

with great power, comes great responsibility



**I-Ching & The World of Metaphysics
Dao De Ching -Laozhe 2.500 years ago**

Chapter One of Dao De Ching (The Book of Dao by Laozhe)

Dao and The Name

The Tao that can be told of is not the Absolute Tao
The names that can be given are not enduring and unchanging names.
As the origin of heaven and earth, it is nameless
As the mother of all things, it is nameable.
Therefore, when one is without passion, he is bale to see things at inner essence.
Therefore, when one is full if worldly or mundane desire, he can see things at outer aspects.
These two denominations bear the same origin but with different names.
Both of them may be called the Cosmic Mystery.
Reaching from the mystery and then into deeper mystery, one can find the door to the secret of life.

Tao- the way, the path, the indescribable abstruse source of cosmic energy.

Chapter Two

The Theory of Opposites

When the people know beauty as beauty,
Ugliness may arise
When the people know the good deeds as good,
Evil deed may arise
Therefore:
Being and non-being interdependent in growth,
Difficult and easy complement each other,
Long and short exhibit in contrast.
High and low, set measure in position.
Voice and sound are in harmony with each other,
Front and rear follow each other/
Therefore the Sage:
Manages affairs and teach people by following the rules of the nature rather than on the mood of debate.
When all things take their rise in growth, he will render effort,
He gives them life, but does not take possession of them.
He acts but does not take pride.
Having accomplishment, he claims no credit.
Because he does not claim credit, his glory is everlasting.



Chapter Three

Method of Non-ado and use of law of nature to govern the people

By not glorifying the talented, people will not fight for glory and position

By not valuing rare objects, people will stop from stealing (crime)

By not seeing things with wanton desire people's minds will not be disturbed

Therefore the Sage governs the people by:

Emptying their minds of evil desires,

Providing them with enough food

Weakening their strong ambitions and

Strengthening their bodies

In this way the people may maintain peace and harmony without mundane knowledge and desires

With such teaching given to the people, even the cunning and ambitious leaders dare not act recklessly

Thus by practicing non-ado and law of nature, may all live in peace.

Chapter 4-Tao's Power and Usage

Tao (way appears empty and void but its energy so produced for nourishing all things is inexhaustible.

Fathomless! It seems to be the origin of all things

Its sharp edges round off

Its tangles united

Its light existed everywhere in harmony

Its existence found even in dusty places

Tao, being so pure and abstruse, seems to be present everywhere

I do not know whose Son it is

An appearance of what existed before God

Chapter 5-Heaven and the Sage

Nature is unkind:

It treats the creation like sacrificial straw-dogs,

The Sage is not benevolent:

He regards the people like sacrificial straw-dogs*

How the universe is like a bellows!

Empty, but it gives a supply that never ends,

The more it works out, the more it can bring out.

By speaking too much our wit may be exhausted.

It would be better to keep to the core or centre. (The original true self of human being)

*Nature and the sage are not benevolent for they have to act according to the doctrine of naturalism, cause and effect without bias and with justice. If people have done evil deeds, they have to face resulting consequence.

Chapter Six

The Formless True Immortal

The Spirit of the Valley never dies.

It is named the Mystic Female.

The Door of the Mystic Female,

It is the root of Heaven and Earth. It appears to exist continuously.

The use of this cosmic energy is inexhaustible.



Valley: The valley is a symbol of 'taoistic' emptiness from which cosmic energy is generated.

Mystic Female: refers to mother of creation-the Tao.

Chapter Seven

Impartial Mind

The Universe is everlasting.

The reason why the universe is everlasting is that it does not live for self.

Therefore the Sage cares for other first and puts his own affairs last,

Therefore, he finds himself in the foremost place.

He knows his body is not permanent.

Therefore he keeps his original soul and spirit pure. In this way, his true self exists forever.

Is it not because he does not live for self that his true self is realized?

Chapter Eight

Best Deeds like Water

The best of men is like water

Water gives benefit to all things

And does not compete with them

It stays in places hated by all men

Therefore, it comes close to Tao

In his residence, the Sage can adjust the situation and live in harmony.

In his mind, his life is profound,

In his relation with others, he is benevolent,

In his words, he keeps faith and sincerity.

In government, he loves peace and order

In affairs, he loves to choose able persons.

In his actions, he likes to choose the right time to fit in the nature.

He does not strive with others

Therefore, he is free from blame.

Chapter 9

Wisdom and Behaviours of a Person

A for holding anything to fullness or extremity,' It would be better to stop in time.

Keep on sharpening a sword,' we see that the edge cannot last long.

When your hall is proud with wealth and honour, you are on the way to get disaster.

Retire in time when you have done your work with great success.

This is the Heaven's way

Chapter 10

Cultivation of Tao is easy or difficult

In keeping the spirit and the vital soul together,

Are you able to maintain their unity?

In controlling your vital force to achieve gentleness and harmony, can you behave like a baby?

Can you purify your mind without defect?

In loving the people and ruling the country,

Can you govern according to the "Law of Nature"?

In opening and closing the Gate of Heaven.

Are you able to understand the part of the Female?



In comprehending all knowledge,
Are you able to keep your purified mind and get rid of emotion and desire?
TO give birth and to nourish,
TO give birth and without taking possession,
To act without arrogance
To be leader among persons without controlling them,
This is called the Mystic or best virtue.

Chapter Eleven (The Utility of not Being)

Thirty spokes make one wheel.
The space in between and the spokes are required for the functioning of a wheel.
Clay is moulded to make utensils,
The substance that makes the wall and the space within is both essential for these utensils.
Making doors and windows in the house,
From their non-being (empty space),
Comes the utility of the house.
Therefore, by the existence of things we benefit.
In addition, by the non-existence of things we are served.

Chapter 12

Person seeking for external self or sensuous world

Colours can blind our eyes,
Sounds can deafens our ears,
Flavours can dull our tastes.
Racing and hunting can madden our mind,
Lust for rare valuable goods tempts persons to do wrong.
Therefore, the Sage cares for the inner true self and not for the outer look of appearances.

