

*Tao Te Ching, translated by Daniel Christopher June*

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1

The path that can be passed is not the eternal path

The name that can be named is not the eternal name.

Nameless, it is the origin of heaven and earth

Named, she is the Mother of All.

Innocence sees the secret

Experience sees manifestations.

These two are of the same source

Though differently named.

It is mystery, mystery and again mystery

The gate of all wonder.

2

On Earth

We see beauty as beauty

because of ugliness.

We recognize virtue as virtue

because of vice.

Hard and easy complete

Long and short compare.

High and low lean each on each.

String and voice harmonize.

Front and back encircle.

Thus the sage works relaxed

and teaches wordlessly;

Many impose and he dismisses none.

He makes, but not to own

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Works, but not to earn.

He accomplishes but doesn't stop.

Because he doesn't dwell on it

it never dies.

3.

Avoid exulting greatness  
Lest the people compete,  
Avoid prizing treasures  
Lest the people steal,  
Avoid parading temptations  
Lest the souls of the people seethe.

The Sage's rule  
Empties their soul  
to fill their core,  
Weakens their will  
To bronze their bones.

Lacking cunning and desire  
they become truly cunning and relaxed.

Working without work

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Everything works out.

4.

Tao of the empty heart

Is yet never poured empty.

Her abyss is the source of all

Blunt the blade

Soften the knot

Cloud the glare

Settle the dust

Such depth!

She seems forever.

I know not her parent

She precedes God.



5.

Heaven and Earth are unsentimental

They look upon people  
as mere grass for the fire

The Sage is unsentimental

He looks upon people  
as mere grass for the fire.

Heaven and Earth

are like a bellows  
Emptied, they are not exhausted  
Moved they move anew

But if a man talks long

He counts himself out.

Better to sit long  
and encounter his inner.

6.

The Spirit of the Valley does not expire.

She, the secret womb of the mare.

And the secret womb, our gate.

She births heaven and earth.

She bides and abides forever

Use her inexhaustibility.

7.

Heaven is eternal, Earth enduring.

Heaven and earth are eternal, enduring

Because they do not live for themselves

They live eternally.

Therefore the Sage

Stays in the background

While in the foreground.

He rejects himself to preserve himself.

Is he not without self?

Therefore he fulfills himself.

8.

Greatness is like water.

Water benefits all

without fuss.

It cleanses where few

care to go

Thus it approximates the Tao.

Great is a humble home

Great is the deep heart.

Great is a kind smile.

Great is sincere speech.

Great is fair rule.

Great is competent work.

Great is graceful movement.

He is fussless,

Therefore faultless.

9.

The bow held taut and overly taut

Better to be released.

The knife ground sharp and over sharp

Soon will break apart.

Pile up gold and jewels

And try to keep out the thieves!

Pile up airs and arrogance

and try to keep your dignity!

Do your work and then step back:

This is Heaven's Way.

## 10.

Are you able to enfold body and soul

As One without two?

Can you gather, grow

Yet remain newborn?

Can you shine the mind's mirror

Yet make no mark?

Can you love and lead the people

And set aside all cunning?

Can you remain a faithful mother bird

As heaven blows and eases?

Shining wide, and penetrating

The four directions

Can you remain inactive?

Engender and rear

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Engender, not owning

Work without holding

Lead without controlling

--this the subtle power.

11.

The spokes of a wheel

Depend on the empty hub

The molded clay bowl

Depends on the inner void

Fashioning a room

Depends on the hollowed door and windows

Usefulness gives benefits

Emptiness gives usefulness.



12.

Blare blinds

Cacophony deafens

Spice numbs

Endless hunting

catches madness

Rare treasures

Leave you stumped

The sage fills not his eyes, but his heart

He dismisses the first and holds to the latter.

13.

Both honor and dishonor bring anxiety.

Both dignity and calamity oppress the body.

What is meant by this first?

Honor brings you low

Receive it with dread.

Both honor and its opposite forebode.

What is meant by the second?

Without a body what would I worry about?

Therefore honor your earthly body

As one fit for heaven.

Love your earthly body

and you will be fit for heaven.

14.

See the unseen and name it invisible.

