# 道德經

"chapters/chapter\_01.xml"

#### Chapter 1

This opening line plays with multiple meanings of  $\check{\underline{u}}$  (way/speak) to create a profound paradox about the ineffable nature of the Dao



Mirrors the structure of the first line, now applying the same paradox to 'naming'



Introduces the concept of A (nothing/absence) as the origin of existence





Note how 以 connects desire (or lack thereof) with perception







 $\dot{\mathbf{z}}$  (dark/profound) is a key concept suggesting deep mystery beyond ordinary understanding



This final line presents the gateway to all mysteries - suggesting that embracing paradox leads to understanding

"chapters/chapter\_02.xml"

#### Chapter 2

This opening line sets up a fundamental Daoist paradox about the relativity of human value judgments







The next several lines demonstrate the interdependence of apparent opposites





Chapter 2

高下相傾 high low mutually lean

音 聲 相 和
tone sound mutually harmonize

前後相隨.
before after mutually follow

是 以 聖 人

Here begins the description of the sage's method - note the emphasis on non-action and teaching without words

處無為之事

行不言之教 practice not speak possessive teaching

萬物作 而不(始).
ten-thousand things arise and not (begin)

This describes the sage's non-attachment to achievements

"chapters/chapter\_03.xml"

#### Chapter 3

不 尚 賢
not clevate worthy

使民不争

不貴難得之貨 not value difficult obtain possessive goods

使民不為盗 cause people not become thief

不見可欲 not see can desire

使民心不亂。

This line introduces the sage's method of governance

# 是以聖人之治。

this by-means-of sage person possessive govern

Notice the beautiful parallel structure and opposing concepts: empty/full, heart/belly

Another parallel structure with opposing concepts: weak/strong, resolve/bones



This final line contains one of the most famous Daoist paradoxes: 為無為 (doing non-doing)

"chapters/chapter\_04.xml"

#### Chapter 4

This opening line uses the metaphor of an empty vessel  $(\pm)$  to describe the Dao's limitless nature



Here the Dao is compared to a deep abyss that appears to be the ancestor/source of all things







Chapter 4

湛 (deep/clear) is a key word suggesting both depth and clarity, like still water



A powerful line expressing both wonder and mystery at the Dao's origins



帝 refers to the legendary divine emperor/deity, suggesting the Dao predates even divinity



"chapters/chapter\_05.xml"

#### Chapter 5

This opening line introduces a challenging concept - that Heaven and Earth operate without human-style benevolence/compassion (4z)



This metaphor of 'straw dogs' ( 第約) refers to ritual objects that were treated as precious during ceremonies but discarded after - suggesting the impersonal nature of natural processes









 $_{\ensuremath{\sharp}}$ 篇 (tuoyue) refers to a bellows or organ-like instrument - emptying and filling naturally

Chapter 5

其猶索籥乎 it like bellows pipe question

虚 而 不 屈

動 而 愈 出
move and more produce

多言數窮 much speech often exhaust

The final line emphasizes keeping to the center/middle way - a key Daoist concept

不如守中 not like keep center "chapters/chapter\_06.xml"

#### Chapter 6

This opening line introduces the concept of 'valley spirit' - an important Daoist metaphor for emptiness and potential







A profound metaphor linking natural phenomena to cosmic origins



This line uses reduplication (绵绵) to create a sense of continuity and endlessness



A practical observation about the sustainable nature of this principle

Chapter 6

### 用之不勤 use it not laborious

"chapters/chapter\_07.xml"

#### Chapter 7

This opening line establishes a cosmic perspective - heaven's endurance and earth's permanence as natural phenomena



This line questions why heaven and earth can persist eternally



A profound paradox - their endurance comes from not living for themselves





Introduces how the sage embodies this cosmic principle



A beautiful paradox: by putting oneself last, one comes first

後其身而身先. behind their body yet body ahead

外 其 身 而 身 存 outside their body yet body exist

邪 here acts as an interrogative particle, questioning if this selflessness is the reason

非以其無私邪. is-not by-means-of their without private (question)

故能成其私.
therefore able accomplish their private

"chapters/chapter 08.xml"

#### Chapter 8

This opening line is one of the most famous in the Dao De Jing - it compares the highest virtue to water, setting up an extended metaphor.



Note how water benefits all things without contending - a key concept in Daoism.



Water flows to low places that others avoid - showing how virtue often manifests in what others reject.





