

6.8.23 His unity [*yi*] was whole and complete [*yi*], and his disunity [*buyi*] was also whole and complete.

His unity was his identification with Heaven, and his disunity was his identification with man. The authentic man regarded Heaven and man as one, other and self as equal, and for him such unity was no different from disunity.²⁶

6.8.24 His unity came from his perfect identification with Heaven.

To regard everything without exception as a unity pertains to Heaven.

6.8.25 His disunity came from his perfect identification with man.

To regard the other as other and the self as self pertains to man.

6.8.26 For him Heaven and man were not in contention; this is why he was called an authentic man.

The authentic man regarded both Heaven and man as the same and countless different tendencies [*wanzhi*] as all equal. For him these countless different tendencies did not negate one another and Heaven and man were not in contention; therefore, utterly void, he regarded absolutely everything as one and arcanelly united the other with the self [*xuantong biwo*].

6.9.1 That one lives or dies is a matter of fate [*ming*]. That this is as inevitable as day and night is due to Heaven.

That this is as inevitable as day and night is due to the Dao of Heaven. Therefore, we know that whether one lives or dies is set by the limits [*ji*] of fate [*ming*] and does not happen at random [*wang*]. Since their succession is just like that of day and night, what bonds [*xi*] need there be [to life]!

6.9.2 That this is something that people can't cope with is always due to their emotional bias [*qing*].

When the authentic man found himself in daytime, he coped with the day, and when he found himself at night, he coped with the night—how could this have been anything beyond his control! But when people are confronted with what lies beyond their control and find themselves reacting emotionally [*youyu zai huai*] to it, this always happens because of emotional bias—and has nothing to do with the principle involved [*li*].

6.9.3 They regard Heaven in particular as their father and even personally love it, so how much the more should they love that which towers majestically [*zhuo*]!²⁷

That which *zhuo* [towers majestically] refers to independent transformation [*duhua*]. For effectiveness [*gong*] arising from following [*yin*] nothing is better than the perfection [*zhi*] of independent transformation. Therefore, what man should follow is Heaven, for what Heaven gives rise to is independent transformation. Everyone regards Heaven as father. Therefore, when day and night change places or the seasons shift from cold to hot, none dare despise what happens but follows Heaven and is content with it—so how much the more should one follow independent transformation, which towers majestically! Even if it

leads to the land of arcane obscurity [*xuanming*] [death], how could one fail to give oneself over [*ren*] to it! And once one gives oneself over to it, when the change and transformation [*bianhua*] from life to death occur, it is just a matter of obeying fate.

6.9.4 People regard the ruler they have as superior to themselves and even personally die for him, so how much the more should they be willing to do this for the authenticity [*zhen*] he embodies.

Authenticity means not pretending to be something else and thus is what is natural [*ziran*]. One can't possibly spurn what is natural, so how could one just do such a thing simply because his ruler commanded it!

6.10.1 When springs dry up and fish find themselves stranded together on land, they spew moisture on each other and wet each other with foam from their mouths, but it would be better if they could just forget about one another in rivers and lakes.²⁸

How could not having enough so that they have to care for each other ever compare to having more than enough so that they can forget each other!

6.10.2 Compared with praising Yao and condemning Jie, it would be better to forget both and follow the transformations of the Dao.

Condemning and praising arise from insufficiency. Therefore, one who has wholly enough, forgets good and bad, discards life and death, and becomes one with change and transformation [*bianhua*]. With perfect magnanimity such a one is perfectly comfortable with absolutely everything, so beyond this why should he heed whether a Yao or a Jie might be in power?

6.10.3 The Great Clod²⁹ burdens me with physical form [*xing*], tires me with life, gives me ease with old age, and allows me rest with death.

Physical form, life, old age, and death—all these are what I am. Therefore, my body is something for me to carry; my life provides the way for me to labor; my old age allows me leisure; and death brings me to an end. Although these four involve change, I never stop being who I am, so why should I have any regrets!

6.11.1 One might hide a boat in a ravine or a mountain in a marsh, and say they are safe.

This is a folk saying that means that one can't escape the changes and transformations of life and death. Therefore, it first cites the most extreme examples of what one might escape with, after which one is supposed to understand that one should conform to [*fu*] inevitable change [*bian*], and by giving oneself over to transformation [*hua*] stay free of attachment.

6.11.2 Nevertheless, in the middle of the night someone strong might shoulder them and run off with them. The stupid don't understand how this happens.