Hear the unheard and name it inaudible.

Grasp the ungraspable and name it intangible.

These three cannot be further gained.

For they work into one

Whose above is not bright

Whose below is not dark.

The infinite nameless thread

Returns in turn

From nonexistence.

Call this 'formless form.'

Call this 'elusive illusion.'

Approach it and you will see no face

Follow it and you will see no back.

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Stay with the ancient Way

To master present matters.

Able to know the ancient origination

This is called the thread of the Way.

15.

Those ancient masters with skillfull fingers

Keen in penetrating subtle depths

Are themselves too deep to fathom.

They are unfathomable.

So let's just try to describe their appearance.

They are cautious as walking a wintery river.

Vigilant as expecting four directions of enemies.

Courteous as a guest.

Supple as melting ice.

Promising as uncut jade.

Open as a valley

Obscure as murk.

They can settle the murk pure

with a long easy calm.

Or they can shake it

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with an enduring stir  
and bring it to life.

Holding this Way

The sage does not crave fulfillment

Thus as he grows old

He makes the world new.

16.

Attain utter emptiness.

Keep constantly relaxed.

Now the many arise together

Let's turn to their returning.

As all these things

Burst and bloom

Each in turn returns to its source.

Returning to the source is called relax.

This is returning to life.

Returning to life is called eternal.

(Knowing the eternal brings enlightenment.

Not knowing the eternal brings disaster)

Knowing the eternal makes one open.

Openness makes one Catholic.

Catholicity makes one noble.

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Nobility makes one heavenly.

Heaven is the Way.

Heaven makes one eternal.

Lose your life, and you lose life's dangers.



17.

The people do best to know the Great.

Second best to love him.

Third best to fear him.

Worst of all to hate him.

Faith is insufficient;

You will find no worthy faith.

Quietly esteem words.

Put your work and deeds in order

And the people will say:

marvel at what we did!

18.

When the great Way is forgotten

Virtue and Humanity burst freely.

When people merely know the right way

They become hypocrites.

When the family dissolves

They praise family values.

When the heart grows cold

They praise love.

When the government fails

They praise patriotism.

When politicians are worthless

They praise them the more.

19.

Drop sagacity, drop wisdom

The people will profit a hundred fold.

Drop kindness, drop duty

The people will recover family love.

Drop learning, drop ceremony

You'll drop sorrows as well.

Drop craftiness, drop profit

Thieves and bandits will cease.

These four are garnish,

Now the dish:

See the simple, immure the pure.

Check the selfish, lessen your urge

## 20.

"Yes!" and "sure" sounds little different.

Good and evil sound much alike.

The worrier can't not worry!

What endless wilderness for his wonders:

Everyone else is just happy happy

Life's a feast, and they feast their eyes.

I alone am unimpressed

Like a newborn unlearned to smile.

Or a man worn and weary from his wandering.

Everyone has everything.

My pockets hold only my hands.

I'm a fool, my mind rolling and roiling.

The people are as bright as brilliance

I'm as dim as darkness.

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The masses are sharp as shrapnel.

I'm as dull as a dullard,

Peaceful as a sea storm

And Whirling like a twister.

They have purpose

While I sit like mud.

Ha! But I alone sip from the Mother's nipple!

21.

Ultimate power is exactly the Way to follow

The Way's active essence entirely eludes, being utterly subtle.

Subtle! Elusive! But its core has form.

Subtle! Elusive! But its core holds tangibles.

Hidden! Obscure! But its core is made of essence.

Its essence is most real, its core contains concrete proof.

From the beginning till now, her name has never departed.

Through her we see the beginning of the many.

Through the many I see their birth from her.

Through this.

22.

Bend then overcome.

Twist then straighten.

Empty then fill.

Exhaust then renew.

Spend then gain.

Increase then confuse.

Therefore the great man:

Model of heaven on earth.

Not self-reflecting he shines.

Not self-righteous he glows.

Not boasting he merits

Not bragging he is legend.

Striving not,

Nobody can oppose him.

The ancients said

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Bend then overcome

Empty words?

Perfecting words.



23.

Speak but brief and natural.

Tempests die before noon.

Torrents die before dusk.

