

Dao De Qing

道德经

Laozi

老子

**Original Chinese
with English translation
by Stephen Mitchell**

Zen Instructional Series

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Dedication

I dedicate this book to Stephen Mitchell who selflessly pioneered the way of Korean Zen in America, then dedicated his life to expanding that understanding to include all sources of spiritual inquiry.

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第一章

道可道，
非常道。

名可名，
非常名。
无名天地之始；
有名万物之母。

故常无，
欲以观其妙；
常有，

欲以观其徼。
此两者，
同出而异名，
同谓之玄。

玄之又玄，
众妙之门。

One

The Dao that can be told
is not the eternal Dao
The name that can be named
is not the eternal Name.

The unnamable is the eternally real.
Naming is the origin
of all particular things.

Free from desire, you realize the mystery.
Caught in desire, you see only the manifestations.

Yet mystery and manifestations
arise from the same source.
This source is called darkness.

Darkness within darkness.
The gateway to all understanding.

第二章

天下皆知美之为美，
斯恶已。
皆知善之为善，
斯不善已。

有无相生，
难易相成，
长短相形，
高下相盈，
音声相和，
前后相随。

恒也。
是以圣人处无为之事，
行不言之教；
万物作而弗始，
生而弗有，
为而弗恃，
功成而不居。
夫唯弗居，
是以不去。

Two

When people see some things as beautiful,
other things become ugly.
When people see some things as good,
other things become bad.

Being and non-being create each other.
Difficult and easy support each other.
Long and short define each other.
High and low depend on each other.
Before and after follow each other.

Therefore the Master
acts without doing anything
and teaches without saying anything.
Things arise and she lets them come;
things disappear and she lets them go.
She has but doesn't possess,
acts but doesn't expect.
When her work is done, she forgets it.
That is why it lasts forever.

第三章

不尚贤，
使民不争
不贵难得之货，
使民不为盗；

不见可欲，
使民心不乱。
是以圣人之治，
虚其心，
实其腹，
弱其志，
强其骨。
常使民无知无欲。
使夫智者不敢为也。

为无为，
则无不治。

Three

If you over esteem great men,
people become powerless.
If you overvalue possessions,
people begin to steal.

The Master leads
by emptying people's minds
and filling their cores,
by weakening their ambition
and toughening their resolve.
He helps people lose everything
they know, everything they desire,
and creates confusion
in those who think that they know.

Practice not-doing,
and everything will fall into place.

第四章

道冲，
而用之或不盈。
渊兮，
似万物之宗；湛兮，

似或存。
吾不知谁之子，
象帝之先。

Four

The Dao is like a well:
used but never used up.
It is like the eternal void:
filled with infinite possibilities.

It is hidden but always present.
I do not know who gave birth to it.
It is older than God.

第五章

天地不仁，
以万物为刍狗；
圣人不仁，
以百姓为刍狗。

天地之间，
其犹橐籥乎。
虚而不屈，
动而愈出。
多言数穷，
不如守中。

Five

The Dao doesn't take sides;
it gives birth to both good and evil.
The Master doesn't take sides;
she welcomes both saints and sinners.

The Dao is like a bellows:
it is empty yet infinitely capable.
The more you use it, the more it produces;
the more you talk of it, the less you understand.

Hold on to the center.

第六章

谷神不死，
是谓玄牝。

玄牝之门，
是谓天地根。
帛系若存，
用之不勤。

Six

The Dao is called the Great Mother:
empty yet inexhaustible,
it gives birth to infinite worlds.

It is always present within you.
You can use it any way you want.

第七章

天长地久。
天地所以能长且久者，
以其不自生，
故能长生。

是以圣人后其身而身先；
外其身而身存。
非以其无私邪。
故能成其私。

Seven

The Dao is infinite, eternal.

Why is it eternal?

It was never born;

thus it can never die.

Why is it infinite?

It has no desires for itself;

thus it is present for all beings.

The Master stays behind;

that is why she is ahead.

She is detached from all things;

that is why she is one with them.

Because she has let go of herself,

she is perfectly fulfilled.

第八章

上善若水。
水善利万物而不争，
处众人之所恶，
故几于道。

居善地，
心善渊，
与善仁，
言善信，
政善治，
事善能，

动善时。
夫唯不争，
故无尤。

Eight

The supreme good is like water,
which nourishes all things without trying to.
It is content with the low places that people disdain.
Thus it is like the Dao.

In dwelling, live close to the ground.
In thinking, keep to the simple.
In conflict, be fair and generous.
In governing, do not try to control.
In work, do what you enjoy.
In family life, be completely present.

When you are content to be simply yourself
and do not compare or compete,
everybody will respect you.

第九章

持而盈之，
不如其已；
揣而锐之，
不可长保。
金玉满堂，
莫之能守；
富贵而骄，
自遗其咎。

功遂身退，
天之道也。

Nine

Fill your bowl to the brim
and it will spill.

Keep sharpening your knife
and it will blunt.

Chase after money and security
and your heart will never unclench.

Care about people's approval
and you will be their prisoner.

Do your work, then step back.
The only path to serenity.

第十章

载营魄抱一，
能无离乎。
专气致柔，
能如婴儿乎。
涤除玄鉴，
能如疵乎。
爱国治民，
能无为乎。

天门开阖，
能为雌乎。
明白四达，
能无知乎。

Ten

Can you coax your mind from its wandering
and keep to the original oneness?

Can you let your body become
supple as a newborn child's?

Can you cleanse your inner vision
until you see nothing but the light?

Can you love people and lead them
without imposing your will?

Can you deal with the most vital matters
by letting events take their course?

Can you step back from you own mind
and thus understand all things?

Giving birth and nourishing,
having without possessing,
acting with no expectations,
leading and not trying to control:
this is the supreme virtue.

第十一章

三十辐，
共一毂，
当其无，

有车之用。
埴埴以为器，
当其无，

有器之用。
凿户牖以为室，
当其无，

有室之用。
故有之以为利，
无之以为用。

Eleven

We join spokes together in a wheel,
but it is the center hole
that makes the wagon move.

We shape clay into a pot,
but it is the emptiness inside
that holds whatever we want.

We hammer wood for a house,
but it is the inner space
that makes it livable.

We work with being,
but non-being is what we use.

第十二章

五色令人目盲；
五音令人耳聋；
五味令人口爽；

驰骋畋猎，
令人心发狂；
难得之货，
令人行妨。
是以圣人为腹不为目，
故去彼取此。

Twelve

Colors blind the eye.
Sounds deafen the ear.
Flavors numb the taste.
Thoughts weaken the mind.
Desires wither the heart.

