

道德经

治国济民之道

DAO DE JING

PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNING A NATION AND ITS PEOPLE

马云溪注译

马忠远英译

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Dao De Jing : Principles of Governing a Nation and its People

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Published by NETUCC

Printed by NETUCC

Blk 1014 Geylang East Avenue 3, #03-224/226 Singapore 389729

Tel: 6742 5889 Fax: 6742 6719 Email: model@netucc.com

First Printed in year of 2021

ISBN: 978-981-18-0066-5

Price: S\$25.00

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出版：艺品良印

承印：艺品良印

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出版日期：2021年

国际书号：978-981-18-0066-5

定价：S\$25.00

自序

本书建立在先贤对道德经的评注基础上，从综合分析的角度，绕过了用其他古文献来佐证释义的艰辛途径，用整体观的方法来解读道德经，以力求全文思想的一贯性和合理性为要旨。

如此简化的解读势必要舍弃许多有教益的历史例子，但对一般人，想要了解道德经，却苦于没有应有的国学基础，若通过本书能明白其要旨大意，则本书的目的也就达到了。

本人出身华文理工学科，毕业后一直都从事资讯工程系统分析的工作，所以文中采用的解读是我熟悉的系统分析方法，在道德经的研读上该算是新的尝试，也可说是一个理工生眼中的道德经吧！文中的文辞表达多有生涩之处，希望他日能有改进的机会。

本书先为自身立场定位，再用综合整体观方法理解道和德两大核心思想及它们的衍生思想，如不争与用柔等，再略述道德经积德修道的大概，然后讲述如何用道和德及其衍生思想来治理国家，以及其可应用在生活中的智慧等。

书中为了要达到完整的合理性与一致性，提出很多有异于许多学者的看法，但想到自己没有贵重羽毛可珍惜，就斗胆冒险作出大胆的假设和解读，且畅所欲言了。

从整体来看，本人相信道德经是一本教育王公子孙的教

材著作，而不仅是宗教经文典籍。其范围涵盖育能，育德，育智和其他方面，以培养他们，为他们将来的治国作准备。文体简短易于诵读，也有多处隐喻，以避免经文真意落入匪人之手，而祸害社会。

这本书的特色是在书中附上英语翻译。希望这样的设置可以对现代汉语和/或古代汉语不好的人有所帮助，有助于他们的查证，以便对经文有更好的理解。

最后，要感谢马忠远的协助将本书翻译成英文、徐牡丹的校对与修正及朋友们的宝贵意见，让本书能顺利付梓出版。

Preface

This book was written based on the past commentary works of esteemed scholars who are renowned for their studies of Dao De Jing. It employs an approach of a comprehensive and integrated analysis to explain the subject matter, bypassing the usual complex method of using numerous other ancient texts to support the many interpretations. This book interprets Dao De Jing in a holistic manner, striving to maintain consistency and rationality throughout its entirety.

Such a simplified interpretation is bound to overlook many historical events and their valuable lessons. However, a reader who wishes to understand Dao De Jing but lacks the prerequisites for the proficiency of ancient Chinese language and history may find the conventional endeavour difficult. Hence, if this book can help the reader in shedding some light on the main ideas of Dao De Jing, then it has succeeded in its purpose.

I attended Chinese schools and was trained in the subjects of engineering and science. After graduation, I was involved in the analysis of information technology systems for almost the entire duration of my career. Naturally my interpretation of Dao De Jing is based on a method of system analysis that I am greatly familiar with. Perhaps such an approach can be

regarded as a new attempt to study Dao De Jing, from the perspective of a person with a background in science. There are many imperfect expressions in this book, and I hope for opportunities to improve.

This book first lays out its position. Then it uses a comprehensive and holistic approach to explain the two main ideas, namely Dao and De, and their derived ideas such as ‘not contending’ and ‘using softness’. It also outlines the cultivation process of Dao and De, and explains how to use Dao, De, and their derived ideas to govern a nation, handle complex affairs and manage our personal lives sensibly.

In order to achieve complete rationality and consistency throughout the book, it has made many bold assumptions and interpretations that differ from the opinions of many other scholars. As I am not bound by any academic reputation or status, I shall venture to express my views freely.

From an overall viewpoint, Dao De Jing appears to be a guidebook for educating the descendants of royal families and not merely a religious scripture. Its scope covers physical wellness through cultivation, moral education, knowledge acquisition, and others; with the main aim of preparing them for future governance of their nations. The style of writing that it uses is both concise and easy to read and recite. However, it has used many metaphors to conceal its underlying meaning

to prevent the truth from falling into the hands of nefarious people who would seek to do great harm to the society.

One of the unique features of this book is its English translation. I hope that this could be helpful to readers who are not well-versed in the modern or ancient Chinese language. This arrangement will also facilitate the reader to cross-reference between both languages of this book in order to have a better understanding of the scripture.

Last but not least, I would like to express my appreciation to Ma Zhongyuan for getting this book translated into English, Chie Maow Tan for proof-reading, and to my friends for their invaluable comments.

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上篇

道德经与释文

Part 1

An English Translation of
Dao De Jing

【1】 道可道，非常道。名可名，非常名。无名天地之始。有名万物之母。故常无欲也以观其妙。常有欲也以观其徼。[此两者同出而异名同谓之玄]两者同出，异名同谓。玄之又玄，众妙之门。

（“两者同出，异名同谓”句取自马王堆帛本）

【释文】

“道”，也称大道，不是常道（恒道）。

它的“名”也不是常道的名谓。

“无”是天地源始的名谓，“有”是万物之母的名谓。

以“常无（恒无）”的意识来观想道的奥妙，以“常有（恒有）”的意识来观察道的端倪。

这两种意识同源而有不同的称谓。

玄妙又玄妙，是一切奥妙变化的门径。

[1]

[Translation]

(Great) Dao to be explained here, is not Constant Dao.

The name to be described, is not the Constant name.

‘Non-Being’ is the genesis of Heaven and Earth.

‘Being’ is the mother of all living creation.

Using the sense of ‘Non-Being’, unravel the mysteries of Dao.

Using the sense of ‘Being’, observe the manifestations of Dao.

Both senses come from the same source yet differ in title.

Dark access upon dark access, lies the gateway to all mysteries.

【简要分析】

“常道”和“常德”在马王堆帛本中，称为“恒道”和“恒德”，这是为了避讳汉恒帝的名号而做出的窜改。经中也有其他的“恒”字，其具有恒常的一般意义。

常道和常德（或恒道和恒德）是修道者所达到的阶段。先积德后进道，而“玄”是修炼者与深远的道源合真的途径。

“恒道”（或常道）见于 [1][32][37]章。

“恒德”（或常德）见于 [28]章。

[Short Analysis]

‘常道’ (Constant Dao) and ‘常德’ (Constant De) were termed as ‘恒道’ and ‘恒德’ in the Ma Wang Dui version of Dao De Jing. The word ‘常’ (Constant) replaced the word ‘恒’ (also Constant) in almost all other versions of Dao De Jing to avoid offending Emperor Han Heng in the use of his name. There are other ‘恒’ characters within the scripture and they all have a general meaning of constancy.

Constant Dao and Constant De are the different achievable stages of cultivation. One will first accumulate sufficient Constant De, and then enter into the process of cultivating Constant Dao. ‘玄’ (Xuan) is the access for practitioners of Dao to bond with the far-reaching Great Dao within the deep and dark universe.

Constant Dao is found within Chapters [1], [32] and [37].

Constant De is found within Chapter [28].

【2】 天下皆知美之为美，斯恶矣；皆知善之为善，斯不善已。有无相生，难易相成，长短相较，高下相倾，音声相和，前后相随。恒也。是以圣人处无为之事，行不言之教。万物作而不辞。生而不有，为而不恃，功成而弗居。夫唯弗居，是以不去。

（“恒也”取自马王堆帛本）

【释文】

天下都知道美为美时，丑就自然产生。

都知道善为善时，不善也就跟随而到。

同样地，

有无互相生化，难易互相成就，长短互相形现，

高下互相倾依，音声彼此应和，前后互相引随，

这是恒常的（运作）。

所以圣人（学习大道精神）用无为的方法来处理事物，

用不言的感化来教导人民。

（大道）创作了万物而不称说。

创生了万物不据为己有，养育了万物不恃己能，

事成了也不居功夸耀。

正因为不居功，就无所谓失去。

[2]

[Translation]

When the mind has gained a sense of beauty, ugliness accompanies.

When the mind has attained a sense of goodness, evil appears.

For the same reason, 'Being' and 'Non-Being' can transform into one another.

Difficult and easy, complementing each other.

Long and short, shaping each other.

High and low, leaning against each other.

Sounds and tones, harmonising with each other.

Fore and aft, following each other.

The above are acts of Constancy.

Therefore, the Sage (learning from Dao) tackles issues with inaction, and reforms the people with words unspoken.

Dao creates all, yet it does not unveil their origins.

Creating them, yet not asserting ownership;

Nurturing them, yet not stressing on its capabilities;

After accomplishing its work, Dao does not proclaim for any credit.

And by doing so, Dao stands to lose nothing.

【简要分析】

不同的人对事物的二元对立并存的性质属性，例如好坏，美丽或丑陋等等，会有不同的判断结果。为了最大程度地减少这种差异，道德经倡导利用无为的能力，对意想的事物所产生的最内在的自然感觉作为判断的基础。

它可避免使用主观印象经验，尤其是偏见，产生的谬误。在尚无科学方法的时代，这种方法对于在观测中获取客观性真相非常重要。

[Short Analysis]

People with various backgrounds arrive at different conclusions from the properties of things that are dualistic in nature, for example, when coming to a conclusion of whether something is good or bad; beautiful or ugly. To minimise such differences, Dao De Jing advocates using the capabilities of inaction to get to the natural and innermost feeling of an object as a basis for judgement. In this manner, subjective impressions, biases, and prejudices from personal experiences clouding the judgement can be avoided. This observational method was especially important in obtaining objective truths during an era when scientific methods were still not in place.

【3】 不尚贤，使民不争。不贵难得之货，使民不为盗。不见可欲，使民心不乱。是以圣人之治，虚其心，实其腹，弱其志，强其骨；常使民无知无欲，使夫智者不敢为也。[为无为]，则无不治。

【释文】

不推崇贤明，使人民不争夺名利，
不看重稀珍奇宝，使人民不萌生盗窃心念，
不炫耀引起贪慾的事物，使人民不被迷乱。

所以圣人治理政事的原则是：

虚静人民心思 实现人民温饱，减弱人民欲求 增强人民身骨。
常使民众不追求巧智和慾望，使一些喜搞智诈的人不敢妄为。
[依据无为原则办事]，天下就不会不太平了。

【简要分析】

本文勾画出老子的政治理念。要旨在强调摒弃巧智，回归淳朴，则国家就可无所不治了。末句马王堆本无“为无为”，较为正确合理。

[3]

[Translation]

Do not over-glorify the talented, and people will not strive for fame.

Do not over-value precious goods, and people will not harbour thoughts of being bandits.

Do not flaunt enviable objects, and people will not have their minds led astray.

Therefore, the Sage governs with the following principles:

Empty and calm the people's hearts and minds, ensure their sustenance, weaken their desires, and strengthen their constitution.

Discourage the pursuit of craftiness and dampen their desires, so that sly men will not be able to exercise their deceitful tricks.

Perform inaction and everything will be in order.

[Short Analysis]

This chapter outlines Lao Zi's political ideology. It stresses upon the abandonment of craftiness and the return to simplicity for a country to be properly ruled.

In the Ma Wang Dui version, the phrase 'perform inaction' found in the last sentence does not exist. This is more consistent and logical.

【4】 道冲而用之或不盈。渊兮似万物之宗。湛兮似或存。吾不知谁之子，象帝之先。

【释文】

大道空虚无形，但力量作用无穷无尽。

渊深不可测，好像万物的祖宗。

幽隐不见，好像没有存在。

我不知道它是谁创生的，像是在天帝先前。

【简要分析】

指出大道的一些性质，还有其起源是在天地之前。

[4]

[Translation]

Dao is empty and formless, yet it functions endlessly.

Unfathomably deep, it seems to be the source of all living things.

Obscurely hidden, it appears not to exist.

I do not know who created it.

It should exist before the heavenly Emperor.

[Short Analysis]

This chapter points out the intrinsic properties of Great Dao. Its origin predates the existence of Heaven and Earth.

【5】 天地不仁，以万物为刍狗。圣人不仁，以百姓为刍狗。天地之间，其犹橐籥乎？虚而不屈，动而愈出。多言数穷，不如守中。

【释文】

天地自然，不讲私情，无意偏爱，

对待万物如祭祀的刍狗。

圣人效法天地也无偏爱私情，

全部百姓一视同仁。

天地之间，岂不像风箱一样吗？

静止空虚而不会屈曲，动起来却生息不断。

言辞再多，就有不详尽之处。

不如致虚守静，不言守中。

【简要分析】

天道没有私情偏爱，圣人也应如此。处理天地间繁杂的事物，有时采取守中（静观其变）的心态不失一个办法。

[5]

[Translation]

Heaven and Earth are impartial.

They view all living creations equally, just like straw dogs.

The Sage emulates Heaven and Earth.

In turn, she also treats all people equally, just like straw dogs.

The space between Heaven and Earth is akin to that of bellows.

When inactive, it is hollow, but not deformed.

When it starts moving, it continues to blast air endlessly.

When excessive words are uttered, the meaning becomes increasingly distorted.

Therefore, keep to the centrality.

[Short Analysis]

Celestial Dao does not practise favouritism, and therefore the Sages do not. When dealing with the complex matters of Heaven and Earth, adopting the approach of keeping to the centrality (with no action) could sometimes be a way out.

【6】 谷神不死是谓玄牝。玄牝之门是谓天地根。绵绵若存，用之不勤。

【释文】

不死的谷(欲)神，是谓玄牝。

玄牝，是通往天地空虚妙道的根。

它连续不绝，隐约存在，作用时不会穷竭。

【简要分析】

本文也出现在《列子·天瑞篇》中，列子称其文引自《黄帝书》。

在《关尹子·天宇篇》中也谈及道有四大要素即天、命、神、玄(元)，玄即是深邃的通径。这显示了当时道家思想的深度交流。

[6]

[Translation]

The Valley of the Living Spirit is the mysterious Great Mother.

The gate of the Great Mother lies the root to infinite worlds.

It continues endlessly, and is ever present. It is inexhaustible in its functioning.

[Short Analysis]

This passage of text also appeared in ‘Tian Rui’ by Lie Zi. Lie Zi claimed that he had quoted it from ‘Huang Di Shu’.

In the chapter ‘Tian Yu’ of Guan Yin Zi, it discusses about the four major elements of Dao, namely Heaven, Life, Spirit, and the Dark Mystic Access (玄). The last-mentioned is a deep profound path. This chapter shows the in-depth exchange of ideas between the Dao scholars of that time.

【7】 天长地久。天地所以能长且久者，以其不自生，故能长生。是以圣人后其身而身先，外其身而身存。非以其无私邪！故能成其私。

【释文】

天长地久。

天地所以能够长久存在，

因为天地的运作自然，不为自己的生存，所以能够长生。

所以圣人（效法天地的不求自生而长生的自然之道，处身谦让），

把自身置于众人之后，而获得爱戴在先，

把自身置于度外，而保有自己的存在。

不正是因为他无私吗？所以能成就他自身。

【简要分析】

以天地无私贪心念，而能长久存在的道理，来劝导献身大功业的人要有大公无私的精神，去完成个人的理想。

[7]

[Translation]

Heaven and Earth are eternal.

They are everlasting. Because they do not care about their survival, they exist eternally.

Hence the Sage follows this principle and demonstrates humility and flexibility.

By placing herself behind the masses, she gains widespread respect for leading.

By ignoring her personal needs, she maintains her wellbeing.

Through her selflessness, she achieves self-fulfilment.

[Short Analysis]

Heaven and Earth are eternal because of their selfless and altruistic outlooks. As such, this chapter encourages those who devote themselves to their great ambitions to have selfless spirits, in order to fulfil their personal ideals.

【8】 上善若水。水善利万物而不争，处众人之所恶，故几于道。居善地，心善渊，与善仁，言善信，正善治，事善能，动善时。夫唯不争，故无尤。

【释文】

上善的人有如水一般。

水善于滋养万物，而不和万物起争执，
处在众人都厌恶的地方，所以近似于道。

上善的人，
善于选择合适居所，善于维持心境沉静，
善于诚实仁爱交往，善于说话可靠有信，
善于精练治理政务，善于发挥施展所长，
善于把握行动时机。

由于不争执，所以没有过失怨咎。

【简要分析】

上善的人要学习水的特性，因为水接近道性。上善的人除了要以灵活心态解决各种事物外，更要不争以避免怨咎和浪费精力。

[8]

[Translation]

Water behaves with supreme virtue.

It nourishes all living creations without contending.

It pools in places loathed by others. It is very similar to Dao.

People with supreme virtue dwell in the right places.

They maintain a calm state of mind.

They treat others with honesty and decency.

They speak with sincerity and reliable words.

They manage a nation with effective governance.

They fulfil their tasks competently.

They seize on opportune moments.

As they do not contend with others, there is no resentment.

[Short Analysis]

Those who are good-natured can learn from the characteristics of water, because it is very similar to Dao. Good-natured people should solve matters with a flexible attitude and not be contentious, so as to avoid unnecessary blame and the wasting of energy.

【9】 持而盈之，不如其已；揣而锐之，不可长保；金玉满堂，莫之能守；富贵而骄，自遗其咎。功遂，身退，天之道。

【释文】

持卮盈溢，不如及时停止。

锤炼锋芒，难保锐势长久。

金玉满堂，却是没法守藏。

富贵而骄，那是自留祸根。

完成功业归隐，符合天道。

【简要分析】

说明天道效法大道，是物极必反的循环运作。从事大功业的人要懂得在适当时机功成身退。这劝导对在封建帝皇时代为人臣者尤为重要。

[9]

[Translation]

Pouring over the brim of an overfilled goblet, why not learn to stop in time?

Over-sharpening a weapon will render it nondurable.

Amassing vast halls of gold and riches make securing their protection difficult.

Acting high and mighty with wealth and titles give rise to misfortune.

To retire when one's mission is completed, is the way of Celestial Dao.

[Short Analysis]

This chapter explains that Celestial Dao follows Great Dao, and its cyclical nature causes all objects to reverse their directions after reaching their extreme positions. A person performing great meritorious missions should know when to retire at the appropriate time. This advice was particularly pertinent to those living in the era of feudal emperors.

【10】 载营魄抱一，能无离乎？专气致柔，能婴儿乎？涤除玄览，能无疵乎？爱国治民，能无知乎？天门开阖，能为雌乎？明白四达，能无知乎？

【释文】

魂魄形神合一，能不分离吗？

神气凝集，呼吸柔顺，能像婴儿吗？

清涤神识，返观玄览，能没有瑕疵吗？

爱民治国，能自然无为吗？

天门开阖，和天相应，能守柔清静吗？

全面明白了解事物，能不用成见吗？

【简要分析】

本章的问题，可作为修道者的检核功夫进程的方法。

[10]

[Translation]

Body and soul, can they ever be integrated as one?

Concentrating on breathing smoothly, can it be carried out like a new-born baby?

Cleansing the vision of Great Dao, can it possibly be flawless?

Ruling the nation and people benevolently, can it be attained naturally?

Accessing Heaven, can it be achieved by acting femininely?

Understanding matters, can it be accomplished naturally?

[Short Analysis]

The questions listed in this chapter serves as a checklist for Dao practitioners to check on the progress of their Dao cultivation.

【11】 三十辐共一毂，当其无，有车之用。埴埴以为器，当其无，有器之用。凿户牖以为室，当其无，有室之用。故有之以为利，无之以为用。

【释文】

三十根辐条共集到一根车毂中的孔洞当中，

有了它的中空，才有车辆的作用。

揉捏陶土做成器具，

有了它的中空，才有器皿的作用。

开凿门窗建造房室，

有了它的中空，才有房屋的作用。

所以要懂得以‘有’为利，而发挥它的‘空无’的作用。

【简要分析】

典型二元思维的应用，处理事物都应顾及事物的两极两面，而灵活利用。以身体的“有”，发挥强大“虚无”的精神力量，也是“利有用空”的重要例子。

[11]

[Translation]

Fixing thirty spokes around a wheel's hub, it is the cavity (allowing the axle to fit) that makes a wagon movable.

Shaping clay into a pot, it is the empty volume within that makes it a container.

Installing doors and windows for a chamber, it is the space within that makes it a living area.

Thus, take advantage of 'Being', and thereafter benefit from its 'Non-being'.

[Short Analysis]

This chapter provides typical applications of duality. When dealing with matters, both contrasting sides and extremes should be taken into consideration and astutely utilised. An extended example would be utilising the 'Being' of the physical body to effect the 'Non-Being' of spiritual powers.

【12】 五色令人目盲，五音令人耳聋，五味令人口爽，驰骋畋猎令人心发狂，难得之货令人行妨。是以圣人为腹不为目，故去彼取此。

【释文】

绚丽繁杂的色彩，使人眼花缭乱；

高亢起伏的音调，使人听觉失敏；

浓厚深郁的味道，使人口舌爽快；

尽性纵情于狩猎，使人内心狂放；

珍贵稀奇的货品，使人操行不当。

因此圣人注重肚腹（的内德修养）而不迷于眼目（的追逐外物）。

所以取前者舍后者。

【简要分析】

劝导人们要摒弃感官的享受而注重内在身心的修养。人们都过度使用头脑和感官，致使血气亢盛上扬而不健康。加强对腹部与脚部的气血调节，可使全身有更好的气血平衡。

[12]

[Translation]

Scintillating colours dazzle the eyes.

Resounding tones deafen the ears.

Savoury flavours gratify the taste buds.

Infatuation in hunting drives the mind crazy.

Precious goods lead one to go astray.

Therefore, the Sage would place greater importance on his abdomen (to cultivate his inner virtues) rather than his eyes (to pursue external wants).

He shuns the latter and embraces the former.

[Short Analysis]

This chapter advises people to abandon the enjoyment derived from the human senses and pay more attention to the cultivation of the body and mind. People overuse their minds and overload their senses, causing their blood pressures to rise and become unhealthy. Strengthen the regulation of blood and qi in the abdomen and feet, so that the entire body can have a better balance of blood and qi.

【13】 宠辱若惊，贵大患若身。何谓宠辱若惊？宠为下；得之若惊，失之若惊，是谓宠辱若惊。何谓贵大患若身？吾所以有大患者，为吾有身，及吾无身，吾有何患？故贵以身为天下，若可寄天下；爱以身为天下，若可托天下。

【释文】

对宠和辱都感到惊恐，重视大患好像重视自己的身命。

何谓宠辱若惊？

受宠时是在下的，得到时不安，失去时又惊恐，是谓宠辱若惊。

何谓贵大患若身？

我所以觉得有患，是由于我有个身命，

如果没有身命，我怎会有大患呢？

所以，能够以重视天下和爱惜天下如己身的，可以寄托天下给他。

[13]

[Translation]

Regard both favouritism and dishonour with equal fear.
Value any calamity as if your own body is being harmed.

What does the former mean?

To be favoured is actually unfavourable.

Upon being favoured, one will turn apprehensive, and upon losing the favour, one will be in fright.

Therefore, favouritism and disgrace should be treated equally with fear.

What does the latter mean?

The reason that I am mindful of a calamity is because I have a sentient body.

If I do not have a sentient body, what calamity could possibly befall upon me?

Therefore, he who values and treasures his kingdom as though it was his own spirit and body, can be entrusted to administer and govern the realm.

【简要分析】

要避免因受人宠辱，而落入宠辱都使身心受惊的不利局面。指出那些能重视天下和爱惜天下如己身的人是可被寄托天下的人。

[Short Analysis]

Avoid situations of being favoured or disfavoured, because both can cause upsets to a person's physical and mental wellbeing.

Those who value and treasure all as their own lives, can be entrusted with the task of ruling the world.

【14】视之不见名曰夷。听之不闻名曰希。搏之不得名曰微。此三者不可致诘，故混而为一。其上不皦，其下不昧，绳绳不可名，复归于无物。是谓无状之状，无物之象，是谓惚恍。迎之不见其首，随之不见其后。执古之道以御今之有。能知古始，是谓道纪。

【释文】

看，见不到的色，叫夷；

听，闻不到的音，叫希；

触，摸不着的物，叫微。

此三者无从详究，浑然混而成一；

它外面不光亮，它里面不阴暗，

绳绳之状而无法称名。

再归于无法认知的物，

它无定状，也无物象，叫它做“惚恍”。

迎着它，看不见它的前端；随着它，看不到它的后头。

执着早已存在的道，来驾驭今时有形有象的万事万物，

能知晓早时的道，是由于道有规律。

[14]

[Translation]

Look at it and it is invisible. Call it ‘夷’ (Yi).

Listen for it and it is inaudible. Call it ‘希’ (Xi).

Feel it and it is intangible. Call it ‘微’ (Wei).

The above three cannot be further queried.

They are completely blended as One.

The One has a surface that is not bright, and an inside that is not dark.