What created heaven and earth?

Even they soon die.

How much quicker goes man.

Therefore, daily walk the Way.

Identify yourself with Tao.

Power identifies with power.

Loss identifies with loss.

Identify with Tao, and you will enjoy the Tao.

Identify with power, and enjoy power.

Identify with loss, and also enjoy loss.

Faith fails, why trust it?

24.

You can't stand firm on your tiptoes.

You can't walk firm with a swagger.

Self-display never shines

Self-righteousness never impresses

Self-adoration never charms.

Self-praise never endures.

The Taoist regards over-activity as gluttony.

Nature detests it.

Therefore the Taoist doesn't indulge

25.

There is a thing chaotic and whole

Preceding in turn both heaven and earth.

How tranquil!

How formless! and yet

How timeless!

She encircles all and never tires

She births great heaven below.

I don't know her name...

Love her, call her 'Tao.'

If pressed, I would call her "Great."

"Great" means "Everywhere"

"Everywhere" means "Always"

"Always" means "center returning."

Tao is great heaven and great earth

Tao is also the great Man.

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In earth there are four greats,  
The great Man unites all of them.

Man follows earth

Earth follows heaven

Heaven follows Tao

Tao naturally follows herself.

26.

The Heavy gives birth to the light.

Quietness masters agitation.

Thus, the great man never ceases

To drag his heavy cart.

Even amidst luxury he holds to the heavy

Even amidst concubines he holds his peace.

Master of a thousand armies,

Yet he takes the world lightly.

Lightness escapes its heavy birth

Agitation loses its quiet master.

27.

The master traveler leaves no footprint

The master speaker makes no slip

The master calculator uses no device.

The masterly shut door needs no bolt or lock

Yet nobody can budge it.

The masterly closed knot needs no extra strings

Yet nobody can open it.

Therefore, the Master rescues all men

And rejects not a one.

He is ever master at rescuing things.

By rejecting nothing,

He walks in the light.

The good man is the bad man's teacher.

The bad man is the good man's resource.

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To dishonor your teacher or to neglect your resource

Even a wise man would be foolish to do that.

This is the crucial lesson.

28.

To know your cock

Coddle your hen;

Become the earth's river of the valley.

Become the earth's river of the valley

And you will remain eternally powerful:

Revert to the state of pristine infancy.

To realize your whiteness

Coddle your blackness.

Become the pattern of earth.

Become the pattern of earth

And you will remain eternally powerful:

Revert to the state of limitlessness.

The one of understanding

Though glorious, keeps humble

Become as humble as the earth's river of the valley.



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The earth's river remains eternally powerful

Being able to return again to purity.

Purity scatters, and then once again coheres.

The master uses it, then becomes himself useful

For a great ruler hurts nobody.

29.

Accept your desire to master the earth

But actually do it!

I think you'll fail.

The earth is heaven's bowl

It won't suffer trifling.

Bend it and it breaks.

Grasp it and it drops.

For some lead and some follow,

Some gasp and some sigh,

Some strengthen and some weaken,

Some conquer and some fall ;

Therefore the master abandons

Extremes, excess, and extravagance.

## 30.

Walking the Way,  
The master helps the people,  
But not by lording armies over them.  
Actions rebound.

The army's place is to weed out briars.  
But its passing blights our crops.

The commander wins his resolve  
Then stops.  
He dares not prefer violence.  
Resolved, he doesn't boast.  
Resolved, he isn't proud.  
Resolved, yet not for profit.  
Resolved, yet not to dominate.

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Some things ripen and then decay.

This is not the Way.

What misses the way quickly dies.

31.

Even a glorious army is a misfortunate tool.

Nature hates it.

The Taoist quickly drops it.

The philosopher in daily life honors his left hand.

Commanding an army honors requires the right.

So sometimes he grasps this misfortunate tool in his right hand.

Do not decry the philosopher his tools.

Avoid them but at times use them.

Maintaining the peace is the best use.

Conquer, but do not relish it.

Glory in conquering, but not in slaughtering.

He who delights in slaughtering

Will lose what he desires on earth.

Fortune gives with her left hand.

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Misfortune gives with her right.