The following lines show how water exemplifies virtue in different contexts.



dwell

many













The chapter concludes by returning to the core principle - non-contention leads to absence of blame.





therefore without blame

"chapters/chapter\_09.xml"

#### Chapter 9



This line uses 揣 (measure/estimate) with 銳 (sharp/keen) to warn against excessive sharpening





A vivid image of material excess using 金玉 (gold-jade) and 滿堂 (full-hall)



Chapter 9

A powerful conclusion about knowing when to retreat after success

"chapters/chapter\_10.xml"

## Chapter 10

This opening line discusses nurturing both the physical and spiritual aspects of one's being through maintaining unity





This line speaks to cultivating softness through breath control - a fundamental Daoist practice





achieve

energy

This line refers to clearing one's vision to see the mysterious



focus

A pivotal line about governance through non-interference





Uses natural imagery of gates opening and closing









These lines speak to nurturing without possessing - a key Daoist concept





The closing line introduces 'mysterious virtue' (玄德) - a fundamental Daoist concept of hidden or subtle power

"chapters/chapter\_11.xml"

#### Chapter 11

This opening line presents a powerful concrete image of a wheel to illustrate abstract principles





埏埴 refers specifically to molding clay - a metaphor for shaping emptiness into usefulness





Windows and doors are themselves empty spaces that make a room useful







The final line presents the central paradox - emptiness/nothingness ( $\not$ a) is what makes things useful



"chapters/chapter\_12.xml"

#### Chapter 12

This opening line uses the metaphor of the five colors to warn about sensory overload - a remarkably modern concept.



Note how imes (heart/mind) and 發狂 (go-mad) work together to describe mental overstimulation







Chapter 12

A powerful contrast between 腹 (belly/core) and 且 (eyes/surface appearances)

為腹不為目 act-for belly not act-for eye

故去彼取此 therefore remove that take this "chapters/chapter\_13.xml"

#### Chapter 13

This opening line sets up a profound comparison between favor/honor and disgrace/ shame, linking them to a startling emotional state



Note how 為 (wei) here means 'because' - showing how receiving honor can be as disturbing as receiving shame





Chapter 13

何謂貴大患若身what call value great trouble like body-self

A pivotal line showing how attachment to self/body leads to suffering

吾所以有大患者為吾有 I therefore have great trouble one-who because I have 身.

body-self

及吾無身吾有何患 until I not-have body-self I have what trouble

故貴以身為天下. therefore value by-means-of body-self for all-under-heaven

若可[以] 寄天下[矣]

愛以身為天下 love by-means-of body-self for all-under-heaven

若可以到託天下(矣).
like can [by-means-of] trust all-under-heaven [indeed]

"chapters/chapter\_14.xml"

#### Chapter 14

This chapter opens with three parallel statements about the ineffable nature of the Dao

After establishing these three qualities, the text emphasizes their ultimate inscrutability



繩繩 is a reduplication expressing continuity - like an endless rope or line



This section describes the paradoxical nature of the Dao - the form of the formless

#### 迎之不見其首 meet it not see its head

The chapter concludes by suggesting that understanding these paradoxes leads to comprehending the essential principle of the Dao

"chapters/chapter\_15.xml"

#### Chapter 15

This opening line describes the ancient sage-scholars, setting up an important contrast between surface appearances and deeper truths



A key line suggesting the ultimately unknowable nature of true wisdom







The text now shifts to vivid metaphorical descriptions using natural imagery



Notice the beautiful imagery of melting ice, suggesting transformation





A profound question about transformation through non-action

熟能安以久動之徐生 who can peaceful by-means-of long-lasting movement it gradually live

保此道者不欲盈 preserve this way one-who not desire full

夫 唯 不 盈

The chapter concludes with the paradox that incompleteness allows for completion

(是) [以] 能 蔽 [而] 不 \_ 成
(this) [therefore] can cover [and] not complete

"chapters/chapter\_16.xml"

#### Chapter 16

This opening line speaks to achieving absolute emptiness - a key Daoist concept



Emphasizes the importance of maintaining stillness with dedication



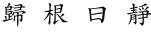


A beautiful image of observing the natural cycle of return



Describes how all things in their multiplicity return to their source





return root called stillness



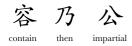
A key concept:  $\mbox{\ref{fig:prop}}$  (constant) appears throughout this chapter representing the eternal unchanging way





Warns of the dangers of acting without understanding the constant way





公 乃 王 impartial then king

王 乃 天 king then heaven

夭 乃 道 heaven then way

道 乃 久 way then enduring

A powerful conclusion: following this path, one's whole life will be free from danger

沒身不始 end body not danger "chapters/chapter\_17.xml"

#### Chapter 17

This opening line speaks of the highest/supreme ruler - a profound observation about leadership styles









A fascinating line about the relationship between trust and distrust





A powerful statement about effortless achievement

功 成 事 遂
achievement complete matter follow

The ideal outcome of wise leadership - when people believe things happened naturally

百姓皆謂我自然. hundred names all say I self so "chapters/chapter\_18.xml"

#### Chapter 18

This opening line sets up a profound observation about the decline of natural ways



Suggests that explicit virtue arises only when natural virtue is lost



Points to the emergence of calculated wisdom replacing natural intuition



A powerful observation that great deception accompanies sophisticated thinking



Speaks to breakdown of natural family harmony



有 孝 慈 exist filial-piety kindness

Describes political disorder at the state level

國家昏亂。 country family confused chaos

有 忠 臣 exist loyal minister "chapters/chapter\_19.xml"

#### Chapter 19

This opening line suggests abandoning conventional wisdom and learned intelligence

