

1.

Tao called Tao is not Tao.

Names can name no lasting name.

Nameless: the origin of heaven and earth.

Naming: the mother of ten thousand things.

Empty of desire, perceive mystery.

Filled with desire, perceive manifestations.

These have the same source, but different names.

Call them both deep-

Deep and again deep:

The gateway to all mystery.

13.

Favor and disgrace are like fear.

Honor and distress are like the self.

What does this mean?

Favor debases us.

Afraid when we get it,

Afraid when we lose it.

The self embodies distress.

No self,

No distress.

Respect the world as your self:

The world can be your lodging.

Love the world as your self:

The world can be your trust.

15.

The ancients who followed Tao:

Dark, wondrous, profound, penetrating,

Deep beyond knowing.

Because they cannot be known,

They can only be described.

Cautious,

Like crossing a winter stream.

Hesitant,

Like respecting one's neighbors.

Polite,

Like a guest.

Yielding,

Like ice about to melt.

Blank,

Like uncarved wood.

Open,

Like a valley.
Mixing freely,
Like muddy water.

Calm the muddy water,
It becomes clear.

Move the inert,
It comes to life.

Those who sustain Tao
Do not wish to be full.

Because they do not wish to be full
They can fade away
Without further effort.

16

Attain complete emptiness,
Hold fast to stillness.

The ten thousand things stir about;
I only watch for their going back.

Things grow and grow,
But each goes back to its root.
Going back to the root is stillness.

This means returning to what is.

Returning to what is

Means going back to the ordinary.

Understanding the ordinary:

Enlightenment.

Not understanding the ordinary:

Blindness creates evil.

Understanding the ordinary:

Mind opens.

Mind opening leads to compassion,

Compassion to nobility,

Nobility to heavenliness, Heavenliness to Tao.

Tao endures.

Your body dies.

There is no danger.

19.

Banish learning, discard knowledge:

People will gain a hundredfold.

Banish benevolence, discard righteousness:

People will return to duty and compassion.

Banish skill, discard profit:

There will be no more thieves.

These three statements are not enough.

One more step is necessary:

Look at plain silk; hold uncarved wood.

The self dwindles; desires fade.

20.

Banish learning, no more grief.

Between Yes and No

How much difference?

Between good and evil

How much difference?

What others fear I must fear-

How pointless!

People are wreathed in smiles

As if at a carnival banquet.

I alone am passive, giving no sign,

Like an infant who has not yet smiled.

Forlorn, as if I had no home.

Others have enough and more,

I alone am left out.

I have the mind of a fool,
Confused, confused.

Others are bright and intelligent,
I alone am dull, dull,
Drifting on the ocean,
Blown about endlessly.

Others have plans,
I alone am wayward and stubborn,
I alone am different from others,
Like a baby in the womb.

37.

Tao endures without a name,
Yet nothing is left undone.
If kings and lords could possess it,
All beings would transform themselves.

Transformed, they desire to create;
I quiet them through nameless simplicity.
Then there is no desire.

No desire is serenity,
And the world settles of itself.

42.

Tao engenders One,
One engenders Two,
Two engenders Three,
Three engenders the ten thousand things.

The ten thousand things carry shade
And embrace sunlight.

Shade and sunlight, yin and yang,
Breath blending into harmony.

Humans hate
To be alone, poor, and hungry.
Yet kings and princes
Use these words as titles.

We gain by losing,
Lose by gaining.

What others teach, I also teach:
A violent man does not die a natural death.
This is the basis of my teaching.

46.

With Tao under heaven
Stray horses fertilize the fields.
Without Tao under heaven
Warhorses are bred at the frontier.

There is no greater calamity
Than not knowing what is enough.
There is no greater fault

Than desire for success.

Therefore,
Knowing that enough is enough
Is always
Enough.

48.

Pursue knowledge, gain daily.
Pursue Tao, lose daily.
Lose and again lose,
Arrive at non-doing.

Non-doing- and nothing not done.

Take the entire world as nothing.
Make the least effort
And the world escapes you.

57.

Use the expected to govern the country,
Use surprise to wage war,
Use non-action to win the world.
How do I know?

Like this!

The more prohibitions and rules.
The poorer people become.
The sharper people's weapons,

The more they riot.
The more skilled their techniques,
The more grotesque their works.
The more elaborate the laws,
The more they commit crimes.

Therefore the Sage says:

I do nothing
And people transform themselves.
I enjoy serenity
And people govern themselves.
I cultivate emptiness
And people become prosperous.
I have no desires
And people simplify themselves.

64.

At rest is easy to hold.
Not yet impossible is easy to plan.
Brittle is easy to break.
Fine is easy to scatter.

Create before it exists.
Lead before it goes astray.

A tree too big to embrace
Is born from a slender shoot.
A nine-storey tower
Rises from a pile of earth.

A thousand-mile journey

Begins with a single step.

Act and you ruin it.

Grasp and you lose it.

Therefore the Sage

Does not act

And so does not ruin

Does not grasp

And so does not lose.

People commonly ruin their work

When they are near success.

Proceed at the end as at the beginning

And your work won't be ruined.

Therefore the Sage

Desires no desires

Prizes no prizes

Studies no studies

And returns

To what others pass by.

The Sage

Helps all beings find their nature,

But does not presume to act.

66.

Rivers and seas

Can rule the hundred valleys.

Because they are good at lying low
They are lords of the valleys.

Therefore those who would be above
Must speak as if they are below.
Those who would lead
Must speak as if they are behind.

In this way the Sage dwells above
And the people are not burdened.
Dwells in front
And they are not hindered.

Therefore the whole world
Is delighted and unwearied.

Since the Sage does not contend
No one can contend with the Sage.

67.

Everyone under heaven calls my Tao great,
And unlike anything else.

It is great only because
It is unlike anything else.

If it were like anything else
It would stretch and become thin.

I have three treasures
To maintain and conserve:

The first is compassion.
The second is frugality.
The third is not presuming
 To be first under heaven.

Compassion leads to courage.
Frugality allows generosity.
Not presuming to be first
 Creates a lasting instrument.

 Nowadays,
People reject compassion
 But want to be brave,
Reject frugality
 But want to be generous,
Reject humility
 And want to come first.

 This is death.

Compassion:
 Attack with it and win.
 Defend with it and stand firm.

Heaven aids and protects
 Through compassion.

76.
Humans are born soft and weak.
They die stiff and strong.

The ten thousand plants and trees
Are born soft and tender
And die withered and sere.

The stiff and strong
Are Death's companions
The soft and weak
Are Life's companions.

Therefore,
The strongest armies do not conquer,
The greatest trees are cut down.

The strong and great sink down.
The soft and weak rise up.

"Stop thinking, and end your problems."

"Act without expectation."

"Life is a series of natural and spontaneous changes. Don't resist them; that only creates sorrow. Let reality be reality. Let things flow naturally forward in whatever way they like."

"When I let go of what I am, I become what I might be."

"Time is a created thing. To say 'I don't have time,' is like saying, 'I don't want to.'"

"Be content with what you have;

rejoice in the way things are.

When you realize there is nothing lacking,
the whole world belongs to you."