The second in command stands to the left.

The first in command stands to the right.

Speak upon war as you would a eulogy.

It kills the life and love of men,

And whips tears into their eyes.

Treat victory at war as a eulogy.

32.

The eternal Tao is nameless.

Purity, even a drop,

Rebuffs heaven's command!

Kings can only honor it,

All things respect it.

Heaven and earth mix,

Sweet dew falls

The people without force

Harmonize their course.

There have been kings from the start.

Names and powers keep multiplying.

Therefore, act and know when to stop.

Knowing your limit repels danger.

*Tao Te Ching, translated by Daniel Christopher June*

Look at the Tao in heaven:

Imagine creeks running into rivers,

And rivers again running

Into the great wide sea.



33.

Knowing others makes you wise.

Knowing yourself makes you enlightened.

Conquering others makes you strong.

Conquering yourself makes you powerful.

Know how to be satisfied and you are already wealthy.

Know how to be powerful and you are already a king.

You will never lose your place.

Even when you die you will keep it.

34.

Oh all pervading Tao!

You reach left, you reach right.

All things rely on your nourishment,

You deny none.

You complete your task,

Seeking no honor for it.

You cloth and feed all things,

And yet command none of them.

You are ever without formality

You count yourself among the small things

All things bow back into you

Though you don't demand them to.

You may be named "Great"

Because you don't try to be great.

*Tao Te Ching, translated by Daniel Christopher June*

Not trying to be, so you are.

35.

Grasp the great symbol of All.

And thereby pass harm into tranquility.

Give music and food to the travelers who stay.

Speaking of the Tao is tasteless.

From a higher view it's not worth the visit.

For good ears it's not worth the speech.

Instead use it and it will never be exhausted.

36.

If you wish to reduce something, first expand it.

If you wish to weaken something, first strengthen it.

If you wish to abandon something, first exalt it.

If you wish to take something, first give to it.

This is an enlightened secret.

Tender and yielding conquers the hard and strong.

Fish can't survive out of water.

Therefore, don't parade weapons and war before the people.

37.

The Tao never acts

Yet leaves nothing undone.

Rulers able to hold this way in all things

Naturally Transfigure.

Transfigure, and old habits awaken

Restrain them with the purity of the Nameless.

The nameless is truly void of habit.

Free of habit, it relaxes:

The whole earth rests content.

38.

Superior power is weak:

That's how it possesses power;

Inferior power clings to power

That's how it loses power.

Superior power relaxes from work

Relaxes in order to work.

Inferior power works to seem busy.

Tenses in order to work.

Superior kindness

Works for the sake of kindness

And not to seem kind.

Superior virtue

Works for the sake of virtue

And not to seem virtuous.

Superior rituals

Work for the sake of ritual.

It takes no heed what the people think.

It rolls up its sleeves and sets to work.

Lose the Way and you resort to virtue.

Lose virtue and you resort to kindness.

Lose kindness and you resort to righteousness.

Lose righteous and you resort to ritual.

Lose even ritual,

And faith and sincerity thin out.

Then you're in trouble.

Before you have gained wisdom

The Tao has already bloomed.

Folly has already sprouted.

The master dwells in the thick,

And escapes the thin.



*Tao Te Ching, translated by Daniel Christopher June*

Grasp the fruit and not the flower.

Ignore the latter and take the former.

39.

The ancients gained unity becoming one.

Heaven gained unity becoming pure

Earth gained unity becoming stable

The gods gained unity becoming spiritual

The valleys gained unity becoming lush

Life gained unity thus thriving.

The rulers gained unity thus ruling the earth.

How did they gain it?

Heaven lacking would shatter

Earth lacking would quake.

Spirits lacking would vaporize

Valleys lacking would flood

Life lacking would overpopulate and go extinct.

The upright rulers lacking would topple.

Therefore, base your superiority upon humility.

*Tao Te Ching, translated by Daniel Christopher June*

Thus kings regard themselves low as orphans.

Is not humility a firm root?

The greatest men pull their wagon with no hope for praise.

They do not wish to tinkle like jingling gems

But to rumble like staunch boulders.

40.

Circular is the Tao's movement

Tender is the Tao's use.

