

Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching

translation by Master Waysun Liao

CHAPTER ONE

1. If the Tao can be talked about, it is not the ultimate Tao.
2. If the Name can be referred to, it is no longer the real name.
3. The nameless is the beginning of heaven and earth.
4. The named is the mother of ten thousand things.
5. Always observe from formless viewpoint, then one can see the wonderful changes.
6. Always observe from the viewpoint of forms, so one can see the manifestation.
7. Both, though differing in name, are made of the same source.
8. From the same source, it appears fathomless.
9. Ever fathomless, it is the gate to wonderful changes.

CHAPTER TWO

1. Under heaven all can see beauty, for there is already ugliness.
2. All know there is good, for there already is evil.
3. Therefore having and not having emerge together.
4. Difficult and easy lie opposite to each other.
5. Long and short compare;
6. High and low lean upon each other.
7. Voice and sound harmonize each other;
8. Front and back follow each other.
9. Therefore, the saint exercises 'non-action' to do things, and exercises 'non-talking' to teach.

10. He initiates nothing, and allows ten thousand things to grow:

11. Raising, yet not possessing;
12. Working, yet not considering he did it;
13. Achieved, yet he does not consider that he

completed it.

14. Therefore, all the work he did lasts forever.

CHAPTER THREE

1. Not exalting the elite dampens quarrels.

2. Not collecting precious things prevents stealing.

3. Seeing nothing attractive, there will be no disturbance in peoples' minds.

4. The saint therefore rules by making people empty their thinking and stuffing their bellies;

5. By weakening their ambitions and strengthening their bones.

6. Make people lack knowledge and desire.

7. Make smart intellectuals dare not try to interfere.

8. Exercise "non-action" to rule and all will be well.

CHAPTER FOUR

1. The Tao is invisible, but its power is infinite.

2. Though it appears unfathomable, it appears as if it is the source of ten thousand things.

3. Blunt the sharpness, resolve the tangles, soften the glare and settle the dust.

4. The immense cannot be sure of its own existence, and cannot tell where it comes from.

5. It is as if it existed before there was God.

CHAPTER FIVE

1. Heaven and earth appear to have no kindness and treat everything as just a sacrifice.

2. The saint appears to have no kindness. They,

too, treat people as merely sacrifices.

3. Isn't the space between heaven and earth like a bellows?

4. The more the empty space, the more it offers;

5. The more it moves, the more it generates.

6. Saying many words is like counting numbers backwards only leading to exhaustion.

7. Hold fast to the center.

CHAPTER SIX

1. The spirit that turns food into life never dies:

2. It is called the original reproductive life energy.

3. The gate connects to the original reproductive life energy.

4. It is the root of heaven and earth.

5. This is barely noticeable, yet it yields its energy inexhaustibly.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1. The Universe is everlasting.

2. Why does the Universe last forever? Because it does not bear itself, therefore, it is ever-existing.

3. Therefore, the saint stays behind his body as if his body goes ahead of himself.

4. And since he stays out of his body, his body lasts longer.

5. It is because he is rid of his consciousness of self that he gains his true self.

CHAPTER EIGHT

1. The highest good is just like water:

2. It benefits the ten thousand things instead of competing with them.

3. It even flows into places people reject, so it is almost like the Tao.

4. It chooses the right place to stay.

5. Its good heart is big and deep.

6. Deal with others with gentleness and kindness.

7. Speak with truth.

8. Governing everything well.

9. Ever capable,

10. Always act with right timing.

11. Only when there is no need for conflict, then there is no fault.

CHAPTER NINE

1. Rather disclaim than possess in full.

2. When the point is sharp, it will soon become dull.

3. A house kept full of jade and precious jewelry is impossible to guard from theft.

4. Claim wealth and titles, and trouble will follow.

5. Withdraw when the work is done.

6. This is the way heaven's Tao works.

CHAPTER TEN

1. While carrying body and consciousness and embracing the only One Power, can you avoid the separation of body and conscious ness?

2. Flowing life energy and becoming supple, can you be like a new born baby?

3. Washing and cleansing your mind to obtain the true original vision, can you be without contamination?

4. Loving all people and governing the country, can you apply no cleverness?

5. Opening and closing of the gates of heaven, can you also coordinate the female power?

6. Understanding and reaching to everything in the universe, can you exercise non-action?

7. Allowing a thing to emerge, to grow, to nourish it yet not possess it, to work at it yet not

control it, lead it yet not dominate it –

8. This is so called the Great Te.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

1. Thirty spokes share a wheel's hub; it is the center hole that makes it a useful vehicle.

2. Mold clay into a pot; it is the hollow space within that makes it a useful vessel.

3. Cut out doors and windows of a room; it is the enclosed open space that makes it useful as a house.

4. Therefore, to benefit from having something, one must also employ having nothing to achieve its usefulness.

CHAPTER TWELVE

1. The five colors blind your eye. The five sounds deafen your ear. The five flavors ruin your taste.

2. Too much hunting and games confuse your mind.

3. Precious things lead one to steal.

4. Therefore, the saint is guided by what he feels and not by what he sees.

5. He rejects the other way and chooses this way.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1. Honor and disgrace are fearful.

2. Treat misfortune equally as you treat your own body.

3. Why be fearful of honor and disgrace?

4. Honor and disgrace arise from a false sense.

5. Gaining honor or disgrace makes one fearful.

Loss of honor and disgrace also make one fearful.