Chapter 13

Favour and disgrace

Favour and disgrace make one feel dismay and surprise.
Only the sage knowing the true is free from favour and disgrace.
What does this mean?
“Favour and disgrace cause dismay and surprise”?
The people are dismayed and not at ease, whenever they posses or lose of favour.
What does this mean?
“What we vale and what we worry are within ourselves”?
We have worries because we have selfish selves or bodies.
However, when we are enlightened to know our spirit and soul as our true selves,
What else we have to worry?
Therefore, if one values the people on earth as his self, he can be trusted to manage the world.
In addition, if one loves world as his self, he can be entrusted with the world.

Chapter 14- Tao is Soundless, Formless and without Appearance

Look at Tao (way) but you cannot see it
Its name is ‘without appearance’
Listen to it but you cannot hear it!
Its name is Soundless



Grasp it but you cannot get it!
Its name is Formless
These 3 attributes are essences inscrutable Tao
Therefore Tao blends together and become one
Its upper side is not dim
Moving on continuously, it cannot be defined
And again return to the realm of nothingness, despite its effect having the force of creation
We call it the formless Form, and the imageless Image
We call it the indefinable and unimaginable
Meeting it, you do not see its face
Following it, you do not see its back
Holding fast to the ancient Tao, you can manage all your present affairs correctly
Knowing the 'Original Beginning' of TAO, you are able to know the system and discipline of Tao

Chapter 15- The Wise Taoist of Old

The ancient best Taoist masters were Subtle, mysterious and acute
Their deepness could not be known
Since they were not easily understood
It would be better to tell roughly how they looked
Like one crossing an icy river in winter
How cautious he should be
As it all around there were danger
How vigilant he should be
As if they were guests on every occasion
How dignified
Like ice just beginning to melt
Self-effacing
Like a piece of wood being uncared
How simple and genuine
Like a valley awaiting a guest
How receptive
And mixing freely, like murky water
Who can find quiet and peaceful rest in turmoil?
Only the Sage has a pure mind
Who can keep his calm for long?
Only by positive activity, it comes back to life
Those holding fast to TAO will keep away from insatiable desire
Therefore they will have constant renewal of life and achieve their goal.

Chapter 16-How to obtain best wisdom

Best wisdom is obtained by utmost keeping your mind empty, pure, void and peaceful
And also holding firm your mind to the state of Quietude
I can observe myriad things taking their cycle of evolution and transmigration.
Myriad things have their growth but at last they have to return to their original roots (soil)
To return quietly to the root is repose
This is called going back to find one's true self of life
Going back to find one's true self of life is to find the Law of Nature
To know the Law of Nature is enlightenment
And not knowing the Law of Nature regarding everlasting spirit and soul will get close to disaster



Knowing the Law of Nature, he is tolerant
Being tolerant, he is impartial
Being impartial, he is kingly
Being kingly, he is in accord with nature
Being in accord with Nature, he is in accord with Tao
Being in accord with Tao, he is everlasting
After death, he would be free from reincarnation

Chapter 17 **Politics by Ruler**

The highest and best ruler is one whose meritorious effect is over the entire nation, yet it appears not to stem from him.
Next comes to one whom they love and raise.
Next comes to whom they fear because of punishment and reward.
Next comes to one they despise and defy because of his trick and rule without sincerity.
When ones do not command people with faith.
Some will lose faith in him.
So, a ruler must honour his promise.
On a success of work done people would say this was done naturally without knowing the effort of the ruler.

Chapter 18 **Humanity and Filial Devotion**

When the great TAO was abandoned,
Teaching of benevolence and righteousness* would arise.
With the appearance of knowledge and cleverness, great hypocrites would exist.
When the family relationship lost their harmony, there was praise of merciful parents and filial sons.
When chaos and bad rulers were rampant in a country, there was praise of loyal ministers.

*With TAO all persons are acting naturally. There is no need to have a code of ethics.

Chapter 19 **Returning to pure simplicity**

Disclaim being a Sage and abandoning wit,
And the people will be benefited a hundredfold.
Disclaim humanity** and justice,
And the people shall recover their innate qualities of filial devotion and kindness.
Banish cunning and profiteering,
There shall be no robbers and thieves.
The above 3 statements may not suffice to teach the people.
Therefore, I give the following enlightenment:
Cherishing simple and plain honesty,
Embracing one's original nature and discarding selfishness and wanton desires.
Disclaim: A true sage disclaims himself to be a sage. He teaches people with priority to return to Nature by finding their true selves. To abandon wit being plotted to satisfy one's wanton desire.



** Humanity: It should be one's innate quality and not to be utilized to win praise and justice hypocrisy.

Chapter 20 (to see things as a whole (body))

TO cease learning tricks is to free your mind from worries.

What is the difference between your speeches when in saying affirmative or negative mood?

How much differences are between 'good' and 'evil'?

That which persons fear.

Is indeed to be feared.

It is a pity that people do not cultivate their minds free from lust, just like the waste garden or field full of wild grass.

The multitudes of people are busy and joyous as if they are celebrating a festival or going up a terrace in spring.

But for me, my mind remains quiet and peaceful, just like in innocent new born baby.

Unattached to worldly desires, I wander about without a home.

People apply full effort in the pursuit of honour and profit.

But I am like that of a fool

Being so childish and muddled

The vulgar appears so smart

I alone seem dull

The vulgar appears bright and clever\I alone seem depressed

My mind remains calm and peaceful like deep and vast sea

Drifting with ease like wind without fixed residence

Relying in their abilities, all people have their aims

I alone appear stubborn and simple

I alone differ from other people,

Because I know the value to obtain endless sustenance from the Mother of Nature* (Unity with Tao) an image of a sucking baby-referring to getting force of energy from the nature of Tao.

Chapter Twenty One-(Manifestation of Tao)

If you want to know the nature of great virtue

Study and follow alone with the Tao

So, what is the body of Tao?