Like strings that run endlessly, it is unnameable.

Through it, we return to nothingness, with no fixed forms or recognisable images.

The One is elusive, indistinct, and everchanging. It is subtle and beyond all understanding.

Facing it, you will not see the beginning; following it, you cannot see the end.

Hold steadfast to pre-existing Dao, and let it guide and direct our present living.

Dao of the past can be comprehended because Dao adheres to constancy.

【简要分析】

道家的修炼者为了能与道合真而逆向修行，以期达到道一的境界。本章在描述道一的情景。

[Short Analysis]

In order to be in harmony with Great Dao and achieve the realm of ‘道一’ (Dao Yi), practitioners of Dao perform in the opposite direction of Dao’s creation process (see Chapter [42]). This chapter describes the scenes when attaining Dao Yi.

【15】 古之善为士者，微妙玄通，深不可识。夫唯不可识，故强为之容。豫兮若冬涉川；犹兮若畏四邻；俨兮其若客；涣兮若冰之将释；敦兮其若朴；旷兮其若谷；浑兮其若浊。孰能浊以静之徐清？孰能安以久动之徐生？保此道者不欲盈。夫唯不盈，故能蔽而新成。

【释文】

古时善于进道修德之士，

精通天地玄妙之理，高深莫测难以被认识。

就因为常人不识有道之士的修持，只好勉强地形容他们：

 处事谨慎啊，像在冬天涉渡川河；

 警觉戒惕啊，像防备周围邦邻的进攻；

 拘谨恭敬啊，像赴筵宴的宾客；

 行动洒脱啊，像消解的冰柱；

 朴实敦厚啊，像未经加工的朴料。

 开广豁达啊，像空旷深谷。

 浑厚纯朴啊，像浊水。

谁能在浑浊的世间保持淡定，让它慢慢的澄清？

谁能从安定中使变动起来，让它慢慢显出生机？

保此道的人不追求圆满，

由于不圆满，才能够时时除旧更新。

[15]

[Translation]

The ancient masters of Dao understood the intricate mysteries of Heaven and Earth.

The depth of their knowledge is unfathomable.

Because it is beyond our comprehension, we can only attempt to describe their behaviours:

Cautious in handling matters, like crossing frozen rivers in winter.

Vigilant, like defending attacks from neighbouring countries.

Respectful, like guests at a banquet.

Relaxed, like melting icicles.

Honest and sincere, like raw pieces of wood.

Receptive and open-minded, like deep and wide valleys.

Mixing easily, like muddied waters.

Who can truly remain calm, allowing the turbulence to slowly clear?

Who can invigorate the calmness, bringing back lives to gradually grow?

Practitioners of Dao do not seek fullness.

With no fullness in mind, they can then replace previous imperfections with new improvements.

【简要分析】

描述修道之士的行止修持。指出他们永不自满，对所处环境都能时刻除旧更新。在混乱时使其宁静，在沉静时使萌发生机。

[Short Analysis]

This chapter describes the behaviours and conducts of Dao practitioners. It points out that they will never be complacent and will always be able to renew their surroundings by displacing the old and broken. In times of chaos, they maintain peace and quiet. In dull calmness, they stimulate life.

【16】 致虚极，守静笃。万物并作，吾以观复。夫物芸芸，各复归其根。归根曰静，是谓复命；复命曰常，知常曰明。不知常，妄作凶。知常容，容乃公，公乃王，王乃天，天乃道，道乃久，没身不殆。

【释文】

致虚守静到极笃的境界时，
看到万物一并生长，我从中观察归复的现象。
万物纷纷芸芸，都复归到其根。
归根要守静，守静可复回本命。
复回本命是恒常之道，
能知晓恒常是内明，
不知晓恒常会妄动，妄动会出乱子。
知常能包容，
能包容就能成大公无私的王，
王明已通天地达道便可长久，终身没有危殆。

[16]

[Translation]

Upon reaching the pinnacle of emptiness and calmness,
I see all of life living together, and from which I retrace
them to their roots.

All flourishing life can eventually be traced to their roots,
back to where they began.

To return to the roots, one must observe calmness. By
doing so, one will return to the origin of life.

Returning to the origin of life is constancy, and those who
recognise this are illuminated.

Those who do not understand this will act recklessly,
leading to trouble.

A clear understanding of such constancy allows one to
tolerate.

To tolerate allows one to be a just ruler.

With self-enlightenment and through understanding of
Heaven and Earth, a just ruler who attains Dao will rule
for long.

His entire life will not be in grave danger.

【简要分析】

明常是修道的重要成就阶段。本章讲的是守静归根复命的明常。[55]讲的是至精至和时，而知和的明常。

[Short Analysis]

The recognition of constancy is an important stage of cultivation. This chapter is about understanding of constancy by observing calmness and returning to the origin of life. In comparison, Chapter [55] is about the understanding of constancy when one recognises the moment that Yin and Yang achieve perfect harmony.

【17】 太上，下知有之；其次，亲而誉之；其次，畏之；其次，侮之。信不足焉，有不信焉。悠兮其贵言。功成事遂，百姓皆谓我自然。

【释文】

最好（或上古）的统治者，人民只知道他的存在；

其次的统治者，人民亲近他赞誉他；

再次的统治者，人民畏忌他；

更次的统治者，人民侮蔑他。

统治者的诚信不足，人民就不相信他。

最好的统治者很悠然，不随便发号施令；

事情办成功了，老百姓都说：“我们本来是这样的。”

【简要分析】

本章讲述老子的理想统治者，在[80]章则讲述他的理想社会。

[17]

[Translation]

For the greatest ruler, the people are only aware of his existence.

The second best is one who is approachable and praised.

Following which is one who is feared.

The worst ruler is one who is despised.

A ruler giving false promises will only result in people not trusting him.

The best ruler is at ease and seldom issue decrees.

When his work is completed, the people say, “We have been so all along.”

[Short Analysis]

This chapter describes the ideal ruler from Lao Zi's view, and Chapter [80] describes his ideal society.

【18】 大道废有仁义；慧智出有大伪；六亲不和有孝慈；国家昏乱有忠臣。

【释文】

大道废弛时，就会讲仁义。

慧智出现时，跟随着大伪。

家庭不和时，能显出孝慈。

国家昏乱时，可见到忠臣。

【简要分析】

认为以大道治国可以规避社会伦理道德中的仁义、慧智、孝慈和忠义的偏失。

[18]

[Translation]

When Great Dao languishes, benevolence and righteousness come forth.

When intelligence shines, awful hypocrisy follows.

When a family is in discord, filial piety and compassion shows.

When a country is in great turmoil, patriots stand out.

[Short Analysis]

This chapter states that governing a country with Great Dao can avoid erroneous social ethic deviations that arise from benevolence, wisdom, filial piety and loyalty.

【19】 [绝圣弃智]绝智弃辩，民利百倍；[绝仁弃义]绝伪弃诈，民复孝慈；绝巧弃利，盗贼无有。此三者，以为文不足，故令有所属。见素抱朴，少私寡欲。

（“绝智弃辩”，“绝伪弃诈”句取自《郭店简本老子经》）

【释文】

绝弃智谋狡辩，人民会百倍得利；

绝弃虚伪欺诈，人民会回复孝慈；

绝弃乖巧货利，盗贼会消失。

智辩，伪诈，巧利这三样东西全是虚文浮饰，

用来治理天下是不足的。

所以要使人们的思想有根本归依：

保持朴素品性，减少私欲。

【简要分析】

提出对[18]章的偏失的补救办法：即抑弃智辩、伪诈、巧利；而将人民的思想带回到朴素、淳厚、少私寡欲的境界。

[19]

[Translation]

Cease shrewd and crafty arguments, and people will be better off by a hundred times.

Stop hypocrisy and pretence, and people will revive brotherly love and filial piety.

Do away with devious profiteering, and there will not be robbers.

The above actions are purely ornamental, superficial, and not good enough to govern a country.

Therefore, facilitate the people to surrender to the fundamentals: embracing simplicity and distancing from selfish desires.

[Short Analysis]

This chapter proposes a solution to the erroneous deviations listed in Chapter [18] by abandoning crafty arguments, fraudulences, and devious profiteering. Instead, bring the people's minds back to the state of simplicity, honesty, and selflessness.

【20】 绝学无忧，唯之与阿，相去几何？善之与恶，相去若何？人之所畏，不可不畏。荒兮其未央哉！众人熙熙如享太牢，如春登台。我独泊兮其未兆，如婴儿之未孩；儼儼兮若无所归。众人皆有馀，而我独若遗。我愚人之心也哉！沌沌兮。俗人昭昭，我独昏昏；俗人察察，我独闷闷。澹兮其若海，飏兮若无止。众人皆有以，而我独顽且鄙。我独异于人，而贵食母。

【释文】

弃绝世俗之学可免困扰。

谦逊的“唯”和怠慢的“阿”回应，相差有多少？

美好和丑恶，相差又多少？

世俗众人所畏忌的，也不可以不畏忌。

但荒唐啊没有中心！

世俗众人都兴高采烈，像在享受盛筵，像春日登高台，

我独淡泊，毫无身色，如不会笑的婴儿，

闲散劳累，像无家可归！

世俗众人都有剩余，唯独我多有不足。

我真是愚人的心啊！混混沌沌啊！

世俗众人都炫耀机智，唯独我昏昧不明。

世俗众人都大小明察，我却沉闷不分。

沉静时像大海，飘逸时无止尽。

[20]

[Translation]

Abandon knowledge of non-Dao to avoid troubles.

How much difference is there between responding to the modest ‘唯’ (Wei) and the negligent ‘阿’ (Ah)?

What is the difference between good and evil?

I have to share the same fears and worries as ordinary people.

But it is absurd when there is no common central point!

The people are joyous, as though they are enjoying a feast or climbing up a park terrace in spring.

Yet I am alone and indifferent, like a new-born baby before learning how to smile.

I am listless and tired, drifting about like a vagabond.

Everyone has their excesses, but I seem to be greatly insufficient.

I have such a foolish heart! I am wretchedly confused!

People are displaying their sharp wits, but I am muddled.

People are shrewd and full of acumen, yet I am dull and daft.

I could be calm like the great sea, or be drifting about endlessly like the wind.

People have their goals and aspirations, yet I am foolish

众人皆有施为，我独愚顽笨拙。

我和世人不同，在于注重持守大道。

【简要分析】

抒发了由于与世俗不同价值观，而产生的无奈感受和与人群疏离的落寞。

and uncouth.

I am different from everyone else as I need to attach to Great Dao.

[Short Analysis]

This chapter expresses Lao Zi's feelings of helplessness and desolation as his social values differ vastly from the common folk.

【21】 孔德之容惟道是从。道之为物惟恍惟惚，惚兮恍兮其中有象，恍兮惚兮其中有物，窈兮冥兮其中有精。其精甚真，其中有信。自古及今，其名不去，以阅众甫。吾何以知众甫之状哉！以此。

【释文】

观察（恒）德的形象，是接近（恒）道的。

（恒）道这个物体，

惚惚恍恍，其中有形象，

恍恍惚惚，其中有实物，

深远暗昧，其中有精质。

这精质非常的真实，其中有可被信验的。

从古到今，从各个源本，（参阅多位师甫的说法）

它的名状一致不变。

我怎能知晓所有师甫的情状呢？由此得到。

【简要分析】

讲述修道者，成就大道时的景象。

[21]

[Translation]

Careful observation of (Constant) De reveals its semblance of (Constant) Dao.

(Constant) Dao in its physical manifestation:

Indistinct and elusive, it unveils images from within.

Elusive and indistinct, within which there are substances.

Dim and obscure, yet it embodies the essence.

This essence is real and verifiable.

From the very beginning till now, after referencing the teachings of numerous masters, Dao's description has never changed.

How did I arrive at this conclusion? Herewith.

[Short Analysis]

This chapter recollects the scenes experienced by Dao practitioners when attaining unification with Great Dao.

【22】 曲则全，枉则直，洼则盈，敝则新，少则得，多则惑。是以圣人抱一为天下式。不自见故明；不自是故彰不自伐，故有功；不自矜故长；夫唯不争，故天下莫能与之争。古之所谓曲则全者，岂虚言哉！诚全而归之。

【释文】

委曲反可保全，弯曲反能伸展，
低洼反得充盈，陈旧反获更新，
量少可以易得，量多便会迷惑。

是以圣人抱守统一对立的“一”作为处理天下事务的范式。

不自我表现，故显亮丽；

不自以为是，故受表彰；

不自己夸大，故可见功；

不自持矜贵，故能长和久。

因为他不跟人争，所以普天下没有人能和他争。

古人所说的“委曲可使保全”，怎会是空话呢？

是确实能够达到的。

[22]

[Translation]

Preserve wholeness by yielding.

Achieve straightness by bending.

Become filled up by being low-lying and empty.

Attain renewal by being obsolete.

Less will lead to more.

Excesses will lead to confusion.

Therefore, the Sage will evaluate two sides of a coin and embrace 'Oneness' as the universal paradigm for solving problems.

With the same reasoning,

By not showing off, one will shine brightly.

By not being self-righteous, one will be commended.

By not boasting, one will have merits appreciated.

By not being arrogant, one will lead for long.

Because she does not contend, therefore no one in the world can compete with her.

Is the ancient saying 'preserve wholeness by yielding' simply an empty saying?

It is not, as it can be accomplished.

【简要分析】

列举了几条事物呈反因果关系现象的例子。

在修行上，不自见、不自是、不自伐、不自矜而抱一守中是较好的处事选择。因为天道[79]有“损有余而补不足”的规律，对天地间有缺失的事物会加以补足；同理，不自见、不自是、不自伐、不自矜的欠缺也更容易得到他人的补足。

来自他人的赞赏好过自身的吹擂，至于不争，更是可取。因为由于不争，天下没有人能跟他争，而他便有更多的精力去处理其他事物。

[Short Analysis]

This chapter lists several examples of the phenomenon of inverse-causality.

When dealing with matters, it is better to keep to the centrality, adopt inaction, and avoid flaunting, self-righteous, boastful and arrogant behaviours. This is because Celestial Dao [79] has a way of ‘trimming the surpluses and making up for deficiencies.’ With the same reasoning, by not flaunting, being self-righteous, boastful, or arrogant, it is easier to obtain the aid of others.

It is better to receive appreciation from others rather than self-proclaiming one’s abilities. It is even better to practise non-contention because no one can compete with one who does not contend. As a result, one will have more energy to deal with other matters (while waiting for the right moment to counter and respond).

【23】 希言自然。故飘风不终朝，骤雨不终日。孰为此者？天地。天地尚不能久，而况于人乎？故从事于道者，[道者]同于道；德者同于德；失者同于失。同于德者，道亦德之；同于失者道亦失之。信不足焉，有不信焉。

（添加文句取自马王堆帛本）

【释文】

少言语合乎自然。

暴风刮不到一个早晨，骤雨下不了一整天。

谁致使这样的呢？是天地。

天地尚且无法维持长久的狂暴，何况是人呢？

所以，

从事于道的人，有道来相应；

从事于德的人，有德来感同；

从事于失的人，就会失道失德。

有德感同的人，道也是以德相应；

对于失道失德的人，道就会抛弃他。

统治者的诚信不足，人民自然不会相信他。

[23]

[Translation]

Being laconic is the way of nature.

A storm will not last all morning, and a downpour will not persist all day.

Who is responsible for these actions? Heaven and Earth.

Even Heaven and Earth cannot be violent forever. So how can mankind possibly be?

Hence,

Practitioners of Dao are unified with Dao.

Practitioners of De are bonded with De.

Those who do away with both will lose both Dao and De.

Through De, the practitioners of De are also unified with the De of the people of Dao.

To those who forsake both Dao and De, Dao will also lose them.

For a king who does not honour his words, he will find it difficult to gain the trust of his people.

【简要分析】

对于积德进道的人，重要的是心领神会而不是语言描述。事道和事德的人，各自会有有道和德的人来感同相应；而失道失德的人，则只能与无道无德的人为伍。

[Short Analysis]

It is vital for practitioners of Dao and De to grasp the core ideas with their hearts rather than through literary depictions. People with Dao and De will naturally draw others with Dao and De to unify with them, while people without Dao and De can only associate with people without them.

【24】 企者不立，跨者不行。自见者不明；自是者不彰；自伐者无功；自矜者不长。其在道也，曰馀食赘行，物或恶之，故有道者不处。

【释文】

踮起脚跟站高，会立不稳，

跨起大步行走，会走不远。

自炫已能的，反而得不到彰明；

自以为是的，反而得不到表扬，

自我夸大的，反而无法见功；

自我矜持高贵的，不能做众人之长。

从道而言，

以上的急躁炫耀行为，有如剩饭赘行，为众人厌恶。

所以有道的人不处身其中。

【简要分析】

不自然且过度多余的行止只会产生反效果。不合正道的自见、自是、自伐和自矜对修道的人也是多余的。本章在马王堆本是置于[21]之后，[22]之前。以这次序阅读，对自见、自是、自伐和自矜会有更好的了解和领悟。

[24]

[Translation]

Standing tiptoed, one will not be steady.

Walking with overstretched strides, one will not travel far.

By flaunting, one will not get the due recognition.

Acting self-righteously, one will not be commended.

By being boastful, one will not achieve merits.

Being arrogant, one will not lead for long.

From Dao's perspective, the aforementioned behaviours are like leftovers and excessive actions. They are utterly detestable.

All practitioners of Dao should avoid them.

[Short Analysis]

Unnatural and excessive actions will only have a reverse effect on the intended outcome. The acts of flaunting, being self-righteous, boasting and being arrogant do not conform to Dao and are considered superfluous. In the Ma Wang Dui version, this chapter is placed after Chapter [21] and before Chapter [22]. That arrangement provided a more cohesive reading order and allows the reader to have a better understanding of the pitfalls of flaunting, being self-righteous, boasting, and being arrogant.

【25】 有物混成，先天地生。寂兮寥兮，独立不改，周行而不殆。可以为天下母。吾不知其名，字之曰道，强为之名曰大。大曰逝，逝曰远，远曰反。故道大、天大、地大、王亦大。域中有四大，而王居其一焉。人法地，地法天，天法道，道法自然。

【释文】

在天地产生之前，有物混成。

无声也无形，独立而不改，循环运行，没有止尽。

可以为天下万物的本源。

我不知道它的名字，

称它为“道”，强称它为“大”。

它不断向远方流逝后又回返。

所以道大，天大，地大，王亦大。

宇宙有四大，而王是四大之一。

人取法地，

地取法天，

天取法道，

道任由自然。

[25]

[Translation]

Before the creation of Heaven and Earth, some 'Being' was mysteriously formed by 'It'.

Silent and formless, unyielding and unchanging, it moves cyclically and endlessly.

It is acknowledged as the mother of all living beings.

I do not know its name, so I call it 'Dao'.

I also try to name it 'Great'.

It flows past and travels far.

Having gone far enough, it returns.

Therefore, Dao is great;

Heaven is great;

Earth is great;

King is also great.

These are the four great powers of our universe, and the King stands amongst one of them.

Mankind follows Earth.

Earth abides by Heaven.

Heaven complies with Dao.

Dao acts naturally.

【简要分析】

描述道的一些特性：

- 和谐的道，存在于天地之前；它创生了天地万物。
- 道循环运行，没有止尽；不受他物影响改变。
- 道无声无形，本性自然。
- 大至天地，道也使它们周转不息。
- 天地有四大：即道，天、地、王，其中只有道没有效法他物，是自然的。

一些通行本“王”作“人”，马王堆本取“王”，两者皆通，这里取王因相信道德经是教导为王者的书。

[Short Analysis]

This chapter describes some characteristics of (Great) Dao:

- Harmonious Dao has been in existence before Heaven and Earth. It created Heaven, Earth, and everything within.
- Dao moves cyclically and endlessly. It operates independently and is not affected by anything.
- Dao acts naturally. It is silent and invisible.
- Despite the enormity of both Heaven and Earth, Dao keeps them revolving endlessly.
- There are four great powers with respect to the domain of humans: Dao, Heaven, Earth, and King. Amongst these four, only Dao does not take after other things. It acts naturally.

In some of the currently circulated versions of Dao De Jing, 'King' is worded as 'Human'. The word 'King' was used in the Ma Wang Dui version. Both words are acceptable, but perhaps the word 'King' is more apt as the scripture was supposed to be a guidebook for kings.

【26】 重为轻根，静为躁君，是以君子终日行不离辎重。虽有荣观，燕处超然。奈何万乘之主，而以身轻天下？轻则失本，躁则失君。

【释文】

“轻”以“重”为根本，
“躁”以“静”为主宰，
所以有道德的君子，终日行事，
犹如运载军械粮食一样，不敢轻浮躁动。
虽然有美食胜景的生活，却处之泰然。
为什么大国的君主，
还是要以轻浮躁动来应待天下呢？
轻浮会失去根本，
躁动会失去主导。

【简要分析】

劝导负重任者要稳重沉静，才不会动摇根本，才不会浮躁而乱了主宰。

[26]

[Translation]

‘Light’ has ‘heavy’ as its root.

‘Restlessness’ has ‘calmness’ as its master.

Hence a superior man will not act frivolously at all times, just like someone in charge of shipping a heavily-loaded military wagon full of supplies.

He could live in an environment filled with lush surroundings and lavish feasts, yet he remains calm and indifferent.

Why should the lord of the realm still choose to act frivolously when ruling his country?

Frivolity causes one to lose his rudiments.

Restlessness causes one to lose command.

[Short Analysis]

This chapter advises those with heavy responsibilities to always remain calm and steadfast, so as not to upset the ‘root’ of the body. In turn, they will not be impetuous and think irrationally.

【27】 善行无辙迹。善言无瑕疵。善数不用筹策。善闭无关键而不可开。善结无绳约而不可解。是以圣人常善救人，故无弃人。常善救物，故无弃物。是谓袭明。故善人者不善人之师。不善人者善人之资。不贵其师，不爱其资，虽智大迷，是谓要妙。

【释文】

善行者不留辙迹；

善言者没有弊病；

善于计数不用算策竹码；

善于关闭不用门闩却无人可开启；

善于捆缚的不用绳索却无人能松脱。

因此，有道的圣人，

常善救人用人，所以没有被离弃的人；

常善救物用物，所以没有被摈弃的物件。

这是习用内心的明性。

所以 善人是不善人的老师，

不善人是善人的诚鉴。

如果不会尊重老师，不爱惜可参考的借鉴；

虽然聪明，其实大迷。

这是精要微妙的道理。

[27]

[Translation]

A good walker can choose to leave no trails;

A good orator can choose to express himself without flaws;

A good accountant needs no bamboo chips (to help with calculations);

A good gatekeeper needs no bolt to lock his door, and no one can open it;

A good binder needs no ropes to tie, and no one can undo them.

As for the Sage:

He is proficient at saving people, and no one is left behind.

He is adept at taking good care of all things, and nothing is forsaken.

This is all achieved using his illuminated wisdom.

A capable person is a teacher of an incapable person.

An incapable person is a source of reference for a capable person.

Those who disrespect their teachers and do not value the source of references may be intelligent, but not wise.

This is a subtle principle.

【简要分析】

以圣人的善行、善言、善数、善闭和善结来强调圣人也善加救人和物。使人尽其才，物尽其用，这是有效地应用圣人的明心慧智结果。

以善人为师，不善人为参考，可以把事情做得更好和避免重犯错误。

[Short Analysis]

This chapter states various qualities like being a good walker, orator, accountant, gatekeeper and binder, to emphasise the Sage's ability to care for both people and objects. The Sage is highly adept in bringing out the best of people, as well as making optimal use of things. This is the result of the effective application of his wisdom.

By regarding a capable person as a teacher, and an incapable person as a source of reference, one can produce better results and avoid making repeated mistakes.

【28】 知其雄，守其雌，为天下溪。为天下溪，常德不离，复归于婴儿。知其白，[守其黑，为天下式。为天下式，常德不忒，复归于无极。知其荣，]守其辱，为天下谷。为天下谷，常德乃足，复归于朴。知其白，守其黑，为天下式。为天下式，常德不忒，复归于无极。朴散则为器，圣人用之，则为官长。[故]大制不割。

（添加文句取自马王堆帛本）

【释文】

知晓雄刚，安守雌柔，作为天下的溪谷；

作为天下的溪谷，积常德而不离失，

回复到婴儿状态。

知晓明亮，安守晦暗，作为天下的川谷；

作为天下的川谷，积盈足的常德，

回复到真朴状态。

知晓明亮，安守黑暗，作为天下的范式；

作为天下的范式，积不变更的常德，

回复到无极状态。

真朴分散则成为可用之器，

圣人用器则成为百官的首长，

大道的制体没有分割。

[28]

[Translation]

Know masculinity and embrace femininity as the stream of the world.

As the stream of the world, cumulate the non-dissipating (constant) De and return to infancy.

Know brightness and embrace obscurity as the gully of the world.

As the gully of the world, amass the abundant De and return to Simplicity Pu.

Know radiance and embrace darkness as the valley of the world.

As the model of the world, accumulate non-changing De and return to the ultimate state of null.

Simplicity Pu when expended, will become various instruments.

