

Moo Do Chor Hak

Martial Arts Philosophy  
Tao Teh Ching Translation

Author Hwang Kee

무도철학

황기 지음



Translated by Mr. Charles Mueller

Edited by Mr. Daniel Segarra

There are many books about philosophy, but of these, there are none that surpass, in terms of content, tradition or history, that work which sets forth the thought of the renowned figure Lao-tzu. For this reason, I have chosen to append a discussion of this book as follows:

### 老子：「道德經」：第一章

道可道，非常道。名可名，非常名。  
無名天地之始；有名萬物之母。  
故常無，欲以觀其妙；常有，欲以觀其徼。  
此兩者，同出而異名，同謂之玄。  
玄之又玄，眾妙之門。

1. The Tao is an unlimited entity.

Translation:

The Tao which can be spoken of is not the forever unchanging Tao. The name which can be called is not the forever unchanging name. When it has no name, it is the source of the universe. When it has a name, it is the mother of the ten-thousand things.<sup>2</sup> Therefore always with no doing and no desire one observes its exquisite essence, and always with doing one observes the revolving phenomena.

These two things, though coming forth from the same source, are called different names; yet they are both called profound. Profound beyond the profound, this Tao is the gate through which come forth the profound principles of all things.

### 老子：「道德經」：第二章

天下皆知美之為美，斯惡已。  
皆知善之為善，斯不善已。  
有無相生，難易相成，長短相形，  
高下相盈，音聲相和，前後相隨。  
恆也。是以聖人處無為之事，

---

<sup>1</sup> "The Book of Lao-tzu" is the traditional title of what was later also called the "Tao-te-ching."

<sup>2</sup> "Things" here includes animals and people.

行不言之教；萬物作而弗始，  
生而弗有，為而弗恃，功成而不居。  
夫唯弗居，是以不去。

## 2. The Source of Changing Phenomena is the Tao

Translation:

People of this world believe that the beautiful is always beautiful and the good always good. But they do not realize that if the beautiful, with the movement of emotion, reaches its apex, it become the ugly; and if the good, with the movement of the will, reaches its apex, it becomes, to the contrary, that which is not good. Thus within such phenomena through which the Tao courses, the ten-thousand things, based on the Tao, are such that they flow along with time and then soon disappear. So if one consistently applies effort, even the difficult becomes easy. No matter how long something is, it becomes shorter according to the speed of its momentum. No matter how tall something is, if the base is shaken, it automatically falls down. No matter how nice a piece of music is to listen to, if its notes are not in harmony, it cannot manifest its artistic value. Just because something stands in front does not mean it will always remain there for if something faster stands in front, it will then be behind. For this reason, the sage does not draw near to either side of things, which are relatively opposed. While living in the world of the not-doing (C. *wu-wei*), natural Tao, which forms the basis of all things, he does not seek to educate others through words. With silent, wordless actions, he serves as an example. The ten-thousand things of Heaven and Earth all appeared from the Tao.

Rather than interfere in the production of all the ten-thousand things, he leaves this to self-autonomy. The ten-thousand things are not fixed phenomena. Though it gives birth to the ten-thousand things, the Tao does not think of them as its own. It does not believe that they were created through its power; and though it achieve merit, the Tao does regard this as its own merit. The Tao ceaselessly produces and develops the ten-thousand things, but it is not caught up in their development. For this reason, the Tao's action is free and eternal.

### 老子：「道德經」：第三章

不尚賢，使民不爭；  
不貴難得之貨，使民不為盜；  
不見可欲，使民心不亂。  
是以聖人之治，

虛其心，  
實其腹，  
弱其志，  
強其骨。  
常使民無知無欲。  
使夫智者不敢為也。  
為無為，則無不治。

### 3. The Political Philosophy of Non-doing and Non-desire

Translation:

If administrators, when carrying out the business of politics, do not praise the talented, telling them that they do well, the people's competitive intent to do everything better than others will naturally disappear. If one does not treasure goods that are difficult to obtain, the people will naturally lose their desire to steal others' things. If one does not demonstrate wild ambition, doing anything, regardless of the means, to achieve a goal, the people's minds will naturally not be unruly.

For this reason, when the sagely politician practices politics, he first eliminates all the people's desires such as the desire for possessions, authority or fame. He makes such feelings return to their natural state and makes the people humble. He makes sure that there are no worries about food and survival, and he satisfies the people's stomachs. And he weakens the will of those with wild thoughts and ambitions. He solidly sets up a framework in which the people can express their given abilities.

In this way, he always makes the people void of any kind of artificial knowledge or desire, and thus makes them return to a state of innocence. And he makes sure that the intelligentsia do not dare hatch any schemes. If non-doing, natural politics is carried out in this way, everything under Heaven is governed.

#### 老子：「道德經」：第四章

道沖，而用之或不盈。  
淵兮，似萬物之宗；湛兮，似或存。  
吾不知誰之子，象帝之先。

4. Translation:

The essence of the Tao is like a large vessel. Though all kinds of things be placed inside, it cannot be filled. All things flow forth from it. Hence, it is the source of the ten-thousand

things. Moreover, the Tao embraces the ten-thousand things while the ten-thousand things embrace within themselves the Tao; hence the Tao is both beyond the ten-thousand things and within them. To speak of its functioning, within the realm of phenomena, sharp objects are dulled, tangled objects are untied, bright objects are harmonized and one is together with defiled objects. To speak of the appearance of the Tao, being clear and deep, it appears to exist. Yet, I do not know whose son it is. This is because it took form prior to the God who created Heaven, Earth and the ten-thousand things.

### 老子：「道德經」：第五章

天地不仁，以萬物為芻狗；聖人不仁，以百姓為芻狗。  
天地之間，其猶橐籥乎。虛而不屈，動而愈出。  
多言數窮，不如守中。

#### 5. Translation:

Heaven and Earth are natural, not anthropomorphic. And they do not have human feelings as people do. Unconcerned with the ten-thousand things, they regards them like straw dogs rolling along the side of the road. The sage, modeling himself<sup>3</sup> on Heaven and Earth, is not very concerned about the people. He also regards them like straw dogs rolling alongside the road. The space between Heaven and Earth is empty like the bellows in a blacksmith's shop. Though it is empty inside, as it ceaselessly moves, wind continuously blows. In this way, nature's energy, i.e., the Tao, has no limit. The more people talk, the more they exhaust reason, thus it is better to just silently maintain the proper way.

### 老子：「道德經」：第六章

谷神不死，是謂玄牝。  
玄牝之門，是謂天地根。帛系若存，用之不勤。

#### 6. Translation:

The appearance of God, formless like an empty valley, is never born nor dies; hence it is called the mysterious female. The reproductive organs of the mysterious female are the source of the ten-thousand things of the universe. With no beginning and no end, the mysterious female seems to exist eternally. Even though Heaven, Earth and the Ten-thousand things continue to develop based on this, it does not dry up.

---

<sup>3</sup> Here and elsewhere, the Korean text does not use a masculine pronoun. This could also be rendered himself/herself.

## 老子：「道德經」：第七章

天長地久。  
天地所以能長且久者，  
以其不自生，故能長生。  
是以聖人後其身而身先；外其身而身存。  
非以其無私邪。  
故能成其私。

### 7. Translation:

The universe is eternal. Why is it eternal? It is because it automatically produces things without any sense of purpose. For this reason, it exists eternally. For this reason, the sage, modeling himself on the universe, has no selfishness. Putting himself behind and others in front, he paradoxically ends up in front of others. Going beyond himself, he paradoxically ends up preserving himself. Does the sage truly have no self? No. For as he has no self, he paradoxically establishes himself.

## 老子：「道德經」：第八章

上善若水。  
水善利萬物而不爭，  
處眾人之所惡，故幾於道。  
居善地，心善淵，與善仁，  
言善信，政善治，事善能，  
動善時。夫唯不爭，故無尤。

### 8. Translation:

Among the good, the greatest good is like water. Water helps all of the ten-thousand things grow well, but it does not fight with other things in order to be in a high or clean place. It seeps into those places which men despise as base and dirty. The nature of water is similar to the Tao, i.e., *ki*. Likewise, as with the best water, the place where the sage dwells in the good becomes good earth. His heart becomes a good lotus-pond.

What he gives becomes good human-heartedness.<sup>4</sup> His words become those of good faith; his politics becomes good rule; his work becomes good skill; and his movements have good

---

<sup>4</sup> “*In*” (in Korean pronounced “een” as in “seen”, “*jen*,” in Chinese) is often translated as “benevolence,” etc. It is the most fundamental virtue in the teachings of Confucius.

timing. Why do they become thus? It is simply because the sage does not struggle to be superior to others. For this reason, there are no faults in the sage's behavior.

### 老子：「道德經」：第九章

持而盈之，不如其已；  
揣而銳之，不可長保。  
金玉滿堂，莫之能守；  
富貴而驕，自遺其咎。  
功遂身退，天之道也。

#### 9. Translation:

To possess things to the full is worse than not possessing [anything]. If a knife is sharpened it cannot be long preserved. Though a house is full of gold and jade, these cannot all be protected. If one leads a luxurious life and acts proud before others, of one's own accord, one leaves behind faults. To retire when merit has been achieved is the principle of nature.

### 老子：「道德經」：第十章

載營魄抱一，能無離乎。  
專氣致柔，能如嬰兒乎。  
滌除玄鑒，能如疵乎。  
愛國治民，能無為乎。  
天門開闔，能為雌乎。  
明白四達，能無知乎。

#### 10. Translation

Can a person depart from the circle of the Tao? Receiving the *ki* of nature, can he make his body soft like that of a child? Can he wipe away his heart's desires like a spotless mirror? Can he love the people and rule the country with non-doing naturalness? Like a female, can he quietly open then close the gate of the reproductive organ? With the wisdom of ignorance, can he master all four sides of his spiritual essence? The Tao gives birth to, and raises, the ten-thousand things. Though it produces the ten-thousand things, it does not consider them its own.

It works but does not hope for [recognition of its] merit. It develop things but does not preside [over them]. This is called the mysterious virtue.

