2</sup> the sage<sup>2</sup> plans for things to be  
difficult.<sup>B</sup>  
  
[them] [schemes]  
◆The Way of heaven :  
◆Does not strive, yet skillfully achieves its  
goals.  
[victory,beat]  
◆Does not speak, yet skillfully responds.  
◆Does not summon, yet everything naturally  
comes to it.  
Is certainly unhurried, yet skillfully  
prepares.<sup>C</sup>  
[slow,patient,calm] [plans]  
◆Heaven's net is extremely vast<sup>2D</sup>;  
◆It is wide meshed, yet does not fail.  
[sparse]

#### Notes

There are two themes in this chapter which do not seem to fit in with typical Daoist concepts - that of heaven conquering (literally "victory" or "beat", interpreted as "achieving its goals") which sounds more like striving than non-action, and planning (interpreted as "prepares") which seems contradictory to being "naturally so" (although the sage also "plans" here and in #63)

A : *in early societies, whatever endeavors failed were by definition what heaven (or the gods) "detested"*

B : this sentence only appears in the later sources, and seems to be a parenthetical comment; although it technically is in the majority, it seems so out-of-place that it is left out of the final translation above

C : this sentence is nearly impossible to translate; while the first symbol in WB and HSG are the same, making them the default "majority", it is different in every other source, and none of their modern translations make sense; some translators use a symbol slightly different than that in WB and HSG but pronounced the same way; finally, "slow, patient, calm" is only the most likely translation that could be found for the first symbol

D : "extremely" is implied by the repeated symbol

#### Cross-references

the sage plans for difficulties : #63  
Way of heaven : #9, #47, #77, #79, #81  
no striving : #3, #8, #22, #66, #68, #81

### Chapter Seventy Four

民不畏死  
奈何以死懼之•  
若使民常畏死  
而為奇者吾得執而殺之•  
孰敢•  
常有司殺者\_\_\_\_  
(•)夫代司殺者殺•  
是謂代大匠斲•  
(•)夫代大匠斲者  
希\_\_\_\_不傷其手矣(•)

If the citizens do not fear death,  
How can you use death to frighten them?  
Assuming you could ensure that the citizens  
always fear  
death,  
And I get hold of those who act strange and  
unusual and  
kill them,  
Then who would be daring?

There will always exist an executioner.  
Now : to take the place of the executioner to do  
the  
killing,

This is called taking the place of a great  
craftsman to carve  
wood.

Now : of those who take the place of a great  
craftsman to  
carve wood,  
Few will not injure their hand!

<p>If the <u>citizens do not fear death</u>,  <u>How<sup>2</sup></u> can you <u>use death to frighten them</u>?  Assuming you could <u>ensure</u> that the <u>citizens</u>  <u>always fear</u>  <u>death</u>,  [make.cause]  And I get hold of <u>those who act strange and</u>  <u>unusual and</u>  <u>kill them</u>,  Then <u>who</u> would be <u>daring</u>{bold}?  There will <u>always exist</u> an  <u>executioner</u><sup>3A</sup>.  [he who attends to/manages killing]  ◆Now : to <u>take the place of the executioner</u><sup>3</sup> to  do the  <u>killing</u>, [he who attends  to/manages killing]  This is called <u>taking the place of a great</u>  <u>craftsman</u> to  <u>carve wood</u>.  ◆Now : of <u>those who take the place of a great</u>  <u>craftsman</u> to  <u>carve wood</u>,  <u>Few will not injure their hand !</u>  [rare,infrequent]</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Notes</u></p> <p>A : <i>it is speculated by some that this refers to heaven or Dao, and while that does make sense in context of the lines that follow, there is no direct support for it in the original Chinese</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Cross-references</u></p> <p>fear/afraid : #15, #17, #20, #72  citizens do not fear : #72  die/death : #6, #33, #42, #50, #67, #75, #76,  #80  citizens do not fear death, take death  seriously/lightly :  #75, #80</p>
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### Chapter Seventy Five

<p style="text-align: center;">• 民之饑 •  以其上食稅之多 •  是以饑  民之難治 •  以其上之有為 •  是以難治 •  民之輕死 •  以其求生之厚 •  是以輕死  (•)夫唯無以生為者  是賢於貴生 •</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">The citizens are hungry  Because their superiors eat too much of their  taxes.  Thus they are hungry.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The citizens are hard to govern  Because their superiors are compelled to take  action.  Thus they are hard to govern.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The citizens take death lightly  Because they seek the substance of life.  Thus they take death lightly.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Now : only he who has no use for being alive  Is virtuous compared to he who values living.</p>
<p>The <u>citizens [they] are hungry</u>  Because <u>their superiors eat too much of</u> their  <u>taxes</u>.<sup>A</sup>  <u>Thus<sup>2</sup></u> they are <u>hungry</u>.  The <u>citizens [they] are hard to govern</u>  Because <u>their superiors [they] are compelled to</u>  <u>take</u>  <u>action</u>.<sup>B</sup>  [possess]  <u>Thus<sup>2</sup></u> they are <u>hard to govern</u>.  ◆The <u>citizens [they] take death lightly</u>  Because <u>they<sup>C</sup> seek the substance<sup>D</sup> of life</u>.  ◆<u>Thus<sup>2</sup></u> they take <u>death lightly</u>.  Now : <u>only he who has no use for being alive</u>  <u>Is virtuous compared to [he who] values living</u>.<sup>E</sup></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Notes</u></p> <p>A : taxes were taken in grain at the time the DDJ was written, so this seems to be something of a play on words  B : literally, they "<u>possess action</u>"  C : HSG and FY have  <u>Because their superiors seek the</u>  <u>substance of life</u>  thus placing the blame not on the people, but those who govern them (WB used the viewpoint of the earlier sources)  D : compare to #38, where living for the "substance" is apparently a good thing, and #50, where it is a bad thing  E : <i>one who "values living" will be less virtuous than one who does not, because the former is out to get what he can for himself</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Cross-references</u></p> <p>citizens are hard to govern : #65  die/death : #6, #33, #42, #50, #67, #74, #76,  #80</p>

citizens do not fear death, take death seriously/lightly :  
#74, #80  
substance : #38, #50, #55

## Chapter Seventy Six

• 人之生也柔弱  
其死也堅強 •  
萬物草木之生也柔脆  
其死也枯槁 •  
(•)故堅強者死之徒 •  
柔弱生之徒 •  
是以兵強則不勝  
木強則兵 •  
強大處下 •  
柔弱處上

The people are born (indeed!) soft and weak.  
They die (indeed!) hard and inflexible.  
The ten thousand creatures, the grass and trees, are born (indeed!) soft and fragile.  
They die (indeed!) dried and withered.

Therefore : that which is hard and inflexible is a follower of death.  
That which is soft and weak is a follower of life.

Thus if a weapon is inflexible, the consequence is defeat.  
If a tree is inflexible, then it snaps.

Inflexible and great dwell below.  
Soft and weak dwell above.

◆ The people [they] are born (indeed!) soft and weak.  
They die (indeed!) hard and inflexible.  
The ten thousand creatures, the grass and trees, [they] are born (indeed!) soft and fragile.  
◆ They die (indeed!) dried and withered.  
Therefore : that which is hard and inflexible is a follower<sup>A</sup> of death.  
That which is soft and weak is a follower of life.  
Thus<sup>2</sup> if a weapon is inflexible, the consequence is defeat<sup>2</sup>.<sup>B</sup>  
[not victory]  
If a tree is inflexible, then it snaps<sup>o</sup>.  
Inflexible and great dwell below<sup>C</sup>.  
Soft and weak dwell above.

Notes  
A : "follower" as in disciple or one who agrees with a particular way of looking at things  
B : *an inflexible weapon shatters easily*; this line can be translated in many ways, because "weapon is inflexible" can also mean weapon is strong  
army is inflexible  
army is strong  
C : interestingly, this is the same symbol translated in #61, #66, and #68 as "lower-than" (which was a good thing), so in this case it is the inferior qualities which are lower-than

Cross-references  
soft : #10, #36, #43, #52, #55, #78  
weak : #3, #29, #36, #40, #55, #78  
die/death : #6, #33, #42, #50, #67, #74, #75, #80  
hard : #36, #43, #78  
follower of death *and* follower of life : #50

## Chapter Seventy Seven

天之道其猶張弓與 •  
高者抑之 •  
下者舉之  
有餘者損之 •  
不足者補之 •  
天之道  
損有餘而補不足  
人之道則不然  
損不足以奉有餘  
孰能有餘(而)奉[於]天下  
唯有道者 •  
是以聖人  
為而不恃

The Way of heaven, how it is just like stretching a bow?  
He who is high is pressed down by it.  
He who is low is lifted by it.  
He who has excess is reduced by it.  
He who does not have enough is filled by it.

The Way of heaven  
Reduces what has excess and fills what does not have enough.

The Way of people on the other hand is not like this,  
And takes from those who do not have enough in order to offer it to those who have too much.

Who can have too much and offer it to the

功成而不處 •  
其不欲見賢 •

world?  
Only he who possesses Dao.

Thus the sage :  
Acts, but is not concerned with the results.  
Accomplishes his tasks, but does not dwell on them.  
He does not desire to display his virtue.

The Way of heaven, how it is just like stretching a bow ?

He who is high is pressed down by it.

He who is low is lifted by it.

He who has excess is reduced by it.

[decrease]

He who does not have enough is filled by it.