The Master observes the world
but trusts his inner vision.
He allows things to come and go.
His heart is open as the sky.

第十三章

宠辱若惊，
贵大患若身。

何谓宠辱若惊。
宠为下，
得之若惊，
失之若惊，
是谓宠辱若惊。

何谓贵大患若身。
吾所以有大患者，
为吾有身，
及吾无身，
吾有何患。

故贵以身为天下，
若可寄天下；
爱以身为天下，
若可托天下。

Thirteen

Success is as dangerous as failure.
Hope is as hollow as fear.

What does it mean that success is as dangerous as failure?
Whether you go up the ladder or down it,
your position is shaky.
When you stand with your two feet on the ground,
you will always keep your balance.

What does it mean that hope is as hollow as fear?
Hope and fear are both phantoms
that arise from thinking of the self.
When we do not see the self as self,
what do we have to fear?

See the world as your self.
Have faith in the way things are.
Love the world as your self;
then you can care for all things.

第十四章

视之不见，名曰夷；

听之不闻，名曰希；

搏之不得，名曰微。

此三者不可致诘，故混而为一。

其上不皦，其下不昧。

绳绳兮不可名，复归于物。

是谓无状之状，无物之象，是谓惚恍。

迎之不见其首，随之不见其后。

执古之道，以御今之有。

能知古始，是谓道纪。

Fourteen

Look and it can't be seen.
Listen and it can't be heard.
Reach and it can't be grasped.

Above, it isn't bright.
Below, it isn't dark.
Seamless, unnamable,
it returns to the realm of nothing.
Form that includes all forms,
image without an image,
subtle, beyond all conception.

Approach it and there is no beginning;
follow it and there is no end.
You can't know it, but you can be it,
at ease in your own life.
Just realize where you come from:
this is the essence of wisdom.

第十五章

古之善为道者，微妙玄通，深不可识。

夫唯不可识，故强为之容：

豫兮若冬涉川；

犹兮若畏四邻；

俨兮其若客；

涣兮其若凌释；

敦兮其若朴；

旷兮其若谷；

混兮其若浊；

澹兮其若海；

飏兮若无止。

孰能浊以静之徐清。

孰能安以动之徐生。

保此道者，不欲盈。

夫唯不盈，故能蔽而新成。

Fifteen

The ancient Masters were profound and subtle.
Their wisdom was unfathomable.
There is no way to describe it;
all we can describe is their appearance.

They were careful
as someone crossing an iced-over stream.
Alert as a warrior in enemy territory.
Courteous as a guest.
Fluid as melting ice.
Shapeable as a block of wood.
Receptive as a valley.
Clear as a glass of water.

Do you have the patience to wait
till your mud settles and the water is clear?
Can you remain unmoving
till the right action arises by itself?

The Master doesn't seek fulfillment.
Not seeking, not expecting,
she is present, and can welcome all things.

第十六章

致虚极，守静笃。

万物并作，吾以观复。

夫物芸芸，各复归其根。

归根曰静，静曰复命。

复命曰常，知常曰明。

不知常，妄作凶。

知常容，容乃公，

公乃全，全乃天，

天乃道，道乃久，没身不殆。

Sixteen

Empty your mind of all thoughts.
Let your heart be at peace.
Watch the turmoil of beings,
but contemplate their return.

Each separate being in the universe
returns to the common source.
Returning to the source is serenity.

If you do not realize the source,
you stumble in confusion and sorrow.
When you realize where you come from,
you naturally become tolerant,
disinterested, amused,
kindhearted as a grandmother,
dignified as a king.
Immersed in the wonder of the Dao,
you can deal with whatever life brings you,
and when death comes, you are ready.

第十七章

太上，不知有之；

其次，亲而誉之；

其次，畏之；

其次，侮之。

信不足焉，有不信焉。

悠兮其贵言。

功成事遂，百姓皆谓：「我自然」。

Seventeen

When the Master governs, the people
are hardly aware that he exists.
Next best is a leader who is loved.
Next, one who is feared.
The worst is one who is despised.

If you do not trust the people,
you make them untrustworthy.

The Master doesn't talk, he acts.
When his work is done,
the people say, "Amazing:
we did it, all by ourselves!"

第十八章

大道废，有仁义；智慧出，有大伪；

六亲不和，有孝慈；国家昏乱，有忠臣。

Eighteen

When the great Dao is forgotten,
goodness and piety appear.
When the body's intelligence declines,
cleverness and knowledge step forth.
When there is no peace in the family,
filial piety begins.
When the country falls into chaos,
patriotism is born.

第十九章

绝圣弃智，民利百倍；

绝仁弃义，民复孝慈；

绝巧弃利，盗贼无有。

此三者以为文，不足。

故令有所属：见素抱朴，少思寡欲，绝学无忧。

Nineteen

Throw away holiness and wisdom,
and people will be a hundred times happier.

Throw away morality and justice,
and people will do the right thing.

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

If these three aren't enough,
just stay at the center of the circle
and let all things take their course.

第二十章

唯之与阿，相去几何。

之与恶，相去若何。

人之所畏，不可不畏。

荒兮，其未央哉。

众人熙熙，如享太牢，如春登台。

我独泊兮，其未兆；

沌沌兮，如婴儿之未孩；

傴傴兮，若无所归。

众人皆有余，而我独若遗。我愚人之心也哉。

俗人昭昭，我独昏昏。

俗人察察，我独闷闷。

众人皆有以，而我独顽且鄙。

我独异于人，而贵食母。

Twenty

Stop thinking, and end your problems.
What difference between yes and no?
What difference between success and failure?
Must you value what others value,
avoid what others avoid?
How ridiculous!

Other people are excited,
as though they were at a parade.
I alone do not care;
I alone am expressionless,
like an infant before it can smile.

Other people have what they need;
I alone possess nothing.
I alone drift about,
like someone without a home.
I am like an idiot, my mind is so empty.

Other people are bright;
I alone am dark.
Other people are sharper;
I alone am dull.
Other people have a purpose;
I alone do not know.
I drift like a wave on the ocean;
I blow as aimless as the wind.

I am different from ordinary people.
I drink from the Great Mother's breasts.

第二十一章

孔德之容，惟道是从。

道之为物，惟恍惟惚。

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，以阅众甫。

吾何以知众甫之状哉。以此。

Twenty One

The Master keeps her mind
always at one with the Dao;
that is what gives her radiance.

The Dao is ungraspable.
How can her mind be at one with it?
Because she doesn't cling to ideas.

The Dao is dark and unfathomable.
How can it make her radiant?
Because she lets it.

Since before time and space were,
the Dao is.
It is beyond *is* and *is not*.
How do I know this is true?
I look inside myself and see.