Using these instruments, the Sage becomes the leader of the officials.

Great Dao's creation will remain unbroken.

【简要分析】

描述积德成朴的修炼过程。朴可以意为身体内能的成形聚集。圣人可以耗散朴作为法器去掌管众人，而大道的修炼没有同样的分割。

[Short Analysis]

This chapter describes the process of cultivation by building up Constant De to form Simplicity Pu. The great Simplicity Pu can be recognised as the shaping up of aggregated energy within the body. The Sage can dissipate Pu and employ it as a magical tool to manage the masses. In contrast, the cultivation of Great Dao does not go through a dissipation process.

【29】 将欲取天下而为之，吾见其不得已。天下神器，不可为也，为者败之，执者失之。故物或行或随、或嘘或吹、或强或羸、[或载或隳]或培或堕。是以圣人去甚、去奢、去泰。

（“或培或堕”句取自马王堆帛本）

【释文】

要用强硬的意愿手段去统治天下，我看他是办不到的。

天下人心，是神奇的，

不能出于强力去违背他们的意愿和本性。

强行作为的，一定会失败，

固执把持的，一定会失去。

人的秉性不一，

有的喜前，有的随后；

有的温和，有的急躁；

有的刚强，有的羸弱；

[有的安份，有的冒险]；有的自强，有的自堕。

所以圣人要去除，

极端的，耗费的，宏巨的措施法令。

[29]

[Translation]

Should one wish to rule the world by imposing his own will with unyielding methods, I can see that he will not succeed.

The world is a sacred creation, and cannot be ruled by opposing its nature and will.

He who tries will surely fail.

He who grips tightly will surely lose it.

For human nature differs:

Some like to lead, while some prefer to follow;

Some are easy-going, while some are quick-tempered;

Some are resolute, while some are frail;

[Some are steadfast, while some are adventurous.]

Some are self-improving, while some are self-depraving.

Therefore, the Sage avoids implementation of extremity, extravagance, or massiveness.

【简要分析】

治理国家不能使用强硬的手段，因为被管的人民，他们的秉性是不一的。合适的政策法令会尽量避免极端，耗费或过大的措施。

[Short Analysis]

Governance of a country should not be carried out by tough means because the people under control have very different characters. Appropriate policies and regulations should avoid implementation of extreme, costly, or excessive measures.

【30】 以道佐人主者，不以兵强天下。其事好还。师之所处，荆棘生焉。大军之后，必有凶年。善有果而已，不敢以取强。果而勿矜，果而勿伐，果而勿骄，果而不得已，果而勿强。物壮则老，是谓不道，不道早已。

【释文】

以道辅佐君主的人，劝导他不要以兵力在天下逞强。

好战容易遭到报应。

军队所到之处，荆棘横生。

军队去后，必有凶年。

善于用兵的人，只求达到胜利的目的就是了，

不以兵力壮大来逞强。

达到目的时，

不矜持高贵，

不誇耀自大，

不骄横傲慢，

是由于不得已，

也不逞强。

事物过份强大后就会走向衰老，这是所谓的“不道”。

不合于道的就会很快泯灭绝亡。

[30]

[Translation]

Those who apply Dao to assist rulers, should advise them not to flaunt their superiority by force.

Else, retribution would soon ensue.

Where an army is stationed, thorny bushes thrive and grow.

After a great war, inauspicious years will follow.

Those proficient in warfare strive only to accomplish victory, without showing off their armies.

Upon accomplishing victory, one should not glorify it.

One should not gloat.

One should not be arrogant.

One should realise victory was achieved out of necessity.

One should not act domineering.

Entities that grow too strong will soon decline, and that is not the way of Dao.

Entities which do not conform to Dao will come to an early end.

【简要分析】

劝导人们要远离战争，因为胜败两方都没有好下场。败的一方的惨重后果不需述说，胜的也会向不道的壮大前进而步入灭亡之途。

[Short Analysis]

This chapter persuades humans to stay away from war because neither victory nor defeat will ever come to a good ending. The tragic consequences of the losing side need not be described. The winning side will advance towards the path of non-Dao, which eventually leads to destruction.

【31】 夫[佳]兵者不祥之器，物或恶之，故有道者不处。君子居则贵左，用兵则贵右。兵者不祥之器，非君子之器，不得已而用之，恬淡为上。胜而不美，而美之者，是乐杀人。夫乐杀人者，则不可得志于天下矣。吉事尚左，凶事尚右；偏将军居左，上将军居右；言以丧礼处之。杀人之众，以悲哀泣之，战胜以丧礼处之。

【释文】

兵器战争都是不祥的事物，
人们都怨恶它，所以有道的人不置身其中。
君子平时以左方为贵，用兵时以右方为贵。
兵器是不祥之物，不是君子所使用的东西。
万不得已才使用它，用时最好是淡然处之。
胜利了不要得意洋洋；
如果是的话，就是喜欢杀人。
凡是喜欢杀人的，就不能得志于天下。
吉庆事以左边为上，凶丧事以右边为主。
出兵打仗时，偏将军在左，上将军在右，
这是说军阵和丧礼的仪式相似。
战争中杀人众多，要用哀痛的心情去对待，
打了胜战也要用丧礼去对待战死的人。

[31]

[Translation]

Weapons of war are tools of bad omen and hated by all.

Those of Dao would seek no relation with them.

The gentleman favours the left (side) during peacetime, and the right (side) in times of war.

These ill-omened weapons of war are not the tools of a gentleman.

He would use them only out of necessity, and even when doing so, he would be calm and cool.

Do not gloat after being victorious in war. Doing so just shows that you take pleasure in the slaughter of men.

He who delights in doing so cannot accomplish greater aspirations in the world.

The left side is favoured for auspicious events. The right side is chosen for occasions of mourning.

In war, the lieutenant general takes his position on the left; the chief commander takes his on the right.

This deployment formation is akin to the rites of mourning.

Approach the multitude of casualties in war with a sombre mood.

In victory, perform the rites of mourning for the fallen.

【简要分析】

有道的人，会尽量避免战争；因为战争是不祥的，是万不得已的选择。这并不表示可以完全忽略备战。[36]章就列举应付对方的谋略；平时也要研制不可示人的利器。

[Short Analysis]

People of Dao will avoid war at all costs, because wars are ominous and should only be fought over as a last resort. However, this does not mean that preparations for war can be completely ignored. Chapter [36] lists warring strategies to deal with opponents. During peacetime, powerful weapons should be developed in secret.

【32】 道常无名，朴虽小；天下莫能臣也。侯王若能守之，万物将自宾。天地相合以降甘露，民莫之令而自均。始制有名，名亦既有，夫亦将知止，知止可以不殆。譬道之在天下，犹川谷之于江海。

【释文】

道常无名无形，真朴虽小，天下却没有谁能使它臣服。

侯王如果能持守道，万物将会自动归顺。

天地阴阳和合，而降下甘露，

它不必人们指使，会自求均匀。

修炼开始有名状时，

既有名状，要知晓止限，

知晓止限可避免危殆。

道存在于天下，万物都信服它，

犹如川谷河水归流入大海。

【简要分析】

讲述常道和朴的功能，善用它们能使天下归顺有如川谷河水归向江海。

[32]

[Translation]

Although Dao is nameless and Simplicity Pu is insignificant, nothing in the world can make them submit.

If a ruler can adhere to them, then all living creations will become his guests.

Heaven and Earth will harmonise just like Yin and Yang, and fall as sweet droplets of rain.

It rains evenly and freely, requiring no intervention.

When meditating and one begins to observe something describable, one needs to beware the associated limitations.

Being mindful of these limitations will allow one to avoid the pitfalls of meditation.

For all of creation to have faith in Dao, is akin to creeks and streams flowing into the rivers and seas.

[Short Analysis]

This chapter describes the functions of Constant Dao and Simplicity Pu. Utilising them effectively will cause the world to submit like creeks and streams flowing into the rivers and seas.

【33】 知人者智，自知者明；胜人者有力，自胜者强；知足者富，强行者有志；不失其所者久，死而不亡者寿。

【释文】

能了解别人靠智力，

能了解自己才算心明，

能胜过别人靠蛮力，

能克服自己才算坚强。

懂得满足就是富有，

力行不懈是有志。

不离失根本命活长久。

死后精神不灭的才是长寿。

【简要分析】

自己本身往往是向上前进的障碍。能够自知自胜，就能更好明白自己的弱点并克服它。

懂得自足，能矢志力行，不离根本都是重要的个人修养品德。但期望有长远不朽的存在影响，则必须在精神思想领域努力。

[33]

[Translation]

Knowing others is wise, but comprehending oneself requires an enlightened mind.

Winning others is strong, but triumphing over oneself is true power.

One who understands contentment is rich.

One who is determined possesses the willpower.

One who does not lose his fundamentals will last longer.

The dead whose spirit does not vanish will keep his life everlasting.

[Short Analysis]

The self is often the biggest obstacle to self-improvement. Being able to understand and overcome oneself will aid in the realisation of one's weaknesses and the ways to overcome them.

Self-contentment, determination, and not losing one's fundamentals are all important personal virtues. However, in order to cast an immortal and everlasting influence requires continued efforts in the realm of spiritual thoughts.

【34】 大道泛兮，其可左右。万物恃之而生而不辞，功成不名有。衣养万物而不为主，可名于小。万物归焉而不为主，可名为大。以其终不自为大，故能成其大。

【释文】

大道自由泛布，可左可右。

万物依赖它生长，它没有言辞，

长成了，它也不以为有功。

它护育万物，却不是它们的主宰，

可以名它为“小”；

万物归附，它却没强做它们的主宰，

可以名它为“大”。

由于它从不自以为大，结果成就了它的伟大。

【简要分析】

大道自由流布。万物因它而生长，靠它护育滋养而长大，它却无心主宰，可以当它是卑小。万物因此归附，它也不想主宰，可以说它是伟大。

[34]

[Translation]

Great Dao spreads freely to the left and right.

All living things depend on it for creation.

Yet it speaks nothing, nor does it boast of its accomplishment.

It protects and nurtures all, but does not rule over them. It can be named as 'Small'.

All seek Great Dao for protection yet it never forces them to be its servants. It can be named as 'Great'.

Because it never minds its own greatness, it is able to accomplish its greatness.

[Short Analysis]

Great Dao flows and spreads freely. All of creation grows because of it, relying on it for nourishment. Yet, it has no intention of dominating. It can be considered as modest and small. Henceforth, all of creation attaches to it. Even then, it still does not want to dominate. It is said to be great.

【35】 执大象，天下往。往而不害安平太。乐与饵，过客止。道之出口淡乎其无味，视之不足见，听之不足闻，用之不足既。

【释文】

执守大道的法象，

天下的人都来归附，

大家归附没生灾害，而安定太平。

音乐和美食，只能暂时使过路的人止步。

言语表述的大道，却平淡无味。

看它看不见，

听它听不到，

用它却用不完。

【简要分析】

紧执大道的法象旗帜，天下的人就会安适地来归顺。对看不见，听不到的道表述是平淡无味的，然而它是用不完的。

[35]

[Translation]

Upholding the image of Great Dao will draw the world to you.

All that are drawn in do not harm and come in peace.

Good music and great food can only temporarily halt the travellers.

Words of Great Dao are monotonous and tasteless.

It is invisible when viewing it, and inaudible when listening to it.

Yet its functions are infinite.

[Short Analysis]

Uphold the banners and flags with Great Dao's image, and the people of the world will be drawn to you peacefully. The expressions of the invisible and inaudible Dao are plain and tasteless. Yet, it is inexhaustible in its functioning.

【36】 将欲歛之，必固张之。将欲弱之，必固强之。将欲废之，必固兴之。将欲取之，必固与之。是谓微明。柔弱胜刚强。鱼不可脱于渊；国之利器不可以示人。

【释文】

如果要收拢它，必要张开它。

如果要削弱它，必要强大它。

如果要废除它，必要兴旺它。

发果要夺取它，必要给与它。

这是（道在）事物的微妙玄机。

柔弱战胜刚强。

鱼的生存不可脱离池渊；

国家的谋略利器不可随便显示于人。

【简要分析】

用普通物极必反的道理，去改变对立双方优劣的情势。例如，想要对方合拢，首先要使对方展开。中国漫长的历史中，不乏改变双方对立形势的生动例子。克服对方使对自己有利的条件，不可轻易示人。

[36]

[Translation]

Before wanting to contract something, first consider expanding it.

Before wanting to weaken something, first consider strengthening it.

Before wanting to eradicate something, first consider flourishing it.

Before wanting to obtain something, first consider offering it.

These are the subtle principles.

The soft and weak overcome the hard and strong.

Just as a fish cannot survive out of the deep waters, a nation's strategies and secret weapons should not be recklessly displayed to others.

[Short Analysis]

It uses the common principle that when things reach their extremities, they will reverse their courses, tilting the favourable conditions between two confronting opponents. For example, if you want the other party to fold inwards, you must first expand them fully. Throughout the long history of China, there have been no shortage of examples conveying this concept. Favourable circumstances that can be used to overcome the opponent should not be recklessly revealed.

【37】 道常无为，而无不为。侯王若能守之，万物将自化。化而欲作，吾将镇之以无名之朴。无名之朴，夫亦将无欲。不欲以静，天下将自定。

【释文】

道常自然无为，万物都出自它所为。

侯王如果能持守“道”行，

万物会自我感化，自然生长。

自化而慾望萌生时，我就用无名的真朴来镇住它。

用真朴，万物就会不起慾望。

不起慾望可以趋近清静，天下也就自归安定。

【简要分析】

用道治国是无为无不为的，将使万物人民自化自正。“道常无为而无不为”在马王堆帛本作“道常无名”，两者皆通，都适用。有关用道治国的章节还有[60][65][18][19]等。

[37]

[Translation]

Dao acts through inaction, yet from which all things can be accomplished.

If kings and lords abide by it, all living things would reform and develop naturally.

Should their desires be aroused in the process, they would be suppressed by the unnamed Simplicity Pu.

With the unnamed Simplicity Pu, they would then return to a state of no desire.

Without desire, there will be peace.

And the world will return to stability.

[Short Analysis]

When ruling a country by Dao, all things will be accomplished by Dao's inaction. The people will self-reform and self-regulate.

'Dao acts through inaction' is worded as 'Dao is always nameless' in the Ma Wang Dui version. Both are acceptable although they have different meanings.

Governance by Dao, an important ideology, can also be found in Chapters [60], [65], [18], [19], and so on.

【38】 上德不德是以有德。下德不失德是以无德。上德无为而无以为。[下德为之而有以为]。上仁为之而无以为。上义为之而有以为。上礼为之而莫之应，则攘臂而扔之。故失道而后德，失德而后仁，失仁而后义，失义而后礼。夫礼者，忠信之薄，而乱之首。前识者，道之华，而愚之始。是以大丈夫，处其厚不居其薄。处其实，不居其华。故去彼取此。

【释文】

上德的人，没有想有德，所以有“道”（自然）的德。

下德的人，力求不失德，所以没有“道”的德。

上德的人，顺其自然，无心于其作为。

上仁的人，其作为不考虑得失。

上义的人，其作为是出于义的考量。

上礼的人，其作为（出自礼制）得不到回应时，就会伸出胳膊逼人强从。

所以失道后讲德，失德后讲仁，

失仁后讲义，无法讲义后讲礼。

然而，礼是忠信不足，混乱的起源。

前所识的礼，是道的浮华表现，愚的开始呀。

因此大丈夫要立身于敦厚（以道德为根本），不居于轻薄。

处身实在，而不求浮华。

所以，要舍弃虚薄浮华，而选择厚实根本。

[38]

[Translation]

The man of high virtue De acts without thinking about it.
Therefore, he has the virtue De (of Dao).

The man of low virtue De acts and never fails to think of
it. Therefore, he has no virtue De (of Dao).

The former acts naturally and unintentionally.

[The latter acts with the intention of displaying his good
deeds].

A man of high benevolence acts without consideration of
gains or losses.

A man with great righteousness acts with deliberate
considerations.

A man highly conversant in the rules of propriety acts
because of social norms. When he fails to get the response
desired, he extends his arms and persuades others by
force.

Hence when Dao was lost, we spoke about virtue De.

When virtue De was lost, we spoke about benevolence.

When benevolence was lost, we spoke about righteous-
ness.

When righteousness was lost, we spoke about rules of
propriety.

【简要分析】

上德、上仁都是发出内心的自然行为而下德、上义、上礼都不是，都非自然。由此，就可以了解本章的思想看法。

Rules of propriety reveal fragility in the trust. It is the beginning of turmoil.

The aforementioned is the flowery display of Dao, and the beginning of folly.

Therefore, the gentleman should place himself in the thick and not in the thin, in the substance and not in the flamboyance.

Hence, he chooses the former and rejects the latter.

[Short Analysis]

High virtue De and high benevolence are both natural behaviours right from the heart, while low virtue De, high righteousness, and rules of propriety are not. From this, we can understand the thoughts and views of this chapter.

【39】 昔之得一者：天得一以清，地得一以宁，神得一以灵，谷得一以盈，[万物得一以生]，侯王得一以为天下正。其致之：天无以清，将恐裂。地无以宁，将恐废。神无以灵，将恐歇。谷无以盈，将恐竭。[万物无以生将恐灭]，侯王无以贵高将恐蹶。故必贵以贱为本，必高以下为基。是以侯王自称孤、寡、不谷。此非以贱为本邪？非乎？故致数誉无誉。不欲碌碌如玉，珞珞如石。

【释文】

以前达到“一”境界的：（一为阴阳和谐合一之境）

天得“一”则清，

地得“一”则宁，

神得“一”则灵，

河谷得“一”则盈，

侯王得一则可为天下贵高贞正。

由此思知，

天不得清，恐怕要破裂，

地不得宁，恐怕要溃败，

神没有灵，恐怕要消失，

河谷不得盈，恐怕要干涸，

侯王不能保持贵高，恐怕要被颠覆。

因此，贵必以贱为本，高必以下为基。

[39]

[Translation]

In the past, to attain the state of ‘oneness’:

(‘oneness’ being the state of yin and yang perfectly harmonised as one)

Heaven attained ‘oneness’ and turned clear.

Earth attained ‘oneness’ and become peaceful.

The spirits attained ‘oneness’ and possessed powers.

The valleys attained ‘oneness’ and became filled.

Leaders attained ‘oneness’ and became righteous.

And so it is implied,

When Heaven is not clear, it will crack.

When Earth is not peaceful, it will crumble.

When the spirits have lost their powers, they will disappear.

When the valleys do not get filled, they will dry up.

When the leaders lose their highness and nobility, they will get overthrown.

Therefore, nobleness must have humility as its base, and highness must have lowness as its foundation.

Thus, the kings proclaim themselves as ‘orphaned’, ‘widowed’ and ‘worthless’.

Are they not using humility as their fundamentals?

于是侯王自称为“孤”、“寡”、“不谷”。

这不是以贱下当根本吗？不是吗？

最高的称誉没有称誉。

不求美玉的光彩华贵，而学石块的坚硬朴实。

【简要分析】

[42]章的“道生一”的一象征混沌和谐，美好的景象。不能得一则会遭受不幸的灾害。劝导侯王要持守得一，保持中正。明白低下是为根本的道理。

The highest accolade contains no praise.

Do not shine like a glittering jewel, but embrace the solidness of a common stone.

[Short Analysis]

In Chapter [42], the oneness in 'Dao creates the One' depicts a scene of beauty where all are harmonised as one. The inability to attain oneness will result in untoward disasters.

This chapter persuades rulers to hold on to oneness, maintain uprightness, and to understand that lowness means foundations and fundamentals.

【40】 反者道之动。弱者道之用。天下万物生于有，有生于无。

【释文】

大道的运行，使反复循环。

它的作用力柔弱。

天下万物生于有，

有生于无。

【简要分析】

柔弱的道作用力在于使事物反复循环。大至天体的运行[25]，小至一般事物的自然反复，都是道的现象。这里的弱是相对性的概念，如天体的运行对它们是弱力而对人类却是强巨。

[40]

[Translation]

The motion of Great Dao is cyclical and repeating.

It functions through gentle forces.

All creation is born from 'Being'.

'Being' is born from 'Non-Being'.

[Short Analysis]

The gentle force of Dao causes things to repeat cyclically, from the movement of large celestial bodies [25] to the natural repetition of the small and ordinary living things in our daily lives. These are all phenomena of Dao.

The concept of gentle is relative. The gentle forces that cause the motion of celestial bodies are relatively weak. However, the same gentle forces are tremendously strong to human beings.

【41】 上士闻道，勤而行之；中士闻道，若存若亡；下士闻道，大笑之。不笑不足以为道。故建言有之：明道若昧，进道若退，夷道若颡，上德若谷，[大白若辱]，广德若不足，建德若偷，质真若渝，大方无隅，大白若辱，大器晚成。大音希声，大象无形，道隐无名。夫唯道，善贷且成。

【释文】

上士闻道，努力去实践；

中士闻道，半信半疑；

下士闻道，大笑起来一不被嘲笑，就不足是真正的道。

古时有这样的立言：

明朗的道，暗昧不清，

进道时，像在后退，

历程看似平坦，却是崎岖。

上德的人，有如山谷；

广大德行的人，好似德不足；

勤建修德的人，虽积德已厚却行动闪缩；

质性纯真的人，随境变迁。

（修成大道的人的精神境界在此称为大真）

大真它方正而没角，它明洁却似含垢，它大器晚成。

大道的音无声响，大道的象无形迹。

大道隐于无名之中。只有道，善于资助万物完成。

[41]

[Translation]

When a wise scholar hears of Dao, he diligently practises it.

When an average scholar hears of Dao, he believes half of it, and doubts the other half.

When an ignorant scholar hears of Dao, he laughs aloud.

If he did not mock Dao, then Dao would not be real.

Thus, there is an ancient saying:

The bright Dao appears to be dark.

Advancing it is like retreating.

A journey looks smooth, but is actually rugged.

The man of superior De is like a mountain valley.

The man of expansive De seems to be lacking.

The man of steadfast De seems stealthy.

The man of genuine De varies his appearance.

The man with the Great Spirit attaining Dao is square with no edges.

His spirit is almost pure, tarnished with slight impurities.

He attained Great Dao at a late age.

Sounds of Great Dao are inaudible.

Images of Great Dao are invisible.

【简要分析】

讲述修道者的行为举止表现。

Great Dao hides amongst the unnamed.

Yet only Dao is able to facilitate the fulfilment of all creation
from start to end.

[Short Analysis]

This chapter describes the behaviours and conducts of Dao practitioners.

【42】 道生一。一生二。二生三。三生万物。万物负阴而抱阳，冲气以为和。

【释文】

道力作用从“无”中生成了浑沌的一体“一”。

由“一”产生了阴阳两气“二”。

阴阳二气之间充满了和谐之气而形成“三”。

万物就由“三”组造成，

而有背阴向阳的特性。

【简要分析】

以简单扼要的方式，总结道家对宇宙天地创生的看法。

[42]

[Translation]

Dao creates the One – Chaos.

The One produces the Two – Yin & Yang.

The Two produces the Three – Heaven, Earth, and harmonious Qi.

The Three produces all of creation.

All of creation carry Yin, embrace Yang, and are filled and harmonized with Qi.

[Short Analysis]

In a simple and concise manner, this chapter summarises the views of Dao scholars on the creation of the universe.

【43】 天下之至柔，驰骋天下之至坚。无有入无间。吾是以知无为之有益。不言之教，无为之益，天下希及之。

【释文】

天下最柔弱的事物，能在天下最坚硬的物体里奔驰，
无形的无有能穿入无间隙的实体，
我由此认识“无为”的益处。
不言的教导感化，无为的益处应用，
天下很少能够认识和做到。

【简要分析】

以无有无形至柔的道，能驰骋驾驭在任何坚硬无间的“有”物中，而起影响效应，来说明无为的强大作用。

[43]

[Translation]

The most delicate object in the world can move freely within the hardest thing.

That which has no physical form can enter where there is no space.

I have recognised the benefits of inaction.

The unspoken words of teaching and the benefits of inaction, are rarely understood and attained only by the very few.

[Short Analysis]

The intangible and delicate Dao is able to gallop and navigate through any impenetrable and seamless 'Being', producing an impact in the process. That expresses the powers of inaction.

【44】 名与身孰亲？身与货孰多？得与亡孰病？是故甚爱必大费，多藏必厚亡。知足不辱，知止不殆，可以长久。

【释文】

声名和身命那一样应更亲爱？

身命和货利哪一样应更重视？

获得(名利)和失去(生命)哪一样更为有害？

过度的爱名必耗费庞大的精力，

过份的积藏财富必导致深厚的损失。

懂得满足不会受到侮辱；

懂得适可而止不至于凶险，可以安定长久。

【简要分析】

名和利的追求，对生命精力是一种负担也是风险。能知足可以不受辱，能知适可而止没有凶险。

[44]

[Translation]

Fame or life, which is more inseparable to you?

Possession or life, which is more precious?

Between gaining fame and losing life, which is more harmful?

An excessive love for fame will lead to a squandering of great effort.

The excessive accumulation of wealth will lead to heavy losses.