The Way of heaven

Reduces what has excess and fills what does not have

enough.

[decrease]

The Way of people on the other hand is not like this,

[<contrast>]

And takes from [those who] do not have enough

in order to

offer it to [those who] have too much.

[decreases] [excess]

Who can have too much and offer it to the world<sup>2</sup>? [excess]

Only he who possesses Dao.

Thus<sup>2</sup> the sage<sup>2</sup> :

Acts, but is not concerned with [the results].

[depend upon, rely upon]

Accomplishes his tasks, but does not dwell on them.

[results, achievements]

He does not desire to display his virtue. [show]

Notes

Cross-references

Way of heaven : #9, #47, #73, #79, #81  
he who "possesses Dao" : #15, #23, #24, #31, #65

acting but not concerned : #2, #10, #51

accomplishing tasks : #2, #9, #17, #34

and not dwelling on them : #2, #9

not displaying oneself (showing off) : #22, #24, #47, #72

## Chapter Seventy Eight

天下莫柔弱於水  
而攻堅強者  
莫之能勝 •  
以其無以易之 •  
弱之勝強 •  
柔之勝剛 ••  
天下莫不知 •  
莫能行 •  
是以聖人云 •  
受國之垢  
是謂社稷 [之] 主  
受國 [之] 不祥  
是謂天下 [之] 王  
正言若反 •

In the world, nothing is softer and weaker than water.  
Yet for attacking that which is hard and strong,  
There is nothing that can surpass it.  
This is because it endlessly replaces itself.

Weakness conquers strength.

Softness conquers hardness.

In the world, there is no one who does not know this,

But there is no one who can practice it.

Thus the sage says :

Accepting upon oneself the disgrace of the nation

Is called being master of the shrines.

Accepting upon oneself the misfortune of the nation

Is called being king of the world.

Honest words seem contrary.

- ◆ In the world<sup>2</sup>, nothing is softer and weaker than water.
- ◆ Yet for attacking that which is hard and strong,
- ◆ There is nothing that can surpass it. [them]

Notes

A : the grammar of this sentence is very difficult to parse; I do not know if 無以 meant "endlessly" when the DDJ was written, but this is the only translation that seems to make sense  
B : the symbols specifically refer to the shrine of the god of soil, and the shrine of the god of

<p>◆ This is because it endlessly<sup>2</sup> replaces {changes} it [self].<sup>A</sup>  <u>Weakness</u> [it] <u>conquers</u> strength.  [victorious, beats]</p> <p><u>Softness</u> [it] <u>conquers</u> hardness.  [victorious, beats]</p> <p>In the <u>world</u><sup>2</sup>, there is no one who does <u>not</u> know this,  But there is no one who can <u>practice</u> it.  [perform]</p> <p>Thus<sup>2</sup> the <u>sage</u><sup>2</sup> says :  <u>Accepting</u> [upon oneself] the <u>disgrace</u> of the nation  Is called being <u>master</u> of the <u>shrines</u><sup>2B</sup>.  <u>Accepting</u> [upon oneself] the <u>misfortune</u><sup>2</sup> of the nation  [not lucky]</p> <p>Is called being <u>king</u> of the <u>world</u><sup>2</sup>.  ◆ <u>Honest words</u> seem <u>contrary</u>.</p>	<p>grain</p> <p><u>Cross-references</u>  soft : #10, #36, #43, #52, #55, #76  weak : #3, #29, #36, #40, #55, #76  hard : #36, #43, #76  strong : #3, #29, #30, #33, #36, #52, #55, #67  soft conquers hard : #36, #43  no one who can practice it : #70  the sage says : #57</p>
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**Chapter Seventy Nine**

<p>和大怨  必有餘怨 •  安可以為善  是以聖人  執左契  而不責於人  [(•)故] 有德司契  無德司徹  天道無親  常與善人</p>	<p>Harmonize a great resentment,  And there must exist some remaining  resentment.  How can this be considered good?</p> <p>Thus the sage :  Holds the left side of an agreement,  But does not demand payment of people.</p> <p>Therefore : to have De is to take charge of your  agreements;  To be without De is to take charge of taking  away from  others.</p> <p>The Way of heaven, while without favor,  Is always with virtuous people.</p>
<p>◆ Harmonize a great resentment,  ◆ And there <u>must exist</u> some <u>remaining</u>  <u>resentment</u>.  ◆ <u>How can</u> this be <u>considered</u><sup>2</sup> <u>good</u>?  ◆ Thus<sup>2</sup> the <u>sage</u><sup>2</sup> :  Holds the <u>left side</u><sup>A</sup> of an <u>agreement</u>,  But does <u>not demand</u> [payment] of <u>people</u>.  <u>Therefore</u> : to <u>have De</u> is to <u>take charge</u> of your  <u>agreements</u>;  ◆ To be <u>without De</u> is to <u>take charge</u> of <u>taking</u>  <u>away from</u>  others.  ◆ The <u>Way of heaven</u>, while <u>without favor</u>,  ◆ Is <u>always</u> [together] with <u>virtuous people</u>.<sup>B</sup></p>	<p><u>Notes</u>  <i>The point of the beginning of this chapter seems to be that the sage does not create resentments in the first place</i>  A : Lau says that the left side of a contract or agreement was the creditor's side, so the sage is the one who is owed  B : Hatcher points out that while the Way of heaven itself is without favor, virtuous people have aligned themselves with it (because of their virtue), hence it is "with" them</p> <p><u>Cross-references</u>  Way of heaven : #9, #47, #73, #77, #81</p>

**Chapter Eighty**

<p>• 小國寡民</p>	<p>In a small nation with few citizens :  Ensure that it has the weapons of ten nobles,</p>
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使有什伯之器而不用 •  
 使民重死而不遠徙  
 雖有舟輿無所乘之  
 雖有甲兵無所陳之  
 使(民)復結繩而用之  
 甘其食  
 美其服  
 安其居  
 樂其俗  
 鄰國相望  
 雞犬之聲相聞  
 民至老死  
 不相往來

but does not  
 use them.  
 Ensure that the citizens take death seriously,  
 and do not  
 migrate far.  
 Even though they have boats and carriages,  
 there is no  
 place to take advantage of them.  
 Even though they have armor and weapons,  
 there is no  
 place to display them.  
 Ensure that the citizens return to knotting  
 ropes and using  
 them,  
 Find deliciousness in their food,  
 Beauty in their clothes,  
 Contentment in their dwellings,  
 Happiness in their customs.  
 Although neighboring nations overlook one  
 another,  
 And sounds of roosters and dogs can be heard  
 in one  
 another -  
 The citizens reach old age and die,  
 And do not come and go between one another.

◆ In a small nation with few citizens :  
 Ensure that it has the weapons<sup>A</sup> of ten nobles<sup>B</sup>,  
 but does not  
use them. [make,cause]  
 [tools] [Count]  
 Ensure that the citizens take death seriously,  
and do not  
migrate far.  
 [make,cause]  
 Even though they have boats and carriages,  
 there is no  
place to take advantage of them.<sup>C</sup>  
 Even though they have armor and weapons,  
 there is no  
place to display them.<sup>D</sup>  
 ◆ Ensure that the citizens return to knotting  
ropes and using  
them<sup>E</sup>,  
 [make,cause]  
 ◆ Find deliciousness in their food,  
Beauty in their clothes,  
Contentment in their dwellings,  
Happiness in their customs.  
 ◆ [Although] neighboring nations overlook one  
another,  
 [look at] [each other]  
 ◆ And sounds of roosters and dogs can be heard  
 in  
one another - [chickens]  
 [each other]  
 ◆ The citizens reach old age and die,  
 ◆ And do not come and go between one  
another.  
 [each other]

Notes  
 A : the symbol literally refers only to tools, but  
 has been associated with weapons in #31, #36,  
 and #57 : "sharp tools", "weapons are not the  
 tools of a noble man"  
 B : the symbol specifically refers to a Count  
 (see #32), but in keeping with other chapters,  
 this is interpreted more generally as "nobles";  
*the entire phrase probably means "as many  
 weapons as the armies of ten Counts would  
 have"*  
 C : *have no need to use them; in other words,*  
*they do not want to leave, as supported by the*  
*last paragraph*  
 D : compare to #36, where the sharp tools of  
 the nation cannot be shown to the people  
 E : *according to Ames&Hall, knotted ropes*  
*used to be used for record-keeping*

Cross-references  
 nobles (in general) : #32, #37, #39, #42, #62  
 die/death : #6, #33, #42, #50, #67, #74, #75,  
 #76  
 citizens do not fear death, take death  
 seriously/lightly :  
 #74, #75  
 returning : #14, #16, #19, #20, #22, #25,  
 #28, #34, #40,  
 #52, #58, #60, #64, #65

## Chapter Eighty One

信言不美  
 美言不信  
 善者不辯  
 辯者不善  
 知者不博  
 博者不知 •

True words are not beautiful;  
 Beautiful words are not true.  
 He who has virtue does not argue;  
 He who argues does not have virtue.  
 He who knows is not learned;  
 He who is learned does not know.

聖人不積  
既以為人已愈有  
既以與人已愈多  
天之道利而不害  
聖人之道為而不爭

The sage does not accumulate things -  
Since through serving people, the more one  
has;  
Since through giving to people, one has even  
more.  
  
The Way of heaven benefits and does not cause  
harm.  
The Way of the sage acts yet does not strive.