It is something elusive, evasive and formless

Evasive and elusive

But within it are forms and appearance

Evasive and Elusive

But within it is creation of all things

Shadowy and dim

Yet within it is the source of life force and essence

The life force being full of vitality

Within it is faithful and evident

Its name has been in existence from the past up to present

This 'mother of creation' (Power and force of TAO) is well worth studying to get the truth.

But how do I obtain such Truth

It is through the enlightenment of Tao.

Chapter Twenty Two-Futility of contention

To yield with patience is for the preservation of the whole



To be bent is to become straight
To be humble is to possess full bright spirit
To be torn is to be renewed
To be little in desires is to gain peace of mind
To have plenty of desires is to gain delusive mind
Therefore the sage embraces the oneness of Tao (cosmic energy)
He becomes the model of the people of the world
He is free from self-display
And is therefore clear-sighted
He is free from self-assertion
And therefore is distinguished
He does not feel a sense of pride
And therefore he earned merit
He does not boast of himself
And has therefore earned long respect
It is because he is free from striving that no one in the world can strive with him
The saying of the ancients 'to yield is to preserve the whole' was not vainly spoken
If he is sincere and able to keep the Law of Nature, all people will follow him

Chapter 23

TO be in Accord with the Nature of Tao

Less argument is more in accord with the Nature of Tao
A violent wind does not last for a whole morning
A sudden rain does not last for the whole day
Who can make such phenomena?
It is Heaven and Earth
Even Heaven and Earth do not last long in its acting
How much less can man do?
Therefore, those who are cultivating TAO are in accord with the Tao and they can study and discuss together
Those who follow Character (TAK) are identified with Character
To face one suffering from loss, we must have compassionate minds to comfort him
He who is in accord with Tao
Tao is also happy to welcome him
He who is identified with Character
Character is also glad to welcome him
To comfort one suffering from loss
The sufferer is happy with you
Tao being so abstruse, someone is lacking faith in its existence
Therefore there is no need for you to argue about this subject with these people

Chapter 24

Not to be greedy and eating too much

He who stands on tiptoe will not stand firm
He who walks with long step will not walk well
He who shows off is not far-sighted
He who justifies himself is not distinguished
He who brags himself is not given credit
He who prides himself is not the leader for long
These in the eyes of Tao, are called 'having surplus burden'



When one has large surplus of food and holding too much high positions
He invites jealousy, disgust and trouble
A man of Tao will be free from such precautions situation.

Chapter 25

The Truth of Tao

There was something undefined
Formless and inaudible
Coming into existence before Heaven and Earth
Silent and boundless
Standing also without change
Keeping on revolving ceaselessly
It is worthy to be the Mother of the world
I do not know its name
But I called it 'Tao'
Making an effort further I gave it another name called 'The Great'
TO be great is to go on
TO go on is to be remote
TO be remote us to return
Therefore:
Tao is great
The Heaven is great
The Earth is great
The King (sage) is also great
In the world there are four that are great and the King (sage) is one of them
Man models himself after the Earth
The Earth models itself after the Heaven
The heaven models itself after TAO
Tao models itself according to the Law of Nature

Chapter 26

Heaviness and Lightness

Gravity is the root of lightness
Stillness is the master of movement
Therefore the Sage travels all day long
He does not leave behind his provision –cart
In spite of his glory and dignity
He has a peaceful mind and remains unmoved to such honourable condition
How can the ruler of a country
Make light if his body for pleasure and act rashly?
One acting lightly is easy to lose his root
The ruler acting rashly is easy to lose his honourable status.

Chapter 27

Perfect Person

Perfect man (sage) doing good deeds for others leaves no trace for he is doing them according to nature
Good speech out of one's purified mind leaves no flaws to censure



A skilful mathematician uses no tallies
A good door is well shut without bolts and cannot be opened
A good knot is tied without rope and cannot be loosened
Therefore the sage is always good at helping others. Hence he does not cast away anyone
He is good at savings things
So, he does not cast away anything
We call him a sage because he had inherited perfect virtue from the ancient people
Therefore, the good man is the teacher of the bad
The bad one's evil deeds could be utilized as lessons to teach the good
The perfect man does not value his teaching qualification
Henceforth, he does not wish to find bad one's lessons to educate the good
Despite his best wisdom he still looks like a fool
Hence, he is the one knowing the important tenet of the TAO

Chapter 28-strong and feeble

He who knows his manhood's strength
Keeps feebleness like a female
Becoming the ravine of the world
Being the ravine of the world
He has kept his constant virtue
And return again to be pure as an innocent baby
He who knows what is pure or white
Keeps his humility
Becomes the model of the world
He has constant virtue to do nothing wrong
And return again to the original emptiness
He who is acquainted with honour and glory
Is advisable to keep his obscure position
Becomes the valley of the world
Being the valley of the world He has enough constant virtue
And returns to simplicity of life
Cutting the uncared wood, it is used as tool or furniture
BY means of such simplicity and original nature the sage could become ministers
Therefore, the sage will not cut up

Ravine: being empty and receptive is a place where water from various sources flows in. This symbolizes a leader attracting people to follow him

Original Emptiness: refers to surrounding where force of energy is produced for creation of the universe

Cut up: meaning the sage keeps his simple, pure and true self, just like natural uncared wood.