絕 聖 棄 智 cut-off sage abandon wisdom

Suggests that when artificial standards are removed, people naturally benefit more

民利百倍·
people benefit hundred times

Continues the theme of abandoning artificial virtues

絕 仁 棄 義 cut-off benevolence abandon righteousness

Suggests that when artificial morality is removed, natural family values return

民復孝慈.
people return filial-piety kindness

絕 巧 棄 利
cut-off cleverness abandon profit

Implies that when people aren't focused on profit, theft becomes unnecessary

Chapter 19

盗 賊 無 有
thief bandit not exist

此 三 者 以 為 文 不 足
these three things by-means-of make culture not sufficient

故令有所屬.
therefore cause have place belong

A beautiful metaphor for seeing things in their natural, unadorned state

見 see plain

Embracing simplicity rather than complexity

抱 樸 embrace uncarved-wood

少 私 minimize private

The chapter concludes with core Daoist values of simplicity and restraint

寡欲.

"chapters/chapter\_20.xml"

#### Chapter 20

This opening line sets up a fascinating paradox - that abandoning scholarly pursuit leads to freedom from worry





A rhetorical question about the distance between apparent opposites







A profound statement about fear - note how the double negative creates emphasis

描绘众人欢乐的景象 - Depicting the joy of the masses





The speaker contrasts themselves with the crowd - note the solitary, calm nature

A beautiful metaphor comparing the speaker's state to an infant's innocence

Chapter 20

如嬰兒之未孩 like infant child possessive not-yet smile

標 憬 兮 若 無 所 歸
tired tired ah like without place return

眾人皆有餘 crowd person all have excess

我 愚 人 之 心 也 哉
I foolish person possessive heart indeed indeed

沌 沌 兮

Another contrast between the masses and the individual

俗人昭昭

我獨(若)昏 I alone (like) dark

Chapter 20



Beautiful nautical metaphor for the speaker's state of mind











A profound closing referencing the source of nourishment - 'mother' here likely refers to the  $D\alpha o$  itself

# 而 貴 食 母 and value eat mother

"chapters/chapter\_21.xml"

#### Chapter 21

This opening line speaks to how supreme virtue/power (孔德) manifests through following the Dao



Here the text begins to describe the elusive nature of Dao as a 'thing/substance'





These three parallel lines build a poetic description of increasing depth and mystery











This rhetorical question uses  $\Phi$  (what) to ask how we can know the nature of all beginnings



以 by-means-of this "chapters/chapter\_22.xml"

### Chapter 22













Notice how &  $\lor$  (therefore) introduces the sage's response to these natural principles

是以聖人

this by-means-of sage person

抱一[以] 為天下式

This begins a series of parallel phrases showing the sage's non-assertive nature

不 自 見 故 明
not self see therefore bright

不 自 是 故 彰
not self right therefore manifest

不自伐故有功 not self boast therefore have merit

不自矜故長。 not self pride therefore endure

夫 唯 不 爭

故天下莫能與之爭 herefore heaven below none able with them contend

Chapter 22

Here begins a conclusion that references back to the opening line

古之所謂 ancient possessive that-which say

曲 則 全 者 bend then complete one-who

豈虚言哉 how empty words indeed

誠全而歸之 truly complete and return to-it "chapters/chapter\_23.xml"

#### Chapter 23

This opening line sets up a profound observation about nature's spontaneity





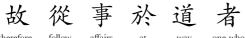


An elegant rhetorical question using '孰' (who/what) to prompt reflection





Here begins an important sequence about alignment with the Dao



therefore follow affairs at way one-who

Chapter 23

A profound closing statement about the relationship between trust and distrust

"chapters/chapter\_24.xml"

#### Chapter 24

This opening line establishes a pattern of paradoxical statements about striving vs. achieving





Note how 自 (self) begins four consecutive lines, emphasizing the theme of ego/self-importance





伐 literally means 'to cut down trees' but here means 'to boast' - an interesting metaphor







This line uses food metaphors to describe excessive/wasteful behavior





The chapter concludes by connecting back to the Dao - suggesting that true followers of the Way avoid such behavior



"chapters/chapter\_25.xml"

#### Chapter 25

This opening line describes the primordial state - 混成 (hun-cheng) is a key concept meaning 'chaotic wholeness' before separation



A temporal reference to the origin before heaven and earth



Beautiful sound symbolism here with 今 (xi) giving a drawn-out, echoing quality







A profound metaphor comparing the Dao to a mother figure

This shows how 道 (Dao) is a later human attempt to name the unnamed

Here begins the famous 'four greats' sequence

天 大

heaven great

地 大

earth great

王 亦 大
king also great

域中有四大 realm within exist four great

而 王 居 其 一 焉 and king dwell its one thus

The following sequence shows the chain of modeling/emulation

人 法 地 human model earth

地 法 天 earth model heaven

#### 天 法 道 hcaven model way

The final line reveals that even the Dao models something - spontaneous naturalness itself

道 法 自 然 · way model self so

"chapters/chapter\_26.xml"