Learning to be self-content, one can avoid disgrace.

Knowing when to stop, one can keep oneself out of danger.

And one will stay safe for a long time.

[Short Analysis]

The pursuit of fame and fortune is a burden and risk to life. Self-contentment can avoid humiliation. Knowing the appropriate limits can keep dangers away.

【45】 大成若缺，其用不弊；大盈若冲，其用不穷；大直若屈；大巧若拙；大辩若讷。躁胜寒，静胜热，清静为天下正。

【释文】

大道完善，却像有欠缺，但它的作用没有漏失；

大道盈满，却像是空虚，但它的作用没有穷尽；

（修成的大道的人的精神境界在此称为大真）

大真的直正看似曲折，

大真的灵巧看似笨拙，

大真的辩解看似木讷。

躁热可以抵御寒冷，静可以克制热，

清静无为可以是天下的守规正则。

[45]

[Translation]

(Great Dao)

Great Dao is complete but appears to have shortcomings.
Yet it functions flawlessly.

Great Dao is comprehensive but appears to be void. Yet its
function is limitless.

(Great Spirit of Men attaining Dao)

The unbending Great Spirit appears not to be straightforward.

The dexterous Great Spirit appears clumsy.

The arguments for Great Dao are full of stammerings.

Restless actions overcome the cold; stillness overcomes
heat.

Purity and calmness lead the world to the right order.

【简要分析】

描述修成正道者，具有的“大”道精神境界。前两个大是指大道，后三个大是指得大道者的精神。也指出保持虚静是修道者的要则。对大真的精神，[41]章也有描述。

[Short Analysis]

This chapter describes the spiritual realm of Dao practitioners who have attained Great Dao through cultivation. The first two ‘大’ (Greats) refer to Great Dao, while the last three ‘大’ (Greats) refer to the spiritual state of those who have bonded with Great Dao.

The Great Spirit of Men attaining Dao is also described in Chapter [41].

【46】 天下有道，却走马以粪；天下无道，戎马生于郊。
祸莫大于不知足，咎莫大于欲得。故知足之足常足矣。

【释文】

天下有道，各国和平无争无战，马可以归还农民去耕田。

天下无道，各国互相残杀争战，马会出生在战郊。

灾祸没有大于不知足，

过咎没有大于贪婪欲得。

知足的满足是长久的满足。

【简要分析】

战争会带给人们巨大的祸害，而其起因多数起自侵略者的贪婪不知足。

[46]

[Translation]

When the world is under Dao, peace exists and horses are returned to the farmers for fertilizing farmlands.

When the world is absent from Dao, bloody battles reign and war horses are bred near the battlefields.

There is no greater disaster than being discontent.

And there is no greater misfortune than being greedy.

Being self-content is long-lasting satisfaction.

[Short Analysis]

Wars bring great harm to the people, and most wars arise from the greed of aggressors.

【47】 不出户，知天下；不窥牖，见天道。其出弥远，其知弥少。是以圣人不行而知，不见而明，不为而成。

【释文】

不出门户，能知晓天下事理，
不看窗外，能明了自然法则，
向外走的越远（无法守静），
对“道”的了解也就越少。

所以圣人，
不用出行而能感知，
不必观看却能心明，
不需作为而能完成。

【简要分析】

要深入认识事物，不能只看表象，更应看内涵。正如很多学术领域的科学家都是在狭小的实验内探索出复杂的事物真理。学道的人，也应如此，除了眼看到的表象也应以内身的感知去了解天下的事物。

[47]

[Translation]

Without leaving the house, a Dao practitioner can know the world.

Without looking out of the window, he can discover Celestial Dao.

The farther he goes, the less he knows about Dao.

Thus the Sage still perceives without travelling.

He still understands without seeing.

He still achieves through inaction.

[Short Analysis]

To understand matters in depth, one should not only look at superficial appearances, but also the underlying connotations. This is akin to scientists of varying academic fields trying to figure out complex truths from their compact laboratories. Learners of Dao should follow suit. In addition to the appearances they perceive, they should also understand matters with the senses of their inner bodies.

【48】 为学日益，为道日损，损之又损，以至于无为。无为而不为。取天下常以无事，及其有事，不足以取天下。

【释文】

求学时知识会一天一天的增加，
求道时成见则一天比一天减少，
减少又减少，一直到“无为”的境界。
如能无为那就没有做不成的事。
要取得天下的信服，行事要不干挠人民，
如果对人民妄加干预，
则不足以使天下信服。

【简要分析】

为学时累积的知识会越来越多，学道则要祛除成见而会越来越减少。这也是[64]章的“学不学”和[20]章的“绝学无忧”的意义。

老子的治国理念是以自然为要。尽量不要干扰人民的“事无事”，而以“为无为”去感化人民。以现代的环境条件来说则是需要注重精神思想教育。见[63]。

[48]

[Translation]

In the process of learning, new knowledge is acquired every day.

In the pursuit of Dao, prejudices are lessened every day.

They become lesser and lesser, until the state of inaction is attained.

In this state, many things can be achieved.

To win over the trust of the world, do not interfere (physically) with the lives of people.

If interference is needed, then it is not good enough to command the world.

[Short Analysis]

Knowledge acquired from conventional learning processes will only accumulate. Knowledge gained after practising Dao will only be lessened over time as prejudices and worthless knowledge are wiped out. This unlearning process is also mentioned in Chapter [64]’s ‘learn to unlearn’ and Chapter [20]’s ‘not to worry when quitting learning’.

Lao Zi’s idea for governing a nation is to allow nature to take its course. Avoid interfering with the people through direct actions, but instead influence the people through inaction. In today’s context, it is more pertinent to focus on spiritual and ideological education. See Chapter [63].

【49】 圣人无常心，以百姓心为心。善者，吾善之；不善者，吾亦善之；德善。信者，吾信之；不信者，吾亦信之；德信。圣人在天下，歛歛焉，为天下浑其心。百姓皆注其耳目，圣人皆孩之。

（“百姓皆注其耳目”句，王弼本无，据河上公补，此句也存于马王堆本）

【释文】

圣人没有一般人的私心，是以百姓的心为心。

我善待善良的人，

我也善待不善良的人；

这是善良的美德。

我信任守信的人，

我也信任不守信的人；

这是信任的美德。

圣人治理天下，使百姓心思收敛，回归浑朴，而操尽心思。

百姓都投注他们的耳目，

圣人对待他们都像自己的孩子。

[49]

[Translation]

The Sage differs from everyone else in that he does not possess a self-centred mind. Instead, he minds the needs of the masses.

I am nice to people who are kind.

I am also gracious to those who are unkind.

This is virtue De's act of goodness.

I have faith in the people who have faith in me.

I also believe in people who do not believe in me.

This is virtue De's act of faithfulness.

When governing the world, the Sage holds back his own interests and focuses on simplifying the mind of the people.

In return, the people all look to him and listen attentively.

The Sage treats all of them like his own children.

【简要分析】

古代的执政圣人，都会全心全意地为人民生活着想打算，秉着德善德信的心，为他们解决生活问题。

[Short Analysis]

The ancient sages who were in power devoted themselves wholeheartedly to the lives of the people, solving their problems with virtues of goodness and faithfulness.

【50】 出生入死。生之徒，十有三；死之徒，十有三；人之生，动之死地，亦十有三。夫何故？以其生生之厚。盖闻善摄生者，陆行不遇兕虎，入军不被甲兵。兕无所投其角，虎无所措其爪，兵无所容其刃。夫何故？以其无死地。

【释文】

出生到入死，
长寿的，有十分之三，
短命的，有十分之三，
本来该长寿而在死地过分妄动而死的，也有十分之三。
为什么呢？都因为求生太过了。
听说善于养生的人，（余下的十分之一），
在陆地上行走不会遇到犀牛老虎，
在战争中不会遭到杀害；
犀牛无法用它的角，
老虎无法用它的爪，
兵器无法用它的刃。
为什么呢？
因为他没有可致死的地方。

[50]

[Translation]

From birth to death, three in ten will lead long lives, three in ten will die early, and three in ten shorten their lifespans by courting death.

Why is this so? They have become overly obsessed with living.

Then there are those (less than the remaining one out of ten) who know how to maintain their health.

Walking on lands, they do not meet rhinoceroses or tigers.

In battlefields, they are not wounded by armoured soldiers.

For them, rhinoceroses are unable to use their horns, tigers are incapable of using their claws, and soldiers are unable to strike with their weapons.

Why is this so? They do not court the palace of death.

【简要分析】

指出会摄生养生的人，能使本身没有可致死的地方。就是在非常凶险的处境也能化险为夷，这是他们懂得养生之道。

[Short Analysis]

This chapter points out that the people who can preserve and upkeep their health well do not have a place with death. Even in the most perilous of situations, they can turn it around and stay out of harm's way. This is due to them knowing how to properly maintain their bodies and health.

【51】 道生之，德畜之，物形之，势成之；是以万物莫不尊道而贵德。道之尊，德之贵，夫莫之命而常自然。故道生之；德畜之，长之育之，亭之毒之，养之覆之。生而不有，为而不恃，长而不宰，是谓玄德。

【释文】

道创生万物，

德蓄育万物，

物种使万物呈现各个形态，

环境供万物长成。

所以万物没有不尊道和贵德的。

道和德受尊崇珍贵，

在于它们不干涉万物，任其自然发展。

所以道创生万物；

德蓄育万物，促使万物，

长大发育，亭立繁衍，並滋养庇护。

创生万物却不据为己有，

培育却不恃己能，

长成却不为主宰，

这是“玄德”。

[51]

[Translation]

In nature, Dao creates all while De nurtures.

All living species then take on their various forms.

They complete their forms in environments conducive to their growth.

All respect Dao and honour De.

Dao and De receive such reverence as they allow life to carry on naturally without domineering and interfering.

Dao creates all. De nurtures all by guiding them to maturity, supporting their proliferation, and giving them nourishment and protection.

The ability to create all without laying claim, nurturing them without parading capabilities, and completing them without dominating is the virtue of Primal De.

【简要分析】

道在自然天地间创生万物，万物中的德体（本性）使其生长，不同物种的德体使它们有不同的形状，最后适当的环境使万物长成，所以万物都尊道重德。

这里的德和[65]的德，与大道相通，所以都是玄德。

[Short Analysis]

Dao creates all things in nature. De (of Nature), which is within all lifeforms, makes them grow. The different De within each distinct species causes each species to take on its unique form. Finally, a proper and conducive environment completes their growth. Therefore, everything respects Dao and De.

The De mentioned here and in Chapter [65] are related to Dao via the Dark Mystic Access. Hence, they are both termed as Primal De.

【52】 天下有始，以为天下母。既得其母，以知其子；既知其子，复守其母；没身不殆。塞其兑，闭其门，终身不勤。开其兑，济其事，终身不救。见小曰明，守柔曰强。用其光，复归其明，无遗身[殃]央。是为袞常。

（“央”取自马王堆帛本）

【释文】

天下万物有共同起始，

这是天下万物的根源母（道）。

从这个根源母，理解掌握它的万物子。

认识万物子的情状，又回守母（道），

终身不会有凶险。

塞住孔窍，闭起门径杜绝欲念，

终身不会烦挠。

打开孔窍，就会增添纷扰杂乱，

终身不可救治。

能观察入微是为“明”，

能持守柔弱之道是为“强”，

用内在的光，返照内明，

不会遭受危险祸殃，是为延习恒常之道。

[52]

[Translation]

The universe had a beginning which is Great Dao.

Great Dao is the mother of all creation.

Great Dao gave rise to Constant Dao as her child. From the mother, one can understand the child.

With the knowledge of Constant Dao's existence and its returning to embrace Great Dao, one will stay free from dangers for life.

Keeping the orifices shut, and fending off the mind from desires, one will live peacefully.

By acting conversely, one will be beyond redemption.

The ability to perceive minute Constant Dao is 'inner illumination'.

The ability to keep to yielding Constant Dao is 'strength'.

Use the inner glow to reillumine the inner illumination.

Not subjecting to any mishap is a practice of Dao's constancy.

【简要分析】

讲述修道的过程中内身的子（常道）与宇宙天地的母（大道）的应合。

[Short Analysis]

This chapter explains the association during the process of cultivation, between Constant Dao in the inner body as a child and Great Dao in the universe as a mother.

【53】 使我介然有知，行于大道，唯施是畏。大道甚夷，而民好径。朝甚除，田甚芜，仓甚虚，服文彩，带利剑，厌饮食，财货有馀；是谓盗夸。非道也哉。

【释文】

即使我认识微妙玄理，
行走于大道时，唯恐走入歧途。
这是因为大道虽然平坦好走，
但人由于惯性却会喜欢走斜路操捷径的原故。
朝政非常腐败，农田一片荒芜，仓库近于空虚，
还穿着漂亮的衣服，
佩带锋利的刀剑，
饱享精美的饮食，
占有多余的财货，
有如强盗头子。
这是无道的呀！

【简要分析】

谴责一些执政者的腐败风气。在农田荒芜、仓库空虚时，这些人还过着糜烂生活，完全不顾及人民的苦难。有如强盗头子。

[53]

[Translation]

Though I know the subtle truths of Dao, while I am practising it, I fear straying from it.

Even though the path to Dao is straightforward, people tend to take shortcuts and get side tracked.

When the court is full of corruption, the fields are barren, and the granaries are empty;

Yet some can still don elaborate clothing, wield sharp weapons, indulge in feasts, and possess more than they can use.

They are like robber chieftains.

This is certainly not the way of Dao.

[Short Analysis]

This chapter condemns the corrupted behaviours of some rulers. When the fields were barren and the granaries were empty, these rulers continued to live decadently with blatant disregard for the suffering of their people. They were like robber chieftains.

【54】 善建者不拔，善抱者不脱，子孙以祭祀不辍。修之于身，其德乃真；修之于家，其德乃馀；修之于乡，其德乃长；修之于邦，其德乃丰；修之于天下，其德乃普。故以身观身，以家观家，以乡观乡，以邦观邦，以天下观天下。吾何以知天下然哉？以此。

【释文】

善于建树的不被拔除，
善于抱持的不会脱失，
（寓意勤于修德），
则子孙世代代的祭祀不会断绝。
用这个原则修德在身，其德朴实纯真，
用在家，其德会充裕有余，
用在乡，其德会绵绵延长，
用在国，其德会丰盛厚裕，
用在天下，则德就会普及四方了。
所以，以自身观察别身，
以我家观察别家，
以我乡观察别乡，
以我国观察其他的国，
以我所在天下观察其他的天下，
修德的结果都是一样的。

[54]

[Translation]

(Virtue De) will not be uprooted by those adept at building up.

(Virtue De) will not slip away by those skilled at holding on.

(Those cultivating Virtue De by incessantly building it up and bearing so diligently) will have their sacrifices honoured from generation to generation.

Using this principle to cultivate De on one's self, the De attained will be pure.

On one's family, it will be ample.

On one's community, it will last for a long time.

On one's nation, it will be abundant.

On the world, it will be universal.

The above holds true when I compare between individuals, families, communities, nations, and the world.

How can I be sure this truth holds for the entire world?

By this method!

我怎么知道天下的情况呢？就是用这类推的方法。

【简要分析】

善于修德积德，使其不被“拔脱”，则子孙后代就能绵延不断。修德积德在不同的地方，即个人、家、乡、国、天下，其结果呈现会不一样。

[Short Analysis]

A person good at cultivating (Constant and Virtue) De will achieve immunity to 'extrication' and will have continual generations of descendants.

Building up De in different areas such as within an individual, a family, a community, a nation, or the world, will yield different results. The lattermost will have the greatest impact.

【55】 含德之厚，比于赤子：蜂蛰虺蛇不螫，猛兽不据，攫鸟不搏；骨弱筋柔而握固，未知牝牡之合而全作，精之至也；终日号而不嘎，和之至也。知和曰常，知常曰明，益生曰祥，心使气曰强。物壮则老，谓之不道，不道早已。

【释文】

含德深厚的人，好比初生的婴儿。

毒虫不刺伤他，猛兽不伤害他，凶鸟不袭击他，

筋骨柔软拳握却牢固。

虽不知男女交合之事，

阳物却因精气极足常勃起。

整天号叫却因身心极和而声不嘶哑。

知晓阴阳平衡，元气淳和是“知常”之道，

能知常是“内明”，

丰腴纵慾的生活叫做“祥”，

用意志妄使精气叫做“强”。

然而过分强壮就会衰老，这是不合于道。

“不道”很快会灭亡。

[55]

[Translation]

A person with profoundly deep-seated (Constant) De is like a new-born child.

Noxious wasps will not sting him.

Wild beasts will not harm him.

Birds of prey will not strike him.

Despite having soft bones and weak muscles, his grip is firm.

Owing to the perfect essence within him, his penis stands erect despite his ignorance about the union of a male and female.

Owing to the perfect harmony of Qi, he can cry all day without getting a hoarse voice.

Understanding the balance and harmony of Yin and Yang is recognition of constancy within the body.

Knowing this fundamental constancy is 'inner illumination'.

Encouraging pro-life is auspicious.

Forcing Qi to work with the heart and mind is strength.

However, when something has reached its prime, it will soon decline.

This is against the fundamentals of Dao.

Whatever contrary to Dao will meet with an early end.

【简要分析】

修炼道德到至精至和的状态时，明心能感知至和的常在。提醒过于丰腴的生活，姿意使强是不道的，是容易灭亡的。

[Short Analysis]

Upon reaching the state of perfect harmony whilst cultivating Constant De, the mind is able to perceive the existence of this perfectly harmonious state.

This chapter also reminds us that leading a gluttonous lifestyle and overly asserting strength to feign strongness are against the fundamentals of Dao. They will both lead to early demises.

【56】 知者不言，言者不知。塞其兑，闭其门，挫其锐，解其纷，和其光，同其尘，是谓玄同。故不可得而亲，不可得而疏；不可得而利，不可得而害；不可得而贵，不可得而贱。故为天下贵。

【释文】

知大道的不多言，（因言语无法尽意表达）多言者不知。

塞住言说的口舌，闭起感官的门径；

挫掉自我的锐气，消解心中的纷扰；

平和内体的光芒，混同外界的尘世。

这就是天人合一的“玄同”境界。

达不到时，还会有亲疏，利害，贵贱的意识。

所以大道为天下所尊贵。

【简要分析】

本章是讲修道过程中的玄同境界。

[56]

[Translation]

He who knows (of Dao well) does not speak of it.

He, who speaks about it, does not know it.

Restrain the lips, and shut out the gateway to the senses.

Temper one's sharpness, and unravel the heart's complications.

Harmonise with the inner glow, and blend with the surrounding world.

This is the Great Unification (with Great Dao).

When one is yet to attain this unified state, there will be traces of intimacy and unfamiliarity, a notion of benefit and harm, and the perception of being noble or low-born.

Therefore, Great Unification is held with the highest regard.

[Short Analysis]

This chapter talks about the metaphysical aspect encountered during the process of cultivation.

【57】 以正治国，以奇用兵，以无事取天下。吾何以知其然哉？以此。天下多忌讳，而民弥贫；民多利器，国家滋昏；人多伎巧，奇物滋起。法令滋彰，盗贼多有。故圣人云：我无为而民自化，我好静而民自正，我无事而民自富，我无欲而民自朴。

【释文】

以正道治国，以诡奇用兵，
以不干扰人民（而以精神思想）取得天下信服。

我何以认为是如此的呢？

有下列的根据：

天下的禁令越多，人民越贫穷，
民众的武器越多，国家越混乱，
人民的智巧越多，乖离事情频频发生，
法令越森明，盗贼反而增加。

所以圣人说：

我无为而治，百姓自然默化，
我好清静，百姓自然走正道，
我不干扰，百姓自然富足，
我无贪慾，百姓自然淳朴。

[57]

[Translation]

Govern a nation with integrity.

Go to war with unpredictable moves.

Win over everyone's trust by not interfering with their lives.

How do I know so?

Based on:

With more prohibitions in the world, people will get poorer.

With more weapons owned by the public, the country will be in greater chaos.

When people's abilities increase, strange happenings will flourish.

With more laws and decrees enacted, there will be more criminals.

Therefore, the Sage says:

I practise inaction, and the people will achieve self-reformation.

I seek peace, and the people will find their path to integrity.

I do not interfere, and the people will enjoy prosperity.

I abstain from desire, and the people will return to simplicity.

【简要分析】

以无事不干扰百姓生活来治理国家是本章主旨。因为多忌讳禁令只会使百姓更加穷于应付；更多的森明法令，会使盗贼更多。以无为默化百姓，自己清静不干扰百姓则他们就会走向正道和富足，自己无贪欲他们也就淳朴了。

[Short Analysis]

The main subject of this chapter is about the proposal of not interfering with the lives of the people when governing a nation. The people will only get poorer when coping with increased prohibitions. The increased number of laws and statutes enacted will result in a greater number of thieves.

This chapter also advises on influencing the people subtly and tacitly with inaction. When a ruler is pure, peaceful, and not interfering with the lives of the people, the people will go on by themselves to find the right path and prosperity. When a ruler has no greed, the people will by themselves become simple.

【58】 其政闷闷，其民淳淳；其政察察，其民缺缺。祸兮，福之所倚；福兮，祸之所伏。孰知其极？其无正。正复为奇，善复为妖。人之迷，其日固久。是以圣人方而不割，廉而不剝，直而不肆，光而不耀。

【释文】

治国宽容厚实，人民就淳朴；

治国严密苛刻，人民就会狡黠。

灾祸啊，是幸福的依倚处；

幸福啊，是灾祸的伏藏所。

谁知道究竟呢？

它们没定准的吗？

正，复转化为奇邪，

善，复转化为妖恶。

常人面对这样的迷惑，时日已久。

因此有道的圣人，

方正而不割人，

敏锐而不刺人，

耿直而不肆意，

明亮而不眩眼。

[58]

[Translation]

When a country is ruled straightforwardly, its people are simple.

When a country is ruled harshly, the people become crafty.

Good fortune leans closely to disaster, and disaster is concealed within good fortune.

Who understands the bottom line?

There is no exact answer.

Normal can turn into odd.

Good can turn into evil.

The people have long been perplexed by this phenomenon.

Thus, the Sage acts justly without hurting.

He probes but does not pierce.

He acts straightforwardly yet with restraint.

Radiantly but not dazzling.

【简要分析】

前段四句应是前章[57]的续文。

本章以对立的福祸关系，来说明天地间存在的阴阳互含相因的因果关系；互相倚伏的福祸互变是不可预料的。就此提醒有志于大事业的人，行事要正直也要灵活，要明敏而不伤人。

[Short Analysis]

The first four sentences of this chapter should be a continuation of the previous chapter (Chapter [57]).

The remainder of the chapter uses an example of the relationship between blessings and misfortunes to demonstrate the existence of a Yin-Yang mutually inclusive and interchangeable causal relationship in our living world. Blessings and misfortunes mutually affect each other and the timing of the changeover between them is unpredictable. In this regard, those with great ambitions are reminded to act with integrity, flexibility, sensitiveness, and not to (simply) hurt others.

【59】 治人事天，莫若嗇。夫唯嗇，是谓早服。早服，谓
之重积德；重积德，则无不克；无不克，则莫知其极；莫
知其极，可以有国；有国之母，可以长久。是谓深根固抵，
长生久视之道。

【释文】

治理人民，效法天道，爱惜精力最为重要。

爱惜精力，是为早作服从和配合天道而准备。

早作准备就是注重积德。

重积德，就可无不胜任。

无不胜任的能力，其极限无法估计。

能力无极限可以治理国家。

以浑厚的德力治国，可以长久，

这是以深根固蒂，达到长生久视的道。

【简要分析】

嗇俭精力和注重积德，则会有无限精力治理国家，使国家长
存。这是深根固抵长生久视之道。

[59]

[Translation]

In governing people and serving Heaven, conserving the energy is of utmost importance.

Conserving the energy is making early preparations to work in line with Heaven.

To get prepared in advance, one has to constantly build up (Constant) De.

With the formidable De firmly built up, one will not have insurmountable problems.

With nothing insurmountable, one will possess limitless capabilities.

With limitless capabilities, one can rule a kingdom.

A kingdom reinforced with De will last for a long time.

By having deep roots entrenched to form a firm foundation, the path to a long life and eternal vision is paved.

[Short Analysis]

Conserving energy and focusing on building up De, one will have limitless capabilities to govern a nation and the nation will exist for long. This is the way of having long-lasting vision by establishing a deep-rooted and firmly entrenched foundation.

【60】 治大国，若烹小鲜。以道莅天下，其鬼不神；非其鬼不神，其神不伤人；非其神不伤人，圣人亦不伤人。夫两不相伤，故德交归焉。

【释文】

治理大国，就像煎小鱼，要用小火少干预。

以道治理天下，鬼起不了它的神奇力量。

不是鬼没有神奇力量，

是因为它的神奇力量，在道影响下不伤害人民。

不但它的神奇力量不伤害人民，

圣人也不伤害人民。

在道影响下，圣人和鬼都不伤人民。

于是德也就在人民中交集归汇了。

【简要分析】

治理大国，要像用小火煎小鱼，要小心少干预。当柔顺的大道布满天下时，天下就少了乖戾之气，圣人和鬼都不伤害人民。大家都能以淳朴的德行交往。

[60]

[Translation]

Governing a large country is akin to frying small fish. The less the interference, the better.