Chapter 29-Do not act against God's will

Those who wish to take the world as their own
Are impossible in my view
Because the world is God's sacred vessel
No one can keep it as his own
He who takes it suffers defeat



He who holds it loses it
Therefore: Something is going ahead
Something is following behind
Some blowing hot
Some blowing cold
Some being strong
Some being weak
Some may take things up
Some may take them down
So, the sage avoids excess, extravagance and arrogance

Chapter 30-Do not Proud of strong military force

Those who apply the doctrine of Tao to help the ruler will oppose all conquest by military force
War being so destructive will as law of cause and effect bring harm to the maker
With the station of soldiers thorny bushes might grow thus affecting livelihood of farmers
After a great war, bad years will surely follow
Therefore a good general only applies force for the protection of peace for the people
A good general will not use force carry out invasion
After the war he does not think it an act of glory
Despite the effect he does not take pride in it
Because he considers the force so used is only a regrettable necessity
After the war he does not love violence
Things to be over-matured are to quicken decay and become old
Violence by use of force is against the nature of Tao
Being not in accord with Tao he must stop such bad ambition

Chapter 31-The way of using weapons

Sharp weapons are instruments of evil omen
They are hated by all creatures
Those who have Tao do not like to use them
The Superior man likes the left in civilian life
But on military application likes the right
Weapons are instruments of evil men
They are not weapons of the superior omen
On occasion of compulsory necessity, it should be used with calm restraint
Even in victory, he does not consider it a glory
And he who calls it glorious
Is the one who delights in killing?
He who delights killing
Will not be successful in his desire to rule the government
Things of good omen favour the left
Things of bad omen favour the right
IN the army the commander stands on the left
While the commander in chief stands on the right
It was said he was in charge if the rite of mourning
The killing of multitude should be mourned with tears and sorrow
A victory in battle should be looked upon as funereal rite



(The ancient Chinese believed the arrangement orientation –left being symbol of good omen while right being the symbol of bad omen)

(Tao dislikes war to settle problems as disputes are settled according to law of nature)

Chapter 32-The Best way to stop in time

Tao is absolute and nameless

Small as it is in its primordial simplicity (like a piece of uncared wood)

It is inferior to nothing in the world

If a ruler could keep to it

All people would spontaneously submit themselves to him and live peacefully

The Heaven and Earth being in accord

The sweet dew would fall down

According to nature without the command of men

With the arising of civilization all names and systems are given by men

Therefore men must know to stop in time and begin to learn the practice of Tao in order to avoid danger

Tao is ever present and surrounding the whole universe, just like streams and rivers all running into seas and ocean.

Chapter 33

Real Everlasting Life

He who knows others is clever

He who knows himself has reflection or insight

He who conquer others has force

He who conquers himself and keeps his benevolent and purified mind is truly powerful and strong

He who knows what enough is rich

He who is determined has strength of will

He who cultivates TAO may die

But his spirit lives forever-this is longevity

Chapter 34

The magnitude of Heaven and Earth

The great Tao is pervading everywhere

It goes left or right naturally

All things depend on it for their production

And it does not deny them

When its work is accomplished it does not claim possession

It loves and feeds all things without claiming lordship

It is regarded as without desires or passion-therefore it may be called small

Being the home of all things, it does not claim to be the master thereof

So, it may be called 'The Great'

Because the sage does not claim to be great

His greatness is fully shown

Chapter 35

Tao is being abstruse and mysterious

Holding the great formless Tao

All people will follow



Following without meeting harm
All live in peace, security and happiness
Music and delicious food can only attract passing guests to stop for a while
But the words of Tao being mild to the taste posses lasting effect
Looking at, it cannot be seen
Listening to, it cannot be heard
Using it, its supply is inexhaustible

Chapter 36

The doctrine of reversion

He who knows withdrawal or retreat
Will get expansion later
He who is to be weakened
Must first be made wrong
He who is to be dismissed or put in the inferior position
May first be put in high position
He who is to be taken away from
Must first be given
This is called 'hiding the light' being so evident but going on unnoticed
The soft and weak overcomes the hard and strong
Fishes must not be taken away from deep water
Sharp weapons of the country
Should not be shown to others

Chapter 37

People's Natural Transformation

Tao being non-active
Yet through it everything is done
If the ruler can keep the TAO
All things will grow and transform naturally
Should such growth and transformation become an object of passion?
I would restrain it by nameless original simplicity
This can curb the desires of men
When the desires or passions are curbed, there will peace and quietude
And the world will be peaceful and in order

Chapter 38

Tao and virtue being the best: benevolence and righteousness being the second

A man of highest virtue, after doing a lot of good things, will not display them and claim credit
His virtue is real
A man of lower virtue, after doing something good, will show off and claim merit
His virtue is considered not perfect
The man of highest virtue acts in accord with "doctrine of Nature" Tao
Without any ulterior motive
The man of lower virtue acts with ulterior motive
The most benevolent person acts, without any motive for he has a purified mind
The righteous person sometimes acts without real understanding the nature of Tao
Therefore his performance is considered on occasion having motive
Those having highest sense of propriety act and show its performance but find no response
from others



Then they would try to do it with force of arm
Therefore
After Tao is lost then comes to the doctrine of virtue
After virtue is lost, then comes to the doctrine of benevolence
After benevolence is lost, then comes to the doctrine of righteousness
After righteousness is lost, then comes to the doctrine of propriety
Now propriety is only husk of loyalty and faith
It is the beginning leading to disorder
Keeping on argument with mundane knowledge without knowing the true self or the Nature is just flowering of TAO
This is the origin of stupidity and blind followers of Taoism
Therefore the great noble man manages affairs in accord with Tao in top priority
Then comes next to handle affairs with benevolence and righteousness
Then he considers what is fundamental
And disregards what is superficial and flowery
Therefore he prefers to what is inner (purity of mind) to what is outer

Chapter 39

The Root of Tao

In ancient time there were those acquiring the Oneness (Tao)
With oneness, the Heaven is clear
With oneness, the Earth is Stable
With oneness, the deities having spiritual power
With oneness, the valleys were made full
With oneness, all creatures and things could live and grow
With oneness, the rulers can rule the world with justice and peace
All creatures and things having close relationship with oneness (Tao)
Without clarity, the heaven will break
Without stability, the Earth will have disasters like earthquakes and flood
Without spiritual power, the deities may lose their mythical abilities
Without being filled, the valleys would dry up
Without this ceaseless power and energy all things might no longer live
Without justice and humanity to rule, the ruler may face downfall
Truly speaking, humility is the root which nobility or greatness grow
And the nobility or greatness must be built from the foundation of the lower
That is why the rulers call themselves; the worthless and lonely ones'
Is it a proof to show that they are in need of the support from ordinary people?
Hence, taking down various connected parts of a chariot, there would be no chariot
I do not wish to be looked upon as valuable as jade and to look down on others as worthless stones

