# A Translation of Lao-tzu's Tao Te Ching and Wang Pi's Commentary

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THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
CENTER FOR CHINESE STUDIES

MICHIGAN PAPERS IN CHINESE STUDIES
NO. 30

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Ann Arbor

Center for Chinese Studies
The University of Michigan

1977

*Open access edition funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities/ Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Humanities Open Book Program.*

ISBN 0-89264-030-8



Printed in the United States of America

ISBN 978-0-89264-030-0 (paper)
ISBN 978-0-472-12743-6 (ebook)
ISBN 978-0-472-90138-8 (open access)

CONTENTS

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This translation was begun in 1968 as research in an area of great personal interest. As a Chinese with an undergraduate major in Western literature and a graduate concentration in English and Philosophy, I was particularly interested in bringing these two cultural worlds together in a philosophical setting. As professor of Non-Western Philosophy and Chinese Philosophy at Southern University, I found a tremendous source of input from my students. Many of them expressed a keen interest in studying the works of Lao Tzu, although warned beforehand that such an endeavor required a rigorous examination of ideas foreign to the Westerner in thought and structure. One who drank deeply of the sweet and the bitter in her intense study of Lao Tzu was the late Ms. Lois A. Miller.

In December 1974, in the course of sending season's greetings to many of my friends and former professors, I attached questionnaires focusing on certain problem areas of the text of the Tao Te Ching, of Wang Pi's commentary and of Ho Shao's biography of Wang Pi. Not only were the responses enthusiastic, but if one friend had doubts about answering a question, he in turn sent letters to his friends and professors asking for their opinions. These respondents covered a wide geographic area and included both Chinese and non-Chinese, and their answers could easily become the basis of another entire book. Their responses not only show the universality of scholarship and interest in this ancient metaphysical philosophy, but also have inspired me to dig deeper and think harder to reconcile differences in interpretation. Having troubled so many friends and friends of friends and made demands on their valuable time and energy, I wish I could acknowledge each of them here. But since they are too numerous to be mentioned in this limited space, I will simply say that without their contribution, the value of this work would have been greatly reduced. I would like to thank, however, the following people who guided me in their particular areas of expertise: Professors K. H. Chan, Constant C. C. Chang, Ch'en Tsu-wen, Chow Ts'e-tsung; Charles C. L. Fan, Charles Wei-hsun Fu, Ho Chiew-ts'ung, Hsiao Ch'un-po, Hsu Chia-pi, Louis S. Illar, Jao Tsung-i, Kao Yueh-t'ien, Li Tche-houa, Lin Wen-chouh, Liu Shu-hsien, Wang Chao-nan Ho, Wang Fan-yu, Wang Teh-chao, Wong Yuk, Wu Yi, Yang Chialo, Yang Lien-sheng, and Yen Ling-feng. My appreciation also goes to the administration of Southern

University for providing much-needed facilities and clerical help and to Dr. Huel D. Perkins, Dean of the College of Arts and Humanities, for his encouragement.

Any work of this scope must involve one's immediate family, and mine was especially helpful throughout the manuscript's preparation. My wife, Ch'en San-su, who majored in Chinese language and literature at Peking University and in English at Teachers College, Columbia University, went over the entire manuscript and offered many helpful suggestions. My daughter Betty, who has studied the Chinese language, assisted in some of the translation. And my daughter Jeannie, an English major and editorial assistant, edited the manuscript from beginning to end. Her sensitivity to language usage and to the poetic element of the original work were crucial in bringing this translation to its final shape and format.

Finally, the high point of writing any book comes with its publication. I am indebted to the staff of the Center for Chinese Studies at the University of Michigan--in particular, Albert Feuerwerker, Rhoads Murphey, Don Munro, Rosalind Daly, JoAnne Browder, Mary Kelly, and Dorothy Perng--for their aid in publishing this work in the Michigan Papers in Chinese Studies series.

Any manuscript, regardless of the amount of care put into it, will contain errors. It is my hope, however, that any reader who finds such errors will write to enlighten me so that revision can be made in the future. And though, as I have emphasized, this book is the result of vast team effort, I alone take full responsibility for any mistakes or transgressions.

Paul J. Lin

# INTRODUCTION

During the Spring-Autumn period (722-480 B.C.) and the time of the Warring States (480-222 B.C.), China was in great turmoil. Intellectuals and social reformers sifted through their wisdom and the experiences of China's already lengthy past, attempting to find a solution to their situation. Because the passing of time has obscured their meanings, our attempts to understand the works they produced often lead to questions, many of which can be answered only through careful speculation.

More than any other work, Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching raises numerous questions concerning authorship, organization, chapter divisions, possible incorporation of the commentaries into the original text, etc. The difficulty is further complicated by the obscuring of philosophical meanings due to the nature of the Chinese language and the technological facilities available for recording the contents, making the exact content and order of the original impossible to verify. Also from a historical perspective, this work has been subject to possible alteration from two major sources, different schools of thought which claimed the book as their own and often made additions favoring their positions, and various commentators and annotators who attempted to influence the thinking of scholars studying their works. We will therefore begin by examining the limitations of language and technology, the additions of varying schools of thought, and the influence of different commentators.

Concerning technological limitations, paper and the art of printing had not yet been invented when the original text was recorded. Most sinologists agree that ancient books like the Tao Te Ching were handcopied. Moreover, it is probable that before they were written down, they were passed on verbally. The Tao Te Ching, for example, was written in verse, and it is speculated that the use of rhyme made the text easier for people to remember and recite. Due to this possible oral origin, most scholars are uncertain of the authorship and date of the Tao Te Ching, and are not even sure that it was created by a single author.[1]

Most of the classics were first recorded on bamboo or wood strips which varied in length (20 to 40 cms), width (1 to 3 cms), and thickness (.15 to .25 cms); the size was determined by the

material used and the individual craftsman. Furthermore, the number of strips per literary unit and the number of words per strip were not consistent; generally each strip had one line of writing and each line had between 10 and 20 words, written in ink or varnish. The strips needed to comprise a unit, a group of units, a book, or even several books, were bound together with hemp and stored in bamboo chests. The hemp and the bamboo chests would rot over a period of time, making it difficult to determine the order of the original. Furthermore, the only way to duplicate a book was through handcopying, in the process of which different calligraphers might inadvertently substitute incorrect characters that were close to the original in appearance. Characters could also be omitted or added, and even the arrangement of chapters might be mixed up. These factors increase our difficulty in determining the original text.

The earliest copies of the book of Lao Tzu were probably not divided into parts or chapters and had no subtitles. In later versions, the work was divided into books and chapters in various ways. Modern versions are usually divided into either two or four sections, two parts representing the male (yang) and the female (yin) or heaven (t'ien) and earth (ti), and four sections representing the four seasons--spring, summer, autumn, and winter. The number of chapters is either 72, which is the product of 8 times 9, the highest even and odd numbers below 10, or 81, which is the product of 9 times 9, the symbol of the sun.

Sinologists believe that before the Ch'in dynasty (221-207 B.C.), there were already three versions of Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching. The first was the original written by Lao Tzu, containing over 5,000 words and divided roughly into 81 parts. The other two versions were divided into two major sections--the Tao Ching and the Te Ching--and reflected changes made by different schools of thought. The versions which placed the Tao Ching first reflected a metaphysical orientation, while the one that placed the Te Ching first reflected a Legalist slant. The accepted arrangement today is to place the Tao Ching before the Te Ching.

We must also realize that different schools of thought have made additions on their own behalf. The most recent example of this phenomenon was discovered in the People's Republic of China in November 1973-January 1974. In the Han Tombs on Ma-Wang-Tui [Horse king heights], Changsha, Hunan, two ancient and pre-

viously lost editions of the Tao Te Ching were unearthed.[2] Both were written with brush and ink on silk.

The first of these silk books was found on a piece of wood about 24 cms high, which included four ancient lost books without titles. There were a total of 463 lines and over 13,000 words. The book has been dated between 206 and 195 B.C., based on the type of characters used (the small-seal style) and the fact that the name of Liu Pang (247-195 B.C.) was not avoided.[3] The second book was found in a varnished box about 48 cms high and included the four books of Fa Ching [The classic of law], The Ten Great Ching, The Title, and The Sources of Tao. There were a total of 32 pieces of silk, 252 lines, and more than 16,000 words. Because the second book was written in clerical style characters and avoided the use of Liu Pang's name [but not the names of Liu Ying (207-188 B.C.) and Liu Hung (202-157 B.C.)], it has been dated between 194 and 180 B.C. Neither book had chapters or chapter headings. Both put the Te Ching before the Tao Ching, reflecting a Legalist slant. The second book had a total of 5,466 words, close to the number of words in modern versions of the Tao Te Ching.

During the time the silk books were written, the political system was based on Legalist thought, but the conception of how government was controlled (e.g., the only task of the monarch is to appoint able officials) corresponded to the metaphysical thinking of Huang Ti and Lao Tzu. During Wang Pi's time, emphasis was placed on metaphysics and philosophical interpretations, and human affairs, economics, and social relations were linked to Tao. The major differences between the Ma-Wang-Tui editions and Wang Pi's editions of the Tao Te Ching are detailed in Appendix III.

The Tao Te Ching may be regarded as a metaphysical book, that is, a source of the highest political thought. Some readers have found in it high principles on human affairs and claimed that it is possible to write different books by focusing on different topics. This is precisely what past annotators and commentators have done. Moreover, those who disagreed with the accepted arrangement of the book have tried to rearrange it according to language style and ideas, grouping sentences on the basis of subject matter and then dividing them into chapters.[4] This of course creates inherent problems in trying to interpret the Tao Te Ching, such as determining exactly if and where commentaries have been

incorporated into the original text. It is generally accepted, for example, on the basis of a careful examination of meanings and language used, that Wang Pi's commentary has been integrated into Chapters 31 and 66, and that in Chapter 32 his commentary has been partially combined with the text.

Why are annotations and commentaries necessary for an understanding of the Tao Te Ching? One reason is that it deals with profound and mystical principles which intrigue annotators and commentators and inspire them to trace the book's sources, analyze its meaning, and search for possible application to their own ideas. These secondary sources sometimes founded schools of thought and became objects of commentary themselves.[5] In addition to its profound meanings and ideas, Lao Tzu's book also uses language which is highly condensed, paradoxical, and metaphorical. Lao Tzu wrote in a cryptic manner, hinting at his meaning without ever revealing it fully. He emphasized one element to show the importance of the opposite; thus he said in Chapter 78, line 13, "True words seem paradoxical." His statements, each stressing one aspect of life while ignoring the others, often seem disconnected. An expression may deny what other expressions affirm while affirming what other expressions deny. Meaning seems to lurk beneath the surface of his expressions and the terse paradoxical language allows many interpretations for a single word. Chapter 21, line 10, word 4 provides a good example of this:

| 以 | 閱 | 衆 | 甫 |
|---|---|---|---|
| i | yüeh | chung | fu |
| In order to | inspect | myriad things | beginning beauty, etc. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Ho-shang-kung, Wang Pi, Wang Huai, etc. | By this the beginning of all things is known. (fu is interpreted as beginning) |
| Ku Huan, Li Jung, Fan Ying-yüan, etc. | fu is interpreted as the origin |
| Lin Hsi-i, Chiao Hung, Hsiao Ch'un-po, etc. | fu is interpreted as beauty |
| Hu Ju-chang and Li Kung-ch'in | fu is interpreted as process of change |

| | |
|---|---|
| Li Chih, Wei Yüan, Chung Ying-mei, etc. | fu is interpreted as all being, entity, or existence |
| Chiang Hsi-ch'ang | fu is interpreted as human beings, mankind |
| Ma Hsü-lun, Chang Mo-sheng, Ho Chien-ts'ung, etc. | fu is interpreted as father |
| Chu Ch'ien-chih | fu is interpreted as great |
| Wu Ching-yü | fu is interpreted as the Sage |

Consequently an annotator or commentator has ample room to develop his own interpretation, resulting in greater difficulty in getting at the "true meaning" of the original work.

Aside from the cryptic style of the writing, the nature of the Chinese language itself creates difficulty in interpreting the Tao Te Ching. The Chinese language is ideographic and pictographic, each word forming a picture, but lacking inflectional elements to denote grammatical classifications. Sentence structure relies exclusively on word order and context. The subject-predicate syntactic structure so basic in English and other Indo-European languages is nonexistent in ancient Chinese; furthermore there are no punctuation marks in ancient Chinese manuscripts. Thus a subject or verb may be missing or the end of a sentence unclearly marked. To identify the subject, predicate, and grammatical relationships, one must study the syntax and word order. To identify the speaker and his audience, one must know syntactic, logical, and even metaphorical relationships. It is no wonder the Chinese commentators often share the same difficulties experienced by non-Chinese scholars and translators in interpreting the Tao Te Ching.

The following example illustrates the difficulties created by a lack of punctuation (Chapter 1, lines 5-6).

| 故 | 常 | 無 | 欲 | 以 | 觀 | 其 | 妙 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ku | ch'ang | wu | yü | i | kuan | ch'i | miao |
| Therefore | constantly | no | desire | to | observe | its | subtlety |

| 常 | 有 | 欲 | 以 | 觀 | 其 | 徼 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ch'ang | yu | yü | i | kuan | ch'i | chiao |
| Constantly | have | desire | to | observe | its | potentiality boundary, etc. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Wang Pi and Ho-shang-kung | Therefore constantly without desire,<br>There is the recognition of subtlety;<br>But constantly with desire,<br>Only the realization of potentiality. |
| Wang An-shih and Kao Heng | Therefore constantly based on non-being, one will have insight into its subtlety;<br>Constantly based on being, one will have insight into its potentiality. |

The former makes a break after desire (yü) in both lines, using it as a noun; it is the traditional explanation based on human experience or pragmatism, belonging to the realm of epistemology emphasizing desire. The latter makes a break before desire (yü), using it as a verb; it is based on ontological practice, belonging to the realm of ontology emphasizing insight.

An example of the difficulty inherent in Chinese syntax comes from the last two lines of Chapter 49.

| 百 | 姓 | 皆 | 注 | 其 | 耳 | 目 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pai | hsing | chieh | chu | ch'i | erh | mu |
| Hundred | people | all | concentrate | their | ears | eyes |
| 聖 | 人 | 皆 | 孩 | | 之 | |
| Sheng | jen | chieh | hai | | chih | |
| Wise | man | all | (to treat as) infants | | them | |

The first line has at least two interpretations: (1) the people themselves take care of their own ears and eyes (i.e., are concerned with their own selfish desires); and (2) the people look at and hear the Sage (i.e., pay attention to the Sage). This ambiguity is made possible by the possessive pronoun ch'i, which can refer to the people or the Sage. The second line clearly indicates that the Sage regards all people as infants. The following sample gives an idea of the differing ways in which these two lines have been handled:

| | |
|---|---|
| Orde Poynton | Wise Men shut themselves away because the world confuses their minds:<br>Wise Men are all children. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Archie J. Bahm | All people admire the intelligent man,<br>Because he regards them all as a mother regards her children. |
| Feng Gia-fu and Jane English | Men look to him and listen<br>He behaves like a little child. |
| C. Spurgeon Medhurst | Most men plan for themselves.<br>The Holy Man treats every one as a child. |
| Arthur Waley | The Hundred Families all the time strain their eyes and ears,<br>The Sage all the time sees and hears no more than an infant sees and hears. |
| John C. H. Wu | All the people strain their ears and eyes:<br>The Sage only smiles like an amused infant. |
| James Legge | The people all keep their eyes and ears directed to him, and he deals with them all as his children. |
| Lin Yutang | The people of the world are brought into a community of heart,<br>And the Sage regards them all as his own children. |
| Chan Wing-tsit | They [the people] all lend their eyes and ears, and he treats them all as infants. |
| Ch'u Ta-kao | Yet what all the people turn their ears and eyes to,<br>The Sage looks after as a mother does her children. |
| This translation | The people all strain their ears and eyes.<br>And the Sage regards them all as infants. |

Most Chinese scholars, such as Wu, Chan, and Ch'u, translate the first line based on the various meanings of the words, and the translation of the second line on ideas from other sections of the

book as well as from the interpretation of the first line. Chapter 3, lines 7-8, for example, reads: "Therefore in governing, the Sage empties the people's hearts and fills their stomachs"; and Chapter 12, lines 6-7, reads: "Therefore the Sage provides for the belly and not for the eyes." Wang Pi's interpretation of these two lines is: although the Sage does not provide for the eyes of the people, he still does not have anything for himself (he does not have his own heart since his heart is the people's heart) and regards the people as infants. Consequently, as stated in Chapter 17, lines 8-9, "When he [the Sage] accomplishes his task and the things get done,/ The people all say: 'We have done it by ourselves.'"

Problems in interpretation may also arise when a character has different pronunciations and therefore different meanings depending on its usage. While Chinese scholars may draw on their cultural background to resolve this problem, non-Chinese scholars may find this feature of Chinese language puzzling. For example, in Chapter 80, lines 4-5 read:

| 使 | 民 | 重 | 死 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Shih | min | chung | szu |
| Let | people | weigh (take seriously) | death |
| 而 | 不 | 遠 | 徙 |
| erh | pu | yüan | hsi |
| and | not | far | move away |

The third word, chung, has at least two pronunciations and meanings. It may be pronounced chùng, meaning heavy, mighty, important, or serious. Or it may be pronounced ch'ung, meaning repetition or again. Below are different translations which result from these different meanings[6] (emphasis added):

| | |
|---|---|
| Orde Poynton | So that though there may be a heavy death rate yet the people do not fly to distant places: |
| Arthur Waley | He could bring it about that the people would be ready to lay down their lives and lay them down again[7] in defence of their homes, rather than emigrate. |

| | |
|---|---|
| C. Spurgeon Medhurst | They should be made to comprehend the gravity of death and the futility of emigration. |
| R. B. Blakney | Where people die and die again but never emigrate; |
| Lin Yutang | Let the people value their lives[8] and not migrate far. |
| Ch' u Ta-kao | I will make the people regard death as a grave matter and not go far away. |
| Chan Wing-tsit | Let the people value their lives[9] highly and not migrate far. |
| John C. H. Wu | Let them [the people] mind death and refrain from migrating to distant places. |
| This translation | Let the people weigh death heavily and have no desires to move far away. |

As has been illustrated, commentators and annotators naturally had different interpretations of the same lines. Readers of the Tao Te Ching have found that a careful examination of the commentaries is necessary in tracking down its essential meanings. Their job is not easy, however, since

> according to statistics, known Chinese commentaries on the Tao Te Ching presently total more than 600. On the average, for every seven words of the text, someone has written a book of explanation.[10]

In discussing the contribution of commentaries to an understanding of the Lao Tzu, we should consider the remark of Su Tung-po (1036-1101) in praise of his younger brother's commentary:

> If, during the Warring States period, we had had this book, then there would have been no Shang Yang or Han Fei [that is, no need for a Legalist school]. If it had existed during the early Han dynasty, then Confucianism and Taoism would be one. If it had existed during the Chin and Sung

dynasties, then Buddhism and Taoism would not have separated.[11]

The passage asserts not only the importance of a commentary, but also the deep influence which Lao Tzu's book was considered to have over Chinese politics, religion, and cultural developments. In fact, the importance of the commentaries in helping the reader to understand Lao Tzu's writing can hardly be exaggerated, especially for translators who are trying to render those meanings in another language.

Wang Pi's contribution to Chinese philosophy in general and Taoism in particular will now be examined. Wang Pi's remarkable scholarship has been noted by Chinese historians and philosophers throughout history. His thoughts will be discussed here in terms of three basic topics--the basic metaphysical problem of being and non-being, the relationship of substance and function according to his interpretation of the Great Expansion,[12] and the Sage and his emotions--which are actually aspects of a single problem, the interpretation of being vs. non-being.

According to Ho Shao (see Appendix II), Wang Pi, when asked about the problem of being and non-being, skillfully followed the philosophical school then in vogue (Confucianism) and answered: "The Sage [Confucius (557-479 B.C.)] embodies non-being, but non-being cannot be taught. Hence he does not discuss it. While Lao Tzu is for being, he constantly discusses its insufficiency." Taken at surface value, these words seem to emphasize the Sage and to favor Confucian thought, thus referring to "sageliness within and kingliness without."[13] In actuality, here "sageliness within" alludes to the thinking of Lao Tzu, while "kingliness without" refers to Confucian concepts on how to govern a nation and put the world in order. Wang Pi tried to reconcile these two schools of thought and of course was attacked from both sides. Some were dissatisfied that he used Taoist concepts to interpret the I Ching, thus drawing on Lao Tzu to interpret Confucius. Others attacked him for emphasizing the importance of the Sage (Confucius), thereby interpreting Taoism by Confucian concepts. The strength of attacks from both sides merely indicates the extent of his provocative and substantial contributions to the field.

On first reading, Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching seems full of contradictions and inconsistencies, almost a disorderly collection of

aphorisms with no structure or organization. Furthermore, the two sections of the book, the Tao Ching and the Te Ching, seem to be unrelated to each other. However, a careful reading of Wang Pi's commentary can help the scholar to understand what relationships do exist. For example, in Chapter 1, lines 3-4 read: "The Nameless is the origin of heaven and earth;/The Namable is the mother of all things." The same idea is expressed in Chapter 2:

> Therefore, being and non-being beget each other,
> hard and easy complement each other,
> long and short shape each other,
> high and low rely on each other,
> sound and voice harmonize with each other,
> front and back follow each other.

The meaning becomes clear only when this passage is examined in totality. The determination of low must rely on high. Being and non-being, easy and hard, and so on--each contributes to the meaning of its opposite. If one is omitted, the other becomes meaningless. How can we have hard if we do not have the easy? This differentiation is part of a natural process in which substance and function are one.

Tao (substance) and Te (function) must be considered as one. Tao is where everything comes from, and Te is what everything obtains. Tao is the origin; Te is the end. While origin and end can be separated in principle, they should be considered as two in one. If there is no substance, how can there be function? If there is no outcome, how can one know its origin? Front and behind, for example, are determined by contrast. When we say that this is in front of that, we are actually considering the back; so in order to recognize the front, we must be aware of the back. When we say something is long, we are mindful of the concept of shortness; only because it is not short do we know that it is long. If we compare it with something longer, it becomes short. The statement in Chapter 2, line 1, "When all in the world recognize beauty as beauty, it is ugliness," is extraordinary. If applied to its extreme, we would be unable to distinguish between good and bad or beauty and ugliness, because they are all, in a sense, two sides of the same thing. If substance and function are considered as one, then everything produced from them cannot be differentiated.

The following example from Chapter 11, lines 1-3, discusses the oneness of substance and function in both text and commentary.

Thirty spokes converge in a nave;
just because of its nothingness [void]
the usefulness of the cart exists.(1)

(1). A nave can unite the thirty spokes because of its void. From its void, it is able to receive all things. Therefore it can unite them.

And from Chapter 1, lines 5-8 and commentary,

Therefore constantly without desire,
There is the recognition of subtlety;(3)
But constantly with desire,
Only the realization of potentiality.(4)

(3). Subtlety is infinitely small. All things originate from ultimate smallness and later achieve completion, begin from nothingness and then grow. Therefore constantly void of desire and empty, one may discern the mystery of the origin of things.

(4). Potentiality returns to the ultimate. All benefits of being must be based on the usefulness of non-being. Desire must be rooted in Tao in order to prevail. Therefore one constantly has desires in order to see the potential of ultimate things.

Finally from Chapter 11, lines 10-11,

Therefore, profit from that which exists
and utilize that which is absent.