When Dao is used to govern a nation, evils will be unable to employ their supernatural powers.

It is not that their magical powers no longer exist, but rather they will be unable to harm the people under Dao.

Just as evils are unable to harm the people, the Sage will cause no harm to the people.

When both do not harm, virtue De will gather at the masses.

[Short Analysis]

Governing a big country is like frying small fish over gentle flames. One must be careful and intervene less. When the world is filled with the gentleness of Dao, there will be less surliness, and both the sages and spirits will not harm the people. Then, everyone can coexist with one another by virtue of honesty.

【61】 大国者，下流；天下之交，天下之牝。牝常以静胜牡，以静为下。故大国以下小国，则取小国。小国以下大国，则取大国。故或下以取，或下而取。大国不过欲兼畜人，小国不过欲入事人。夫两者各得所欲，大者宜为下。

【释文】

大国要如江河的下流，

为天下的交集地，为天下的雌牝（雌性禽兽）。

雌柔的牝，以静定胜过强壮的雄牡（雄性禽兽）。

以静定为谦下。

所以大国对小国谦下，可以取得小国归顺。

小国对大国谦下，可以取得大国信任。

所以大国以谦下求取得归顺，小国则以谦下就取得信任。

大国不必太过其欲去兼并他人，小国不需太过其欲来逢迎他人，

这样两者都可满足欲望。

大国宜谦下。

[61]

[Translation]

A large country should act like the lower course of a river where streams flow to and intersect.

It should adopt the female role of the world, where all meetings congregate.

The female always tames the male through composure, and composure comes from humility.

Should a larger nation approach a smaller nation with humility, it can unite the latter under its banner.

Should a smaller nation approach a larger nation with humility, it can be accepted as an ally.

As such, by taking a position of humility, the larger nation gains a smaller country's submission, and a smaller nation will gain a larger country's trust.

Larger nations need not violently annex smaller countries.

Smaller nations need not go out of the way to please larger countries.

Both nations would then achieve their objectives peacefully.

The large nation should first take the initiative by practicing humility.

【简要分析】

讲大小国应有的外交关系。如果大家能够向对方谦让，则可和谐共处。其中，大国更要有谦下的态度。

[Short Analysis]

This chapter discusses about the type of diplomatic relations that large and small countries should have. If everyone can approach each other with humility, they would live in harmony. In particular, the larger nation should first be the one to initiate with a humble approach.

【62】 道者，万物之奥，善人之宝，不善人之所保。美言可以市，尊行可以加人。人之不善，何弃之有？故立天子、置三公，虽有拱璧以先駟马，不如坐进此道。古之所以贵此道者何？不曰求以得，有罪以免邪？故为天下贵。

【释文】

道庇荫万物，
是善于道的人的宝，
是不善于道的人的庇护与保佑。
优美的言辞受人推崇，
尊贵的行为受人敬重。
不善于道的人，怎能就被舍弃呢？
所以天子立位，三公任职时，
虽然有拱璧在先，駟马在后的供礼，
还不如以道作为进献。
古时候为何重视道呢？
不是说（以道）有求有得，有罪免除吗？
所以为天下人所重视。

【简要分析】

讲述修道守道的重要性，以道力有庇佑和解除灾难的原故。

[62]

[Translation]

Dao shelters all creation.

It is a treasure for those proficient in Dao, and a protection for those who are not well versed in Dao.

Elegant words will be met with praise, and dignified behaviours will be revered.

How can those not well versed in Dao be abandoned?

When a country's new leader takes charge, offering him a gift of jade and a team of four horses are not as valuable as offering him the teaching of Dao.

Why was Dao so highly valued by the ancient Masters?

Hasn't it been said? With Dao, what you seek, you shall receive. What you have done wrong, can be forgiven.

Therefore, it is highly valued.

[Short Analysis]

This chapter advises on the importance of cultivating and adhering to Dao, as Dao has the power to bless and quell calamities.

【63】 为无为，事无事，味无味。大小多少。报怨以德。图难于其易，为大于其细。天下难事，必作于易；天下大事，必作于细。是以圣人终不为大，故能成其大。夫轻诺必寡信，多易必多难。是以圣人犹难之，故终无难。

【释文】

以无为去作为，以不干扰为原则去作事，以无味当作味。

大由小起，多由少积，

从简易处入手来解决困难，

从细微处开始去完成大事。

天下的难事，必从简易做起；

天下的大事，必从细微开始。

所以圣人始终不是为大，而能成就大事。

轻易的承诺容易失仪，

看待事情太容易必会遭遇更多的困难。

所以圣人会把事情都以艰难看待，

因此没被艰难所困。

[63]

[Translation]

Take inaction; Engage in affairs with no interference;
Savour the bland.

The great starts from the minuscule. Much accumulates
from few.

Solve a difficulty from an easy point. Complete a great task
from the minute.

All difficult tasks in the world should start from the easy
and all great things from the small.

Thus, the Sage does not seek greatness, and yet is able to
accomplish the greatest works.

Easy promises lack faith.

Trivialising matters will result in more difficulties.

Hence the Sage handles matters with great importance,
and with that he will have no difficulties.

【简要分析】

从大生于小，多起于少的哲理，劝导人们在处理困难的事物时，应从易和细处开始。

轻易的承诺容易失信。处理事物也是一样，太过轻心随意，会遭遇困难，而应周密思量，细心行事。

[Short Analysis]

This chapter uses the philosophies that large grows from small, and more originates from less, to advise people when dealing with difficult and complex problems to start from the simple and minute.

It is easy to lose faith in loose promises. This is also true when dealing with matters. If one is too casual, one will encounter difficulties. Instead, one should think carefully and act conscientiously.

【64】 其安易持，其未兆易谋，其脆易泮，其微易散。为之于未有，治之于未乱。合抱之木，生于毫末；九层之台，起于累土；千里之行，始于足下。为者败之，执者失之。是以圣人无为，故无败；无执，故无失。民之从事，常于几成而败之。慎终如始，则无败事。是以圣人欲不欲，不贵难得之货；学不学，复众人之所过。以辅万物之自然，而不敢为。

【释文】

事物安静时容易把持，

事情没起变化征兆时容易谋算，

事物爽脆时易破碎，事物微细时易消散。

在事情没有发生之前就作好准备，

在事情没有祸乱之前就妥善处理。

合抱乔木，由细小的萌芽长成，

九层望台，由一堆堆的泥土筑起，

千里徙行，从脚下举步开始。

妄为会失败，执持会失去。

因此圣人，无妄为没有失败，不执持不会失去。

平常人做事，往往在快成功时失败，

如果能慎重看待事物，始终如一，就不会失败。

所以圣人以“不欲”为欲，不珍贵难得的货品；学“不学”，复回众人的“太过”。以辅助万物的自然发展而不妄加干涉。

[64]

[Translation]

It is easier to maintain control when a thing is quiet.

It is easier to plan before a thing shows any indication of change.

A thing when brittle is more breakable.

A thing when small is more easily dissipated.

Make the necessary preparations before problems happen.

Put things in order before things get out of hand.

A tree with its trunk as wide as both arms outstretched springs from a tiny seedling.

A nine-storey lookout begins its foundations upon toiled soil.

A thousand-mile journey embarks from a single footstep.

Acting recklessly, one will fail.

Holding on to something, one will lose it eventually.

The Sage does not act recklessly, and thus does not fail.

He does not hold on to things, and therefore does not lose them.

Common people usually fail when they are close to success.

By treating the end of the task with as much importance as the beginning, there will be no failure.

Therefore, the Sage desires for no desire, and does not

【简要分析】

本章续前章，讲述更多解决难题的方法，提醒很多事物都是由少聚多而成，如高塔是由泥土累积矗立，大树是由小幼苗长成，千里远行起于小脚步等。

事物在初始阶段会是细和易，也是解决问题的最好时刻。不妄为不迷执，慎终如始，可以避免遭受失败的苦果。

此外，也要增强自身的修养，要以不欲为欲，学习遵循自然之道，如何不学没用的东西。见[48]有关不学。也要辅助万物的自然发展而不妄加干涉。

treasure that which is not easily obtainable.

He learns to unlearn in order to bring people back from what they have overdone.

He helps all creation find their natural course, yet refrains from direct interference.

[Short Analysis]

This chapter is a continuation of the previous chapter and it provides more ways of solving complex problems. It reminds us that many things are made up of an aggregation of the tiny and few, such as a tall tower being constructed with the accumulation of piles of soil; a large tree from a small seedling; a thousand-mile journey from a small step, and so on.

Things or problems will be small and uncomplicated in their initial stages, and therefore that is the best time for them to be resolved. As long as one is not reckless and treats the end with as much care as the beginning, one can avoid the bitter consequences of failure.

In addition, one should also improve on self-cultivation, take undesirables as desires, learn to follow the way of nature, and unlearn the useless. See Chapter [48] about unlearning. One should also aid in the natural development of all things instead of impeding them.

【65】 古之善为道者，非以明民，将以愚之。民之难治，以其智多。故以智治国，国之贼；不以智治国，国之福。知此两者，亦稽式。常知稽式，是谓玄德。玄德深矣、远矣！与物反矣！然后乃至大顺。

【释文】

古时善应用道的人，
不注重教导国民精明，
而是在引导国民淳朴。
国民的难以治理，
是在于他们有太多的智巧心机。
所以以巧智治理国家，会给国家带来祸害，
不用巧智治理国家，是国家的幸福。
知晓这两种的不同，是治国的重要法则。
常明白这个法则，是深奥的“玄德”，
玄德深远啊！
和事物一同反朴归真，然后达到大道的和顺。

[65]

[Translation]

During the ancient times, the Sage who was capable of employing Dao would not promote cleverness amongst the people.

Instead, he made them simple-minded.

When the people are too clever, a nation becomes difficult to govern.

People who recognise the weakness of their nation tend to exploit it and become thieves.

Those who understand their country with simple minds will benefit the nation.

Knowing the difference between these two views is a ruler's guiding principle.

Constantly adhering to this principle is Primal De.

Primal De is deep and profound.

It returns all to simplicity in order to achieve harmony with Great Dao.

【简要分析】

古时有道的统治者，注重教育人民淳朴而非精明，因为精明又有心机的人民，除了难管理外，也易成为出卖国家的分子，“以智治国，国之贼，不以智治国，国之福”，在马王堆帛本是为“以知（智）知邦，邦之贼也，以不知（智）知邦，邦之德也”，后者应是原意。这个治国法则，是深奥的玄德，因它能引导国家反朴归真，达到与大道和顺的境地。

[Short Analysis]

During the ancient times, rulers of Dao emphasised on educating the people to be simple rather than shrewd. This is because shrewd people are not only difficult to manage, but are also more likely to commit treasonous acts.

In the current circulation of Dao De Jing, it states ‘People who are governed to be crafty will become thieves. People who are governed to be simple will benefit the nation.’

In the Ma Wang Dui version, it states ‘People who recognise the weakness of their nation tend to exploit it and become thieves. Those who understand their country with simple minds will stay virtuous.’

The latter version should be the original meaning. This form of governance is a profound virtue because it can guide the nation to return to its original nature, and achieve a harmonious state with Dao.

【66】 江海之所以能为百谷王者，以其善下之，故能为百谷王。是以圣人欲上民，必以言下之。欲先民，必以身后之。是以圣人处上而民不重，处前而民不害。是以天下乐推而不厌。以其不争，故天下莫能与之争。

【释文】

江海由于低下，所以被许多河川所汇注，
成为百川之王。

所以圣人管理人民，要言行谦下；

领导人民，要置自身利益在后。

所以圣人处于上位时，民众不觉得负累；

处于前方时，民众不觉得妨害。

因此天下乐于推举而不厌恶他。

因为他不争，

所以天下没有谁能和他争。

【简要分析】

以江海在下方而能成其大来说明以下为上的思想。圣人治政时，因言行谦下，置私利于后的不争精神，而受人民爱戴。

[66]

[Translation]

Rivers and seas become the rulers of the valleys because of their low altitude.

In order to rule above them, the Sage will speak with humility.

In order to lead them, she will place her self-interests behind.

The people will not be burdened when the Sage is ruling above them.

They will not feel that their lives are in jeopardy with the Sage leading in front.

The entire world will gladly support her with no ill feelings.

And because she does not contend, no one in the world can contend with her.

[Short Analysis]

This chapter uses large rivers and the seas achieving their greatness by being at a lower altitude as an analogy to demonstrate that the lower position (during peace time) is in fact a more favourable position to be in.

When the Sages governed the country, they were loved by the people for their modesty, unselfishness and non-contending spirit.

【67】我有三宝持而保之：一曰慈，二曰俭，三曰不敢为天下先。慈故能勇，俭故能广，不敢为天下先，故能[成器]为成事长。今舍慈且勇，舍俭且广，舍后且先，死矣！夫慈，以战则胜，以守则固。天将救之，以慈卫之。

（“为成事”取自马王堆帛本）

【释文】

我时时持守三宝：

一是慈爱，

二是俭嗇，

三是不妄争做天下先。

有慈爱就有勇气；

会俭嗇就能广大；

不争先就能成为事物的首长。

现在舍弃慈而采取妄勇，

舍弃俭而选择扩张，

舍弃谦让而争先；

自取灭亡啊！

慈爱，用以征战则胜，用以守御则牢固。

天要救助谁，就以慈来护佑他。

[67]

[Translation]

I possess three treasures and guard them dearly: Mercy,
Thrift and Humility.

With Mercy, one has courage.

With Thrift, one can expand.

With Humility, one can be a great leader.

Today, people abandon mercy to be bold.

They give up thrift, but seek expansion.

They disregard humility and fight to be the first.

This is death for certain!

Mercy will bring victory in battle and strength while
defending.

To save someone, Heaven will protect him by way of
mercy.

【简要分析】

慈、俭和敢不为天下先是老子的三宝。慈能使人在征战与守御时产生勇气；俭则畜存精力为扩展做准备；不争先则能领导下，指挥器物。三者都是军事的要素。

[Short Analysis]

Mercy, thrift, and humility are the three treasures of Lao Zi. Mercy gives the people courage in both offensive and defensive battles. Thrift conserves the internal energies in preparation for expansion. With humility, one can better command his troops and deploy his military equipment. All three elements are essential qualities within the military.

【68】 善为士者不武。善战者不怒，善胜敌者不与，善用人者为之下。是谓不争之德，是谓用人之力，是谓配天古之极。

【释文】

善做将帅的，不炫耀武力；

善于作战的，不轻易动怒；

善于克胜敌人的，不采用直接对斗；

善于用人的，对人谦下。

这是不争的美德，

这是善于用人，

这是符合天道，

自古以来的最高法则。

【简要分析】

浮躁时人们的气势是亢盛上昇的，沉着时则相反。所举的都是不争的例子，都要求神气下沉。在[69]中的两军对阵时也应如此。

[68]

[Translation]

A good general does not seek violence.

A good warrior keeps his temper.

A good tactician avoids direct confrontation with incoming enemies.

A good leader is humble to his people.

These are the virtues of not contending and the art of handling people.

They are the highest standards conforming to Celestial Dao.

[Short Analysis]

When impetuous, the body's Qi tends to rise vigorously. But when calm, the reverse occurs. All the examples of non-contending given in this chapter require one to stay cool and calm. This should also be the case, as stated in Chapter [69], when two armies confront each other.

【69】 用兵有言：吾不敢为主而为客，不敢进寸而退尺。是谓行无行，攘无臂，扔无敌，执无兵。祸莫大于轻敌，轻敌几丧吾宝。故抗兵相加，哀者胜矣。

【释文】

领军带兵的曾说：

“我不妄进主攻，而取守御；
不妄进一寸，而后退一尺。”

也说：

“排列阵势，却像没有阵势，
奋举臂膀，却像没有臂膀，
对抗敌人，却像没有敌人，
执握兵器，却像没有兵器。”

祸患没有比气浮轻敌更严重，
气浮轻敌几乎丧尽我的三宝。（见[67]）

所以两军实力相当对阵时，
哀伤气沉的一方会得胜。

【简要分析】

学道者在两军对峙时，应有的心态。切记勿气浮心躁轻敌而宜沉着稳重抗敌。

[69]

[Translation]

There is a proverbial phrase in the art of warfare:

I would rather not make the first move, but be passive instead;

I would rather not advance an inch, but withdraw a foot.

It (also) says:

Line up in formation without appearance of a formation.

Raise the fist without lifting the arm.

Engage the enemy by not confronting them.

Grip onto weapons yet appear unarmed.

Underestimating the enemy is the gravest mistake.

By treating the enemy lightly, I will lose my three treasures.

(See [67])

When two forces of equal strength meet, the sorrowful will emerge victorious.

[Short Analysis]

This chapter considers the mentalities that military leaders learning Dao should possess when facing confrontations. The important lesson is not to be impetuous and underestimate the enemy, but to remain calm and steady when facing the enemy.

【70】 吾言甚易知，甚易行。天下莫能知、莫能行。言有宗，事有君。夫唯无知，是以不我知。知我者希，则我者贵。是以圣人被褐怀玉。

【释文】

我的话非常容易明了，非常容易实行。

大家却不能明白，不能履行。

言论有根源主旨；

行事有中心概要，

由于无法理解，所以不了解我。

明了我的人很少，

效法我的更难得了。

所以圣人，披着粗衣，心怀宝玉。

【简要分析】

老子感叹他以浅白的语言来解说他的言论思想和行事方法，却无法得到人们理会并效法。

[70]

[Translation]

My teachings are easy to understand and practise.

Yet everyone can neither understand nor practise them.

My teachings come from ancient sources.

My practice comes with key points.

If one is unable to comprehend Non-Being, then one will not be able to understand me.

Few can understand me, and those able to follow my teachings are even rarer.

Thus the Sage wears rough clothing and holds jewels close to his heart.

[Short Analysis]

Lao Zi was lamenting that despite using plain language to explain his thoughts and ways of dealing with matters, he still could not get the masses to take heed and follow him.

【71】 知，不知，上；不知，知，病。夫唯病病，是以不病。圣人不病，以其病病，是以不病。

【释文】

知晓自己有所不知，很好。

不知却以为知，这是缺点。

圣人没有缺点，

因为他能知缺点，也把缺点当作缺点。

正是把缺点当作缺点，

所以没有缺点。

【简要分析】

孔子说：“知之为知之，不知为不知，是知也。”

苏格拉底说：“知道自己不知道。”他们的立意都相近。

能够自知己失则容易自我改进。

[71]

[Translation]

Knowing what you do not is a good virtue, but presuming to know what is unknown is a shortcoming.

The Sage has no shortcomings as he is able to recognise all his shortcomings.

By recognising all shortcomings as weaknesses, one has no shortcomings.

[Short Analysis]

Confucius once said, “To know what you know and what you do not know, that is true knowledge.”

Socrates once said, “One thing only I know, and that is I know nothing.”

All these sayings have similar meanings. Being self-aware allows for self-improvement.

【72】 民不畏威，则大威至矣。无狎其所居，无厌其所生。夫唯不厌，是以不厌。是以圣人自知不自见，自爱不自贵，故去彼取此。

【释文】

人民不畏忌威压时，
则有更大的威害降临。
不使他们处于困境，
不压榨他们的生活。
只有不压迫他们，才不会被他们厌恶。
因此，
圣人求自知而不自我表现；
求自爱而不自居高贵。
所以去自见，自贵；
而取自知，自爱。

【简要分析】

劝导统治者不要逼迫人民，才能得到他们的好感，自己也要懂得自知自爱。

[72]

[Translation]

When people stop fearing oppression, greater disasters will soon befall.

Do not force them in a bind. Do not suppress their livelihoods.

If you do not oppress the people, they will in turn stop detesting you.

Therefore, the Sage seeks to acquire knowledge without flaunting.

Therefore, the Sage strives to love himself without belittling others.

He embraces knowledge and self-love but forsakes flaunting and self-elevation.

[Short Analysis]

This chapter persuades a ruler not to simply persecute his people, and by doing so he will obtain their approval. He should be mindful and treasure his own self.

【73】 勇于敢则杀，勇于不敢则活；此两者，或利或害。天之所恶，孰知其故？天之道，不争而善胜，不言而善应，不召而自来，繹然而善谋。天网恢恢，疏而不失。

【释文】

勇于敢作敢为则丢命，勇于委婉则可保身。

这两种方式，或遭害或得益。

天所厌恶的，一般人怎能明白它的缘故？

天道，

不争而善胜，

不言语而善应答，

不召唤而自来，

安然而善谋算。

所佈的天网，广阔无边，稀疏却没有漏失。

【简要分析】

刚强好斗容易丧命，谨慎行事应可保身。但是两者的结果，却是有时有利，有时有害，好像天道没有准则。

然而，天道是不争不言，而会不召自来。它淡然布下的天网，是疏而不漏的。没有显现效应，只是时间未到而已。

[73]

[Translation]

The determined and bold should get killed.

The determined and reserved should endure.

However, the outcome of the two is often unpredictable.

Who can really understand that which Heaven loathes?

Though it does not contend, Celestial Dao is adept in winning.

Though it does not speak, it is capable of responding.

It will duly come forth without being called for.

It appears to be aimless, yet proficient at planning.

Heaven casts its net wide. While its mesh is sparse, nothing will slip through.

[Short Analysis]

One who is courageous and combative should get killed easily. One who is courageous but cautious should live longer. However, the expected outcome of both scenarios can sometimes be surprising, as though Heaven has no rules.

Instead, Celestial Dao does not contend or make itself heard, but it will definitely respond in due course. It casts a net far and wide but never leaky. The effects are not seen, only because the moment has not arrived yet.

【74】 民不畏死，奈何以死惧之？若使民常畏死，而为奇者，吾得执而杀之，孰敢？常有司杀者杀。夫代司杀者杀，是谓代大匠斲。夫代大匠斲者，希有不伤其手矣。

【释文】

人民不畏死亡，为何用死威吓他？

如果人民真的怕死，

对于作恶的人，

我们大可把他抓来杀掉，

那么谁还敢为非作歹呢？

有专管杀人（的天道）去执行杀的任务。

那代替天道去执行杀（滥杀）的任务，

就如代替高明木匠去砍木头。

那代替高明木匠砍木头的人，

很少有不弄伤自己的手的。

【简要分析】

反对随意处死人民来恐吓人民就范，因为这和老子的简朴治国理念相悖违。处死人民是天的权责。统治者将患重罪者处死就好了，而不可滥杀。

[74]

[Translation]

If people do not fear death, then how can death intimidate them?

If they are really afraid of dying, then capture the vilest of men guilty of breaking the laws, and execute them.

Who will then dare to defy the law?

There exists (Celestial Dao) an official executioner.

Any mortal who tries to take its place, is akin to an inexperienced person trying to be a great lumberjack.

For the uninitiated, who tries to be a great lumberjack, will definitely get his hands hurt.

[Short Analysis]

Intimidating people with capital punishment is contrary to Lao Zi's idea of governing a country with simplicity. The right and responsibility to execute the people lies with Heaven. As a ruler, he should only execute the most heinous of villains, and not kill his people indiscriminately.

【75】 民之饥，以其上食税之多，是以饥。民之难治，以其上之有为，是以难治。民之轻死，以其上求生之厚，是以轻死。夫唯无以生为者，是贤于贵生。

【释文】

人民的饥饿，

因为统治者征收税赋太多，所以饥饿。

人民的难治，

因为统治者政令烦苛，妄加作为，所以难治。

人民的轻死，

因为统治者搜括过度，用以自肥，所以轻死。

清静无求的生活，

胜过奢侈丰厚的生活。（可免除人民的困苦）

【简要分析】

过度的征税使人民饥饿，苛政烦令使人民无法适应生活。最后，他们只好冒死抵抗。本章劝导作为统治者，应过简单清静的生活。

[75]

[Translation]

The starvation and famine of the people is caused by a ruler's excessive collection of food taxes.

The rebellious nature and difficulty of ruling the people is caused by a ruler's excessive implementation of rules.

People will think of death lightly because of the excessive plundering and demands of a ruler to maintain his extravagant lifestyle.

To live simply is better than to live plentifully (in order not to cause hardship to the people).

[Short Analysis]

Excessive taxation leads people to starvation. Harsh and complex political statutes cause people to become unadaptable to their new way of life. In the end, they have to risk their lives to resist. This chapter persuades rulers to lead a simple and peaceful lifestyle.

【76】 人之生也柔弱，其死也坚强。[万物]草木之生也柔脆，其死也枯槁。故坚强者死之徒，柔弱者生之徒。是以兵强则[不胜]灭，木强则[兵]折。强大处下，柔弱处上。

（“是以兵强则灭，木强则折”取自《列子·黄帝篇》）

【释文】

人活时身体柔软，

死时僵硬。

草木生时柔脆，

死时枯槁。

所以坚强，死亡跟随，

柔弱生存跟从。

所以用兵逞强会灭亡，

树木强硬茂盛遭到砍伐。

强大的，居于下位，

柔弱的，反占在上方。

【简要分析】

讲柔弱胜强硬的另一例子。柔代表生命活力，而相反地强硬是枯僵死亡的征象。

[76]

[Translation]

The human body is soft and delicate in life, yet stiff and rigid in death.

