

Dao de jing

道德經

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Additional Translations
and Other Materials

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 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.

14.

- a*> What you look at but cannot see is called ‘transparent’; what you listen to but cannot hear is called ‘rarified’; what you grab at but cannot grasp is called ‘minute’. These three cannot be probed through, thus they are conflated to one.
- b*> Its top is unshining, its bottom not darkened – endless, it cannot be named. Returned to a state without things, it is called the form of no form, the image of no things; it is called the indistinct.
- c*> Encountering it you do not see its head; pursuing it you do not see its back. Grasp the *dao* of the past to steer what there is today.
- d*> To be able to know the beginning of the past is called the guideline of the Dao.

15.

- a*> In the past, those who were good at being gentlemen were subtle, marvelous, mysterious, penetrating – so deep they could not be fathomed. Just because they cannot be fathomed, I strain to describe their appearance:
 Hesitant, as though crossing a winter stream;
 Timid, as though fearing all nearby;
 Reverent, like a guest;
 Rent, like river ice soon to melt;
 Solid, like an uncarved block;
 Vacant, like a valley;
 Turbid, like muddied water.
- b*> Who can be turbid, yet settling slowly clear?
 Who can be at rest, yet moving slowly come to life?
- c*> One who protects this *dao* does not wish to become full. It is precisely because he is not full that he can be tattered yet new made.

16.

Reaching the ultimate of emptiness, deeply guarding stillness, the things of the world arise together; thereby do I watch their return.
 The things of the world burst out everywhere, and each returns to its own root.

Returning to the root is called stillness; this is called returning to destiny; returning to destiny is called constant; knowing the constant is called enlightenment.

Not knowing the constant one acts blindly and ill-omened.

Knowing the constant one can accommodate; accommodation leads to impartiality; impartiality leads to kingliness; kingliness leads to Tian; Tian leads to the Dao.

With the Dao one may endure, and to the end of life one will not be in danger.

17.

The best: those below are aware that he is there. Next best: they love and praise him. Next best, they fear him. Next best: they insult him.

Insufficient faith above, unfaithfulness below.

Far off, he speaks but rarely. When the work is accomplished and the task is complete, the people all say, "We did it of ourselves."

18.

When the Great Dao was discarded, only then came *ren* and right. When wisdom and insight emerged, only then came the Great Artifice. When the six kinship classes fell out of harmony, only then came filiality and parental kindness. When the state is darkened with chaos, only then do the loyal ministers appear.

19.

Cut off sagehood! Cast out wisdom! The people will benefit a hundredfold.

Cut off *ren*! Cast out right! The people will return to filiality and parental kindness.

Cut off cleverness! Cast out profit! Brigands and thieves will nowhere be found.

As patterns, these three are insufficient and only make the people seek to add to them.

Exhibit the plainness of undyed cloth; embrace the uncarved block.

Be little self-regarding and make your desires few.

20.

a> To assent and to object – how different are they? Beauty and ugliness – what is the distinction between them?

b> What others fear, one must fear too – how baseless! Far off the mark!

- c*> **How joyous the mass of people are, as if banqueting on the sacrificed ox, as if mounting a tower in spring –**
I alone am still, without visible sign, like a new born baby yet to smile,
all listless, like one with no home.
The mass of people have more than enough –
I alone appear bereft; I, with the mind of a dolt, so slow.
Ordinary men are brilliant –
I am dim.
Ordinary men are perceptive –
I am closed.
Sudden, like the sea, like a tempest, as though endless, the mass of
people all have their means –
I alone am obstinate, uncouth.
I alone wish to be different from others, and value feeding from the
mother.

21.

- a*> **The bearing of abundant virtue is to follow the Dao alone.**
- b*> **As a thing the Dao is shadowed, obscure.**
Shadowed, obscured,
A thing lies within;
Obscured, shadowed,
An image lies within.
Dark, dim,
An essence lies within.
So sound is the essence,
Full concord lies within.
- c*> **From the past to the present, its name has never left it, and hence it has pleased the multitude of elders. How do I know this of the multitude of elders? By means of this.**

22.

“A fragment, thus whole”: bent, thus straight; hollow, thus full; worn, thus new.
Few, thus gaining; many, thus confused – therefore the sage embraces One and is a standard for the world.
Not revealing himself, thus bright; not asserting himself, thus shining; not praising himself, thus meritorious; not boasting of himself, thus enduring.