Chapter 40

Principle of Reversion and Evolution

Cycle of reversion is the evolution or action of Tao
Weakness or gentleness is the operation of Tao
Myriad things and creatures of the world come from being
And being comes from non-being (Tao)

Chapter 41

Nobility of Tao



When the scholars of the highest class hear the Tao (truth)
They put in into practice earnestly
When scholars of the middle class hear of the Tao
They waver between belief and disbelief
When the scholars of the lowest class hear about the Tao
They will give out loud laughter
If it were not laughed at, it would not be fit to be called the Tao
Therefore there are the following mottoes:
Who understands Tao appears to look like a fool
Who is progressing in Tao seems to walk backward
Who is in accord with Tao speaks simple and straightforward words
Persons with highest virtue appear like a receptive valley
A man with purified mind does not care much about honour and disgrace
A person of distinct nature and character seems to be incapable and keeps humble
A virtuous person seems to look like simple and ordinary despite his meritorious deeds for the people
His firm virtue appears simple and he acts in accord with the Nature
Great space (heaven) has no corners
Great talent takes time to become mature
Great sound generated during the rotation of heavenly planets is inaudible to men on earth
Great Tao is formless
And Tao is hidden and nameless
However, it is this Tao that is best to give out power and energy for the successful creation of creatures and things

Chapter 42

Creation Made by Tao

The Tao produces one
One produces two
Two produces three
Three produces all creatures and things
The created world carries the Yin at its back and the Yang in front
Through the union of the vital force of Yin and Yang, harmonious nature has been so produced
TO be virtue less, the lonely and the worthless is what people dislike is
Yet the rulers humbly call themselves these names
For sometimes things are benefited by being diminished and suffer harm by being increased
Others have been enlightened by this motto
Which I shall also teach
'The violent and strong persons do not die naturally'
The above motto will be used by me as the basis of my teaching

Chapter 43-The Soft overcomes the hard and strong

The softest thing in the world passes through and overcomes the hardest.
That which is the formless vital power of energy can penetrate into any space without hindrance.
Hereby I know the benefit of taking non-action*.

Only a few in the world could reach the standard of teaching by setting good example instead of words
The advantage of non-action (TAO) is beyond comparison in the world.



*Influence of TAO reaches everywhere. Mankind relies on it for existence.

Chapter 44-True Self and the Fame

As for fame and one's true self, (soul and spirit), which is the dearer?

As for one's true self and wealth, which is more worthy?

As for gain of honour and loss of one's true self, which is more valuable?

Therefore excessive passion and desires will cost you to pay a high price in the end.

He who hoards much loses much

The contented person will suffer no disgrace.

Who knows when to stop is free from peril?

Hence, he will live long

TO hoard much will invite jealousy and hatred, thus leading to disaster.

Chapter 45-Purity and the Nature

The highest perfect appears like imperfection, Virtue of humility.

And its application is never exhausted.

Great achievements seem empty in the mind of the sage

And yet its use is endless

What is most straight appears crooked

The greatest skill appears clumsy

The greatest eloquence seems like stammering

Instant heat overcomes cold for a while

Calm overcomes heat

Purity, quietude and calmness indicate the law of Nature to be observed for peace and order of the world

Chapter 46-Tao and No Tao in the World

When the world is in accord with TAO

Horses are sent back to do farming work

When the world is not in the accord with TAO

War horses breed themselves in the wilderness

There is no greater misfortune than the lack of contentment

There is no greater guilt than the passion for selfish possession

There he who knows what enough is will have contentment

Chapter 47-The Principle of the Nature

Without going outside one's door.

One can understand what is happening in the world.

Without looking out from one's window,

One can see the TAO of Heaven

The farther one goes,

The less one knows

Therefore sages get their knowledge without travelling far away

Understand all things and names of Nature without seeing them,

Accomplish their aims without purpose of achieving them

(One who has purified mind free from delusion, attachment and worldly desires can truly understand what happens in the world.



Chapter 48-Te Mysterious Non –Action

In the pursuit of learning
One knows more day by day
In the practice of TAO (way) one aims at losing human desires day by day
Keep on losing and losing
Until you reach the state of non-action
By the doctrine of non-action everything can be done
One can win the world by doing things according to Law of Nature
If one have private ends and selfish desires
He will not win the world

Non-action means making use of natural force of energy to achieve one's object.

Chapter 49-The Mind of The Sage

The sage has no constant mind
He treats the minds of the people as his mind
He is kind to the kind
He is also kind to the unkind
This is kindness of virtue
He is faithful to the faithful
He is also faithful to the unfaithful
This is the faith of virtue
The sage is mindful of the people who have gone astray
And wishes to guide them to follow the truth of Tao
Therefore the people will follow his enlightenment attentively
And the sage regards as his own children

Chapter 50-Life and Death

Men come forth and live
Then they enter again and die
Of every ten, three can take care of their life
Three are ministers of death
There are also three in every ten, whose purpose is to live but whose movement of desires lead them to death
How is it so?
Because of their intense passions and greedy desires causing them early death
It has been said that one who is a best preserver of life is truly aware of his true self.
He meets no tigers or wild buffaloes on land
He will not be harmed by weapons in battle-field
The horns of buffalo are useless to attack him
The claws of tigers are powerless t to hurt him
Even the soldier cannot use weapons to carry out attack against him
How is it so?
Because he is beyond death and his true self (spirit and soul) is everlasting!