#### Chapter 26

This opening line establishes a key metaphor: heaviness/weightiness as the root of lightness



A parallel construction showing how stillness masters restlessness





輜 refers to baggage/supplies - suggesting staying grounded and prepared



This line paints a vivid image of maintaining composure even amid luxury



## 處 超 然

萬乘 literally means '10,000 chariots' - a metaphor for great power/authority





 $\bigstar$  (root/foundation) connects back to the opening metaphor



"chapters/chapter\_27.xml"

#### Chapter 27

This line speaks to actions that leave no trace - the highest form of skillful action is one that appears effortless and natural



Similarly, the best speech is flawless and leaves no room for criticism

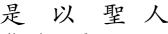




A metaphor for natural security - the best lock is one that doesn't need physical mechanisms







this by-means-of sage person

A key principle of the Dao - the sage helps all beings without discrimination











A profound statement about teaching and learning - those who need help become opportunities for those who can help

故善人者不善人之師 therefore good person one-who not good person of teacher

不善人者善人之資.

not good person one-who good person of resource

不貴 其 師
not value their teacher

不爱其資 not love their resource

雖智大迷 although wisdom great confused

The final line suggests that this paradoxical relationship between teacher and student, helper and helped, contains a profound mystery

是謂要妙 this called essential subtle

Chapter 27

"chapters/chapter\_28.xml"

#### Chapter 28

This opening line establishes a key theme of balancing opposing forces - masculine/feminine energies







德 (virtue/power) that is 常 (constant) does not depart - a key concept in Daoism



The image of returning to an infant state represents returning to natural simplicity



無極 represents the infinite/boundless - another return to the origin

Chapter 28

#### 常德乃足 constant virtue then sufficient

樸 (uncarved block) is a key metaphor for natural simplicity in Daoism



This line shows how the natural state gets transformed into societal roles





"chapters/chapter\_29.xml"

# Chapter 29

This opening line sets up a hypothetical scenario about attempting to control/seize the world



The speaker observes the futility of such attempts



'Divine vessel' is a metaphor for the world/empire - suggesting it has its own sacred nature





A powerful statement about how forcing control leads to loss







These paired lines describe natural cycles and opposites in nature









Introduces the sage's response to these observations



The final three lines present a powerful triple repetition of 'removing extremes' - a key teaching of moderation



remove excessive



remove extravagant





remove extreme

"chapters/chapter\_30.xml"

#### Chapter 30

This opening line sets up a contrast between ruling through dao versus military might





A subtle observation about how violence tends to cycle back



 $\boldsymbol{\Lambda}$  powerful metaphor: where armies camp, thorns grow - suggesting how violence leaves lasting scars





The next several lines use repetition of  $\mathbb{R}$  (resolve/result) to build a meditation on proper action

Chapter 30

善者果而已.

不 敢 以 取 強 not dare by-means-of take force

果而勿矜 resolve and not boast

果而勿伐.
resolve and not attack

果 而 勿 驕
resolve and not pride

果而不得已 resolve and not get stop

果 而 勿 強 resolve and not force

A profound observation about the natural cycle of things

物 壯 則 老

Chapter 30

是謂不道 this called not way

不道早已.

"chapters/chapter\_31.xml"

#### Chapter 31

This chapter discusses warfare and weapons with deep moral implications





Notice the symbolic importance of left vs right in Chinese culture

Note how 不得已 (unavoidable) is constructed from 'not-obtain-already'











This passage reflects ancient Chinese military formations









The chapter ends with a powerful statement about treating victory with solemnity

# 戰勝以喪禮處之. battle victory by-means-of mourning ritual handle it

"chapters/chapter\_32.xml"

#### Chapter 32

道常無名 way constant without name

樸 雖 小
uncarved-block although small

天 下 莫 能 臣 \_\_\_\_\_\_ heaven below none can subject

Note how  $\not\equiv$  (if) sets up a conditional statement - a common Classical Chinese construction

侯王若能宇之 marquis king if can keep it

萬物將自賓. ten-thousand things will self guest

天地相合.
heaven carth mutual join

甘露 (sweet dew) is a metaphor for natural harmony and blessing

以降甘露。

by-means-of descend sweet dew

民 莫 之 令

而 自 均 yet self equal

[病]始制有名 [thereupon] begin system have name

名 亦 既 有
name also already have

夫亦將知止 that also will know stop

A key Daoist concept - knowing when to stop prevents danger

知止(所)以不始know stop (that-which) by-means-of not danger

The final metaphor compares the Dao to water flowing naturally to lower places



"chapters/chapter\_33.xml"

#### Chapter 33

This line contrasts external vs internal knowledge. 短 (know) when paired with 人 (person/others) creates 智 (wisdom) - showing how understanding others is one path to wisdom.



A profound parallel to the first line - 明 (bright/clear) represents a deeper form of wisdom that comes from self-knowledge.





Notice how 自勝 (self-overcome) leads to 強 (strong) - suggesting true strength comes from mastering oneself rather than others.