Metaphysically, the principles of substance and function are separate but also one. Practically, substance or non-being should be the principle in the use of all things. Being is the function of substance; applied to all things, it will benefit everything that exists. That is to say, "The Tao of heaven is to benefit others without hurting them" (Chapter 81, lines 12-13).

Thus substance and function are one. The Great Expansion consists of 50 numbers. Of these, the One is not used. According to Wang Pi, it is not used so that all useful things may draw their usefulness from it. Although not a number like other numbers, all numbers are completed by it. In the Great Expansion, only 49 numbers are used. According to Wang Pi, non-being (the

One) cannot express itself, but must rely on being (the 49). Hence one knows the fundamental relation between the One and the many, or the substance and the function.[14]

What does Wang Pi say of the Sage and his emotions? From Chapter 2, lines 11-16, we find:

> Therefore, the Sage administers without action(2)
> and instructs without words.
> He lets all things rise without dominating them,
> produces without attempting to possess,
> acts without asserting,(3)
> achieves without taking credit.(4)
>
> (2). To be natural is quite enough; to exert means to defeat.
>
> (3). Wisdom and knowledge are innate; to strive for them is false [to nature].
>
> (4). Abiding by their natural functions, all things will achieve their own fulfillment; hence one cannot take any credit.

And from Chapter 49, lines 1-2,

> The Sage has no constant heart [mind].
> He takes the people's heart as his heart.(1)
>
> (1). To move constantly is to follow.

We see from these passages Wang Pi's emphasis on the importance of "following" in the role of the Sage.

Chapter 29, note 2, states, "The virtue of all things is based on nature." The Sage reaches the ultimate in nature, flowing through the passions of all things. Here we realize that according to Wang Pi, the Sage must have emotions. Without them, he cannot reach the ultimate in nature. The nature of the Sage is further developed in Chapter 81, where Lao Tzu's and Wang Pi's ideas are merged and crystallized.

> The Sage does not store things for himself.(4)
> The more one does for others,
> The more he has for himself.(5)

The more one gives to others,
The more he keeps for himself.(6)

The Tao of heaven is to benefit others
without hurting them.(7)
The Tao of the Sage is to act without competing.(8)

(4). Without selfishness, one is self-sufficient; giving only to the good and leaving [other] things alone.

(5). That is what all things respect.

(6). That is how all things return to him

(7). It always moves to produce and complete.

(8). Follow the benefit of heaven and never harm each other.

In our lack of understanding, we tend to categorize and make divisions in interpreting life. Wang Pi's meticulous and profound comments show that human affairs cannot be separated from the way of heaven. Everything can be seen as two manifestations of one, and one cannot be divided. This is Wang Pi's contribution to the interpretation of the Lao Tzu and the reason why his commentary is considered a model of discernment. His deep influence cannot be taken as a chance event, but rather the result of profound insight into the meaning of Taoism.

There are now over seventy or eighty translations of Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching, most of which are based on Wang Pi's edition of the Lao Tzu. Translations have been done in so many different languages that every language has at least one version. The Tao Te Ching has, for example, already been translated into English forty-four times. A new version has appeared about every other year during the last twenty years, with half of them in the United States.[15] Projecting this further, we can estimate that a new version of this book will emerge at the rate of one per year. Why then have we done yet another translation of the Tao Te Ching? Part of my purpose in translating this book was to trace the original meanings of both Lao Tzu and Wang Pi as faithfully as possible, showing the interrelationship between the original verse and Wang Pi's comments.

The Chinese feel that there are two commentaries on the Tao Te Ching worth noting, one by Ho-shang-kung and the other by Wang Pi. Ho-shang-kung's commentary has already been translated into

English,[16] but no translation of Wang Pi's commentary has appeared even though his is considered the older of the two and therefore closer to Lao Tzu's thought. While Ho-shang-kung had a religious Taoist slant dealing with such issues as attaining longevity, Wang Pi presented an intellectual philosophical viewpoint, and for this reason is often considered the more authentic of the two.[17]

Arthur Waley remarked on Wang Pi's commentary as follows:

> All the commentaries, from Wang Pi's onwards down to the 18th century are "scriptural"; that is to say that each commentator reinterprets the text according to his own particular tenets, without any intention or desire to discover what it meant originally. From my point of view they are therefore useless.[18]

Each individual translator relies on his own learning, background, common sense, and insights to discover the original meaning of Lao Tzu. Each interpretation therefore has its own bias, but we cannot discount a commentator because his interpretations are different. I agree with R. B. Blakney, who says:

> I suspect that nearly every foreigner in China who has taken the trouble to study this collection of mystical poems has felt the same way: so many translations of it have appeared. For one reason or another each translation, in its turn, fails fully to satisfy one who knows the original, and at length, one tries his own hand at it. Will he, in his turn, satisfy? Probably not; but he may add his share to the ultimate understanding of one of the world's truly distinguished religious works.[19]

I also agree with Chan Wing-tsit's comment that "It is highly desirable to have a translation of Wang Pi's commentary."[20]

My final reason for this translation was to explore through the use of everyday language how Chinese and English can relate to each other--to fathom the relationships between words and meanings in both languages and to test the elasticity and resourcefulness of American idioms and expressions in an attempt to preserve the Chinese meanings and poetic elements of the original without sacrificing readability to the Western reader. In so doing, I hope I have helped

the reader to catch a glimpse of not only the thought of Lao Tzu, but also the logic and genius of the Chinese language.

The first part of this book is my translation of the Tao Te Ching, along with Wang Pi's commentary arranged in note form. My main source was the Okada version of the Tao Te Ching, but I used six other versions--Kondo, the Orthodox Tao-ts'ang, Ssu Pu Pei Yao, Sun, T'ang, and Usami--as cross-references. My own comments, marked by asterisks, come after the commentary. Whenever possible, I have tried to note the specific passages that have been sources of error or controversy among different translators. I have also tried to point out significant philosophical and historical correlations.

For those readers who wish to know something about the lives of Lao Tzu and Wang Pi as presented by writers who lived closer to their times, I have included Ssu-ma Ch'ien's "Collective Biography of Lao Tzu" and Ho Shao's "Biography of Wang Pi" (see Appendices I and II). The biography of Lao Tzu is in itself an intriguing work which presents Lao Tzu more as a legend than a man. The biography of Wang Pi is a collection of short notes which show that Wang Pi's life, although short (he died at twenty-four), was full of splendor. Some say that he understood the meaning of Taoism so profoundly that life and death made no difference to him and that, by "dying without extinction" (Chapter 33), he attained a type of immortality. For practical purposes, his immortality is evident in the distinguished commentary he left behind.

Appendix III is a detailed listing of the major differences between Ma-Wang-Tui's and Wang Pi's editions of the Tao Te Ching. The recent archaeological discovery at Ma-Wang-Tui[21] shows the Legalist school of thought as applied to Lao Tzu's writings and makes this comparison/contrast interesting and informative.

NOTES

1. For instance, Chapter 6 of the Tao Te Ching appeared in The Book of Lieh Tzu and was apparently taken from The Book of the Yellow Emperor. See Lionel Giles' translation of Taoist Teachings from the Book of Lieh Tzu, Book I, "Cosmogony," p. 17.

2. For further reference, see Kao Heng and Ch'ih Hsi-chao, "Notes on the Silk Manuscript Text[s] of Laotzu Found in the Han Tomb No. 3 at Ma-Wang-Tui, Changsha," Peking: Wen Wu [Cultural relics], No. 11 (total no. 222), November 1974, pp. 1-7. Also see Writers Corps, Institute of Archaeology, Academia Sinica and the Hunan Provincial Museum, "Significance of the Excavation of Han Tombs Nos. 2 and 3 at Ma-Wang-Tui in Changsha," Peking: Kaogu [Archaeology], No. 1 (total no. 136), January 1975, pp. 47-57, 61.

3. The emperor could not be referred to by name after his term of office. The first silk book was dated before or during Liu Pang's term because his name was not avoided. The second book was dated after his term because his name was avoided.

4. See, for example, Yen Ling-feng, A New Compilation of the Four Writers of Taoism, or Cheng Lin, The Works of Lao Tzyy, Truth and Nature. Professor Yen's writings are a major influence on the newest generation of Taoist scholars in China.

5. Ho-shang-kung's and Wang Pi's commentaries are typical examples.

6. The idea of chùng-szu has been expressed in the Ma-Wang-Tui editions A and B as follows: "Let those who weigh death heavily have intent to move away." If one is in accord with Tao, he should not be too concerned with the problem of life and death, but if he is, he should intentionally move away without delay. (See Chapter 80 under Appendix III.)

7. For ch'ung-ssu in the sense of "die twice over" compare Lü Shih Ch'un Ch'iu, p. 131, end: "Everyone has to die once, but it may be truly said that Ch'ing Feng died twice over" (note in original).

8. Lit., "death" (note in original).

9. Lit., "taking death seriously" (note in original).

10. Constant C. C. Chang and Wu Yi, Chung-kuo che hsüeh shih hua [The story of Chinese philosophy], p. 55.

11. Kiyama Kōkichi, A Commentary on Su Ch'e's Annotation of Lao-tzu's Tao Te Ching, 1:3a.

12. T'an Yung-t'ung, "Wang Pi chih Chou-i Lun-yu hsin-i" [Wang Pi's new meanings of Chou-i and The Analects], trans. by Walter Liebenthal, Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies, 10 (1947): 124-161.

13. The phrase "sageliness within and kingliness without" was traditionally considered to be a Confucian ethic, "sageliness within" referring to the development of inner qualities and "kingliness without" referring to the application of these qualities (helping others through government). Here Wang Pi reinterprets "sageliness within" as coming from Lao Tzu's thought.

14. For details, see the I Ching, p. 310. (In this translation, the I Ching generally refers to the Richard Wilhelm translation unless otherwise specified.) Also see Note 7 of Appendix II.

15. According to Chan Wing-tsit, trans., The Way of Lao Tzu (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1963), p. 83.

16. See Eduard Erkes, trans., Ho-Shang-Kung's Commentary on Lao Tse (Ascona, Switzerland: Artibus Asiae, 1950).

17. Fung Yu-lan even thinks Wang Pi is the best of all the commentators on Lao Tzu. (See Fung's A History of Chinese Philosophy, 2:170.)

18. Arthur Waley, The Way and Its Power (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1958), p. 129.

19. R. B. Blakney, trans., The Way of Life: Lao Tzu (New York: The New American Library, 1955), p. ix, preface.

20. Chan Wing-tsit, trans., The Way of Lao Tzu, p. 83.

21. For further references, see Study Group for Han Silk Manuscripts from Ma-Wang-Tui, "Transcription of the Silk Manuscript Text(s A and B) of Laotzu Found (in the Han Tomb No. 3) at Ma-Wang-Tui, Changsha," Wen Wu [Cultural relics] (Peking), no. 11 (total no. 222), November 1974, pp. 15-20.

# BOOK ONE

## 1

The Tao that can be spoken of is not the eternal Tao;
The Name that can be named is not the eternal Name.[1]
The Nameless [non-being] is the origin of heaven and earth;
The Namable [being] is the mother of all things.[2]

Therefore constantly without desire,
There is the recognition of subtlety;[3]
But constantly with desire,
Only the realization of potentiality.[4]
The two come from the same source,
Having different names.
Both are called mysteries,
More mystical than the most mystical,
The gate of all subtleties.[5]

[1] The Tao that can be spoken of and the Name that can be named, which refer to the denoting of things and the making of shapes, are not eternal. Therefore, [the eternal] cannot be spoken of and named.

[2] All being originates from non-being. Therefore, while formless and unnamed, it is the beginning of all things. While formed and named, it grows, cultivates, protects, and disciplines, becoming the mother. Tao described as formless and unnamed begins the completion of all things. To begin and complete without knowing why--this is the mystery of the mystical.

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The numbers designated in footnote form actually indicate Wang Pi's commentary and may explain not only a particular term or the preceding sentence, but often all the preceding sentences as well. This translator's comments will be noted with one or more asterisks and are placed after the commentary.

3 Subtlety is infinitely small. All things originate from ultimate smallness and later achieve completion, begin from nothingness and then grow. Therefore constantly void of desire and empty, one may discern the mystery of the origin of things.

4 Potentiality returns to the ultimate. All benefits of being must be based on the usefulness of non-being. Desire must be rooted in Tao in order to prevail. Therefore one constantly has desires in order to see the potential of ultimate things.

5 "The two"* refer to the origin and the mother.** Coming from the same source means coming together from the mystic. Having different names, they function differently. In the beginning it is called the origin; at the end, it is called the mother. The mystic is dark, silent, and void; it is where the origin and the mother come from. It cannot be named, therefore it cannot be spoken of. Call it "the mystic," because it is derived from the unobtainable, as it must be. If it must be so, then it cannot be determined by only one mystical element and to name it would be a big mistake. Therefore the mystic is more mystical than the most mystical. All subtle things come from this same source, which is therefore called the gate of all subtleties.

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* According to Ho-shang-kung, another famous commentator of the Lao Tzu, "the two" refers to having desire and not having desire. Wang Pi says they are "the origin" and "the mother." But in actuality, "the two" should be interpreted as "being" (有) and "non-being" (無). So according to a number of Chinese scholars, lines 5 through 8 of this text should be translated as follows:

Therefore, constantly based on non-being,
One will have insight into its subtlety;
Constantly based on being,
One will have insight into its potentiality.

** In a comparison of the seven versions of the Tao Te Ching according to Wang Pi (Kondo, Okada, the Orthodox Tao-ts'ang, Ssu Pu Pei Yao or SPPY, Sun, T'ang, and Usami), the Kondo, Ssu Pu Pei Yao, and T'ang use the word "mother," but the Okada, Orthodox Tao-ts'ang, Sun, and Usami use "nothingness."

## 2

When all in the world recognize beauty as beauty,
it is ugliness.
When they recognize good as good,
it is not good.

Therefore, being and non-being beget each other,
hard and easy complement each other,
long and short shape each other,
high and low rely on each other,
sound and voice harmonize with each other,
front and back follow each other.[1]

Therefore, the Sage administers without action[2]
and instructs without words.
He lets all things rise without dominating them,
produces without attempting to possess,
acts without asserting,[3]
achieves without taking credit.[4]

And because he does not take credit,
it will never leave him.[5]

[1] Beauty induces happiness in human hearts; ugliness brings disgust to human hearts. So beauty and ugliness are like happiness and anger; good and not good are like right and wrong. Happiness and anger have the same root; right and wrong have the same gate. So they cannot be mentioned with partiality. These six show that obvious elements of nature cannot be mentioned with partiality.

2 To be natural is quite enough; to exert means to defeat.

3 Wisdom and knowledge are innate; to strive for them is false [to nature].

4 Abiding by their natural functions, all things will achieve their own fulfillment; hence one cannot take any credit.

5 If one takes credit, then fulfillment will not last.

Exalt not the worthy,

so that the people will not fight.

Prize not the rare treasure,

so that they will not steal.

Exhibit not the desirable,

so that their hearts will not be distracted.[1]

Therefore in governing, the Sage

empties the people's hearts and fills their stomachs,[2]

weakens their will and strengthens their bones.[3]

He always keeps them void of knowledge and desire,[4]

so that those who know will not dare to act.[5]

Acting through inaction, he leaves nothing ungoverned.

[1] To be worthy means to be able. To exalt means to praise. To prize is to attach high value. If only the able man is appointed, why exalt him? If only useful things are employed, why set high value on them? To exalt the worthy man and to glorify his name is to place his distinction higher than his appointment; people will rush to compete for supremacy. If goods are prized beyond their usefulness, the greedy will rush to dig a hole in the wall and to search the chest for stealing, heedless of their lives. Therefore, if the desired goods are not visible, their hearts will not be distracted.

[2] The heart embraces knowledge. The stomach embraces food. The empty [heart] contains knowledge, but the full stomach does not.

[3] Their bones without knowledge are the trunk; their will, causing trouble, brings confusion. If their hearts are emptied, their will will be weakened. *

[4] Keeping their truthfulness.

[5] Those who know are those who know how to act.

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* Of the seven versions of the Tao Te Ching according to Wang Pi, only the Kondo, SPPY, and T'ang maintain this last sentence.

## 4

Tao is empty, used yet never filled.
It is deep, like the forefather of all things.

It dulls sharpness,
and sorts tangles,
Blends with the light,
becoming one with the dust.
So serene, as if it hardly existed.
I do not know whose son it is.
It seems to have preceded God.[1]

[1] To hold quantity for one's family does not make the family complete. To hold quantity for a nation does not make the nation complete. To exhaust one's strength to lift a weight is not one's [normal] function. Therefore, although a man knows how to govern all things, to govern without using the two principles* of Tao is not enough. The earth has its shape [poh 魄 ],** but if it does not abide by heaven, it cannot possess complete tranquility. The heaven has the image of its spirit, but if it does not abide by Tao, it cannot preserve its spirit. When emptied and used, it is never exhausted. To fill it is to make it full; and when full, it will overflow. When emptied and used, it is never exhausted. So it is infinite to the utmost. Although its form is vast, it does not burden the body. Although its appearances are many, they do not fill its capacity. If all things forsake this to seek a master, where can the master be? Is this not deep enough to be the forefather of all things? Sharpness dulled but not destroyed; tangles sorted without labor; blending with the light without making the body unclean; becoming one with the dirt without giving up its innocence; is this not serene enough as if it hardly existed? The earth keeps its shape, and no virtue is beyond its support. The heaven enjoys its image, and no virtue is beyond its shelter; even heaven and earth cannot keep pace with it [Tao]. Didn't its existence precede God's? "God" refers to the God of heaven.

* Refers to the yin (陰) and yang (陽).

** According to Chapter 10 of Ho-shang-kung's commentary, poh [魄] is the animal soul which is in the lungs; hun [魂] is the spirit soul which is in the liver. The Eighth Chapter of the Li Ki [Chiao T'e Sheng 郊特牲 (The special victim at the suburb sacrifices)] (p. 093) in The Ancient Commentaries of the Five Classics reads:

> Be careful on all occasions of sacrifice. The air of hun returns to the heaven and the shape of poh returns to the earth. Therefore the sacrifice is seeking the meaning of the yin and yang [i.e., hun and poh].

## 5

Without kindness heaven and earth
treat all things as straw dogs.[1]
Without kindness the Sage
treats the people as straw dogs.[2]

The space between heaven and earth is a vacuum like a bellows,*
Emptied, but inexhaustible.
The more it moves, the more it yields.[3]

Too much talk often brings exhaustion.
Is it not better to keep to the middle path?[4]

[1] Heaven and earth follow nature. Without action or creation, all things rule each other by themselves. Therefore they are without kindness. Kindness creates, upholds, administers, and changes, with grace and action. Created, upheld, administered, and changed, things will lose their true nature. With grace and action, things cease to co-exist. If things cease to co-exist, then there is not enough to support them all. The earth does not grow straw for the beasts, but the beasts eat the straw. [The heaven] does not produce dogs for man, but man eats the dog.** Inaction in regard to all things means to let them do as they should. Then they will be self-sufficient. If one has to use wisdom, it will not work.

[2] The Sage, joining in the virtue of heaven and earth, compares the people to straw dogs.

[3] The bellows is a series of ranked bags; the stick is like a flute. A bellows holds emptiness, no passion, and inaction. Therefore, its emptiness is interminable. When moved, it is never exhausted. Between heaven and earth, everything abides by nature. So, like a bellows, it will never be exhausted.

4 The more one does, the more he loses. Concerning the things, one reveals their ugliness. Concerning events, one says the wrong words. If one does not employ this, he does not know to pay attention to the amount exhausted.*** But keeping to the middle path like a bellows, he will never be exhausted. Denying oneself and letting things alone, everything will be in order. If a bellows intends to make its own sound, it cannot provide for those who request [sound].

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* A bellows is composed of a series of ranked bags with a stick through the middle.

** Wang Pi separated the straw and the dog. But actually the two represent one thing, the straw dog. A straw dog is made of straws tied into a dog shape. People used it as a sacrifice during the worship ceremony. Afterwards, they would throw it away. Today, farmers still set up straw dogs in the fields to scare away birds during harvest time.

*** The meanings here are obscure, so the translator has tried to interpret the words as accurately as possible.

6

The Valley Spirit never dies.
It is called the mystic female.
The door of the mystic female
    is the root of heaven and earth.
Being interminable and seeming to endure,
It can be used without toil.[1]

[1] The Valley Spirit is the center of the valley; therefore it is not the valley. Without shape or shadow, without rebellion or defiance, it lies low and motionless, keeps still and unfading, and thus forms the valley. It has no visible shape, yet it is ultimate. Lying low and unnamable, it is called the root of heaven and earth. Being interminable and seeming to endure, it can be used without toil. "The door" is the pathway of the mystic female. Following the pathway and uniting with the ultimate, it is therefore called the root of heaven and earth. If one says it exists, its shape cannot be seen; if one says it does not exist, it produces ten thousand things. Therefore, it seems to exist endlessly and nothing is left incomplete. It functions without effort. Therefore, it is used without toil.

Heaven lasts; earth endures.
They last and endure
    because they do not live for themselves.[1]
And thus can live forever.

Therefore, the Sage positions himself behind
    and yet stays ahead.
He denies himself
    and so is preserved.
Is it not because of his selflessness
That he completes his own?[2]

[1] To live for oneself is to compete with other things. Not to live for oneself means all things will return [to him].

[2] Selflessness means not doing anything for oneself. Staying ahead and preserving, one achieves self-fulfillment.

## 8

The man of supreme goodness resembles water.
Water benefits all things
    Without competing with them,
Staying in places that men despise;[1]
Therefore, it is very close to Tao.[2]

Dwelling in good places,
Having a heart that loves the profound,
Allying with benevolence,
Inviting trust with words,
Being righteous in governing,
Managing all things well,
Moving at the right time--
Just because he does not compete,
The man of supreme goodness frees himself of blame.[3]

[1] Men despise low [places].

[2] Tao is nothing; water is something. They are, therefore, "very close" [but not the same].

[3] That is to say, all men should follow the Tao of governing.

## 9

Hold [a cup] and fill it to the brim;
Is it not better to stop in time?[1]

Hammer and sharpen [an edge];
It cannot last long.[2]
Fill a hall with gold and jade;
They cannot be protected.[3]

He who is rich, honored, and arrogant
brings blame upon himself.[4]
He who withdraws after achieving success
and performing duty*
adheres to the Tao of heaven.[5]

[1] To hold means not to lose virtue. Not losing virtue but filling it [a cup] will make it overflow. So, if one cannot stop in time, it is better to have no virtue and no merit at all.

[2] Hammering [an edge] to a sharp end and sharpening it to its keenest, one is likely to ruin it. Therefore, it cannot last long.

[3] It is better to stop [collecting] them.

[4] They cannot be retained for long.

[5] The four seasons evolve in turn, each completing its role and then moving on.

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* Some translate ming sui (名遂) as "fame accomplished," but this interpretation contradicts somewhat the doctrine of Taoism. This translator takes ming (名) to mean ming fen (名分) or duty proper to one's name.

Keeping one's ying poh* and embracing the One,
Can man not depart from it?[1]
Breathing intensely to induce softness,
Can man be like an infant?[2]
The mystic vision being pure and clean,
Can it be without flaw?[3]
Loving the people and governing the state,
Can man be without action?[4]
Opening and closing the gate of heaven,
Can it not be the female?[5]
Discerning and understanding the four corners,
Can man do so without knowledge?[6]

To produce and to raise;[7]
To produce without possessing;
To act without asserting;
To develop without controlling;
This is called the profound virtue.[8]

[1] To keep means to reside in. The soul is where man constantly resides. "One" means man's true nature. This means a man can reside constantly in his house [soul], embracing the One with pure spirit, and never departing from it. Then all things will become but outsiders.