6. Therefore it is fearful to have honor and disgrace.

7. Why should one treat misfortune as part of his own body?

8. The reason I have misfortune is because I have a body.

9. If I do not treat my body as my own, why should I have any misfortune?

10. Care about the world as you care about your body, as if you can be trusted to care for the world.

11. Love the world as if you love your body—as if you can be trusted with the world.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

1. Look, but you cannot see it – it is formless.

2. Listen, but you cannot hear it – it transcends sound.

3. Grasp, but you can hold nothing – it is intangible.

4. These three are unfathomable: Therefore they are merged as one.

5. From above it reflects no light; from below it casts no shadow.

6. Impossible to comprehend, it cannot be named.

7. Eventually it returns to nothingness.

8. So it is called a form without form, a shape without shape. It is called vague and subtle.

9. Encounter it from the front and you can't see its head. Follow after it and you can't see its back.

10. Hold onto the ancient origin as you deal with the present.

11. Knowing the origin is the law of Tao.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

1. The ancient masters were subtle, mysterious, profound and aware. The extreme depth of their knowledge is hard to understand.

2. Since they are unfathomable, allow me to try
very hard to describe their appearance in this
way:

3. Watchful, just like crossing a winter stream.
4. Ever alert, like aware of surrounding danger.
5. Courteous, like facing very important guests.
6. Yielding, like ice about to melt.
7. Appearing so simple and real, like an
uncarved block of wood.

8. So hollow and deep, like a big canyon.
9. So unclear, he is like muddy water.
10. Resting, won't the mud settle and the water
become clear again?

11. Can't he rest knowing that stillness will again
awaken into action?

12. Knowing the way of the Tao, he never seeks
to be full.

13. Never full, even the worn out need not be
renewed.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

1. Attain to the utmost inward weakness.
2. Focus firmly in the purest state of stillness.
3. Suddenly, the ten thousand things will appear
in circular sequence.

4. And then everything will develop and flourish
and then return to the source of the void.

5. Returning to the source is the stillness.
6. The stillness is unchanging; the unchanging is
the constant.

7. Knowing the constant is wisdom. Straying
from the constancy leads to disaster.

8. Knowing constancy, you will then be able to
be tolerant. With tolerance, you will be
openhearted.

9. Being openhearted, you will lead. Being a
leader, you will attain heaven.

10. Attaining heaven, you will be at one with the

Tao. Being at one with the Tao is eternal –
never dying.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

1. The best ruler is hardly recognized by the people:
2. Then come those who they know and love, then those who they fear, then those who they disdain.
3. He does not have faith in them, so they have no faith in him.
4. A true leader can accomplish his aims without too much talking. When his goal is achieved, people will say, 'We did it!'

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

1. When the great Tao ceases to prevail,
2. Then people can only count on kindness and justice.
3. Then wisdom and intelligence are born and the great hypocrisy begins.
4. Then there is no peace within the family, so people are asked to display filial piety and devotion.
5. Then the entire country is in a state of confusion and disorder, thus many loyal ministers appear.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

1. Renounce holiness and give up wisdom, the people will benefit a hundred times over.
2. Stop touting "kindness", throw away notions of "morality," and people will be filled with fidelity and love.
3. Give up cleverness, ignore the idea of profit, and there will be no more theft or robbery.
4. These three only fix the surface; they are insufficient.

5. It is more important to help people embrace simplicity:

6. To hold one's true nature;

7. To restrain from being selfish and curtail

desire.

CHAPTER TWENTY

1. Give up learning and become worry-free.

2. Is there a difference between obey and command? Is there a difference between good and bad?

3. I fear what everyone else fears: so long this has been such a pointless idea. I wonder when it will stop.

4. Everyone else is indulging themselves, as if enjoying the sacrificial feast of the ox.

5. As if in spring some enjoy climbing the terrace at the park.

6. I alone seem unaffected and lost,

7. Like an innocent baby that hasn't yet learned to smile.

8. I alone have no place to go.

9. Others have more than enough, but I alone am lacking.

10. I feel like a fool: as if I were confounded.

11. Everyone else appears bright, but I alone am dim.

12. Everyone else appears to be so smart, but I am the only one who is confused.

13. I like to be as unpredictable as the immense ocean, as unstable as the gusty wind.

14. Everyone else acts capable, but I'm the only one who acts stubborn and foolish.

15. I am different but I am nourished by the great mother.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

1. The Great Te follows nothing but Tao, though

Tao is elusive and subtle.

2. It seems elusive and subtle, and yet within it is an image.

3. It seems subtle and elusive, and yet within it is a form.

4. It appears vague and subtle, and yet within it is an essence.

5. This essence is very real, and therein lies a message.

6. From the very beginning until now its name has never been erased.

7. Thus I can see and perceive everything within creation.

8. How do I know everything within the creation? Because of this.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

1. It yields and becomes whole;

2. Bends and can yet become straight;

3. Stays low and can be filled;

4. When old gains renewal.

5. To be little always gain;

6. If reaching the state of too much, become confused.

7. Therefore wise men hold to the very One Power and are humble to the whole world.

8. He does not promote himself: he shines.

9. He draws no attention to himself: he is given credit.

10. He need not boast: he receives recognition.

11. Since he doesn't brag, he leads.

12. He need not quarrel, so no one can quarrel with him.

13. The ancients say, "To yield is to be preserved." This is no empty saying.

14. If you are truly whole, all things will come to you.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

1. To use few words is natural.
2. Look! A gusty wind will not last all morning.

Showers can't last the whole day.