◆ True\* words are not beautiful;  
◆ Beautiful words are not true\*.  
He who has virtue does not argue;  
He who argues does not have virtue.  
He who knows is not learned;  
He who is learned does not know.  
◆ The sage<sup>2</sup> does not accumulate [things] -  
◆ Since through serving people, the more  
one[self]  
has;  
[by means of]  
Since through giving to people, one[self] has  
even more<sup>2</sup>. [by means  
of] [more more]  
◆ The Way of heaven benefits and does not  
cause harm.  
The Way of the sage<sup>2</sup> acts yet does not strive.

#### Notes

#### Cross-references

one who is not virtuous : #27, #49, #62  
Way of heaven : #9, #47, #73, #77, #79  
no harm : #35, #56, #58, #60, #66  
no striving : #3, #8, #22, #66, #68, #73

### Appendix - Different Layers of the Dao De Jing

While translating the DDJ, I discovered John Emerson's articles on the possibility of various "layers" within it, based on the presence or absence of certain symbols and "themes" in each chapter. While he was not the first to suggest the presence of multiple layers, of particular interest to me was his comment : "Many of the objections to my method seemed to be objections to the kinds of rough, empirical, non-algorithmic methods best used to disentangle historically confused material." Having a background in something called pattern recognition, I decided to find out whether or not each chapter could be classified as belonging to these layers based on this purely analytical method.

Emerson tentatively identified Early, Middle, Late, Added (very small) and Post-Guodian layers. By definition, the Post-Guodian layer contains at least chapters 67-81, none of which appear in the Guodian source. Building on Emerson's work, extensive analysis using pattern recognition methods based on the relative frequencies of the symbols in each chapter indicates that the most self-consistent results are obtained when the DDJ is separated into three layers of chapters :

Early : 1 4 5 6 7 9 10 13 14 15 16 20 21 23 24 25 28 30 31 32 34 35 37 39 41 44 51 52 55 56

Late : 3 8 12 17 18 19 22 27 29 38 45 46 47 48 49 53 54 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66

Post-Guodian : 11 26 33 36 40 42 43 50 67-81

Mixed : 2

Excluding the chapters he identified as Middle (which ended up being assigned very evenly across the other three layers), none of these completely disagree with Emerson's assignments (except for 52, which is the only entire chapter he considered to be Added), although he assigns some sections of some chapters to other layers. While a significant majority (85%) of the chapters were strongly identified as belonging to their layer (the underlined chapters above), the pattern recognition process did indicate that a few (most notably chapters 24, 45, 46, 59, and 62, and to a lesser extent 8, 22, 30, 39, 44, and 49) may have elements of more than one layer present within them.

Note that while Emerson's names (Early, Late, Post-Guodian) are kept for convenience, they don't necessarily have to indicate separation in time - they could perhaps represent different oral traditions, or sayings that originally developed in different regions of China, which combined to form the Dao De Jing we know today. Also note that the Guodian document (~300 BCE) consists of chapters from both Early and Late in roughly equal numbers, so this "layering" actually happened very early.

Although chapter 40 was identified as being strongly Post-Guodian, it is present in the Guodian manuscript, but that is not considered a major problem. For example, if perhaps the post-Guodian “style” was already being developed at the time the Guodian document was created, then the presence of chapter 40 in the document could mean that it had already been written in this style, perhaps shortly before the Guodian document was created, whereas chapters 68-81 had yet to be written (or the Guodian compiler was not aware of their existence). There are probably many other scenarios that could explain such a result.

Chapter 2 was variously classified as belonging to all three layers, but the symbol distributions (below) simultaneously indicated that it cannot belong to any of them! If any chapter is truly a mixture of layers, it is this one (which Emerson agrees with), so it is not assigned to any.

With the chapters separated as given above, it is possible to identify which symbols are used more often in one layer than another, as shown in the table below. Each line represents one symbol, and shows its various English meanings (as used in this translation). “Weak” symbols show up three to six times more often in the indicated layer than the other two, while “Strong” symbols show up more than six times more often. Within these sections, symbols are ordered from the least unbalanced to most unbalanced distributions between the layers. “Unique” symbols show up only in that layer, and not even once in the others. In these sections, words are listed from fewest appearances to most appearances. Weak and Strong symbols must show up in at least five chapters to be included, while Unique symbols must be in at least three chapters. Phrases (two or more symbols) are shown in italics. Some punctuation symbols are included as they tend to show differences in grammatical conventions between the layers. Where two symbols are consistently translated into the same punctuation, (#1) and (#2) are used to distinguish between them.

	<b>Mostly Early</b>	<b>Mostly Late</b>	<b>Mostly Post-Guodian</b>
<b>Weak</b>	valley call, say, speak return self deep mystery, deep and mysterious mother child, children fill, full maintain, protect	<i>do not act</i> truth, honest, trust* affairs, duties, trouble honest and just <i>non-action</i> kind, kindness* wise, wisdom* heart/mind	strong, inflexible, try originally, undoubtedly, firm, strong soft, softness, yielding dare, daring <i>Dao of</i>
<b>Strong</b>	! (#1) name, fame, reputation	choose, take, take hold of 100	weak, weakness victory, conquer die, death
<b>Unique</b>	? (#1) army blended, mingled pure and clear clear, pure, bright <i>newborn infant</i> hard work unfortunate, bad nobles (specifically Marquis) within, middle exist, survive, keep disgrace <i>without-name</i> same, sameness stop, rest, stay ? (#2) <i>no danger</i> gateway image <i>heaven &amp; earth</i>	<i>rare goods</i> abandon <i>non-interference</i> family morality* clever, skillful bandit, evil thief, robbery confuse, confusion	treasure hard teach, teaching

The symbol for “die, death” that is strongly Post-Guodian is in only one non-Post-Guodian chapter (6, where the “spirit of the valley does not die”). All of the other 17 times (!) it is used is in Post-Guodian chapters, so if it wasn’t for the one use in chapter 6, this symbol would be strongly unique to the Post-Guodian chapters.

Symbols that show up much more often in two layers but rarely in the other one are presented in the table on the following page, in the same format as the previous one. Symbols in the “Never” sections appear about equally often in the other two layers, but not once in the indicated layer.

“Dao” is *almost* three times more likely to appear in Early and Late than Post-Guodian (and there almost always as “Dao of”), but not quite enough to make it into the following table (under “Rarely in Post-Guodian”).

	<b>Rarely in Early</b>	<b>Rarely in Late</b>	<b>Rarely in Post-Guodian</b>
<b>Weak</b>	govern behavior, perform, travel virtue, good(ness), skilled ! (#2) <i>sage</i>	weapons who, which ready, would, about to, general create, life, produce one	De



<b>Strong</b>	benefit, profit, sharp nation citizens <i>thus the sage</i>		
<b>Never</b>	<i>virtuous person</i> misfortune serious, double easy <i>do not strive</i> difficult, hard	Qi good fortune scholar since, once maintain, protect master depend on, concerned with rare, few <i>do not know</i>	<i>100 families</i> female ocean, sea subtle mystery spirit bright, brightness empty arise, make move, movement, action begin, beginning arise, produce, go out ! ,? uncarved block not (非)

Besides the symbol distributions, it is interesting to note that of the six chapters in which the majority of the sources are anti-Confucian, all but chapter 33 are Late (and it is Post-Guodian) – thus none of the Early chapters are anti-Confucian. Also, the anti-military chapters (30, 31) are Early, while the chapters offering military advice (68, 69) are Post-Guodian. Finally, “living for the substance” is a good thing in chapter 38 (Late), but a bad thing in chapters 50 and 75 (both Post-Guodian).

Early chapters are more concerned with heaven and earth, images of the feminine and the child, the concepts of “without-name” and “no danger”, and are the only chapters that try to describe Dao (1, 4, 14, 21, 25, 32, 34, 35), while they have little to do with the sage (only twice using “thus the sage” in 30 chapters), governing the nation, easy vs. difficult, and never mention the concept of “not striving”.

Late chapters have more Confucian terms, advice on how to rule, and talk about non-interference, but at the same time are the only ones that talk about possessing or “taking hold of” the world or the nation.

Post-Guodian chapters also offer some advice on how to rule, tend to deal with hard/soft/weak/strong, are the only chapters that offer military advice, and talk a lot about death, but rarely mention Dao or De, and never mention the feminine, the child, emptiness, or the uncarved block.

The rest of the appendix collects all the chapters of each layer together, so the reader can see their common themes. The final section is called “What Would the Sage Do?”, and collects every reference to the Sage from the entire document.

## References

A Stratification of Lao Tzu, by John J. Emerson; *The Journal of Chinese Religions*, #23, pp. 1-28; 1995  
Lao Tzu Stratified, II: A Sketch, by John J. Emerson; <http://www.idiocentrism.com/china.strata3.htm>; 2003

## **EARLY**

### One

The Dao that can be spoken of is not the ever-constant Dao.

The name that can be named is not the ever-constant name.

That which is without-name is the beginning of heaven and earth.

That which possesses a name is the mother of the ten thousand creatures.

Therefore : always without-desire, thus you observe its subtle mystery.

Always possessing desires, thus you observe its external appearances.

These two, they arise from the same source but have different names;

This sameness is called their deep mystery.

Deep mysteries, and again deep mysteries –  
The gateway of many subtle mysteries.

### Four

Dao is like a cup or bowl, yet use it and there exists no

need to fill it.