All things spring from her

All things come from nothingness.

41.

The superior scholar hearing the Tao

Practices diligently always

The mediocre scholar hearing the Tao

Practices sometimes and sometimes ignores

The inferior scholar hearing the Tao

Laughs out loud.

If he didn't laugh, the Tao would be unworthy.

Thus we have the saying:

The Tao seems Dark

Progressing on the Way seems a retreat

Walking the level Way seems rugged

Highest power seems as low as a valley

Utter whiteness seems tainted.

Utter power seems lacking

Solid power seems wobbly.

Solid reality seems shifting.

*Tao Te Ching, translated by Daniel Christopher June*

The great square lacks borders

The great vessel lacks completeness

The great music lacks loudness

The great Tao is hidden without name

And for this very reason

The Tao provides and fulfills.

42.

Tao begets Unity

Unity begets Duality

Duality begets Trinity

Trinity begets all.

All things shoulder the yin

And embrace the yang.

Blending the breath between these

Brings harmony.

For this reason,

those who detest widowers and orphans

Are unworthy

Kings title themselves by these names.

Sometimes a gain brings loss

And sometimes a loss brings gain

Others have taught it and so I will I,

*Tao Te Ching, translated by Daniel Christopher June*

The violent die violently

I make this teaching chief.



43.

The world's softest

Gallops over the world's hardest.

Nothingness can enter

Where there isn't a crack.

I therefore know that nonaction benefits:

Wordless the wisdom

Motionless the benefit.

Few in the world obtain it.

44.

Fame and health, which is dearer?

Health and wealth, which is best?

Gain and loss, which is worst?

Therefore, passion exhausts.

Therefore, hoards impoverish.

The contented man shames nobody.

The restrained man risks nothing.

And so he long endures.

45.

Utter perfection seems flawed

Yet its use is never exhausted.

Utter fullness seems void

Yet its use is never spent.

Great Justice seems crooked

Great skill seems clumsy

Great eloquence seems stammering.

Briskness daunts the cold

Stillness beats the heat

Peaceful and Serene rules the World.

46.

The world has Tao:

Racehorses are bridled to haul fertilizer.

The world lacks Tao:

War horses thrive in the countryside.

There is no greater calamity

Than discontentment

There is no greater calamity

Than wanting more.

Therefore be content with contentment

And you'll be content indeed!

47.

Without stepping out your door

    You can know the world

Without looking out your window

    You can see the way of heaven

The more you travel

The less you know.

Thus the sage

Travels not

Yet knows

Looks not

Yet names

Works not

Yet wins.

48.

Seek knowledge daily

And you'll gain.

Seek Tao daily

And you'll lose

Lose it

And you'll lose again.

Thus strive until you can't strive.

Without action yet not without action

Conquer the world forever thus

Without meddling.

The man of meddling affairs

Hasn't the stuff for conquering worlds.

49.

The sage lacks a set mind  
Thus everyone's mind becomes one.

To the good I am good  
The the bad I am also good  
For virtue is excellent.

To the truthful I am truthful  
The the liars I am also truthful.  
For virtue is excellent.

The sage abides the world in peace.  
By universalizing the world in his mind,  
The sage regards all people as his children.

## 50.

From life comes death.

Three out of ten men are friends of life

Three out of ten men are friends of death

Three out of ten men are merely passing

From one to the other.

Why is this?

Because they all live too intensely

But the remaining one lives a good life.

He travels the land and fears neither rhino nor tiger.

Enters the battlefield with neither shield nor sword

The rhino has no place to sink its horn

The Tiger has no place to set his claws

The soldiers have no place to press their blade.

Why is this?

Because he lacks an appointment with death.



51.

Tao begets things

Power nourishes them

Environment shapes them

Circumstances complete them

That is why all things

Worship the Tao and honor power

To Tao, Worship

To Power, Honor

Yet without their command

All things spontaneously grow

Tao beget things

Power nourishes them

Raises them and nurtures them

Shelters them and protects them

Supports them and prepares them

*Tao Te Ching, translated by Daniel Christopher June*

Tao begets them without owning

Power makes them without claiming

Raises them yet doesn't try to control them.