[2] To be intense means to let go; to induce means to reach the utmost. This means by letting go and breathing naturally, the harmony of the utmost suppleness can be achieved. By behaving like a baby without any desires, all things will be perfect and their nature will be obtained.

3 The mystical is the ultimate of all things. It can wash away evil and disguise to achieve utmost vision. In not letting material things obscure the clarity and the flaw, is it not godlike? Then all is in accord with the mystical.

4 To use art to achieve the end and to employ destiny to uncover the hidden things is wisdom. To discern the mystical vision clean and pure is to abandon sagacity. To govern the state without wisdom means to abandon wisdom. Can one do without wisdom? Then the people will not deviate and the state will be governed.

5 The gate of heaven is where the world comes through. Opening and closing signify the moments of order and confusion. Opening or closing is the path of mandate to the world. Therefore it is called the opening and closing of the gate of heaven. The female responds but does not initiate, conforms but does not act. This means in the opening and closing of the gate of heaven, it is far better to assume the female's part. Thus all things will pay respect and one's residence is secure.

6 It means that if one who is inactive can let his discernment reach the four corners without confusion or uncertainty, then all things will be transformed. This is to say Tao is constant inaction. If the duke and king can adhere to this, then all things will transform themselves.

7 Not obstructing their sources, and not stifling their nature.

8 Do not obstruct their sources; then things grow by themselves. So who can claim the credit? Do not stifle their nature; then things are self-sufficient. So who can assert action? Things grow fully by themselves without our control. To have the virtue without the master; is this not profound? Profound virtue refers to having virtue without knowing its master; this comes from the mysterious world.

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* Ying poh (the same as hun poh 營魄=魂魄) represents two kinds of human souls. See the translator's notes in Chapter 4.

## 11

Thirty spokes converge in a nave;
just because of its nothingness [void]
the usefulness of the cart exists.[1]
Molded clay forms a vessel;
just because of its nothingness [hollowness]
the usefulness of the utensil exists.
Doors and windows are cut into a house;
just because of their nothingness [emptiness]
the usefulness of the house exists.
Therefore, profit from that which exists
and utilize that which is absent.[2]

[1] A nave can unite the thirty spokes because of its void. From its void, it is able to receive all things. Therefore it can unite them.

[2] "Wood," "clay," and "wall" constitute the three [examples] by utilizing nothingness. To say nothingness means that which exists is beneficial only by the use of that which is absent.

The five colors* blind man's eyes.
The five notes** deafen his ears.
The five tastes*** spoil his palate.
The chase and the hunt make his heart go mad.[1]
The rare treasures constrain his actions.[2]

Therefore, the Sage provides for the belly
and not for the eyes;
He rejects that to prefer this.[3]

[1] To spoil means to lose. The function of the palate is lost; therefore it is spoiled. The ears, eyes, mouth, and heart follow their own virtues. Not following their virtues and hurting their nature, they will become blind, deaf, spoiled, and mad.

[2] The rare treasures block man's right way; therefore they constrain his actions.

[3] "For the belly" means to feed oneself with material things; "for the eyes" means to allow material things to enslave the self. Therefore the Sage does not provide for the eyes.

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* The five primary colors are red, yellow, blue (including green), white, and black.

** The following are quotations from The Chinese Music published by Quonquon Company, Los Angeles, California, 1974. (Chinese characters are added by the translator.)

"The Chinese had the diatonic scale--coming now to comparatively modern times--six hundred years before it was completed in Europe, and a sol-fa system which was at least eight hundred years old when Curwen began his in 1840. The ancient Chinese scale has five tones: Kung [宮 ; C], Shang [商 ; D],

Chiao [角 ; E], Chih [徵; G], and Yu [羽 ; A]. At the time of the Chou dynasty [1125-255 B.C.], two further notes were added: Pien-chih [變徵; F#] and Pien-kung [變宮; B]. Each note of this scale of five or seven notes can be used as a primary note, giving five or seven modes. As each of these five or seven modes can be transposed in twelve ways, there are sixty or eighty-four keys in Chinese music" (pp. 4-5).

"It is the old scale of seven notes with the semitones between the fourth and fifth, identical in principle with the Curwen modulator of 1840. Further, there is extant the record of the work of Ssu-ma Ch'ien, who died in 85 B.C. He gave the length of the pitch-pipes for producing the five notes of the Chinese scale: Do (C), 81; Re (D), 72; Mi (E), 64; Sol (G), 54; La (A), 48. Starting with 81, and subtracting one-third alternately, he found the value by fifths" (p. 9).

*** The five tastes are sweet, sour, bitter, acrid, and salty.

Favor and disgrace are likely to cause fear.
Highly respect great trouble as one respects his own body.

What is meant by "favor and disgrace
are likely to cause fear"?[1*]
Favor is for the inferior:
Obtaining it, one will fear it.
Losing it, one will fear it.
This means that "favor and disgrace
are likely to cause fear."

What is meant by "highly respecting great trouble
as one respects his own body"?[2]
"I have great trouble because I have a body;[3]
When I no longer have a body,[4] how can I have trouble?"
Therefore, one who respects himself for the world
can be lodged with it;[5]
One who loves himself for the world
can be entrusted with it.[6**]

1 Favor is necessarily accompanied by disgrace. Honor is necessarily accompanied by trouble. Fear and disgrace are equal. Honor and trouble are the same. When an "inferior" regards favor, disgrace, honor and trouble with fear, he will not cause disorder in the world.

2 Great trouble is like honor and favor. Exerting too much for life, one must enter the territory of death. Therefore it is called great trouble. When a man deludes himself with honor and favor, the delusion is reflected in his body. This is the reason that great trouble is like one's body.

3 Because one possesses his body.

4 When it returns to nature.

5 Nothing can affect the body; this is to respect it. Then he can be entrusted with the world.

6 Nothing can hurt the body; this is to "love" it. Then one can be lodged with the world. Not letting favor, disgrace, honor, and trouble hurt or change the body, one can be charged with the world.

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* The Okada and Sun versions of the Tao Te Ching completely omit the fourth line ("are likely to cause fear").

** The entire chapter including text and commentary advocates the doctrine of naturalism. One should not value oneself, nor highly respect one's body, letting everything be natural and not letting favor and disgrace, honor and trouble startle the body and soul.

## 14

Looked at, it cannot be seen;
    it is called colorless.
Listened to, it cannot be heard;
    it is called soundless.
Grasped, it cannot be obtained;
    it is called formless.

These three cannot be investigated further,
    so they merge together to make one.[1]
The upper part is not bright;
The lower part is not dark.
So subtle, it cannot be named,
But returns to nothingness.
This is called the shape without shape,
    the image without image.[2]
This is called indistinct:[3]
    confronting it, one cannot see the head;
    following it, one cannot see the back.
Grasp the Ancient Tao to manage present existence.[4]
Thus we may know the beginning of the Ancient.
This is called the record* of Tao.[5]

[1] Having no shape, no image, no sound, and no voice, there is nothing it cannot penetrate and no place it cannot go. Unknown even to my ears, eyes, and body, I do not know how to name it; thus it cannot be investigated further, but merges together to make one.

2 If we speak of its non-being, everything comes from it. If we speak of its being, its shape cannot be seen. So it is called the shape without shape, the image without object.

3 It cannot be determined.

4 Existence means existing phenomena.

5 Without shape or name, it begets all things. Although the present and Ancient are different, time has moved and customs have changed, still everything follows this principle to accomplish order. So one can grasp the Ancient Tao to manage present existence. Although the Ancient is far-removed, its Tao still exists. So although we exist in the present, we can know the beginning of the Ancient.

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* According to The Great Principles (Hung Fan 洪範), there are five records: (1) the year; (2) the month; (3) the day; (4) the stars; and (5) the farming seasons. Those five represent the recorders (agents) of heaven.

The Ancients who made themselves the best
    Were subtle and penetrating
    And deep beyond knowing.
Because they were beyond knowing,
    we can only try to describe them:
Cautious, as if crossing the river in winter.[1]
Circumspect, as if afraid of the neighbors on four sides,[2]
Dignified, as if a guest.
Expansive, as melting ice.
Unspoiled, as unhewn wood.
Broad, as a valley.
Opaque, as turbid puddles.[3]

Who can calm the turbid and clear it gradually?
Who can stir the inert and bring it gradually to life?[4]

One who keeps this Tao does not wish to be filled.[5]
And because he is not filled,
    he can be sheltered and beyond renewal.[6]

[1] Crossing the river in winter, one is cautious about crossing or not crossing; this describes the emotion which cannot be seen.

[2] When the neighbors on four sides join to attack the master in the center, they do not know what his intentions are. Regarding the man with the supreme virtue, his intentions cannot be seen also. So his virtuous intent is not visible, exactly like that.

[3] The use of "as" or "as if" is a way of description, since its name or shape cannot be determined.

[4] Using the dark to analyze things, obtain brightness! Using tumult to calm things, obtain clarity! Using the inert to move things, obtain life! This is the nature of Tao! "Who can" suggests the difficulty. "Gradually" suggests being meticulous and cautious.

[5] To be filled is to overflow.

[6] Shelter means to cover.

Attain the ultimate emptiness;

Maintain the absolute tranquility.[1]

All things rise together.[2]

And I observe their return[3]. . .

The multitude of all things return each to their origin.[4]

To return to the origin means repose;

It means return to their destiny.

To return to their destiny means eternity;[5]

To know eternity means enlightenment.

Not knowing eternity is to do evil things blindly.[6]

To know eternity means having capacity.[7]

Capacity leads to justice.[8]

Justice leads to kingship.[9]

Kingship leads to Heaven.[10]

Heaven leads to Tao.[11]

Tao is everlasting.[12]

Thus the entire life will be without danger.[13]

[1] This means to attain the ultimate of empty things, and maintain the true rectitude of tranquil things.

[2] All things move and grow.

[3] With emptiness and tranquility, one observes the return of all things. All being starts from emptiness. All movement, from tranquility. Therefore, although all things move together, they ultimately return to emptiness and tranquility. This is the utmost single-heartedness of all things.

[4] All things return to their beginning.

5 Returning to their origin means rest. It is called tranquility. Tranquility means returning to their fate, therefore it is called "returning to their destiny." Returning to their destiny means to achieve the constancy of life. Therefore it is called eternity.

6 Eternity is a thing without bias or illustriousness, without decay or obscurity, and without warmth or cold. Therefore, to know eternity means enlightenment. Only this return can embrace and contain all things. If one loses this and moves on, then the perverse will enter and cause division. Then all things will disintegrate. Therefore, not knowing eternity is to do evil things blindly.

7 Nothing exists which cannot be embraced.

8 If everything that exists can be embraced, then one can attain immense justice and equality.

9 From immense justice and equality, nothing is universally inapplicable.

10 If nothing cannot be universally applicable, one can identify with heaven.

11 Sharing virtue with heaven, one embodies Tao with great communication, reaching the point that he will be with the utmost of nothingness.

12 Searching for the utmost of nothingness, one obtains the eternity of Tao, then one reaches the point that he has nothing but the ultimate.

13 Nothingness is something which water and fire cannot destroy, metal and stone cannot injure. When applied to one's heart, the tiger and the rhinoceros have no place to thrust their teeth and horns, and war weapons have no place to stab their sharp points. Then what danger and harm will one have?

Of the best, the people barely know of his existence.[1]
Of the next best, the people love and praise him.[2]
Of the next one, the people are afraid of him.[3]
And of the next, the people despise him.[4]

He who does not trust others enough
will not be trusted by them.[5*]

Therefore, hesitating, one should carefully choose his words.
When he accomplishes his task and the things get done,
The people all say: "We have done it by ourselves."[6]

1 "The best" means the great man. The great man is above the rest; therefore he is the best. The great man, being above, resides in inaction, gives instructions without words, lets all things develop without his initiation. Therefore the common people barely know of his existence.

2 Being unable to reside in inaction and instruct without words, he upholds goodness and lets it prevail, so the people can love and praise him.

3 Being unable to return to gratitude and kindness, he relies on authority and power to command.

4 Being unable to regulate the people with laws of justice, he governs the state with shrewdness. The people know how to avoid him and evade his orders, thus they "despise him."

5 That means to emulate the man on top. If, in regulating the body one destroys its quality, then disease will prevail. If, in aiding all things one destroys their true nature, then disaster and rift will rise. If one's credibility is inadequate, people will not have trust. This is the way of nature. If one is lacking in his conduct, shrewdness cannot help.

6 The signs of nature cannot be seen; its inclinations cannot be discerned. Nothing can change its words. The words must have consequences. Therefore, one must take time to honor his words. Residing in inaction, instructing without words, and not upholding form over substance, he accomplishes his tasks and completes his work, but the people do not know what has happened.

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* These two lines can also be translated as:

He who does not establish enough trust
Will not be trusted by others.

## 18

When the Great Tao is abandoned,
There are human-heartedness and righteousness;[1]
When knowledge and wisdom arise,
There is great hypocrisy;[2]
When the six relations are not in accord,
There are filial piety and paternal affection;
When a country is in disorder,
There are loyal ministers.[3]*

[1] Abandoning inaction and further using wisdom as the best way to promote things.

[2] To employ craftiness and use knowledge to discern treachery and hypocrisy induces people to see the appearances of things and know how to avoid them. So when knowledge and wisdom arise, there is great hypocrisy.

[3] The most beautiful name is born of the greatest evil. That is to say: virtue and evil come from the same source. The six relations are father and son, older and younger brother, and husband and wife. If the six relations are in harmony, and the country is self-regulated, then filial piety, paternal affection, and loyal ministers have no need to exist. The way fishes do not know each other in rivers and lakes yet have to have the virtue of spit.**

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* The translation of the last line is based on the Kondo, Orthodox Tao-ts'ang, SPPY, T'ang and Usami versions of the Tao Te Ching. According to the Okada version, it should be rendered as:

There are loyalty and sincerity.

** According to Chinese legend, fishes in rivers and lakes do not know each other, but when the waters dry up, they have to join

together and live by breathing each other's spit. This is the virtue of spit, arising from the fishes' needs. This legend has also been recorded in the Chuang Tzu, Chapter 14, "The Turning of Heaven."

Banish sagacity; forsake wisdom.

The people will benefit a hundredfold.

Banish human-heartedness; forsake righteousness.

The people will recover filial piety and paternal affection.

Banish craftiness; forsake profit.

Thieves and robbers will no longer exist.

Those three are superficial and inadequate.

Hence the people need something to abide by:

Discern plainness.

Embrace simplicity.

Reduce selfishness.

Restrain desires.[1]

[1] Sagacity and wisdom are good talents; benevolence and righteousness are good human qualities; profit and benefit are good management. To say that they must be banished means that these expressions are especially not enough and one cannot know what they denote. Therefore, those three [expressions] are not enough as words and must be properly placed to show the people where they belong: with plainness, simplicity, and the restraint of desires.

## 20

Abandon learning; then one has no sorrow.
Between "yes" and "no," what is the difference?
Between good and evil, what is the difference?
If I should fear what the people fear,[1]
Then where is the end of my fear?[2]
Lustily the people seem to be enjoying a feast
Or ascending a tower in the springtime.[3]
I alone am unmoved, showing no sentiment,
Like a baby who does not yet know how to smile.[4]
So weary, I seem not to know where to return.[5]
While the multitudes have plenty,
I alone seem to be left out.[6]
My heart is like a fool's.[7]
How chaotic! Chaotic![8]
While the common people are so bright,[9]
I alone am so dull!
While the common people know how to differentiate,[10]
I alone cannot see the difference.
Boundless as the sea,[11]
Aimless as the breeze,
I seem to have no stop.[12]
All the people have their purpose,[13]
But I alone am stubborn and despicable.[14]
I alone differ from the others
And value getting nourishment from the Mother.[15*]

[1] A following chapter** indicates that those who pursue learning will improve daily, and those who pursue Tao will diminish daily. Therefore, learning is to improve one's ability and increase one's knowledge. If one is satisfied without desire, then why should one seek more? If one hits the target without knowledge, then why should one seek improvement? Swallows and sparrows are a match for each other; turtledoves and pigeons hate each other; folks in poor villages certainly know about wool and fur. To be natural is sufficient. To add more only results in sorrow. Therefore lengthening the legs of wild ducks is not different from shortening the necks of cranes. To advance for fear of one's fame is not different from for fear of punishment. Between "yes" and "no" or "good" and "evil," what makes the difference? Therefore, what the people fear I should fear too, but I cannot rely on it in applying myself.

[2] Sighing over one's distance from the common people.

[3] The common people are obsessed with beauty and advancement and deluded by honor and profit. Their desires growing and their hearts striving, they are joyous as if having a big feast and ascending a tower in spring.

[4] That is to say: unrestricted, I have no shape to speak of and no omen to establish, like a baby who does not yet know how to smile.

[5] As if having no place to reside.

[6] The multitudes fill their chests and hearts with ambition and will, so they have plenty. Only I am free, without action and without desire, seeming to be left out.

[7] For an absolutely foolish man, his heart knows no difference, his will shows no desire, and his emotions are not seen. I am likewise dispirited.

[8] Undifferentiated or unrecognized, it cannot be named.

[9] Shining their brightness.

[10] To differentiate means to know the difference.

11 My passion is not visible.

12 There is no tie, no anchor.

13 Purpose means function; they all want to function or apply themselves.

14 There is nothing I desire to do. Indifferent and dull, I seem to know nothing. Therefore, I alone am stubborn and despicable.

15 Getting nourishment from the Mother is the root of life. The people forsake the root of their lives and treasure trivial and artificial splendors. Therefore, I alone prefer to be different from the people.

---

* The Eighth Chapter of the Li Ki, shih mu [食母 (The nourishment from the Mother)] refers to the nursers; here it refers to the mother of all things (Tao). It is interesting to note too that in Plato's writings, when Timaeus considers the element of necessity which existed before creation, he describes it as the "receptacle, the nurse [in a way] of creation."

** Chapter 48.

The feature of great virtue
is to follow only Tao.[1]
Tao is something elusive and vague![2]
Though vague and elusive, in it is the image.
Though elusive and vague, in it is the substance.[3]
Obscure and dim, in it is the spirit.[4]
The spirit is truly genuine; in it is credibility.[5]

From ancient times until now,
Its name has never disappeared.[6]
By this the beginning of all things is known.[7]
How can I know the beginning of all things?
By this.[8]

[1] "Great" means empty. Only regarding emptiness as a virtue can one act according to Tao.

[2] "Elusive and vague" means to exclaim over its shapelessness and unrestraint.

[3] Things originate in shapelessness and complete in unrestraint. Thus all things begin and complete without knowing why. Therefore, it says: elusive and vague, vague and elusive, in it is the image.

[4] "Obscure and dim" refers to that which is deep and far-reaching. Deep and far-reaching, it cannot be seen, but through it all things can be seen and their true nature can be determined. Therefore, obscure and dim, in it is the spirit.

[5] Credibility refers to empirical evidence. Things return to the obscure, which is the utmost of their true spirit, as determined by the nature of things. Therefore, the spirit is truly genuine; in it is credibility.

6 The ultimate reality cannot be named; namelessness is its name. From the ancient to the present, nothing is complete without it. Therefore, from ancient times until now, its name has never disappeared.

7 "The beginning of all things" means their origin. Its namelessness indicates the beginning of all things.

8 As is stated above, how can I know that all things originate from nothingness? I know it by this!

## 22

To yield is to have the whole.[1]
To be crooked is to be straightened.[2]
To be hollow is to be filled.[3]
To be worn out is to be renewed.[4]
To have a little is to get more.
To have a lot is to be confused.[5]

Therefore the Sage sets an example for the world
By embracing the One.[6]
By not insisting on his view, he may become enlightened.
By not being self-righteous, he may become illustrious.
By not boasting, he may receive credit.
By not being arrogant, he may last long.
And just because he does not compete,
the entire world cannot compete with him.
The Ancients say:
"to yield is to have the whole."
Are these merely words?
Truly the whole will return to him.

[1] By not holding to his view, his name* may be whole.

[2] By not being self-righteous, his righteousness may be manifested.

[3] By not being boastful, his credit may be recognized.

[4] By not being arrogant, his virtue may last long.

[5] The Tao of nature is like a tree. Turning too much will make it go far away from its roots. Turning less will make it obtain

its roots. Turning too much is far from its truth; hence it is confused. Turning less, it may obtain its roots; hence it is called "to obtain."

6 "One" is the utmost of smallness. "Example" is for people to emulate.

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* Some versions read "insight" or "discernment."

## 23

To spare words is to be natural.[1]
Therefore a whirlwind does not last all morning,
And a sudden shower does not last all day.
Who causes this?
Heaven and earth.
If even Heaven and earth cannot last long,
What can man do?[2]
Therefore one dealing with Tao will resemble Tao.[3]
Dealing with virtue,* one will resemble virtue.[4]
Dealing with loss, one will resemble loss.[5]
If one resembles Tao, Tao is pleased to accept him.
If one resembles virtue, virtue is pleased to accept him.
If one resembles loss, loss is also pleased to accept him.[6]

By not having enough credibility,
One will not be trusted [by others].[7]

[1] "Listened to, it cannot be heard. It is called 'soundless.'" A following chapter** indicates that the words of Tao are flavorless and bland. Looked at, it cannot be seen; listened to, it cannot be heard. Thus flavorless, unheard words are the truest words of nature.

[2] That is to say: violent speed and glorified undertaking cannot last long.

[3] "Dealing with" means acting and abiding by Tao. Tao, without form or action, completes and aids all things. Therefore those who deal with Tao must master with inaction and teach with no words. Tao is interminable and everlasting; all things obtain their essence and embody Tao. Therefore they become one with Tao.

[4] To obtain is to have little; to have little is to obtain. Therefore, it is called "obtaining." To practice virtue is to embody "obtaining." Therefore, it resembles "obtaining."

[5] "Loss" refers to one who accumulates too much. To accumulate too much is to lose. Therefore it is called "loss." To act the loser is to embody "loss." Therefore it is one with "loss."

[6] Wherever one goes, he receives the corresponding results.

[7] If one does not show enough loyalty and credibility to his subordinates, he will not be trusted by them.

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* Virtue (德), according to Wang Pi, is gain (得).

** Chapter 35.

Those who rise on tiptoe cannot stand.[1]
Those who stride cannot walk.

Those who hold to their views
    cannot be enlightened.
Those who are self-righteous
    cannot shine.
Those who boast
    cannot receive credit.
Those who are arrogant
    cannot last long.

In the light of Tao, they are like left-over food
    and burdensome wens,[2]
Even despised by all creatures.
So those with Tao do not want to stay with them.

[1] Anything striving to advance will lose its safety. Therefore, those who rise on tiptoe cannot stand.

[2] In terms of Tao, these people are like backsliders or banquet left-overs. Although originally good, they appear more ugly. Although originally creditable, due to boastfulness they become more like burdensome wens.

## 25

There is a thing formed in chaos
Existing before Heaven and Earth.[1]
Silent and solitary, it stands alone, unchanging.[2]
It goes around without peril.
It may be the Mother of the world.[3]
Not knowing its name,[4] I can only style it Tao.[5]
With reluctance, I would call it Great.[6]
Great means out-going.[7]
Out-going means far-reaching.
Far-reaching means returning.[8]

Therefore, Tao is great.
Heaven is great.
Earth is great.
The king is great.[9]
In the universe, there are four great things,[10]
and the king is one of them.[11]
Man abides by earth,
Earth abides by heaven,
Heaven abides by Tao,
Tao abides by nature.[12]

[1] Chaos cannot be known, but all things take shape from it. Therefore it is said to be "formed in chaos." It is not known whose son it was; therefore it existed before heaven and earth.