Profound and deep!, it appears to be the ancestor of the  
ten thousand creatures.

It blunts their sharpness,  
Loosens their tangles,  
Softens their brightness,  
Makes them the same as the dust of the world.

Deep and profound!, it seems to barely exist.  
I do not know whose child it is -  
Its image came before that of god.

#### Five

Heaven and earth are not kind -  
Thus the ten thousand creatures become as straw dogs to  
them.

The sage is not kind -  
Thus the 100 families become as straw dogs to him.

The space between heaven and earth,  
How is it just like a bellows or flute?  
It is empty, yet does not run out.  
The more it moves, and the more it produces.

Too much talking is exceptionally exhausting,  
Which is not as good as maintaining what is within.

#### Six

The spirit of the valley does not die -  
It is called the deep and mysterious feminine.

The gateway of this deep and mysterious feminine -  
It is called the source of heaven and earth.

Unbroken, it seems to exist.  
Using it takes no effort.

#### Seven

Heaven is eternal, earth is enduring.  
The reason that heaven and earth can be eternal and  
enduring

Is because they do not live for themselves.  
Therefore they can live forever.

Thus the sage :  
Puts his self behind others, yet finds his self before them.  
Considers his self extraneous, yet his self survives.

Is this not because he has no self-interests?  
Therefore he can achieve his self-interests.

#### Nine

Holding and filling it  
Are not as good as your stopping short.

Hammering and sharpening it  
Can not be forever maintained.

When gold and jade fill a room,  
There is no one who can protect it.

To have wealth and high rank, but with arrogance -  
Then naturally their loss is your own fault.

When the task is successful, the self should let go of it.  
This is the Way of heaven.

#### Ten

Carrying and managing a body while embracing the One,

Are you able to not separate them?  
Concentrating your Qi to become soft,  
Are you able to be like a newborn infant?  
Cleansing and clearing your deep and mysterious  
perception,  
Are you able to be without blemish?  
Loving the citizens and governing the nation,  
Are you able to use non-action?  
Opening and closing the gateway of heaven,  
Are you able to serve as the feminine?  
Attaining clear insight in all directions,  
Are you able to not use your knowledge?

Creating them and raising them,  
Creating but not possessing,  
Acting but not concerned with the results,  
Leading yet not governing -  
This is called deep and mysterious De.

### Thirteen

Favor and disgrace seem alarming.  
High rank brings great suffering if you have a self.

What is meant by "favor and disgrace seem alarming"?  
Favor makes you the inferior, so gaining it seems  
alarming.  
Losing it also seems alarming.  
This is what is meant by "favor and disgrace seem  
alarming".

What is meant by "high rank brings great suffering if  
you have a self"?  
I am the reason that I have great suffering, I who act like  
I have a self.  
When I am without a self, how could I have suffering?

Therefore : he who is high ranking and uses his self to  
serve the world -  
It seems he can thus be entrusted with the world!  
He who is loving and uses his self to serve the world -  
It seems he can thus be entrusted with the world!

### Fourteen

Look, it is not seen; its name is called elusive.  
Listen, it is not heard; its name is called tenuous.  
Grasp, it is not gotten; its name is called subtle and  
obscure.  
These three things can not be investigated any further -  
Therefore they blend and become one.

This one thing :  
Its highest point is not bright;  
Its lowest point is not dark.  
Continuous and unending!, it can not be named;  
It returns to non-existence.  
It is called the form of that which is without-form;  
The image of non-existence.  
It is called confusing and indistinct.  
Meet it and you do not see its beginning;  
Follow it and you do not see its end.

Hold fast to the Way of the ancients  
In order to master the present moment.  
The ability to know the ancient beginning -  
This is called the main principle of Dao.

### Fifteen

The virtue of the ancients made them who were scholars  
subtle, mysterious, obscure, deep, and penetrating.  
Their mysterious depths can not be understood.

Now : only because they can not be understood,

Therefore we try to emulate their appearance :  
Hesitant!, as if crossing a winter stream.  
Wary!, as if afraid of their neighbors all around.  
Respectful!, they are like a visiting guest.  
Yielding!, like ice that is about to break off.  
Honest and genuine!, they are like the uncarved block.  
Wide and open!, they are like a valley.  
Unclear!, they are like muddy water.

Who can take muddy water and use stillness to slowly and  
gently make it pure and clear?  
Who can take what is tranquil and use continual movement  
to slowly and gently bring it to life?

He who maintains this Way does not desire to be full.  
Now : only because he is not full,  
Thus he can be hidden and unfinished.

### Sixteen

Attain the utmost emptiness.  
Maintain a profound stillness.

The ten thousand creatures arise in unison,  
And thus I observe their return.  
Now : all the myriad creatures return to their source.  
Returning to the source speaks of stillness.  
Stillness is called returning to the natural order.  
Returning to the natural order speaks of the  
ever-constant.

Knowing the ever-constant speaks of insight.  
Not knowing the ever-constant is foolish and creates  
misfortune.

Knowing the ever-constant leads to tolerance.  
Being tolerant leads to being just and unbiased.  
Being just and unbiased leads to being kingly.  
Being kingly leads to heaven.  
Heaven leads to Dao.  
Dao leads to what endures.

When the self disappears, there can be no danger.

### Twenty

Renounce learning and be without worry.

“Yes” together with “yeah” -  
What is their mutual distance or nearness?  
Beautiful together with ugliness -  
What is their mutual distance or similarity?

That which people fear, they are not able to not fear.  
How ridiculous! They are not yet centered!

Everyone is very festive,  
As if enjoying the Tai Lao sacrifice,  
As if climbing terraces in the spring.  
I alone am unmoved! -  
Like one who has not yet given any sign,  
Like a newborn infant who does not yet act like a baby.  
Very tired and worn out!, as if without a place to return  
to.

Everyone all has more than they need;  
I alone seem to have lost everything.  
I have the heart/mind of a foolish person, indeed!!  
I am very mixed up and confused!

Common people are very clear and bright;  
I alone seem confused.  
Common people are very observant and alert;  
I alone am very gloomy and depressed.  
Tranquil!, they are like the ocean;

I drift on the wind!, as if without a place to rest.  
Everyone all has a purpose;  
I alone am stupid and stubborn, and appear mean and shallow.

I alone am different compared to other people,  
And value the food of the mother.

#### Twenty one

The greatest De is possible only when Dao is followed.

The action of Dao on creatures is just indistinct, just confusing.

Confusing! and indistinct!, within it exists image.

Indistinct! and confusing!, within it exists things.

Obscure! and dark!, within it exists essence.

Its essence is extremely real and true.

Within it exists truth.

From the present reaching to antiquity,

Its name has not departed -

Thus I observe the father of the multitudes.

How do I thus know the father of the multitudes is like this?

By means of this.

#### Twenty three

Minimal words are naturally so.

Therefore : strong winds do not last the entire morning,

Sudden rains do not last the entire day.

Who makes these things? Heaven and earth.

Even heaven and earth can not maintain them forever,

And so how much less can people?

Therefore : of those who engage in Dao -

He who Daos is one with Dao.

He who Des is one with De.

He who loses is one with the loss.

For he who is one with Dao,

Dao is also pleased to have him.

For he who is one with De,

De is also pleased to have him.

For he who is one with loss,

Loss is also pleased to have him.

If you do not trust enough, then you will not have anyone's trust.

#### Twenty four

He who stands on tiptoe does not really stand.

He who stands astride can not travel.

He who displays himself does not have insight.

He who considers himself correct does not distinguish himself.

He who boasts about himself is without merit.

He who brags about himself does not endure.

He who lives in Dao -

Calls these leftover food and unnecessary behavior.

Creatures detest them, no matter what.

Therefore : he who possesses Dao does not live by them.

#### Twenty five

Something existed unformed yet complete,

Before heaven and earth were created.

Silent! Empty!

Standing alone, not changing.

It circulates everywhere, and causes no danger.

It can be considered the mother of the world.

I do not know its name;  
Its symbol is called Dao.  
If I tried to make its name, I would call it great.  
Being great speaks of departing.  
Departing speaks of being remote.  
Being remote speaks of returning.

Dao is great,  
Heaven is great,  
Earth is great,  
The king is also great.  
Within the realm exist four that are great,  
And the king resides as one of them!

People follow the earth.  
The earth follows heaven.  
Heaven follows Dao.  
Dao follows what is naturally so.

### Twenty eight

Know your maleness, but maintain your femaleness.  
Serve as a stream to the world.  
Serving as a stream to the world,  
The ever-constant De will not depart,  
Returning you to the state of the newborn infant.

Know your brightness, but maintain your darkness.  
Serve as an example to the world.  
Serving as an example to the world,  
The ever-constant De will not falter,  
Returning you to the state of the limitless.

Know your honor, but maintain your disgrace.  
Serve as a valley to the world.  
Serving as a valley to the world,  
The ever-constant De will then be sufficient,  
Returning you to the state of the uncarved block.

When the uncarved block is broken up, then it becomes  
tools.  
When the sage uses it, then he becomes the senior  
government official.  
Therefore : the greatest cutting does not divide.

### Thirty

He who uses Dao to assist the master of the people  
Does not use weapons or strength on the world,  
For his troubles would likely return -  
In the dwelling places of armies, thorns and brambles are  
produced,  
And so what is left behind a great army must have a bad  
year.