Chapter 51-The Mystic Virtue of Tao

Tao gives birth to all things and creatures
Tao Virtue nourishes them
They receive their forms according to nature
And they are completed in accord with circumstances



Therefore all things in the universe honour TAO and highly value Tao
Without the command from anyone but only follow the Law of Nature
Therefore Tao produces them
Tao nourishes them, let them grow nurses them
Completes them, matures them
Feeds them and shelters them
It produces them but does not claim possession of them
It acts without claiming merit and ability
It is superior but exercises no control over them
This is called "the mystic virtue"

Chapter 52-The Origin of Tao

There was origin of the universe
This may be considered as the Mother of Creation (TAO)
From the Mother, we may know her sons
After knowing her sons, we must follow the way of Mother of Creation, Thus our life is free from any peril
To maintain vitality, energy and spirit one who cultivates TAO must keep closed the six doors of sensation.
In so doing he will have great success in the practice of TAO without rendering much effort
Relying on ability to handle affairs without closing the 'Six Doors of Sensation' one's whole life is beyond redemption
He who keeps softness is strong
Using the light of enlightenment, one can return to clear-sightedness
Thus he is free from disaster
In such a way he is in accord with TAO

Six doors are eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind; with purification of mind these 6 doors will be shut: therefore, one will be free from delusion, passion and attachment. This is important for practice of TAO

Chapter 53- Action of Tao

If I possess some wisdom to walk on the main path (Tao)
I shall be careful and avoid the devious by-paths
The main path being smooth and straight is easy to walk on
But people love the small by-paths
The following are few examples:
The official courts are corruptible and lacking justice and humanity.
The farming fields are weedy and not well attended to
People's granaries are empty
Yet these corruptible officers still wearing beautiful and elegant clothes to show off their nobility
And carrying sharp swords
Furthermore, they are in hot pursuit of delicious food and wine
They possess super-abundance of property and wealth
Such rulers and officers may be called robbers
Surely, this is contrary to the Tao
By-paths-meaning people walking the devious side way leading to greedy desires

Chapter 54-The importance of Virtue

What is well planted is not uprooted



What is firmly embraced is not easy to let go
From generation to generation his offspring can carry out ancestral sacrifices continuously
Cultivate the way (TAO) yourself; your virtue will be genuine
Cultivate the way in the family; your virtue is so sincere and abundant that your family members
will be prosperous because of enlightened by your virtuous deeds
Cultivate the way in the state; people having virtue would enjoy prosperity
Cultivate the way in the world; people would become virtuous throughout the universe
Therefore, after understanding the truth of TAO, I can use it to judge and observe myself, other
families, other villages, other states and the future development of the world
How do I know about the world?
It is though the study of TAO

Chapter 55- A Person with Highest Virtue

One who has highest virtue?
Is like a child
Poisonous insects will not sting him
Wild beasts will not attack him
And birds of prey would not maul him
His bones are soft, his tendon tender but his grip of the fist is tight and strong
He does not know the sexual union of male and female, but his organ has vital force
This is because he is full of vitality and unspoiled vigour
Crying the whole day, he could maintain his voice not being hoarse
This shows that he has obtained perfect harmony of the nature
To know such harmony is in accord with the everlasting TAO
And to know the everlasting TAO is the one who has obtained enlightenment and understands
what the true self is.
Making use of harmony to improve one's life is a good omen
To act rashly without harmonious mind appears strong but in effect it is wrong
Things to be over-matured are to quicken decay and become old
Violence by use of force is against the Nature of TAO
And he who is against perishes young

Chapter 56-Understanding of Tao

He who knows does not speak
He who speaks does not know
A man of TAO will keep his mouth shut to avoid useless debate
Shut all sensual doors
To blunt one's sharp points
To untie all tangles
To have harmony with brightness and lights
To mix up with people in the mundane world but keeping his true self and simplicity
This is called mystic unity
Therefore intimacy and hatred cannot touch him
Gain and loss cannot move him
Honour and disgrace cannot affect him
Therefore he is the noblest man in the world

The formless TAO cannot be truly expressed by words and knowledge. Only by purification of
mind and keeping away from passion one can enter the State of TAO



Every person has six sensual doors (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind) generating seven emotions of happiness, rage, sadness, joyousness, love, hatred and lust. Six desires and seven emotions, if not properly controlled, are far away from TAO.

Chapter 57-How the State Be Ruled

A state must be ruled by justice and righteousness
To win the battle by means of surprising tactics
To win the world by freedom of action and purpose
How do I know such truth?
From the following, I am enlightened:
The more prohibitive enactments issued by the Government, the poorer, the people will become
The more sharp weapons possessed by the people
The greater the chaos in the state
The more skills of technique
The more strange evil things would appear
The greater the number of laws
The greater the number of thieves and robbers
Therefore the sage says:
I do according to the nature; the people are reformed of themselves
I am fond of quietude and the people would be influenced to become correct and righteous
I apply the principle of non-intervention: the people would become rich
I have no passion and the people are simple and pure by themselves.

Chapter 58-Ways to Govern the State

When the government is liberal and broad-minded
The people will be simple and honest
When the Government is too attentive and strict and its officers are full of selfish desires
The people will be cunning and have too much worry
What one considers disaster may often give rise to felicity
What one considers felicity may often end with disaster
Who would be able to know its final result and the cycle reversion?
Nowadays most people are abnormal
What is normal and correct truth is regarded as strange and worthless
What is good teaching is regarded as sinister?
It is a pity that mankind has been under delusion and gone astray for long
Therefore the sage maintains his principle of teaching without the intention of harming others
The Sage has integrity and does not hurt others
He is straightforward and keeps away from extremity
He is bright but not dazzling

Chapter 59-To manage Human affairs and serve the heaven

In managing human affairs and serving the Heaven there is no better way than keeping one's vitality and spirit.
In keeping vitality and spirit his purity of mind and virtue is complete
With accumulated virtuous deeds he is ever-victorious
To be ever-victorious is to have infinite source of power and energy
He who has infinite source of power and energy is fit to carry out the burden of dulling the country



He could be 'mother of the country 'Hence the country can long secure
This is deeply rooted with strength
Therefore this is the way to immortality and correct vision of TAO