老子：「道德經」：第十一章

三十輻，共一轂，當其無，有車之用。  
埴埴以為器，當其無，有器之用。  
鑿戶牖以為室，當其無，有室之用。  
故有之以為利，無之以為用。

11. Translation

Thirty spokes had an empty wheel hole. Within this, one can place an axle. This must be so for a carriage to function as a carriage. When kneading clay to make a bowl, the bowl must be empty for things to be placed inside. It must be so for a bowl to function as a bowl. When a door and windows are made and a room is constructed, there must be the empty space of the room for furnishings to be placed inside. This must be so for it to function as a room. Thus the reason that existence is an existence is that the non-existent is used.

老子：「道德經」：第十二章

五色令人目盲；五音令人耳聾；五味令人口爽；  
馳騁畋獵，令人心發狂；難得之貨，令人行妨。  
是以聖人為腹不為目，故去彼取此。

12. Translation

Originally, the eyes naturally appear so that one can see, but people, excessively fond of blue, brown, white, black and red colors<sup>5</sup> and such, end up losing their sight. The ears originally appeared so that one could hear, but people, excessively fond of *kung, sang, kak, ch'i, u*<sup>6</sup> and such, end up losing their hearing. The mouth naturally appeared so that one could taste, but people, excessively fond of the sour, salty, spicy, sweet, bitter<sup>7</sup> and such, ruined their mouth. The body originally arose for life, but people, excessively fond of riding horses and entering mountains and fields to hunt birds and beasts, made their bodies<sup>8</sup> crazy. Originally, goods naturally appeared so that people could sustain a livelihood, but people, greedy for goods

<sup>5</sup> The five colors (corresponding to the so-called “five-elements”), hence objects of sight in general.

<sup>6</sup> The sounds of the East-Asian five-note scale, hence music in general.

<sup>7</sup> The five tastes corresponding to the five elements, hence gustatory objects in general.

<sup>8</sup> The text is probably a typo. The author probably means “mind” (*maum*) here instead of “body” (*mom*). The former would agree with the character *shim* (heart/mind) that appears in the original text.



excessively difficult to obtain, are unable to stop. For this reason, the sage fills their bellies in a substantive manner, but does not, out of love for vain, outer appearances, work for the sake of the eye. In this way, he renounces all desire and takes the Tao.

### 老子：「道德經」：第十三章

寵辱若驚，貴大患若身。

何謂寵辱若驚。

寵為下，得之若驚，失之若驚，是謂寵辱若驚。

何謂貴大患若身。

吾所以有大患者，為吾有身，

及吾無身，吾有何患。

故貴以身為天下，若可寄天下；

愛以身為天下，若可托天下。

#### 13. Translation

There are times when people suffer the disgrace of patronage. But rather than be overjoyed at having received patronage, one should act as if worried and surprised. Do not try to avoid great calamity, but instead, regard it as precious as your body. Why is it said that one should regard patronage and disgrace with alarm? Patronage is given by those above you, while disgrace is suffered by those below. Though one receive patronage, one must be worried and alarmed about the day when this patronage will not be forthcoming. Though one suffer disgrace, one is happily surprised with the thought that the day will eventually arrive when this will change. This is what it means to be worried and surprised at patronage or disgrace.

And why is it said that one should not try to avoid great calamity, but should instead regard it as one's body? The reason that one has a great calamity is because one has a body. If one had no body, what calamity could one suffer? For this reason, to one who treasures his body as Heaven and Earth, one could give Heaven and Earth; to one who loves his body as Heaven and Earth, one could entrust Heaven and Earth.

### 老子：「道德經」：第十四章

視之不見，名曰夷；

聽之不聞，名曰希；

搏之不得，名曰微。

此三者不可致詰，故混而為一。  
其上不皦，其下不昧。  
繩繩兮不可名，復歸於物。  
是謂無狀之狀，無物之象，是謂惚恍。  
迎之不見其首，隨之不見其後。  
執古之道，以御今之有。  
能知古始，是謂道紀。

#### 14. Translation

As the Tao has no forms, though one looks for it, it is not visible. As it has no sound, though one listens for it, it is not audible. As it has no appearance, though one try to feel it, it is intangible. Thus, the invisible Tao, inaudible Tao and intangible Tao do not exist separately. As these three cannot be spoken of in separate terms, the invisible Tao, inaudible Tao and intangible Tao are put together and spoken of as one Tao. If one rises up into the metaphysical realm, the Tao, hidden behind phenomena, is obscure. If one descends into the physical realm, the Tao, appearing before our eyes, is not obscure. As something infinitely continuous like a string with no end, it cannot be cut off somewhere and given a name. Though it does indeed exist, it has no color, sound or end, and therefore one is left with the fact that it is not a “thing.” Therefore, this sort of thing is called a formless form (i.e., pure form) and a motionless motion (pure motion). Called ecstasy, it allows for no distinction between front or back. Transcending time, it produces the ten-thousand beings. If one grasps the Tao and thus regulates the ten-thousand beings of the present, one can know whence the ten-thousand beings first began and the Tao which forms their basis. In this respect, it is said that the Tao forms the framework for all things. By observing the laws of all things, one can understand the Tao which forms their basis.

老子：「道德經」：第十五章  
古之善為道者，微妙玄通，深不可識。  
夫唯不可識，故強為之容：  
豫兮若冬涉川；

猶兮若畏四鄰；  
儼兮其若客；  
渙兮其若凌釋；  
敦兮其若朴；  
曠兮其若谷；  
混兮其若濁；  
澹兮其若海；  
颺兮若無止。  
孰能濁以靜之徐清。  
孰能安以動之徐生。  
保此道者，不欲盈。  
夫唯不盈，故能蔽而新成。

## 15. Translation

In ancient times, the appearance of those cultivating the Tao was subtle and profound, with unimaginable depth. If forced to describe their attitude, it was as follows: They first took a serious attitude toward their task. This attitude, of not racing to conclusions, is like someone hesitatingly deciding whether or not to cross a stream in winter.

Next, one must be deliberate. While in the safe zone of the center, one must always be concerned that something may come up along the edge. This attitude is like one defending against enemies rushing in from all four directions. One has a solemn attitude. As if receiving guests, this attitude of non-attachment to things is like ice melting on a spring day. One's simple attitude is like uncut wood. One's attitude of humility is like a completely empty valley. And the attitude of indifference to right and wrong, and purity and impurity, is like water which has seeped into the dirty earth. Who can go into the multitudes, accept defilement as is, and silently, slowly make it pure? Who can calmly move this and slowly bring it to production? Regarding all events, which are each imbued with such a Tao, one does not satisfy one's desires. Because after satisfaction, there is dissatisfaction. Only those who are satisfied with the insufficient, constantly prize the old and do not wish for that which has newly come about.

### 老子：「道德經」：第十六章

致虛極，守靜篤。  
萬物並作，吾以觀復。  
夫物芸芸，各復歸其根。  
歸根曰靜，靜曰復命。  
復命曰常，知常曰明。

不知常，妄作凶。  
知常容，容乃公，  
公乃全，全乃天，  
天乃道，道乃久，沒身不殆。

#### 16. Translation:

In respect to those phenomena visible to the eye, if one understands the silent, unmoving calm state that stands within the void hiding behind phenomena, i.e., the Tao, one can observe how the Ten-thousand Things of Heaven and Earth, though they arise simultaneously, ultimately harken back to the realm of the Tao which is prior to phenomena. No matter how chaotic visible phenomena may be, each thing returns to that which it is in itself, that is, its basis. This is called “the quiet, motionless state of calmness.” Remaining in the state of calm is called “returning to the realm of life” and “returning to the realm of life” is called “the eternally unchanging realm of essence.” “Understanding the eternally unchanging realm of essence” is called “perspicacity.” The person who does not know this eternally unchanging essence, i.e. the Tao, being vainly motivated by his desires, calls misfortune upon himself. If one knows what this eternally unchanging Tao is, one can embrace all things. If this is the case, since there are no things or people to be cast away, one becomes fair and impartial. If one is fair and impartial, [one’s actions]<sup>9</sup> have universal validity. With universal validity, the gate to the phenomena of existence is wide with a vast horizon. If wide with a vast horizon, there is a path, i.e., a Tao, through which one can go anywhere. The Tao is everlasting, thus for he who lives in accordance with the Tao, there is nothing and no one to harm him. And thus, for his whole life, he is not in danger.

#### 老子：「道德經」：第十七章

太上，不知有之；  
其次，親而譽之；  
其次，畏之；  
其次，侮之。  
信不足焉，有不信焉。  
悠兮其貴言。  
功成事遂，百姓皆謂：「我自然」。

#### 17. Translation

---

<sup>9</sup> The text omits the subject, but something along the lines of “all one does” seems to be implied.

The most outstanding king rules the country through the non-action, natural Tao, and so the people do not know he exists. The second best king rules the country with virtue, and so the people cherish and praise him. The king worse than this rules the country with laws and punishments, and so the people fear or despise him. The king thereby lacks the confidence of the people and thus the people do not trust him. The best king basically carries out the teaching of no words. Thus he leaves the people to nature. He takes his words seriously<sup>10</sup> and does not rashly let them escape his mouth. Though the people succeed in their endeavors, they say, “We have done this all by ourselves.”

老子：「道德經」：第十八章  
大道廢，有仁義；智慧出，有大偽；  
六親不和，有孝慈；國家昏亂，有忠臣。

#### 18. Translation

“Benevolence”<sup>11</sup> was proclaimed after the great Tao had been thrown away. The great lie appeared after the appearance of a “wisdom” that did not recognize the limits of knowledge. “Filial piety,” “parental affection” and the like appear after a family has forgotten their natural feelings<sup>12</sup> and love, and their harmony has been destroyed. “Loyal subjects” appear when the politics of non-action have been ignored and the country has fallen into a state of chaos.

老子：「道德經」：第十九章  
絕聖棄智，民利百倍；  
絕仁棄義，民復孝慈；  
絕巧棄利，盜賊無有。  
此三者以為文，不足。  
故令有所屬：見素抱朴，少思寡欲，絕學無憂。

#### 19. Translation

In regards to academic study, when the desire for knowledge which seeks to become a sage or scholar is eliminated, the people’s thoughts of becoming better than others naturally

---

<sup>10</sup> Literally, “heavily.”

<sup>11</sup> This character (pronounced “ren” in Chinese) can also be translated as “human-heartedness.” It is the key Confucian virtue.