第二十二章

曲则全，枉则直，洼则盈，

敝则新，少则得，多则惑。

是以圣人抱一为天下式。

不自见，故明；

不自是，故彰；

不自伐，故有功；

不自矜，故长。

夫唯不争，故天下莫能与之争。

古之所谓「曲则全」者，岂虚言哉。

诚全而归之。

Twenty Two

If you want to become whole,
let yourself be partial.
If you want to become straight,
let yourself be crooked.
If you want to become full,
let yourself be empty.
If you want to be reborn,
let yourself die.
If you want to be given everything,
give everything up.

The Master, by residing in the Dao,
sets an example for all beings.
Because he doesn't display himself,
people can see his light.
Because he has nothing to prove,
people can trust his words.
Because he doesn't know who he is,
people recognize themselves in him.
Because he has no goad in mind,
everything he does succeeds.

When the ancient Masters said,
"If you want to be given everything,
give everything up,"
they weren't using empty phrases.
Only in being lived by the Dao can you be truly yourself.

第二十三章

希言自然。

故飘风不终朝，骤雨不终日。

孰为此者。

天地。天地尚不能久，而况于人乎。

故从事于道者，同于道；

德者，同于德；失者，同于失。

同于道者，道亦乐得之；

同于德者，德亦乐得之；

同于失者，失亦乐得之。

信不足焉，有不信焉。

Twenty Three

Express yourself completely,
then keep quiet.

Be like the forces of nature:
when it blows, there is only wind;
when it rains, there is only rain;
when the clouds pass, the sun shines through.

If you open yourself to the Dao,
you are at one with the Dao
and you can embody it completely.

If you open yourself to insight,
you are at one with insight
and you can use it completely.

If you open yourself to loss,
you are at one with loss
and you can accept it completely.

Open yourself to the Dao,
then trust your natural responses;
and everything will fall into place.

第二十四章

企者不立；跨者不行；

自见者不明；自是者不彰；

自伐者无功；自矜者不长。

其在道也，曰：余食赘形。

物或恶之，故有道者不处。

Twenty Four

He who stands on tiptoe
doesn't stand firm.

He who rushes ahead
doesn't go far.

He who tries to shine
dims his own light.

He who defines himself
can't know who he really is.

He who has power over others
can't empower himself.

He who clings to his work
will create nothing that endures.

If you want to accord with the Dao,
just do your job, then let go.

第二十五章

有物混成，先天地生。

寂兮寥兮，独立而不改，

周行而不殆，可以为天地母。

吾不知其名，强字之曰道，强为之名曰大。

大曰逝，逝曰远，远曰反。

故道大，天大，地大，人亦大。

域中有四大，而人居其一焉。

人法地，地法天，天法道，道法自然。

Twenty Five

There was something formless and perfect
before the universe was born.

It is serene. Empty.

Solitary. Unchanging.

Infinite. Eternally present.

It is the mother of the universe.

For lack of a better name,

I call it the Dao.

It flows through all things,
inside and outside, and returns
to the origin of all things.

The Dao is great.

The universe is great.

Earth is great.

Man is great.

These are the four great powers.

Man follows the earth.

Earth follows the universe.

The universe follows the Dao.

The Dao follows only itself.

第二十六章

重为轻根，静为躁君。

是以君子终日行不离辎重。

虽有荣观，燕处超然。

奈何万乘之主，而以身轻天下。

轻则失根，躁则失君。

Twenty Six

The heavy is the root of the light.
The unmoved is the source of all movement.

Thus the Master travels all day
without leaving home.
However splendid the views,
she stays serenely in herself.

Why should the lord of the country
flit about like a fool?
If you let yourself be blown to and fro,
you lose touch with your root.
If you let restlessness move you,
you lose touch with who you are.

第二十七章

善行无辙迹，善言无瑕谪；

善数不用筹策；善闭无关键而不可开，

善结无绳约而不可解。

是以圣人常善救人，故无弃人；

常善救物，故无弃物。

是谓袭明。

故善人者，不善人之师；

不善人者，善人之资。

不贵其师，不爱其资，

虽智大迷，是谓要妙。

Twenty Seven

A good traveler has no fixed plans
and is not intent upon arriving.
A good artist lets his intuition
lead him wherever it wants.
A good scientist has freed himself of concepts
and keeps his mind open to what is.

Thus the Master is available to all people
and doesn't reject anyone.
He is ready to use all situations
and doesn't waste anything.
This is called embodying the light.

What is a good man but a bad man's teacher?
What is a bad man but a good man's job?
If you do not understand this, you will get lost,
however intelligent you are.
It is the great secret.

第二十八章

知其雄，守其雌，为天下溪。

为天下溪，常德不离，复归于婴儿。
知其白，守其辱，为天下谷。

为天下谷，常德乃足，复归于朴。
知其白，守其黑，为天下式。

为天下式，常德不忒，复归于无极。
朴散则为器，圣人用之，

则为官长，故大智不割。

Twenty Eight

Know the male,
yet keep to the female:
receive the world in your arms.
If you receive the world,
the Dao will never leave you
and you will be like a little child.

Know the white,
yet keep to the black:
be a pattern for the world.
If you are a pattern for the world,
the Dao will be strong inside you
and there will be nothing you can't do.

Know the personal,
yet keep to the impersonal:
accept the world as it is.
If you accept the world,
the Dao will be luminous inside you
and you will return to your primal self.

The world is formed from the void,
like utensils from a block of wood.
The Master knows the utensils,
yet keeps to the block:
thus she can use all things.

第二十九章

将欲取天下而为之，吾见其不得已。

天下神器，不可为也，不可执也。

为者败之，执者失之。

是以圣人无为，故无败；

无执，故无失。

夫物或行或随；或嘘或吹；

或强或羸；或载或隳。

是以圣人去甚，去奢，去泰。

Twenty Nine

Do you want to improve the world?
I do not think it can be done.

The world is sacred.
It can't be improved.
If you tamper with it, you'll ruin it.
If you treat it like an object, you'll lose it.

There is a time for being ahead,
a time for being behind;
a time for being in motion,
a time for being at rest;
a time for being vigorous,
a time for being exhausted;
a time for being safe,
a time for being in danger.

The Master sees things as they are,
without trying to control them.
She lets them go their own way,
and resides at the center of the circle.

第三十章

以道佐人主者，不以兵强天下。

其事好远。

师之所处，荆棘生焉。

大军之后，必有凶年。

善有果而已，不以取强。

果而勿矜，果而勿伐，果而勿骄。

果而不得已，果而勿强。

物壮则老，是谓不道，不道早已。

Thirty

Whoever relies on the Dao in governing men
doesn't try to force issues
or defeat enemies by force of arms.
For every force there is a counterforce.
Violence, even well intentioned,
always rebounds upon oneself.