He who has virtue gets results and stops.  
He does not dare to take by using strength.  
He gets results, but never brags.  
Gets results, but never boasts.  
Gets results, but is not arrogant.  
Gets results, but only when he has no choice.  
Gets results, but never uses strength.

When creatures are robust but old,  
This is called "not Dao".  
That which is "not Dao" has an early finish.

### Thirty one

Now : fine weapons, they are not tools of good fortune.  
Creatures detest them, no matter what.  
Therefore : he who possesses Dao does not live by them.  
When a noble man is in his dwelling, then he honors the  
left.

When he commands troops, then he honors the right.

Weapons, they are not tools of good fortune.  
They are not the tools of a noble man.  
When he has no choice but to use them,  
To be calm and indifferent is superior -  
Never pleased, indeed!  
And he who is pleased enjoys killing people.

Now : he who enjoys killing people  
Can not get what he desires from the world!

Therefore : in fortunate affairs honor the left,  
In unfortunate affairs honor the right.  
Thus the assistant general of the army resides on the left,  
The supreme general of the army resides on the right.

Thus we say they are dwelling at a funeral :  
When many people are killed,  
Then mourn and weep with grief for them.  
Victory in war thus means they will dwell at a funeral.

### Thirty two

Dao is ever-constantly without-name.

Even though the concept of the uncarved block seems  
insignificant,  
No one in the world can conquer it.  
If nobles and kings could maintain it,  
The ten thousand creatures would naturally obey.  
Heaven and earth would join with each other,  
Thus dropping a sweet dew.  
There are no citizens who would make this happen,  
Yet it would be naturally fair and impartial.

And so, begin to divide and you have names.  
Once names exist,  
Men should also be ready to know when to stop.  
Knowing when to stop is the reason that there is no  
danger.

An analogy for the action of Dao in the world :  
It is similar to a stream in a valley that becomes part of a  
large river or ocean.

### Thirty four

Great Dao is like a vast flood!  
It is able to flow left and right.

The ten thousand creatures depend on it in order for life,  
And are not rejected.  
It accomplishes its tasks successfully,  
Yet does not possess a name.  
It clothes and supports the ten thousand creatures,  
But does not act as their master.

Therefore : since it is ever-constantly without-desire,  
It can then be named insignificant.

Since the ten thousand creatures return to it  
But it does not act as their master,  
It can then be named great.

Thus the sage can achieve greatness  
Because he does not act great.  
Therefore he can achieve greatness.

### Thirty five

Holding fast to the great image,  
The entire world comes towards you.  
Comes towards you, and meeting with no harm,  
There is the greatest peace and calm.

Music together with good food make passing guests stay,  
But Dao's words are bland!  
They are without flavor.

Look for it, there is not enough to see.  
Listen for it, there is not enough to hear.  
Use it, there is not enough to exhaust.

### Thirty seven

Dao ever-constantly resides in non-action,  
Yet nothing is left undone.

If nobles and kings could maintain it,  
The ten thousand creatures would naturally transform.  
Transform, and if desire arises,  
I would restrain it by means of the nameless uncarved  
block.

In the state of the nameless uncarved block,  
Men also would be without-desire.  
Not desiring, thus they would be still -  
And the world would naturally settle.

### Thirty nine

Of those who in ancient times attained oneness :  
Heaven attained oneness, thus becoming pure and clear.  
Earth attained oneness, thus becoming stable.  
Spirit attained oneness, thus becoming potent.  
The valley attained oneness, thus becoming full.  
The ten thousand creatures attained oneness, thus  
becoming alive.  
Nobles and kings attained oneness, thus serving the  
world faithfully.  
They attained it.

If heaven could not use its purity and clarity,  
I fear it would split apart.  
If earth could not use its stability,  
I fear it would erupt.  
If spirit could not use its potency,  
I fear it would cease to be.  
If the valley could not use its fullness,  
I fear it would be used up.  
If the ten thousand creatures could not use their life,  
I fear they would be destroyed.  
If nobles and kings could not use their high rank and  
prominence,  
I fear they would fall.

Therefore : humility thus serves as the source of high  
rank;  
Low thus serves as the foundation of high.  
Thus nobles and kings call themselves orphaned, lonely,  
and unlucky.  
Does this not mean that humility thus serves as the  
source?  
Does it not?

Therefore : to attain exceptional popularity is to be  
without popularity -  
Do not desire to be scarce like jade,  
But common like rock.

### Forty one

The superior scholar hearing of Dao works hard and  
practices it.  
The average scholar hearing of Dao seems to keep it,  
seems to lose it.  
The inferior scholar hearing of Dao laughs greatly at it.  
If he did not laugh, it would not be qualified to be Dao.



Therefore : in the established sayings that exist, it is  
said -  
Insight into Dao seems like darkness.  
Advancing in Dao seems like retreating.  
Smooth Dao seems knotted.  
Superior De seems like a valley.  
The greatest purity seems like disgrace.  
The most extensive De seems like it is not enough.  
Established De seems aimless.  
Real and true character seems inconsistent.

The greatest region is without borders.  
The greatest vessel is last to be completed.  
The greatest tone is a tenuous sound.  
The greatest image is without-form.  
Dao is hidden and without-name.

Now : only Dao is good at beginning and also good at  
completing.

#### Forty four

Fame and self : which do you love?  
Self and property : which is greater?  
Gain and loss : which is the affliction?

Extreme desire must lead to great expense.  
Collecting too much must lead to substantial loss.

Knowing when you have enough, there can be no  
disgrace.  
Knowing when to stop, there can be no danger.  
Then you can forever endure.

#### Fifty one

Dao creates them,  
De raises them,  
Things shape them,  
Circumstances complete them.

Thus among the ten thousand creatures,  
There are none who do not respect Dao and honor De.  
Respect of Dao,  
Honor of De -  
Now : there is no one who commands this,  
Yet it is always naturally so.

Therefore : Dao creates them, De raises them.  
Leads them, nourishes them,  
Shelters them, heals them,  
Supports them, protects them.

Creating but not possessing,  
Acting but not concerned with the results,  
Leading yet not governing -  
This is called deep and mysterious De.

#### Fifty two

The world had a beginning,  
Which can be considered the mother of the world.  
Once you have realized its mother,  
You thus know her children.  
Once you know her children,  
Return to and maintain their mother.

When the self disappears, there can be no danger.

Block your senses, close your gateway -  
All your life you will not struggle.  
Open your senses, be successful in your duties -  
All your life you will not have relief.

Seeing the insignificant speaks of insight.

Maintaining softness speaks of strength.  
Use your brightness to return to your insight.  
Do not lose your self in misfortune.  
This is called practicing the ever-constant.

#### Fifty five

He who embodies the substance of De  
Can be compared to a newborn child :  
Wasps, scorpions, snakes, and serpents do not sting him,  
Fierce beasts do not seize him,  
Birds of prey do not claw him.  
His bones are weak, his muscles are soft, yet his grasp is  
firm and strong.  
He has not yet known the union of female and male, yet  
his penis rises.  
He has the utmost essence, indeed!  
He cries the entire day yet does not get hoarse.  
He has the utmost harmony, indeed!

Knowing harmony speaks of the ever-constant.  
Knowing the ever-constant speaks of insight.  
Benefitting life speaks of good fortune.  
Heart/mind making Qi speaks of strength.

When creatures are robust but old,  
We call them "not Dao".  
That which is "not Dao" has an early finish.

#### Fifty six

He who knows does not speak;  
He who speaks does not know.

Block your senses, close your gateway.  
Blunt your sharpness,  
Loosen your tangles,  
Soften your brightness,  
Be the same as the dust of the world.  
This is called a deep and mysterious sameness.

Therefore : you can not gain it and be friendly,  
Can not gain it and be unfriendly,  
Can not gain it and benefit,  
Can not gain it and cause harm,  
Can not gain it and have high rank,  
Can not gain it and be lowly.

Therefore you become valuable to the world.

### **LATE**

#### Three

Not honoring those who are esteemable  
Ensures that the citizens do not strive.  
Not valuing rare goods  
Ensures that the citizens do not act like thieves.  
Not showing that which can be desired  
Ensures that the citizens' heart/minds do not become  
confused.

Thus the governing of the sage  
Empties their heart/minds, fills their stomachs,  
Weakens their ambitions, strengthens their bones.

By always ensuring that the citizens are  
without-knowledge and without-desire,  
Those who make men wise will not dare to act.

Act with non-action, then all will be governed!

#### Eight

The highest virtue is like water -

Water's virtue benefits the ten thousand creatures, yet it does not strive.

It dwells in places that everyone detests,  
Therefore it is almost comparable to Dao!

In dwelling, the virtue is in the land.

In your heart/mind, the virtue is in being profound and deep.

In relations, the virtue is in being kind.

In speech, the virtue is in being truthful.

In governing, the virtue is in being honest and just.

In your duties, the virtue is in being competent.

In action, the virtue is in the timing.

Now : only because there is no striving,  
Therefore there is no blame.

### Twelve

The five colors can make people's eyes blind.

The five tones can make people's ears deaf.

The five flavors can make people's mouths dull.

Excessive hunting and horse racing can make people's heart/minds become wild.

Rare goods can make people's behavior corrupt.

Thus the sage :

Acts on what is inside, he does not act on what he sees.

Therefore he leaves that and chooses this.

### Seventeen

The existence of the best ruler is barely known to the people.

Next is one who they love and praise.

Next is one who they fear.

Next is one who they ridicule.