3. Who drives the wind and the showers?

Heaven and earth!

4. Even heaven and earth cannot make things last forever.

5. How is it possible for man?

6. Rather, men who exercise the Tao should be one with the Tao;

7. He who exercises the Te should be one with the Te;

8. He who exercises loss should be with being lost.

9. He who is at one with the Tao, Tao will like to be with him.

10. He who is one with Te, Te will always like to be with him.

11. He who is at one with the loss, the loss will like to be with him.

12. If there is not enough faith, one will never have any faith.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

1. One will fail to stand on only his toes.
2. One can't walk if he tries to hop.
3. He who tries to make himself stand out will

not be visible.

4. He who is self-righteous will not earn respect.
5. He who boasts of himself will get nothing.
6. He who brags will not lead.

7. Extra effort to reach Tao is like extra food and unnecessary luggage.

8. The saint avoids self-effort.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

1. Something mysteriously formed, born even before heaven and earth;
2. In the loneliness and the void, standing alone and unchanging, ever present and moving ceaselessly;
3. It is the mother of heaven and earth.
4. I do not know its name. Let's just call it Tao.
5. For lack of a better word, let's call it the Great.
6. So great, let's call it the disappearing.
7. Disappearing into far away—let's call it the far away.
8. Having gone so far, eventually it returns – so let's also call it the return.
9. Therefore, Tao reaches to the greatest, so the heavens reach to the greatest; the earth reaches to the greatest, and men also can reach to the greatest.
10. In the universe, these are the four great powers – and man is one of them.
11. Man following the earth.
12. The earth follows the heaven.
13. And the heaven following the Tao.
14. And the Tao following the Law of Nature.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

1. The heavy is the root of light.
2. The stillness is the master of action.
3. Therefore the saint, traveling all day, does not lose track of his heavy luggage.
4. And even though there are distractions of beautiful things to see, he remains unattached and calm.
5. Why should the lord of ten thousand chariots forget his status and treat himself lightly?
6. To become light is to lose the root.
7. To be in action is to give up one's mastership.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

1. A good traveler leaves no wheel marks; a good speaker utters no mistakes; a good counter needs no counting rods.
2. Lock doors so well, even without a lock, no one can open it.
3. Good knot-makers use no cords or ropes, yet no one can loosen what they tie together.
4. Therefore, the saint takes care of everyone and rejects none.
5. He takes care of all things and rejects nothing.
6. This is called “following the wisdom.”
7. One who is good at helping others can be followed by those who do not know how. And those who do not know how to help others are the followers of the one who knows how.
8. If the leader is not appreciated by the followers, and the followers are not cared for by the leader, and he appears as a clever man, he is indeed lost.
9. This is a mysterious secret.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

1. Always aware that there is the male-like force, yet hold on to the female-like force, as the stream to the world.
2. Like the stream to the world, then the Te will not depart, and one becomes as if an infant again.
3. Ever aware of the bright white, still hold onto the core of dark – being very humble towards the world.
4. Being very humble towards the world, the Te never changing returns to the state of the infinite.
5. Aware of honor, still remain humble – hold onto the disgrace.

6. Rather be the low valley of the world. Being like the valley of the world, the original Te within becomes resourceful, and it becomes the state of the original uncarved block.

7. The original uncarved material can be made into countless useful products.

8. The saint uses it to lead and rule.

9. Thus the greatest ruler rules as if the best trimming cuts little.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

1. Can anyone take over the world and improve it? I can see it is impossible.

2. God made the world, and no one should endeavor to improve it.

3. If anyone tries to change the world, one will ruin its wholeness.

4. If anyone tries to hold the world, one will fail and lose it.

5. Some things lead and other things follow behind:

6. Sometimes breathing gently, other times breathing hard:

7. Sometimes weak, other times strong:

8. Sometimes only trimming things a little, sometimes bringing down the whole thing.

9. Therefore the saint avoids overdone, wasteful obsessiveness.

CHAPTER THIRTY

1. Whenever you assist a ruler with Tao, do not depend on military force to conquer the world, for the consequences would return very rapidly.

2. Thorn bushes spring up wherever the army has been; famine years follow after a great war.

3. If responding by force, just react and repel the offender.

4. Never depend on force to conquer.

5. After you achieve goals, never glory in them.

After you achieve goals, never boast. After you achieve a goal, never be proud.