The Master does his job
and then stops.
He understands that the universe
is forever out of control,
and that trying to dominate events
goes against the current of the Dao.
Because he believes in himself,
he doesn't try to convince others.
Because he is content with himself,
he doesn't need others' approval.
Because he accepts himself,
the whole world accepts him.

第三十一章

夫兵者，不祥之器，

物或恶之，故有道者不处。

君子居则贵左，用兵则贵右。

兵者不祥之器，非君子之器，

不得已而用之，恬淡为上。

胜而不美，而美之者，是乐杀人。

夫乐杀人者，则不可得志于天下矣。

吉事尚左，凶事尚右。

偏将军居左，上将军居右，言以丧礼处之。

杀人之众，以悲哀泣之，战胜以丧礼处之。

Thirty One

Weapons are the tools of violence;
all decent men detest them.

Weapons are the tools of fear;
a decent man will avoid them
except in the direst necessity
and, if compelled, will use them
only with the utmost restraint.
Peace is his highest value.
If the peace has been shattered,
how can he be content?
His enemies are not demons,
but human beings like himself.
He doesn't wish them personal harm.
Nor does he rejoice in victory.
How could he rejoice in victory
and delight in the slaughter of men?

He enters a battle gravely,
with sorrow and with great compassion,
as if he were attending a funeral.

第三十二章

道常无名朴。

虽小，天下莫能臣。

侯王若能守之，万物将自宾。

天地相合，以降甘露，民莫之令而自均。
始制有名，名亦既有，

夫亦将知止，知止可以不殆。

譬道之在天下，犹川谷之于江海。

Thirty Two

The Dao can't be perceived.
Smaller than an electron,
it contains uncountable galaxies.

If powerful men and women
could remain centered in the Dao,
all things would be in harmony.
The world would become a paradise.
All people would be at peace,
and the law would be written in their hearts.

When you have names and forms,
know that they are provisional.
When you have institutions,
know where their functions should end.
Knowing when to stop,
you can avoid any danger.

All things end in the Dao
as rivers flow into the sea.

第三十三章

知人者智，自知者明。
胜人者有力，自胜者强。
知足者富。
强行者有志。
不失其所者久。
死而不亡者寿。

Thirty Three

Knowing others is intelligence;
knowing yourself is true wisdom.
Mastering others is strength;
mastering yourself is true power.

If you realize that you have enough,
you are truly rich.
If you stay in the center
and embrace death with your whole heart,
you will endure forever.

第三十四章

大道泛兮，其可左右。

万物恃之以生而不辞，功成而不有。

衣养万物而不为主，可名于小；

万物归焉而不为主，可名为大。

以其终不自为大，故能成其大。

Thirty Four

The great Dao flows everywhere.
All things are born from it,
yet it doesn't create them.
It pours itself into its work,
yet it makes no claim.
It nourishes infinite worlds,
yet it doesn't hold on to them.
Since it is merged with all things
and hidden in their hearts,
it can be called humble.
Since all things vanish into it
and it alone endures,
it can be called great.
It isn't aware of its greatness;
thus it is truly great.

第三十五章

执大象，天下往。

往而不害，安平泰。

乐与饵，过客止。

道之出口，淡乎其无味，

视之不足见，听之不足闻，用之不足既。

Thirty Five

She who is centered in the Dao
can go where she wishes, without danger.
She perceives the universal harmony,
even amid great pain,
because she has found peace in her heart.

Music or the smell of good cooking
may make people stop and enjoy.
But words that point to the Dao
seem monotonous and without flavor.
When you look for it, there is nothing to see.
When you listen for it, there is nothing to hear.
When you use it, it is inexhaustible.

第三十六章

将欲歛之，必故张之；将欲弱之，必故强之；

将欲废之，必故兴之；将欲取之，必故与之。

是谓微明。

柔弱胜刚强。

鱼不可脱于渊，国之利器不可以示人。

Thirty Six

If you want to shrink something,
you must first allow it to expand.
If you want to get rid of something,
you must first allow it to flourish.
If you want to take something,
you must first allow it to be given.
This is called the subtle perception
of the way things are.

The soft overcomes the hard.
The slow overcomes the fast.
Let your workings remain a mystery.
Just show peoples the results.

第三十七章

道常无为而无不为。

侯王若能守之，万物将自化。

化而欲作，吾将镇之以无名之朴。

镇之以无名之朴，夫将不欲。

不欲以静，天下将自正。

Thirty Seven

The Dao never does anything,
yet through it all things are done.

If powerful men and women
could center themselves in it,
the whole world would be transformed
by itself, in its natural rhythms.
People would be content
with their simple, everyday lives,
in harmony, and free of desire.

When there is no desire,
all things are at peace.

第三十八章

上德不德，是以有德；

下德不失德，是以无德。

上德无为而无以为；

下德无为而有以为。

上仁为之而无以为；

上义为之而有以为。

上礼为之而莫之应，

则攘臂而扔之。

故失道而后德，失德而后仁，

失仁而后义，失义而后礼。

夫礼者，忠信之薄，而乱之首。

前识者，道之华，而愚之始。

是以大丈夫处其厚，不居其薄；

处其实，不居其华。故去彼取此。

Thirty Eight

The Master doesn't try to be powerful;
thus he is truly powerful.
The ordinary man keeps reaching for power;
thus he never has enough.

The Master does nothing,
yet he leaves nothing undone.
The ordinary man is always doing things,
yet many more are left to be done.

The kind man does something,
yet something remains undone.
The just man does something,
and leaves many things to be done.
The moral man does something,
and when no one responds
he rolls up his sleeves and uses force.

When the Dao is lost, there is goodness.
When goodness is lost, there is morality.
When morality is lost, there is ritual.
Ritual is the husk of true faith,
the beginning of chaos.

Therefore the Master concerns himself
with the depths and not the surface,
with the fruit and not the flower.
He has no will of his own.
He dwells in reality,
and lets all illusions go.

第三十九章

昔之得一者：

天得一以清；

地得一以宁；

神得一以灵；

谷得一以生；

侯得一以为天下正。

其致之也，谓天无以清，将恐裂；

地无以宁，将恐废；

神无以灵，将恐歇；

谷无以盈，将恐竭；

万物无以生，将恐灭；

侯王无以正，将恐蹶。

故贵以贱为本，高以下为基。

是以侯王自称孤、寡、不谷。

此非以贱为本邪。非乎。故致誉无誉。

是故不欲碌碌如玉，珞珞如石。

Thirty Nine

In harmony with the Dao,
the sky is clear and spacious,
the earth is solid and full,
all creature flourish together,
content with the way they are,
endlessly repeating themselves,
endlessly renewed.