This is the secret power.

52.

The world had a beginning

The world has a Mother.

Study the mother to know the child

Know the child to return to the mother.

If you Close your mouth and shut its gates

Till life's end you'll be safe

Till life's end you'll have no toil.

If you open your mouth and meddle with affairs

Till life's end you'll lack all hope.

Perceive that the subtle has light

Hold tender the strong

Use the light

Return to the light

And so avoid danger.

This is the Eternal Practice.

53.

If I had a little sense  
I'd walk the Great Path  
Yet I fear I'll stray.

Though the path is even  
People prefer side roads

The palace may be splendid  
Yet the fields grow weedy  
And the granaries bare  
They wear fine clothes  
Yet carry weapons  
And over-eat, over-drink  
They hold great wealth  
Like bragging bandits!  
Anti-Tao indeed!

This is characteristic of a highway man

*Tao Te Ching, translated by Daniel Christopher June*

Not the man of the High Way.

54.

The well planted cannot be pulled

The well grasped cannot be snatched

The generations therefore perpetually sacrifice

Cultivate it yourself

And your virtue will be solid

Cultivate it through your family

Your power will overflow

Cultivate it through your community

Your power will endure

Cultivate it with your nation

Your power will proliferate

Cultivate it with your world

Your power will universalize.

Therefore -

The self judges the self

The family judges the family

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The nation judges nations

The world judges worlds

How do I understand the world?

By this.

55.

Fully own Power

And you are the fresh babe

Hornets, scorpions, and serpents won't sting

Beasts won't rend

Birds won't seize

Though your bones are feeble

Though your muscles weak

Your grasp will last.

Though virginal you are erect

Vital indeed, you cry all day

And are never hoarse

How harmonious!

Knowing this harmony is eternal

This eternity shines!



Quicken your vitality

And be blessed

Let your heart guide your spirit

And be strong

What first matures and then decays

That isn't Tao

What lacks Tao soon ends.

56.

He who knows does not speak

He who speaks does not know.

Shut your mouth!

Close those gates!

Blunt the edge

Loose the knot

Dim the glare

And so identify with dust

That is the profound identification.

Obtain this and you cannot be loved

Obtain this and you cannot be hated

Obtain this and you cannot gain

Obtain this and you cannot lose

Obtain this and you cannot be honored

Obtain this and you cannot be disgraced

You become instead the world's greatest treasure.



57.

Use the Straightforward to rule the empire

Resort to indirectness only in war.

With noninterference you seize the world.

I know why this works!

Too many restrictions and the people grow poor -

Too many weapons and you invite chaos -

The more indirect you are the more crooked the people -

The more laws, the more criminals -

Thus the sage says

I practice doing nothing and the people spontaneously transform

I keep my peace, and the people spontaneously straighten up

I don't interfere, and the people spontaneously grow wealthy

I impose no desire, and the people spontaneously simplify.

58.

This government is so unobtrusive

And how pure the people!

That government is so obtrusive

How dependent the people!

How horrible!

The place of happiness is trust.

How happy!

The place of misery is concealment.

What are the limits?

What is the standard?

If the standard is warped,

The people grow crooked

They will be long confused

The Sage is

Sharp yet doesn't hurt

*Tao Te Ching, translated by Daniel Christopher June*

Pointed yet harmless

Straight yet unstrained

Bright yet not blinding.

59.

In ruling humanity and serving heaven

Nothing beats moderation.

Truly! Moderation allows quick self-correction

Quick self-correction grants a heavy harvest of power.

A heavy harvest of power overcomes all.

Overcoming all means knowing no limits.

Knowing no limits, one can thereby rule humanity.

Ruling over the state, its Mother can long abide.

Deep roots, sturdy stem, immortality

A lasting insight into the Way.

60.

Govern a big state the way you would fry small fish.

Govern the world with the Way

And the tricky imps will forfeit power.

Not only will they lose their power

But the power they do have can't harm the people.

Not only will their power not harm the people

The sage is also spared.

Truly neither is hurt.

Their virtue united intensifies both.



61.

The great state flows down like a river

Towards the union of heaven and earth.

The female through stillness

Constantly overcomes the male.