[2] "Silent and solitary" means it is formless and matchless, therefore standing alone. Returning and adapting, ending and starting, without losing its permanence; therefore it is unchanging.

3 It can go around anywhere without peril and achieve the Great Shape. Therefore it may be the Mother of the world.

4 The name determines the form; formed in chaos and shapeless, it cannot be determined. Therefore we do not know its name.

5 The name determines the form, but the style states its merit. "Tao" means the way from which all things come. Formed in chaos, it can be described as the greatest.

6 The reason I style it "Tao" is to show that among all things describable, it is the greatest. Regarding the source of this word, it is bound to the great. Anything great is bound to have divisions. Once it has divisions, it will lose its ultimate nature. Therefore, I name it great only with reluctance.

7 "Out-going" means moving--not restricted to a great system, moves around and reaches everywhere. Therefore it is called "out-going."

8 "Far-reaching" means to reach the ultimate. Going around there is nowhere it cannot go, but it does not go in one direction only. Therefore it is called "far-reaching." It doesn't stay where it goes; its body* is free and therefore "returning."

9 In the nature of heaven and earth, man is valuable and the king is the chief of men. Therefore although his duty is not bound to the Great, he is also great. Matching the other three, the king therefore is also great.

10 The four great things are Tao, heaven, earth, and king. All things that have names and titles are not ultimate realities. Tao has its own source. It is through this source that** it can be named "Tao." The Tao which is the greatest of the namables is not as great as the Tao which is not namable. Unnamed, it cannot be obtained; therefore it is called the universe. Tao, heaven, earth, and the king are within the unnamed [universe]. Therefore, there are four great things in the universe.

11 The king is great because he is the master of men.

12 "Abide by" means conform to the rule. Man does not violate the earth and thus achieves his security because he abides by the

earth. The earth does not violate heaven and thus obtains its capacity to support because it abides by heaven. Heaven does not violate Tao and thus obtains its capacity to shelter because it abides by Tao. Tao does not violate its own nature and thus achieves its virtue because it abides by nature. Within the square, abide by the squareness; within the circle, abide by the roundness; never go against nature. Nature is an unnamed expression, the word for ultimate reality. To use wisdom is not as good as no wisdom. The shape is not as good as the image of the spirit; the image of the spirit is not as good as formlessness. Having principle is not as good as not having it. Therefore they abide by each other. Tao follows its natural way; thus heaven gets its assets. Heaven abides by Tao; therefore the earth gets its pattern. The earth abides by heaven; therefore the man gets its image. Therefore being their master to unite them together is the king.

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* Some versions use "will" (chih 志) instead of "body" (ti 體). Both "body" and "will" imply the exercising of freedom.

** The Usami version of the Tao Te Ching omits "It is through this source that" but uses "therefore" instead.

Heaviness is the foundation of lightness.
Serenity is the lord of rashness.[1]
Therefore the Sage who travels the whole day
never leaves his heavily covered carts.[2]
Though there are spectacles of splendor,
he stays composed and aloof.[3]
Why as a ruler of ten thousand chariots
would he treat himself
lightly in the world?
Lightness will lose the foundation.*
Rashness will lose the lord.[4]

[1] Anything light cannot carry heavy loads. Anything small cannot overpower the big. He who doesn't walk causes others to walk. He who doesn't move controls the movements of others. Therefore heaviness must be the foundation of lightness. Serenity must be the lord of rashness.**

[2] Heaviness is his base; therefore one never leaves it.

[3] They do not engage his heart.

[4] The light never overpowers the heavy. To lose the foundation is to forsake oneself. To lose lordliness is to lose a lord's position.

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* The Okada version of the Tao Te Ching interprets this line as "Lightness will lose the ministers."

** Compare Aristotle's conception of the unmoved movers and Neitzsche's statement that the world should be ruled by the silencer.

## 27

A good walker leaves no trail.[1]
A good speaker leaves no grounds for blame.[2]
A good counter needs no calculator.[3]
A well-closed door needs no bolt
and still cannot be opened.
A well-tied knot needs no binding
and still cannot be untied.[4]

Therefore the Sage is always able to save his people
and there is no one forsaken.[5]
He is able to save all things
and there is nothing wasted.
This is called inherited enlightenment.

Therefore the good man is the teacher of the bad.[6]
And the bad man is the material for the good.
He who fails to value the teacher and cherish the material,[7]
Is utterly lost in spite of his knowledge.[8]
This is called crucial subtlety.*

[1] Proceed according to nature; neither institute nor initiate; then everything attains, leaving no trail.

[2] Follow the nature of things without discriminating and analyzing; then one leaves nothing [for others] to pick holes in.

[3] To follow the number of things without reference to form.

[4] Follow the nature of things without fixing or interfering; then there is no need for bolts or binding and ropes; to keep things

from being opened or untied. These five explain that one should neither institute nor interfere, but follow the nature of things and not control them with forms.

5 The Sage does not sort things by establishing norms. He does not favor the distinguished and forsake the defective by instituting directions. He helps things develop their nature without initiating. Thus no one is forsaken. Prefer not the worthy and able, so that the people will not fight; prize not the rare treasure, so that they will not steal; exhibit not the desirable, so that their hearts will not be distracted. Always keep people's hearts from desires or distraction; then no one is forsaken.

6 Uphold the good man for the bad man to emulate. Hence he is the teacher.

7 "The material" means supply. The good man uses goodness to level badness, uses goodness to avert badness. Therefore the bad man is the material for the good man to take [work on].

8 Although one has knowledge, employing one's knowledge and not following the nature of things, he must lose Tao. Therefore, he is utterly lost in spite of his knowledge.

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* Never sacrifice mankind for the sake of Tao. To the contrary, this chapter emphasizes the practice of Tao in a wholesome society.

Knowing the male and keeping the female,
One will become the river of the world.
Being the river of the world,
One will not digress from constant virtue,
And will return to being a baby.[1]

Knowing the white and keeping the black,
One will become a model of the world.[2]
Being a model of the world,
One will not deviate from constant virtue[3]
And will return to the infinite.[4]

Knowing honor and keeping disgrace,
One will become the valley of the world.
Being the valley of the world, *
One will be content with constant virtue
And return to the unhewn wood.[5]**
Unhewn wood when scattered will become vessels.
The Sage makes use of them to become the chief officer.[6]***
Therefore the great system will not be cut apart.[7]

[1] The male belongs in the front; the female belongs in the rear. One who knows how to lead the world must stay in the rear. Therefore the Sage keeps himself behind and thus stays ahead. The river makes no demands on anything, but everything returns to it. A baby never uses his wisdom, but is attuned with the wisdom of nature.

[2] "Model" means pattern.

[3] "Deviate" means to be led astray.

[4] That which cannot be fathomed.

[5] Virtue resides in these three, namely constancy, returning, and staying behind, to perfect itself. As stated in a following chapter, **** returning is the movement of Tao; accomplishment cannot be claimed. The mother resides in constancy.

[6] Unhewn wood preserves true nature. When true nature is dispersed, a hundred walks burst forth and different species, like vessels, spring to life. Based on their diversities, the Sage appoints chief officers for them; using the good men as teachers and the bad men as materials, changing traditions and customs and enabling them to return to the One.

[7] The great system has the heart of the people for its own heart. Therefore it will not be cut apart. *****

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* The T'ang version of the Tao Te Ching omits this phrase.

** Unhewn wood refers to "simplicity."

*** According to Wang Pi, this line should be translated: "The Sage appoints chief officers for them."

**** Chapter 40.

***** The other function of a ruler is to enable people to return to the One. The One should never be split.

He who wants to take the world and act on it
will not be able to achieve, I know.
The world is a sacred vessel[1]
Which cannot be acted on.
To act on it is to destroy it.
To seize it is to lose it.[2]

So the things
Either lead or follow;
Either whistle or blow;
Either are strong or weak;
Either defeat or fall.*

That is why the Sage abandons
the excessive, the extravagant, and the extreme.[3]

[1] The sacred has no shape and no angles; the vessel is a composite substance. Being composed with no shape, it is therefore called the sacred vessel.

[2] The virtue of all things is based on nature. Therefore it is subjected to follow, not to act, is able to communicate, not to hold. Things possess constant virtue; to impose and act upon them will spoil them. Things ought to come and go [naturally]; to hold them is to lose them.

[3] These "either-or" expressions indicate that all things and events go together or in opposite directions, return or recur, and should not be acted upon, seized, or disrupted. The Sage reaches the ultimate in nature, flowing through the passions of all things. Therefore he appropriates without acting, follows without administering, removes that which deludes, eliminates that which confuses.

Therefore his heart is not distracted and the nature of things is self-contained.

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* The translation of this line is based on the Orthodox Tao-ts'ang, SPPY, T'ang and Usami versions of the Tao Te Ching. According to the Kondo, Okada and Sun versions, it should be rendered as: "Either support or fall."

Those who aid the ruler with Tao
    do not use military force to conquer the world.[1]
Because this will invite retaliation.[2*]
Where the army stays,
    briers and thorns grow.
After a great war comes the year of adversity.[3]

The good man stops after getting results.
Without daring to conquer.[4]
He achieves results without bragging,
Achieves results without exalting,
Achieves results without arrogance.[5]
Achieves results with reluctance,
Achieves results without conquering.[6]

A thing in its prime soon becomes old;
This is not Tao.
Not being Tao, it is sure to die early.[7]

[1] Even those who aid the ruler with Tao do not use military force to conquer the world. How can the ruler who embodies Tao use it?

[2] The initiator has to achieve merit to stir up events, but those with Tao have to return to inaction. Therefore, events are bound to return.

[3] That is to say: armies are something evil and harmful. They can do nothing but bring disaster, robbing and injuring the people, and devastating the land. Therefore briers and thorns will grow.

4 Result means relief. That is to say: one who knows how to make good use of military force hastens to relieve calamity only, but will not use it to conquer the world.

5 Not preferring military force, I use it reluctantly; then what do I have to be arrogant or brag about?

6 That is to say: one who uses military force to hasten results and relieve calamities must do it with reluctance. When he has to use it again, he uses it for the purpose of quenching violence only, but never uses its results to show power.

7 "Prime" refers to the rapid development of brute force, such as using the army to conquer the world. A whirlwind does not last all morning; nor does a sudden shower last all day.** Therefore rapid development is certainly not Tao; it is sure to die early.

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* According to Wang Pi, this line should be translated: "For this thing is bound to return."

** See Chapter 23.

## 31

Fine weapons are the tools of evil;
All things are likely to hate them.
So those with Tao do not want to deal with them.
The gentleman who stays at home values the left;
In war, he values the right.
Weapons are the tools of evil,
not the tools of the gentleman.
When he uses them unavoidably, he is most calm and detached
And does not glorify his victory.

To glorify means to relish the murder of people,
Relishing the murder of people,
One cannot exercise his will in the world.
Happy occasions prefer the left.
Sorrowful occasions prefer the right.
The lieutenant-general is placed on the left.
The general-in-chief is placed on the right.
This means observing this occasion with funeral rites.
Having killed many people, one should lament
with sorrow and grief.
Victory in war must be observed with funeral rites.*

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* This chapter and Chapter 66 do not have any commentary by Wang Pi. Some scholars suspect that Wang Pi's commentary was merged into the texts of these two chapters. The Four Scholars' Collected Annotations of the Tao Te Ching claims that Wang Pi said: "I doubt that this chapter was written by Lao Tzu."

## 32

Tao is constantly nameless.
Though the unhewn wood is small, *
No one in the world dares to subjugate it.
If dukes and kings can keep it,
All things will become guests by themselves.[1]**
Heaven and earth conjugate***
    in dropping sweet dew;
People without being ordered
    are fair to each other.[2]
In the beginning of creation, all were given names.
Having names, they know their limits.
Knowing their limits keeps them from danger.[3]
Thus Tao is to the world
    As brooks and valleys are to rivers and seas.[4]

[1] Tao, being formless, does not cling; being eternal, it cannot be named. Because its constancy is with namelessness, therefore Tao is constantly nameless. The unhewn wood is something with nothingness as its heart; it is also nameless. Therefore, if one wants to obtain Tao, there is no better way than to keep this simplicity. Then those who are wise can be led to serve competently; those who are brave can be directed to the military force; those who are skilled can be enlisted to work; and those with great strength can be made to carry heavy loads. The unhewn is something dull-witted, unbiased, and close to nothingness; therefore it cannot be subjugated. Embrace simplicity with inaction; never let the things disturb one's true nature; never let desire harm one's spirit; then all things will become guests by themselves and Tao will be attained by itself.

[2] That is to say: when heaven and earth conjugate, sweet dew will drop without being requested. I keep my true nature and do nothing; then the people, without being ordered, act fairly.

3 The beginning of creation refers to the time when the unhewn essence was dispersed and chief officers were first appointed. First, the chief officers were given titles proper to their station to determine their rank. Therefore, in the beginning of creation, all were given names. From that time on, the people would fight for trivial points of a knife. Therefore, after names have been established, it is better to know the limits. If the name is allowed to master things, that is the mother of unruliness. Thus, knowing their limits will keep people free from danger.

4 Brooks and valleys seek out rivers and seas; but the rivers and seas do not summon them. Without summons or search, the former return to the latter naturally. Therefore those who apply Tao to the world would make it self-regulated without ordering, and self-fulfilled without seeking. Therefore, they are as brooks and valleys are to rivers and seas.

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* The Orthodox Tao-ts'ang version of the Tao Te Ching omits this line.

** All things will pay homage to dukes and kings by themselves.

*** According to the Eighth Chapter of the Li Ki, p. 092: "Heaven and earth conjugate, then all things spring up."

To know others is to be clever.

To know oneself is to have discernment.[1]

To overcome others takes force.

To overcome oneself takes strength.[2]

To be content is riches.[3]

To act perseveringly takes will.[4]

Not to lose one's place means one can last long.[5]

To die without extinction* means longevity.[6]

[1] Those who know men are merely clever; they are less than those who know themselves and surpass cleverness.

[2] Those who conquer others display force only; they are less than those who overcome themselves and whose strength cannot be harmed by anything. To apply cleverness to others is less than to apply it to oneself. To use force on others is less than to use it on oneself. To have discernment in oneself means nothing can evade him. To apply force on oneself means nothing can affect him.

[3] One who is self-contented will never lose; so he has riches.

[4] To act diligently, one's will will prevail. Therefore, one who acts perseveringly needs will.

[5] Investigating oneself with discernment, estimating one's strength before acting, maintaining one's position without losing it, one will last long.

[6] Although one has died, if his way of living is not dead, then he can enjoy longevity. Even when the body ceases to exist, Tao still lives, not to mention that his body exists and Tao does not perish.

---

* If one really is with Tao, he will live forever.

The great Tao overflows,
able to move left and right.[1]
All things rely on it for life,
But it does not dominate them.
Completing its task without possession,
Clothing and feeding all things,
Without wanting to be their master.
Always void of desire,
It can be called Small.[2]
All things return to it
Without its being their master;
It can be called Great.[3]
Just because the Sage would never regard himself as great,
He is able to attain his own greatness.[4*]

[1] That means Tao overflows everywhere and there is nowhere it cannot go. It may turn left and right, up and down, and around in its applications. So there is nowhere it cannot go.

[2] All things are born from Tao. Having been born, they do not know their source. Therefore when the world is without desire, all things have their proper place as if Tao has nothing to do with them. Then Tao may be called "Small."

[3] All things return to Tao for life, but it purposefully does not reveal their source to them. This cannot be called "Small." Then again it can be called "Great."**

[4] To become great from smallness; to attempt the difficult from the easy.***

* Some versions read: "Therefore the Sage would never deem himself great. He is able to complete his own greatness."

** The Four Scholars' Collected Annotations of the Tao Te Ching omits this note.

*** See Chapter 63.

## 35

Hold on to the great image
And the whole world will follow.[1]
Following without harm,
in safety, peace, and comfort.[2]
Music and viand will cause the traveler to stop.
But Tao spoken by mouth is flavorless and bland.
Looked at, it cannot be seen.
Listened to, it cannot. be heard.
Used, it will never be exhausted.[3]

[1] The great image is the mother of celestial image. Neither cold, nor warm, nor cool, it therefore can encompass all things without incurring harm or hurt. If the king holds on to it, the whole world will follow.

[2] Without shape or cognizance, not biased or showy, all things therefore can follow without harm and hindrance.

[3] This is to say: Tao is profound and great. When the people hear the words of Tao, [the words] are less than music and viand which cause their hearts to rejoice. Music and viand cause the traveler to stop, but the words of Tao are flavorless and bland. Looked at, it cannot be seen; so it is not enough to please the eye. Listened to, it cannot be heard; so it is not enough to please the ear. It seems useless; but when it is used, it cannot be exhausted.

About to shut it, let it first be opened.

About to weaken it, let it first be strengthened.

About to destroy it, let it first be advanced.

About to snatch it, let it first be given away.

This is called the subtle wisdom.[1]

The soft overcomes the hard;

The weak overcomes the strong.

As fish cannot be separated from deep water,

The state's sharp weapons* cannot be shown to the people.[2]

[1] To eliminate burglars and gangsters, rely on these four. Following the nature of things, let them destroy themselves. Do not use punishment to eliminate those that one is "about to" eliminate. This is called subtle wisdom. When opened enough and left to suffice, one who tries to open it more will be shut out by the people. When not opened enough and left to change, the one who opens it more will receive the benefit and the one [who failed to open it enough] will be in danger.**

[2] Sharp weapons refer to weapons of benefit to the state. Following only the nature of things, never using form to manage things and allowing weapons to be seen; all things will have their proper place. This is called weapons of benefit to the state. To show them to the people means using punishment. Using punishment to benefit the state is to lose it. Fish separated from deep water will certainly be lost. Sharpening the state's weapons to signify punishment of the people will certainly fail.

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* Refers to the art of governing.

** Some scholars suggest the following translation for the last five lines: "This is called discernment of subtlety. Let it be opened enough if it requests such; if it requests more, then the people will know to shut it. For example, if not opened enough and one requests more, the one who requests more will be in great danger."

Tao is always inactive.[1]
But it leaves nothing undone.[2]
If dukes and kings can keep it,
Then all things will be naturally transformed.
If transformation raises desires,
I would suppress them with nameless simplicity.[3]
Nameless simplicity means being without desires.[4]
Being without desires and with tranquility,
The world will keep peace by itself.

[1] To follow nature.

[2] Nothing exists which is not governed or accomplished by action.*

[3] "If transformation raises desires"; "raises" means the desires are formed. I would suppress them with nameless simplicity without being the master.

[4] Having no desires to contend with.

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* This line can also be translated: "Nothing is not from it [inaction] to begin and accomplish."

# BOOK TWO

## 38

He with the highest virtue
Does not display his virtue
And so has virtue.

He with the lowest virtue
Does not let go of virtue
And so has no virtue.

He with the highest virtue does not act
    And nothing is left undone.*
He with the lowest virtue acts
    And has intent to act.
He with the highest human-heartedness acts
    And has no intent to act.
He with the highest righteousness acts
    And has intent to act.
He with the highest propriety acts
    And if there is no response,
    Bares his arms to apply force.

Therefore, when Tao is lost, virtue appears.
When virtue is lost, human-heartedness appears.
When human-heartedness is lost, righteousness appears.
When righteousness is lost, propriety appears.
Propriety is the thinness of loyalty and honesty
    And the beginning of disorder;
Foreknowledge is the ornament of Tao,
    And the beginning of ignorance.

Therefore, great gentlemen stay in the thick,

and not in the thin.

They stay with the substance, and not with the ornament.

So they reject that to prefer this.[1]

1 Virtue means gain. To constantly gain without loss, and to have benefit without harmfulness, then it is called virtue. How is virtue gained? Through Tao. How is virtue fully completed? Through the use of non-being. Through the use of non-being, nothing is left unsupported. Therefore, if things rest in non-being, then everything is regulated; if they rest in being, then there is not enough to spare their lives. Therefore, although heaven and earth are vast, they use non-being as their heart; although the Sage is great, he regards emptiness as his master. That is to say: if one sees with Return,** he will discern the hearts of heaven and earth; if one meditates on the winter solstice,*** he can see the zenith of ancient kings. Therefore, if one subdues his selfishness and disregards his own body, then the Four Seas will pay him reverence, the far and the near will come to him. But if he distinguishes himself and becomes self-possessed, he cannot even preserve his own body, and his muscles and bones cannot tolerate each other.

Therefore the man with the highest virtue uses Tao only. Not displaying his virtue, not grasping, not applying, thus he can have virtue, and nothing is left undone. To gain without seeking, to achieve without action, although he has virtue, he does not acquire the name of virtue.

The man with the lowest virtue gains by seeking, achieves by action, and establishes goodness to govern things. Thus he acquires the name of virtue. Gain by seeking cannot avoid loss; achievement by action cannot avoid failure. When the name "goodness" is produced, badness may respond. Therefore the man with the lowest virtue acts and has intent to act. Having no intent to act means employing without partiality. The man who cannot do anything through inaction has the lowest virtues, namely, human-heartedness, righteousness, propriety, and etiquette. In order to make clear the differences between the highest and the lowest virtues, the lowest virtue is compared with the highest virtue to the ultimate, measuring below the lowest

virtue which is the highest benevolence.**** When one reaches the point with no intent to act, one still has to act. Therefore one should act with no specific intent, for to act intentionally is the calamity of action. The root lies in inaction; the mother rests in the nameless. To discard the root, to forsake the mother, and to follow the son, though the achievement may be great, it certainly does not help. Though the name may be splendid, falsehood will surely arise. If one is not able to achieve without action, to rule without initiation, and still has to act, then he must administer to all with human-heartedness and love.

Loving without partiality, those with the highest human-heartedness therefore act with no intent to act. If love cannot be impartial, then curbing and resisting, rectifying and straightening will arise. Those with righteousness will detest the abuser and protect the righteous, helping this and attacking that. Everything, then, becomes intentional. Therefore, the man with the highest righteousness acts and has intent to act. To be right without moral devotion, then, those who like idle ornaments, elegant statements, and proper ceremonies would argue back and forth about the details, and disagreement between two opposing parties would arouse anger and grudges. Therefore those with the highest righteousness act, and if there is no response, they bare their arms to apply force.

The ultimate greatness is simply Tao! From this point on, nothing is worthy of respect! Therefore although those who have abundant virtue, plenty of property, and possession of all things can obtain their own virtue, they cannot achieve self-completion. Therefore, heaven cannot support; earth cannot shelter; man cannot be self-sufficient. Though all things***** are valuable, they must employ non-being and cannot cease to embody non-being. Not being able to cease to embody non-being, they cannot be great. That is to say when Tao is lost, virtue ensues. To use non-being is to have the Mother. Then, one does not toil, and everything is in order. Below this, when the mother is disused, and one has to act, then the best thing is to administer to all. If one cannot administer to all, then the best thing is to uphold the righteous. If one cannot uphold the righteous, then one venerates ornaments and ceremonies. Therefore, when virtue is lost, human-heartedness ensues; when human-heartedness is lost, righteousness ensues; when righteousness is lost, propriety ensues. Propriety begins with insufficient loyalty and honesty, the secretiveness of communication, the insistence on appearance, and fight for control of trivialities. When human-heartedness and propriety arise from within, practicing

them can still be regarded as hypocrisy. How can those devoted to external ornaments last long? Therefore, propriety means the thinness of loyalty and honesty, and the beginning of disorder.