When man interferes with the Dao,
the sky becomes filthy,
the earth becomes depleted,
the equilibrium crumbles,
and creatures become extinct.

The Master views the parts with compassion,
because he understands the whole.
His constant practice is humility.
He doesn't glitter like a jewel
but lets himself be shaped by the Dao,
as rugged and common as stone.

第四十章

反者道之动；弱者道之用。
天下万物生于有，有生于无。

40

Return is the movement of the Dao.
Yielding is the way of the Dao.

All things are born of being.
Being is born of non-being.

第四十一章

上士闻道，勤而行之；中士闻道，若存若亡；

下士闻道，大笑之。不笑不足以为道。

故建言有之：

明道若昧；

进道若退；

夷道若颡；

上德若谷；

广德若不足；

建德若偷；

质真若渝；

大白若辱；

大方无隅；

大器晚成；

大音希声；

大象无形；

道隐无名。

夫唯道，善贷且成。

Forty One

When a superior man hears of the Dao,
he immediately begins to embody it.
When an average man hears of the Dao,
he half believes it, half doubts it.
When a foolish man hears of the Dao,
he laughs out loud.
If he didn't laugh,
it wouldn't be the Dao.

Thus it is said:
The path into the light seems dark,
the path forward seems to go back,
the direct path seems long,
true power seems weak,
true purity seems tarnished,
true steadfastness seems changeable,
true clarity seems obscure,
the greatest are seems unsophisticated,
the greatest love seems indifferent,
the greatest wisdom seems childish.

The Dao is nowhere to be found.
Yet it nourishes and completes all things.

第四十二章

道生一，一生二，二生三，三生万物。

万物负阴而抱阳，冲气以为和。

人之所恶，唯孤、寡、不谷，而王公以为称。

故物或损之而益，或益之而损。

人之所教，我亦教之。

强梁者不得其死，吾将以为教父。

Forty Two

The Dao gives birth to One.
One gives birth to Two.
Two gives birth to Three.
Three gives birth to all things.

All things have their backs to the female
and stand facing the male.
When male and female combine,
all things achieve harmony.

Ordinary men hate solitude.
But the Master makes use of it,
embracing his aloneness, realizing
he is one with the whole universe.

第四十三章

天下之至柔，驰骋天下之至坚。

无有入无间，吾是以知无为之有益。

不言之教，无为之益，天下希及之。

Forty Three

The gentlest thing in the world
overcomes the hardest thing in the world.
That which has no substance
enters where there is no space.
This shows the value of non-action.

Teaching without words,
performing without actions:
that is the Master's way.

第四十四章

名与身孰亲。身与货孰多。得与亡孰病。
甚爱必大费；多藏必厚亡。
故知足不辱，知止不殆，可以长久。

Forty Four

Fame or integrity: which is more important?
Money or happiness: which is more valuable?
Success or failure: which is more destructive?

If you look to others for fulfillment,
you will never truly be fulfilled.
If your happiness depends on money,
you will never be happy with yourself.

Be content with what you have;
rejoice in the way things are.
When you realize there is nothing lacking,
the whole world belongs to you.

第四十五章

大成若缺，其用不弊。
大盈若冲，其用不穷。
大直若屈，大巧若拙，大辩若讷。
静胜躁，寒胜热。清静为天下正。

Forty Five

True perfection seems imperfect,
yet it is perfectly itself.
True fullness seems empty,
yet it is fully present.

True straightness seems crooked.
True wisdom seems foolish.
True art seems artless.

The Master allows things to happen.
She shapes events as they come.
She steps out of the way
and lets the Dao speak for itself.

第四十六章

天下有道，却走马以粪。

天下无道，戎马生于郊。

祸莫大于不知足；咎莫大于欲得。

故知足之足，常足矣。

Forty Six

When a country is in harmony with the Dao,
the factories make trucks and tractors.
When a country goes counter to the Dao,
warheads are stockpiled outside the cities.

There is no greater illusion than fear,
no greater wrong than preparing to defend yourself,
no greater misfortune than having an enemy.

Whoever can see through all fear
will always be safe.

第四十七章

不出户，知天下；不窥牖，见天道。

其出弥远，其知弥少。

是以圣人不行而知，不见而明，不为而成。

Forty Seven

Without opening your door,
you can open your heart to the world.
Without looking out your window,
you can see the essence of the Dao.

The more you know,
the less you understand.

The Master arrives without leaving,
sees the light without looking,
achieves without doing a thing.

第四十八章

为学日益，为道日损。

损之又损，以至于无为。

无为而无不为。

取天下常以无事，及其有事，不足以取天下。

Forty Eight

In pursuit of knowledge,
every day something is added.
In the practice of the Dao,
every day something is dropped.
Less and less do you need to force things,
until finally you arrive at non-action.
When nothing is done,
nothing is left undone.

True mastery can be gained
by letting things go their own way.
It can't be gained by interfering.

第四十九章

圣人常无心，以百姓心为心。
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。
圣人在天下，歛歛焉，为天下浑其心，
百姓皆注其耳目，圣人皆孩之。

Forty Nine

The Master has no mind of her own.
She works with the mind of the people.

She is good to people who are good.
She is also good to people who aren't good.
This is true goodness.

She trusts people who are trustworthy.
She also trusts people who aren't trustworthy.
This is true trust.

The Master's mind is like space.
People do not understand her.
They look to her and wait.
She treats them like her own children.

第五十章

出生入死。

生之徒，十有三；

死之徒，十有三；

人之生，动之于死地，亦十有三。

夫何故。

以其生之厚。

盖闻善摄生者，路行不遇兕虎，入军不被甲兵；

兕无所投其角，虎无所用其爪，兵无所容其刃。

夫何故。以其无死地。

Fifty

The Master gives himself up
to whatever the moment brings.
He knows that he is going to die,
and he has nothing left to hold on to:
no illusions in his mind,
no resistances in his body.
He doesn't think about his actions;
they flow from the core of his being.
He holds nothing back from life;
therefore he is ready for death,
as a man is ready for sleep
after a good day's work.

第五十一章

道生之，德畜之，物形之，势成之。

是以万物莫不尊道而贵德。

道之尊，德之贵，夫莫之命而常自然。

故道生之，德畜之；

长之育之；成之熟之；养之覆之。

生而不有，为而不恃，

长而不宰。是谓玄德。

Fifty One

Every being in the universe
is an expression of the Dao.
It springs into existence,
unconscious, perfect, free,
takes on a physical body,
lets circumstances complete it.
That is why every being
spontaneously honors the Dao.