知足 (know-enough) is a common Chinese idiom meaning contentment - here it leads to true wealth.

知 足 者 富
know enough one-who wealthy

強行者有志 strong act one-who have will

This line speaks to staying true to one's nature/position - 不失其所 literally means 'not losing one's place'.

不 失 其 所 者 久 · not lose one's place one-who endure

A profound paradox - physical death  $(\mathfrak{K})$  need not mean the end of one's lasting influence (a)

死而不亡者壽.

die yet not perish one-who long-lived

"chapters/chapter\_34.xml"

## Chapter 34

This opening line paints a picture of the Dao as vast and flowing like water





Notice how 恃 (rely-on) connects all beings to the Dao







A beautiful metaphor showing how the Dao nurtures without dominating

衣養萬物

而不為主 yet not act-as master

[故] 常 無 欲 ·

可名於小 can name at small

萬物歸焉 ten-thousand things return thereto

而不為主 yet not act-as master

可名(於)大。
can name (at) great

(是以聖人之能成大.)

(thus-sage's-ability-achieve-greatness)

[because-not-act-great

This final line emphasizes the paradox that true greatness comes from not trying to be great



"chapters/chapter\_35.xml"

## Chapter 35

This opening line establishes a powerful metaphor - 'holding/grasping the great image/symbol'









An interesting metaphor comparing the Dao to music and food that attracts passing travelers





Chapter 35

其 無 味 its without flavor

The next three lines form a powerful parallel structure about the ineffable nature of Dao

視之不足見.

聽之不足聞.

用之不足既.
use it not enough exhaust

"chapters/chapter\_36.xml"

# Chapter 36

This chapter opens with a series of parallel constructions showing opposing forces















微明 (subtle-brightness) is a key concept suggesting paradoxical wisdom



A famous line expressing how the soft overcomes the hard - a central Daoist principle



An metaphorical image comparing state power to fish in deep waters



A warning about showing state power openly



Chapter 36

"chapters/chapter\_37.xml"

#### Chapter 37

This opening line establishes one of the most fundamental concepts in Daoism - the paradox of wuwei (non-action)





Here 'lords and kings' represents those in positions of power and leadership







樸 (pu) is a key concept meaning 'uncarved wood' - representing natural simplicity

#### 吾將鎮之以無名之樸 I will steady it by-means-of not-have name of simplicity



This final line suggests that when desire ceases, natural order emerges

"chapters/chapter\_38.xml"

#### Chapter 38

This chapter explores the hierarchy of virtue, beginning with a paradoxical statement about highest virtue

Note how 無為 (non-action) is a key Daoist concept - acting without forcing or interfering





Chapter 38



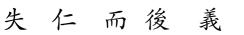
A vivid image of forcing compliance through ritual





This section shows the degradation from Dao to mere ritual - a key criticism of Confucian emphasis on ritual









A powerful critique of empty ritual - 薄 meaning thin/superficial is key here



大丈夫 'great person' represents the ideal sage in Daoism

"chapters/chapter\_39.xml"

#### Chapter 39

This opening line sets up a historical perspective about those who have attained unity/oneness





神 (spirit) here refers to divine or spiritual forces



 $\ensuremath{\mathfrak{F}}$  (valley) is often used metaphorically to represent emptiness or capacity



# 萬物得一以生.

ten-thousand

things

obtain

one by-means-of

live



其致之.

its arrive-at

Here begins the negative consequences of losing unity

天 無 以 清

heaven without by-means-of clea

將 恐 裂

will fear split

A profound statement about the relationship between high and low positions

高以下為基

high by-means-of low become foundation

The final lines use interesting metaphors comparing jade (precious) to stone (common)

不欲琭琭如玉

not desire jade-like jade-like like jade

珞珞如石 stone-like stone-like like stone

"chapters/chapter\_40.xml"

#### Chapter 40

This opening line introduces a fundamental concept about the Dao's movement being cyclical or contrarian to what we expect



This line pairs with the first, showing how the Dao operates through what appears weak or yielding



Here we see the origin of manifested things, using 萬物 (10,000 things) to represent all of existence



This final line reveals the ultimate source - that being itself comes from non-being, a profound philosophical statement in just 5 characters



"chapters/chapter\_41.xml"

#### Chapter 41

This opening describes how different levels of scholars/practitioners respond to the Dao





Note how 大笑 (great-laugh) implies mockery or ridicule







This begins a series of paradoxical descriptions using  $\Xi$  (seem/as-if) to show how the Dao appears contrary to expectations

明道若昧 bright way scem dim

進道若退 advance way seem retreat

夷 道 若 纇 smooth way seem rough

上 德 若 谷 highest virtue seem valley

大 白 若 辱 great white seem shame

廣德若不足 broad virtue seem not enough

建 德 若 偷 stablish virtue seem steal

質 真 若 渝 substance true seem change

These lines describe how the greatest manifestations of the Dao often appear formless or empty











The chapter concludes by affirming that only the Dao can perfect both beginnings and endings



"chapters/chapter\_42.xml"

#### Chapter 42

This opening line establishes the cosmological progression of creation from Dao

A pivotal line showing how the abstract numbers manifest into the physical world

This describes the fundamental duality in all things







These terms referred to those without family/support - a powerful statement about society's values







A profound observation about the cyclical nature of gain and loss







強梁 (qiang liang) refers to those who use force and violence - a warning about their fate

強梁者不得其死 strong beam one not obtain their death

吾將以為教父 I will by-means-of make teaching father "chapters/chapter\_43.xml"

#### Chapter 43

This opening line establishes a profound contrast - the softest thing under heaven. In Classical Chinese, extremes often reveal deeper truths.