Foreknowledge means to know before others do; it is one of the lowest virtues. Exhaust one's wisdom to claim foreknowledge; enslave one's intelligence to manage mundane affairs; though his passion is worthwhile, he is full of wickedness and cunning; though his praise is profuse, he only loses more of his devotion and honesty! He labors only to make things confusing, manages only to cause government disruption. Even using his sagacity to the utmost, he does more damage to the people.

Forget oneself and let things alone; achieve peace without action; keep to simplicity and never follow laws and systems; let the people keep their gain and abandon what one has kept; recognize that the ornament of Tao is the beginning of ignorance. If one obtains the mother of achievement, then all things rise without his control; all things survive without his labor. Function without form and control without name; then human-heartedness and righteousness can be manifested; reverence can be manifested. Support with the great Tao, subdued with no name, then nothing is preferred and no intent is self-serving. Each carries his own purity and attends to events with sincerity. Then, human-heartedness and virtue are thick; the use of righteousness is just; propriety and reverence are pure. To abandon that which supports, to forsake that which gives life, to employ one's finished form, to enslave one's intelligence, then human-heartedness becomes hypocritical,****** righteousness competitive, and propriety contentious. Therefore the depth of human-heartedness and virtue is not measured by the use of human-heartedness. The justice of employing righteousness is not accomplished by the use of righteousness. The purity of propriety and reverence is not achieved by the use of rituals only.

To support with Tao, to manage with the Mother, to distinguish without preference, to be made known without competing: use no name, then the name is true; use no shape, then the shape is formed. Keep the mother to preserve the son; honor the root to uphold the end. Then both the shape and name are there, and the wicked cannot thrive. Great righteousness matches heaven, and the ornament does not rise. Do not keep the mother at a distance; do not lose the root. Human-heartedness and righteousness are the issues of the Mother; they cannot be the mother's model. Utensils are fashioned by the carpenter; they cannot be the carpenter. To forsake the mother and use the son; to abandon the root and follow the end;

the names having their divisions and the shapes having their limits then though greatness is extended to the utmost, it must have not been completed; though goodness seems exuberant, there must be misfortune and sorrow. If achievement relies on action, it is not worth claiming.

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* The translation of this line is based on Fu's Ancient Text of the Tao Te Ching in accord with Wang Pi's commentary. Otherwise, it has to be translated as: "And has no intent to act."

** Return refers to the 24th hexagram of the I Ching, Fu [復 ䷗ (The Turning Point)]. Refer to the I Ching, p. 98:

> The idea of Return is based on the course of nature. The movement is cyclic, and the course completes itself. Therefore it is not necessary to hasten anything artificially. Everything comes to itself at the appointed time. This is the meaning of heaven and earth.

*** The winter solstice is the time of year when high governmental officials lock themselves up to rest (see the I Ching, p. 98):

> In winter the life energy, symbolized by thunder, the Arousing, is still underground. Movement is just at its beginning; therefore it must be strengthened by rest, so that it will not be dissipated by being used prematurely. This principle, i.e., of allowing energy that is renewing itself to be reinforced by rest, applies to all similar situations.

Wang Pi comments here that the present resembles the past, so movement is cyclical and natural.

**** Some sinologists and my former professors suggest that this sentence should be:

> The greatest capacity of the lowest virtue is the highest benevolence.

But I think the present translation is more in agreement with Lao Tzu's degenerative order, from Tao to Te (virtue) to human-heartedness to righteousness to propriety.

***** The SPPY and T'ang versions of the Tao Te Ching omit "they cannot achieve self-completion . . . Though all things."

****** Some versions have "hypocritical" (wei 偽), while others have "sincere" (ch'eng 誠). This translation uses the former based on the textual research of the Usami version.

Those of ancient times obtained the One:[1]

Heaven obtained the One for its clarity;
Earth obtained the One for its tranquility;
The Spirit obtained the One for its divinity;
The Valley obtained the One for its repletion;
All things obtained the One for their lives;
Dukes and kings obtained the One for the
rectitude of the world.

What causes these is the One.[2]

Without clarity,
Heaven could not avoid disrupting.[3]

Without tranquility,
Earth could not avoid explosion.

Without divinity,
The Spirit could not avoid dissolving.

Without repletion,
The Valley could not avoid dissipating.

Without life,
All things could not avoid perishing.

Without rectitude and dignity,
Dukes and kings could not avoid falling.

Therefore, distinction has humility as its root;
The high regards the low as its foundation.
Therefore dukes and kings call themselves
Orphans, widowers, and starvers.
Does this not mean regarding humility as a base?
Doesn't it?

He who is most praise-worthy

Does not need any praise.*

He prefers to be neither rare as jade,

Nor as common as rocks.[4]

[1] "Ancient" means the "beginning." "One" is the beginning of numbers and the utmost of things. Each thing is produced by One; therefore One becomes its master. All things obtain their forms from this One. Being formed and completed, they stay in their forms. Staying in their forms, they lose their mother. Therefore, they are disrupted, exploded, dissolved, dissipated, perished, and fallen.

[2] Each with the One becomes clear, tranquil, divine, replete, alive and rectified.

[3] Use the One to obtain clarity, and not clarity to become clear. Keeping the One, then clarity won't be lost; otherwise, clarity will probably bring disruption. So the mother of achievement cannot be forsaken. One does not make much of his achievement, for fear he will lose his roots.

[4] Clarity cannot become clear; fullness cannot become full. They all have their mother to keep their forms. Therefore clarity cannot be valued; fullness cannot be enough. The value lies in the mother, but the mother has no valued shape for distinction** so humility is used as its root; for the high uses the low as its foundation. Truly he who is most praiseworthy does not need praise. Jade or stone, beautiful or common, their substance is limited in their shape. So one doesn't want them.

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* The translation of these two lines is based on the Orthodox Tao-ts'ang version of the Tao Te Ching to correspond with Wang Pi's commentary.

** According to Professor Yen Ling-feng, this line should be:

And the mother's value has no shape,
Because the mother here resembles Tao.

Returning is Tao's motion.[1]

Weakness is Tao's function.[2]

All things in the world are produced by being.

And being is produced by non-being.[3]

[1] The high regards the low as its foundation. Distinction regards humility as its roots. Being regards non-being as its function. Each is its opposite. If motion knows its own nothingness [opposite], then all things can be interchangeable. Therefore, returning is Tao's motion.

[2] The soft and the weak can be interchangeable without limit.

[3] All things in the world regard being as their life; being regards non-being as its roots. If one wishes to achieve perfect being, one must return to non-being.

The superior man, on hearing Tao,
Practices it diligently.[1]
The average man, on hearing Tao,
Regards it both as existing and not existing.
The inferior man, on hearing Tao,
Laughs aloud at it.
Without his laughter, it would not be Tao.

Therefore the established word says:[2]
The luminous Tao seems obscure.[3]
The advancing Tao seems retreating.[4]
The even Tao seems rough.[5]
The highest virtue seems empty.[6]
Great whiteness seems blackened.[7]
Broad virtue seems insufficient.[8]
Established virtue seems secret.[9]
Pure substance seems fluid.[10]
The great square has no corners.[11]
The great vessel is late in completing.[12]
The great voice sounds faint.[13]
The great image has no shape.[14]
Tao is concealed and has no name.
Yet only Tao is good in giving and completing.[15]

[1] This refers to one who has his will.

[2] "Established" means accomplished.

[3] Luminous but not shining.

[4] To keep oneself behind in order to stay ahead; to deny oneself in order to survive.

[5] "Rough" means not smooth. The great smooth Tao follows the nature of things, but it never insists on smoothness and cuts things apart. Therefore its smoothness cannot be discerned, and it seems to be rough and uneven.

[6] Never claiming its own virtue, it has nothing in its bosom.

[7] Knowing its whiteness but keeping its blackness, great whiteness can then be obtained.

[8] Broad virtue is never full. Expansive but formless, it can never be filled.

[9] "Secret" means "to compete." The sturdy virtue, following the natural course of things, doesn't establish or employ. Therefore it appears "to compete [secretly]."

[10] Pure substance never boasts of its purity; therefore, it seems fluid.

[11] The square has never been cut; therefore, it has no corners.

[12] The great vessel completes the world without insisting on its own distinction, so it must be late in completing.

[13] Listened to, it cannot be heard; it is called soundless--its sound cannot be heard. Having sounds means having different divisions; being different, it is either kung [宮] or shang [商]. So different sounds cannot include all sounds. Therefore, any sound cannot be the great sound.

[14] Having shape means having divisions; when there are divisions, it will be either warm or hot, either hot or cold. Therefore a shaped image is not the great image.

[15] All those good things are completed by Tao. In terms of image, it is the great image. The great image does not have shape. In terms of sound, it is the great sound. The great sound sounds faint. Things are completed by it but they do not see its shape. Therefore it hides itself in namelessness. In rendering, it does not provide only for one's needs; once rendered, its virtue lasts forever. Therefore, those who are good in rendering and completing

things do not cut them as a carpenter does, so that nothing cannot adhere to its shape. Therefore this is called "good in completing."

Tao begets One.
One begets Two.
Two begets Three.
Three begets all things.
All things carry the female and embrace the male.
And by breathing together, they live in harmony.

What the people hate is being orphaned, widowed, and starved.
But kings and dukes call themselves these names.
Therefore everything can be augmented when diminished,
and diminished when augmented.[1]
What the people teach, I teach too.[2]
The violent and fierce cannot die a natural death.
I will become the father of teaching.[3]*

[1] Myriad things have myriad shapes but return to the One. How can they become One? Because they are from nothingness. From nothingness comes One; this One may be called nothingness. Once it is called "One," how can it not be described? Having One and describing it, are there not two? Having One and two, then there is three. From non-being to being, the numbers end here. From this point on, nothing flows from Tao. Therefore regarding the birth of myriad things, I know their master [Tao]. Though with myriad shapes, they blend breaths into one. People have their hearts, different states have different customs, but One is obtained so kings and dukes become their masters. With One as their master, how can it be forsaken? The more One multiplies, the further are the people from it: to be diminished is to be near the One; to be diminished to the utmost is to reach the ultimate. Though it has been called "One," it adds up to three. Those whose roots are more than One, can they be close to Tao? "To diminish it in order to augment it." Are these merely words?

2 I do not force the people to follow me, but use nature to point out the true reason: following it will bring fortune, violating it will bring misfortune. Therefore the people teach each other that he who violates it will bring misfortune on himself, just as I teach the people not to violate it.

3 The violent and the fierce cannot die a natural death. The people teach each other to be violent and fierce just as I teach them not to be violent and fierce, pointing out that the violent and the fierce cannot die a natural death. Teaching by these means, those who follow my teaching will be fortunate. Therefore I can obtain those who reject other teachings, and then I become the father of teaching.

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* The translator has followed Wang Pi's commentary in interpreting this line. It could actually be translated as follows:

I will consider them [the people] the father of teaching.

The world's softest thing gallops to and fro
through the world's hardest thing.[1]
Things without substance
can penetrate things without crevices.
Thus I know the benefit of inaction.[2]
But teaching without words and benefitting without action
are understood by few in the entire world.

[1] There is nothing that the air cannot penetrate; there is no passage that the water cannot go through.

[2] Emptiness, nothingness, softness, and weakness: there is nowhere they cannot go and nothing they cannot penetrate. The softest thing cannot be broken; and projecting this, one knows the benefits of inaction.

Of fame and life, which is more dear?[1]
Of life and wealth, which is more worthy?[2]
Of gain and loss, which is more distressing?[3]
Therefore, loving in excess incurs great cost.
Overhoarding brings heavy loss.[4]
To know what is enough means to avoid disgrace.
To know where to stop is to avoid danger.
Thus one can last long and endure.

[1] One who prefers fame and high positions will certainly neglect his body.

[2] One whose greed is never satisfied leaves very little for his body.

[3] To obtain great benefit and lose one's body, which is more harmful?

[4] Loving in excess will destroy one's communication with things; hoarding too much will prevent one's sharing with things. Then there will be many requests and attacks, which cause the sickness* of things. Therefore it is called "great cost" and "heavy loss."

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* The Okada version omits the word "sickness."

Great completion appears to be imperfect,
Yet its usefulness is never exhausted.[1]
Great fullness appears to be empty,
Yet its usefulness is unlimited.[2]
Great straightness seems bent.[3]
Great craftiness seems clumsy.[4]
Great eloquence seems to be stuttering.[5]
Hastiness overcomes the cold.*
Serenity overcomes the hot.
Calmness and serenity
become the rectitude of the world.[6]

[1] To complete by following the things means not to keep to one image. Therefore it seems imperfect.

[2] Great fullness means plentiful enough to give according to the needs of things, without reservations or care. Therefore it seems empty.

[3] Maintain straightness by following the things: this kind of straightness cannot be unified in one. Therefore it seems bent.

[4] Great craftiness follows nature in making vessels without creating anything out of the ordinary. Therefore it seems clumsy.

[5] Great eloquence is to follow the expressions of things, not to say something for them. Therefore it seems stuttering.

[6] Through hastiness, the cold can be overcome; serenity and inaction overcome the hot. Projecting this, calmness and serenity become the rectitude of the world. Serenity preserves the true nature of things; hastiness violates the virtue of things. Therefore, only calmness and serenity can achieve the above great things.

* Hastiness (躁) is sometimes translated as "activity," "motion," etc. But some think the original text reads "the cold overcomes the hasty," to be in accord with Lao Tzu's philosophy.

In a world with Tao,

racing horses are drawn back [to the fields] for dung.[1]

In a world without Tao,

war horses are raised outside the city.[2]

No crime is greater than having desires.*

No calamity is greater than not knowing contentment.

No fault is greater than longing for gain.

Therefore, the contentment of knowing contentment

is always contentment.

[1] In a world with Tao, the people know what is sufficient and when to stop. Without seeking the external, each cultivates only his internal quality. Therefore racing horses are drawn back to carry dung for the field.

[2] Having unquenchable greed and never cultivating internal quality, everyone seeks the external. Therefore war horses are raised outside the city.

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* Only the Okada and Sun versions of the Tao Te Ching contain this line.

Without going out-of-doors,
One can know the whole world.
Without looking out of windows,
One can see the Tao of heaven.[1]
The farther one goes, the less one knows.[2]
Therefore, the Sage does not go and yet knows,
Doesn't see and yet names,[3]
Doesn't act and yet completes.[4]

[1] Each event has its origin and all things have their master. Coming from different roads to the same place, with many different preoccupations, they achieve the same goal. Tao has its great constancy. Reason has its own great induction. Grasping the Tao of the Ancients, one is able to control the present. Although living in modern times, one is able to comprehend the beginning of the Ancients. Therefore, without going out-of-doors and peeping through windows, one can comprehend.

[2] Nothingness resides in the One, but is drawn from the many. Tao, looked at, cannot be seen; listened to, cannot be heard; and grasped at, cannot be obtained. But if one knows it, he need not go out-of-doors; if one does not know it, the farther he goes, the more confused he becomes.

[3] Having grasped the ultimate of things, though one does not go anywhere, he knows them through his forethought. Having comprehended the origin of things, though one does not see them, he can name them based on the principle of right and wrong.

[4] To discern the nature of things is merely to follow it; therefore although one does not act, he makes them complete.

The pursuit of learning increases daily.[1]
The pursuit of Tao decreases daily,[2]
Decreasing more and more
Until it reaches the point of inaction.
Inaction: then nothing cannot be done by it,[3]
Therefore the capture of the world should always be done by inactivity.[4]*
As for activity,[5] it is insufficient to capture the world.[6]

[1] One wishes to improve his ability and increase what he learns.

[2] One wishes to return to nothingness.

[3] Doing something, one is likely to miss something else; therefore, to do nothing means nothing cannot be done by it.

[4] To move constantly is to follow.

[5] To create a problem by oneself.

[6] Because the basic principle of governing is lost.

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* One should not take part in the affairs of the world.

The Sage has no constant heart [mind].
He takes the people's heart as his heart.[1]
Good men, I treat well.
Bad men, I also treat well.[2]
Therein I attain goodness.[3]

Honest men, I trust.
Dishonest men, I also trust.
Therein I attain trust.

The Sage in his position in the world,
Yieldingly harmonizes the people's heart
with simplicity.
The people all strain their ears and eyes.[4*]
And the Sage regards them all as infants.[5**]

[1] To move constantly is to follow.

[2] Following each according to his own usefulness, I then will not lose his goodness.

[3] There is no forsaken man.

[4] Each uses his own intelligence.

[5] Let all of them live in harmony and have no desires like a baby. Heaven and earth establish order, and the Sage is able to deal with men and Spirits;*** for the people and the able men, he gives to the capable and takes away from the rich, magnifies those who are great and sends a valuable gift to those who are worthy. All things have their ancestors; all events have their master. Thus even if the silk string cap covers the eyes, he is not afraid of being cheated; even if the yellow cap covers his ears, he is

not worried about being slighted.**** Then why should he belabor intelligence to examine the feelings of the people? If one examines things with intelligence, all things will use their intelligence in response. If one examines things with distrust, all things will strive to respond with mistrust. The hearts of the world are not the same, but their responses dare not be different. Then they will not make use of their feelings. The greatest damage is no more damaging than the use of intelligence: emphasize shrewdness, and the people will sue; emphasize force, and the people will fight. One does not surpass others in shrewdness; when brought to court, he will be in distress. One does not surpass others in strength; on the battleground, he will be in danger. If one cannot prevent the people from using shrewdness and force against him, then he is one against many, while the people are many against him, then he increases the dragnets of law, multiplies the forms of punishment, blocks the pathways, and attacks private homes, then all things will lose their natural virtue. People will forsake their brothers; birds will be disturbed above; fish will be disoriented below. Therefore the Sage draws back from the world. With no fixed ideas in his heart, he tries to harmonize the hearts of the world. With no specific intent or direction, he does not discriminate; so why should the people avoid him? He has no requests, so how can the people react? Neither avoiding nor reacting, the people will use their natural feelings. A man should not forsake what he can do and do what he cannot do; forsake his strengths and engage his weakness. Then he who talks will tell what he knows, and he who performs will do what he can. Therefore the people will lend their ears and eyes, and I [the Sage] will regard them all as infants.

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* The SPPY version of the Tao Te Ching omits this line.

** According to Kao Heng (高亨), this line should be translated: "And the Sage closes them."

*** Refer to the I Ching, p. 354:

> Heaven and earth determine the places. The holy sages fulfill the possibilities of the places. Through the thoughts of men and the thoughts of spirits, the people are enabled to participate in these possibilities.

**** In ancient times the king shielded his eyes and covered his ears for two reasons: (1) to partially avoid seeing and hearing; and (2) as expressed in the text, if one is with Tao, he doesn't have to see but know, doesn't have to hear but comprehend. See Chapter 47 for more detail.

Coming out means life; going in means death.[1]
Three-tenths of men are disciples of life.
Three-tenths of men are disciples of death.
Three-tenths of men actually have life,
    but strive for death through activity.
Why is this so?
Because they over-nourish themselves.

So I have heard that he who is capable of sustaining life
Can travel on land without ever encountering a rhinoceros or tiger;
Can enter a battle without ever being touched by arms and weapons.
The rhinoceros cannot charge him with its horns.
The tiger cannot attack him with its claws.
Weapons have no place to lodge their blades.
Why is this so?
Because he has no grounds for death.[2]

[1] Coming out means the place of life and going in means the place of death.

[2] Three-tenths means three out of ten. Only three out of ten adopt the way of life and live the utmost of life. They are three out of ten! Those who adopt the way of death and follow through the utmost of death are also three out of ten. People who live by over-nourishing themselves have no grounds for life. Those who know how to sustain life do not take life too seriously; therefore, they have no grounds for death. The most harmful instruments are weapons and the most harmful beast is no more than a rhinoceros or tiger; if one is able to keep weapons from lodging their blades and points and rhinoceros and tigers from applying their claws and horns, then his body is not burdened [by desires]. Then where are his grounds for death? The earthworms regard the depths of

a river as shallow and dig a hole in it; the powerful eagles regard the mountain as low and build a nest on top; where harpoons and bird-shooting devices cannot reach, there are no grounds for death. But they are eventually lured by sweet bait, and enter a place without life; is this not called over-nourishing one's life? Therefore if things [people] are not driven by their desires and move far away from their roots, if they are not driven by desires and submerge their true nature, then entering battle, they will never be hurt, and traveling on land, they will never be attacked. An infant can be a valuable model! How true this is!

Tao begets them.
Virtue nurtures them.
Matter gives them form.
Circumstances bring them into completion.[1]
Therefore all things not only respect Tao
but also value virtue.[2]
Yet Tao is respected and virtue is valued.
Without being ordered, they come naturally.[3]

Therefore Tao begets them.
Virtue nurtures them,
grows them and rears them,
perfects them and ripens them,
nourishes them and shelters them.[4]
Begetting without possessing;
Acting without asserting;[5]
Developing without controlling;
This is called mystical virtue.[6]

[1] After commencement of life, things have to be nourished; being nourished, they take form. Having form, they grow to completion. From what do they get life? From Tao. From what do they obtain nourishment? From Te [virtue]. From what do they take form? From matter. From what do they achieve completion? From circumstances. Just because it simply follows, nothing therefore does not achieve its form. Just because of circumstances, nothing therefore cannot be completed. The reason that all things have their lives and all endeavors can be complete is that they have their sources. From where do their sources come? From nothing but Tao. Traced upward to the ultimate, it is the ultimate Tao. Following their sources, they each have their titles.

[2] Tao is where all things come through. Virtue is what all things obtain. Through Tao, one can obtain [virtue]; therefore one cannot help but respect [Tao]. Losing virtue, one will get hurt; therefore one cannot help but value [virtue]. *

[3] To order also means to oblige.

[4] To complete is to give substance. Each obtains its shelter and protection so its body is not harmed.

[5] Action without possession.

[6] This means to have virtue without knowing the master. It comes from mysticism; therefore it is called mystical virtue.

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* The word order of Wang Pi's commentary seems to have been rearranged here. After consulting many scholars, this translator arranged it in the present form.

The world had a beginning
Which was the mother of the world.[1]
Having known the mother, we know the son.
Having known the son, we keep the mother.
Thus, through life, we are without danger.[2]

Block the passage;
Shut the door;[3]
Throughout life there will be no toil.[4]

Open the passage;
Multiply the activities;
Throughout life there will be no cure.[5]

To discern the small is called enlightenment;
To preserve weakness is called strength.[6]
Use the light;[7]
Return to enlightenment;[8]
Leave nothing to harm the body;
This is called practicing the constant.[9]

[1] To have a good beginning is to have good nourishment and nurture. Therefore the world has a beginning, and it can be the mother of the world.*

[2] The mother is the root; the son is the branch. To obtain the root is to know the branch. One should not abandon the root to go after the branch.

[3] "The passage" is where activities and desires are born. "The door" is where activities and desires pass through.

4 With nothing to do and in permanent repose, one will have no toil throughout his life.

5 By not blocking the source and multiplying activities, one will have no cure throughout his life.

6 To achieve in governing, never rely on great things. To see the great things is not enlightenment; to discern subtle things is enlightenment. To preserve the strong is not strength; to preserve the weak is to be strong.

7 To illuminate Tao in order to eliminate the people's ignorance.

8 Never examine things with intelligence.

9 This refers to the constancy of Tao.

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* Note 1 of Wang Pi's commentary is completely deleted in the SPPY version of the Tao Te Ching.

## 53

If only I could have a little knowledge,
I would walk in the Great Tao,
    Being afraid only of acting on it.[1]
The Great Tao is very smooth,
But people prefer the by-paths;[2]
The court is very well kept;[3]
The fields are full of weeds;
And the granaries are extremely empty.[4]
To wear embroidered clothes,
To carry sharp weapons,
To be satiated in food and drink,
And to have excessive treasures and goods--
This is called robbery and extravagance.
Really, this is not Tao.[5]

[1] That is to say: if I only had a little knowledge, I would practice the Great Tao in the world. My only fear would be acting on it.

