

Dao de jing

道德經

Translated by Robert Eno
2010
Version 1.2

Additional Translations
and Other Materials

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.

Highest virtue (*de*) seems a valley,
 Greatest white seems sullied,
 Broad virtue seems inadequate,
 Vigorous virtue seems to shirk,
 Plain virtue seems soiled.
 The great square is cornerless
 The great vessel is last complete,
 The great note is rarified sound,
 The great image has no form.

- c*> The Dao hides in wordlessness. Only the Dao is well begun and well completed.

42.

- a*> The Dao gives birth to one; one gives birth to two; two gives birth to three; three gives birth to the ten thousand things.
- b*> The things of the world bear Yin on their backs and embrace the Yang. They exhaust their *qi* in harmony.
- c*> People detest being orphaned or widowed or unemployed, yet these are the terms kings and lords use to refer to themselves.
- d*> One may detract from a thing and it is enhanced thereby, or enhance it and so detract from it.

43.

- a*> The most pliant thing in the world will ride roughshod over the hardest. What comes out from where nothing is enters into what has no apertures.
- b*> Hence I know the advantage of non-action (*wuwei*). The wordless teaching and the advantage of non-action – few in the world attain to these.

44.

One's reputation or one's body: which is dearer?
 One's body or one's goods: which is worth more?
 Gaining or losing: which is worse?
 Therefore, miserliness leads to great expense, hoarding leads to deep loss.

Know what is enough and escape shame; know when to stop and escape danger – thus can one long endure.

45.

- a*> **Great perfection appears defective, so use can never make it worn; great fullness seems vacant, so use can never make it empty. Great straightness seems bent; great skill seems clumsy; great eloquence seems inarticulate.**
- b*> **Haste overcomes cold, tranquility overcomes heat.**
- c*> **Clear and tranquil, be a standard to the world.**

46.

- a*> **When the Dao prevails in the world, fast horses are corralled for manure; when the Dao does not prevail in the world, steeds of war are born in the city pastures.**
- b*> **There is no calamity greater than not knowing what is sufficient; there is no fault greater than wishing to acquire. Thus the sufficiency of knowing what is sufficient is eternal sufficiency.**

47.

**Without going out your door, know the world; without looking out the window, know the Dao of Tian.
The further you travel, the less you know.
Hence the sage knows without going to it, names it without seeing, does nothing and it is achieved.**

48.

- a*> **He who studies is daily enlarged; he who follows the Dao is daily diminished. Diminished and then diminished yet more, at last attaining non-action (*wuwei*). Never acting, nothing is undone.**
- b*> **To control the world, undertake nothing. Once you undertake to do anything you are unfit to control the world.**

49.

The sage has no constant mind: he takes the mind of the people as his mind.
 When I treat the good as good and I also treat those who are not good as good, my virtue is good.
 When I treat the faithful as faithful and I also treat the unfaithful as faithful, my virtue is faithful.
 The sage appears shut to the world, and towards the world he blanks his mind in a daze. The people all entrust their eyes and ears to him; he treats them as children.

50.

Coming we are born, going we die.
 Three in ten are followers of life; three in ten are followers of death – at birth begun to move towards the death, these too are three in ten. Why is this? Because they treat life as life.
 I have heard that one good at protecting his life walks in the hills but never encounters rhinoceros or tiger, charges against armies and is never touched by weapon or armor. The rhinoceros finds no place to thrust its horn; the tiger finds no place to grip its claws; weapons find no place to drive their blades. Why is this? Because he has no death place in him.

51.

- a*> The Dao gives birth to them, virtue (*de*) rears them, things give them form, circumstances complete them.
 Thus all things in the world revere Dao and honor virtue. That the Dao is revered and virtue honored is ordained by no one; it is ever so of itself.
 Thus the Dao gives birth to them and virtue rears them – fosters them, nurtures them, settles them, completes them, nourishes them, covers them.
- b*> To live but not possess, to act but depend on nothing, to lead without directing, this is called mysterious virtue.

52.

- a*> The world has a beginning – take it to be the mother of the world. Having grasped the mother, you can know the child. Having grasped the child, return to preserve the mother and you will live out your life without danger.