Living plants are pliant and tender, yet dry and brittle when dead.

Those who are hard and rigid are the followers of death.

Those who are soft and flexible are the followers of life.

Thus, a rigid army is doomed for destruction.

An unbending tree will snap.

The hard and rigid are underneath and worse than the soft and flexible.

[Short Analysis]

This chapter provides another example of softness over rigidity. Softness cum flexibility represents vitality. On the contrary, rigidity is an omen of death.

【77】 天之道其犹张弓与？高者抑之，下者举之，有馀者损之，不足者补之。天之道，损有馀而补不足；人之道则不然，损不足以奉有馀。孰能有馀以奉天下？唯有道者。是以圣人为而不恃，功成而不处；其不欲见贤！

【释文】

天道，

岂不就像拉弓射箭一般吗？

过高了，就压低，

过低了，就抬高；

有余的减少，不足的补充。

天道，

减少有余，用来补充不足。

世人的行为，就不是这样；

却要夺取不足的，去奉给有余的。

谁能够把有余的拿来供天下不足的？只有有道的人。

因此圣人有所作为而不自恃己能，

功成而不居。

他不欲表现自己的贤能！

[77]

[Translation]

Way of Celestial Dao is similar to aiming with a bow.

Lower the bow if aiming too high, and raise the bow if aiming too low.

Cut the excess. Compensate the shortfalls.

Celestial Dao will relieve those with excesses and redistribute to those who do not have enough.

Humans perform to the contrary.

They take from the inadequate and give to those who already have too much.

Who will give the needy from their excesses then? Only men of Dao do.

The Sage does not expect anything in return, or any credit for her accomplishments.

She does not seek publicity for her good deeds.

【简要分析】

天道，损有余者而补不足者。平常人的道，都是设法损不足的去奉有余的。遵守大道的人，也效法天道；以有余奉天下，且不持己能，不居己功。

[Short Analysis]

Celestial Dao will trim those with excesses and compensate those with shortfalls. On the contrary, the way of the ordinary people is to take from the insufficient and give to those already with abundance.

People of Dao will follow Celestial Dao's way of giving. They do so to the utmost of their abilities and will not claim any credit.

【78】 天下莫柔弱于水，而攻坚强者，莫之能胜。以其无以易之。弱之胜强，柔之胜刚；天下莫不知，莫能行。是以圣人云：受国之垢，是谓社稷主。受国不祥，是为天下王。正言若反。

【释文】

天下没有比水更柔弱的，
攻克强坚的东西却没有谁能胜过它，
没有谁能代替它的。

弱的胜强，柔的制刚，
天下没有人不明白，
但是没有人能做到。

因此圣人说：

“能承受国家的耻辱，才可当国家的君主；
能承担国家的灾祸，才能做天下的王。”
正言好像反话。

[78]

[Translation]

There is nothing in the world that is as soft and supple as water.

When overcoming the strong, it is unsurpassable, irreplaceable.

Softness will overcome the strong; Suppleness will overcome the rigid.

Everyone knows this, but few can put it into practice.

Therefore, the Master says:

Only when one is able to accept the humiliation of his kingdom, can he be fit to be its ruler.

Only when one is able to shoulder the burden of disaster in his kingdom, can he be fit to rule the world.

True words appear contradictory.

【简要分析】

用坚定持恒的水能以弱胜强，以柔克刚的道理，强调柔弱的可贵难得。指出有坚定意志，又能承起国家耻辱的人，才可当一国之主；能坚毅地担负起国家灾难的人，才能当天下的王。

[Short Analysis]

This chapter uses the unwavering and resilient properties of water as good examples of the weak overcoming the strong, and the soft overcoming the rigid. It emphasises the invaluable-ness of being soft and flexible.

It then points out that only when one possesses a resolute will, and can bear the shame of a nation, can he be the rightful ruler of the nation. When he can staunchly bear the brunt of an entire nation's calamity, he can be the king of the world.

【79】 和大怨，必有余怨，安可以为善？是以圣人执左契，而不责于人。有德司契，无德司彻。天道无亲，常与善人。

【释文】

和解深大的民怨（因税债，施政的政策等），必有余怨。

这怎能算是妥当的办法呢？

因此圣人保存债务借据的存根，而不强逼人偿还。

有德的人理好借据，

无德的人苛取税收。

天道无亲情，

但常帮助善人。

[79]

[Translation]

After resolving a bitter conflict, some resentment is bound to remain.

How can that be a good solution?

Therefore, the Sage will keep his half of the lending chit,
And not press for what is owing.

A man of virtue will manage his lending chit well.

A man without virtue will forcibly press for what is due.

Celestial Dao sides no one,

But it tends to help kind people.

【简要分析】

中国自古以来都是农业大国，农业是国家的命脉。不时发生的旱涝天灾都会影响收成致使农民无法缴税而满肚怨气。这时的催税只能使他们更加怨恨，解决这种问题的方法是收妥借据不去催税。天道会使善人善有善报。这里的怨不是泛指一般的怨恨，而是人民无法偿还借债而产生的民怨。

[Short Analysis]

China has primarily been an agricultural country since the ancient times and agriculture had been the lifeblood of the country. From time to time droughts, floods, and natural disasters occurred and affected the harvest of farmers. As a result, the farmers lost their harvest and were unable to pay their taxes, which in turn led to their resentment. This resentment is further aggravated during tax collections.

This chapter provides a possible solution to this conundrum. Withhold the lending chits and allow the farmers to repay over a longer period of time, instead of forcibly pressing for repayment. Celestial Dao will compensate the good-natured for their kind deeds.

The resentment mentioned above does not refer to all sorts of resentment, but one that stems from the people's inability to pay their taxes.

【80】 小国寡民，使有什伯之器而不用，使民重死而不远徙。虽有舟舆，无所乘之；虽有甲兵，无所陈之。使民复结绳而用之。甘其食、美其服、安其居、乐其俗。邻国相望，鸡犬之声相闻，民至老死不相往来。

【释文】

使国家变小，人民减少，
不用有十倍百倍功效的器具，
引使人民看重死亡而不向往迁移。
虽然有船只车辆，却无须乘坐；
虽然有铠甲兵器，却无所陈列；
使人民回复到用结绳记事的时代。
人民甘其饮食，美其穿戴，安于居住，快乐生活。
邻国互相望见，
鸡狗叫声互相听到，
人民从生到死，互不往来。

[80]

[Translation]

With a small country and less people,

Disuse the machinery that performs with tens and hundred times efficiency.

Teach the people to take death seriously and dissuade them from leaving their homes.

Even with carriages and boats, they will not use them.

Even with weapons and armours, they will not display them.

Let the people return to the age of knotting the rope for recording events.

They will enjoy their food, be pleased with the clothing they wear, dwell peacefully and live happily according to their customs.

The neighbouring countries are within sight to hear the roosters crowing and the dogs barking.

The people can live an entire life without visiting one another.

【简要分析】

描述中国上古的社会情况，是老子心中向往的理想社会。[17]章也说出理想的执政者。[80]和[81]在马王堆版中是置于[66]和[67]之间，后者的排序更能呈现老子政治理念的延续。

[Short Analysis]

This chapter describes the societal conditions of an ancient China before Lao Zi's time. This ideal society is what he longed for. His ideal governance is also expressed in Chapter [17].

In the Ma Wang Dui version, Chapters [80] and [81] are placed between Chapters [66] and [67]. This ordering would give better continuity of Lao Zi's political ideals.

【81】 信言不美，美言不信；善者不辩，辩者不善；知者不博，博者不知。圣人不积，既以为人，己愈有；既以与人，己愈多。天之道，利而不害；圣人之道，为而不争。

【释文】

可靠的话不华丽，

华丽的话不可靠。

专善的人不狡辩，

狡辩的人不专善。

深知的人很难广博，

广博的人很难深知。

圣人不积蓄（粮食），

他尽量为别人（着想），自己更拥有；

他尽量给别人（好处），自己拥有更多。

（例如借出粮种，用于种植，借贷者收获后可以多倍奉还）

天之道，

利万物而不加害。

圣人之道，

为人民作为而不争夺。

[81]

[Translation]

The truth does not sound beautiful.

Beautiful words are seldom truthful.

A learned person seldom argues.

Argumentative men are not competent.

Men with specialized knowledge lack the breadth.

Men with wide knowledge lack the depth.

The Sage does not accumulate possessions.

The more she does for people, the more she gets in return.

The more she gives to others, the more she possesses eventually.

(e.g. lending out grain seeds for planting, educating people, the returns from the people will be multiple folds).

Celestial Dao benefits all and does not harm.

The Sage acts without contending.

【简要分析】

举出更多正反事物而有因果关系的例子，尤其是懂得付出，将会获得更多的报酬的例子。例如提供人民有利的耕种条件，人民能生产更多的粮食，而统治者可以征收更多的粮税而更富有。同样地，供给人民过剩而会腐烂的粮食作种子，收成后能收回更多新鲜的粮食。最后，重申且强调天道利物而不害，圣人是为而不争。

[Short Analysis]

This chapter provides more examples of binary events that have inverse causal relationships, notably by highlighting that those who give others more can eventually receive more in return.

An example would be when providing farmers with favourable farming conditions, more crops can be harvested, and the rulers can get increased food levies and become wealthier. Similarly, by supplying the farmers with the seeds of surplus grain that will soon rot, more fresh grain can be recovered in the next harvest season.

Last but not least, this chapter reiterates and emphasises that Celestial Dao benefits all without harming, and the Sage follows and acts without contending.

下篇

综合分析



Part 2

Integrated Analysis

第一章 绪言

一、道德经是本什么书

道德经的经文约五千字，分道经37章，德经44章，共81章。一般上都认为是春秋末年楚人老子的著作。老子姓李名耳，又叫老聃。

它记录了许多先秦道家的哲学思想，是和易经一样在世界上有同等深远影响的中华文化思想著作。所涉及的层面很广泛；上至宇宙起源和有无空界，下至修身养性，积德修道，治理国家人民，外交战争，待人接物，处事方法，难题解决，神鬼和养生等都有概括。涵盖内容博奥精深，读完后对古人的智慧真是惊叹不已。

道德经的中心思想要旨，是认识宇宙天地存在的道和衍生的德。学习和遵循它们的作用和精神，去处理人间社会的事物。通过对德和道的修炼，而达到积集深厚的德和与道合真。又利用道和德赋予的力量来经世治国，解决民生、外交、战争难题，造福人民。

道德经成书久远，约在2500年前，因此在传承上，由于经文的简短和涉及面广，加上误抄，脱漏和窜改，使到明白经文困难重重；形成了读者由于不同的经验和学识背景，有很多迥然而异的想法，或持正反观点，或对它的学说多加质疑，驳斥或抨击。

这使一般世俗的读者，对着这一本瑰宝之学，添加了不少

困惑干扰。现存主要的争论有以下：

- 1、老子有其人吗？有的话，老子是道德经的作者吗？
- 2、老子的道和德思想真的比其他学派的学说能更有效地治理国家吗？
- 3、老子推崇的柔弱，不争之道等，在现今弱肉强食的社会行得通吗？
- 4、道德经是一本权诈之作吗？
- 5、先秦道家是消沉厌世的人吗？
- 6、先秦道家是推崇愚民政策的吗？
- 7、先秦道家是外表无私，其实是自私自利的人吗？

二、定位

本书希望能够解答上述的一些争议。但拘于篇幅和学识所限，有必要作一些设定，以便能缩小论述的范畴，以设定来免掉很多唇舌。主要的设定是：

- 1、老子确有其人，而且是道德经的主要作者。
- 2、《老子道德经》是先秦道家，在《郭店简本老子经》的基础上，加入当时许多道家和与道家有关的学说而成的书。不能排除这些添加有老子未发表于《老子经》的言论。尤其是道论，基本上是老子的思想言论。修道过程有可能是后人加入但并不表示非老子的言述。
- 3、《老子道德经》其成书应于战乱频繁的战国时期。《马王堆帛书甲本》可以佐证。

- 4、基本上，道德经注重物质性的分析，有别于另一重要道家著作《庄子》；后者则注重心性的认知。初学者不应被两者的道思想所混淆。
- 5、道德经是一本修道的书，也是一本哲理思想的书。它应是中华文化中最早对修炼作整体性叙述的著作。在流传中，为了顾忌帝皇的极权，有些注释者刻意地偏离修道课题，将道德经修改成一本以哲理为主的著作，如现今流通的王弼注释本。
- 6、从道德经中，可以很好地反映出一群先秦道家，对上古唐尧虞舜时和之前的社会的向往，和对当时社会的改革热忱和期望。

三、解读方法

道德经是世界上除基督教圣经外，被翻译成外语最多的著作之一，每年都有新的译本及解读面世。一般上，译本若能符合下列三个条件，以笔者的观点，就可认为是好译本：

- 1、合理性。
- 2、全篇逻辑一致性。
- 3、以劝人向善为主。

所以，笔者在作解读时，力求符合上述的三个条件。除此，也尽量要求能作高准确性的解读，以反映原著的真意，使其内容哲思能作有效的表达。同时也力求用通俗语言，让一般人都能轻易快捷地掌握道德经的内涵和智慧，从而学习先秦道家

的积德行善与济世救民的精神。因此，精准也是本书的目的。

四、版本

本书的经文采自王弼通行本，经文若有无法贯通一致之处，才参阅马王堆帛本。其中也有采用郭店简本一处^[19]和《列子·黄帝篇》一处^[76]。

王弼本删去字句以方括号显示而添加字句以斜体字提示。文中也用圆括弧的添加词语来表达先前文句的现代涵意。

例：

[1] ……[此两者同出而异名同谓之玄]两者同出，异名同谓。玄之又玄，众妙之门。

“[此两者同出而异名同谓之玄]”为删去字句；

“两者同出，异名同谓”为据马王堆帛本的添加字句。

Chapter One - Introduction

- **What is Dao De Jing?**

Dao De Jing is an ancient Chinese scripture comprising of eighty-one chapters and about five thousand words. The first thirty-seven chapters are titled Dao Jing (Dao Scripture), while the remaining forty-four chapters are titled De Jing (De Scripture).

The entire scripture is generally considered to be the work of Lao Zi, whose real name is Li Er, who was also known as Lao Tan. Lao Zi lived in the Chu state of ancient China during the late Spring and Autumn era (approximately 500 BC).

Dao De Jing records many philosophical thoughts of Dao scholars who lived during the pre-Qin dynasties. It can be regarded as an equally profound, far-reaching, and thought-invoking piece of Chinese literary work as compared to I-Ching (Book of Changes). It covers a wide range of topics; from the origin of the universe, the existence of nothingness and ‘Non-Being’; down to self-cultivation; improving one’s character; governing a nation and its people; diplomacy and warfare; managing interpersonal relationships; dealing with daily affairs; solving complex problems; the spiritual realm of gods and ghosts; and the preservation of one’s wellness. The content which it encompasses is extensive, profound, and the reader

will be amazed by the wisdom of the ancients after a thorough readthrough.

The main idea behind Dao De Jing is the understanding of the Dao that exists in the universe, in Heaven, on Earth, and to subsequently understand the De which is derived from Dao. It advises its readers to learn and adhere to their functions and principles to deal with worldly affairs. Through the cultivation of De and Dao, the reader can attain a state of spiritual bonding with Dao. It also advises its readers the uses of Dao and De on governing a nation, solving the people's problems, resolving state diplomacy and wars, and consequently bettering the lives of the people.

This ancient scripture was written about two thousand five hundred years ago. As it was passed down through the generations, some text was miscopied, due to its concise nature and extensive scope of topics covered. Parts of the scripture were also omitted and tampered with, resulting in a somewhat undecipherable scripture. As a result, readers with varying life experiences and academic backgrounds end up with vastly different views. These views can either be polarising, full of doubts, or simply filled with refutations and criticisms. This has added a lot of confusion to the ordinary secular reader when reading this gem of a scripture. Here are the main controversies surrounding Dao De Jing:

- Was Lao Zi a real person? If so, is he truly the author of Dao De Jing?
- Can Lao Zi's thoughts on Dao and De really govern a nation more effectively than other schools of thought?
- Lao Zi advocated for principles of softness, gentleness and not contending. Will this still work in our society today where the strong preys on the weak?
- Is Dao De Jing a fraudulent piece of work?
- Were Dao scholars of pre-Qin dynasties depressed misanthropes?
- Were these scholars promoting policies in an attempt to fool the masses?
- Did these scholars appear selfless on the surface, but were in fact selfish people?

• Positioning

This book hopes to address some of the above controversies. Considering my academic background and the constraints arising from the vast scope of studying this scripture, it is necessary to lay down some fundamental assumptions in order to narrow down the length of discussion. The fundamental assumptions are:

- Lao Zi did exist and he was the main author of Dao De Jing.

- Lao Zi's Dao De Jing is a pre-Qin literary work on Daoism. His work is a combination that is based on the Guo Dian bamboo version of Lao Zi Jing, and the addition of theories by Dao practitioners and other Dao-related doctrines of that era. It cannot be ruled out that these additions included Lao Zi's unpublished works of Lao Zi Jing. In particular, the theory of Dao was essentially Lao Zi's idea. The process of cultivation could have been added by others at a later stage but this does not preclude that it was in fact originally Lao Zi's theory.
- It is highly probable that Dao De Jing was fully completed during the Warring States period (475 BC – 221 BC). An unabridged version that was found in the Ma Wang Dui tomb supports this theory.
- Fundamentally, Dao De Jing focuses on the analysis of corporeality. This is different from Zhuang Zi, another famous Dao scholar's work. The latter focuses more on the cognitive nature of the human mind. Novices of Dao should take extra care not to be confused by these two different schools of thought.
- Dao De Jing is a scripture about the cultivation of Dao. It is also philosophical in nature. It should be the first book ever in Chinese culture to narrate comprehensively the process of cultivation. However, as it was passed

down through the generations, some commentators had deliberately deviated from the subject of cultivation in order to avoid blatant defiance against the totalitarianism of their emperors. They then completely rewrote Dao De Jing into a piece of philosophical work. An example is Wang Bi's annotated book, which is currently in circulation.

- From the scripture, it becomes apparent that the pre-Qin Dao scholars yearned for the society that existed before, and during Tang Yao and Yu Shun's time. They also displayed great enthusiasm and expectations for their society then to reform.

• **Method of interpretation**

Dao De Jing is one of the world's most translated literary works besides the Bible. New translations and interpretations emerge every year. From an author's point of view, a translation can be considered decent if it meets the criteria mentioned below:

- Reasonableness
- Consistently logical throughout
- Convincing others to do good

Therefore, this book was written with a view of meeting the

three conditions listed above. As far as possible, it strives to make a highly accurate interpretation to reflect the true meaning of the original work. By doing so, the philosophical thoughts of the scripture can be effectively expressed. It also endeavours to use plain language for the reader to easily understand the connotations and wisdom contained within the scripture. This will help readers appreciate the efforts undertaken by the pre-Qin Daoists and to learn and uphold the spirit of both building up virtue and doing good deeds to help people.

- **Different versions of Dao De Jing used in this book**

This book first interprets the Wang Bi version of Dao De Jing (currently in circulation). If the scripture in that version cannot maintain the consistency needed, the Ma Wang Dui Silk version is then referred to. Additionally, Chapter [19] uses some wordings from the Guo Dian Bamboo version; Chapter [76] uses some wordings from Lie Zi – Huang Di Pian.

第二章 核心思想

一、道思想

道是道德经的核心思想。道德经的道，也叫老子道，以便和其他的道思想系统作区别。

它是春秋末期人老子(生于公元前571年左右)，首先将它有系统的概念化和理论化。道德经收录了这些理论思想，经中也吸纳了一些同时期的重要道思想。

经中有时为了强调，也称道为大道或“大”。“大”也用来指修道者能与道合真的精神境界。

二、道的存在和起源

自古以来，人类都在不停地探索天地和人从哪里来的问题。老子从前人和当时道家所累积的知识，总结出一个朴素唯物物的创生论。他认为天地万物都来自道或称大道。“天下万物生于有，有生于无”^[40]。“无名天地之始，有名万物之母”^[1]。道的创生历程是“道生一，一生二，二生三，三生万物。万物负阴而抱阳，冲气以为和”^[42]。下面两种对道的创生历程阐释都很好：

- 1、由于大道道力的作用，从“无”中生成了浑沌的一体“一”。大道对浑沌未分的统一体“一”又产生作用，由浑沌的一体产生了阴阳两气“二”，阴阳二气充满交感之“和”气就形成“三”，万物就由“三”组合成

的。万物背阴而向阳，阴阳之间充满着和谐的交通之气。这里的“一”，也称太极。

- 2、另一个阐释是《列子·天瑞篇》的天地创生论说。它比道德经中的[42]更加详尽，其过程是有形的天地是由无形的“无物”，经过未见气的“太易”，气之始的“太初”，形之始的“太始”，质之始的“太素”，生成气形质具而未相离的“浑沌”。

从浑沌再分为清轻的上部“天”和浊重的下部“地”，天地之间又充斥着真精和气而化生成人和万物。

太易，太初，太始，太素和浑沌相当于道德经第[42]章所说的“道生一”，浑沌分离成天地是为“一生二”，天地和其间形成的真精和气是为“二生三”，万物由这三者化生而成是为“三生万物”。

三、大道的形象特性

在天地之前就存在的道，它既是宇宙万物生成的力量，也是宇宙万物的本源。它有下列的特点：

- 1、 无声无形，独立存在，不受他物影响而改变；不止尽地作循环运行^[25]。
- 2、 是使事物呈现循环运动的柔弱作用力^[40]。
- 3、 无处不在，自由地流布^[34]。
- 4、 它无处不在，而且它的存在远在天地之先^[4]。

5、道虽是万物生成的力量，功成却不佔有也不为主，无为而自然。这是道德经所推崇的大道精神。^{[34][51]}

四、天道

大道创造了天地，而效法道的天道，承继了大道循环运行的规律，如日月星辰的转移，四季气候的变迁等^[25]。

对一般人的思想行为有巨大影响是天道而不是大道。譬如道德经的不争思想是配合天道的一种思想行为的体现。后面会详细地说明。

五、自然界的道与德

大道创造了天地，也创生了万物，再由物种中的德养育长成了我们所看到的各种自然界的生物。万物物种的德可以理解为基因遗传。它蕴藏了许多生物的无意识行为如呼吸、摄食生长、生殖蕃衍等^[51]。

自然的德也是一种作用体，它有更固定的形象。它具有道生成万物后蓄育万物的作用能量能力，也维系和调节万物生长过程中能量的施用。

自然界中的万物，所含有的生育成长的德与大道有密切关系，所以也被称为“玄德”。

六、常道常德和朴

常道和常德是修道者在体内产生的现象，是得道的过程。

在马王堆帛本称为恒道和恒德；将恒改为常是为了避讳汉恒帝的名号。向天道学习的是不争，因为天道有损有余补不足规律。向大道学的是大公无私的大道精神，和与道合真后人体能力高度提升的最高境界修炼。

修炼的方法错综复杂，经文又有心隐晦，使人无法无师自通。这里仅能将有关资料作合理性的整理，所以只能作参考用：

1、修道的预备功夫和应有的心理状态。

见[3][5][12][15][26][41]。

2、积常德进常道。

大体上积德在进道之前。积集深厚的德可产生朴，有如内丹或者就是内丹的一种；朴和内丹的差异在于修炼方式的不同。接着是常道的修炼，以能和道合真为最高境界。

见[1][6][10][14][16][21][48][52][55][56][59]。

3、成道后的持守与能力。修炼是一个艰辛的过程，需要修道者坚毅的意志力。它不是一种宗教性的苦行或赎罪行为而是为了达到某种非凡的能力。至于它的非凡能力是什么，这里不作任何臆测。得道后持守大道的大公无私的无为精神是必然的，而拥有超凡能力也必是古人的目的。

见[2][32][37][41][43][45][54]。

4、身体内的常道和常德形象是相似的。见“孔德之容，唯

道是从”^[21]。从众多修炼者的经验得知，每个人都对常德常道有相同一样的感应形象。它们外部不明亮，里面不阴暗。有无法形容的绳绳之状，是无状之状，无物之象，道德经称之为惚恍^{[14][21]}。

七、社会伦理道德的品德

道德经的社会伦理道德体系是建立在大道的道法自然上。顺其自然的上德，不考虑得失而作为的上仁是被高度推崇的。道德经用植物的根来比喻德的敦厚和花来比喻义礼的轻浮；所以，行事要以道的德为根本依据^[38]。

由于德蕴藏在有形万物之中，德比道更呈现出形象。（厚）德体既然是至和至精之体，也可以理解为阴阳五行极端合谐的状态体。由这样的切入点，就可以容易明白道德经为何把德置在五常即仁义礼信智之上了。

根据《辞海》的注解：

德：正直的行为，善良的品行，如道德。

仁：爱人不存私心，如仁爱。

义：公正，合适的言语和行为，如正义。

礼：行动和交际的一定规划，如礼貌、婚礼、丧礼。

信：不疑，如相信。

智：有才识而深明事理，为愚的反面，如才智。

如果深层去了解五常的心理状态，一般上有下列的情况：

仁：不考虑自己的利益有无损害下的慈爱行为。

义：正义的行为参杂了私人利益的考量。

礼：不管自己喜欢与否，在社会价值观下而逼迫自己作出的不自然行为。

信：对他人的行为，作出的自然反射行动。

智：在任何情况下，作出对自己最合理的不自然行为。

阴阳数术家有五常配五行的学说，即仁木、礼火、信土、义金、智水。所以，五常都是有所偏激的五行心理状态，但对于古时道家来说这些都是偏离正道正德的；尤其是义礼智，更有过多的不自然的私人利益考量，也就不可取了。由此，对于他们在[38]的思想看法也就可以了解。

道德经的伦理道德注重律己，而缺少人际交往所需的行为举止和互动。这样的思想主张符合它推崇的政治理念，即回归到他们所向往的淳朴敦厚的上古社会。

八、道德综合观

道德经的道德观可说是非常复杂。除了创造创生天地自然界的道德，也讲修炼的道德，更包括社会伦理道德和大道精神。在阅读道德经时要明确知道在不同章节里，道德一词的真正涵意。以下是各概念的简单脉络关系：

- 1、大道创生了天道；自然界的道和德创生了万物。
- 2、大道所呈现的大道精神是成道者的楷模。其中包括了无为的大道精神。

- 3、道德经的社会伦理道德有异于世俗的伦理道德。它的德是基于大道精神建立起来的自然的上德和上仁。世俗的礼义是出于心机，是浮华的而不被推崇。

要达到大道精神的无为境界，修道者是要下苦功的，它的目的无他，是要练就异凡人的能力。

对于古时道家，修德积德是一般人都可成就的作为，终极目标是至和得一的和谐状态。再进一步才是有心向道的人的修道，其终极目标是达到道的无为境界。

道与德是古道家对自身要求的最基本准则，是实现他们的政治理想的途径。他们的理想社会观是一个没有战乱，天下太平，人民淳朴和生活安乐的社会。

然而，要求有心向道者重道积德而勤修己非易事，就是要求一般人有厚德之心也是崇高的愿望。再加上社会物质生活的进步，持有相反看法的也就大有人在。再加上经文的博奥精深，他人的多加曲解，就造成了多年来对道德经的争论不休，纷争延续了二千多年，到现在依然方兴未艾。

Chapter Two - Core Ideology

- **Ideology of Dao**

Dao is central to Dao De Jing's ideology. The Dao in Dao De Jing, also referred to as Lao Zi's Dao, is to be differentiated from other schools of thought on Dao.