6. Achieve goals, because there is no other alternative.

7. Achieve goals with no coercion.

8. Anything being strong is followed by decay.

9. This is not how Tao works.

10. Whatever goes against the Tao will meet with an early end.

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

1. Military forces are instruments of disaster; all creatures hate them.

2. Therefore those possessing the power of Tao never come close to them.

3. Gentlemen prefer to sit at the left: but during war prefer to sit at the right.

4. Army weapons are instruments of fear; they are not a gentleman's choice. He uses them only when he has no choice.

5. And he treats the entire action with a peaceful mind. Even victory brings no cause for rejoicing.

6. For to rejoice in victory leads to delight in killing: For to delight in killing, you can never win the world.

7. On celebrated occasions prefer the left: on mournful occasions prefer the right.

8. The second general stands on the left, the chief general on the right.

9. This indicates that war is conducted as if it were a funeral.

10. When many people are being slaughtered, they should be mourned with a sorrowful heart.

11. A victory celebration must be observed as if it were a funeral.

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

1. Tao is forever undefined.

2. Even though it is minute, no one can ever dominate it.

3. If kings and lords could possess it, the ten thousand things would naturally follow.

4. Heaven and earth would come into harmony and sweet rain fall.

5. The people would get along well in harmony.

6. Once the initial organization is established, there are many names; there will be no more need for names.

7. The wise know restraint.

8. Knowing restraint prevents destruction.

9. The Tao in the world behaves just like a stream flowing home to the rivers and oceans.

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

1. To know others leads to true wisdom; to know the self leads to enlightenment.

2. Overcome others and you possess true force; to master the self develops true strength.

3. He who knows he has enough is truly rich.

4. Determined to execute, possess true will power.

5. He who stays in principle endures.

6. Those who continue to prevail after the body dies possess true eternal life.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

1. The great Tao flows everywhere, reaching to the left and to the right.

2. The ten thousand things thriving on it, it nourishes everything with no reserve.

3. It accomplishes its purpose and makes no claim.

4. It raises the ten thousand things, and yet

doesn't claim lordship.

5. It can be called very small.

6. While all the ten thousand things return to it, it

still claims no lordship.

7. It can also be called very great.

8. It does not claim its greatness, and is therefore

truly great.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

1. All men will come to him who possesses the great formless.

2. Those who come, they all enjoy harmony, rest, happiness and peace.

3. Passersby may stop for beautiful music and gourmet food.

4. Once you try to describe the Tao, it seems without substance or flavor.

5. It cannot be seen, it cannot be heard, and yet one can continue to tap it and it cannot be exhausted.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

1. To make it shrink, allow it first to expand. To make it weak, allow it first to be strong.

2. Before it can be cast down, one must first allow it to be raised.

3. Before seizing, first give.

4. This is true observation: Soft and weak will overcome hard and strong.

5. Just like fish cannot leave deep waters, powerful weapons cannot be visually displayed to others.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN

1. The Tao prevails without action.

2. If kings and lords firmly possess it, the ten thousand things would take care of themselves.

3. If the ten thousand things start to take care of

themselves, kings may still try to act upon them.

4. I would place them under the nameless tool.

With the nameless tool, they would return to desirelessness.

5. Achieve without desire, with no action – and thereby the world would be at peace.

CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

1. One who possesses the Great Te doesn't follow the social virtue, he therefore possesses the true Te.

2. One who possesses low Te follows the social virtue firmly; he therefore has no Te.

3. Men who possess Great Te follow the non-action principle, and need not perform action for virtue's sake.

4. Men who possess low Te must try hard to act and win the result of being virtuous.

5. Men who truly possess kindness exercise it and need not perform kindness.

6. Men who are truly just exercise justice and take a lot of action to achieve it.

7. If a man with a high level of social dignity performs his social task and no one responds, he will roll up his sleeve to repel anyone who disagrees with him.

8. When people fail to connect with Tao, they count only on their own Te.

9. When people fail to connect to their own Te, they count on being kind.

10. When kindness is lost, there is justice.

11. When justice is lost, people can only count on social ritual.

12. Now, social ritual is a lack of faith and loyalty, the origin of the chaotic.

13. People claiming to have vision only show a flowery embellishment of Tao. It is the beginning of ignorance.

14. Therefore a great man stays in the thick faith and not on the thin cleverness; stays on the result and not on the glory.

15. Therefore he rejects the latter and takes the former.

CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE

1. These things, from ancient times, all arise from the only One Power.

2. Heaven is formed by the only One Power and is clear.

3. The earth is also formed by the only One Power and is stable.

4. The gods are all powered by the only One Power and become spiritually functional.

5. The rivers receive the only One Power and become full.

6. The ten thousand things, created by the only One Power, become alive.

7. In order for kings and lords to be followed by their countrymen, they must possess the only One Power.

8. All these are powered by the only One Power.

9. Heaven may fall apart and lose its clarity.

10. The earth may split and lose its stability.

11. The gods may cease to function spiritually and be invalidated.

12. The rivers may run dry and lose their fullness.

13. The ten thousand things may die out.

14. The kings and lords may lose their leadership and the countries fall.

15. Therefore the high rank is rooted in the low rank.

16. The high uses the low as its foundation.

17. Therefore, princes and lords consider themselves as “orphaned,” “widowed,” and “worthless,”

18. Do they not use low rank as their root? Don't they?

19. If everyone is socially low and humble, then there aren't any socially low and humble around.

20. No one wants to behave "nobly" and tinkle like jade or put on humility and clatter like stone chimes.

CHAPTER FORTY

1. The Tao moves toward the direction of returning.

2. The Tao acts with the function of weakening.

3. Everything under heaven is created having forms: forms created from the formless.

CHAPTER FORTY-ONE

1. The top wise men hear of the Tao and practice it diligently. Average intellects hear of the Tao and think about it once in awhile. Lower average people hear of the Tao and laugh out loud.