<sup>12</sup> “*Cheong*,” the Korean word used here (which has been translated as “feelings” for want of a better term), has complex connotations. Its opposite is emotional coldness and aloofness. It could be described as human warmth or emotional involvement. It actually includes the entire gamut of emotions, including hatred and anger. For Koreans, to say that someone has a lot of “*cheong*” is a great compliment.

disappear and they benefit a hundredfold. In regards to virtue, when the desire for fame which seeks to be benevolent or righteous is cut off, the people's intent to become better than other people naturally disappears and they have filial piety and love their children. In regards to economics, when the desire for possession which seeks to become a technician or profiteer is cut off, the people naturally lose their competitiveness so that they no longer steal. The above-mentioned corrupt practices all arise because the people, instead of being ruled according to the Tao, are ruled according to civilization—unnatural culture. Thus, there is a basis for the people to follow. This is to guide them so that they live a simple, frugal life.

### 老子：「道德經」：第二十章

唯之與阿，相去幾何。

之與惡，相去若何。

人之所畏，不可不畏。

荒兮，其未央哉。

眾人熙熙，如享太牢，如春登台。

我獨泊兮，其未兆；

沌沌兮，如嬰兒之未孩；

儻儻兮，若無所歸。

眾人皆有餘，而我獨若遺。我愚人之心也哉。

俗人昭昭，我獨昏昏。

俗人察察，我獨悶悶。

眾人皆有以，而我獨頑且鄙。

我獨異於人，而貴食母。

#### 20. Translation

When investigating the Tao which forms the basis of the Ten-thousand Things, one probably need not be concerned about giving up intellectual studies or ethics. In everyday speech, we answer those older than us with signs of respect saying “yes sir” and those younger with familiar forms such as “uh huh” or “yeah,” but as these are all alike in being vocalizations, there is not much difference between them. The people of the world normally like the beautiful and hate the ugly, but as these all appear from the emotional functioning of the same individual, there is not much difference between them. However, since I am also a person, when I mix with people, I respond “yes sir” to elders and “uh huh” or “yeah” to those younger. If people say something is beautiful, I also say it is beautiful. If they say it is ugly, I also say it is ugly. What others fear, I also cannot help but fear.

The people of the world busily search for what is near and small while I alone grope for what is distant and large. Thus others see me as one whose mind is not centered, like one wandering around on a desolate plain. People of the world are content and overjoyed with the tiny things in front of their eyes. They look like people going up to a pavilion on a spring day, who catch a cow or pig and hold a feast, eating, drinking and singing. Yet my mind is, somehow, aloof and detached<sup>13</sup> like an infant still so immature it does not yet know how to smile. Or like one who left home when young and whose body has become exhausted from a dissolute life, yet does not know to return home. Everyone lives a life of plenty, but standing alone, what am I? I seem to be forgotten. With a mind like a fool, I am murky like one unable to discriminate between anything.

Worldly people are very decisive and smart in choosing between right and wrong, but I alone am murky and seem stupid. The worldly are precise and detailed, whereas I alone, knowing nothing, seem annoying. My nature from birth is simple and detached like seawater which has lost even its saltiness. Like a wind that knows neither whence nor where it blows, I apparently do not know how to stop. Possessing skills, other people are of use wherever they go and thus adapt well to their environment, I alone, lacking both knowledge and desire, seem stubborn and vulgar. Yet there is one way I differ from others: I cherish nature, the mother who gives me sustenance.<sup>14</sup> This is because nature, my mother, is the basis of my life.

### 老子：「道德經」：第二十一章

孔德之容，惟道是從。  
道之為物，惟恍惟惚。  
惚兮恍兮，其中有象；恍兮惚兮，其中有物。  
窈兮冥兮，其中有精；其精甚真，其中有信。  
自今及古，其名不去，以閱眾甫。  
吾何以知眾甫之狀哉。以此。

#### 21. Translation

The Tao simply follows the movements of the Ten-thousand Thing, which regard emptiness as virtue. The Tao, existing everywhere, is only vague. Though existing, it is formless and has activity; though non-existent, it is formed and has images.

Amidst its depth and remoteness, there is energy. Amidst its depth, there is truth. From ancient times to the present, the name “Tao” has always been the source of the Ten-thousand

---

<sup>13</sup> Literally, “tasteless.”

<sup>14</sup> Literally, “rice” or “food.”

Things. One can always know when the Ten-thousand Things appeared. How do I know when the Ten-thousand Things appeared? It is by realizing the Tao which is the source of the Ten-thousand Things.

老子：「道德經」：第二十二章

曲則全，枉則直，窪則盈，  
敝則新，少則得，多則惑。  
是以聖人抱一為天下式。  
不自見，故明；  
不自是，故彰；  
不自伐，故有功；  
不自矜，故長。  
夫唯不爭，故天下莫能與之爭。  
古之所謂「曲則全」者，豈虛言哉。  
誠全而歸之。

22. Translation

The Tao transforms all things. Thus it makes the broken correct, the bent straight, the hollow full, the old new, and that with little to acquire and that with much to lose. This is the law of nature. Thus, the sage who has acquired the Tao, with the Tao, becomes the example [for all] under Heaven. Since he does not, of his own accord, claim to be kind, he is kind. Since he does not, of his own accord, think himself correct, he is correct. Since he does not, of his own accord, praise those who have merit, he has merit. Since he does not, of his own accord, boast, he can have lasting fame. Since the sage generally does not struggle to be better than others, there is no one under Heaven to struggle against him. The ancients said that that which is broken becomes whole. In this, how could there be falsehood? Indeed, this is to make oneself whole and return to nature.

老子：「道德經」：第二十三章

希言自然。  
故飄風不終朝，驟雨不終日。  
孰為此者。  
天地。天地尚不能久，而況於人乎。



故從事於道者，同於道；  
德者，同於德；失者，同於失。  
同於道者，道亦樂得之；  
同於德者，德亦樂得之；  
同於失者，失亦樂得之。  
信不足焉，有不信焉。

### 23. Translation

Words without pretense are natural. Unnatural, strong winds cannot blow even through morning. A sudden rainstorm cannot last even in a day. What does this? It is nothing less than Heaven and Earth. As even the work of Heaven and Earth cannot last long, how long is the work of man going to last? Thus the person who carries out natural virtue automatically becomes one with virtue, while he who naturally loses [things] automatically becomes one with the things he has lost. The person who is with the natural Tao obtains the Tao, while he who is with the natural virtue obtains virtue, while he who is with that which he has lost naturally, gets what he has lost. When trust is lacking, one naturally receives distrust.

### 老子：「道德經」：第二十四章

企者不立；跨者不行；  
自見者不明；自是者不彰；  
自伐者無功；自矜者不長。  
其在道也，曰：餘食贅形。  
物或惡之，故有道者不處。

### 24. Translation

He who raises his heel and stands on his tiptoes cannot stand for a long time. He who spreads his legs wide and walks with long strides cannot walk far. This is because unnatural actions cannot last long. He who sets himself up as wise is not a sagely man. He who sets forth his own assertions as correct does not think of others as being correct.

He who praises himself loses merit. He who boasts of his talent is not a person with real talent. Such action deviates from nature. It is as useless as left-over food or a growth on the face. Others do not think well of such behavior. Thus, he who understands the Tao does not do such things.

### 老子：「道德經」：第二十五章

有物混成，先天地生。  
寂兮寥兮，獨立而不改，  
周行而不殆，可以為天地母。  
吾不知其名，強字之曰道，強為之名曰大。  
大曰逝，逝曰遠，遠曰反。  
故道大，天大，地大，人亦大。  
域中有四大，而人居其一焉。  
人法地，地法天，天法道，道法自然。

#### 25. Translation

There is a chaos and this arose prior to Heaven and Earth. The unmoving image, as an independent existence that does not rely on other things, does not change. In the phenomenal realm, though all things are in operation, there is no blockage. It is without danger, the Ten Thousand things are produced from it; hence it can be the matrix of Heaven and Earth. As the unlimited, one cannot give it a name. However, if one is to express it with a written character, it is called the way, i.e., Tao, with the sense that it extends anywhere. And if someone were to give it a name, it could be called Ta (Kor. Tae), i.e. great, with the sense that it can embrace anything. Growing infinitely big, its radius becomes long so that it naturally goes this way and that. If one goes infinitely far, then naturally the center becomes farther away. And if one goes infinitely far, since the world is round, one ends up back at the starting point. Of things that grow large like this, there are four big things: the first is the Tao, the second is Heaven, the third is Earth and the fourth is man. Thus man bases himself on the laws of the Earth, Earth on those of Heaven, Heaven on those of the Tao, and the Tao on those of nature.

### 老子：「道德經」：第二十六章

重為輕根，靜為躁君。  
是以君子終日行不離輜重。  
雖有榮觀，燕處超然。  
奈何萬乘之主，而以身輕天下。  
輕則失根，躁則失君。

#### 26. Translation

That which is heavy serves as the source of that which is light, supporting it. That which is quiet controls that which is hurried. The sage gives prominence to that which is heavy and quiet all day long in carrying out [his activities].

Though there be some glorious event worth seeing, with outstanding detachment, he resides in the world of the Tao. This being the case, how could the Son of Heaven<sup>15</sup> have disdain for all under Heaven? If his actions as king are rash, he will lose the people—those who form the basis of the country. And if the actions of the people are hurried, they lose their king.

### 老子：「道德經」：第二十七章

善行無轍跡，善言無瑕謫；  
善數不用籌策；善閉無關楗而不可開，  
善結無繩約而不可解。  
是以聖人常善救人，故無棄人；  
常善救物，故無棄物。  
是謂襲明。  
故善人者，不善人之師；  
不善人者，善人之資。  
不貴其師，不愛其資，  
雖智大迷，是謂要妙。

#### 27. Translation

The Tao of nature operates well leaving no wheel tracks. The words of nature are spoken well without fault. The mind of nature calculates well though it use no calculator. Those things closed naturally can be easily closed and opened even without a lock or key. Those things bound by nature can be readily bound or untied even without a rope. And since it always readily saves things, it has nothing to throw away. What is this called? It is called the wisdom passed down of old. Thus, the good person becomes the teacher of the bad, and Tao becomes the material for he who does not know the Tao. The teacher who knows the Tao, taking disciples who are ignorant of the Tao as his material, does good. Bad disciples, becoming material for a good teacher, do good. Seen thus, the good teacher cannot become a teacher apart from disciples ignorant of the Tao. Disciples cannot become disciples apart from their teacher. Thus, knowing and not knowing the Tao are mutually compatible and thus form a unity. Just because someone is a good teacher does not make them so precious, and just because the students form the material does not mean one should value them so greatly. In this way, though they be students, the delineation

---

<sup>15</sup> An expression referring to the emperor or king.

between knowing and unknowing ceases to be known. This is the mysterious, extremely exquisite secret method.