A powerful image of the softest thing riding over/conquering the hardest - a key Daoist paradox where softness overcomes hardness.



This line speaks to how the formless can penetrate where there seems to be no space - like water seeping into stone.





Note how 'teaching without words' parallels 'acting without action' - both paradoxical Daoist concepts.



Chapter 43



The final line suggests how rare it is for people to grasp these profound paradoxes - few in the world attain this understanding.



"chapters/chapter\_44.xml"

# Chapter 44

This opening line poses a profound question about priorities - what matters more: reputation or one's physical self?



Here the comparison is between physical self and material wealth -  $\alpha$  theme that resonates through time



A philosophical inquiry about gain versus loss - which causes more suffering?



Notice how 甚 (very) modifies 愛 (love) to warn about excessive attachment





A powerful statement about contentment being a shield against shame

知足不辱 know enough not shame

知止不始 know stop not danger

The conclusion suggests that understanding limits leads to sustainability

可以 長久

"chapters/chapter\_45.xml"

# Chapter 45

This opening line sets up a profound paradox - that true greatness appears incomplete or lacking





The character  $\underline{\mathbf{z}}$  (empty container) creates a powerful image of a vessel that appears empty but has endless utility









Chapter 45

大辯若納 great eloquence seems-like stuttering

These next two lines present a fascinating contrast between movement and stillness

躁 勝 寒
restless overcomes cold

靜 勝 熱 still overcomes heat

The final line presents clarity and stillness as the way to properly order the world -  $\alpha$  powerful conclusion that ties the paradoxes together

清靜為天下正.

"chapters/chapter\_46.xml"

# Chapter 46

This opening line sets up a contrast between when the world follows the Way vs doesn't



A powerful image: in times of peace, warhorses are retired to farming work





Contrasting image: in chaotic times, war horses are bred at the borders





This line introduces a key theme about the dangers of endless wanting

A famous concluding line about contentment. Note how  $\mathcal{K}$  is used three times with slightly different meanings: 'enough', 'sufficiency', and 'satisfied'



"chapters/chapter\_47.xml"

# Chapter 47

This opening line sets up a profound paradox about gaining wisdom without leaving one's dwelling



Here we see how internal contemplation can lead to understanding the external world







A key turning point showing the paradox of seeking external knowledge





Here we meet the sage who embodies this wisdom





The chapter concludes with the paradoxical achievement of the sage

"chapters/chapter\_48.xml"

## Chapter 48

This line contrasts pursuing academic knowledge vs the Dao - knowledge accumulates while the Dao strips away





This emphasizes the continuous process of reduction - 'decrease and decrease again'





A famous paradox - 'doing nothing yet leaving nothing undone'



This final line completes the paradox - trying to actively control or 'take' the world will fail



"chapters/chapter\_49.xml"

## Chapter 49

This opening line introduces a profound concept about the sage's adaptable mindset



Shows how the sage aligns with the people's hearts





A powerful statement about the nature of virtue

Chapter 49

This beautiful metaphor describes the sage's careful attention to the world







The final line reveals how the sage views all people as children - with acceptance and care

"chapters/chapter\_50.xml"

# Chapter 50

This opening line establishes a profound contrast between life and death

A key line suggesting how life's movements can lead to death-grounds

#### 以 其 生 生 之 厚 by-means-of their live life of thick

This begins a famous metaphorical passage about those who understand how to preserve life





Note how the rhinoceros's horn is rendered useless - a powerful metaphor



The profound conclusion - suggesting that one who truly understands life has no vulnerable spots  $\,$ 



"chapters/chapter\_51.xml"

# Chapter 51

This opening line establishes the foundational relationship between Dao and creation





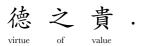






Note how the double negative 莫不 creates emphasis







自然 (spontaneous-so) is a key concept in Daoism, suggesting natural authenticity





亭 here suggests providing shelter/support





玄德 (dark virtue) represents a profound, mysterious virtue that operates without conscious effort

"chapters/chapter\_52.xml"

# Chapter 52

This opening line establishes a cosmic origin principle

天 下 有 始

A metaphorical reference to the Dao as mother of all things

以為天下母 by-means-of become heaven below mother

既得其母 already obtain its mother

以 知 其 子 by-means-of know its child

既知其子 already know its child

Important theme of returning to the source

復守 其 母return guard its mother

A metaphorical instruction about controlling sensory desires

A powerful paradox about perception and wisdom



The final line suggests this is the natural way of cultivation

是 謂 習 常 this called practice constant "chapters/chapter\_53.xml"