As for the strength of that which is without strength, none is greater than change and transformation [*bianhua*]. Therefore, such strength takes up

everything in Heaven and Earth in pursuing the new and carries mountains with it in discarding the old. Never resting for a moment, suddenly new things thus happen, and so it is that the myriad things of Heaven and Earth never cease their transformation. Everyone in the world is continually something new, yet they think of themselves as something old. A boat moves every day, but looking at it, it seems to be just as it was before; a mountain changes every day, but looking at it, it seems to be just as it had been. Now, here is someone who all he can do is fold his arms and suffer their loss, for both are taken from him in the dark. Thus it is that the I who existed before is no longer the I who exists now. Since every such I continually escapes from the present, how can one ever preserve what he used to be! Yet no one in the world understands this but unreasonably says that one can remain attached to what one happens to be in the present and stay the way he is. Is this not stupid!

6.11.3 If one hides something small in something large, though it fits there, it can still slip away.

If one does not understand that he should form one body with transformation [*hua*] and instead thinks that hiding will allow him to escape transformation, though it involves the most secluded and secure places, into which he always manages to fit, this is still no way to prevent change [*bian*] from happening to him every day. Thus it is that hiding to keep oneself intact can't prevent oneself from slipping away. However, when one does not try to hide but instead gives himself over to transformation [*renhua*], change [*bian*] can't change him.

6.11.4 But to hide the world in the world so nothing can slip away is the great truth [*daqing*] of things as they constantly endure [*hengwu*].

With nothing hidden and giving oneself over to everything, such a one neither fails to merge arcanely with things nor becomes one with transformation. Therefore, nothing is outer or inner to him. Free from life and death, he embodies Heaven and Earth and joins in perfect harmony with change and transformation. If one tries to find anything that might slip away from such a one, he can't find it. Such is the great truth [*daqing*] of constant existence [*changcun*]³⁰—and not just some small point of the truth [*yiqu*] for the small-minded.

6.11.5 When one happens to take on a human physical form [*xing*], he thus is excessively delighted with it. However, outcomes as good as a human physical form, which are the results of myriads of transformations, are without limit.

A human physical form is nothing more than a single outcome from among myriads of possible transformations, so it is not worth being particularly delighted about. From among this limitlessness [*wuji*], all outcomes are just as good as a human physical form, so why should the human form in particular be cause for delight and anything else not be cause for joy!

6.11.6 And this is cause for joy beyond calculation!

One originally was not a human being and then was transformed into a human being, and, with transformation into a human being, one incurs the loss of the former state of being. It is losing the former state of being that causes one delight—one finds the outcome joyful. Since change and transformation are inexhaustible, is there any outcome that could not occur! And since any outcome would be joyful, how could the joy involved ever come to an end!

6.11.7 Therefore, the sage wanders where things can't slip away and everything is preserved.

The sage wanders along the path of change and transformation and so allows himself go in a current new each day. As the myriad things undergo myriads of transformations, so he undergoes myriads of transformations along with them. Since such transformations are limitless, he too is limitless in step with them—so what could such a one have slip away on him! In life lost so in death preserved—so whenever would such a one not be preserved!

6.11.8 Though such a one but makes the best of early death and makes the best of old age, makes the best of his beginning and makes the best of his ending, people should still emulate him.

This means that one should maintain innate equilibrium [*zijun*] throughout the span of one hundred years, neither making the best of early death nor being negative about old age, for one who does so is neither capable of embodying change and transformation nor regarding life and death as equal. However, for his calmness and simplicity he still is a worthy teacher of men.

6.11.9 So how much the more should they when it is one who bonds with the myriad things and unites with that on which transformation depends.

This is to merge arcanelly [*xuantong*] with the myriad things and form one body with transformation. It is for this reason that such a one is venerated as model [*zong*] by the whole world—is this not indeed fitting [*yi*]!

6.12.1 Although the Dao has an innate character and is faithful, it acts unself-consciously and has no discernible form.

It has predilection [*qing*] free from predilection [*qing*], thus it acts unself-consciously [*wuwei*]; it has faithfulness free from constancy, and it is without discernible form.³¹

6.12.2 It can be conveyed but not possessed.

People throughout ancient and modern times convey it and so give it temporary lodging, but none are able to acquire it and so possess it.

6.12.3 One can attain it, but it is invisible.

All can internalize [*zirong*] it, but none sees its form.

6.12.4 Self-rooted and taking hold all by itself, it has inherently existed [*gucun*] from time immemorial before there were Heaven and Earth.

This makes it clear that its non-existence [*wu*] does not depend on existence [*you*] for its non-existence [*wu*].