

Dao de jing

道德經

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Additional Translations
and Other Materials

- b*> When the uncarved block is dispersed, vessels are made from it. The sage uses these to become the leader of the officers of state. Thus the greatest carving never cuts.

29.

- a*> The wish to grasp the world and control it – I see its futility. The world is a spiritlike vessel; it cannot be controlled. One who would control it would ruin it; one who would grasp it would lose it.
- b*> Thus things may lead or follow, blow hot or cold, be strong or weak, sustain or destroy.
Therefore the sage discards the excessive, the extravagant, the overbearing.

30.

- a*> He who assists a ruler by means of the Dao does not coerce the world by means of arms. Consequences come back around like a ring.
Where troops encamp, brambles grow;
After great armies, crops always fail.
The good man is simply resolute; he never employs coercion. Be resolute without boast, resolute without threat, resolute without pride.
Resolute from necessity, be resolute without coercion.
- b*> When things in their prime grow old, they are called ‘contrary to the Dao’.
What is contrary to the Dao comes to an early end.

31.

Weapons are ill-fortuned tools. Things may detest them, hence the man of the Dao does not rely on them.
When a *junzi* is at leisure he honors what is at his left; use of weapons honors the right. Thus weapons are not tools of a *junzi*.
Weapons are ill-fortuned tools; they must be used only from necessity. It is best to use them without gusto, to prevail without relish. To relish victory is to take joy in killing men. The man who takes joy in killing men will never attain his ambition in the world.
Affairs of good fortune honor the left; affairs of ill fortune honor the right. The lieutenant’s place is to the left, the commander’s place is to the right. This means that mourning rites are the model. When the masses of another lord are killed, one should mourn them with wailing – for victory in battle, mourning rites are the model.

32.

- a*> **The Dao is ever nameless. Though the uncarved block be small, it cannot be made the subordinate of any in the world. If a king or lord could preserve it, the things of the world would come to him of themselves. As heaven and earth conjoin to send down sweet dew, the people will settle themselves, though none so decrees. As soon as it is cut, then there are names. Once there are names one must know it's time to stop. Knowing to stop is the way to avoid danger.**
- b*> **The Dao is to the world as the Yangzi and sea are to streams and brooks.**

33.

**He who knows men is wise; he who knows himself is enlightened.
 He who conquers men has strength; he who conquers himself is strong.
 He who knows when he has enough is wealthy; he who perseveres has strong will.
 He who does not lose his place is lasting; he who lasts beyond his death is long lived.**

34.

- a*> **The Great Dao flows everywhere, at our every right and left. Relying upon it, the things of the world are born, yet it remains wordless; its work done it takes no name as the doer.**
- b*> **Clothing and nourishing the things of the world, it never acts as their lord – constant without desire, it may be termed small. The things of the world return to it but it never acts as their lord – it may be termed great.
 Because it never takes itself to be great it is able to complete its greatness.**

35.

- a*> **Grasp the great image and the world will come; coming and encountering no harm, it will settle in great peace.**
- b*> **Where there is music and food, travelers stop.**

- c*> When the Dao is spoken as words, how thin it is, without taste. Look at it and it cannot be seen; listen to it and it cannot be heard. But use it, and it cannot be exhausted.

36.

- a*> To shrink it you must stretch it; to weaken it you must strengthen it; to discard it you must raise it up; to seize it you must bestow it – this is called subtle discernment.
- b*> The weak and supple overcomes the strong and hard.
- c*> Fish must not emerge from the deeps; the vital tools of a state must not be revealed.

37.

The Dao is ever non-acting (*wuwei*), yet nothing is undone. If a lord or king can preserve this the things of the world will of themselves be transformed.

Transformed, should desire arise, I will press it down with the uncarved block of namelessness. The uncarved block of namelessness—surely then they shall be without desire. Without desire and thus still, so will the world be settled of itself.

38.

The highest virtue (*de*) is without virtue, hence it has virtue. The lowest virtue never deviates from virtue, hence it lacks virtue. The highest virtue does not act (*wuwei*) and has no reason to act; the lowest virtue acts and has reason to act. The highest *ren* acts without any reason to act. The highest right (*yi*) acts and has reason to act. The highest *li* acts, and if no persons respond, rolls up its sleeves and twists their arms.

Hence, only after the Dao is lost is there virtue; only after virtue is lost is there *ren*; only after *ren* is lost is there right; only after right is lost is there *li*.

Li is the thinning of loyalty and faithfulness, when chaos first raises its head. Foreknowledge is the blossom of the Dao, when ignorance first begins. Therefore, the great man dwells in the thick, not in the thin; abides in the fruit, not in the blossom. Thus he discards the one and grasps the other.

39.

- a*> **Those of old that gained the One:**
 The sky (*tian*) gained the One and was thus clear;
 Earth gained the One and was thus calm;
 The spirits gained the One and were thus potent;
 The valley gained the One and was thus full;
 The things of the world gained the One and were thus born;
 Kings and lords gained the One and were models to the world –
This is what the One brought about.
 Without what makes it clear, the sky would likely split;
 Without what makes it calm, the earth would likely collapse;
 Without what makes them potent, the spirits would likely dissipate;
 Without what makes it full, the valley would likely run dry;
 Without what gives them birth, the world of things would likely be
 extinguished;
 Without what makes them honored, kings and lords will likely topple.
- b*> **Therefore, the honored takes the lowly as root; high takes low as foundation.**
 For this reason, kings and lords refer to themselves as ‘the orphan’,
 ‘the widow’, ‘the unemployed’ – does this take the lowly as the root or
 does it not?
**Hence the utmost renown is to be unknown. Have no wish be glossy like jades,
 rather be hard like stones.**

40.

- a*> **Reversal is the motion of the Dao. Weakness is the method of the Dao.**
- b*> **The things of the world are born from being, and being is born of nothing.**

41.

- a*> **When the best gentlemen hear the Dao they practice it assiduously. When middling gentlemen hear the Dao, sometimes they seem to have it, sometimes they seem to have lost it. When the least of gentlemen hear the Dao they laugh out loud. If they did not laugh out loud, it would not be the Dao.**
- b*> **Thus the ‘Standard Sayings’ says:**
 The bright *dao* seems dark,
 The advancing *dao* seems to retreat,
 The level *dao* seems steep.