[2] That is to say: the Great Tao is unprejudiced, just, and equal, but people still abandon it and refuse to flow with it. They prefer the deviant by-paths and also act to block the middle way of Tao. Therefore, this is to say, the Great Tao is very smooth, but the people prefer the by-paths.

[3] The court refers to the palace. "Very well kept" means clean and nice.

[4] If the court is very clean, then the fields are full of weeds and the granaries are empty. Maintaining one will cause many calamities.

5 To obtain things without following the right way is wicked; to be wicked means to rob. To be extravagant without following the right way means to steal the throne. Therefore to mention "not Tao" in order to clarify "not Tao": these are all robberies and extravagances.

To be built well is not to be toppled.[1]
To be held fast is not to slip.[2]
With this, children and grandchildren will never stop
offering sacrifice to their ancestors.[3]

With this to cultivate oneself,
one's virtue will be true;
With this to cultivate the family,
its virtue will be plentiful.[4]
With this to cultivate the community,
its virtue will last long;
With this to cultivate the nation,
its virtue will be abundant;
With this to cultivate the world,
its virtue will be good.

Therefore, examine a person with a person,
Examine a family with a family,
Examine a community with a community,
Examine a nation with a nation,[5]
Examine a world with a world.[6]
How can I know this is the way of the world?
By this.[7]

[1] Firm the foundation before building the top, so it cannot be toppled down.

[2] Never covet too much; just match one's capacity, so it will not slip away.

[3] Inheriting this Tao, children and grandchildren will worship their ancestors through sacrifice without ceasing.

[4] Start with the self and apply this to others. Cultivating oneself, the self will be true. Cultivating the family, the family will be plentiful. Cultivating without ceasing, to apply it will turn out great.

[5] They are the same.

[6] Use the hearts of the people in the world to examine the Tao of the world. The Tao of the world, either in bad terms or good, in fortune or misfortune, are all similar to the Tao of man.

[7] The above statements point to the question: how can I know about the world? By examining myself and not seeking anything external. This is to say "never going out-of-doors and knowing the world."

Maintaining an abundance of virtue is comparable
to being an infant.
Poisonous insects will not sting;
Ferocious beasts will not seize;
Predatory birds will not pounce;[1]
The bones are tender, the sinews are soft,
but the grasp is firm.[2]
Not knowing the union of male and female,
The organ is fully formed;[3]
This is the zenith of essence.
Howling and screaming all day without getting hoarse;[4]
This is the zenith of harmony.
To know harmony means to be constant;[5]
To know constancy means enlightenment;[6]
To benefit one's own life is ill-fated.[7]
To let one's heart direct vigor is to become stark.[8]
Things in their prime will become old;
This is not Tao.
Being not Tao means to die early.

[1] An infant without requests or desires never offends anything. Therefore poisonous insects never sting him. One who maintains an abundance of virtue never offends anything. Therefore nothing will interfere with his perfection.

[2] Tender and soft, its grasp is completely firm.

[3] "Formed" means grown. Nothing can hurt his body, so he retains his growth. That is to say: for one who maintains an abundance of virtue, nothing can diminish his virtue or change

his innocence; the tender and soft do not fight, and so are not broken or smashed. That is all there is to it.

4 Having a heart void of contention or desires, [an infant] can howl all day without becoming hoarse.

5 The thing regards harmony as its constancy. Therefore, to know harmony is to be constant.

6 Neither bright nor dim, neither warm nor cold, this is constancy. Having no form, it cannot be seen; therefore it is called enlightenment.

7 Life cannot be benefitted; to benefit it means to die young.

8 The heart ought to be empty; if allowed to direct vigor, it would become stark.

The one who knows does not speak.[1]
The one who speaks does not know.[2]

Block the passage.
Close the door.
Dull the sharpness.[3]
Loosen the tangles.[4]
Blend with light.[5]
Become one with the dust.[6]

This is called mystical identity.
Hence one can be neither close to it,
    nor far from it;[7]
One can neither benefit it,
    nor harm it;[8]
One can neither value it,
    nor despise it.[9]
Therefore, it is valued by the world.[10]

[1] To follow nature.

[2] To cause trouble.

[3] To maintain quality.

[4] To eliminate the source of dispute.

[5] By not being distinguished or preferred, nothing will fight for favors.

6 By not being singled out for disgrace, nothing will feel particularly ashamed.

7 If one can get close to it, then one can also separate from it.

8 If one can bestow benefit, then one can also inflict harm.

9 If one can value it, then one can also despise it.

10 Nothing can impose on it.

## 57

Rule the state with rectitude.

Direct the army with trickery.

Capture the world through inactivity.[1]

How can I know it shall be so?

By this:

When the world is full of taboos and prohibitions,

The people will become very poor.

When the people possess many sharp weapons,

The nation will become more chaotic.[2]

When the people possess much craftiness,

Trickery will flourish.[3]

When law and order become more conspicuous,

There will be more robbers and thieves.[4]

Therefore the Sage says:

I do not act and the people reform themselves;

I love serenity and the people rectify themselves;

I employ inactivity and the people become prosperous themselves;

I have no desires and the people become simple by themselves.[5]

[1] Govern the nation with Tao, then the nation will have peace; govern the nation with rectitude, then battles and strategies will arise. With inaction, one can win the world. A former chapter* indicates that one always wins the world with inaction. If one has to act, one is not good enough to win the world. Therefore governing a nation with rectitude, one is not good enough to win the world and has to use brilliant strategies in battles. Governing a nation with Tao, one honors the roots and eases the branches; governing a nation with rectitude, one establishes laws to attack the branches. When the roots are not established, the branches

are sparse, the people cannot subsist; therefore, one has to use the army with brilliant strategies.

2 Sharp weapons refer to all instruments which can be for selfish purposes. When the people are strong, the nation becomes weak.

3 If the people are full of intelligence, then cleverness and hypocrisy will flourish; when cleverness and hypocrisy flourish, wickedness prevails.

4 To establish rectitude to stop wickedness, one must employ military trickery. Multiply taboos and prohibitions to ward off poverty, but the people become increasingly poor. Use sharp weapons to strengthen the nation, but the nation becomes more chaotic. All of this is caused by forsaking the roots and managing the branches.

5 What the higher people desire, the common people would quickly follow; if I desire only to be without desire, then the people would have no desires and become simple. These four indicate honoring the roots and easing the branches.

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* Chapter 48.

When the government is sluggish and dull,
The people are honest and content;[1]
When the government is discriminating and exacting,
The people are wily and restless.[2]

Calamity is what good fortune depends on.
Good fortune is what calamity hides in.
Who knows their utmost?
Is it not better to have no rectitude?[3]
Rectitude returns to trickery;[4]
And goodness returns to evil.[5]

The people's delusion has long existed.[6]
Therefore, the Sage is square but not cutting;[7]
is honest but does not hurt;[8]
is straight but does not bully;[9]
is bright but does not shine.[10]

[1] Those who know how to govern have no form, no name, no activity, and no rectitude to uphold. Sluggish and dull, they eventually achieve great government. Therefore, "the government is sluggish and dull." The people, having nobody to contend with, are magnanimous and content. Therefore, "the people are honest and content."

[2] To establish criminal laws and classifications, to be keen about rewards and punishments in order to check the villains and the wicked is called discriminating. To divide people into kinds and categories, then they will fight and compete. Therefore, "the people are wily and restless."

3 That is to say: who knows the ultimate of good governing? Only [good governing] establishes nothing called rectitude and sets up nothing called form or name. Sluggish and dull, one can cause great change in the world. This is the ultimate.

4 Governing with rectitude means to return to the use of military trickery. Therefore rectitude returns to perversity.

5 Establishing goodness to harmonize all things means to return to the disaster of evil.

6 The people's delusions mean that the people have lost Tao long long ago, and cannot easily be set straight and hold their responsibility for good government.

7 Leading things with squareness, causing them to abandon their wickedness but never cutting them down with one's squareness. This is to say, the "great square has no corners."

8 "Honest" means immaculately clean. To hurt means to injure. Honesty is used to cleanse the people and let them discard their wickedness and corruption. However, honesty is not used to hurt anything.

9 Leading things with uprightness, letting them abandon their prejudice, but not using uprightness to bully them. This is to say, "straightness seems bent."

10 Using brightness to illumine delusion, but not to search out the hidden or concealed. This is to say, lucid Tao seems obscure. All these mean to emphasize the root and put the end to rest; never attacking, but allowing them to return [to Tao].

In governing the people and serving heaven,
There is nothing like thriftiness.[1]
Only through thriftiness can one submit [to Tao] early;[2]
Having submitted early, one accumulates virtue.[3]
Having accumulated virtue, one can overcome everything.
Having overcome everything, one can know no limits.[4]
Knowing no limits, one is able to rule a nation.[5]
Possessing the mother of the nation, he may last long.[6]
This is called the deep root and firm stalks,
And the way to longevity and everlasting vision.

[1] "Nothing like" means "nothing better than"; thriftiness refers to the farmer. When a farmer cultivates his field, he eliminates different kinds by unifying them into one. Completing its nature, he does not hasten its diseases, but eliminates the source of the diseases. He inherits heaven's ordainment from above and soothes the people below. Nothing is better than this.

[2] To submit early means to return to eternity.

[3] Only by accumulating virtue and refusing to push sharply can one submit early to eternity. Therefore, to submit early means to accumulate virtue.

[4] Tao is limitless.

[5] To rule a nation with limitations, one cannot rule the nation.

[6] Whatever puts the nation at rest is called the mother. To accumulate virtue means only to deal with its roots and then manage the branches. Therefore, one can last forever.

To rule a large nation is as to cook a small fish.[1]
In a world with Tao prevailing,
Ghosts will not become goblins.[2]
Not that ghosts will not become goblins,
But God will not hurt the people;[3]
Not that God will not hurt the people,
But the Sage will not hurt them either.[4*]
When both will not hurt each other,
All virtue will converge to them.[5]

[1] This means not to disturb it. Hastiness creates much harm; serenity preserves true nature. Therefore, the larger the nation, the quieter its master. Thus he is able to win the people's hearts completely.

[2] To rule a large nation is as to cook a small fish. In governing the world with Tao, ghosts will not become goblins.

[3] The spirit does not harm nature. When things maintain their nature, the spirit cannot impose on them. When the spirit cannot impose on them, one does not know the spirit as spirit.

[4] When Tao is in harmony, the spirit will not harm people. When the spirit does not harm people, they do not know the spirit as spirit. When Tao is in harmony, then the Sage will not hurt the people either. When the Sage does not hurt the people, they do not know the Sage as sage either. In other words, the people are not only unaware of the spirit as spirit, they are also unaware of the Sage as sage. The dependence on the net of authority to control things is the decline of government. Not letting the people know the spirit as spirit and the Sage as Sage is the ultimate of Tao.

[5] If the spirit does not harm people, the Sage does not harm them either. If the Sage does not harm people, the spirit does not

harm them either. This is to say both refrain from hurting the other. The spirit and the Sage are in accord with Tao; all will converge to them.

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* Confucius emphasized the importance of the people (the Analects, 6:2):

> Chilu asked about the worship of the celestial and earthly spirits. Confucius said, "We don't know yet how to serve men, how can we know about serving the spirit?" "What about death?" was the next question, and Confucius said, "We don't know yet about life, how can we know about death?"

Confucius stressed serving the people, while Lao Tzu concentrated on the practice of the ultimate of Tao--not hurting people and letting them follow the way of Tao.

A large state is like the low land;[1]
It is the focus point of the world[2]
And the female of the world.[3]

The female always conquers the male by serenity.
In serenity, she puts herself low.[4]

Therefore, the large state puts itself
beneath the small state,[5]
And thereby absorbs the small state.[6]
The small state puts itself under the large state,
And thereby joins with the large state.[7]

Therefore, one either puts himself beneath to absorb others,
Or puts himself under to join with others.[8]

What the large state wants is no more than to feed the people.
What the small state wants is no more than to join and serve the people.
Both have their needs satisfied.

Thus the large ought to stay low.[9]

[1] The river and sea are large but stay low; therefore hundreds of streams flow to them. If the great state is large and behaves humbly, then the entire world comes to it. Therefore, a large state is like the low land.

[2] The world converges to it.

[3] Serene and undemanding, all things naturally return to it.

4 Because of her serenity, she can be humble. "The female" means femininity; the male is aggressive and covetous. The female, in her serenity, can always overcome the male. Because of her serenity and also her humility, all things return to her.

5 Saying that "the large state puts itself beneath" means the large state makes itself humble to the small state.

6 The small state is attached to it.

7 The large state accepts it.

8 That is to say: only by cultivating humility can each obtain its proper place.

9 The small state cultivates humility only for self-preservation; it cannot cause the world to come to it. When the large state cultivates humility, the world will return to it. Therefore, each obtains what it wants, and the large should stay low.

Tao is the refuge of all things:[1]
The treasure of the good man[2] and the shield of the bad man.[3]
Beautiful words can be for sale.
Good deeds can become gifts to others.[4]
If a man is bad, can he be forsaken?[5]
Therefore when the king is crowned
and the three dukes are installed,[6]
Though large, priceless jade preceding a team of four horses
can be offered,
It is not as good as sitting down and offering this Tao.[7]
Why did the ancients treasure this Tao?
Wasn't it said: "With this Tao, the seeker will obtain,
and the guilty will be spared"?
Therefore it is valued by the world![8]

[1] "The refuge" means hidden, that is, the sheltering place.

[2] "The treasure" is to be used.

[3] "The shield" means to protect safely.

[4] This means Tao comes before everything, and nothing is more valuable than it. Valuable gems and handsome horses cannot match it. Beautiful words can outsell all merchandise; therefore beautiful words can be sold in the market. Good deeds can draw responses from a thousand li; therefore "good deeds can become gifts to others."*

[5] A bad man should preserve Tao to avoid being forsaken.

[6] That means employing Tao from high places.

7 "This Tao" refers to what has been stated above. The crowning of the king and the installment of the three dukes mean honoring their positions and respecting their persons, all for the sake of Tao. Nothing can be more valuable than this. Therefore, the offering of large,** priceless jade preceding a team of four horses is not as good as sitting and offering this Tao.

8 To seek and obtain, to avoid and be spared. Nothing is inapplicable. This is why Tao is valued by the world.

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* Refer to the I Ching, p. 305:

> The Master said: "The Superior man abides in his room. If his words are well spoken, he meets with assent at a distance of more than a thousand miles."

** So large that two arms are required to encircle it.

Acting by inaction;
Doing by not doing;
Tasting by not tasting.[1]
Whether it is great or small, whether it is much or little,
Always repaying malice with virtue.[2]
Planning difficulties from the easier.
Employing the great from the small.
The world's difficult things surely begin with the easy.
The world's great things surely begin with the small.

Therefore, the Sage never does anything to be great
And so accomplishes greatness.
To take one's promises lightly results in little confidence.
To take things too easily results in much difficulty.
Therefore, even the Sage takes things seriously.[3]*
And never has any difficulty.

[1] Resting in inaction, teaching without words, and relishing the insipid and tasteless are the ultimate in governing.

[2] A little malice is not worth repaying; great malice incurs the hatred of the world. To identify with the world is virtue.

[3] With the ability of the Sage, it is still difficult to deal with the small and easy. Can those who do not have the ability of the Sage neglect this? Therefore this is to say, "Even [the Sage] takes things seriously."

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* This means the Sage regards even the easy thing as difficult.

Things at rest are easy to hold.
Things unbegun are easy to plan.[1]
Fragile things are easy to shatter.
Tiny things are easy to scatter.[2]
Manage things before they exist.[3]
Set things in order before they become chaotic.[4]
A tree as big as one's embrace
originates from a rootlet.
A nine-story terrace begins with a heap of earth.
A thousand-li journey starts from beneath one's feet.
To act means to fail;
To insist means to lose.[5]
The Sage does not act and therefore never fails;
He does not insist and therefore never loses.
When the people undertake to do something,
They almost always fail at the point of success.[6]

One should be cautious at the end as at the beginning,
Then there will be no failure.
Therefore the Sage desires no desires,
Values not the rare treasures,[7]
Learns from the unlearned,
Reverses the faults of the people,[8]
And assists all things in their natural development,
Never daring to interfere.

1 When at rest, one should never forget danger.* When holding, one should never forget loss. One should plan a thing before it is accomplished, so it is called easy.

2 In leaving non-being to enter being, due to their smallness and feebleness, they are not able to have great achievement. Therefore they are easy [to scatter]. These four indicate that one must be careful of the results. One must not fail to hold it because it is nothing or scatter it because it is small. If it is nothing and one does not hold it, then it will grow. If it is small and one does not scatter it, then it will grow bigger. Therefore to think about the difficulties at the end as much as the trouble at the beginning is to be without failure.

3 That means when they are at rest and have not begun.

4 That means when they are still small and fragile.

5 Be cautious to the end and eliminate the small; be cautious to the small and eliminate disorder. But to govern with action and insist on forms and names will cause incidents to arise, and cunning and evasion to prevail. Thus, failure and loss will follow.

6 Not cautious to the end.

7 Even small wishes and desires give rise to conflicts. The rare treasure, though small, gives rise to greed and thievery.

8 To have this ability without learning is natural; but taken to mean one does not have to learn is a mistake. So the Sage has to learn what the people do not learn in order to reverse their faults.

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* Refer to the I Ching, p. 341:

> Therefore the superior man does not forget danger in his security nor ruin when he is well established, nor confusion when his affairs are in order.

The Ancients who were good in practicing Tao
Did not teach the people with intelligence
But kept them in ignorance.[1]
The people are hard to govern when they know too much.[2]
Therefore, one who rules the nation with knowledge
robs the nation.[3]
One who does not rule the nation with knowledge
brings good fortune to the nation.
To know these two things
means to know the standard.
To constantly know the standard is called mystical virtue.
Mystical virtue goes deep and far.[4]
It returns with all things[5]
to reach great harmony.

[1] "Intelligence" means to see more trickery and deception and to cloud their innocence. "Ignorance" is to have simplicity with no knowledge and keep their true quality, which means to follow nature.

[2] Having too much knowledge, trickery, and deceptiveness, the people are hard to govern.

[3] To have "knowledge" is to govern. To govern a nation with knowledge is to rob it. Therefore this is called knowledge. The people are hard to govern when they have too much knowledge. The most urgent task is to block all the passages, shut all the doors, and let the people have no knowledge or desires. If one uses knowledge and craft to stir up the people and arouse their wicked hearts, he will again use cunning and craft to check their deception; then the people, knowing his craftiness, will follow his

example to avoid him. The more complicated and cunning the thought, the more hypocrisy will result. Therefore, to govern the nation with knowledge is to rob it.

4 "The standard" refers to uniformity. The ancients and moderns have the same standard without repeal. All know this standard; it is called mystical virtue. Mystical virtue is deep and far-reaching.

5 Returns to its true nature.

## 66

Rivers and seas become the kings of one hundred valleys
Because they are able in putting themselves below;
So they can become their kings.

Therefore, for the sake of staying above the people,
The Sage* must lower himself with words.
For the sake of staying ahead of the people,
He must put himself behind them.

Therefore, the Sage stays above and the people do not
feel the burden.
He stays in front and the people do not consider him harmful.

Therefore the whole world delights in exalting him without tiring.
Because he does not compete,
The whole world cannot fight with him.**

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* The SPPY, Kondo, T'ang and Usami versions of the Tao Te Ching omit "the Sage."

** This chapter has no commentary by Wang Pi.

## 67

The whole world says that*
My Tao is great but seems to resemble nothing.
Because it is great, it seems to resemble nothing.
If resembling anything, it would have become small long ago.[1]

I have three treasures
To be kept and treasured;
One is compassion.
The second is thriftiness.
The third is not daring to be
ahead of the world.

Through compassion, one can be brave.[2]
Through thriftiness, one can be expansive.[3]
Not daring to be ahead of the world,
One can be the master of the vessels.[4]

Now to abandon compassion and to be brave,[5]
To abandon thriftiness and to be expansive,
To abandon the rear and to be in front--
That means death!

Compassion, in attack, will bring victory;[6]
In defense, it will hold firmly.
When heaven is going to save a person,
It will protect him with compassion.

1 "Becoming small long ago" means becoming small for a long time. Resembling anything would mean losing its greatness.** Therefore, "if resembling anything, it would have become small long ago."

2 In attack, compassion brings victory; in defense, it holds firm. Compassion, then, permits bravery.

3 Thriftiness means sparing expenses; then the world will not be lacking. Therefore one can be expansive.

4 Only by denying one's self or putting the self behind can all things return to it. Then one creates and completes tools for the benefit of the world and becomes the master of all things.***

5 "And to" means to prefer.

6 To aid each other without avoiding the difficult is justified.****

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* According to the Okada and Sun versions, the first line should be, "The whole world believes."

** This means: if it resembles one particular thing, it cannot become a norm or universal for everything.

*** Refer to the I Ching, p. 319:

> With respect to creating things for use and
> making tools helpful to the whole world,
> there is no one greater than the holy sages.

**** Some texts use "victorious" instead of "justified."

One who makes a good general is not warlike;[1]
One who makes a good fighter is not angry;[2]
One who makes a great conqueror of his enemies does not strive;[3]
One who knows how to manage the people well
places himself under them.

This is called the virtue of not competing.
This is called the power of using people.[4]
This is called the match of Heaven, the ultimate of the Ancients.

[1] A "general" is the commander of soldiers. "Warlike" means to push ahead and to bully people.

[2] To be behind, not in front; to respond, not initiate; therefore one does not resort to anger.

[3] Never fighting with them.

[4] By using people and not placing oneself under them, the people's strength will never be fully utilized for him.

The commander of war has said:

"I dare not be a host, but be a guest.

I dare not advance one inch, but withdraw a foot."

This means:

To set up a march as if without one.[1]

To stretch the arm as if without one.

To confront* the enemy as if without one.[2]

To grasp war weapons as if without them.

No calamity is greater than taking the enemy lightly.

Taking the enemy lightly almost makes me lose my treasures.[3]

Therefore, in raising arms against each other,

The one with pity will win.[4]

[1] Then they won't stop.

[2] The "march" refers to military array. This means with humility, withdrawal, sorrow, and compassion, not daring to be ahead of things, one goes into battle as if there were no march to pursue, no arms to stretch, no weapons to grasp and no enemy to confront. That is to say, nobody can repel him.

[3] That means due to my pity, compassion, humility, and withdrawal, I do not want to rely on force to become unconquerable in the world. If I finally become unconquerable, it is what I call "my great calamity." "Treasures" refer to the three treasures. Therefore it says, "almost makes me lose my treasures."

[4] "Raising" means to lift up; "against" means to confront. Those with pity must confront each other, they do not pursue benefit and avoid harm. Therefore, they will certainly win.

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* To confront (jeng 扔 ) means to throw, to face, or to undergo.

My words are very easily understood,
and very easily put into practice.
Yet no one in the world is able to understand
and to practice them.[1]

My words have their root; my deeds have their lord.[2]
Just because the people do not know,
they do not know me.[3]
Those who know me are few.
Those who emulate me are rare.[4]
Therefore, the Sage wears coarse clothes on the outside,
And bears precious jade near his breast.[5]

[1] One knows without going out-of-doors or peeping through windows. Therefore, it is very easy to understand. One completes without action. Therefore, it is easy to put into practice. Confused by impulsive desires, one therefore cannot understand them. Blinded by honor and benefits, one therefore cannot practice them.

[2] "Root" refers to the source of all things. "Lord" refers to the master of all things.

