

# *Dao de jing*

## 道德經

Translated by Robert Eno  
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Additional Translations  
and Other Materials

## 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.

- b*> **Block the portals and shut the gate, you will live out your days and never be troubled. Open the portals and turn to the tasks, you will live out your days and never be rescued.**
- c*> **To see the small is called enlightenment; to preserve the pliant is called strength.  
Use the gleam to return to enlightenment without bringing calamity upon oneself.  
This is to make the constant your habit.**

## 53.

- a*> **Had I the least wisdom I would walk the great Dao. I would fear only side paths. The great Dao is so level, yet people prefer shortcuts.**
- b*> **The court is so tainted, the fields so overgrown, the granaries so empty. Robes gleaming with patterns, belts hung with swords, sated with food and drink, goods in excess – such is to rob the destitute. Robbing the destitute is not the Dao.**

## 54.

- a*> **What is firmly planted cannot be uprooted; what is tightly embraced cannot be stripped away. Descendants will thereby sacrifice without cease.**
- b*> **Cultivate it in yourself and your virtue (*de*) will be authentic; cultivate it in the family and it will have virtue in abundance; cultivate it in the village and its virtue will endure; cultivate it in the state and its virtue will be rich; cultivate it through the world and its virtue will spread everywhere.**
- c*> **Hence see people through oneself; see families through your family; see villages through your village; see states through your state; see the world through the world.  
How do I know the world is thus? By means of this.**

## 55.

- a*> **One who possesses virtue in abundance may be compared to a new born babe. Wasps and scorpions, poisonous snakes: none will bite him. Fierce beasts will not maul him, predatory birds will not swoop down upon him.**

**His bones are weak, his muscles pliable, and his grasp is firm. He knows nothing of the female and the male, yet his male organ stirs. His essence is at its most pure. He can scream all day and not become hoarse. This is harmony at its height.**

*b>* **Knowing harmony is called constant; knowing the constant is called enlightened.**

**To increase one's nature is called inauspicious; when the mind directs the *qi* it is called self-coercion.**

*c>* **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.**

### 56.

*a>* **Those who know do not speak; those who speak do not know.**

*b>* **Blunt the point,  
Undo the tangle,  
Soften the glare,  
Join the dust.**

**This is called the dark joining.**

*c>* **Hence one cannot become close to it, one cannot become distant from it, one cannot profit it, one cannot harm it, one cannot honor it, one cannot disdain it.**

**Thus it is honored by the world.**

### 57.

*a>* **To order a state use uprightness; to lead troops use stratagems; to control the world undertake nothing.**

**How do I know it is so? By means of this.**

*b>* **As the world is filled with more taboos the people grow poorer; as the people possess more sharp weapons the state grows benighted; as men use more crafty skills strange goods increasingly appear; as laws are proclaimed with increasing clarity bandits become more common.**

*c>* **Hence the sage says: If I take no action the people will transform of themselves; if I love tranquility the people will be upright of themselves; if I undertake nothing the people will create wealth of themselves; if I have no desires the people will of themselves become uncarved blocks.**

## 58.

- a*> When the government is narrow and dull the people are simple and pure; when the government is clear and acute the people are sharp and crafty.
- b*> Disaster – good fortune adheres therein; good fortune – disaster lurks therein.  
Who knows its limit? It possesses no settled norm. The norm turns into the anomaly, the good turns into the monstrous.  
It has been long indeed that men have lost their way.
- c*> Hence the sage is like a square that does not cut, a corner that is not sharp, a straight line that cannot align, a light that does not shine.

## 59.

- a*> In governing people and serving Tian, there is nothing like parsimony. Parsimony may be called ‘submitting in advance’. Submitting in advance may be called piling up virtue (*de*). If you pile up virtue there is nothing you cannot overcome, and if there is nothing you cannot overcome, the limit of it cannot be known. When the limit cannot be known, you may possess the state. If you possess the mother of the state, you may long endure.
- b*> This is called the deep root and the solid trunk; it is the *dao* of long gazing upon enduring life.

## 60.

- a*> Governing a large state is like cooking a small fish.
- b*> When one approaches governing the world by means of the Dao, ghosts will have no potency. It is not that they have no potency, but that their potency will not harm people, It is not that their potency will not harm people, but that the sage too will not harm people. These two will do no mutual harm, and therein will virtue (*de*) commingle and return.

## 61.

A large state lies downstream; it is the female of the world. In intercourse, the female overcomes the male by means of stillness, because stillness lies below. Thus when the large state takes the lower position it