If the ruler does not trust enough, then he will not have anyone's trust.

Thoughtful!, he values his words.

When tasks are accomplished and duties are successful,  
The 100 families all say "we are naturally so".

### Eighteen

When the great Dao is abandoned,

There exists kindness and morality.

When intelligence and wisdom arise,

There exists a great deal of deception.

When the six relationships are not in harmony,

There exists devoted children and loving parents.

When the nation and the families are very confused,

There exists loyal officials.

### Nineteen

Renounce sacredness, abandon wisdom,

And the citizens benefit 100-fold.

Renounce kindness, abandon morality,

And the citizens return to being devoted children and loving parents.

Renounce cleverness, abandon profit,

And thieves and bandits will not exist.

These three things thus make a civilized society, but are not enough.

Therefore : to ensure the citizens have a place to belong-  
See the simplicity,

Embrace the concept of the uncarved block,  
Less selfishness,  
Fewer desires.

#### Twenty two

What is wrong then becomes whole and perfect.  
What is bent then becomes straight.  
What is hollow then becomes filled.  
What is worn out then becomes new.  
Have little, then gain.  
Have too much, then become confused.

Thus the sage :  
Embraces the One, thus serving as an example to the  
world -  
He does not display himself, therefore he has insight.  
Does not consider himself correct, therefore he  
distinguishes himself.  
Does not boast about himself, therefore he possesses  
merit.  
Does not brag about himself, therefore he endures.

Now : only because he does not strive,  
Therefore no one in the world can strive against him.

That which the ancients say :  
"He who is wrong then becomes whole and perfect" -  
How can these be empty words?  
Be truly whole and perfect, and return to it.

#### Twenty seven

A good traveler is without wagon track or footprint.  
A good speaker is without flaw or disgrace.  
A good accountant does not use counting tokens.  
A good barrier is without bar or lock, yet can not be  
opened.  
A good binding is without cord or restraint, yet can not  
be loosened.

Thus the sage :  
Is always good at helping people,  
Therefore he does not abandon people.  
Is always good at helping creatures,  
Therefore he does not abandon creatures.  
This is called following your insight.

Therefore : he who is a virtuous person is the teacher of  
he who is not a virtuous person.  
He who is not a virtuous person is the resource of he  
who is a virtuous person.  
If the latter does not value his teacher,  
Or the former does not love his resource,  
Even if there is wisdom, there will be great confusion.  
This is called the essential subtle mystery.

#### Twenty nine

Would you take hold of the world and control it?  
I see you have no choice.

Now : the world is a divine vessel,  
You can not control it (indeed!).  
He who acts, ruins it;  
He who grasps, loses it.

Therefore : creatures are  
Sometimes active, sometimes passive,  
Sometimes breathe heavy, sometimes breathe easy,  
Sometimes strong, sometimes weak,  
Sometimes oppressed, sometimes overthrown.

Thus the sage :  
Removes the extremes,

Removes the extravagant and wasteful,  
Removes the arrogance.

### Thirty eight

A man of highest De does not use his De, thus he  
possesses De.

A man of inferior De does not lose his De, thus he is  
without De.

A man of highest De uses non-action, and acts without  
motive.

A man of inferior De coerces others, and has a motive to  
act.

A man of highest kindness coerces others, and acts  
without motive.

A man of highest morality coerces others, and has a  
motive to act.

A man of highest propriety coerces others, and if there  
is no one who responds,

Then he rolls up his sleeves and keeps doing it.

Therefore : lose Dao, and later comes De.

Lose De, and later comes kindness.

Lose kindness, and later comes morality.

Lose morality, and later comes propriety.

Now : propriety is that which is merely the appearance  
of loyalty and honesty,

And the beginning of confusion.

He who is ahead in knowledge has the flower of Dao,  
But the beginning of stupidity and foolishness.

Thus the greatest elders :

Live by Dao's substance, and do not dwell on Dao's  
appearance.

Live on Dao's fruit, and do not dwell on Dao's flower.

Therefore they leave that and choose this.

### Forty five

Great achievement seems incomplete,  
But its usefulness is not impaired.

Great fullness is like a cup or bowl,  
Its usefulness is not exhausted.

Great straightness seems bent.  
Great skillfulness seems clumsy.  
Great debaters seem slow of speech.

Restlessness conquers cold.

Stillness conquers heat.

Purity and clarity along with stillness makes the world  
proper and correct.

### Forty six

When the world possesses Dao,  
Riding horses are nonetheless used for manure.

When the world is without Dao,  
War-horses are bred in the countryside.

There is no fault greater than the capacity for desire.  
There is no misfortune greater than not knowing when  
you have enough.

There is no error greater than desire for gain.

Therefore : knowing the sufficiency of having enough,  
there is always enough!

### Forty seven

You do not have to go out the door

In order to to know the world.  
You do not have to look out the window  
In order to to know the Way of heaven.

The farther you go out,  
You know even less.

Thus the sage :  
Does not travel, yet knows.  
Does not display himself, yet has a reputation.  
Does not act, yet accomplishes.

#### Forty eight

The actions of those who learn daily increase.  
The actions of those who Dao daily decrease.  
Decreasing and again decreasing,  
In order to arrive at non-action.

Use non-action, and nothing is left undone.  
To take hold of the world, always use non-interference.  
When you are compelled to interfere,  
Then you are not qualified to take hold of the world.

#### Forty nine

The sage does not have a constant heart/mind,  
Thus the 100 families' heart/minds become his  
heart/mind.

He who is virtuous, I am virtuous to him.  
He who is not virtuous, I am also virtuous to him.  
Because De is virtue.

He who is honest, I am honest with him.  
He who is not honest, I am also honest with him.  
Because De is honesty.

The sage lives in the world, gathering it all in.  
And so he serves the world, merging with their  
heart/minds.

The 100 families all pay attention to their ears and eyes,  
And the sage treats them all like his children.

#### Fifty three

If I correctly use the tiniest bit of knowledge that I  
possess

While travelling on the great Way,  
It is only walking off the path that I need to fear.  
The great Way is extremely even,  
But the citizens are fond of side paths.

Although the royal court is very well-kept,  
The fields are very overgrown with weeds,  
The granaries are very empty.  
While at the court they wear refined multicolored silks,  
Carry sharp swords,  
Stuff themselves with drink and food,  
And have an excess of wealth and goods.

This is called robbery and extravagance,  
Not Dao, indeed!!

#### Fifty four

That which is well established is not uprooted.  
That which is well embraced is not abandoned.  
Thus children and grandchildren offer sacrifices, and so  
sacrifices do not stop.

Cultivate it in the self - your De will then be true and  
real.  
Cultivate it in the family - its De will then be more than

enough.

Cultivate it in the village - its De will then last forever.  
Cultivate it in the nation - its De will then be abundant.  
Cultivate it in the world - its De will then be everywhere.

Therefore : use your self to contemplate the self.  
Use your family to contemplate the family.  
Use your village to contemplate the village.  
Use your nation to contemplate the nation.  
Use the world to contemplate the world.

How do I thus know the world is like this?  
By means of this.

#### Fifty seven

Use honesty and justness when governing a nation.  
Use strange and unusual tactics when commanding  
troops.  
Use non-interference to take hold of the world.  
How do I thus know it is like this?  
By means of this :

The world has many prohibitions and taboos,  
And the citizens become even poorer.  
The citizens have many sharp tools,  
And the nation and the families grow in confusion.  
The people have too much knowledge and cleverness,  
And strange things begin to increase.  
Matters of law are increasingly proclaimed,  
And more thieves and bandits exist.

Therefore : the sage says -  
I use non-action, and the citizens naturally transform.  
I cherish stillness, and the citizens naturally become  
honest and just.  
I use non-interference, and the citizens naturally become  
wealthy.  
I am without-desire, and the citizens naturally return to  
the state of the uncarved block.

#### Fifty eight

If their government is very restrained,  
Its citizens will be very genuine and honest.  
If their government is very observant and alert,  
Its citizens will be very lacking and deficient.

Misfortune! is that which good fortune leans on.  
Good fortune! is that which misfortune lies on.  
Who knows their limits?  
They are not honest and just.  
Honesty and justness returns, becoming strange and  
unusual.  
Virtue returns, becoming weird and strange.

The confusion of the people -  
Its days have indeed been everlasting.

Thus the sage :  
Is honest and does not divide,  
Is honorable and does not injure,  
Is straightforward and does not indulge in excess,  
Is bright but does not dazzle.

#### Fifty nine

When governing people or doing heaven's duties,  
It is better to be sparing.

Now : only when you can be sparing,  
This is called early acceptance.  
Early acceptance is called doubling your accumulation  
of De.  
With a double accumulation of De,

Then everything can be overcome.  
When everything can be overcome,  
Then no one knows your limits.  
When no one knows your limits,  
You can possess the nation.  
Possessing the mother of the nation,  
You can forever endure.

This is called having a deep source and a firm  
foundation,  
The Way of long life and enduring sight.

#### Sixty

Governing a great nation is like cooking a small fish.

Because Dao is present in the world,  
Its ghosts do not have spirit.

Not that its ghosts do not have any spirit,  
But their spirit does not injure people.

Not only does their spirit not injure people,  
The sage also does not injure people.

Now : since these two do not injure each other,  
Therefore their De merges and returns!

#### Sixty one

A great nation is like the lowest places water can flow -  
The merging place of the world,  
The female of the world.