By holding still, lowers the big state.

The great state bows to the small.

That great state overcomes the small.

The small under the great wins the great.

Thus the lower wins.

Others who are low also win.

The big state wants nothing more than to care for the small.

The small state want nothing more than to serve something great.

In this way both get what they want.

The greater rightly yields.

62.

The Tao stores all things like a granary.

They are the treasures of the virtuous,

Safe from the bad.

Eloquence can hence do her business.

Good deeds can hence make a man.

If the others are bad, why discard what we've got?

The king has three ministers

Who give him jade and royal horses.

Preferable would it be to give him the Tao.

The Ancients indeed honored the Tao.

Didn't they say those who seek it are freed from sin?

They thus become the world's prize.

63.

Act in relaxation,

Work without working,

Taste without indulging.

Magnify the small,

Increase the few.

Requite injury with kindness.

Prepare for difficulty when it is yet easy

Take care of great matters when they are yet small

The world's troubles begin small enough.

The greatest enterprise starts tiny.

Thus because the sage does not attempt greatness

He thereby accomplishes it.

To promise rashly lacks conviction

Taking problems too lightly leads to error.

The sage accepts the difficult for what it is.

Thus he escapes difficulty.

64.

That which is at peace is easy to hold

The *not yet* is readily anticipated

The brittle is quickly smashed

Vagueness is with a word dispersed.

Approach your problems before they're established

Manage them before they're trouble

A hug-wide tree grows from a sprout

A nine story tower comes from small shovels of dirt

The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single  
footstep.

Try and you'll fail

Grab and it slips

Thus the holy man

Who doesn't try

Doesn't fail

He does not grab

*Tao Te Ching, translated by Daniel Christopher June*

It does not slip.

The people, always chasing their business,  
Are ever close to success but inevitably fail.

Be careful all the way to the end

As you were in the beginning

And you won't ruin your business.

The sage who doesn't desire the desirous

Who doesn't seek rare treasures

He reminds the people what they missed

He helps them find themselves

--Yet without daring to do a single thing!

65.

Those ancients

Skilled at the Tao

They didn't enlighten the people

Who were too simple for all that

The people are difficult to rule

When they know too much

Accordingly, rule the people with cleverness

And you rule to their ruin

Govern naively

And you rule to their fortune

He who knows this balanced pair

Holds the template.

The standard template is a profound power

Profound power goes deep and far

All things regress to their godhood.

Thus the great balance.

66.

The rivers seek the sea

To be kings of a hundred valleys;

Because they lower themselves

They are kings over a hundred valleys.

Wanting to stand above the people

You must lower your speech.

Wanting to lead

You must follow them.

Thus if the stage stands above the people

They don't feel his weight

He stays first by doing no harm

The world rejoices and praises him endlessly.

Because he doesn't compete, the world can't beat him.

67.

On earth, all call me the Way,

Great and like no other

And great precisely because

I am like no other.

Resembling something,

How quickly a thing diminishes!

I have three treasures --

-- Cherish and protect them!

The first is love

The second is simplicity

The third is putting Heaven First.

Love is also brave,

Frugality is also generous

Putting Heaven first,

You also actualize



Your own capacity

If you disregard love

And stick only with bravery

If you disregard Frugality

And stick only with generosity

If you put yourself before heaven

What a tragic end that will be!

Deep love, by fighting, conquers

When it defends, it will last

Love will save.

68.

The good warrior is not warlike

The good fighter is not furious

Graceful defeat seeks no vengeance.

This is the virtue of nondisputation

This summons the people's power

This is how the ancients became Divine.

69.

The Strategists have a saying:

Never strike first

But do strike back.

Don't dare press an inch

But give a foot.

This means advancement

Without advancing

Stand without arms

To force your foe to stand without arms

Nothing is worse than

Underestimating your enemy

Underdestimators lose the prize

When the enemies meet,

The underdog will take the day.

The one who yields also wins.

70.

My words are easy to understand  
And are easy to practice  
Yet the earth neither understands  
Nor practices them.

Words have a source  
Actions have a Lord  
Because the people don't know this  
They don't understand me.