### 老子：「道德經」：第二十八章

知其雄，守其雌，為天下溪。  
為天下溪，常德不離，復歸於嬰兒。  
知其白，守其辱，為天下谷。  
為天下谷，常德乃足，復歸於朴。  
知其白，守其黑，為天下式。  
為天下式，常德不忒，復歸於無極。  
朴散則為器，聖人用之，  
則為官長，故大智不割。

#### 28. Translation

If one, knowing the nature of the male, maintains it, one can see it naturally return to the female. This is like a large valley: though it stays still, all the water of the gorge automatically seems to gather. If a person likewise models himself on, or regards as moral law, this sort of natural principle of the valley, the forever unchanging virtue will not leave him and he will thus revert to being an innocent child. If one, knowing the nature of brightness, adheres to the darkness, one will definitely see the brightness shine forth within darkness. From this, one can realize the principle that when the development of anything reaches an extreme, it definitely returns. If one regards this natural principle as a moral law, this becomes the forever unchanging virtue and definitely returns to the Mu Ultimate (*mugeuk*)<sup>16</sup> which again heads towards both extremes. One knows that if a person, knowing the nature of glory, adheres to disgrace, once disgrace has run its course, glory will, without fail, bite disgrace's tail. This is like the large valley, which is still, yet filled with water. If one regards this nature law as a moral principle, one acquires the forever unchanging virtue so that one's whole body becomes complete and one becomes simple, like a piece of wood untouched by human artifice. However, if a lumberjack cuts the forest, putting forth human artifice, then all manners of implements appear. If a sage, having realized such truths, were to put these morals into effect in his daily life, he would become a dignified leader capable of guiding the people. This is because the great dictator is the dictator who does not dictate.

### 老子：「道德經」：第二十九章

<sup>16</sup> Mu = "not," "no" or "none" while "geuk" means "ultimate" or "extreme."

將欲取天下而為之，吾見其不得已。  
天下神器，不可為也，不可執也。  
為者敗之，執者失之。  
是以聖人無為，故無敗；  
無執，故無失。  
夫物或行或隨；或噓或吹；  
或強或贏；或載或隳。  
是以聖人去甚，去奢，去泰。

## 29. Translation

While there are those who have tried to seize the world, I have never seen a person who obtained it. The world is a mysterious vessel. It is hard to control. One may rashly attempt to control it, but it does not work that way. Though you try to put it in your hand, one cannot grasp it. If you rashly attempt to do so, you will surely fail. If you try to put it in your hand, you will surely lose it. Among all people, there are those who go forward and those who go backward. There is inhalation and exhalation. There is that which is strong and that which is weak. There is that which is set above and that which falls below. Thus, the sage abandons violence, extravagance and pride.

### 老子：「道德經」：第三十章

以道佐人主者，不以兵強天下。  
其事好遠。  
師之所處，荊棘生焉。  
大軍之後，必有凶年。  
善有果而已，不以取強。  
果而勿矜，果而勿伐，果而勿驕。  
果而不得已，果而勿強。  
物壯則老，是謂不道，不道早已。

## 30. Translation

He who, modeling himself on the Tao of nature, advises the king, does not seek to make armed war with the world. Because if this country seeks to invade that one, that country will also seek to invade this one. In places where troops are stationed, the soil becomes coarse and filled with thorny thickets. Large wars are inevitably followed by famines. Thus, he who is truly good at war, will simply achieve the aims of the war and then pull his forces and weaponry out

of the enemy nation. Though he achieve his objectives, he will not boast of them to the conquered. He will not be proud nor haughty. He will say that he unavoidably engaged in a difficult war. He will not think that his side is strong.

All things grow then decline. This is a natural principle which cannot be altered through human efforts. Hence to cling only to that which is mature is to behave in a way that falls outside of the Tao. Behavior that falls outside of the Tao cannot last long.

老子：「道德經」：第三十一章

夫兵者，不祥之器，  
物或惡之，故有道者不處。  
君子居則貴左，用兵則貴右。  
兵者不祥之器，非君子之器，  
不得已而用之，恬淡為上。  
勝而不美，而美之者，是樂殺人。  
夫樂殺人者，則不可得志於天下矣。  
吉事尚左，凶事尚右。  
偏將軍居左，上將軍居右，言以喪禮處之。  
殺人之眾，以悲哀泣之，戰勝以喪禮處之。

31. Translation

Generally speaking, weapons are inauspicious tools. Since they harm people, they are hated and despised. Thus he who cultivates the Tao does not use such things. During normal times, the superior man regards the left side as the position of honor, and during war the right. Since weapons are an inauspicious tool, they are not tools that the morally superior man uses. When they are unavoidably used, they must be regarded as the best policy for pacifying the nation. When victorious, he who things of it as glorious is a person who relishes killing. In the world, he who relishes killing loses the hearts of men.

The seat of honor at a congratulatory feast is on the left, while it is on the right during a funeral. This is a practice handed down from ancient times. However, in the military, the lieutenant sits on the left and the general on the right. This is because the battlefield is like a funeral. Though one win a war carried out to kill many people, one should be sad about this rather than happy. One must regard a victory celebration as a funeral.

老子：「道德經」：第三十二章

道常無名朴。  
雖小，天下莫能臣。

侯王若能守之，萬物將自賓。  
天地相合，以降甘露，民莫之令而自均。  
始制有名，名亦既有，  
夫亦將知止，知止可以不殆。  
譬道之在天下，猶川谷之於江海。

### 32. Translation

When it comes to the Tao, one is never able to definitely declare it to be something and give it a name. The Tao is like the uncut block felled by the lumberjack.

The Tao is something both big and small. To speak of its massiveness, it can include all of Heaven and Earth. To speak of its smallness, it can enter the end of a hair. Though small, it cannot be altered by the power of man. In other words, it cannot be dominated. Yet it becomes the virtue of all things. If the sovereign can wield the virtue of the uncut block, all the people under Heaven will, without any [prior] promise, come of their own accord and follow him. The yin and yang forces of Heaven and Earth will come together to form a sweet dew. Though given no order to do so, the people will maintain the order among themselves and lead balanced lives.

As the Tao is originally without form, one cannot define it as being a certain thing, but once it takes on the form of time and space, it can be distinguished as an object and given a name. Once it takes on a name, i.e., a concept, it seeks to remain. If one tries to remain with the Tao, though one changes, one is not in peril. By way of comparison, the fact that the Ten Thousand things are derived from the Tao and seek to return to the Tao is like the water of many valleys that flows into the wide ocean.

#### 老子：「道德經」：第三十三章

知人者智，自知者明。  
勝人者有力，自勝者強。  
知足者富。  
強行者有志。  
不失其所者久。  
死而不亡者壽。

### 33. Translation

While he who understands others is called wise, he who understands himself is sagacious. He who defeats others is powerful, while he who defeats himself is strong. He who senses life's contentment is called a rich man, while he who diligently carries out the Tao is called a person

with a strong will. He who understands and firms his will is said to be one who truly lives long, while he who, joining with the Tao, dies but does not perish is said to have a long life.

### 老子：「道德經」：第三十四章

大道泛兮，其可左右。  
萬物恃之以生而不辭，功成而不有。  
衣養萬物而不為主，可名於小；  
萬物歸焉而不為主，可名為大。  
以其終不自為大，故能成其大。

#### 34. Translation

The Tao, being large without limit, fully extends above and below, to the left and to the right. The Ten-thousand Things engage in production as that which manifests the Tao. However, the Tao, though it produce the Ten-thousand things, does not rule over them as their owner. The Tao, though it completes the Ten-thousand things, does not boast that it has merit.

Though cultivating the Ten-thousand Things, the Tao does not exercise sovereignty. In this way, it has no desire to control things; yet as it is inherent in even objects such as dust particles and the like, it can be said to be extremely small. The Ten-thousand Things, having come out of the Tao, return again to the Tao, but the Tao, never refusing them out of dislike, accepts anything; hence it can be called big. However the Tao, from ancient times to the present, has never consciously boasted, in reference to the Ten-thousand Things, that it the biggest thing in the world. Since the Tao does not of its own accord claim to be big, it is big.

### 老子：「道德經」：第三十五章

執大象，天下往。  
往而不害，安平泰。  
樂與餌，過客止。  
道之出口，淡乎其無味，  
視之不足見，聽之不足聞，用之不足既。

#### 35. Translation

If one realizes the character<sup>17</sup> of the big Tao, no matter where one goes under Heaven, there are no hindrances. Thus, one's mind is always peaceful, harmonious and tranquil. Good music and good food makes the passerby stop. However, the truth of the Tao as expressed in

---

<sup>17</sup> *Moseup*. Literally, "appearance."



words is ordinary and thus seems insignificant. The Tao cannot be seen through sight or heard through hearing. If one wants to realize it, there is no end.

**老子：「道德經」：第三十六章**

將欲歛之，必故張之；將欲弱之，必故強之；  
將欲廢之，必故興之；將欲取之，必故與之。  
是謂微明。  
柔弱勝剛強。  
魚不可脫於淵，國之利器不可以示人。

36. Translation

If one wants something, first give. If one wants to weaken something, first strengthen it. If one wants to ruin something, first make it prosper. If one wants to seize something, first give it. Such principles are the exquisite providence of the Tao. Because this providence exists, the soft and weak can defeat the hard and strong. If a fish jumps out of a pond, it dies. If a country makes a display of power, it will surely fall.

**老子：「道德經」：第三十七章**

道常無為而無不為。  
侯王若能守之，萬物將自化。  
化而欲作，吾將鎮之以無名之朴。  
鎮之以無名之朴，夫將不欲。  
不欲以靜，天下將自正。

37. Translation

The Tao is non-personal. Hence, though it has no intention to do something, it transforms and produces all things solely through the force of nature. This is the Tao of non-doing nature. If the sovereign governs based on such principles of the Tao, though he have no particular purposeful intent in all he does, the people will produce and develop of the themselves. However, if the people, undergoing such development, try to do something with their own private will, I would pacify them with the virtue of the uncarved block derived from the Tao. The virtue of the uncarved block would prevent the people from doing something through their own will. When the people no longer desire to act in accordance with their own will, their hearts automatically become settled and all under Heaven automatically and naturally is set in order so that all is just.