The Dao gives birth to all beings,
nourishes them, maintains them,
cares for them, comforts them, protects them,
takes them back to itself,
creating without possessing,
acting without expecting,
guiding without interfering.
That is why love of the Dao
is in the very nature of things.

第五十二章

天下有始，以为天下母。

既得其母，以知其子，

复守其母，没身不殆。

塞其兑，闭其门，终身不勤。

开其兑，济其事，终身不救。

见小曰明，守柔曰强。

用其光，复归其明，无遗身殃；是为袭常。

Fifty Two

In the beginning was the Dao.
All things issue from it;
all things return to it.

To find the origin,
trace back the manifestations.
When you recognize the children
and find the mother,
you will be free of sorrow.

If you close your mind in judgments
and traffic with desires,
your heart will be troubled.
If you keep your mind from judging
and aren't led by the senses,
your heart will find peace.

Seeing into darkness is clarity.
Knowing how to yield is strength.
Use your own light
and return to the source of light.
This is called practicing eternity.

第五十三章

使我介然有知，行于大道，唯施是畏。
大道甚夷，而人好径。

朝甚除，田甚芜，仓甚虚；

服文采，带利剑，厌饮食，

财货有余；是为盗夸。

非道也哉。

Fifty Three

The great Way is easy,
yet people prefer the side paths.
Be aware when things are out of balance.
Stay centered within the Dao.

When rich speculators prosper
While farmers lose their land;
when government officials spend money
on weapons instead of cures;
when the upper class is extravagant and irresponsible
while the poor have nowhere to turn-
all this is robbery and chaos.
It is not in keeping with the Dao.

第五十四章

善建者不拔，

善抱者不脱，子孙以祭祀不辍。

修之于身，其德乃真；

修之于家，其德乃余；

修之于乡，其德乃长；

修之于邦，其德乃丰；

修之于天下，其德乃普。

故以身观身，

以家观家，以乡观乡，

以邦观邦，以天下观天下。

吾何以知天下然哉。以此。

Fifty Four

Whoever is planted in the Dao
will not be rooted up.
Whoever embraces the Dao
will not slip away.
Her name will be held in honor
from generation to generation.

Let the Dao be present in your life
and you will become genuine.
Let it be present in your family
and your family will flourish.
Let it be present in your country
and your country will be an example
to all countries in the world.
Let it be present in the universe
and the universe will sing.

How do I know this is true?
By looking inside myself.

第五十五章

含「德」之厚，比于赤子。

毒虫不螫，猛兽不据，攫鸟不搏。

骨弱筋柔而握固。

未知牝牡之合而峻作，精之至也。

终日号而不嘎，和之至也。

知和曰「常」，

知常曰「明」。

益生曰祥。心使气曰强。

物壮则老，谓之不道，不道早已。

Fifty Five

He who is in harmony with the Dao
is like a newborn child.
Its bones are soft, its muscles are weak,
but its grip is powerful.
It doesn't know about the union
of male and female,
yet its penis can stand erect,
so intense is its vital power.
It can scream its head off all day,
yet it never becomes hoarse,
so complete is its harmony.

The Master's power is like this.
He lets all things come and go
effortlessly, without desire.
He never expects results;
thus he is never disappointed.
He is never disappointed;
thus his spirit never grows old.

第五十六章

知者不言，言者不知。

挫其锐，解其纷，和其光，

同其尘，是谓「玄同」。

故不可得而亲，不可得而疏；

不可得而利，不可得而害；

不可得而贵，不可得而贱。故为天下贵。

Fifty Six

Those who know do not talk.
Those who talk do not know.

Close your mouth,
block off your senses,
blunt your sharpness,
untie your knots,
soften your glare,
settle your dust.
This is the primal identity.

Be like the Dao.
It can't be approached or withdrawn from,
benefited or harmed,
honored or brought into disgrace.
It gives itself up continually.
That is why it endures.

第五十七章

以正治国，以奇用兵，以无事取天下。

吾何以知其然哉。以此：

天下多忌讳，而民弥贫；

人多利器，国家滋昏；

人多伎巧，奇物滋起；

法令滋彰，盗贼多有。

故圣人云：

「我无为，而民自化；

我好静，而民自正；

我无事，而民自富；

我无欲，而民自朴。

Fifty Seven

If you want to be a great leader,
you must learn to follow the Dao.
Stop trying to control.
Let go of fixed plans and concepts,
and the world will govern itself.

The more prohibitions you have,
the less virtuous people will be.
The more weapons you have,
the less secure people will be.
The more subsidies you have,
the less self-reliant people will be.

Therefore the Master says:
I let go of the law,
and people become honest.
I let go of economics,
and people become prosperous.
I let go of religion,
and people become serene.
I let go of all desire for the common good,
and the good becomes common as grass.

第五十八章

其政闷闷，其民淳淳；

其政察察，其民缺缺。

是以圣人方而不割，廉而不剝，

直而不肆，光而不耀。

 祸兮福之所倚，福兮祸之所伏。

孰知其极。其无正也。

正复为奇，善复为妖。

人之迷，其日固久。

Fifty Eight

If a country is governed with tolerance,
the people are comfortable and honest.
If a country is governed with repression,
the people are depressed and crafty.

When the will to power is in charge,
the higher the ideals, the lower the results.
Try to make people happy,
and you lay the groundwork for misery.
Try to make people moral,
and you lay the groundwork for vice.

Thus the Master is content
to serve as an example
and not to impose her will.
She is pointed, but doesn't pierce.
Straightforward, but supple.
Radiant, but easy on the eyes.

第五十九章

治人事天，莫若嗇。

夫唯嗇，是谓早服；

早服谓之重积德；重积德则无不克；

无不克则莫知其极；莫知其极，可以有国；

有国之母，可以长久；

是谓深根固抵，长生久视之道。

Fifty Nine

For governing a country well
there is nothing better than moderation.

The mark of a moderate man
is freedom from his own ideas.
Tolerant like the sky,
all-pervading like sunlight,
firm like a mountain,
supple like a tree in the wind,
he has no destination in view
and makes use of anything
life happens to bring his way.

Nothing is impossible for him.
Because he has let go,
he can care for the people's welfare
as a mother cares for her child.

第六十章

治大国，若烹小鲜。

以道莅天下，其鬼不神；

非其鬼不神，其神不伤人；

非其神不伤人，圣人亦不伤人。

夫两不相伤，故德交归焉。

Sixty

Governing a large country
is like frying a small fish.
You spoil it with too much poking.

Center your country in the Dao
and evil will have no power.
Not that it isn't there,
but you'll be able to step out of its way.

Give evil nothing to oppose
and it will disappear by itself.