## Chapter 53

This chapter begins with introspective reflection on wisdom and its relationship to following the Way







A powerful contrast is being set up between the 'great way' and what follows





The next several lines paint a picture of neglect and misplaced priorities







This powerful conclusion draws attention to how excess and showing off are forms of robbery

是謂盗夸 this called robber boast

非道也哉 not way indeed indeed "chapters/chapter\_54.xml"

# Chapter 54

This opening couplet uses parallel structure to express durability through gentleness





Speaks to unbroken continuation of family traditions





The next five lines show expanding circles of influence, from self to the world











These parallel lines show how understanding moves from micro to macro









A rhetorical question that ties the chapter together

吾何以知天下然哉 I how by-means-of know heaven below thus indeed

以 by-means-of this "chapters/chapter\_55.xml"

#### Chapter 55

This chapter opens with a powerful metaphor comparing those who embody deep virtue to infants - a recurring theme in Daoism





This sequence presents vivid imagery of dangerous creatures that do not harm the infant - suggesting a state of natural harmony



snake



scorpion viper



Notes the paradox of an infant's apparent weakness containing true strength

骨弱筋柔而握固. bone weak sinew soft yet grip firm

A complex line referring to the infant's vital essence being at its peak before awareness of duality

未知牝牡之合而(腹)作 not-yet know female male of joining yet (aroused) arise

精之至也。

終日號而不嗄 whole day cry yet not hoarse

和之至也 harmony of ultimate indeed

These parallel structures define important concepts through their relationships

知和日常 know harmony call constant

知常日明 know constant call bright





A warning about the natural cycle - forcing strength leads to decay

"chapters/chapter\_56.xml"

# Chapter 56

This famous opening couplet emphasizes the paradoxical nature of true wisdom - those who truly know don't speak of it, while those who speak much may not truly know.





The next series of lines describe practices for achieving a state of profound awareness through various forms of restraint and moderation.









Chapter 56



'Mysterious unity'  $({\dot {\vec x}} | {\it l})$  is a key concept in Daoism, representing the profound state of being one with the Dao.





These parallel lines describe how one who achieves this state transcends ordinary human distinctions.





#### 不可得而賤 not can obtain and humble

The final line reveals that by transcending these distinctions, one becomes truly valuable to all under heaven.



"chapters/chapter\_57.xml"

### Chapter 57

· 以 正 治 國 by-means-of upright govern state

以 奇 用 兵 by-means-of strange use soldiers

以無事取天下 by-means-of without affairs take heaven below

吾何以知其然哉 I how by-means-of know its so indeed

以 by-means-of this

Notice how  $\mbox{\it FT}$  (heaven-below) appears again - this compound means 'the world' or 'all under heaven'

天下多忌諱 heaven below many taboo avoid





Note how 知 (know) in brackets implies knowledge in a negative sense - clever or cunning









This begins a powerful series of parallel statements showing the sage's approach

我 無 為 而 民 自 化
I without action and people self transform

我好靜而民自正 I love quiet and people self upright

我無事而民自富 I without affairs and people self rich

我 無 欲 而 民 自 樸
I without desire and people self simple

"chapters/chapter\_58.xml"

### Chapter 58

This opening set of contrasts shows how different governing styles affect the people







Note the use of (xi) as a classical particle expressing emotion or emphasis

孰 is an interrogative meaning 'who' or 'what' - showing philosophical questioning



who know



Here begins the description of the sage's balanced way

方而不割 square but not cut

廉而不劌 corner but not pierce

直而不肆 straight but not unrestrained

The final lines present beautiful metaphors of balanced action

光 而 不 燿 light but not glare "chapters/chapter\_59.xml"

### Chapter 59

This opening line establishes the theme of governing both human affairs and natural/heavenly matters

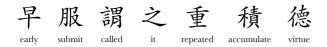






'Early submission' here refers to addressing things before they become problems













'Mother of the country' is a metaphor for the fundamental principles that sustain a nation



### 是調深根固柢 this called deep root firm base

This final line connects the practical governance described above with the eternal Dao

長 生 久 視 之 道 . . long live endure see of way

"chapters/chapter\_60.xml"

### Chapter 60

This opening line uses a cooking metaphor - comparing governing a large state to cooking small fish, suggesting gentleness and restraint



A pivotal line establishing how to approach rulership - through the Way





Notice how the sage is equated with spiritual forces - neither causing harm

聖人亦不傷人.
sage person also not harm person

A key principle of Daoism - mutual non-interference leads to harmony

夫 兩 不 相 傷

The final line shows the natural result - virtue/power (de) naturally returns

故德交歸焉 therefore virtue exchange return herein "chapters/chapter\_61.xml"

### Chapter 61

This chapter uses the metaphor of water flowing downward to discuss international relations and power dynamics