Chapter 60- The Simple, pure and Harmonious World

To rule a large country is like frying a small fish
Who rules the world in accord with TAO would discover that the evil ghosts lose their spiritual power to do people harm
Even the powerful spirits are not harmful
Not only are the spirits not harmful
The Sage is also not harmful
When both do not do any harmful things, one's original true self is restored. Thus harmony and peace prevail

The art of frying a small fish is not to stir it but cook it with care as to keep it away breaking up into pieces. This is a metaphor indicating that to rule the people with care to prevent chaos

Chapter 61-Big and Small Countries

A great nation is like the big sea in the lowland towards which all streams and rivers flow in. It is the concourse of the world
The females always overcome the males by their stillness
Stillness may be regarded as abasement
Therefore a great nation by condescending o small countries can win over them
If a small country can lower itself in front of a big nation it will gain the support of the big nation
The one wins by humility
The other by keeping in low position
The ultimate aim of the big nation is to protect all the people and lead then live a peaceful and simple life
And what a small country wants is to be treated equally
In such a way both may get what the want
Therefore a big nation, as a mode, should learn to place itself in the low position

Chapter 62- The Mysterious Essence of The Tao

Tao is the mysterious essence of the world
It is the treasure of the good men
And also the bad men always use it for protection
Beautiful sayings with 'truth' can win admiration from others
A noble person with cultivation of TAO is fit to be chosen as a teacher
If one has done something wrong and intends to repent his crime
Why reject him?
Therefore it is better to cultivate TAO than to be an emperor or powerful noble ministers. It is even better than possession of precious jade and riding best horses
Why did the ancients highly value this TAO?
The reason was that if they were contrary to TAO they would commit sins
Once committing sins, how could they avoid punishment resulting from cause and effect?
Therefore, TAO is the treasure of the World

Chapter 63-Managing Affairs by The Sage

The Sage manages affairs in accord with the NATURE



Attend to affairs with purity of mind
The sage tastes the flavorless not caring for taste of desires
No matter it is big or small, many or few
He requites hatred with virtue
He handles difficult matters while they are easy
Handling big matters while they are small
Difficult problems in the universe must be handled while they are easy
Great problems in the universe must be handles while they are small
The Sage will not deal with great problems in a hurry but rather handle them step by step
One, who lightly makes a promise, will often find hard to keep it
One who takes light of problems will meet with difficulties
Therefore even the Sage takes into consideration things as difficult
And for this reason he never encounters difficulties

Chapter 64-Method of Cultivation and Management

What is at rest is easy to hold
What has not yet happened is easy to plan ahead
What is fragile is easily broken
What is small is easily dispersed
Action is taken before a thing has made its appearance
To establish order and peace before disorder has begun
A tree as big as tow men's embrace grew up from tiny sprout
The tower of nine storey was first built with a small heal of earth
A journey of one thousand miles begins with the first step
He who acts without heeding to the above points will suffer defeat
He who takes hold of a thing in the same manner also loses his hold
Therefore, the Sage who acts in accord with the nature does not suffer defeat
Because the Sage is free from attachment and keeps his true self, he will not be affected by any sense of suffering loss
In managing affairs people often ruin them just at the point of success
By being careful at the end as at the beginning
Failure could be avoided
Therefore the sage desires what other people do not desire
And do not pray for precious goods
The Sage learns what other men do not learn
The sage keeps on reminding people to find theory own essence of mind and not to do any sinful deeds
Thus he may help the development of myriads of things according to Nature
And does not dare to act with any selfish ulterior motive

The Sage learns philosophy of life while other men mostly learn how to get wealth and fame

Chapter 65- Return to purity and simplicity

The ancients who understand TAO well knew how to govern a state
They aimed not at enlightening people with wits and cunning tactics
But to keep them in the state of simplicity and honestly
Why are the people hard to govern?
It is because they have too much wits and cunning tactics
IF a rule uses wits and cunning tactics to govern the state
It would lead to chaotic condition



The ruler who does not seek to rule the state with wits and cunning tactics is the state's blessing

Those who know these two principles possess the excellent standard of ruling

And to know always such excellent standard is called the 'mystic virtue'

Such 'Mystic Virtue' is far-reaching, so deep in its rationale. It may seem contrary to materialistic consideration

But then it is the way leading to purity, simplicity and Grand harmony

Chapter 66- Lowness and Humility

How did the seas and rivers become the master of all streams?

By being good to keeping low position

Hence they are the masters of all streams

Therefore, in order to be a leader among people

One must be humble in his speech

TO lead the people, one must respect and walk behind them

In spite of taking high position the Sage keeps and acts with humility

The people do not feel his weight and pressure

He walks in front, the people will not do him harm

Hence the people of the world are happy to elect him as leader without hesitation

Because he does not strive

No one in the world is able to strive with him.

Chapter 67-Compassionate Mind

People in the world say that my TAO is great but it does not appear to be

TAO is great because it is like nothing in the world

If it were like anything in the world how small it would be from the very beginning

I have 'three treasures'

Possess them and keep them constantly

The first is compassion

The second is frugality

The third is never to be first in the world (humility)

Because of compassion, there is courage

Because of frugality he has obtained the essence of TAO to help others in all respect

Because of humility one can develop one's talent leading to mature success

Nowadays people prefer courage first and yet abandon compassion

Prefer extravagance and extremity and yet abandon frugality

They are on the way to death!