第六十一章

大邦者下流，天下之牝，

天下之交也。

牝常以静胜牡，以静为下。

故大邦以下小邦，则取小邦；

小邦以下大邦，则取大邦。

故或下以取，或下而取。

大邦不过欲兼畜人，小邦不过欲入事人。

夫两者各得所欲，大者宜为下。

Sixty One

When a country obtains great power,
it becomes like the sea:
all streams run downward into it.
The more powerful it grows,
the greater the need for humility.
Humility means trusting the Dao,
thus never needing to be defensive.

A great nation is like a great man:
When he makes a mistake, he realizes it.
Having realized it, he admits it.
Having admitted it, he corrects it.
He considers those who point out his faults
as his most benevolent teachers.
He thinks of his enemy
as the shadow that he himself casts.

If a nation is centered in the Dao,
if it nourishes its own people
and doesn't meddle in the affairs of others,
it will be a light to all nations in the world.

第六十二章

道者万物之奥。善人之宝，不善人之所保。
美言可以市尊，美行可以加人。

人之不善，何弃之有。

故立天子，置三公，

虽有拱璧以先駟马，

不如坐进此道。

古之所以贵此道者何。

不曰：求以得，有罪以免邪。故为天下贵。

Sixty Two

The Dao is the center of the universe,
the good man's treasure,
the bad man's refuge.

Honors can be bought with fine words,
respect can be won with good deeds;
but the Dao is beyond all value,
and no one can achieve it.

Thus, when a new leader is chosen,
do not offer to help him
with your wealth or your expertise.
Offer instead
to teach him about the Dao.

Why did the ancient Masters esteem the Dao?
Because, being one with the Dao,
when you seek, you find;
and when you make a mistake, you are forgiven.
That is why everybody loves it.

第六十三章

为无为，事无事，味无味。

图难于其易，为大于其细；

天下难事，必作于易，

天下大事，必作于细。

是以圣人终不为大，故能成其大。

夫轻诺必寡信，多易必多难。

是以圣人犹难之，故终无难矣。

Sixty Three

Act without doing;
work without effort.
Think of the small as large
and the few as many.
Confront the difficult
while it is still easy;
accomplish the great task
by a series of small acts.

The Master never reaches for the great;
thus she achieves greatness.
When she runs into a difficulty,
she stops and gives herself to it.
She doesn't cling to her own comfort;
thus problems are no problem for her.

第六十四章

其安易持，其未兆易谋。

其脆易泮，其微易散。

为之于未有，治之于未乱。

合抱之木，生于毫末；

九层之台，起于累土；

千里之行，始于足下。

民之从事，常于几成而败之。

慎终如始，则无败事。

Sixty Four

What is rooted is easy to nourish.
What is recent is easy to correct.
What is brittle is easy to break.
What is small is easy to scatter.

Prevent trouble before it arises.
Put things in order before they exist.
The giant pine tree
grows from a tiny sprout.
The journey of a thousand miles
starts from beneath your feet.

Rushing into action, you fail.
Trying to grasp things, you lose them.
Forcing a project to completion,
you ruin what was almost ripe.

Therefore the Master takes action
by letting things take their course.
He remains as calm
at the end as at the beginning.
He has nothing,
thus has nothing to lose.
What he desires is non-desire;
what he learns is to unlearn.
He simply reminds people
of who they have always been.
He cares about nothing but the Dao.
Thus he can care for all things.

第六十五章

古之善为道者，非以明民，将以愚之。
民之难治，以其智多。

故以智治国，国之贼；

不以智治国，国之福。
知此两者亦稽式。

常知稽式，是谓「玄德」。

「玄德」深矣，远矣，与物反矣，然后乃至大顺。

Sixty Five

The ancient Masters
didn't try to educate the people,
but kindly taught them to not-know.

When they think that they know the answers,
people are difficult to guide.
When they know that they do not know,
people can find their own way.

If you want to learn how to govern,
avoid being clever or rich.
The simplest pattern is the clearest.
Content with an ordinary life,
you can show all people the way
back to their own true nature.

第六十六章

江海之所以能为百谷王者，

以其善下之，故能为百谷王。

是以圣人欲上民，必以言下之；

欲先民，必以身后之。

是以圣人处上而民不重，处前而民不害。

是以天下乐推而不厌。

以其不争，故天下莫能与之争。

Sixty Six

All streams flow to the sea
because it is lower than they are.
Humility gives it its power.

If you want to govern the people,
you must place yourself below them.
If you want to lead the people,
you must learn how to follow them.

The Master is above the people,
and no one feels oppressed.
She goes ahead of the people,
and no one feels manipulated.
The whole world is grateful to her.
Because she competes with no one,
no one can compete with her.

第六十七章

天下皆谓我道大，似不肖。

夫唯大，故似不肖。

若肖，久矣其细也夫。

我有三宝，持而保之。

一曰慈，

二曰俭，

三曰不敢为天下先。

慈故能勇；俭故能广；

不敢为天下先，故能成器长。

今舍慈且勇；舍俭且广；

舍后且先；死矣。

夫慈以战则胜，以守则固。

天将救之，以慈卫之。

Sixty Seven

Some say that my teaching is nonsense.
Others call it lofty but impractical.
But to those who have looked inside themselves,
this nonsense makes perfect sense.
And to those who put it into practice,
this loftiness has roots that go deep.

I have just three things to teach:
simplicity, patience, compassion.
These three are your greatest treasures.
Simple in actions and in thoughts,
you return to the source of being.
Patient with both friends and enemies,
you accord with the way things are.
Compassionate toward yourself,
you reconcile all beings in the world.

第六十八章

善为士者，不武；

善战者，不怒；

善胜敌者，不与；

善用人者，为之下。

是谓不争之德，

是谓用人之力，

是谓配天古之极。

Sixty Eight

The best athlete
wants his opponent at his best.
The best general
enters the mind of his enemy.
The best businessman
serves the communal good.
The best leader
follows the will of the people.

All of them embody
the virtue of non-competition.
Not that they do not love to compete,
but they do it in the spirit of play.
In this they are like children
and in harmony with the Dao.

第六十九章

用兵有言：

「吾不敢为主，而为客；

不敢进寸，而退尺。」

是谓行无行；攘无臂；

扔无敌；执无兵。

祸莫大于轻敌，轻敌几丧吾宝。

故抗兵相若，哀者胜矣。

Sixty Nine

The generals have a saying:
"Rather than make the first move
it is better to wait and see.
Rather than advance an inch
it is better to retreat a yard."

This is called
going forward without advancing,
pushing back without using weapons.