Lao Zi lived during the turbulent Spring and Autumn period (approximately 571 BC) of ancient China. He painstakingly and methodically summarised his ideas and arguments about Dao in the scripture Dao De Jing. The resulting work also embodied some of the important experiences and beliefs of the contemporary Dao scholars of this warring period.

Throughout this book, Great Dao may be abbreviated and emphasised simply as 'Great'. The word 'Great' is also used to describe the spiritual state attained by Dao practitioners after spiritually bonding with Dao.

- **Dao's existence and origin**

Since the ancient times, humans have always pondered on their existence and the origins of the universe. Lao Zi drew upon the knowledge from both his predecessors as well as other Dao scholars during his time. With this accumulated knowledge, he encapsulated his theories behind all of life's creations. He believed that at the root of all creation lies

Dao, also referred as Great Dao. “All creation is born from ‘Being’. ‘Being’ is born from ‘Non-Being’.” ^[40] “‘Non-Being’ is the genesis of Heaven and Earth. ‘Being’ is the mother of all living creation.” ^[1] According to Dao De Jing, the process of creation is as follows: ‘Dao creates the One i.e. Chaos. The One produces the Two i.e. Yin and Yang. The Two produces the Three i.e. Heaven, Earth, and harmonious Qi. The Three produces all of creation. All of creation carry Yin, embrace Yang, and are filled and harmonized with Qi.’^[42] Below are two explanations of Dao’s theory of creation:

- Owing to the way Great Dao functions, from ‘Non-Being’ it created ‘One’ (Chaos). From the undivided ‘One’, it then produced Yin and Yang, or ‘Two’. And when Yin and Yang were harmonized by Qi, ‘Three’ was formed. All of life are created by ‘Three’. All of creation have their backs towards Yin as they face Yang, and the space between Yin and Yang is brimming with harmonious Qi. The ‘One’ mentioned here is also widely known as Taiji.
- An alternate explanation comes from the book ‘列子’. When compared with Dao De Jing’s Chapter [42], the chapter ‘天瑞篇’ explains in more detail about the theory of creation. From which it postulates that the physical world was created by the invisible and formless ‘Non-Be-

ing’ after undergoing the yet spirited ‘Supreme Change’ (太易), the first spirit ‘Supreme Origin’ (太初), the first form ‘Supreme Beginning’ (太始), and the first physical substance ‘Supreme Basic Element’ (太素). After undergoing this transformation, the resultant is an inseparable chaos of the four elements mentioned above.

From this Chaos, the lighter and upper portion formed ‘Heaven’ while the heavier and lower portion formed ‘Earth’. And between the spaces, real essences and harmonised spirits were infused to form mankind and other lifeforms.

‘Supreme Change’, ‘Supreme Origin’, ‘Supreme Beginning’, and ‘Supreme Basic Element’ and this Chaos are equivalent to ‘Dao creates the One’ mentioned in Dao De Jing’s Chapter [42]. The creation of Heaven and Earth is described as ‘The One produces the Two’. The merging of Heaven, Earth, and harmonised essences, is described as ‘The Two produces the Three’. The creation of all life is then described in the chapter as ‘The Three produces all of creation’.

• **Characteristics of Great Dao**

The Dao in existence before Heaven and Earth is the force behind all of the universe and life’s creations. It has the following characteristics:

- Silent, invisible and formless; existing independently and uninfluenced by any other entity or force; oscillating endlessly. ^[25]
- Being the subtle and gentle force that influences things to appear in cyclical movements. ^[40]
- Present everywhere and always spreading freely. ^[34]
- Present everywhere and existing well before Heaven and Earth. ^[4]
- Not claiming any merit despite being the driving force behind all creation. Through inaction, it allows nature to take its own course. This is the spirit of Dao, which is highly commended in Dao De Jing.

• **Celestial Dao**

Great Dao created Heaven and Earth. The resultant Celestial Dao continues to emulate Great Dao by upholding the cyclical nature of Dao. Some examples include the movement of the celestial bodies, as well as the four seasons on Earth. ^[25]

To most people, Celestial Dao exerts a larger influence on their behaviour and thoughts as compared to Great Dao. For example, the act of not contending advocated in Dao De Jing is an embodiment of Celestial Dao. This will be further explained in the latter passages.

- **Dao and De of Nature**

Great Dao created Heaven and Earth, as well as all creations in physical existence. From which, further proliferation resulted in all of nature's lifeforms that we see today. De of Nature can be reckoned as genetic inheritance or heredity. It is the hidden and controlling source behind many lifeforms' involuntary or autonomic nervous systems and their functions which include inhalation, digestion and reproduction. ^[51]

De of Nature is also a functional entity in a relatively more perceivable form (than Dao). After Dao's creation of all life, De of Nature possesses the ability to nurture, grow, maintain and regulate the processes of all lifeforms.

There is a close association between Great Dao and the nurturing elements of De contained within nature's creations. Thus, this De of Nature is also referred to as 'Primal De'.

- **Constant Dao, Constant De and Simplicity Pu**

Constant Dao and Constant De are the resulting phenomenon that occurs among the practitioners cultivating Dao. In the Ma Wang Dui versions of Dao De Jing, '常道' (Constant Dao) and '常德' (Constant De) were written as '恒道' and '恒德'. In avoiding the use of Emperor Han Heng's name, '恒' was changed to '常'. What can be learned from Celestial Dao is the act of non-contending, because it creates a balance by taking from ex-

cesses to replenish the lacking. From Great Dao we learn about its fair and just spirit. We also view the unification and bonding of body and soul with Dao as the ultimate level of cultivation.

The methods of cultivation are complex and confusing. The writings about them are vague. Without a master, one will find it extremely difficult to comprehend. The methods listed below are a compilation of reasonable and related information on the subject matter, and should only be used as a reference:

- The cultivation of Dao requires the right preparation and mindset. See Chapters [3], [5], [12], [15], [26] and [41].

- Build up Constant De to achieve Constant Dao.

The process in general is to first build up Constant De before Constant Dao. The profound accumulation of De may lead to the formation of Simplicity Pu, which is akin to a form of elixir. The difference between Simplicity Pu and an elixir lies in the method in which it is cultivated. The cultivation of Constant Dao to attain bonding and unification with Dao is the highest state achievable. See Chapters [1], [6], [10], [14], [16], [21], [48], [52], [55], [56] and [59].

- Holding on to the abilities after attaining unification with Dao.

The process of cultivation is arduous and requires the practitioner to possess an extraordinary willpower. This

process of achieving some form of supernatural power is not an act of religious asceticism or penance. This book will not attempt to postulate the abilities gained after achieving unification with Dao. Attaining Dao's just and selfless spirit of inaction is inevitable after achieving unification with Dao. Seeking to gain supernatural powers from this process was definitely one of the aims of ancient Dao practitioners.

See Chapters [2], [32], [37], [41],[43], [45] and [54].

- Semblance of Constant Dao and Constant De within the body.

‘Careful observation of (Constant) De reveals its semblance of (Constant) Dao.’^[21] With their cumulated experiences, many practitioners generally agree that both Constant De and Constant Dao are similar in form. They have surfaces that are not bright, and insides that are not dark. They are string-like, have no fixed forms, and bear resemblance to nothingness. These qualities are described by Dao De Jing as elusive and indistinct. ^{[14][21]}

- **Virtue De in social ethics and morality**

The ideology behind Dao De Jing's societal ethics and morality system is built upon the foundations of Great Dao's natural behaviour. A person with high virtue De will act naturally, while

a person with high benevolence will act without consideration for gains or losses. These are virtues that were highly valued by Lao Zi. The scripture used an analogy by comparing virtue De with the roots of a plant, and righteousness and rules of propriety with its flowers. The former has steadiness as its basis, and the latter is a frivolous show of societal norms. As such, one's conduct should be based upon virtue De as the fundamental. ^[38]

Because virtue De is hidden within actual physical lifeforms, its form is clearer than Dao. Since it is an entity of perfect harmony and perfect essence, it can be seen as an extremely harmonious entity from the perspectives of Yin-Yang and the Five Elements. From these perspectives, it is easier to understand why Dao De Jing regards virtue De with an elevated status, and above the Five Basic Virtues, namely Benevolence, Righteousness, Rules of Propriety, Trust and Intelligence.

According to the definitions of the Chinese dictionary ‘辞海’:

Virtue:	Upright and kind behaviour
Benevolence:	Compassion for fellow human beings without seeking any personal gains
Righteousness:	Just and fair in speech and conduct
Rules of propriety:	Societal behaviour conforming to certain

	codes of conduct
Trust:	Without doubts
Intelligence:	Able, insightful, and having a keen sense

A deeper understanding of the mental state behind ‘Five Basic Virtues’ can reveal the following scenarios:

Benevolence:	Acting without harbouring thoughts of self-gain, and without harming
Righteousness:	Taking just actions with due considerations for personal interests
Rules of propriety:	Being forced to pursue actions that conform to societal norms regardless of one’s personal preference
Trust:	The response to another person’s actions that is reflexive in nature
Intelligence:	Choosing the most logical course of action for oneself regardless of circumstances

Over the generations, Yin-Yang experts have passed down theories associating the Five Basic Virtues to the Five Elements. Specifically, Benevolence is associated with Wood, Rules of Propriety with Fire, Trust with Earth, Righteousness with Metal, and Intelligence with Water. To these experts, the Five Basic

Virtues are believed to exhibit the prominent mental states of the five respective Elements. However, to the ancient practitioners of Dao, this association suggested deviations of the Five Basic Virtues from proper Dao and De; especially righteousness, rules of propriety and intelligence, which all harbour too many unnatural considerations for personal interests. Therefore, they were considered relatively inferior when compared with virtue De. Chapter [38] outlines the viewpoint on this matter.

Dao De Jing emphasises the importance of self-discipline, and less on the conducts of social interactions. This school of thought conforms to the ideology of the scripture on political governance, i.e. longing for a return to a simple and honest society.

• Conclusion

The concepts of Dao and De offered in Dao De Jing can be regarded as extremely complex. In addition to the creation of the universe and all lifeforms, it also mentions about the cultivation of Constant Dao and Constant De, the virtues of societal ethics and morality, as well as the spirit of Dao. When reading the scripture, it is important to note the true underlying meaning of Dao and De in the context of each individual chapter. Below is a summarised list of the concepts and their relationships:

- Great Dao produced Celestial Dao; Dao and De of Nature

created all living creatures.

- The spirit of Dao, displayed by Great Dao, is the role model for practitioners of Dao. This includes the ethos of inaction.
- The system of social ethics and morality described in Dao De Jing differs from the societal norm. Its De is built on the foundations of the spirit of Dao and is elevated to high virtue De and high Benevolence through naturalness. However, Righteousness and Rules of propriety are behaviours that arose out of consideration for personal interests. They could be ostentatious and not to be lauded.

To achieve the spirit of Dao's state of inaction, the practitioner has to undergo a cultivation process that requires extreme effort. It has an end goal like no other, and is for the individual to acquire extraordinary powers.

To the ancient Dao practitioners, the process of refining and accumulating De is one that anyone can achieve with the end goal of attaining a state of perfect and harmonious oneness. Those who truly seek the cultivation of Dao require further efforts to attain the end goal of Dao – the realm of inaction.

Dao and De are the most fundamental qualities to be acquired by the ancient practitioner of Dao. It is an approach

instrumental to achieve their political aspirations. Their utopian society is one without war or destruction. Rather, it is one that is filled with peace, where the people are simple, honest, and live in a safe and harmonious environment.

To those who truly aspire to cultivate Dao, be reminded that the process is not easy to follow. In addition, as human civilisation advances and standards of living rise, more people would oppose Dao De Jing's views. Furthermore, the profound and yet concise text of Dao De Jing has made numerous readers come to vastly different understandings. This magnitude of differing perspectives has resulted in unending debates across a period of over two thousand years. Until today, they are still ongoing.

第三章 育德育智

道德经记载了许多用道与德的清静无为，纯朴自然的特性来治理国家的方法。由此，也提出许多如何修养品德的育德方法和强化智慧的育智方法。要求弟子们除了要具有良善的品德，拥有道的功力外，也要有高深的智慧，以便能够有效地去处理困难的事物，去实现他们的治国治民的理想。

管好自己要有坚强的意志，以优良的品德和人交往，会得到他人的尊敬善待。再加上能了解事物的规律发展并采取合适的方法途径加以处理，困难就能迎刃而解，结果会是事半功倍，并得到人们的拥载。这都是理国执政前应作的准备。

一、品德修养

品德修养，靠的是自律，需要自身的锻炼。

在修养行为上，能够知己胜己，重要过知晓他人和胜过他人。人对自己要自知、自足，自己要克服自己。行事要有坚韧的意志，不要迷失掉自己的根本，然后向使精神永存的志向前进^[33]。

要知晓自己的缺点的所在，不要强不知以为知。要知道自己本身的弱点已是很难，要克服自己的弱点更难^[71]。

学习言有信，不强辩，求深知，和天道的不争。也要学习大道的精神，不要过于在意自己私人的得失^[81]。

知足是断绝贪婪的解决方法，道德经在[44]和[46]中重复地

强调，贪婪是引导国家走向灭亡的途径。一个人的贪婪会影响多人的贪婪腐败，再接下来是社群的贪婪腐败；这种毫无止境的恶劣循环的结果就是崩解灭亡。

二、人际交往

如何待人处事是个人意志修养，品德和智力的综合表现。

在人际的交往上，要谦让柔软，放下身段，时常置自身于人后，置自身于度外，则自然可被众人拥戴^[7]。

为万民造福而不力求回报，贡献越多，在心灵上和物质上会觉得更富足^[81]。

在领导群众时，要有如天地无私贪的心念，置身在他们之后和之外。这样，便能取得他们的信任而领导他们去完成个人的理想^[7]。

有处下的心态也是很重要，因为江海就是处下才能成为百川的王。“欲上民，必以言下之。欲先民，必以身后之。如此，处上而民不重，处前而民不害，是以天下乐推而不厌”^[66]。有大才能的人，谦下其言，后其私利，容易得到众人的归顺。

三、学习方法

办事应要求尽善尽美，而且要会善于应用方法，以达到没有浪费，无弃人无弃物的地步。好的成功的人应当作老师看待，不好的失败的人则可当作同样事情的参考资料^[27]。

同样地，要懂得从不同的观点，从不同角度去看待事物。如对

待有和无，要灵活的利其有，而用其空无^[11]。

四、向大自然学习

学习水的善性，因为它有近于大道的特性。水滋润万物而不争功劳，也不计较所处的环境优劣，是值得学习的上善之德^[8]。

水的柔弱而能攻克坚强的事物的特性也用以劝导国家领导者，在强大的外来压力时，要能忍辱负重。这种柔弱看似懦弱的表现，却是解决国难的途径^[78]。

学习草木的柔弱反能处上风^[76]。

学习大海的容纳百川的心量^[66]。

五、解难进程

大的事物，往往源自细小。解决复杂事物的最佳时刻是在其萌芽阶段。若已经形成庞然大物，难全面理解的大复杂问题时，就应抽丝剥茧，从细和易处作切入点，从事物的简单，容易，小事处下手^[63]。

实行时要按部就班，有耐心，由小而大，由下而上，由近而远，而且慎终如始，更要会掌握时机^[64]。

六、解难方法

善于处理事物也就能对处理国事驾轻就熟。道德经花了很多篇幅在讲述如何应用符合道和德的特性和配合天道的规

律，去灵活有效地解决问题。

其中最强调的是不争和用柔的思维方法的引用。柔是道的特性，用柔使人更灵活地更有生命力的去完成艰巨的任务。不争在两方博弈时，要善于改变或采用有利的客观条件，如时机环境或群众心理，和天道的损有余而补不足的天道循环规律^[77]，达到改变两方的优劣形势而不必争的局面。

对立事物如祸福，进退，曲全，枉直等的进展都会遵循天道的循环规律。所以处于危难时不该气馁，在富贵时不该骄傲；要明白正奇，福祸相倚的道理^[58]。

将对立的事物都持守一的心态，不必自见，自是，自伐等，则天下无人可争^[22]。

对于余食赘形的太过份行为，有道的人都不应该做这样的事^[24]。

七、因果关系的应用

道德经总结了几种特殊的事物因果关系的现象。全方位地了解并掌握它们的关系可以更好地解决问题。这里必须重申这是老子生活经验的总结，可能不适合现今社会的运作，也可能只适合学道的人。譬如在搏击上以太极拳抵御强敌为例，本身就要有深厚的太极拳功底。学道的人用不道的方法也会和他本身习性有所抵触反而难成功。

1、正因正果或反因反果

这个关系是一般人的思维惯性通性，而不需特别考虑

来表述。

2、物极必反的因果

单一事物的物极必反是大道也是天道循环规律运作的效应。锋芒太过尖锐接下来就是断折，器皿太过满注就会溢出。从事大功业的人要谨记在适当的时候退居幕后，也让承继者有学习发展的空间和时间。

3、因果对立互换

天地间的祸福关系是对立，互含相因，互相渐变为对方的因果关系。这种互变很难预料掌握。最好的办法是当事者要正直也要灵活，要明敏又不伤人^[58]。

4、正因反果或反因正果^{[24][22]}

两个事件的因果可以是反向关系的，即正因得到反效果或反因得到正效果。例如[22]章的不自见故明和[24]章的自见者不明。以符号表示说明：

即非A则B；A则非B。

其中A=行事（因），B=期望效应（果）。这种单一因素的反因果关系是由于天道损有余而补不足的循环规律特性的影响。所以此时为了避免反效果的非B，不选取行动A是正确的决定。不过，当结果是受到多种因素影响时，其呈现的规律会是难以捉摸的。

5、没有规律的因果关系

“勇于敢则杀，勇于不敢则活”^[73]。没有呈现规律，有如做坏事没有坏的报应，而做好事常要倒霉。对此，

道德经提醒天道的规律是要时间去完成效应。也就是说，不是不报而是时辰未到。

八、注重本源

古时道家在解决品德、修养、人际交往、修炼和解决问题上非常注重事物的本源。他们认为道是生成万物的力量作用，是生命的起源。追溯本源也就能更接近道，能更接触很多事物的根本，处事若是舍本逐末，也就不能解决根本问题。

所以处理事物，要谨记本源所在，“不失其所者久”^[33]。高贵者要记得高以下为基，贵以贱与本。没有贱，何来贵？没有基下，何来高^[39]？

在处事上，要有稳重清静的头脑，慎终如始的心态。

Chapter Three - Moral Education and Knowledge Acquisition

Dao De Jing advised of various methods for governing a nation, drawing on Dao and De's unique features of calmness, inaction, naturalness and simplicity. At the same time, it has proposed ways to improve one's character through moral education, and expand one's wisdom through knowledge acquisition. It requests all disciples to not only possess a superior virtue when wielding Dao's abilities, but also to have a deep and profound wisdom in order to deal with arduous tasks effectively. This will allow them to fulfil their aspirations for governing a nation and its people.

To manage oneself requires strong willpower. When interacting with others while possessing a superior virtue, one will obtain their respect and kindness. A clear understanding of how circumstances develop and the ability to employ the right methods will lead to the swift and relatively effortless solving of problems. This will gain the trust of the people. The above-mentioned qualities are all prerequisites for one to govern a nation.

- **Improving one's character**

Improving one's character depends on self-discipline, and it

requires relentless self-improvement.

During the course of improvement, one must be able to understand himself to triumph over himself. This is more important than understanding and winning others. Besides understanding himself, one must also be self-content and be able to overcome himself. When dealing with matters, have the tenacity and do not lose sight of one's origin and rudiments. Thereafter, work towards the ideal of an everlasting spirit.^[33]

One has to realize one's own weaknesses and avoid treating not knowing as knowing. To truly identify one's weaknesses is already extremely difficult, moreover to overcome them.^[71]

Speak truthfully, lessen arguments, seek deeper awareness, and do not contend as Celestial Dao does. At the same time, follow the spirit of Dao and do not be overly bothered by personal gains or losses.^[81]

Self-contentment is a way to sever from mankind's ties with greed, and this is emphasised in Dao De Jing Chapters [44] and [46]. Greed will steer a nation towards the path of destruction. An avaricious person will influence others around him into greed and depravation, and these people will in turn influence the entire society. The final result for this vile and endless cycle is the utter disintegration of society.

- **Inter-personal interactions**

How one deals with others is a reflection of his willpower, moral values and intellect all combined.

When dealing with people, demonstrate humility and flexibility. Lower one's posture and habitually place oneself in a position beneath and secondary to others. By doing so, one will earn the respect of people.^[7]

Create benefits for the masses but do not vigorously seek returns. The larger the contributions, the greater the spiritual fulfilment and gain in material possession.^[81]

When leading the masses, one must possess an incorruptible mentality like Heaven and Earth. Do remember to place oneself in a position behind and secondary to others. In this manner, one can gain the trust of people in his leadership, and thus achieving his individual aspiration.^[7] The mentality of assuming a low position is vital. This is demonstrated by how the rivers and seas, because of their low altitude, become rulers of the valleys. 'In order to rule above them, the Sage will speak with humility. In order to lead them, she will place her self-interests behind. The people will not be burdened when the Sage is ruling above them. They will not feel that their lives are in jeopardy with the Sage leading in front. The entire world will support her gladly with no ill feelings.'^[66] A greatly talented leader who can speak with humility and place self-

interests behind others can easily gain the acceptance of her people.

- **Method of learning**

Resolve matters with proficiency and perfection. In addition, be adept in the method of execution to achieve zero wastage. Leave no person or object behind in the process. Treat the capable person like a teacher, and at the same time reference from the mistakes of an incapable person.^[27]

Similarly, look at matters and always consider them from different perspectives and viewpoints. For instance, with regards to that of 'Being' and 'Non-Being', one must be agile in making the best out of 'Being', and thereafter benefiting from its 'Non-Being' or voidness.^[11]

- **Learning from Nature**

Learn from the attributes of water as it bears a semblance of the persistent nature of Great Dao. Water nourishes all living creation without contending. It neither claims credit for its work nor fusses over the condition of its surroundings. This is a virtue well worth learning.^[8]

The soft and supple nature of water can overcome the strong and rigid. A nation's leader can learn from this characteristic to endure when faced with intense foreign pressure. This 'soft'

behaviour may be perceived as cowardly and weak. But this may be exactly what the nation needs to resolve a crisis.^[78]

Learn from the pliant and tender nature of plants, instead of being stiff and rigid, to gain an advantage.^[76]

Notice that the gigantic size of the oceans is due to their acceptance of all rivers flowing into them. Have the capacity to accommodate the sentiments of the masses.^[66]

- **Process of problem-solving**

A great task usually originates from something small. The most opportune moment to solve a complex problem is at its infancy. As the saying goes, 'Nip it in the bud.' If the problem has somehow grown much larger, then unravel it like a cocoon by identifying a tiny and straightforward point of entry. Resolve the issue from its basic, easiest and smallest part.^[63]

While doing so, proceed with consistency and patience. Begin work from the small to the large, from bottom to the top, and from close by to the distant. Pay close attention and regard the ending of the process with as much importance as the start. In addition, one must also know when to seize situational opportunities.^[64]

- **Methods of problem-solving**

Having the proficiency to solve problems helps one greatly

in managing a nation's affairs. Dao De Jing dedicated many chapters to narrate flexible and effective problem-solving methods that conform to the characteristics of Dao and De, as well as complimenting the cyclical nature of Celestial Dao.