The female always uses stillness to conquer the male.  
By using stillness, she becomes lower-than.

Therefore : if a great nation is lower-than a small nation,  
Then it takes hold of the small nation.  
If a small nation is lower-than a great nation,  
Then it is taken hold of by the great nation.

Therefore : sometimes one nation is lower-than in order  
to take hold of,  
Sometimes one nation is lower-than and then it is taken  
hold of.

A great nation merely desires to combine livestock and  
people,  
A small nation merely desires to get work for its people.  
Now : for both nations to each get that which is their  
desire,  
It is proper for the great nation to be lower-than.

#### Sixty two

That which Daos is the obscure mystery of the ten  
thousand creatures.  
This is the treasure of a virtuous person,  
And that which is the protection of a person who is not  
virtuous.

Beautiful speech can be used in the market,  
Respectful behavior can benefit people.  
People who are not virtuous,  
Why abandon them?

Therefore : when inaugurating the son of heaven,  
Or installing the three nobles -  
Even if you possessed jade disks drawn by a team of  
four horses,  
That is not as good as sitting and offering this Way.

What was the ancients' reason that they valued this Way?  
Did they not say :



Seek in order to obtain,  
Have faults in order to be forgiven?

Therefore Dao becomes valuable to the world.

### Sixty three

Act with non-action.  
Handle duties with non-interference.  
Taste that which is without-flavor.

Greatness is insignificant, too much is less.  
Repay animosity with De.

Plan for the difficult while it is easy.  
Act on the great while it is tiny.  
In the world, difficult duties certainly start while easy.  
In the world, great duties certainly start while tiny.

Thus the sage in the end does not act great,  
Therefore he can achieve his greatness.

Men who make promises lightly, certainly few will trust.  
Men who expect most duties to be easy will certainly  
have many difficulties.

Thus the sage plans for things to be difficult,  
Therefore in the end he is without difficulty!

### Sixty four

What is peaceful is easy to hold.  
What has not yet been revealed is easy to plan for.  
What is brittle is easy to shatter.  
What is minute is easy to scatter.  
Act on it while it does not yet exist.  
Govern them while they are not yet confused.

A tree too big to embrace is created from the tiniest  
shoot.  
A terrace of nine stories rises from a pile of dirt.  
A journey of a thousand miles begins from under the feet.

He who acts, ruins it.  
He who grasps, loses it.

Thus the sage :  
Does not act, therefore he does not ruin.  
Does not grasp, therefore he does not lose.

Citizens are always on the verge of achieving their  
undertakings, yet they ruin them.  
Be as careful in the end as if it was the beginning,  
Then you will not ruin your affairs.

Thus the sage :  
Desires to not desire,  
Does not value rare goods,  
Learns to not learn.

He returns to that which everyone else has passed over,  
Thus helping the ten thousand creatures to be naturally  
so,  
Yet not daring to act.

### Sixty five

The virtue of the ancients (they who acted in Dao),  
Did not use it to enlighten the citizens,  
But would have used it to keep them ignorant -  
The citizens are hard to govern  
Because they have too much knowledge.

Therefore : using knowledge to govern the nation  
Is the bane of the nation.

Not using knowledge to govern the nation  
Is the good fortune of the nation.  
He who has knowledge of these two also has them as  
examples.

To always understand these examples -  
This is called deep and mysterious De.  
Deep and mysterious De is so profound! and remote!  
That when creatures return, it returns with them!  
Then they reach the greatest harmony.

#### Sixty six

The reason that rivers and seas can act as kings of the  
100 valleys  
Is because they are good at being lower-than them.  
Therefore : they can act as kings of the 100 valleys.

Thus the sage :  
In desiring to be above the citizens,  
He must by means of his speech be lower-than them.  
In desiring to be before the citizens,  
He must by means of his self be behind them.

Thus the sage :  
Lives above them, but the citizens are not burdened.  
Lives in front of them, but the citizens are not harmed.  
Thus the world is pleased to promote him, and does not  
tire of him.

Because he does not strive,  
Therefore no one in the world can strive against him.

### **POST-GUODIAN**

#### Eleven

Thirty spokes of a wheel share one hub;  
In its emptiness exists the usefulness of the cart.

Mix water with clay thus making a vessel;  
In its emptiness exists the usefulness of the vessel.

Cut out doors and windows thus making a room;  
In their emptiness exists the usefulness of the room.

Therefore : what exists thus makes a thing profitable;  
Emptiness thus makes it useful.

#### Twenty six

Serious serves as the source of frivolous.  
Stillness serves as the ruler of restlessness.

Thus the noble man travels the entire day,  
And does not stray from his wagon.  
He is serious, even though glorious sights and feasts  
exist;  
He lives above them, like this.

So how could one be the master of ten thousand chariots,  
And conduct his self frivolously in the world?

Be frivolous, then lose the source.  
Be restless, then lose the rulership.

#### Thirty three

He who knows people is wise;  
He who knows himself has insight.

He who is victorious over people possesses power;  
He who is victorious over himself is strong.

He who knows he has enough is wealthy;  
He who uses force possesses ambition.

He who does not lose his place endures;  
He who dies yet does not perish has longevity.

### Thirty six

When you are about to gather something,  
You must have originally spread it out.  
When you are about to weaken something,  
You must have originally strengthened it.  
When you are about to abandon something,  
You must have originally been interested in it.  
When you are about to seize something,  
You must have originally given it.

This is called subtle and obscure insight.

What is soft and weak conquers what is hard and strong.

Fish can not escape from the deep;  
The sharp tools of the nation  
Can not be shown to the people.

### Forty

The movement of Dao returns things.  
The function of Dao is to weaken things.

The ten thousand creatures of the world are created from  
being;  
Being is created from non-being.

### Forty two

Dao creates one.  
One creates two.  
Two creates three.  
Three creates the ten thousand creatures.  
The ten thousand creatures carry Yin and embrace Yang,  
Pouring their Qi together, thus becoming harmonious.

That which people detest :  
Being alone, orphaned, lonely, and unlucky -  
Yet kings and nobles thus name themselves.

Therefore : creatures  
Sometimes lose, yet they gain;  
Sometimes gain, yet they lose.

That which people teach, I also teach :  
Those who are bullies and hoodlums do not meet their  
natural death.  
I will thus become their elder teacher.

### Forty three

The softest things of the world  
Overrun the hardest things of the world.

Non-being can enter where there is no space in between.  
Thus I know that non-action has benefits.

The teaching of no-talking,  
The benefit of non-action -  
Few in the world attain these.

### Fifty

Between coming out into life and entering death,  
Followers of life are 3 in 10.  
Followers of death are 3 in 10.  
People whose lives are merely moving them towards the  
place of death  
Are also 3 in 10.

Now : what is the reason?  
Because they live life for its substance.

But I have heard that he who is skilled at taking in life  
Can travel the mountains and does not meet rhino or  
tiger,  
Can enter a battle not wearing armor or weapons.  
The rhino has no place to thrust its horns,  
The tiger has no place to use its claws,  
The weapon has no place to allow its blade.

Now : what is the reason?  
Because for him there is no place of death.

#### Sixty seven

In the world, all say I am great,  
But do not seem to be like everyone else.  
Now : only because I am not like everyone else,  
therefore I can be great.  
If I was like everyone else,  
Long ago! I would have become insignificant, indeed!

Now : I possess three treasures -  
Hold and maintain them.  
The first is called compassion,  
The second is called economy,  
The third is called not daring to act first in the world.

With compassion, you can therefore be brave.  
With economy, you can therefore expand.  
By not daring to act first in the world,  
Therefore you can achieve the capacity for leadership.

At present, people abandon compassion but also try to be  
brave,  
Abandon economy but also try to expand,  
Abandon being behind but also try to be first -  
This is death!

Now : when compassion is used in war, the consequence  
is victory.  
When it is used for protection, the consequence is  
strength.  
When heaven would help you,  
Using compassion it protects you.

#### Sixty eight

He who is good at being a scholar is not militant.  
He who is good at war does not get angry.  
He who is good at conquering the enemy does not  
engage them.  
He who is good at making use of people acts lower-than  
them.

This is called the De of not striving.  
This is called the power of making use of people.  
This is called joining the elite of heaven's ancients,  
indeed!

#### Sixty nine

Those who command troops have a saying :  
I dare not act like the master, but instead act like a guest.  
Dare not advance an inch, but instead retreat a foot.

This is called marching without marching,  
Seizing without using your arms,  
Routing without having an enemy,  
Defending without using weapons.

There is no misfortune greater than underestimating the  
enemy.  
By underestimating the enemy, I nearly lose my

treasures.

Therefore : when armies on opposing sides are evenly  
matched,  
Then they who mourn will be victorious!

#### Seventy

My words are very easy to understand,  
Very easy to practice.  
But there is no one in the world who can understand  
them,  
There is no one who can practice them.

My words possess a lineage,  
My duties possess a ruler.

Now : only because I am without-knowledge,  
Thus I am not understood.  
Those who understand me are rare,  
Consequently I am one who is valued!

Thus the sage wears coarse cloth, but carries jade in his  
heart.

#### Seventy one

Knowing that you do not know is honorable!  
Not knowing that you know is a sickness!

Now : only when you are sick of sickness,  
Thus you are not sick.

The sage is not sick  
Because he is sick of sickness.  
Thus he is not sick.

#### Seventy two

If the citizens do not fear your authority,  
Then a greater authority will arrive!