[3] Just because my words have their root and my deeds have their lord, I must be known by someone. And the people cannot be without knowledge of that.

[4] Because of my profundity, few people understand me. The fewer the people who know me, the more matchless I become. Therefore those who know me are few, so those who emulate me are rare.

[5] Wearing coarse clothes, the Sage is one with the dust; bearing jade near his breast, he treasures true nature. The Sage is

hard to know because he identifies with the dust and does not distinguish himself, bears precious jade near his breast and does not change from it. Therefore, he is hard to know and rare.

He who knows that he does not know is the best.
He who does not know but pretends to know is sick.[1]
He who realizes the sickness is sickness
    Doesn't have any sickness.
The Sage is without sickness
Because he realizes the sickness is sickness.
Therefore, he doesn't have any sickness.

[1] One who does not know that knowledge is not reliable is diseased.

If the people do not dread power,
There will be the appearance of great power.
Do not restrict their living quarters.
Do not disturb their livelihood.[1]
Just because one does not annoy them,[2]
He will not be annoyed by them.[3]*

Therefore, the Sage knows himself but does not display himself.[4]
He loves himself but does not distinguish himself.[5]
Therefore, he rejects that to prefer this.

[1] Serenity and inaction are called "the beginning."** To be humble and not filled is called "life." If one forsakes serenity, acts on his hasty desires, abandons the self-effacing, and indulges his power and harshness, then things will be disturbed and the people will be perverse. Power can no longer control the people; and the people can no longer endure domination. Then both high and low will be in a great rout, and the punishment of heaven will occur. Therefore if the people do not fear his power, then great fear*** will occur. Not restricting their living quarters and not disturbing their livelihood mean that one should not rely on authoritative power.

[2] Does not disturb himself.

[3] Because one does not disturb himself, the world will not disturb him.

[4] He does not display his knowledge to shine his light or exert his power.

[5] Having self-value, one's living quarters will be disturbed and his livelihood will be disgusted.

* The meaning of the 5th and 6th lines in this translation is different from Wang Pi's commentary.

** Some texts use "the residence" instead of "the beginning."

*** Some texts use "power" instead of "fear."

To be brave in daring is to be killed.[1]
To be brave in not daring is to live.[2]
Both of them are either beneficial or harmful.[3]
Who knows the real reason for heaven's hatred?
Even the Sage would find it difficult.[4]

The Tao of heaven does not compete,
but is good in winning;[5]
does not speak, but is good in responding;[6]
does not summon, but things come by themselves;[7]
behaves calmly, but is good in planning.[8]

The net of heaven is so vast.
Although it is wide open, it loses nothing.

[1] Will surely not die a natural death.

[2] Will surely be in accord with life.

[3] Both are brave, but their functions are different since benefit and harm are different. Therefore they are either beneficial or harmful.

[4] "Who" means which one. That is to say: which one knows the reason or intent of the world's hatred? Only the Sage does. Even with his sagacity, the Sage finds it difficult to be brave. What about those who want to act without the Sage's sagacity? So it is even more difficult.

[5] Because heaven does not compete, nothing in the world can compete with it.

[6] To conform will bring fortune; to reject will bring evil. Good responses need no words.

7 Staying low, all things automatically will return to it.

8 To recognize good and evil by descending to images; to establish sincerity* before the event, not to forget danger in safety; to plan before summoning;** therefore it is called to be calm and skillful in planning.

---

* We are not sure whether sincerity (ch'eng 誠 ) or warning (chieh 誡 ) was the original word since their characters are so similar.

** Some texts use "sign" or "omen" instead of "summoning."

If the people do not fear death,
Why threaten them with death?
If we let the people always fear death,
And we capture and kill those who use trickery,*
Who would dare [to use trickery]?[1]

Those responsible for executions perform executions.
But those who perform executions for them
Are doing no more than carving wood for the greater carpenter.
And those who carve wood for the great carpenter
Can rarely fail to injure their own hands.[2]**

[1] To disturb the people by perfidy and deviousness is called trickery.

[2] Nonconformity evokes the anger and disgust of orderly people. Unkindness evokes the hatred of the people. Therefore there is always a need for an executioner.***

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* Evil-doers or law-breakers.

** The Orthodox Tao-ts'ang version of the Tao Te Ching renders these five lines as:

Those constantly responsible for executions perform executions;
They are the great carpenters who carve the wood.
But those who carve wood for the great carpenter
Can rarely fail to injure their own hands.

*** Refers to the Tao of Heaven or the great carpenter.

The people are starving
Because the man on top devours too much tax money.
So they are starving.

The people are hard to govern
Because the man on top is too active in governing.
So they are hard to govern.

The people think little of death
Because the man on top strives for a rich life.*
So they think little of death.

Therefore it is better to do nothing for one's life
Than to value it.[1]**

[1] That is to say: what makes the people perverse and the government chaotic originates at the top, not the bottom. The people always follow the man on top.

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* The translation of this line is based on the SPPY version of the Tao Te Ching.

** In the Four Scholars' Collected Annotations of the Tao Te Ching, Wang Pi supposedly said regarding this chapter: "I suspect this is not Lao Tzu's work."

In life, man is supple and tender.
In death, he becomes rigid and stark.
Myriad things such as grass and trees
    are supple and frail in life,
And shrivelled and dry in death.

Therefore, the rigid and stark are disciples of death,
While the supple and weak are disciples of life.

Therefore the army that uses strength cannot win.[1]
The tree that stands firm will break.[2]

The strong and large are subordinate;[3]
The soft and weak are superior.[4]

[1] He who uses a strong army to do violence to the world incurs the people's hate. Therefore he can never win.

[2] It will be imposed on.

[3] Referring to the trunk of the tree.

[4] Referring to the branches of the tree.

Perhaps the Tao of heaven resembles the drawing of a bow.
When it is high, lower it.
When low, raise it.
When excessive, diminish it.
When deficient, replenish it.

The Tao of heaven diminishes the excessive
and replenishes the deficient.
The Tao of man is not so[1]--while decreasing the deficient,
it supplies the excessive.
Who can supply the world with overabundance?
Only the man with Tao.

Therefore the Sage acts without exalting his ability.
He achieves without dwelling upon it.
He does not want to display his superiority.[2]

[1] By sharing virtue with heaven and earth, one can therefore embody it like the Tao of heaven. As for the measure of mankind, each has his own physical identity and cannot share equally with others. Only when he forsakes his identity and stops regarding private property as nature can he share virtue with heaven and earth.

[2] That is to say: dwelling in fullness to preserve emptiness, diminishing the abundant and replenishing the deficient, blending with light and becoming one with dust, being magnanimous and sharing--this only Tao can do! Therefore the Sage does not display his superiority in order to share with the world.

Nothing in the world is softer and weaker than water.
Yet, in attacking the hard and strong, nothing can surpass it.

Because nothing can exchange places with it,[1]
Use weakness to overcome strength.
Use softness to overcome hardness.
None in the world do not know this.
But none can practice it.

Therefore the Sage says:
To suffer dishonor for the state
is to be the lord of the community;
To bear the calamity of the state
is to be the king of the world.

True words seem paradoxical.

[1] "With" (yi 以) means usefulness. "It" refers to water. That is to say, if the softness and weakness of water is used, nothing can take its place.

The settlement of great grudge
always leaves some residue grudge![1]
How can this be remedied?

Therefore, the Sage retains the left stub of the contract,[2*]
And does not make claims on others.
The man with virtue keeps the contract,[3]
While the man without virtue collects the tax.[4]
The Tao of heaven plays no favoritism;
It is always for the good man.

[1] Not knowing how to settle the contract, one causes great grudge. When grudge is settled with virtue, the wound is not healed. Therefore, some residue grudge must remain.

[2] The left stub of the contract prevents the rise of grudge.

[3] A man with virtue considers the contract and prevents grudge from rising before trying to blame people.

[4] One taxes others for their mistakes.

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* In ancient China, a contract was divided into two sides. The left side was kept by the creditor who had the right to collect the loan back, and the right side was kept by the debtor who had the responsibility of paying back the loan. But Lao Tzu said the Sage (creditor) made no claims on others, i.e., was not concerned whether the debtor paid back the money or not. Therefore, "the man with virtue keeps the contract" (without making claims). But the man without virtue tracks the people down and taxes them for their mistakes, as stated in the commentary. This chapter illustrates that there is no point in governing a nation with rules and laws, and it is significant to note that the last two lines of this chapter are an old proverb quoted here by Lao Tzu.

The state may be small; its people may be few.[1]
Let the people have tenfold and one-hundredfold of utensils,
But never make use of them.[2*]

Let the people weigh death heavily
And have no desires to move far away.[3]
Though there be boats and carriages,
No one will ride in them.
Though there be armour and weapons,
No one will exhibit them.

Let the people return to tying knots and using them.
Relish their food,
Appreciate their clothes,
Secure in their homes,
Happy with their customs.

The neighboring states will be so close
that they can see each other,
and hear the sounds of roosters and dogs.
But the people will grow old and die,
Without having visited each other.[4]

[1] Even a small state with scanty population can return to the ancient, let alone the great state with plenty of people. Therefore the small state is used as an example.

[2] That means let the people have tenfold or a hundredfold of utensils, but they never use them. Then why worry that there are not enough [utensils]?

3 Never let the people use anything, but only value themselves. Never let them indulge in bribery and let each of them feel secure in his own home. When they weigh death heavily, they never have any desire to move far away.

4 Without desires and demands.

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* The translation of the 2nd and 3rd lines is based on the Kondo, SPPY, Orthodox Tao-ts'ang and Usami versions. According to the Okada, T'ang and Sun versions, they can be rendered as follows:

> Let those who possess tenfold and one-hundredfold of power over men never use it.

Sincere words are not kind;[1]
Kind words are not sincere.[2]
One who is good will never argue;
One who argues is not good.
One who knows does not know all;[3]
One who knows all does not know at all.

The Sage does not store things for himself.[4]
The more one does for others,
The more he has for himself.[5]
The more one gives to others,
The more he keeps for himself.[6]

The Tao of heaven is to benefit others
without hurting them.[7]
The Tao of the Sage is to act without competing.[8]

[1] The substance is in the quality.

[2] The root stems from simplicity.

[3] The ultimate is contained in One.

[4] Without selfishness, one is self-sufficient; giving to the good and leaving [other] things alone.

[5] That is what all things respect.

[6] That is how all things return to him.

[7] It always moves to produce and complete.

[8] Follow the benefit of heaven and never harm each other.

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX I

## THE COLLECTIVE BIOGRAPHY OF LAO TZU[1]

by
Ssu-ma Ch'ien

Lao Tzu was born in Ch'ü-jen village, Li district, K'u county, in the state of Ch'u. He was surnamed Li, named Erh, styled Po-yang, and posthumously titled Tan. He was the keeper of the archives of Chou.

When Confucius went to Chou to ask him about the meaning of propriety, Lao Tzu responded, "The men whom you talked about and their bones have already rotted. Only their words remain. What is more, when a gentleman is in keeping with the times, he rides the chariot; when he is not, he drifts with the wind. I have heard that a good merchant secretly hides his goods and appears to possess nothing, and that a gentleman of great virtue assumes the appearance of ignorance. Abandon your arrogance, multiple desires, pretentious affectation and excessive ambition. They are of no benefit to you. This is all I have to tell you."

Confucius left and said to his disciples, "I know that birds can fly, fish can swim, and animals can run. Whatever runs can be trapped with nets; whatever swims can be caught with fishing lines; whatever flies can be shot with arrows. But as for dragons, I do not know how they ride the wind and clouds and soar in the sky. Today I saw Lao Tzu. Is he not like a dragon?"[2]

When Lao Tzu cultivated himself with Tao and Te, he became concerned with self-effacement and anonymity. He lived in Chou for a long time, but he saw that Chou was on the decline, so he left. When he reached the Pass,[3] the keeper, Kuan Yin, greeted him with delight:[4] "Since you are going to retire, could you make an effort to write something for me?" Consequently, Lao Tzu wrote a book with two parts which discussed the meaning of Tao and Te in a little over five thousand words and then departed. No one knows what happened to him since.

Some say, "Lao Lai Tzu, likewise from Ch'u, wrote fifteen chapters to discuss the applications of Taoism and was a contemporary of Confucius." The reason was that Lao Tzu lived to be

over 160 years old [some say over 200 years old] because he cultivated Tao and consequently nurtured longevity.

One hundred twenty-nine years after Confucius died, according to the Historical Records, the great Chou historian Tan came to see Duke Hsien (362-338 B.C.) of Ch'in and told him, "In the beginning, the states of Ch'in and Chou were united and then separated. They were separated for five hundred years and then reunited. They have been reunited for seventy years,[5] and a powerful king[6] will be born." Some say that Tan was Lao Tzu. Others say that he was not. No one knows which is true.

Lao Tzu was a hermit. His son was named Tsung. Tsung was a general of the state of Wei and was given the fief of Tuan Kan. Tsung's son was Chu, Chu's son was Kung, and Kung's great-great-grandson was Chia. Chia was an official under King Hsiao Wen (202-157 B.C.) of the Han dynasty. And Chia's son, Chieh, was the royal tutor of Prince Ang of Chiao Hsi. Therefore, he made his home in Ch'i.

The people who study Lao Tzu tend to disparage Confucianism, and those who study Confucianism also disparage Lao Tzu. Does this not illustrate that people who do not follow the same Tao have nothing to do with each other? Li Erh's philosophy is that inaction brings self-transformation, quietude brings rectification.

## NOTES TO APPENDIX I

1. "The Collective Biography of Lao Tzu" is taken from "The Collective Biographies of Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu (?369-286 B.C.), Shen Pu-hai (d. 337 B.C.), and Han Fei Tzu (?280-233 B.C.)," pp. 677-678, in the Historical Records by Ssu-ma Ch'ien (145-86 B.C.). "Collective" means a collection of the significant acts or deeds in their lives for the people to pass on to the generation. Lao Tzu was believed to have lived in either (?604-531 B.C.) or (561-467 B.C.).

2. This story also appears in the Chuang Tzu, Chapter 14, "The Turning of Heaven."

3. The Pass refers either to Han Ku Kuan (函谷關), now in Honan Province, or San Kuan (散關), now in Shensi Province.

4. A number of Chinese scholars interpret "the keeper of the pass, Kuan Yin-hsi, said . . ." instead of "the keeper, Kuan Yin, greeted him with delight . . . ." Hsi (喜) in Chinese means "delight" on the one hand and can be taken as part of the proper name of the keeper on the other. The ambiguity is caused by the lack of punctuation or any sign of a proper name (comparable to capitalization in English) in ancient Chinese.

5. More accurately the two states had been reunited for "seventeen years" rather than "seventy years." See Kao Heng, A Revised Collation of the Lao Tzu, pp. 177-178.

6. The "king" refers to Ying Cheng, who launched a war for conquering Han, Chao, Yen, Wei, Ch'u, and Ch'i, and completed the unification of China between 230 and 221 B.C. He gave himself the title Ch'in Shih Huang [The First Emperor of Ch'in] or Shih Huang Ti [The First Emperor (of China)] (259-201 B.C.). Thus, the Warring States period came to an end.

## APPENDIX II

## THE BIOGRAPHY OF WANG PI[1]

by
Ho Shao

Wang Pi of Shan-yang liked to discuss Confucianism and Taoism. He was talented in writing and superlative in argumentation. He wrote commentaries on the I Ching and Lao Tzu, became the sub-secretary of the Royal Secretariat [shang shu lang], and died in his early twenties. Pi was styled Fu-szu. Ho Shao wrote his biography as follows:[2] As a child, Pi showed great intelligence. In his teens, he liked Lao Tzu and exhibited understanding, discrimination, and eloquence. His father, Yeh, was also the sub-secretary of the Royal Secretariat. P'ei Fei was then the sub-secretary of the Civil Personnel Department [li pu lang]. Pi, only a young adult, visited him. Fei was immediately amazed and asked Pi, "Non-being is truly the source of all things, but the Sage is not willing to discuss it. Why does Lao Tzu expound on it constantly?" Pi replied, "The Sage embodies non-being, and non-being cannot be taught; hence he does not discuss it. Lao Tzu is for being and constantly discusses its insufficiency."[3] Soon Pi also became acquainted with Fu Ku (209-255). At the time, Ho Yen (190-249), the secretary of the Civil Personnel Department [li pu shang shu], thought Pi was extraordinary and exclaimed, "Chung-ni [Confucius] says that the young are awe-inspiring. Is this not the man with whom you can discuss the rapport between heaven and man?" During the period of Cheng Shih (240-249), the position of the Palace Chief of Staff [huang men shih lang] was repeatedly vacant. After Chia Ch'ung (217-282), P'ei Hsiu (224-271), and Chu Cheng, Yen now considered appointing Pi. But at that time, Ting Pi, who was vying with Yen for power, introduced Wang Li of Kao-i to Ts'ao Shuang (178-249). Shuang appointed Li, and Pi was appointed to fill the office of the sub-secretary of the Royal Secretariat [t'ai lang]. When Pi assumed office, he visited Shuang and asked for a private audience. Shuang dismissed his attendants and discussed Tao with Pi. As time passed, Pi discussed nothing but Tao, and Shuang laughed at him. Shuang was then in control of the government. Those who followed and agreed with him got promoted. Pi was aloof, distinguished, indifferent, and in great repute. When Li became sick and died soon after, Shuang appointed Wang Shen to replace Li, and Pi lost his chance to serve under Shuang. Yen was disgusted and chagrined. In Pi's tenure as the

sub-secretary of the Royal Secretariat, since he was not skillful in general management, he did not take the job seriously. Liu T'ao of Huai-nan discussed diplomacy [tsung heng][4] knowledgeably and was considered an expert by his contemporaries. Whenever he talked with Pi, he often won the argument, but Pi's distinguished talent was such that whenever he had a point, no one could gainsay him. By nature Pi was rational and amiable, and he enjoyed outings and feasts. He was good in music and tou hou [a Chinese game].[5] When he discussed Tao and engaged in writings, his diction was not as good as Yen's but his innate ability far surpassed Yen's. He tended to show off his specialty and scorned people, thus frequently incurring the disgust of other gentlemen. Pi and Chung Hui (225-264) were good friends. Hui loved arguments and was an expert on the investigations of name-principles, but he always bowed to Pi's highmindedness.

Ho Yen felt that the Sage was a person without joy, anger, sorrow, or delight. His argument was very subtle, and Chung Hui and others expounded on it, but Pi took issue with them. He felt that the Sage was richer than ordinary people in insight, and the same as ordinary people in the five passions.[6] Being richer in insight, he is able to experience harmony in communicating with nonbeing. Having the same five passions as others, he is not lacking in sorrow or delight and is responsive to things. Hence by nature the Sage can respond to things without being burdened by them, and to say that the absence of burden means a lack of responsiveness misses by a long shot. Pi wrote a commentary on the I Ching, and Hsün Jung of Ying Ch'uan refuted his interpretation of the "Great Expansion" [tai-yen].[7] Pi responded in a sarcastic letter saying "Discernment can fathom the subtle and profound, but it cannot negate the essence of nature. Yen Tzu's capacity was already known by Master Confucius. But when they met, Confucius could not help but feel happy, and when [Yen Tzu] died, he could not help but feel sad.[8] We often criticized him for not making his emotions conform to his principles, but now we know that human nature cannot be changed. Your capacity is already bound by your chest and stomach. Why, then, for the last ten or fifteen days have you been so excessively concerned about me? So if we understand the relation between Master Ni [Confucius] and Yen Tzu, then we can avoid making a big mistake."

Pi's commentary on the Lao Tzu provides a concise guide, with systematic arrangement which illumines Tao in terse state-

ments.[9] His commentary on the I Ching frequently has excellent statements. Wang Chi of T'ai Yüan, who loved to expostulate but disliked Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu, often said that after he had read Pi's commentary on the I Ching, he comprehended a great deal more. However, Pi's personality was shallow, and he did not understand the nature of things. At first, he was on good terms with Wang Li and Hsün Jung, but he held a grudge against Li when Li captured the position of the Palace Chief of Staff from him. His relations with Jung did not last long either. In the tenth year of Cheng Shih, Ts'ao Shuang was removed from office,[10] but [Pi] was spared because he was not officially involved. That fall, Pi became seriously ill and died without an heir at the age of twenty-four. The Duke of Chin heard about Pi's death and grieved for days. It was such a severe loss to the highest intelligentsia! According to Sun Sheng,[11] the I Ching is a book which penetrates the mystic and discerns the principles of change. Unless a person is endowed with the best in the world, how can he have anything to do with it? Therefore, all of the connotators of the world have been mistaken. In particular, how can Wang Pi use his twisted arguments to generalize on the profound meaning of the mystic? Thus he uses an abundance of ornate expressions to explicate his superficial meanings and a clever, flawless obtrusiveness to establish the yin and the yang; but the Six Mixes affecting the change of myriad things and the cycle of days, months, years, and time and the interactions of the five atmospheres have not been his concern. Therefore, although he has his definite contribution, he is probably far from the great Tao. The Record of the Archives [po wu chi] says that at first, Wang Ts'an (177-217) and his cousin K'ai both retreated to Ching Chou. Liu Piao (144-208)[12] wanted to marry his daughter to Ts'an but rejected him because of his homely appearance and rash behavior. Feeling that K'ai was graceful, he married his daughter to K'ai.[13] K'ai begot Yeh; Yeh was Liu Piao's grandson. Ts'ai Yung[14] had nearly 10,000 volumes of books, and in his old age, he sent several cartloads to Ts'an. After Ts'an died, Assistant Premier [hsiang Kuo tsu] Wei Feng plotted a revolt. Ts'an's sons were involved and therefore executed. Yung's books were then passed on to Yeh.[15] Yeh, styled Chang-hsü, reached the position of the Chief Protocol Officer [yeh che p'u she]. His son, Hsüan, styled Cheng-tsung, held the position of the Police Head of the Imperial Capital [szu li chiao wei]. Hung was Pi's older brother. According to The Wei's Spring and Autumn, after Emperor Wen[16] executed Ts'an's two sons he made Yeh the heir of Ts'an.

## NOTES TO APPENDIX II

1. "The Biography of Wang Pi (226-249)" by Ho Shao (236-301) appears as one of the commentaries to "The Biography of Chung Hui (225-264)" written by Ch'en Shou (233-297) in his "Record of the Wei dynasty" in The Record of the Three Kingdoms (Shu [221-264], Wei [220-265], and Wu [222-280]).

2. The preceding lines were stated by Ch'en Shou.

3. This explains what Lao Tzu expressed in Chapter 56: "The one who knows does not speak; the one who speaks does not know," and in Chapter 81: "One who knows does not know all; one who knows all does not know at all." It shows at least that when he was less than twenty years old, Wang followed the fashion of his time in preferring the Sage (Confucius) to Lao Tzu.

4. During the age of the Warring States, these were two opposing principles in diplomacy: a confederacy against Ch'in uniting the states vertically (tsung) and a federation under Ch'in uniting the states horizontally (heng). Thus people refer to the tactics of diplomacy as the vertical and horizontal, or tsung heng.

5. Tou hu (投壺): A game played during feasts in which the one who got the greatest number of arrows into a distant pot became the winner. Chapter 19 of the Li Ki, no. 40, titled "Tou Hu," has a full description of the game.

6. The five passions are joy, anger, sorrow, pleasure and love; sometimes, hate and desire are added to become seven passions.