**老子：「道德經」：第三十八章**

上德不德，是以有德；

下德不失德，是以無德。  
上德無為而無以為；  
下德無為而有以為。  
上仁為之而無以為；  
上義為之而有以為。  
上禮為之而莫之應，  
則攘臂而扔之。  
故失道而後德，失德而後仁，  
失仁而後義，失義而後禮。  
夫禮者，忠信之薄，而亂之首。  
前識者，道之華，而愚之始。  
是以大丈夫處其厚，不居其薄；  
處其實，不居其華。故去彼取此。

### 38. Translation

As it is not artificial, extremely lofty virtue does not seem like virtue. Indeed, virtue that is not like virtue is authentic virtue. As it is artificial, very low virtue seems like virtue. Indeed, virtue that seems like virtue is not authentic virtue. As it is not artificial, there is nothing that extremely lofty virtue cannot do. As it is artificial, there is that which very low virtue cannot do. With lofty benevolence, there is that which one cannot do and with lofty righteousness there is that which one cannot do. With lofty *ye*,<sup>18</sup> one breaks the arm of those who do not consent to it and forcefully drags people to *ye*.

Thus when the non-doing natural Tao falls into decline, virtue appears; after virtue appears, benevolence appears; and after benevolence appears, *ye* (rites) appear. In general, *ye* appear as people's sincerity grows faint. Moreover, it is the first step towards throwing the natural order into chaos. The so-called prophet, who with artifice vainly claims the not-doing natural Tao, is the first step on the path to idiocy. Thus the great man leads a natural, simple life, rather than an artificial life full of pretensions. Hence he who realizes the Tao gives up luxurious living and assumes a simple lifestyle.

### 老子：「道德經」：第三十九章

昔之得一者：  
天得一以清；  
地得一以寧；

<sup>18</sup> *Ye* (Chinese “*li*”), pronounced like the “*Ya*” in “*Yale*.” Normally translated as “rite” or “rites,” in the Confucian system this represents the proper social expression of benevolence. Such proper social action is often culturally defined in terms of etiquette or rites. A translation of *ye* might be “external manifestation/expression of virtue.”

神得一以靈；  
谷得一以生；  
侯得一以為天下正。  
其致之也，謂天無以清，將恐裂；  
地無以寧，將恐廢；  
神無以靈，將恐歇；  
谷無以盈，將恐竭；  
萬物無以生，將恐滅；  
侯王無以正，將恐蹶。  
故貴以賤為本，高以下為基。  
是以侯王自稱孤、寡、不谷。  
此非以賤為本邪。非乎。故致譽無譽。  
是故不欲琺琺如玉，珞珞如石。

### 39. Translation

At first, there was that which received the one *ki*. Heaven, having received the *ki*, is lucid. Earth, having received the *ki*, is stable. Spirits, having received the *ki*, are numinous.

Valleys, having received the *ki*, are bountiful. The Ten-thousand things, having received the *ki*, are engaged in generation. The sovereign, having received the *ki*, is just. This and that, in terms of their culmination, are all one and the same way. If Heaven were not clear, it would probably be rent asunder. If Earth were not stable, it would probably cave in. If spirits were not numinous, their wisdom would disappear. If valleys were not bountiful, they would dry up. If the Ten-thousand Things were unable to generate, they would become extinct. If the sovereign were not just, he would die. Thus, that which is precious has that which is base as its basis; and that which is high has that which is low as its support. Thus the sovereign calls himself lonely, and calls himself one of little virtue who is unable to do good. Isn't this taking the base as a basis? Hence, the ultimate sovereign's merits cannot be praised in words. The sage who has realized the Tao in regard to this problem does not want to apply artifice in order to become bright jade or polished stone.

### 老子：「道德經」：第四十章

反者道之動；弱者道之用。  
天下萬物生於有，有生於無。

#### 40. Translation

The return of all<sup>19</sup> phenomena upon reaching an extreme is the movement of the Tao. The defeat of the strong by the weak is the function of the Tao. The Ten-thousand Things under Heaven arise from existence; existence arises from non-existence (*mu*).

#### 老子：「道德經」：第四十一章

上士聞道，勤而行之；中士聞道，若存若亡；  
下士聞道，大笑之。不笑不足以為道。

故建言有之：

明道若昧；

進道若退；

夷道若類；

上德若谷；

廣德若不足；

建德若偷；

質真若渝；

大白若辱；

大方無隅；

大器晚成；

大音希聲；

大象無形；

道隱無名。

夫唯道，善貸且成。

#### 41. Translation

When those with the highest level of knowledge hear the Tao, they diligently put it into effect. When those of the mediocre level here the Tao, they do not quite believe it. Actually, any Tao not seen as ridiculous by such people is not the authentic Tao.<sup>20</sup>

The brilliant Tao in ancient texts seems dark; the quickly advancing Tao seems to be retreating; and the most level Tao seems to be winding.<sup>21</sup> The highest virtue seems to be low; the whitest light seems black; the widest virtue seems to be deficient; the soundest virtue seems feeble; and the very simple Tao seems foolish. Thus, the biggest sound is inaudible and the biggest form has no appearance.

<sup>19</sup> *Manmul*. Literally, the Ten-thousand things.

<sup>20</sup> The author seems to have accidentally skipped over eight Chinese characters from the original text which occur before this sentence. The missing characters could be translated, "When the inferior man hears the Tao, he has a great laugh."

<sup>21</sup> The preceding sentence makes more sense if we think of Tao in its literal meaning, i.e. "road."

As it hides behind phenomena, the Tao cannot be named. But only the Tao lends itself to all things and makes all things form.

老子：「道德經」：第四十二章  
道生一，一生二，二生三，三生萬物。  
萬物負陰而抱陽，沖氣以為和。  
人之所惡，唯孤、寡、不谷，而王公以為稱。  
故物或損之而益，或益之而損。  
人之所教，我亦教之。  
強梁者不得其死，吾將以為教父。

#### 42. Translation

From the Tao—the source of the universe—is born the *ki* of the primal origin. From the *ki* of the primal origin, um *ki* and yang *ki* appear. From um and yang *ki*, harmony *ki* appears; and through the combined action of these three *ki*, the Ten-thousand Things appear. Everyone hates loneliness, excess and malevolence, but the sagely king uses these three words in place of his name. Thus all people, through loss receive benefit, and through benefit suffer loss. This is the rule of the phenomenal realm. What others teach, I also teach. That is, a person who boasts cannot reach his fated time of death. I also take this as the first point of education.

老子：「道德經」：第四十三章  
天下之至柔，馳騁天下之至堅。  
無有入無間，吾是以知無為之有益。  
不言之教，無為之益，天下希及之。

#### 43. Translation

The softest and weakest things overcome the strongest and firmest. This is because that without form seeps inside of that without holes. Through this, we know that non-action (*muwi*) is acting. Thus the education without words and the benefit without action is difficult for the people of the world to carry out.

老子：「道德經」：第四十四章  
名與身孰親。身與貨孰多。得與亡孰病。  
甚愛必大費；多藏必厚亡。  
故知足不辱，知止不殆，可以長久。

#### 44. Translation

Of fame and life, which is more cherished? Of life and property, which is more important? Of acquiring and losing, which is more painful? If one excessively prizes something, one will surely waste it. If one possesses much, one will surely suffer great loss. If one values what one now has, one does not suffer disgrace. He who knows how to remain within his own sphere will be safe from peril and live long.

老子：「道德經」：第四十五章

大成若缺，其用不弊。  
大盈若沖，其用不窮。  
大直若屈，大巧若拙，大辯若訥。  
靜勝躁，寒勝熱。清靜為天下正。

45. Translation

That which is most perfect seems to be missing something. However much one uses it, there is no exhausting it. That which is completely full seems empty. Yet no matter how much one uses it, there is no exhausting it. That which is very straight seems bent; and the greatest skill seems like clumsiness. Great eloquence is like stuttering; and a cool calm wins over haste. Cold defeats heat. Therefore, purity and calm are the correct norm for all under Heaven.

老子：「道德經」：第四十六章

天下有道，卻走馬以糞。  
天下無道，戎馬生於郊。  
禍莫大於不知足；咎莫大於欲得。  
故知足之足，常足矣。

46. Translation

If one governs according to the non-action natural Tao, there will be peace and the military horses will be returned to farming villages where they are used to fertilize.<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, if the world is without the Tao, the farming horses are requisitioned and sent to war. What is the source for such calamities of war? It is from an inability to feel satisfaction with what one has, from the endless expansion of people's constant desire for belongings and dominance. In the case of those who know how to be satisfied with what they have, even though

---

<sup>22</sup> That is, used to fertilize the ground with their droppings.

they be poor, they are always satisfied; whereas, those who are unsatisfied, though they be rich, are always unsatisfied.

老子：「道德經」：第四十七章

不出戶，知天下；不窺牖，見天道。

其出彌遠，其知彌少。

是以聖人不行而知，不見而明，不為而成。

47. Translation

If one has realized the Tao, even though one does not go out one's door, one can understand the movement of the general trends of all under Heaven. Though one does not look past one's door, one can understand the operations of the totality. If one investigates knowledge solely through the realm of consciousness, the further one goes, the more that knowledge decreases so that one finally realizes that there is more that one does not know. This being so, the sage who has discerned the source of things, though he not go, can understand; though he not see, can put forth a proposition; though he not act, can establish [things].

老子：「道德經」：第四十八章

為學日益，為道日損。

損之又損，以至於無為。

無為而無不為。

取天下常以無事，及其有事，不足以取天下。

48. Translation

If one engages in learning, knowledge increases day by day. If one studies the Tao, knowledge decreases day by day. If it decreases more and more until one arrives at the stage of ignorance, one's knowledge of existence disappears, but one acquires knowledge of non-existence. In governing all below Heaven, one must always rule through non-effort. If one governs all under Heaven with effort, one will not be able to govern it.