For Comparison is victorious in fighting against the evil

And strong in defense

Heaven is on the side of a person with compassionate mind

Chapter 68 –The Best Fighter

The skillful soldier is not violent

An able fighter always keeps his temper and does not express anger easily

The great conqueror will not declare war rashly

His fighting tactics are only for protection of order and peace after the war

The good users of manpower place themselves below others

This is the virtue of non-contention

And the ability to employ persons



Such is called the virtuous compliance with the ancient heavenly way (TAO)

Chapter 69-The real Victory

The military strategies have a saying 'If I cannot take the offensive, then I could refer to take the defensive. If I cannot advance an inch, then I would retreat a foot. If is called movement of soldiers without being easily detected

To carry out attack without gesture of committing brutalities

To fight only for justice and peace by holding up weapons

There is no greater disaster than to underestimate the strength of your enemy

TO do so may lose your life and the treasures of compassion, frugality and humility

Thus in war, the army with TAO in mind will win at last

Chapter 70-The Truth of my Words

My teachings are very easy to understand and easy to put them into practice

But the world cannot understand them nor practice them

My words have principles

In managing affairs I have given out implied direction

The people have no knowledge of these

Therefore they have no knowledge of me

Since there are only a few who know me

Therefore the TAO that I teach is highly precious

Hence the Sage is like an ordinary person wearing coarse clothing inside which here is a piece of priceless jade.

People have no real knowledge of TAO because their minds are polluted by mundane greedy desire

Chapter 71

Knowing and Not Knowing

A person understands TAO but does not claim such real understanding

He is a person of high class in the knowledge of TAO

A person who is ignorant of Tao claims such understanding

He is suffering from the illness of exaggeration

The awakened and enlightened person realizes such illness

Therefore he will not get such illness

The Sage is free from such illness because he knows the painful effect

Chapter 72

Love and my own self

When people have done evil deeds and have no fear of force

Great disaster may come

We must widen our mind so that everywhere is our residence

We must find our true self, which is eternal

Because he values his true self, nothing in the world could reject him

The Sage knows himself but does not show off himself

The sage cares his true self and disregards fame and wealth

Therefore he cares for his true self rather than his physical body

Chapter 73 Cause and Effect

When one is over daring and loves violence he may be killed



When one is daring but careful he can protect his life
Both of these are courageous
One is useful while the other is harmful
Heaven dislikes violent and brutal persons
Who can know the reason?
Even the Sage regards it as a difficult question
It is Heaven's Way to conquer without striving
Through Heaven does not speak, yet it can give out good response
Showing its appearance without arrangement of invitation
Acting in justice according to the mechanism of cause and effect
The meshes of the net of Heaven are large but letting nothing escape

Chapter 74

Under Tyrannical Rule

Under tyrannical rule, the people are not afraid of death
Why threaten them with death?
If the people are afraid of death
I could lawfully arrest the wrong doer and sentence him to death
Who else would dare to do wrong?
There is appointed executioner whose duty is to kill
To do the killing in behalf of the executioner is like cutting wood for the master carpenter
In so doing it seldom avoids hurting his own hands

Chapter 75

Under Tyrannical Rule

Why the people are hungry?
It is because they are heavily taxed
Why are the people difficult to govern?
It is because of excessive interference from their rulers who have selfish desires and aims
Why are the people not afraid of death and begin to revolt?
It is because their rulers are indulgent and enjoying luxurious lives
One who loves simplicity and purity of life truly values his own life

Chapter 76

Hard and Soft

When man is born he is supple and soft
At death he is firm and stiff
So it is with all things, Plants and trees are soft and brittle in their early growth
At their death they become dry and withered
From the above points one who keeps hard and strong forever is on the way to death
On the contrary one who keeps soft and supple is on way to everlasting life
A country relying on the strength of military forces does not conquer
When a tree is hard and strong it will be cut down
The humble and weak will be placed above

Chapter 77

Tao is mysterious and abstruse

The Tao of Heaven may be likened to bending of a bow
The upper part comes down while the lower part goes up
Of the bowstring is too long it is cut short



If it is too short, it is added to
It is the way of Heaven to diminish where there is great abundance and to supplement where deficiency is
This is not so with men's way
He takes away from those who have not enough to serve the powerful and the rich
Who could use one's superabundance to help the poor in the world?
Only the man in possession of TAO
Therefore the sage acts but does not take possession
He accomplishes without claiming credit
He does not want his meritorious deeds to be seen

Chapter 78

The benefit of softness and weakness

In the world there is nothing softer and weaker than water
But nothing is superior to it in overcoming the hard
Nothing can take its place
The weak overcomes the strong and the soft overcomes the hard
This fact is known by all but no one can put it into practice
Therefore the Sage says:
He who could accept calumny and humiliation for the sake of the nation is fit to be called master of the nation

He who could suffer and bear himself sins and disasters of the world is qualified to be king of the world
My words that are really true seem to be paradoxical

Chapter 79

The Virtue of Heaven

When reconciliation is arranged after a great hatred
It is sure to leave some hatred behind
How could it be regarded as good and satisfactory?
Therefore the sage could be regarded as keeping the left-tally*
Contract and would not press for speedy fulfillment of the contractual obligation by the other party
The virtue less is not only pressing for return in respect of money or things given to others.
But the way of heaven is impartial
It is always on the side of the good man

*Left-tally contract-ancient contract was made by lines cut on bamboo tally slips which were split into two, the lender kept the left-hand portion, while the borrower kept the right portion.

Chapter 80

The simple and pure small country dream of utopia

Let there be a small country with a small population
Though there were tenfold or hundredfold very able persons
Yet their abilities should not be fully used
Let the people value their lives and stop migrating to distant places
Though they had boats and carriages they should have no occasion to ride in them
Though they had weapons and armor
They had no occasion to display them



The people were taught to tie ropes for reckoning
Then people would enjoy their food
Despite coarse clothing they felt it beautiful
They found comfort in their homes
They were happy in their customs
The neighboring country was within sight
And the people could hear the barking of dogs and crowing of cocks from their neighborhood
And the people till the end of their life
Would never think of migration because they enjoyed simple and pure living

Chapter 81

The Mission of the Sage

Sincere words are not fine
Fine words are not sincere
A good man does not argue
Who argues is not a good man
Wise man may not be very 'learned'
Learned man may not be wise
The Sage does not accumulate wealth and property but only keeps his essence of pure mind
He works for other people
And become richer himself
He gives to other people
And has greater abundance
The Way of Heaven
Is to benefit and bless people and does no harm
The way of the Sage is to carry out the mission of the Tao and does not strive with anyone

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