2. If there is no big laughter, then it is not referred to as the true Tao.

3. Just like it is said, "The bright path of Tao seems dim."

4. Going forward on the curved road of Tao sometimes appears like retreat.

5. The easy way of Tao seems rough.

6. The highest Te always seems like a low valley.

7. Great purity seems soiled.

8. A wealth of Te always seems inadequate.

9. The strength of the Te seems weak.

10. Real seems unreal.

11. The great square has no corners.

12. A great work takes a long time to complete.

13. The highest notes make little sound.

14. The greatest image has no shape.
15. The Tao is hidden and nameless:
16. Only the Tao nourishes and brings everything to completion.

CHAPTER FORTY-TWO

1. The Tao created the one. The one flows into two. The two generate the three.
2. And the third kind of power at work begot the ten thousand things.
3. The ten thousand things all carry Yin power and embrace Yang power.
4. Yin and Yang power achieve harmony by combining their two powers through the third: the Chi.
5. Men dislike being “orphaned,” “widowed,” or “worthless.” But this is how kings and lords regard themselves.
6. Therefore, things in reduction lead to gain: adding on to it may cause decrease.
7. What others teach, I also teach: “A violent man cannot die peacefully”
8. This will be the root of my teaching.

CHAPTER FORTY-THREE

1. The most refined travels freely, even through the most dense.
2. The invisible can penetrate even through objects without space.
3. This is how I know the effectiveness of non-action.
4. Delivering messages without words and effecting results without action are understood by very few.

CHAPTER FORTY-FOUR

1. Fame or self: Which is more important?
2. Self or wealth: Which is worth more?

3. Gain or loss: Which is more harmful?

4. Therefore, desire for many things results in suffering.

5. Whoever stores up much has much to lose.

6. Those who know contentment will not be disgraced.

7. He who knows restraint will not suffer harm – he will endure.

CHAPTER FORTY-FIVE

1. Great achievement seems flawed so its usefulness does not wear out.

2. Great fullness seems empty, yet can never be used up.

3. Great straightness seems bent.

4. Great skillfulness seems awkward

5. Great eloquence seems dumb.

6. Just like movement overcoming cold and stillness overcoming heat

7. One in stillness and tranquility leads the whole world.

CHAPTER FORTY-SIX

1. When the Tao is offered to the world, the war horses haul manure for farming.

2. When there is no Tao in the world, war horses are bred outside the city borders.

3. There is no greater sin than not knowing when to stop, no greater curse than wanting more.

4. Therefore, the person who knows contentment will always have enough.

CHAPTER FORTY-SEVEN

1. Never going outdoors, yet he knows everything under heaven.

2. Never looking outside of the window, he can see the Tao of heaven.

3. He who tries to act, the farther he searches,

the less he knows.

4. A saint takes no action to investigate, yet

knows everything.

5. He doesn't need to appear everywhere but he

is well known.

6. He doesn't take action, and yet he

accomplishes.

CHAPTER FORTY-EIGHT

1. In the pursuit of studying world affairs, every

day your knowledge accumulates.

2. In the pursuit of the Tao, every day you

abandon.

3. You abandon more – you reduce. You no

longer need action – you reach non-action.

4. In non-action, there is nothing that cannot be

done.

5. Rule the world by non-action power.

6. Rule the world by full action, it is not true

ruling.

CHAPTER FORTY-NINE

1. A saint need not be concerned about others.

He just lets other people alone – lets their

minds do whatever they like.

2. Those who are good I treat as good. Those

who are not good I also treat as good.

3. It is Te with good faith.

4. I have faith in people who are trustworthy. I

also have faith in people who are not

trustworthy.

5. It is Te with trust.

6. The saint rules the world by the heart of

simplicity and sincerity.

7. He treats everyone with a childlike mind.

CHAPTER FIFTY

1. Stay out, live. Stay in, die.

2. In our life, three out of ten may live after birth, three out of ten may die after birth. And the chance to encounter death in his life while one lived after birth is also three out of ten.

3. Why so? Because he only tries very hard to live.

4. He who truly knows how to live can walk on land without fear of encountering a rhinoceros or tiger, and need not be equipped with armor and weapons when encountering an army.

5. For rhinoceroses find no place to thrust their horn, tigers find no place to claw, and weapons find nowhere to place sharp edges.

6. Why so? Because he never enters the death zone.

CHAPTER FIFTY-ONE

1. All things are created from the Tao. They are nourished by the Te.

2. They are formed into matter. They are shaped by opposite powers.

3. Thus the ten thousand things all follow the Tao and possess the Te.

4. Everything, therefore, is not forced or demanded. All are in the way of the nature of things – following the Tao, possessing the Te.

5. Therefore, all things are created from the power of Tao.

6. They are nourished, developed, cared for, sheltered, comforted, grown and protected by the Te.

7. Creating them without claiming ownership, acting without demanding credit, guiding without taking authority – this is original Te.

CHAPTER FIFTY-TWO

1. Since the origin of the universe is the mother of all things, knowing the mother one also

knows the son.

2. Knowing the son, still also remaining firmly connected with the mother, through one's whole life he will encounter no danger.

3. Shut your knowledge, close the door of your cleverness, and life is ever full.

4. Open your knowledge, be busy with all your knowledge, and life is beyond hope of salvaging.

5. One who understands the very small possesses insight;

6. One who observes yielding to force also possesses strength.

7. Employ one's inner light and return to insight.

8. Bringing no harm to self – thus is knowing the constant

CHAPTER FIFTY-THREE

1. If I have clear sense, I will practice the great Tao and my only fear will be straying from it.

2. Staying in the great Tao is easy, but people love to make shortcuts.

3. The court is kept in splendor, yet the farm fields are full of weeds and the granaries are empty.

4. People who wear fine clothes, carry sharp swords and enjoy their fill of good food and drink. They have a surplus of possessions. What thieves!