老子：「道德經」：第四十九章

聖人常無心，以百姓心為心。

善者，吾善之；不善者，吾亦善之；德善。

信者，吾信之；不信者，吾亦信之；德信。

聖人在天下，歛歛焉，為天下渾其心，

百姓皆注其耳目，聖人皆孩之。

#### 49. Translation

The sage does not have a fixed, unchanging will.<sup>23</sup> Instead, he regards the will of the people as his will. The sage's virtue makes the good people better and the bad people good. He makes sincere people more sincere while the insincere become sincere. In his governing of all under Heaven, the sage does not set up, in regards to his personal matters, his own opinion or view, but rather regards the general will of the people as his own will. The people wonder, "What is the sage intent on, what does he see?" In spite of such scrutiny, the sage merely makes the people ignorant and without desire like a naïve child.

#### 老子：「道德經」：第五十章

出生入死。  
生之徒，十有三；  
死之徒，十有三；  
人之生，動之於死地，亦十有三。  
夫何故。  
以其生之厚。  
蓋聞善攝生者，路行不遇兕虎，入軍不被甲兵；  
兕無所投其角，虎無所用其爪，兵無所容其刃。  
夫何故。以其無死地。

#### 50. Translation

A person's birth and death are the exiting and entering of the Tao. The exit from non-existence (*mu*) to existence (*yu*) is nothing less than birth itself, while the entrance from existence to non-existence is death. Only three out of ten people are alive, and likewise three out of ten are dead. And though living and moving their limbs, another three of ten are on their way to the burial grounds. If one asks why, it is because they place too much importance on life. I have often heard it said that one who accepts life well, though he traverse the earth, does not meet with rhinos or tigers; though he go out to the battlefield, he is not harmed by weapons. The rhino does not pierce anyone with its horn and the tiger does not scratch anyone with its claws. Why is this said? For he who does not cling to life, there is nowhere to die even though he should wish to.

#### 老子：「道德經」：第五十一章

道生之，德畜之，物形之，勢成之。  
是以萬物莫不尊道而貴德。

<sup>23</sup> *Maeum*. Typically, translated as "mind" or "heart." but the translation "will" seems to be more in keeping with the political tone of this passage.



道之尊，德之貴，夫莫之命而常自然。  
故道生之，德畜之；  
長之育之；成之熟之；養之覆之。  
生而不有，為而不恃，  
長而不宰。是謂玄德。

#### 51. Translation

The various things arise due to the Tao, and receiving virtue,<sup>24</sup> are raised. Becoming objects they take on form, and through [its] power, form. Since the Ten-thousand Things cannot exist apart from the Tao and virtue, they regard the Tao and virtue as noble. However, the noble Tao and virtue are not manmade but are instead always natural. Thus the Tao produces the Ten-thousand Things and virtue protects them making them exist, grow, become stable and develop. Though the Tao produces the Ten-thousand Things, it does not claim them as its own; though it acts for their sake, it does not hope for merit; though it makes them grow, it does not interfere. This is called the mysterious *tao-te* (way and virtue).

#### 老子：「道德經」：第五十二章

天下有始，以為天下母。  
既得其母，以知其子，  
復守其母，沒身不殆。  
塞其兌，閉其門，終身不勤。  
開其兌，濟其事，終身不救。  
見小曰明，守柔曰強。  
用其光，復歸其明，無遺身殃；是為襲常。

#### 52. Translation

This world has a source Tao: it is called the matrix.<sup>25</sup> If one realizes the matrix, one can know the sons produced from it: i.e., the Ten-thousand Things. And vice-versa, if one knows the Ten-thousand things, the children, one can preserve the matrix and thus be without peril throughout one's life.

If one closes up the sense functioning in contact with the external world, the Tao, the source of life, does not dry up. If one opens up the sense functioning, entrapped by desires throughout one's life, one cannot obtain salvation. If one looks at the subtle Tao innate to one's body and if one looks at it every day, one's mind will grow bright; and if one possesses a gentle *ki*, one's body will strengthen daily.

<sup>24</sup> *Teok* (Chinese *Te*). This is the same character forming the title of the *Tao-te-ching*.

<sup>25</sup> *Moch'e*. The characters forming this word literally mean "mother-body."

If one illuminates the Ten-thousand Things with the light of the Tao, the mind will grow bright once more; and if one preserves a gentle *ki*, one's body will grow strong so that one does not suffer a premature death.

老子：「道德經」：第五十三章

使我介然有知，行於大道，唯施是畏。  
大道甚夷，而人好徑。  
朝甚除，田甚蕪，倉甚虛；  
服文采，帶利劍，厭飲食，  
財貨有餘；是為盜夸。  
非道也哉。

53. Translation

If I were, for a moment, to possess political knowledge and govern according to the great Tao, I would not feel averse. My only worry would be how to prevent the people, who are so excited by vain pursuits, from walking down the wrong path. Actually, when understood correctly, the great Tao (way) that I am talking about is exceedingly level. However, the people and sovereign of this world like to traverse a narrow and windy political course. The government offices of the country are very clean and elaborate, while in the countryside, the dry and wet fields are desolate and the rice warehouses of the people are completely empty. The bureaucrats adorn themselves with silk and walk around with sharp knives around the waist. In their houses, though they use expensive articles, there is extra remaining. Those who practice this form of governing are called proud thieves who eat while putting forth no effort. This is not the Tao of equality which lowers the high and fills the hollow.

老子：「道德經」：第五十四章

善建者不拔，  
善抱者不脫，子孫以祭祀不輟。  
修之於身，其德乃真；  
修之於家，其德乃餘；  
修之於鄉，其德乃長；  
修之於邦，其德乃丰；  
修之於天下，其德乃普。  
故以身觀身，  
以家觀家，以鄉觀鄉，  
以邦觀邦，以天下觀天下。  
吾何以知天下然哉。以此。

54. Translation

That which is set up well does not fall down; that which is embraced well, does not flee. Firmly maintaining one's inner virtue, one does not let go of it.

The grandchildren never cease to perform the ancestral rites. If one cultivates one's body with this, the virtue becomes authentic. If one leads the family with this, the virtue has remainder; if one leads the village with this, the virtue endures for long; if one leads the nation with this, the virtue is abundant; and if one leads all under Heaven with this, the virtue is wide and great. Thus, one looks at the body with the body, the family with the family, the village with the village, the nation with the nation and all under Heaven with all under Heaven. After all, how am I to know that all under Heaven is so?

### 老子：「道德經」：第五十五章

含「德」之厚，比於赤子。  
毒蟲不螫，猛獸不據，攫鳥不搏。  
骨弱筋柔而握固。  
未知牝牡之合而峻作，精之至也。  
終日號而不嘎，和之至也。  
知和曰「常」，  
知常曰「明」。  
益生曰祥。心使氣曰強。  
物壯則老，謂之不道，不道早已。

#### 55. Translation

He who is replete with virtue can be compared to a newborn babe. Such a person is not stung by fierce bees. Even terrifying tigers do not scratch him with their claws. Even ferocious eagles do not attack him. Though his bones be weak and his sinews pliant, his grip is strong. Though he is still unaware of the mating of female and male, his own rising provides proof of the attainment of the refined *ki* of nature. Though he cry all day, his throat does not become hoarse. This is proof that being in accord with nature, his *ki* of harmony has reached the apex. His *ki* of harmony having reached the apex, he achieves the eternally unchanging Tao. Knowing this ultimate refined *ki* is called clear wisdom. If one only looks out for life, in the end, one cannot live to one's allotted life span. The ability to control the forces of the heart is called strength. It is said that to enter senescence upon development is not the Tao. That which is not the eternally unchanging Tao cannot endure long.

### 老子：「道德經」：第五十六章

知者不言，言者不知。  
挫其銳，解其紛，和其光，  
同其塵，是謂「玄同」。  
故不可得而親，不可得而疏；

不可得而利，不可得而害；  
不可得而貴，不可得而賤。故為天下貴。

#### 56. Translation

He who truly knows does not speak;<sup>26</sup> he who speaks truly does not know. He who truly knows closes up the sense gate of desires. He dulls the sharp and unties the complex. He muddies that which gleams and buries himself within the dust. Such actions are all called the mysterious equality. As something is a certain way, one need not become intimate with it; something being another way, one need not neglect it. Something being a certain way, one need not think to benefit it; something being another way, one need not think to harm it. Something being a certain way, one need not befriend it. By acting thus, one becomes a valued person under Heaven.

#### 老子：「道德經」：第五十七章

以正治國，以奇用兵，以無事取天下。  
吾何以知其然哉。以此：  
天下多忌諱，而民彌貧；  
人多利器，國家滋昏；  
人多伎巧，奇物滋起；  
法令滋彰，盜賊多有。  
故聖人云：  
「我無為，而民自化；  
我好靜，而民自正；  
我無事，而民自富；  
我無欲，而民自朴。」

#### 57. Translation

One commands the nation with righteousness and uses cleverness in battle. Yet righteousness and cleverness are merely relative. Transcending these, one rules all under Heaven with non-action (*muwi*). Regarding how I know this, I give the following example:

The more restrictions there are under Heaven, the poorer the people's lives become. The more beneficial devices of civilization that the people have, the more chaotic the country becomes. The more the people's technology advances, the more bizarre devices increase. Thus the sage says: if I am without action and without desires, the people inspired of their own accord. If I, not moving, remain still, the people will become honest of their own accord. If I do not work, the people will become simple of their own accord.

#### 老子：「道德經」：第五十八章

<sup>26</sup> The Chinese character text contains a mistake here. Instead of *shin* (believe), it should say *eon* (say).

其政悶悶，其民淳淳；  
其政察察，其民缺缺。  
是以聖人方而不割，廉而不劌，  
直而不肆，光而不耀。  
禍兮福之所倚，福兮禍之所伏。  
孰知其極。其無正也。  
正復為奇，善復為妖。  
人之迷，其日固久。

#### 58. Translation

If a nation's government is totally ordinary, the people become simple. When a nation's government becomes complex, the people are disappointed. Unhappiness becomes the cause of happiness and happiness the cause of unhappiness. Yet who realizes that in the end, there is neither good nor bad? The nice once more becomes the bad; good once more becomes evil. Regarding this, the people have long been in a state of delusion. For this reason, the sage, while rectifying the people, does not set form his conclusions. Though he makes them upright, he does so without stinginess. Though he make them honest, he does so without causing distortions. Though he make them bright, he does not make them appear brilliant.