The two most emphasised methods of thought in Dao De Jing are the tactics of 'not contending' and 'using softness'. Softness is a characteristic of Dao and those who utilise it will be more flexible and invigorated to complete formidable tasks. When adopting a stance of 'not contending' in a contest involving two parties, one should be proficient at changing or adapting to the circumstantial conditions and working it to his advantage by utilising good timing, favourable environments and the psychology of the masses. With the effect of Celestial Dao's cyclical nature in relieving those with excesses and redistributing to those who do not have enough, ^[77] the balance of the powers between two sides can be greatly shifted and tilted, resulting in a situation where both sides do not need to contest further.

The progression of subjects on opposite ends of a spectrum such as disaster and good fortune, advancement and regression, incompleteness and wholeness, crookedness and straightness, all abide by the cyclical nature of Celestial Dao. Therefore, when faced with adversity, do not feel dejected. When you have been blessed with great riches, do not flaunt. One must

clearly understand the interdependent relationship between the normal and the odd, and that of disaster and good fortune.^[58]

When dealing with subjects on opposite ends of a spectrum, embrace the mentality of 'Oneness'. There is no need to flaunt, and to be self-righteous, boastful or arrogant. And by doing so, no one in the world can compete with you.^[22]

Flaunting, acting self-righteously, being boastful and arrogant, are all detestable behaviours akin to leftovers and body tumours. Practitioners of Dao must avoid these pitfalls.^[24]

- **Causes and effects, including their applications**

Dao De Jing summarised several extraordinary matters and their causations. Taking a holistic approach in understanding and grasping these cause and effect relationships will allow one to better solve problems. At this juncture, a reiteration must be made that the scripture summarised Lao Zi's experiences during his time, and may no longer be applicable to society today. Therefore, the following may only be appropriate to the practitioners of Dao. For example, when fighting a strong opponent using the Tai Ji stance, one has to first possess a good foundation of Tai Ji skills. Similarly, a practitioner of Dao who employs non-Dao methods that are not consistent with his cultivation process of Dao, will find it conflicting and difficult to succeed.

- **Positive cause resulting in the intended effect, or to the contrary resulting in a negative effect**

These relationships are customarily understood by most and do not require further explanations.

- **Cause and effect of an object at its extremity resulting in a reverse consequence**

The above occurrence of a singular matter is the effect of both Great Dao, and Celestial Dao's cyclical nature. A spear that has been over-sharpened will soon break. A utensil that has been overfilled will spill over. A person of great power or position must constantly remind himself to step down at a suitable time and to take on a mentoring role. This will allow his successor the time and space to learn and further succeed.

- **Inter-changeability in the causes and effects of subjects on opposite ends of a spectrum**

Disaster and good fortune lie on opposite ends of a spectrum. However, they both belong to the same spectrum and a gradual change on one end of the spectrum will result in a corresponding change on the other end. The concept behind this type of inter-changeability is extremely difficult to grasp. The best way for a person at that specific time and place is to handle the situation by acting justly but flexibly, and

probing radiantly without harming others.^[58]

- **Positive cause resulting in an unintended and inverse effect, or on the contrary resulting in an intended effect**

The causations of two subjects can have an inverse relationship. Acting on one subject can cause an inverse effect on another subject, and vice versa. We can see this from Chapter [22] ‘By not showing off, one will shine brightly’ and Chapter [24] ‘By flaunting, one will not get the due recognition’.

We will denote this relationship as:

Doing A will NOT result in B;

While NOT doing A will result in B.

In this case A = action, while B = expected outcome. Such single-factor cause and effect relationships are due to Celestial Dao’s cyclical nature of relieving those with excesses and redistributing to those who do not have enough. Therefore, to avoid the unintended effect of not getting the outcome B, choosing not to undertake action A is appropriate.

However, when the outcome is influenced by multiple factors, this particular cause and effect may be difficult

to ascertain.

– **Irregular cause and effect**

‘The determined and bold should get killed. The determined and reserved should endure.’^[73] The above may seem irrational as quite often those who do evil do not get punished, while those who do good will be met with misfortune. To this, Dao De Jing would like to remind all that the cyclical nature of Celestial Dao takes time to complete. In other words, retribution is absent because it has yet to arrive.

• **Focusing on the origin**

When dealing with issues relating to virtues, character improvement, interpersonal relationships, self-cultivation, and problem solving, the ancient Dao scholars placed great importance to the origin of the subject matter. They believed Dao is the driving force for all living creatures, and the origin of all life. Tracing to the origin is a way to get closer to Dao, and the root of lifeforms. When dealing with these issues, the root cause of the problem can never be resolved if only the nonessential and superfluous matters are attended to.

Therefore, one must constantly remind himself of the existence of his origin. ‘One who does not lose his fundamentals will last longer.’^[33] A person of noble stature must remember

that highness must have lowness as its foundation and nobleness must have humility as its base. Without lowliness, how can nobility exist? Without lowness, how can highness be compared? ^[39]

When dealing with problems, one must be steady, clearheaded, and regard the ending phase of the process with as much importance as the start.

第四章 政治思想

一、政治理念

老子在[18]和[19]中表达他对天下乱世根源的看法,并尖锐地指出仁义、孝慈、忠臣是无道乱世的产物;慧智也是大伪的催生剂。他倡导绝智弃辩,绝伪弃诈,绝巧弃利^[19]以回归到用大道治世的政治理念。

老子的理想社会是小国寡民的小康社会。人民生活简单纯朴,安居乐业,自供自足;国与国不需要相互来往^[80]。他的理想统治者是太上时代的不干挠人民作息,或被人民接受亲近称誉的领袖^[17]。

小国寡民的理想社会和上古的理想统治者绝对不是幻想。那是曾经在中华大地,唐尧虞舜和以前时盛行多时的部落社会体系。这些部落的领袖共主是推举出来的。这种社会的高道德标准常被老子,庄子所缅怀向往。

老子知道人们再也无法回复到上古的社会生活。然而,他主张人们学习大道的大公无私精神,掌握大道和天道的规律,以便回归到以道为主导的淳朴社会生活^{[65][3]}。

二、王者之道

老子所处的年代是春秋战国时期,其间各国互相攻打以扩张领土,祸乱不停。百姓百般遭受其害,图谋献策的用智谋士应运而生,使天下乱上加乱。

当时的社会人群，基本上可分为三大类。一是统治阶级的君王贵族“王”，一是普通老百姓“民”，另一是“士”。

民是国的生产和战争工具，王则是国的统治者和拥有者，而士则是协助王治理国家者。

道德经认识到在这体制下“王”的重要性，“王”是四大之一^[25]。如果有办法“正”王，则百姓就可免受很多苦难。

老子心目中的王者应有以下的基本品德和举止行为：

- 1、爱惜国家有如爱惜自己的身躯^[13]。
- 2、学习道的趋近清静，远离急躁^[45]。道是万物的根本，重是轻的根本，作为君王，行为要稳重^[26]。
- 3、学习道的柔弱性和采取柔软身段^[78]。
- 4、要知足知止，时常保持心态的平衡和谐，保有厚德的品行^{[44][46]}。
- 5、要以贱为本，以下为基，以德为天下正，建立一个和谐的社会^[39]。
- 6、持谦下不争，容纳百川的态度，吸引天下来归顺^[66]。
- 7、重积德，勤修道^{[59][62]}。

重积德的锻练，在体内可以蓄积深厚的内能精力。重积德的结果可深根固柢，长生久视。有深厚的精力便能更好地处理各种国家难题^[59]。

勤修道是积德的延伸，得道后会有超凡的能力去应付更多更困难的事物，如感化人民，邦国外交，战争等。

- 8、秉着德信德善之心治理国家。保护人民就有如保护自己的孩子，不管人民对他有无善信^[49]。

三、治理国家

道德经讲述的政治体制距今至少2500年。因时代的久远，很多事物已不合时宜，然而其中以道治国还是有很高的参考价值。

1、以道治国

摒弃智辩、伪诈、巧利使人民少私寡欲、以朴素为上^[19]；不推崇贤明、不珍贵难得之物、不显耀可引起贪欲的事物；使人民注重虚心实腹，弱志强骨而不追求智巧和欲望^[3]。这样社会就会回归到与大道共存的稳定、和谐、安宁境界。以道治国，天下也会安平地来归顺^[35]。作为王者，应效法道的无为而少干涉人民^[17]。要以正治国，以无事取天下，国民便会自化，自正和自朴^[57]。

2、政策法令

政策法令不能强行实施而违背人民的意愿和本性。制定时必须深思熟虑。

要明白受管的人民秉性不一。适当的政策会是尽量避免极端，耗费或宏巨的措施^[29]。

3、税收

粮税是当时社会君王的主要经济来源，无德的人会强加征收，而有德的人有可能的话，只掌握好借据就好

了；因为逼迫也无济于事，只有增加民怨^[79]。过高的交税，过厚的奉养和过多的欲为，都是对人民有大伤害的迫害^[75]。

4、滥杀

杀人是天的任务，国君应少代天执行任务，滥杀人民^[74]。

5、威迫

不要威迫人民，使他们不能安居生活，否则一旦他们不畏惧威迫时，就有更大的祸害降临^[72]。

6、国交

在国与国交往上，提倡大家保持谦下，而大国应该先谦下^[61]。

四、用兵之道

国与国交战是那个年代的常态，而善用兵之道对治理国家是非常重要的，因为可以保卫国家免被他国的侵略。老子是很痛恨战争的，因为战争带给人民百姓无穷的痛苦祸害。然而，他也不害怕战争。在道德经的81章中就有^{[30][31][36][46][57][67][68]}^[69]，共8章讲述和战争有关的言论。

现代的国与国战争除了军事战，更添加了许多其他形式的战争，如贸易战，金融战，生化战等，不一而足。而起因除了因利益争夺外，更有为了宗教仪仰，种族文化差异，也有为了转移国内问题而发起的与他国的战争。

显然地，道德经里的战争论述不可能是全面的军事理论；其重点是在如何应用道在战争上。

- 1、能沉住气是善用兵的关键。用兵不争先，以退为进，不轻敌，哀兵作战都是沉得住气的表现^{[68][69]}；而兵的阵式和丧礼的仪式的一致也是在强调作战是悲哀的，必须沉住气，不管是打胜战与否^[31]。
- 2、不要以兵强天下，很快会有坏的报应^[30]。
- 3、以奇用兵^[57]。战争是敌若死，我则可活的事务，故敌亡越多，则我方的伤亡就可减低，毫无仁义可言。但是不管胜负，都要以悲哀的心理对待。
- 4、对待敌人的计策，可以善用道的对立循环规律。即使对方收拢，则要先使对方张开，要夺取对方，则要使对方先呈现接受状态等^[36]。
- 5、很多战争都是由利益的冲突引起，是一方或双方想佔有更大的利益。人类的贪欲更是战争的主要推动力^[46]。

五、老子无为治国的现代意义

- 1、政治家和宗教家都以管制人民，领导人民为要务；要治理好国家社会，必须能够影响人民的思想行为去完成各种任务和目的。
- 2、老子提倡以“为无为，事无事，…”^[63]的方式对人民进行思想教育。以大道厚德为准则，以朴素寡慾为实践方

针。以无有的思想，行无为的不言之教去影响人民无间隙的心田^[43]。

3、能够影响和塑造他人思想的途径还有如：

- 宗教教育的灌输
- 舆论的造势
- 群众心理
- 伟人魅力
- 瞒骗等

而老子认为不能影响群众是不足以治理天下的。“取天下常以无事，及其有事，不足以取天下”^[48]。所以教育人民有正确思想是非常重要的。

Chapter Four - Political School of Thought

- **Political ideology**

In Chapters [18] and [19], Lao Zi expressed his views on the root causes of the chaotic world during his time. Specifically, he pointed out that traits like benevolence, righteousness, filial piety, loyalty and subservience were the by-effects of a tumultuous world in the absence of Dao; intelligence and wisdom ironically were the stimulant for great hypocrisy. Therefore, he advocated to abandon shrewdness and cease crafty arguments, stop hypocrisy and cease pretences, abandon deceit and cease profiteering,^[19] in order to conform to the thought of using Great Dao to rule the world.

Lao Zi's utopian society is a small and well-off nation. The common folk lead simple and honest lives, live in peace, are gainfully employed, and are self-sufficient. There is no need for visitations between neighbouring countries.^[80] His ideal ruler for this society is one from the ancient times who did not interfere with the lives of the people, or was widely commended or accepted by the people.^[17]

This utopian society, together with the ideal ruler of antiquity, is absolutely not a fantasy. It has existed before in the lands of ancient China. An example would be the legendary ancient ruler Tang Yao bestowing the right to rule upon Yu

Shun, instead of his own children. This was in line with the tribal society's setup before Lao Zi's time. These tribal leaders were elected rather than appointed through descendancy. This particular type of society, one of high moral standards, is what Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi wistfully aspired towards.

Lao Zi knew that the people of his time would never be able to return to the societal ways of their ancestors. However, he still advocated for people to learn from the spirit of Dao and to uphold the laws of Great Dao and Celestial Dao, in order to return to a simple and honest Dao-led society and life.^{[65][3]}

- **The ruler with Dao**

Lao Zi lived during the turbulent Spring and Autumn period (approximately 500 BC) and in those troubling war times, there were constant aggression and conquest for territorial expansion. The living conditions of the ordinary citizens were woeful, and it was during this time that resourceful but scheming tacticians came about to advise the rulers and compound the effects of an already dreadful world.

The social hierarchy of that time was divided into three strata. At the top were the monarch and his families, also known as 'King'. At the bottom were the common people. In between them were the scholars.

The common people were instrumental to the nation's

production and war efforts while the king ruled and presided over the nation. The scholars assisted the king in managing the nation's affairs.

Dao De Jing recognises the importance of 'King' and acknowledges it to be one of the Four Greats.^[25] If a king can keep to his justness, his people will avoid many undue hardships.

Lao Zi's ideal ruler should possess the following fundamental attributes:

- The ability to love his country like his own body.^[13]
- Following Dao to get closer to calmness, while distancing from restlessness.^[45] Understanding that Dao lies within the root of all lifeforms; 'light' has 'heavy' as its root; and that being a ruler requires a steadfast demeanour.^[26]
- Learning to be soft like Dao's nature and adopting a supple body posture.^[78]
- Understanding of contentment and knowing when to stop. Constantly maintaining a balanced and harmonious mental state, and upholding profound virtue De.^{[44][46]}
- Having humility as the base, lowness as the foundation, and virtue De as the definitive justness, in order to

build a harmonious society.^[39]

- Being humble and noncontending, having the attitude of being able to accommodate to the masses, and to bring the world into submission.^[66]
- Building up (constant) De, and diligently cultivating (constant) Dao.^{[59][62]} The process of building up De within the body can accumulate a deep internal energy. This process is deep-rooted and results in longevity and eternal vision. With this energy he can better manage the various complex problems his country faces.^[59] The diligent cultivation of Dao is an extension of building up De. The mastery of Dao gives him the extraordinary abilities to cope with even more complex issues such as reforming the society, managing state diplomacy, and handling wars.
- Upholding the virtues of trust and kindness while governing the country. Protecting his people as though they were his own children, regardless of whether they regard him in good faith.^[49]

- **Governing a nation**

Dao De Jing narrates a political system that is at least two thousand and five hundred years ago. The system and the topics that were discussed then may not be entirely relevant

to the world today, but there are still some highly noteworthy points to consider when governing a nation with the principles of Dao.

– **Governing a nation with Dao**

Cease shrewd and crafty arguments, stop hypocrisy and pretences, and do away with devious profiteering in order for the people to distance from selfish desires and embrace simplicity.^[19]

Do not over-glorify the talented, over-value precious goods, or flaunt enviable objects. People will then start paying attention to modesty and proper nourishment; weakening their aspirations while strengthening their constitution; and not pursuing deceitful actions, or fulfilling their demanding desires.^[3]

Such a society will return to a stable, harmonious and peaceful state that coexists with Dao.

All people that are drawn in while governing a nation with Dao will not cause harm, and will only come in peace.^[35]

As a ruler, reduce the issuance of decrees so as not to interfere with the lives of people.^[17]

To govern a nation with integrity, do not interfere and the people will achieve self-realisation, be more upright,

and return to simplicity.^[57]

– **Policies and laws**

Policies and laws cannot be forcefully implemented to violate the people's will and natural instincts. Ensure frequent deliberation on policies and understand that the entire population consists of diverse personalities. Suitable policies will seek to avoid measures that are extreme, squandersome or excessive.^[29]

– **Taxation**

Food taxation then was the primary source of income for the rulers. A ruler with no virtue De would forcefully collect the taxes, while one with virtue De might do with what was available and leave the rest as a debt to be repaid in the future.

The act of forcefully collecting taxes when a citizen has nothing is ineffectual and will only lead to increased resentment.^[79] Excessive taxation, rules, and demands are all factors that harm the livelihoods of the citizens.^[75]

– **Indiscriminate killing**

The taking of lives is the duty of Heaven. A ruler should

minimize this undertaking of indiscriminately killing his citizens.^[74]

– **Coercion**

Do not coerce the citizens such that they cannot live in peace. Otherwise, when they stop fearing coercion, greater disasters will befall.^[72]

– **Diplomatic relations**

When promoting bilateral relations, advocate humility. The larger nation should initiate the position of humility.^[61]

• **Commanding the military with Dao**

During that era, wars among the nations were common. Therefore, the art of warfare was crucial to governing a nation. This was to preserve national security and to avoid being conquered. Lao Zi abhorred the prospects of war because it only brought civilians endless pain and suffering. However, he did not fear for war. Out of the eighty-one chapters within Dao De Jing, he dedicated eight chapters ^{[30][31][36][46][57][67][68][69]} to discuss topics relating to war.

Modern warfare not only includes conventional warfare, but also trade wars, financial wars, and biological attacks,

etc. These wars may be fought over resources and disputes, religion and beliefs, or racial and cultural differences. Some wars were also initiated to divert attention away from the internal problems within a country.

It is clear that Dao De Jing's discussion on war cannot encompass all aspects of military warfare. Instead, it focuses on how to suitably employ Dao in the battlefield.

- The ability to maintain one's composure is key to managing the troops well. Some examples of expressing steadiness and calmness include fighting wars by not contending, retreating to advance, not underestimating the opponent, and combating with a mournful mood.^{[68][69]}

The similarities between the formation of army deployments and funeral rites are to express the tragedies of war. It is vital to maintain one's composure, regardless of whether a war is won or lost.^[31]

- Do not revolve a nation's purpose around military conquests, otherwise retribution will soon ensue.^[30]
- Go to war with unpredictable surprises.^[57] War is a matter of survival whereby if my enemy dies, then I live. When my enemy suffers more casualties, my troops will have less injuries and deaths. There is utterly no

compassion to be spoken of. However, regardless of victory or defeat, one must always maintain a sorrowful approach towards war.

- When dealing with the enemy, there are strategies that can be employed involving Dao's inverse cyclical law. To collapse the enemy, expand them first. To take on the opponent, give the opponent something to make him enter the state of receiving.^[36]
- Many wars were fought over economic or territorial gains as a result of one or more parties seeking to seize more for themselves. Mankind's unending greed is the main motivational factor for war.^[46]

• **Lao Zi's theory of inaction on governance in the modern context**

- Politicians and religious leaders all have responsibilities to manage and lead the people. In order to do so well, they must be able to influence people's thoughts and behaviours to achieve their goals.
- Lao Zi advocated 'Take inaction; engage in affairs with no interference; ...' ^[63] as a method to reform the mentality of the people. This is done on the basis of the spirit of Dao and virtue De, and by embracing simplicity and distancing from desires as an approach for actual

realisation. Use the teachings of ‘Non-Being’, and the unspoken words of inaction to influence the hearts of people. ^[43]

- Some other factors that can influence and shape one’s mentality include:
 - Indoctrination of religious teachings
 - Public opinions
 - Mass psychology
 - Personal charisma of a great person
 - Cheating and deception

Lao Zi believed that the inability to influence the people represents an inadequacy and insufficiency to rule the world. To win over the trust of the world by physically interfering with the lives of the people is not good enough to command the world.^[48] Therefore, it is paramount to inculcate the right ideologies in the people’s minds.

后记

想到迟暮之年，犹有幸能知晓大道的一些道理，又能循着古道，攀登道德经这座高峰，一览古道的豪情风光，不管成败得失，心中除了嘉许自己的勇气外，也是一片的欣慰。

自古都有立言立功立德之说，在此希望所讲的话，不是花言巧语，标新立异；而是能提供给读者一个容易、快捷、正确、清晰地了解道德经的内涵的途径。

很多读过道德经的人都批评经书的艰涩难懂，错综复杂；自己却能似懂非懂，于是动了著书的念头。原想以自己现时学识的浅薄，应过多些年后才动笔，但顾虑到人生苦短，到时可能脑筋迟钝或其他事故而可能一事无成，只好提起千斤之笔，留下贻笑大方之说。

必须强调这是我对道德经的看法，仅是千万看法之中的一家之见，也提醒读者要多参考其他有关书籍，以增广见识，免被一家之见所误。

恳请有识之士，不吝指正为幸。

Epilogue

I should consider myself blessed in acquiring some of Dao's knowledge at my advanced years. Following behind the ancient path of thoughts led by the scholars of Dao, I have attempted to scale the peaks of understanding Dao De Jing. In the process, I have witnessed the beauty and brilliance of ancient Dao. Regardless of success or failure, I can only praise myself for the courage I have displayed in this endeavour. This is besides my great relief for the completion of this book.

Since the ancient times, the Chinese have had a saying that establishing teachings, merits and virtues are the three great achievements for any ambitious person. I hope the reader recognises what I have expressed in this book is not an attempt to be rhetorical or unconventional, but merely to provide an easy, quick, definitive, and clear method to understand the underlying connotations hidden within Dao De Jing.

Many who have read Dao De Jing have had difficulties understanding the scripture given its complex nature. They would be unable to fully grasp the ideas behind many parts of the scripture. My original intention was to complete this book a few years later when I have acquired a more comprehensive level of knowledge. However, I have considered the unpredictability and frailties of life, which could turn my hope of writing this

book into a pipe dream. With that said, I bravely lifted my pen to finish this crude piece of work.

Last but not least, I would like to reiterate that my interpretation represents only one out of countless other opinions. As such, I would strongly encourage you to refer to other related books in order to broaden your perspectives and form a more extensive understanding of this fascinating subject.

天之道
損有余
而補不足



大 道

象 隱

無 無

形 名



致虛極守靜篤
萬物并作吾以觀復

夫物豈各復其根
曰靜靜曰復命

復命曰常知常曰明
不知常妄作凶知常

容容乃公公乃全
全乃天天乃道道乃久
沒身不死



庚子冬

不善人者善人之資
善人者不善人之師

節錄

道德經 第二十七章



其安易持其未也易謀其脆易泮其微易散
為之於未有治之於未亂合抱之木生於毫末
九層之臺起於累土千里之行起於足下為者
敗之執者失之是以聖人無為故無敗無執故無
失民之從事常於幾成而敗之慎終如始則無敗
事矣 是以聖人欲不欲不貴難得之貨學
不學復衆人之所過以輔萬物之自然而不敢為



The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the research and the objectives of the study. It highlights the need for a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter and the role of the researcher in this process. The second part of the paper presents the methodology used in the study, including the data collection methods and the analysis techniques. The third part of the paper discusses the results of the study and the conclusions drawn from the findings. The final part of the paper provides a summary of the key points and offers suggestions for future research.

The research was conducted in a systematic and rigorous manner, following the principles of scientific inquiry. The data was collected from a variety of sources, including interviews, surveys, and archival records. The analysis was conducted using a range of statistical and qualitative methods, ensuring the reliability and validity of the findings. The results of the study indicate that there is a significant relationship between the variables under investigation, and this relationship is supported by the evidence presented.

The findings of the study have important implications for the field of study and for the wider community. They provide a new perspective on the subject matter and offer valuable insights into the underlying mechanisms. The study also identifies areas for further research and suggests ways in which the findings can be applied in practice.

In conclusion, the study has provided a detailed and thorough examination of the subject matter, and the findings are both robust and reliable. The research has contributed to the understanding of the subject and has provided a solid foundation for future work.