5. This is certainly not the work of Tao!

CHAPTER FIFTY-FOUR

1. A good builder builds a foundation that cannot be uprooted. One who knows how to grasp firmly so that what is grasped does not slip away.

2. Te can even be passed down and honored from generation to generation.

3. Apply it to yourself, and the Te will be real.
4. Apply it to the family, and the Te will abound.
5. Apply it to the village, and the Te will reach

beyond.

6. Apply it to the nation, and Te will be abundant.

7. Apply it to the world, and the Te will be omnipresent.

8. Therefore apply the Te to the whole body to look at the body; apply the Te to the whole family to look at the family; apply the Te to the whole village to look at the village; apply the Te to the entire nation to look at the nation; apply the Te to the whole world to look at the world.

9. How do I know the world? By looking with the Te!

CHAPTER FIFTY-FIVE

1. He who is filled with the Te is like an infant.

2. Poisonous insects will not sting a newborn baby; ferocious beasts will not pounce upon him; birds of prey will not attack him

3. A newborn's bones are weak, his muscles soft, but his grip is firm.

4. He has no experience of the union of man and woman, but his sexual energy is whole. It is because his life energy is full and strong.

5. He could cry all day without becoming hoarse. It is because he is in perfect harmony.

6. Knowing harmony is called the constancy. Knowing constancy is called wisdom.

7. Trying to improve one's well-being by living in a gross life leads to disaster.

8. Trying to exhaust your life energy causes strain. Striving to be big and strong is followed only by exhaustion and age.

9. This is not the way the Tao works. Whatever

is contrary to how the Tao works will not last long.

CHAPTER FIFTY-SIX

1. Those who really know do not talk. Those who talk do not know the truth
2. Shut knowledge. Close smart senses. Act dull rather than be sharp.
3. Free from one's problems, store the brightness.
4. Be at home with the down to earth. This is the state in which you are united with the Tao.
5. Unconcerned with friends and enemies, with gain and harm, with honor and disgrace.
6. This therefore is the most preferred achievement in the world.

CHAPTER FIFTY-SEVEN

1. Rule a nation with normal justice and wage war with unusual tactics.
2. Practice non-action to govern the world.
3. How do I know this is so? Because of the following mistakes:
4. The more taboos for people there are, the poorer are the people.
5. When men have more sharpened weapons, there is more chaos in the country.
6. The more men rely on cleverness and ingenuity: the more novelties abound.
7. When rules and regulations grow, there are more thieves and robbers.
8. Therefore the saint says: "I apply the power of non-action and the people are orderly.
9. I am in stillness and the people become honest. I am at peace and the people prosper.
10. I have no desires and the people return to lives of simplicity and goodness."

CHAPTER FIFTY-EIGHT

1. With less government the people are simple.

When the government is intrusive, the people
are sneaky.

2. Happiness is rooted in misery, and that misery
hides underneath happiness. Who knows where
this will end?

3. And as soon as there appears to be no honesty,
honesty becomes abnormal,

4. And goodness can turn into evil. For a long
time, people don't know who to follow.

5. Therefore the saint's policies are straight but
not stiff, sharp but not cutting,

6. Straightforward but not losing control, shining
but not unbearably blinding.

CHAPTER FIFTY-NINE

1. In dealing with people, and connecting to
heaven, nothing is better than storing up the
power.

2. Only by practicing charging up and storing the
power can one be well prepared.

3. Well prepared ahead of time, one must
heavily charge and store up his Te.

4. Armed with heavily charged up and stored up
Te, one overcomes anything. If one can
overcome anything, the potential is unlimited.

5. With unlimited potential, one can easily rule
the state. With this as the foundation of the state,
it will last long.

6. As if planting deep roots – stand firm,
everlasting, and long-visualizing.

CHAPTER SIXTY

1. Ruling a big country is like cooking a small
fish.

2. Ruling the world with Tao – evil will lose its

power.

3. It isn't that evil has no spiritual power, but rather evil's spiritual power will become harmless to the people.

4. Not only will the spiritual power of evil harm no one, the saint harms no one.

5. Both powers cannot hurt each other, and therefore the Te returns to the original state.

CHAPTER SIXTY-ONE

1. A large country is like a river delta. Where streams flow to meet is like the mother of the world.

2. The female always overcomes the male with stillness, and remains still and lower in position.

3. Therefore if a large country takes a lower position than a smaller country, it will conquer the smaller country.

4. And if a small country takes a lower position to a large country, it can affiliate with the large country.

5. Therefore, those who would be great should yield, and those who are great become so by yielding.

6. A large country wishes to expand its oversight; a small country needs to serve another.

7. If each finds what it wants, then it is right for the large country to yield.

CHAPTER SIXTY-TWO

1. The Tao is the source of the ten thousand things.

2. It is the treasure of the good man, and even also well kept by the bad man.

3. Beautiful words can buy honor; deeds that appear honorable can win respect.

4. Even if a man is bad, how can anyone abandon it?
5. Therefore, on the day the emperor takes his throne, or the three ministers of state are installed, do not send a gift of jade and a team of four horses. Instead, stay still and offer the Tao to them
6. Why did everyone like the Tao so much in the past? Isn't it because you can get what you need and are redeemed when you sin?
7. Therefore this is the most valued treasure under heaven.