Those are rare who know  
They follow me to the treasure.  
The sage wears homely clothes  
To conceal the inner gem.

71.

Knowing unknowingly is best.

Not knowing what is knowable is illness

Only those sick of sickness are not sick.

The sage is healthy

because he is sick of sickness

That is how he is free of disease.

72.

When people are unafraid of justice

Then divine violence arrives

Don't cramp their homes

Or burden their households

Only when you oppress are they also oppressive

This sage has no self regard

He doesn't flatter himself

He treasures himself

Disregard the former

And take the latter.

73.

Courage carried too far

Brings Death

Courage not so far

Preserves Life

Each of these

Has benefits and costs

Why does heaven disfavor some?

--A difficult question!

Heaven's way

Doesn't strive

Yet conquers

Doesn't Speak

Yet Communicates

Doesn't summon

Yet draws

*Tao Te Ching, translated by Daniel Christopher June*

--It is slow and ready

Heaven's net is wide as the world

And yet nothing slips through.



74.

The people don't worry about death  
How then shall we make them afraid?  
Suppose you threaten them  
If they act dishonestly  
We can seize and destroy such presumption!

There has ever been the master executioner  
Yet instead of the master executioner who kills  
Let's substitute the master artisan who crafts

Truly, such a great artisan  
As he cuts out the dead wood  
Will he not also cut his own hands?

75.

The people starve

Because the government devours their taxes

It's too much, so they starve

The people revolt

Because the government meddles too much

Therefore, they are difficult to rule

The people have no respect for death

because their lives are anxious enough

They therefore take death lightly

Truly, only the one not striving for life

Is worthy of esteeming life's worth.

76.

A man's life is tender and pliant

Yet he dies hard and unyielding

All things such as grass and trees are tender and delicate

Yet they die rigid and dry

Therefore, hard and stiff are death's companions

Tender and gentle are life's companions

And so, the forceful army can't win

Just as the unyielding tree will be hacked

The unyielding mighty

Will lower themselves

The tender and weak

Ascend above.

77.

Heaven's way is like flexing a bow

When high you aim low

When low you aim high

If there's not enough slack

You pull less

If there's too much

You pull more:

Heaven's way is to decrease excess.

And supplement inadequacy

Man's way is otherwise:

Those who don't have enough

Pay to those who have too much

Let the man of abundance

Give to all

Only the man of Tao does this

*Tao Te Ching, translated by Daniel Christopher June*

Only a sage

Gives without expecting gratitude

Credits but doesn't expect to be credited

He doesn't want to appear great.

78.

Nothing on earth is softer than water  
Yet for assaulting the hard, it is the best.  
Nothing could replace it.  
The weak defeats the strong  
The tender betters the stiff  
Everyone knows this –  
But who acts accordingly?

Therefore, the sage says  
That to protect the nation's disgrace  
One is called Lord of the Earth  
And to guard the people accursed  
One deserves to rule over Earth's face.  
These words sound paradoxical  
But they sound out the truth.

79.

When balancing great hatred  
Some will surely remain  
How to make that good?  
The sage therefore  
Accepts his debt  
Yet doesn't demand what he's owed.  
Nobility keeps its word  
Lacking such virtue  
One holds back his due  
  
Heaven's Way holds no favors  
It follows the goodness of the good.

80.

Let the state be small  
And the citizens few  
Let them greatly multiply  
Their tools beyond use  
Let them respect death  
And travel but little  
Though having boats and ships aplenty.  
Though having armor and weapons  
Let them leave off.

Let men return to knotting ropes for reminders  
Let them enjoy their food  
Let their clothes be beautiful  
And their homes content.  
Let them delight in everyday life  
Let they and their neighbors  
Mutually overlook the other.



*Tao Te Ching, translated by Daniel Christopher June*

Let dogs and roosters give ear to each other.

The people will gracefully age

And die without all this running around.

81.

Sincerity is artless

The artful insincere.

The righteous don't dispute

The disputatious aren't right.

Wisdom isn't scholarly

The scholars don't know.

The sage doesn't hoard

Since he works for others

He furthers himself

Having given to the people

He has so much more

The Way benefits without injuring

The Sage's Way Works without Striving.