There is no greater misfortune
than underestimating your enemy.
Underestimating your enemy
means thinking that he is evil.
Thus you destroy your three treasures
and become an enemy yourself.

When two great forces oppose each other,
the victory will go
to the one that knows how to yield.

第七十章

吾言甚易知，甚易行。

天下莫能知，莫能行。
言有宗，事有君。

夫唯无知，是以不我知。
知我者希，则我者贵。

是以圣人被褐而怀玉。

Seventy

My teachings are easy to understand
and easy to put into practice.
Yet your intellect will never grasp them,
and if you try to practice them, you'll fail.

My teachings are older than the world.
How can you grasp their meaning?

If you want to know me,
look inside your heart.

第七十一章

知不知，尚矣；不知知，病也。

圣人不病，以其病病。

夫唯病病，是以不病。

Seventy One

Not-knowing is true knowledge.
Presuming to know is a disease.
First realize that you are sick;
then you can move toward health.

The Master is her own physician.
She has healed herself of all knowing.
Thus she is truly whole.

第七十二章

民不畏威，

则大威至。

无狎其所居，

无厌其所生。

夫唯不厌，

是以不厌。

是以圣人自知不自见；

自爱不自贵。

故去彼取此。

Seventy Two

When they lose their sense of awe,
people turn to religion.
When they no longer trust themselves,
they begin to depend upon authority.

Therefore the Master steps back
so that people won't be confused.
He teaches without a teaching,
so that people will have nothing to learn.

第七十三章

勇于敢则杀，勇于不敢则活。

此两者，或利或害。

天之所恶，孰知其故。

天之道，

不争而善胜，不言而善应，

不召而自来，繹然而善谋。

天网恢恢，疏而不失。

Seventy Three

The Dao is always at ease.
It overcomes without competing,
answers without speaking a word,
arrives without being summoned,
accomplishes without a plan.

Its net covers the whole universe.
And though its meshes are wide,
it doesn't let a thing slip through.

第七十四章

民不畏死，奈何以死惧之。

若使民常畏死，而为奇者，

吾得执而杀之，孰敢。

常有司杀者杀。

夫代司杀者杀，是谓代大匠斲，

夫代大匠斲者，希有不伤其手矣。

Seventy Four

If you realize that all things change,
there is nothing you will try to hold on to.
If you aren't afraid of dying,
there is nothing you can't achieve.

Trying to control the future
is like trying to take the master carpenter's place.
When you handle the master carpenter's tools,
chances are that you'll cut your hand.

第七十五章

民之饥，以其上食税之多，是以饥。

民之难治，以其上之有为，是以难治。

民之轻死，以其上求生之厚，是以轻死。

夫唯无以生为者，是贤于贵生。

Seventy Five

When taxes are too high,
people go hungry.
When the government is too intrusive,
people lose their spirit.

Act for the people's benefit.
Trust them; leave them alone.

第七十六章

人之生也柔弱，其死也坚强。
草木之生也柔脆，其死也枯槁。
故坚强者死之徒，柔弱者生之徒。
是以兵强则灭，木强则折。
强大处下，柔弱处上。

Seventy Six

Men are born soft and supple;
dead, they are stiff and hard.
Plats are born tender and pliant;
dead, they are brittle and dry.

Thus whoever is stiff and inflexible
is a disciple of death.
Whoever is soft and yielding
is a disciple of life.

The hard and stiff will be broken.
The soft and supple will prevail.

第七十七章

天之道，其犹张弓欤。

高者抑之，下者举之；

有余者损之，不足者补之。

天之道，损有余而补不足。

人之道，则不然，损不足以奉有余。

孰能有余以奉天下，唯有道者。

是以圣人为而不恃，功成而不处，其不欲见贤。

Seventy Seven

As it acts in the world, the Dao
is like the bending of a bow.
The top is bent downward;
the bottom is bent up.
It adjusts excess and deficiency
so that there is perfect balance.
It takes from what is too much
and give to what isn't enough.

Those who try to control,
who use force to protect their power,
go against the direction of the Dao.
They take from those who do not have enough
and give to those who have far too much.

The Master can keep giving
because there is no end to her wealth.
She acts without expectation,
succeeds without taking credit,
and doesn't think that she is better
than anyone else.

第七十八章

天下莫柔弱于水，而攻坚强者莫之能胜，以其无以易之。

弱之胜强，柔之胜刚，

天下莫不知，莫能行。

是以圣人云：

「受国之垢，是谓社稷主；

受国不祥，是为天下王。」

正言若反。

Seventy Eight

Nothing in the world
is as soft and yielding as water.
Yet for dissolving the hard and inflexible,
nothing can surpass it.

The soft overcomes the hard;
the gentle overcomes the rigid.
Everyone knows this is true,
but few can put it into practice.

Therefore the Master remains
serene in the midst of sorrow.
Evil cannot enter his heart.
Because he has given up helping,
he is people's greatest help.

True words seem paradoxical.

第七十九章

和大怨，必有余怨；

报怨以德，安可以为善。

是以圣人执左契，而不责于人。

有德司契，无德司彻。

天道无亲，常与善人。

Seventy Nine

Failure is an opportunity.
If you blame someone else,
there is no end to the blame.

Therefore the Master
fulfills her own obligations
and corrects her own mistakes.
She does what she needs to do
and demands nothing of others.

第八十章

小国寡民。

使有什伯之器而不用；

使民重死而不远徙。

虽有舟舆，无所乘之，

虽有甲兵，无所陈之。

使民复结绳而用之。

甘其食，美其服，安其居，乐其俗。

邻国相望，鸡犬之声相闻，

民至老死，不相往来。

Eighty

If a country is governed wisely,
its inhabitants will be content.
They enjoy the labor of their hands
and do not waste time inventing
labor-saving machines.
Since they dearly love their homes,
they aren't interested in travel.
There may be a few wagons and boats,
but these do not go anywhere.
There may be an arsenal of weapons,
but nobody ever uses them.
People enjoy their food,
take pleasure in being with their families,
spend weekends working in their gardens,
delight in the doings of the neighborhood.
And even though the next country is so close
that people can hear its roosters crowing and its dogs barking,
they are content to die of old age
without ever having gone to see it.

第八十一章

信言不美，美言不信。
善者不辩，辩者不善。
知者不博，博者不知。
圣人不积，既以为人已愈有，

既以与人己愈多。
天之道，利而不害；

圣人之道，为而不争。

Eighty One

True words aren't eloquent;
eloquent words aren't true.
Wise men do not need to prove their point;
men who need to prove their point aren't wise.

The Master has no possessions.
The more he does for others,
the happier he is.
The more he gives to others,
the wealthier he is.

The Dao nourishes by not forcing.
By not dominating, the Master leads.