Do not disrespect their dwellings,  
Do not despise their livelihood.

Now : only because you do not despise them,  
Thus they will not tire of you.

Thus the sage :  
Knows himself but not display himself,  
Loves himself but does not exalt himself.  
Therefore he leaves that and chooses this.

#### Seventy three

When your courage lies in daring,  
The consequence is killing.  
When your courage lies in not daring,  
The consequence is survival.

These two choices, they sometimes cause benefit,  
sometimes cause harm.  
That which heaven detests - who knows its reasons?

The Way of heaven :  
Does not strive, yet skillfully achieves its goals.  
Does not speak, yet skillfully responds.  
Does not summon, yet everything naturally comes to it.  
Is certainly unhurried, yet skillfully prepares.

Heaven's net is extremely vast;  
It is wide meshed, yet does not fail.

#### Seventy four

If the citizens do not fear death,  
How can you use death to frighten them?  
Assuming you could ensure that the citizens always fear  
death,  
And I get hold of those who act strange and unusual and  
kill them,  
Then who would be daring?

There will always exist an executioner.  
Now : to take the place of the executioner to do the  
killing,  
This is called taking the place of a great craftsman to  
carve wood.  
Now : of those who take the place of a great craftsman to  
carve wood,  
Few will not injure their hand!

#### Seventy five

The citizens are hungry  
Because their superiors eat too much of their taxes.  
Thus they are hungry.

The citizens are hard to govern  
Because their superiors are compelled to take action.  
Thus they are hard to govern.

The citizens take death lightly  
Because they seek the substance of life.  
Thus they take death lightly.

Now : only he who has no use for being alive  
Is virtuous compared to he who values living.

#### Seventy six

The people are born (indeed!) soft and weak.  
They die (indeed!) hard and inflexible.  
The ten thousand creatures, the grass and trees, are born  
(indeed!) soft and fragile.  
They die (indeed!) dried and withered.

Therefore : that which is hard and inflexible is a follower  
of death.  
That which is soft and weak is a follower of life.

Thus if a weapon is inflexible, the consequence is defeat.  
If a tree is inflexible, then it snaps.

Inflexible and great dwell below.  
Soft and weak dwell above.

#### Seventy seven

The Way of heaven, how it is just like stretching a bow?  
He who is high is pressed down by it.  
He who is low is lifted by it.  
He who has excess is reduced by it.  
He who does not have enough is filled by it.

The Way of heaven  
Reduces what has excess and fills what does not have  
enough.  
The Way of people on the other hand is not like this,  
And takes from those who do not have enough in order to  
offer it to those who have too much.

Who can have too much and offer it to the world?  
Only he who possesses Dao.

Thus the sage :  
Acts, but is not concerned with the results.  
Accomplishes his tasks, but does not dwell on them.  
He does not desire to display his virtue.

### Seventy eight

In the world, nothing is softer and weaker than water.  
Yet for attacking that which is hard and strong,  
There is nothing that can surpass it.  
This is because it endlessly replaces itself.

Weakness conquers strength.  
Softness conquers hardness.  
In the world, there is no one who does not know this,  
But there is no one who can practice it.

Thus the sage says :  
Accepting upon oneself the disgrace of the nation  
Is called being master of the shrines.  
Accepting upon oneself the misfortune of the nation  
Is called being king of the world.

Honest words seem contrary.

### Seventy nine

Harmonize a great resentment,  
And there must exist some remaining resentment.  
How can this be considered good?

Thus the sage :  
Holds the left side of an agreement,  
But does not demand payment of people.

Therefore : to have De is to take charge of your  
agreements;  
To be without De is to take charge of taking away from  
others.

The Way of heaven, while without favor,  
Is always with virtuous people.

### Eighty

In a small nation with few citizens :  
Ensure that it has the weapons of ten nobles, but does not  
use them.  
Ensure that the citizens take death seriously, and do not  
migrate far.  
Even though they have boats and carriages, there is no  
place to take advantage of them.  
Even though they have armor and weapons, there is no  
place to display them.

Ensure that the citizens return to knotting ropes and using  
them,  
Find deliciousness in their food,  
Beauty in their clothes,  
Contentment in their dwellings,  
Happiness in their customs.

Although neighboring nations overlook one another,  
And sounds of roosters and dogs can be heard in one  
another -  
The citizens reach old age and die,  
And do not come and go between one another.

### Eighty one

True words are not beautiful;  
Beautiful words are not true.

He who has virtue does not argue;  
He who argues does not have virtue.

He who knows is not learned;  
He who is learned does not know.

The sage does not accumulate things -

Since through serving people, the more one has;  
Since through giving to people, one has even more.

The Way of heaven benefits and does not cause harm.  
The Way of the sage acts yet does not strive.

*As mentioned above, chapter 2 seems to be a truly "mongrel" chapter, with characteristics that indicate it belongs to all three layers, and none of them. Therefore, it is presented here, separate from the other layers.*

## Two

In the world, when all know that the action of beauty is  
beautiful, then ugliness ensues.  
When all know that the action of good is goodness, then  
not-good ensues.

Therefore : being and non-being create each other,  
Difficult and easy complete each other,  
Long and short contrast each other,  
High and low lean on each other,  
Tone and voice harmonize each other,  
Before and after follow each other.

Thus the sage :  
Lives by using non-action in his duties,  
And practicing no-talking in his teachings.

The ten thousand creatures arise, but do not have a  
beginning.  
Creating but not possessing;  
Acting, but not concerned with the results;  
Accomplishing tasks, but not dwelling on them.

Now : only because there is no dwelling,  
Thus the results do not depart.

## **WHAT WOULD THE SAGE DO?**

Thus the sage :  
Lives by using non-action in his duties,  
And practicing no-talking in his teachings.

Thus the governing of the sage  
Empties their heart/minds, fills their bellies,  
Weakens their ambitions, strengthens their bones.

The sage is not kind;  
Thus the 100 families become as straw dogs to him.

Thus the sage :  
Puts his self behind others, yet finds his self before them.  
Considers his self extraneous, yet his self survives.  
Is this not because he has no self-interests?  
Therefore he can achieve his self-interests.

Thus the sage :  
Acts on what is inside, he does not act on what he sees.  
Therefore he leaves that and chooses this.

Thus the sage :  
Embraces the One, thus serving as an example to the  
world -  
He does not display himself, therefore he has insight.  
Does not consider himself correct, therefore he  
distinguishes himself.  
Does not boast about himself, therefore he possesses  
merit.  
Does not brag about himself, therefore he endures.  
Now : only because he does not strive,  
Therefore no one in the world can strive against him.

Thus the sage :  
Is always good at helping people,



Therefore he does not abandon people.  
Is always good at helping creatures,  
Therefore he does not abandon creatures.  
This is called following your insight.

Thus the sage :  
Removes the extremes,  
Removes the extravagant and wasteful,  
Removes the arrogance.

Thus the sage can achieve greatness  
Because he does not act great.  
Therefore he can achieve greatness.

Thus the sage :  
Does not travel, yet knows.  
Does not display himself, yet has a reputation.  
Does not act, yet accomplishes.

The sage does not have a constant heart/mind,  
Thus the 100 families' heart/minds become his  
heart/mind.

The sage lives in the world, taking it all in.  
And so he serves the world, merging with their  
heart/minds.

The 100 families all pay attention to their ears and eyes,  
And the sage treats them all like his children.

Therefore : the sage says -  
I use non-action, and the citizens naturally transform.  
I cherish stillness, and the citizens naturally become  
honest and just.  
I use non-interference, and the citizens naturally become  
wealthy.  
I am without-desire, and the citizens naturally return to  
the state of the uncarved block.

Thus the sage :  
Is honest and does not divide,  
Is honorable and does not injure,  
Is straightforward and does not indulge in excess,  
Is bright but does not dazzle.

The sage also does not injure people.

Thus the sage in the end does not act great,  
Therefore he can achieve his greatness.

Thus the sage plans for things to be difficult,  
Therefore in the end he is without difficulty!

Thus the sage :  
Does not act, therefore he does not ruin.  
Does not grasp, therefore he does not lose.

Thus the sage :  
Desires to not desire,  
Does not value rare goods,  
Learns to not learn.

Thus the sage :  
In desiring to be above the citizens,  
He must by means of his speech be lower-than them.  
In desiring to be before the citizens,  
He must by means of his self be behind them.

Thus the sage :  
Lives above them, but the citizens are not burdened.  
Lives in front of them, but the citizens are not harmed.  
Thus the world is pleased to promote him, and does not  
tire of him.

Thus the sage wears coarse cloth, but carries jade in his heart.

The sage is not sick  
Because he is sick of sickness.  
Thus he is not sick.

Thus the sage :  
Knows himself but not display himself,  
Loves himself but does not exalt himself.  
Therefore he leaves that and chooses this.

Thus the sage :  
Acts, but is not concerned with the results.  
Accomplishes his tasks, but does not dwell on them.  
He does not desire to display his virtue.

Thus the sage says :  
Accepting upon oneself the disgrace of the nation  
Is called being master of the shrines.  
Accepting upon oneself the misfortune of the nation  
Is called being king of the world.

Thus the sage :  
Holds the left side of an agreement,  
But does not demand payment of people.

The sage does not accumulate things -  
Since through serving people, the more one has;  
Since through giving to people, one has even more.

The Way of the sage acts yet does not strive.

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