

Dao de jing

道德經

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Additional Translations
and Other Materials

Dao de jing

1.

- a*> **A *dao* that may be spoken is not the enduring Dao. A name that may be named is not an enduring name.
No names – this is the beginning of heaven and earth. Having names – this is the mother of the things of the world.**
- b*> **Make freedom from desire your constant norm; thereby you will see what is subtle. Make having desires your constant norm; thereby you will see what is manifest.
These two arise from the same source but have different names. Together they may be termed ‘the mysterious’.
Mystery and more mystery: the gate of all that is subtle.**

2.

- a*> **All in the world deem the beautiful to be beautiful; it is ugly. All deem the good to be good; it is bad.**
- b*> **What is and what is not give birth to one another,
What is difficult and what is easy complete one another,
Long and short complement one another,
High and low incline towards one another,
Note and noise harmonize with one another,
Before and after follow one another.**
- c*> **Therefore the sage dwells in the midst of non-action (*wuwei*) and practices the wordless teaching.**
- d*> **Herein arise the things of the world, it does not turn from them; what it gives birth to it does not possess; what it does it does not retain. The achievements complete, it makes no claim to them. Because it makes no claim to them, they never leave it.**

3.

- a*> **Do not honor the worthy. This will keep the people from contention. Do not prize rare things. This will keep the people from becoming thieves. Do not display the desirable. The hearts of the people will not be turbulent.**
- b*> **Hence the governance of the sage:
Empty their minds and fill their bellies,
Weaken their wills and strengthen their bones.
Always render the people free of knowledge and desire. Ensure that the clever do not dare to act.**
- c*> **Engage in non-action (*wuwei*) and nothing will go unruled.**

4.

- a*> **The Dao is empty yet you may keep drawing from it as though it could never fill your need.**
- b*> **It is an abyss, like the ancestor of the world of things.**
- c*> **Blunt the point,
Undo the tangle,
Soften the glare,
Join the dust.**
- d*> **Dim, it seems almost to exist. I know not whose child it may be. It seems the forerunner of the Lord.**

5.

- a*> **Heaven and earth are not *ren*: they treat the things of the world as straw dogs. The sage is not *ren*: he treats the people as straw dogs.**
- b*> **All between heaven and earth is like a great bellows--
Empty, yet it does not collapse,
The more it is moved the more it issues forth.**
- c*> **Many words are soon exhausted;
Better to preserve the central.**

6.

The spirit of the ravine is undying; it is called the dark vagina. The gateway of the dark vagina is called the root of the world.
Stretching further and further, as though always there; use it, effortless.

7.

Heaven endures; earth long abides. Heaven endures and earth long abides because they do not give birth to themselves. Hence they are long lived. Hence the sage places his person last, and it comes first; he treats it as something external to him and it endures.
Does he not employ selflessness? Hence he attains his self-regarding ends.

8.

Highest good is like water: water benefits the things of the world and does not contend.
Dwell in places that the masses of men despise.

9.

- a*> It is better to stop pouring than to grasp it until it is full; the blade forged to full sharpness will not last long.
Halls filled with gold and jade can never be secured; pride in wealth and rank brings disaster upon itself.
- b*> The work being done, step out of view – that is the *dao* of Tian.

10.

- a*> As you carry your bodily soul embracing oneness, can you never depart from it?
As you concentrate your *qi* and extend your suppleness, can you be as a new born babe?
As you polish the dust from your mysterious mirror, can you render it free of all blemishes?
As you cherish the people and order the state, can you do so without awareness?
As heaven's gate swings open and shut can you keep to the female?

As your brilliant awareness penetrates everywhere can you refrain from employing it in action?

- b*> You give birth to it, you nurture it – yet in giving birth you do not possess it, in doing it you do not retain it, in leading it you employ no authority: this is called mysterious power (*de*).

11.

Thirty spokes share a single hub; grasp the nothingness at its center to get the use of the wheel.

Clay is fashioned to make a vessel; grasp the nothingness at the center to get the use of the vessel.

Bore windows and doors to create a room; grasp the nothingness of the interior to get the use of the room.

That which is constitutes what is valuable, but that which is not constitutes what is of use.

12.

The five colors blind men's eyes,

The five tones deafen men's ears,

The five flavors numb men's mouths,

Racing at a gallop in pursuit of the hunt maddens men's minds.

Rare objects obstruct men's conduct.

Therefore the sage is for the belly and not for the eye. Therefore he discards the one and selects the other.

13.

Great favor and disgrace startle alike. Prize great troubles as you do your body.

What do I mean by "great favor and disgrace startle alike?" When an inferior receives a superior's favor, he is startled when he gets it, and startled when he loses it. That is the meaning of "great favor and disgrace startle alike."

What do I mean by "prize great troubles as you do your body?" The only reason I have great troubles is because I have a body; if I had no body, what trouble would I have?

Therefore, he who prizes his body as if it were the world can be given charge of the world. He who loves his body as if it were the world can be entrusted with the world.