7. According to the I Ching, p. 310, the number of the Great Expansion is 50. However, only 49 are used. The sum of the odd numbers and the even numbers from one to ten (1+3+5+7+9=25, 2+4+6+8+10=30) is 55. (See Fung's A History of Chinese Philosophy, 2:181-182.) From these 55, subtract 5 which represent the five basic elements of the universe (metal, wood, water, fire, and earth). Through the remaining 50, all things in the world can transform into and communicate with each other. Of the 50, the number One is unique because it represents Tao--the great ultimate. Hence only 49 are used. The scholars before Wang Pi's time regarded the numbers cosmologically as follows: Each

number is both a symbol and a number. The number or symbol existed before the creation of all things and will remain after the destruction of all things. Therefore, the relationship between the substance and the function is that of the One (1) and the Many (49), which belong to two distinctive categories. But Wang Pi interpreted this relationship as follows:

> To employ the numbers of Heaven and Earth, rely on 50, but use only 49. One is not used; being unused, all usefulness can flow from it. It is not a number (like other numbers), but all numbers are completed by it. This is the ultimate of change. These 49 numbers are the ultimate of numbers because non-being cannot manifest itself from non-being; it must rely on being (the 49 numbers). Besides, the ultimate of things (49) must be manifested from their source (the One). [See The Ancient Commentaries on the Five Classics, pp. 048-049.]

That is to say, Wang Pi introduced the Taoist concept into the I Ching. His argument, philosophically, is that the substance and the function should be one. The function should arise from the substance; without the substance, there is no function. The substance exists only through its function; without function, there is no substance. This metaphysical idea can be applied to the relationship between One and Many. One and Many, substance and function, must be one. In his letter to Hsün Jung, Wang Pi explained the relationship of the Sage's (Confucius') emotion and his reason as that of substance and function, which should not be separated because they are one.

8. Yen Hui (521-490 B.C.) was one of the most outstanding disciples of Confucius. When he died, Confucius said, "Alas! Heaven has destroyed me! Heaven has destroyed me!" (See The Analects, Book 11, "Hsien Chin," Chapter 8.)

9. Other than his commentary on the Lao Tzu, Wang Pi's works on Taoism were believed to have been lost. Professor Yen Ling-feng, however, stated recently that he had found Wang Pi's Some Examples of the Implicit Meanings of Lao Tzu in The Collection of the Orthodox Tao-ts'ang (Taoist Canon). Based on the Ming dynasty edition of the collection, he photolithographed it for inclusion in his first series of The Collected Works on the Lao-tzu.

10. Ts'ao Shuang was killed in that year by Ssu-ma I (178-251), a famous general of the Later Han dynasty.

11. Sun Sheng (fourth century) was a native of Chung-tu in T'ai Yüan. He was a man with broad knowledge and great discernment. (See Wang's New Interpretations of Popular Sayings, Part 1 of Book 1, p. 27.) His two books of history, The Wei's Spring and Autumn (Wei shih ch'un ch'iu) and particularly The Chin Yang (Spring) and Autumn (Chin yang ch'iu), won him the title of the Distinguished Historian (liang shih). In his public life, he served under several famous generals, T'ao K'an (259-334), Yü Liang (289-340) and Huan Wen (312-373). His last official position was the Supervising Censor (mi shu chien) and he died at the age of seventy-two.

12. Liu Piao (144-208) of Kao-ping, Shanyang, had a distant kinship with the Imperial House of Han. In 190 he was appointed governor of Ching Chou which he made famous as a center of learning. Scholars such as Soong Chung, Wang Ts'an, etc., got together and launched a new movement in the intensive study of Taoism and the application of its concepts in the interpretation of the meanings of classical writings. Wang Pi, a nephew of Ts'an, followed the intellectual tradition of the movement, particularly in his revolutionary commentary on the I Ching. (Also see note 7 above.)

13. See Chang Hua, The Record of the Archives, 4:3b.

14. Ts'ia Yung (133-192) was a distinguished musician and politician of the Later Han dynasty.

15. Wang Yeh was Wang Pi's father as mentioned in the beginning of this biography.

16. The Emperor Wen refers to Ts'ao Pi (186-226), Emperor of he the Wei dynasty.

## APPENDIX III

## THE MAJOR DIFFERENCES BETWEEN WANG PI'S EDITION AND THE MA-WANG-TUI EDITIONS A AND B

The significance of the recent discovery of two lost editions of the Tao Te Ching at Ma-Wang-Tui has yet to be studied. Some of the groundwork for such a study, however, is presented here in a comparison of the major differences between Wang Pi's edition and the Ma-Wang-Tui editions. For Wang Pi's edition of the Tao Te Ching, I used the Okada version with references to other versions when relevant. In addition, the ancient Fu version is included in the comparison since it is one of the oldest and most significant versions of Lao Tzu's work.

### In General

The Ma-Wang-Tui editions differ from modern versions in chapter order. Chapter 24 in modern versions comes before chapter 22 in both MWT editions. Modern chapter 41 is "chapter" 40 in MWT edition B, but seems to have been omitted in edition A. Finally, modern chapters 80 and 81 are "chapters" 67 and 68 in the MWT editions A and B.

### Chapter 1

lines 5-8

"Therefore constantly without desire,
There is the recognition of subtlety;
But constantly with desire,
Only the realization of potentiality."

The MWT editions A and B agree with this translation's punctuation because at the ends of lines 5 and 7, both editions have a function word yeh (也) to indicate a "stop."

## Chapter 2

line 7 "long and short shape each other"

The Fu and MWT editions agree with the above translation, but the Ssu Pu Pei Yao version reads:

"long and short compare with each other"

line 9 "sound and voice harmonize with each other"

The MWT edition A reads:

"meaning and voice correspond with each other"

[After line 10 ("front and back follow each other"), both MWT editions A and B have the two words heng yeh (恆也) which mean "constantly so."]

line 13 "He lets all things rise without dominating them"

Both MWT editions A and B and the Fu edition read:

"He lets all things rise without initiating them"

## Chapter 3

line 6 "so that their hearts will not be distracted"

The MWT editions read:

"so that they will not be distracted"

## Chapter 5

line 8 "Too much talk often brings exhaustion."

Both MWT editions A and B read:

"Too much hearing often brings exhaustion."

## Chapter 8

| Line | Wang Pi Edition | Ma-Wang-Tui Editions | | Fu Edition |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | A | B | |
| 8 | "Allying with benevolence" | omits this line | omits this line, but substitutes: "Sharing the good with heaven" | "Allying with the good man" |
| 9 | "Inviting trust with words" | "Giving trust with confidence" | "Inviting trust with words" | "Inviting trust with words" |

## Chapter 9

line 5 "Fill a hall with gold and jade"

The Fu edition agrees with the above translation, but the MWT editions A and B interpret the line as follows:

"Fill a house with gold and jade"

lines 9-10 "He who withdraws after achieving success
and performing duty"

The MWT editions A and B interpret this line as follows:

"He who achieves success
and withdraws"

## Chapter 10

line 5 "The mystic vision being pure and clear"

In the MWT editions A and B, "the mystic vision" is simply one's "inner mirror" or "insight."

lines 7-8 "Loving the people and governing the state,
Can man be without action?"

In the Fu and MWT editions, the above lines are rendered as follows:

"Loving the people and governing the state,
Can man not use knowledge?"

## Chapter 12

The following is a comparison of the order of the first five lines of this translation and of the MWT editions:

| Present Line Order | MWT Line Order |
|---|---|
| 1 | 1 |
| 2 | 5 |
| 3 | 4 |
| 4 | 2 |
| 5 | 3 |

## Chapter 13

line 15 "can be lodged with it"

The Fu and MWT editions read:

"can be entrusted with it"

line 17 "can be entrusted with it"

The Fu and MWT editions read:

"can be lodged with it"

## Chapter 14

line 2 "it is called colorless"

The MWT editions A and B read:

"it is called formless"

line 6 "it is called formless"

The MWT editions A and B read:

"it is called colorless"

lines 16-17 "confronting it, one cannot see the head;
following it, one cannot see the back."

The MWT editions A and B reverse the order of these lines:

"following it, one cannot see the back;
confronting it, one cannot see the head."

line 18 "Grasp the Ancient Tao . . ."

According to the MWT editions A and B this phrase should be:

"Grasp the Modern Tao . . ."

## Chapter 15

line 1 "The Ancients who made themselves the best"

The Fu and MWT editions read:

"The Ancients who were good with Tao"

line 17 "he can be sheltered and beyond renewal"

The Fu and MWT editions read:

"he can endure wearing out
and is beyond completion"

## Chapter 18

The third word of the last line, "There are loyal ministers," is ch'eng (貞), meaning virtuous, instead of chung (忠), meaning loyal, in the Fu and MWT editions.

## Chapter 21

line 8 "From ancient times until now" is expressed in the MWT editions A and B as "from the present time to the ancient."

The MWT editions infer that Taoism is a modern concept being applied to ancient times and some sinologists feel that this is closer to fact.

line 10 "By this the beginning of all things is known." The fourth word "beginning" in the MWT editions A and B is "father." So is the sixth word of line 11, "How can I know the beginning of all things?"

## Chapter 22

| Line | Word | Wang Pi Edition | Ma-Wang-Tui Editions | | Fu Edition |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | A | B | |
| 2 | 7 | chih (直), straightened | ting (定), settled | cheng, (正), rectified | cheng (正), rectified |
| 7 | 6 | shih (式), example | mu (牧), officer | mu (牧), officer | shih (式), example |

## Chapter 23

line 11 "If one resembles Tao, Tao is pleased to accept him."

This line is omitted in the MWT editions A and B.

lines 12-13 "If one resembles virtue, virtue is pleased to accept him.
If one resembles loss, loss is also pleased to accept him."

The MWT editions render these lines as follows:

"If one resembles virtue, Tao also values him.
If one resembles loss, Tao also loses him."

## Chapter 24

line 2 "Those who stride cannot walk."

The MWT editions A and B omit this line.

lines 3-6 "Those who hold to their views
cannot be enlightened.
Those who are self-righteous
cannot shine."

The MWT editions A and B read as follows:

"Those who show themselves
cannot become famous.
Those who look at themselves
cannot be luminous."

line 14 "So those with Tao do not want to stay with them."

The MWT editions render this line as follows:

"So [even] those with desire do not want to take up residence."

## Chapter 25

line 4 "It goes around without peril."

The MWT editions A and B omit this line.

## Chapter 26

line 3 "Therefore the Sage . . ."

"The Sage" is "the gentleman" in both MWT editions and the Fu edition.

## Chapter 28

Between lines 5 and 6, the MWT editions A and B also include the following five lines:

"Knowing the white and keeping the black,
One will become the valley of the world.
Being the valley of the world,
One has enough constant virtue
and can return to simplicity."

## Chapter 29

The order of the last line in the MWT editions A and B is:

"the excessive, the extreme, and the extravagant"

## Chapter 30

line 6 "After a great war comes the year of adversity."

The MWT editions A and B omit this line.

## Chapter 31

The MWT editions A and B omit the first word of the first line, "Fine," and lines 6 and 7 are rendered as follows:

"Weapons are not the tools of the gentleman;
They are the tools of evil."

## Chapter 33

line 8 "To die without extinction means longevity."

The MWT editions A and B read:

"To die without [being] forgotten means longevity."

## Chapter 34

lines 3-4 "All things rely on it for life,
But it does not dominate them."

The MWT editions A and B omit these two lines and render lines 5 through 9 as follows:

"Achieving success and completing the tasks
[for all things],
It does not want to be their master.
All things return to it,
but it does not want to be their master;
Constantly void of desire, it can be called small."

lines 13-14 "Just because the Sage would never regard himself as great,
He is able to attain his own greatness."

In the MWT editions, these two lines are as follows:

"Therefore, the Sage can become great,
Because he has never regarded himself as great;
So he can attain his own greatness."

## Chapter 35

line 6 "But Tao spoken by mouth is flavorless and bland."

In the Fu and MWT editions, this line reads:

"What Tao says is flavorless and bland."

## Chapter 36

lines 6-7 "The soft overcomes the hard;
The weak overcomes the strong."

The Fu edition agrees with this translation. The Ssu Pu Pei Yao edition reads:

"The soft and weak overcome the hard and strong."

The MWT editions A and B read:

"The soft and weak overcome the strong."

## Chapter 37

line 2 "But it leaves nothing undone."

The MWT editions A and B omit this line.

line 9 "The world will keep peace by itself"

The fifth word, ting (定), meaning peace, is cheng (正), meaning justice, in the Fu and MWT editions.

## Chapter 38

lines 9-10 "He with the lowest virtue acts
And has intent to act."

The Fu edition reads:

"He with the lowest virtue acts
And has no intent to act."

Both the MWT editions A and B omit these two lines.

line 25 "And the beginning of ignorance"

The MWT edition A reads:

"And the capital of ignorance"

The MWT edition B reads:

"And the capital of disorder"

## Chapter 39

line 6 "All things obtained the One for their lives"

The MWT editions A and B omit this line.

lines 28-29 "He who is most praiseworthy
Does not need any praise."

In the Okada, Ssu Pu Pei Yao, and MWT editions A and B, these two lines are rendered:

"Therefore a carriage separated into parts
cannot be a carriage."

## Chapter 40

line 3 "All things in the world are produced by being."

In the MWT editions, this line is:

"Things of the world are produced by being."

## Chapter 41

| Line | Word | Wang Pi Edition | Ma-Wang-Tui Editions | | Fu Edition |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | A | B | |
| 9 | 5 | "The luminous Tao seems obscure." | exerting | exerting | obscure |
| 15 | 4 | "Established virtue seems secret." | transport-ing | transport-ing | transport-ing |
| 20 | 2 | "The great image has no shape." | great | Heaven's | great |
| 22 | 7 | "Yet only Tao is good in giving and completing." | beginning | beginning | giving |

## Chapter 42

| Line | Word | Wang Pi Edition | Ma-Wang-Tui Editions | | Fu Edition |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | A | B | |
| 7 | 3 | "What the people hate . . ." | world | people | people |
| 13 | 7 | "I will become the father of teaching." | learning | learning | learning |

## Chapter 43

lines 3-4 "Things without substance
can penetrate things without crevices."

The MWT edition A agrees with this translation, but the MWT edition B and Fu edition read:

"Things which come from nothingness
penetrate things without crevices."

## Chapter 49

The MWT editions A and B delete all use of the pronoun "I."

## Chapter 51

| Line | Word | Wang Pi Edition | Ma-Wang-Tui Editions | | Fu Edition |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | A | B | |
| 4 | 1 | "circumstances" | utensils | utensils | circum-stances |
| 8 | 3 | "Without being ordered" | Without being given rank | Without being given rank | Without being given rank |
| 10 | 1 | "virtue" | (omitted) | (omitted) | virtue |

## Chapter 52

line 17 "This is called practicing the constant"

The Fu and MWT editions A and B read:

"This is called inheriting the constant"

## Chapter 55

lines 4-5 "Ferocious beasts will not seize;
Predatory birds will not pounce"

The MWT edition A reads:

"Predatory birds and ferocious beasts will not pounce"

But the MWT edition B reads:

"Predatory birds and ferocious beasts will not seize"

line 9 "The organ is fully formed"

The MWT editions A and B read:

"The organ is furiously active"

## Chapter 57

The last line ("I have no desires . . .") reads in the MWT editions A and B: "I desire no desires . . ."

## Chapter 58

line 5 "Calamity is what good fortune depends on."

In the MWT edition B, this line is omitted.

line 12 "Therefore, the Sage is square but not cutting"

In the MWT editions A and B, the second and third words "the Sage" are omitted.

## Chapter 59

line 3 "Only through thriftiness can one submit [to Tao] early"

The Fu and MWT editions A and B read:

"Only thriftiness brings an early submission"

## Chapter 60

line 7 "But the Sage will not hurt them either"

The MWT editions A and B read:

"But the Sage will not hurt either"

## Chapter 61

lines 2-3 "It is the focus point of the world
And the female of the world."

The order of these two lines is reversed in the MWT editions A and B.

"It is the female of the world
And the focus point of the world."

## Chapter 62

line 1 "Tao is the refuge of all things"

The MWT editions A and B read:

"Tao is where all things pour in"

line 7 "and the three dukes are installed"

The MWT editions A and B read:

"and the three ministers are installed"

## Chapter 64

line 3 "Fragile things are easy to shatter."

The Fu and MWT editions A and B read:

"Fragile things are easy to tell apart."

line 9 "A nine-story terrace begins with a heap of earth."

The MWT editions A and B read:

"A nine-tenths completed terrace begins with a heap of earth."

line 10 "A thousand-li journey starts from beneath one's feet."

The MWT edition A renders this line as follows:

"A hundred jen [(仞); eight feet = one jen] height starts from beneath one's feet."

While the MWT edition B reads:

"A height of a hundred thousand starts from beneath one's feet."

## Chapter 65

line 1 "The Ancients who were good in practicing Tao"

The MWT edition A reads:

"It has been said that those who practiced Tao"

And the MWT edition B reads:

"The Ancients who practiced Tao"

lines 5-8 "Therefore, one who rules the nation with knowledge robs the nation.
One who does not rule the nation with knowledge brings good fortune to the nation."

The MWT edition A reads:

"Therefore, one who makes the country known with knowledge
robs the country.
One who does not know how to make the country known brings virtue to the country."

The MWT edition B reads:

"Therefore, one who makes the nation known with knowledge
robs the nation.
One who does not know how to make the nation known brings virtue to the nation."

## Chapter 66

lines 8-9 "Therefore, the Sage stays above and the people do not feel the burden.
He stays in front and the people do not consider him harmful."

The MWT edition A reads:

"Therefore, [one] stays in front and the people do not consider him harmful.
He stays above and the people do not feel the burden."

And the MWT edition B reads:

"Therefore, [one] stays above and the people do not feel the burden.
He stays in front and the people do not consider him harmful."

## Chapter 67

lines 5-6 "I have three treasures
To be kept and treasured"

The MWT edition A reads:

"I constantly have three treasures"

The MWT edition B reads:

"I constantly have three treasures
To be kept and treasured"

line 14 "One can be the master of the vessels"

The MWT edition A reads:

"One can be the master of the affairs"

The MWT edition B reads:

"One can be the master of the vessels"

line 16 "To abandon thriftiness and to be expansive"

The MWT edition A omits this line. The MWT edition B keeps the line.

lines 21-22

"When heaven is going to save a person,
It will protect him with compassion."

The MWT editions A and B read:

"When heaven is going to establish a person,
It will fortify him with compassion."

## Chapter 68

lines 7-8

"This is called the power of using people.
This is called the match of Heaven, the ultimate
of the Ancients."

The MWT edition A reads:

"This is called using people.
This is called Heaven, the ultimate of the Ancients."

The MWT edition B reads:

"This is called using people.
This is called the match of Heaven, the ultimate
of the Ancients."

## Chapter 69

lines 7-8

"To confront the enemy as if without one.
To grasp war weapons as if without them."

These lines are reversed in the MWT editions A and B:

"To grasp war weapons as if without them.
To confront the enemy as if without one."

## Chapter 70

line 5

"My words have their root; my deeds have their lord."

This line in the MWT edition A reads:

"My words have their lord; my deeds have their root."

But in the MWT edition B, the order is the same as the present translation.

## Chapter 71

The MWT edition A renders the whole chapter as follows:

> He who knows that he does not know is the best.
> He who does not know that he does not know is sick.
> Therefore, the Sage is without sickness
> Because he realizes that sickness is sickness.
> Therefore, he doesn't have any sickness.

The MWT edition B renders the chapter in this way:

> He who knows that he does not know is the best.
> He who does not know but pretends to know is sick.
> Therefore, the Sage is without sickness
> Because he realizes that sickness is sickness.
> Therefore, he doesn't have any sickness.

## Chapter 73

line 5 "Even the Sage would find it difficult."

The MWT editions A and B omit this line.

## Chapter 75

line 8 "Because the man on top strives for a rich life"

The Okada and MWT editions A and B read:

"Because they strive for a rich life"

## Chapter 76

line 7 "While the supple and weak are disciples of life"

The MWT edition B agrees with this translation, but edition A reads:

> "While the soft, weak, tiny, and small are disciples of life"

lines 10-11 "The strong and large are subordinate;
The soft and weak are superior."

The MWT edition A reads:

"The strong and large stay below;
The soft, weak, tiny, and small stay above."

The MWT edition B reads:

"Therefore, the strong and large stay below;
The soft and weak stay above."

## Chapter 77

line 1 "Perhaps the Tao of heaven . . ."

The MWT edition B agrees with this translation, while the MWT edition A reads:

"Perhaps the Tao of the world . . ."

line 10 "Who can supply the world with overabundance?"

The MWT editions A and B read:

"Can those who have possessed excesses supply heaven with their overabundance?"

line 12 "Therefore the Sage acts without exalting his ability."

The MWT editions A and B read:

"Therefore the Sage acts without possession."

## Chapter 78

line 2 ". . . nothing can surpass it"

The MWT editions A and B read:

". . . nothing can overtake it"

lines 4-5 "Use weakness to overcome strength.
Use softness to overcome hardness."

The MWT edition A reads:

"The soft overcomes the hard;
The weak overcomes the strong."

The MWT edition B reads:

"Water overcomes the hard;
And the weak overcomes the strong."

## Chapter 80

lines 2-5

"Let the people have tenfold and one-hundredfold
of utensils,
But never make use of them.
Let the people weigh death heavily
And have no desires to move far away."

The MWT editions A and B read:

"Let those who possess tenfold and one-hundredfold
of power over men never use it.
Let those who weigh death heavily have intent to
move away."

lines 13-14

"Secure in their homes,
Happy with their customs"

The MWT editions A and B read:

"Happy with their customs,
Secure in their homes"

## Chapter 81

lines 3-6

"One who is good will never argue;
One who argues is not good.
One who knows does not know all;
One who knows all does not know at all."

The MWT editions A and B read:

"One who knows does not know all;
One who knows all does not know at all.
One who is good never possesses much;
One who possesses much is never good."

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This selected bibliography consists of three parts. Part I, "The Main References," includes Wang Pi's version of the Tao Te Ching and his commentary on it, as well as other commentaries on Wang Pi's commentary and important works on the Tao Te Ching referred to or quoted in this translation. The second part, "Other Chinese Books and Articles," includes publications written by Chinese, ancient and modern, who in rendering annotations, commentaries, compilations, explanations, explications, interpretations, notes, and revisions of the Tao Te Ching and of Wang Pi's commentary have greatly enriched the meaning of Taoism. The third part, in addition to general references, also includes translations of Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching, mostly by Western scholars whose cultural orientations often bring a perspective quite different from that of Chinese translators.

The books and articles listed here present only a part of all of the works available on the Tao Te Ching which I have read or consulted. It is impossible to include them all in this bibliography, but perusal of them has kept me constantly alert to the wide range of possible interpretations of the text.

The richness of resources for the study of Lao Tzu can bring problems as well as stimulation. The name 老子, for example, has been romanized in such different ways as Lao-tsi, Lao-tze, Lao-tzu, Lao-tzyy. This translation uses Lao Tzu to refer to the person and Lao Tzu to refer to the book (also referred to as the Tao Te Ching) unless it is used in a direct quote.

Another problem concerns the dates of ancient Chinese scholars. It is important to understand the historical setting in which ancient materials were written to interpret their contents. However, ascertaining these dates is, to quote a Chinese proverb, like recovering a needle from the bottom of the sea (hai ti lao chen). The search is laborious, if not entirely futile. Friends and relatives who are librarians often have only their sympathy to offer. If the reader remembers that Lao Tzu lived about 2,500 years ago, and all commentators of his work from Wang Pi to the present have spanned a period of seventeen centuries, he can understand why so much is buried in the dust of history. According to the Chinese, however, a man lives in his publication. If his book survives, when he actually lived or died is immaterial.

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