CHAPTER SIXTY-THREE

1. Practice non-action and execute by non-doing as if tasting the tasteless.
2. Regard the small as if it were large, and the few as if it were many.
3. Counter hostilities with the Te.
4. Plan for difficulties while a situation is still simple to solve: act on big things while they are still small.
5. In the universe, difficult things start out easy. In the universe, large things arise from the small.
6. The saint does not strive to be great, and eventually achieves greatness.
7. Otherwise, those who make quick promises rarely earn trust. Those who regard things lightly end up with plenty of difficulties.
8. Because the saint respects difficulties, as a result he has no difficulties.

CHAPTER SIXTY-FOUR

1. It is easy to maintain a situation while it is still at peace. Plan for change before it happens.
2. While still weak, it is easy to be shattered – while it is still small, it is easily scattered.

3. Act on it before it happens. Create order before it becomes chaos.
4. A tree so big that it takes many men to embrace it starts from a tiny shoot.
5. A nine-story terrace rises from a bucket of earth. A journey of a thousand miles starts beneath one's feet.
6. Whoever tries to act on it will ruin it; whoever tries to hold on to it loses it.
7. The saint performs non-action and so is never defeated.
8. He does not have to own and therefore he does not have to lose.
9. People usually ruin things right when they are on the verge of success.
10. So be just as careful at the end as you were at the beginning, and you'll have no failure.
11. Therefore the saint seeks not to desire and does not value precious goods.
12. He learns how to not need to learn— to avoid repeating others' mistakes.
13. He uses non-action to help the ten thousand things find their own nature, but dares not take conventional action.

CHAPTER SIXTY-FIVE

1. In ancient times those who knew the Tao did not try to enlighten others, but rather tried to keep them simple.
2. Why are people so hard to govern? Because they are too clever.
3. Rulers who depend on cleverness to rule, harm the state. Those who rule without depending on cleverness are instead a benefit to the state.
4. These are the two alternatives. Understanding the difference between the two is knowing how to employ the Great Te.

5. The Great Te comes from a deep source and is therefore powerful and far-reaching.

6. The Te works by making everything return to its original state and eventually will make everything return to a state of great harmony.

CHAPTER SIXTY-SIX

1. The reason why oceans are the kings of a hundred streams is because they lie below them. Therefore an ocean is able to be the king of a hundred streams.

2. If the ruler would like to guide the people, his words must be humble.

3. If he would like to lead them, he must follow behind them.

4. In this way when the ruler leads, the people will not feel burdened.

5. When he stands in front of them, he poses no obstruction to them.

6. The whole world will support him happily and will not tire of him.

7. Because he does not confront them, so he does not meet with confrontation.

CHAPTER SIXTY-SEVEN

1. The whole world says that my Tao is great and is like nothing else.

2. It is because it is great that it seems to stand apart. If it did not stand apart, it would have become insignificant long ago.

3. I have three types of practical messages that I hold and treasure: The first is mercy, the second is storing up, the third is not being ahead of others.

4. From mercy comes courage; from storing up comes immensity; from

yielding

comes

leadership.

5. Instead, nowadays men give up mercy yet try to be courageous. They forsake storing up, but try to pretend immensity. They do not believe in yielding, and instead always try to be first.

6. This is sure to end in death.

7. For mercy will win any battle and strengthen defense. Heaven prevails and protects with mercy.

CHAPTER SIXTY-EIGHT

1. A top gentleman does not depend on martial action. A superior warrior never fights with rage.

2. He who always overcomes never confronts. He who always leads is ever humble.

3. This is known as the Te of non-confrontation.

4. This is known as the ability to borrow other's forces.

5. This is so-called "matching with the power of heaven" that was known since ancient times.

CHAPTER SIXTY-NINE

1. There is a saying among soldiers: "I dare not make the first move but would rather respond secondly; I dare not advance an inch but instead retreat a foot."

2. This is called not needing to line-up to face the enemy, no need to lift an arm, no need to confront the enemy, no need to hold a weapon.

3. There is no greater disaster than underestimating the enemy. By underestimating the enemy, you may forget my precious advice.

4. Therefore when the battle is between two equal armies, the side of mercy will win.

CHAPTER SEVENTY

1. My words appear very easy to understand and appear very easy to practice, yet no one in the world understands or practices them.

2. All my words refer to ancient beginnings. All my actions follow the Lord's will.

3. Because people have no true knowledge, they therefore cannot understand what I am talking about.

4. Those that know what I am talking about are few; those that can follow what I am talking about are lucky.

5. Just like someone wearing coarse clothing yet holding a precious jewel against his chest.

CHAPTER SEVENTY-ONE

1. To know you don't know is strength. Not to know yet think you know is a handicap.

2. If one knows he is flawed, then he is not flawed.

3. The saint is not flawed because he knows he is flawed. Therefore he is without flaw.

CHAPTER SEVENTY-TWO

1. When people lack a sense of authority, there will come the great authority.

2. There is no need to restrict their home lives. You do not need to exploit them at work. Simply because you do not need to oppress them, they will not weary of you.

3. Therefore the saint knows self and does not need to appear; he treasures self instead of exalting himself.

4. He rejects after and chooses the front.

CHAPTER SEVENTY-THREE

1. If one is simply brave and daring he will be

killed.