#### 老子：「道德經」：第五十九章

治人事天，莫若嗇。  
夫唯嗇，是謂早服；  
早服謂之重積德；重積德則無不克；  
無不克則莫知其極；莫知其極，可以有國；  
有國之母，可以長久；  
是謂深根固柢，長生久視之道。

#### 59. Translation

In governing the people and serving Heaven, one must follow the example of a farmer planting seedlings. The farmer removes the weeds from the field and entrusts the grain to nature letting it grow it well. In everyday life as well, one must discard vanity, which is like the weeds, and hasten back to man's natural nature<sup>27</sup> so as to accumulate virtue.<sup>28</sup> When one has accumulated virtue again, one cannot help but overcome any desire. When one is able to

<sup>27</sup> *Seong*. Nature of the heart/mind. The fact that English uses the word "nature" in the sense of both "mother nature" and human "nature" makes this phrase seem awkward.

<sup>28</sup> *Teok*. (Chinese *Te*). Normally rendered as virtue. This and other passages demonstrate how the word "virtue" fails to capture what is actually being discussed. Waley chose to translate this as "power." It is said to be cognate with another Chinese character (pronounced *Teuk* in Korean) which means attainment. It might be better to render this character with the phonetic *Teok* (or *Te*) instead of translating it.

overcome all desires, the people will not rush to both extremes. When the people do not rush to both extremes, one arrives at the stage of the Mugeuk<sup>29</sup> and one can thus preserve the nation. When the nation has the Tao, one can also last long. This is called "the Tao which is deep-rooted with the fruit firm so that one lives long without dying."

老子：「道德經」：第六十章

治大國，若烹小鮮。  
以道蒞天下，其鬼不神；  
非其鬼不神，其神不傷人；  
非其神不傷人，聖人亦不傷人。  
夫兩不相傷，故德交歸焉。

60. Translation

Ruling a nation is like boiling a small fish; hence, in a nation ruled according to the Tao, even spirits do not exercise their spiritual powers. It is not that the spirits do not have spiritual powers, rather it is this way because people cannot recognize<sup>30</sup> them. The people do not fail to recognize just spirits: they also do not recognize sages. They do not recognize spirits or sages, but the grace of the spirits and virtue of the sages return to them.

老子：「道德經」：第六十一章

大邦者下流，天下之牝，  
天下之交也。  
牝常以靜勝牡，以靜為下。  
故大邦以下小邦，則取小邦；  
小邦以下大邦，則取大邦。  
故或下以取，或下而取。  
大邦不過欲兼畜人，小邦不過欲入事人。  
夫兩者各得所欲，大者宜為下。

61. Translation

If a large nation is likened to the sea, it belongs to the lower waters where all the world's minor nations gather together; it is where the world's minor nations converge. Moreover, if a large nation, liked to an animal, is regarded as the female, the various minor nations of the world are like many males searching for a single female. The female, with a passive attitude, remains still, but wins over the active males. Since it maintains a passive attitude, it controls the proud males with its humble attitude. Therefore, if it is humble, as a large nation, towards small

<sup>29</sup> The Mu Ultimate. Mu means "no" or "not," but "non-ultimate" is not what is being discussed here. Rather, Mu stands on its own as a philosophical concept.

<sup>30</sup> Are not conscious of them. Are not aware of them.

nations, small nations will, of their own accord, accept it; and if small nations, as such, are humble towards large nations, they receive their protection.

Thus by being humble, they receive deferential treatment and protection. The large nation merely wishes to safeguard the small nation's people, while the small nation merely wishes to enter into cooperation with the large nation. The large nation and small nation each achieve that which they hope for. Consequently, a large nation must be humble in regard to small nations.

**老子：「道德經」：第六十二章**

道者萬物之奧。善人之寶，不善人之所保。  
美言可以市尊，美行可以加人。  
人之不善，何棄之有。  
故立天子，置三公，  
雖有拱璧以先駟馬，  
不如坐進此道。  
古之所以貴此道者何。  
不曰：求以得，有罪以免邪。故為天下貴。

62. Translation

The Tao is the source hidden behind the Ten-thousand Things. A good person regards it as a unique treasure. Moreover, bad people carry within them the Tao.

Truly nice, beautiful and good words can be a thing sold without a price to many people. Even a person who has not awakened is still one who carries the Tao so how can you cast a person away? Thus in human society, setting up the Son of Heaven,<sup>31</sup> assigning ministers, using precious gems as ritual objects, riding carriages and seeking the wise is not equal to simple stepping forward to carry out this Tao. Why has the Tao been valued from ancient times? It is because one receive it though one does not seek it; it is because, though one has committed a misdeed, one is forgiven. Thus all in the world value it.

**老子：「道德經」：第六十三章**

為無為，事無事，味無味。  
圖難於其易，為大於其細；  
天下難事，必作於易，  
天下大事，必作於細。  
是以聖人終不為大，故能成其大。  
夫輕諾必寡信，多易必多難。  
是以聖人猶難之，故終無難矣。

---

<sup>31</sup> The emperor.

### 63. Translation

Do not do that which is artificial, do that which is natural. Do not do work that is artificial, do work which is natural. Do not have artificial hobbies, have hobbies that are natural. Big things are born of small things; the many rises from the few. Pay back enemies with virtue. Difficult tasks are planned beginning with easy tasks. Big events begin with trivial events. Thus all difficult tasks under Heaven definitely began with easy tasks. All large tasks under Heaven surely begin with trivial tasks. For this reason, the sage, to the very end has no intention of becoming big and is thus able to become big. Usually, easy assent is a definite sign of insincerity. Work that is too easy definitely involves a great amount of difficult work. Thus the sage, to the contrary, regards easy tasks as difficult so that, in the end, there is nothing which is difficult.

#### 老子：「道德經」：第六十四章

其安易持，其未兆易謀。  
其脆易泮，其微易散。  
為之於未有，治之於未亂。  
合抱之木，生於毫末；  
九層之台，起於累土；  
千里之行，始於足下。  
民之從事，常於幾成而敗之。  
慎終如始，則無敗事。

### 64. Translation

That which is stable is easy to maintain; before signs<sup>32</sup> have appeared, it is easy to take care of a task. The brittle is easy to break; that which is minute is easily dispersed. One must take care of a task before it arises and gather things up before their order is destroyed. Even a tree the size of a man's embrace begins with a sprout the size of a hair's tip. Even a nine-story pagoda begins with a shovel-full of earth. A thousand-*li* journey begins with the first step. Those who oppose this natural principle fail; those who grasp are lost. Thus the sage, not intending, never fails; as he does not grasp, he never loses anything. When people work, they always fail when the work is almost completed. If they are careful as the end of the work as they were when first beginning, they do not fail. For this reason, the sage, being without any desire for possession, does not crave goods hard to obtain. Studying the study which is not a study, and returns to the Tao which the multitude have rashly disregarded. In this way, he merely preserves the natural nature of the Ten-thousand Things; he does not dare undertake tasks characterized by artificiality.

---

<sup>32</sup> In other words, it is easy to take care of matters beforehand, i.e., before a crisis becomes evident.



## 老子：「道德經」：第六十五章

古之善為道者，非以明民，將以愚之。  
民之難治，以其智多。  
故以智治國，國之賊；  
不以智治國，國之福。  
知此兩者亦稽式。  
常知稽式，是謂「玄德」。  
「玄德」深矣，遠矣，與物反矣，然後乃至大順。

### 65. Translation

In ancient times, those who governed the nation by means of the Tao made the people foolish rather than wise. The people are difficult to govern because their wisdom is great. He who rules the country with wisdom is a thief who inflicts damage on the country. If a country is not ruled with wisdom, it becomes, to the contrary, happy. When it comes to ruling a country, these two things become one's model. Constant awareness of this model is called the unfathomable mysterious virtue. The mysterious virtue, being profound, returns with things. Indeed, that which returns accords with the order of Nature.

## 老子：「道德經」：第六十六章

江海之所以能為百谷王者，  
以其善下之，故能為百谷王。  
是以聖人欲上民，必以言下之；  
欲先民，必以身後之。  
是以聖人處上而民不重，處前而民不害。  
是以天下樂推而不厭。  
以其不爭，故天下莫能與之爭。

### 66. Translation

The streams flowing down many valleys gather together to become rivers and the sea, that is, the king. Rivers and lakes are in the lowest areas, lower than the streams and can therefore gather the stream water so as to become king. For this reason, if the politician who wishes to govern the people intends to be above the people, he must surely make his pronouncements low. If he wishes to stand in front of the people, he must place himself behind them. Thus, in a place ruled by the government of the philosopher, the people do not feel any pressure. Though he be in front of the people, they do not consider him an obstacle. This way, all the people under Heaven do not despise him, but rather look up to him with joy.

This is because he believes, as the basic principle of politics, that he should not fight in opposition to the people. Thus there is no one in the world to fight in opposition with him.

### 老子：「道德經」：第六十七章

天下皆謂我道大，似不肖。  
夫唯大，故似不肖。  
若肖，久矣其細也夫。  
我有三寶，持而保之。  
一曰慈，  
二曰儉，  
三曰不敢為天下先。  
慈故能勇；儉故能廣；  
不敢為天下先，故能成器長。  
今舍慈且勇；舍儉且廣；  
舍後且先；死矣。  
夫慈以戰則勝，以守則固。  
天將救之，以慈衛之。

#### 67. Translation

The people of the world all accept that my Tao is vast but say that it seems to be missing something. It is because the Tao is truly vast that it seems to be missing something. If it were completely big, it would already be small. I have three treasures which I safeguard and protect.

The first is a heart of love towards people. The second is a frugal attitude towards things. Third is behavior which does not set out to be ahead of others. Loving people ironically allows me to be brave. Frugality ironically prevents me from being destitute and ensures that I have abundance. Not setting out to be ahead of others ironically allows me to be a leader. Forgetting love and trying to be brave, forgetting frugality and trying to have abundance, forgetting to step back and trying to get ahead of others leads to destruction. In general, if a person fights with his mind<sup>33</sup> he wins; if he tries to protect (himself), he becomes rigid. If Heaven intends to rescue someone, it protects him with love.

