

I

- 1 The way that can be spoken of
Is not the constant way;
The name that can be named
Is not the constant name.
- 2 The nameless was the beginning of heaven and earth;
The named was the mother of the myriad creatures.
- 3 Hence always rid yourself of desires in order to observe
its* secrets;
But always allow yourself to have desires in order to
observe its manifestations.^{1†}
- 3a These two are the same
But diverge in name as they issue forth.
Being the same they are called mysteries,
Mystery upon mystery –
The gateway of the manifold secrets.

*In translating from the Chinese it is often impossible to avoid using the pronouns 'it' and 'they' and their derivatives without any clear reference, whether these are expressed in the Chinese or only implied. In the present work 'it' used in this way sometimes refers to 'the way' and 'they' to 'the myriad creatures'.

† Superior arabic figures refer to notes, mainly of a textual nature, placed at the end of the book.