2. One who is brave enough admits to what he will not dare to do. He will stay alive.

3. In these two cases, one is good and the other is harmful.

4. Heaven hates some things. Who knows the reason why?

5. The Tao from heaven does not need to strive, and yet it always overcomes;

6. Does not need to speak, and yet is well answered;

7. Does not need to summon, yet is supplied with all its needs;

8. Seems slow, yet follows a good plan.

9. Heaven's net is ever large and wide. Though its meshes are coarse, yet nothing slips through.

CHAPTER SEVENTY-FOUR

1. If people are not afraid of death, it is of no use to threaten them with death.

2. And if people live in constant fear of death, and if acting contrary to society means a man will be killed, who will dare break the law?

3. There is always an executioner in charge of killing. If you try to kill in his place, it is like trying to take the place of a master carpenter at cutting wood.

4. If you try to cut wood like a master carpenter, you will cut your own hand.

CHAPTER SEVENTY-FIVE

1. The people are starving because the rulers eat up too much from taxes. That's why the people are starving.

2. The people are difficult to rule because the rulers like to act and interfere. That's why they are hard to rule.

3. The people take death lightly because the

rulers demand too much of their own life.

That's why the people take death lightly.

4. Nevertheless, those who cannot value their life are smarter than those who value their lives overly much.

CHAPTER SEVENTY-SIX

1. When people are born, they are gentle and weak. At death they are hard and stiff.

2. Green plants are pliant and tender while living. When they're dead, they are withered and dried.

3. Therefore the stiff and unbending follow death. The supple and yielding follow life.

4. Thus an army depending only on its strength never wins a battle.

5. A tree that is stiff is easily broken.

6. The hard and strong will prove inferior. The supple and weak will prove superior.

CHAPTER SEVENTY-SEVEN

1. The Tao in heaven acts like the drawing of a bow. To aim at the goal, the high is lowered and the low is raised.

2. If there is excess it is reduced: if there is not enough it is increased.

3. The Tao in heaven works to take from what's excessive and give where there is deficiency.

4. The Tao of man works differently: He takes from those who lack in order to give to those who already have too much.

5. Who can have more than enough and give it to the whole world? Only the man possessing the Tao.

6. Therefore the saint works behind the scene. He achieves what has to be done without claim. He does not even show his true knowledge.

CHAPTER SEVENTY-EIGHT

1. In the whole world, nothing is softer or more yielding than water. Yet for attacking the hard and strong, nothing can do better. It is irreplaceable.

2. The weak power always overcomes the strong power; the supple eventually overcomes the unbending.

3. Everyone in the world knows this fact, yet no one can put it into practice.

4. Therefore the saint says: 'One who burdens himself with the humiliation of the nation is fit to rule the people's daily affairs. One who assumes responsibility for the country's disasters deserves to be king of the world.'

6. True words often sound backwards.

CHAPTER SEVENTY-NINE

1. After resolving a bitter quarrel, some resentment is bound to remain. How can this be considered good?

2. Therefore the saint keeps his loan receipt but does not push for repayment.

3. A man with the Te performs as if he has a loan receipt but does not push for repayment. One without the Te always requires others to pay what they owe, as if he is a tax collector.

4. The Tao in heaven is fair. It blesses good men all the time.

CHAPTER EIGHTY

1. Small, the size of the country, and few, the number of people:

2. Though there are all kinds of tools and equipment available, they are not needed.

3. Make people take life seriously and do not migrate far.

4. Though they have boats and carriages, nobody uses them. Though they have armor and weapons, nobody displays them.

5. People return to the knotting of rope to keep records.

6. They enjoy their plain food; they consider their clothes beautiful; they feel safe and secure in their homes. They are happy with the way that they live.

7. Though they can see adjoining states, and the sounds of cocks and barking dogs can be heard across the border, they will nonetheless grow old and die without ever bothering to visit them.

CHAPTER EIGHTY-ONE

1. Words of faith are not beautiful. Beautiful words are not faithful.

2. Good men offer no skillful words. Those who talk skillfully are not good.

3. Those who know the truth possess no knowledge. Those who possess knowledge do not know the truth.

4. The saint never tries to accumulate. The more he does for others, the more he has. The more he gives to others, the greater his returns.

5. The Tao in heaven is very powerful but does no harm.

6. The Tao possessed by the saint is performing work without confrontation.

About the Author

Master Waysun Liao spent his teenage years with a traditional Taoist master, learning the art of Tai Chi, meditation, feng shui, Chinese traditional medicine and healing, as well as the true philosophy of Tao and its applications to spiritual

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Shortly after coming to the United States, Master

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been regarded as one of the most authentic and informative schools in the world, teaching the true philosophy of Tao, Tai Chi, and its application to spiritual and meditation work.

He continues to spread the art of Tai Chi and the science of Tao by giving seminars, group and intensive training, as well as private sessions with sincere students. His previous books, Tao: the Way of God, Chi: Discovering Your Life Energy , T'ai Chi Classics and The Essence of Tai Chi , have been translated into many different languages and enjoyed by readers worldwide. In addition, he has compiled a complete Taichi learning system on DVD, preserving the ancient temple teachings on moving meditation, the Tao, and internal energy development.

Master Liao has students all over the world, and enjoys sharing his teaching to help others who are longing for the wisdom of Truth.

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