### 老子：「道德經」：第六十八章

善為士者，不武；  
善戰者，不怒；  
善勝敵者，不與；  
善用人者，為之下。  
是謂不爭之德，  
是謂用人之力，  
是謂配天古之極。

#### 68. Translation

<sup>33</sup> According to the Chinese text, this should read, "If a person fights with a loving (mind), he wins." I think that this is what the author actually meant to say here. He seems to have simply forgotten to add the word "loving."

A great warrior does not use martial force. He who is good at fighting does not become angry. He who defeats bandits does not fight with them. He who uses people well becomes their subordinate. This—non-competitiveness with others, is the rule of virtue; it is the capacity to use people well; and it is the ultimate principle of unity with nature.

老子：「道德經」：第六十九章

用兵有言：  
「吾不敢為主，而為客；  
不敢進寸，而退尺。」  
是謂行無行；攘無臂；  
扔無敵；執無兵。  
禍莫大於輕敵，輕敵幾喪吾寶。  
故抗兵相若，哀者勝矣。

69. Translation

Long ago, the masters of soldiering said, “One must not start a fight. Wait until someone else starts it. Do not go out to fight but instead retreat and protect.” This means that even though one marches amidst the formless, one can ward off attack even without using one’s arms. Even without weapons, one can lay hold (of the enemy) and even without a rival army, one can advance. There is no great mishap than to regard the enemy lightly. By disregarding the enemy, one loses the three treasures which I have referred to. For this reason, he who feels that use of the military to fight is a tragedy will be victorious.

老子：「道德經」：第七十章

吾言甚易知，甚易行。  
天下莫能知，莫能行。  
言有宗，事有君。  
夫唯無知，是以不我知。  
知我者希，則我者貴。  
是以聖人被褐而懷玉。

70. Translation

In speech, there is that which is fundamental. In actions, there is that which is fundamental. My words are extremely easy to understand and carry out, yet the people of the world still do not understand them and cannot carry them out. Since I merely have knowledge of nothingness (*mu*),<sup>34</sup> people of the world cannot understand me. If few understand me, to that

<sup>34</sup> Mu is normally used as a negation to mean “not” or “not exist.” Here it is being used as a philosophical concept, and as such, it is not easily translated.

extent, this existence called “myself” becomes valuable. Thus, the sage wears hemp garments over the body but conceals jade on his chest.

老子：「道德經」：第七十一章

知不知，尚矣；不知知，病也。  
聖人不病，以其病病。  
夫唯病病，是以不病。

71. Translation

The supreme wisdom knows what everything is. It is a disease to not know what knowing is. A disease, when seen as a disease, is not a disease.

老子：「道德經」：第七十二章

民不畏威，  
則大威至。  
無狎其所居，  
無厭其所生。  
夫唯不厭，  
是以不厭。  
是以聖人自知不自見；  
自愛不自貴。  
故去彼取此。

72. Translation

When people, fearing power, do not know what to do, they encounter the power of nature. People must not disregard their place. They must not hate their life. Because if they do not have hearts of hate, they will naturally not hate anything. Thus the sage, though he knows, does not reveal himself; though he loves, he does not value himself. He therefore discards private intentions and chooses instead the non-acting (*muwi*), natural Tao.

老子：「道德經」：第七十三章

勇於敢則殺，勇於不敢則活。  
此兩者，或利或害。  
天之所惡，孰知其故。  
天之道，  
不爭而善勝，不言而善應，  
不召而自來，繹然而善謀。  
天網恢恢，疏而不失。

---

73. Translation

If one is brave regarding the risky, one dies. If one is brave regarding that which is not risky, one lives. These two things can be beneficial or harmful, but who knows why Heaven hates it? For this reason, even the sage finds it difficult to understand. The Way of Heaven is to win without a fight, to answer well without even speaking, to come though not called, to remain still yet be inclusive. Heavens net is so vast that it does not leak in spite of being sparse.

**老子：「道德經」：第七十四章**

民不畏死，奈何以死懼之。  
若使民常畏死，而為奇者，  
吾得執而殺之，孰敢。  
常有司殺者殺。  
夫代司殺者殺，是謂代大匠斲，  
夫代大匠斲者，希有不傷其手矣。

74. Translation

If the people do not fear dying, how can one use death to scare them? If one always makes people fear death so that no one does wrong, I can lay hold of that person and kill him. But who dares to kill? There is always someone in charge of killing. However, if one kills in place of this person, this is like cutting timber in place of a carpenter.<sup>35</sup> Generally speaking, of those who cuts a timber in place of a carpenter, almost none fails to hurt his hand.

**老子：「道德經」：第七十五章**

民之飢，以其上食稅之多，是以飢。  
民之難治，以其上之有為，是以難治。  
民之輕死，以其上求生之厚，是以輕死。  
夫唯無以生為者，是賢於貴生。

75. Translation

The reason the people starve is that the politicians above them receive a large amount of tax revenues. As a result, they starve. Difficulty in ruling the people is because the politicians above them carry out the artificial politics of action (*yuwei*). The reason that the people take death lightly is that the politicians above only want to live well themselves. As a result, people take death lightly.<sup>36</sup> This is because to not live solely for the sake of life, is better than treasuring life.

**老子：「道德經」：第七十六章**

人之生也柔弱，其死也堅強。  
草木之生也柔脆，其死也枯槁。  
故堅強者死之徒，柔弱者生之徒。

<sup>35</sup> The idea here seems to be that society may have the need for the occasional execution, but this can be handled by professional executioners. Murder need not be a general practice.

<sup>36</sup> That is, they do not fear death.

是以兵強則滅，木強則折。  
強大處下，柔弱處上。

#### 76. Translation

A person's body is soft while living but becomes stiff when he dies. Grasses likewise are pliant when living but dry up when they die. Hence, softness and pliancy are signs of life, stiffness and strength are signs of death. For this reason, a country with a strong military falls to other countries; a tree with strong limbs breaks in the wind. The victory of weak nations over strong ones is a principle of nature.

#### 老子：「道德經」：第七十七章

天之道，其猶張弓歟。  
高者抑之，下者舉之；  
有餘者損之，不足者補之。  
天之道，損有餘而補不足。  
人之道，則不然，損不足以奉有餘。  
孰能有餘以奉天下，唯有道者。  
是以聖人為而不恃，功成而不處，其不欲見賢。

#### 77. Translation

The Tao of Heaven is like the stringing of a bow. When stringing a bow, one presses down on that which is high and presses up on that which is low. That which is long is shortened and the short part is pulled.

The Tao of Heaven likewise reduces that which is left over and supplements that which is lacking. However, the Way of Man, to the contrary, takes from those who do not have enough and gives to those which have abundance. Who can give to those under Heaven that which is left over? Only one who possesses the Tao. For this reason, the sage, though he works, does not seek recompense; though he achieves merit, does not remain. This is because he does not seek to display his wisdom.

#### 老子：「道德經」：第七十八章

天下莫柔弱於水，而攻堅強者莫之能勝，以其無以易之。  
弱之勝強，柔之勝剛，  
天下莫不知，莫能行。  
是以聖人云：  
「受國之垢，是謂社稷主；  
受國不祥，是為天下王。」  
正言若反。

#### 78. Translation

In this world, nothing is softer or weaker than water. At the same time, when it comes to striking and overcoming that which is hard and strong, there is nothing better than water. For this, nothing can replace water. In this world, though aware that the weak overcomes the strong and the soft the firm, no one can carry this out in practice. Thus, the sage has said, “He who accepts the disgrace of the nation is its sovereign. He who accepts the misfortune of the world is its king.” Seen in this light, true principles appear as if they are their opposites.

### 老子：「道德經」：第七十九章

和大怨，必有餘怨；  
報怨以德，安可以為善。  
是以聖人執左契，而不責於人。  
有德司契，無德司徹。  
天道無親，常與善人。

#### 79. Translation

Great discontent, though assuaged, is not completely dispelled. How can this then be the ultimate good? For this reason, the sage, though he possess a contract of debt, does not demand repayment from the debtor. Moreover, he who has virtue possesses a contract of transfer to others while he who is devoid of virtue has a contract to receive transfer of articles.<sup>37</sup> The Heavenly Tao, i.e. the principles of nature, has no personal bias and always takes the side of the sage.

### 老子：「道德經」：第八十章

小國寡民。  
使有什伯之器而不用；  
使民重死而不遠徙。  
雖有舟輿，無所乘之，  
雖有甲兵，無所陳之。  
使民復結繩而用之。  
甘其食，美其服，安其居，樂其俗。  
鄰國相望，雞犬之聲相聞，  
民至老死，不相往來。

#### 80. Translation

---

<sup>37</sup> I don't quite understand what the author intends here. The idea may simply be that the virtuous are giving and the non-virtuous obsessed with taking. Other translators evidently have a tough time with this passage. Waley has, “For he who has the ‘power’ of Tao is the Grand Almoner; he who has not the ‘power’ is the Grand Perquisitor.” Pak Ilbong, a Korean translator, has “The politician with virtue governs with mere promisory notes, while the politician without virtue strives to gather taxes.” (My translation from the Korean.)

In the small state inhabited by a small citizenry, even if weapons exist, people are prevented from using them. People are led to think of killing as a great matter and are kept from moving to other areas. Even though boats and carriages exist, they do not go out to war. The people return to the period prior to history. People are led to plow their own fields and relish the grains they have cultivated. They are led to think highly of the clothes they have woven. They are led to live peacefully in the houses they have built, and to joyfully practice their own customs. Though they can look across at the neighboring country and the cries of chickens and barking of dogs are heard from across the way, the people, to the day they grow old and die, would never venture back and forth.

老子：「道德經」：第八十一章

信言不美，美言不信。  
善者不辯，辯者不善。  
知者不博，博者不知。  
聖人不積，既以為人已愈有，  
既以與人已愈多。  
天之道，利而不害；  
聖人之道，為而不爭。

**81. Translation**

Reliable words lack embellishment; words with embellishment are not reliable. An honest person does not make excuses; he who makes excuses is not honest. One who truly knows cannot know all things extensively; he who knows all things extensively does not really know. The sage does not store up virtue for himself. By acting for the sake of others, he acquires greater virtue. By giving virtue to others, he acquires more virtue. The Tao of Heaven does not harm the Ten Thousand Things but rather benefits them; the Tao of the Sage is to work without struggling against others.