Uses feminine/masculine imagery to discuss power dynamics















This line introduces a key paradox - gaining by lowering oneself



Describes the motivations of great states



Contrasts with motivations of small states



夫 兩 者 各 得 [其] 所 欲 ·
thus both ones each obtain [their] place desire

The chapter's key conclusion - the natural advantage of humility

大者宜為下 great one suitable make lower "chapters/chapter\_62.xml"

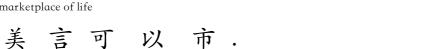
# Chapter 62

This opening line establishes the Dao as the profound source/mystery behind all things





An important parallel structure showing how both words and actions have value in the marketplace of life





A rhetorical question suggesting no one should be abandoned

what abandon them

故立天 establish heaven

install three duke

This line references ancient gift practices - jade discs and horses were supreme gifts

有拱壁以先 although have ceremonial jade-disc by-means-of precede four-horse horse

不如坐進此道 like advance not

古之所以贵此道者 that-which by-means-of one-who

not say





A powerful conclusion emphasizing the universal value of the Dao



"chapters/chapter\_63.xml"

# Chapter 63

This opening line introduces a key Daoist paradox - acting through non-action





A subtle reference to finding satisfaction in simplicity





A profound statement about responding to negativity with virtue





Chapter 63

This line expresses how great tasks begin with small steps



A paradoxical truth: by not attempting greatness, true greatness is achieved

# 是以聖人猶難之

this by-means-of sage person still difficult is

The chapter concludes with the wisdom that by treating things as difficult, one ultimately finds no difficulties

故終無難矣.

"chapters/chapter\_64.xml"

### Chapter 64

This opening line discusses how something stable or settled is easily maintained

Before something manifests signs or symptoms, it's easier to plan for



A key Daoist concept: act before problems arise

Chapter 64

This beautiful metaphor shows how great things begin small - a tree you can barely wrap your arms around begins as a tiny sprout





A famous line suggesting all great journeys begin with a single step









The paradoxical concept of wu-wei (non-action) - by not forcing, one does not fail





This line observes how people often fail just as they're about to succeed









A paradoxical teaching - the sage desires non-desire, showing how true wisdom involves transcending normal attachments



不貴難得之貨 not value difficult obtain of goods

學不學.

This line suggests the sage returns to what others have passed by or overlooked - finding value in the ordinary

復 眾 人 之 所 過 · return many person of place pass-by

以輔萬物之自然 by-means-of assist ten-thousand thing of self so

而不敢為.
and not dare act

"chapters/chapter\_65.xml"

## Chapter 65

This opening line sets up a comparison with ancient sages - note how  $\mbox{\colored}$  (good/skilled) pairs with  $\mbox{\colored}$  (do/make) to indicate mastery









Note how  $\not$ Er (knowledge) is placed in parentheses, suggesting it's being treated as a noun rather than verb





Chapter 65



以(知)治

(knowledge)

blessing country

by-means-of

稽式 appears together meaning 'pattern/model' - an interesting compound suggesting fundamental principles

country

know this examine pattern

always know examine pattern

玄德 (dark virtue) is a key Daoist concept suggesting a profound, mysterious kind of virtue

this called dark

virtue

dark virtue deep indeedindeed

與	物	反	矣
with	things	reverse	indeed

The final line suggests a return to natural harmony through reversing artificial complexity

\_\_\_ 乃 至 大 順
then arrive great accordance

"chapters/chapter\_66.xml"

### Chapter 66

This opening line uses the rivers and seas as a metaphor for leadership - a recurring theme in Daoist thought about how the 'low' position can actually be most powerful







Note how 聖人 (sage) is set apart in brackets, emphasizing this key Daoist concept





必以言下之 must by-means-of words below them

欲 先 民 ·

必以身後之 must by-means-of body behind them

是以 坚 人 this by-means-of sage person

Notice the elegant parallel structure in these next few lines, showing cause and effect

處上而民不重。

dwell above and-yet people not burden

處前而民不害.

是以天下樂推而不厭. this by-means-of heaven below joy promote and-yet not weary

以 其 不 爭 .

by-means-of their not compete

Chapter 66

The chapter closes by returning to the theme of non-contention, showing how true power comes from not fighting for it

故天下莫能與之爭 therefore heaven below none able with them compete "chapters/chapter\_67.xml"

### Chapter 67

This opening line plays with the concept of paradox - the speaker is describing how others view them as 'great' while suggesting this perception may be mistaken





This line reveals a key Daoist paradox - true greatness comes from not trying to be great







The 'three treasures' (三寶) introduced here are fundamental Daoist virtues

# 夫 我 有 三 寶

持而保之.

一 日 慈 one called compassion

二 日 儉 two called frugality

The third treasure embodies the Daoist virtue of humility

三日不敢為天下先 three called not dare act-as heaven below first

慈故能勇 compassion therefore can brave

儉故能廣 frugality therefore can broad

不敢為天下先 not dare act-as heaven below first

Chapter 67



These next lines warn against abandoning the three treasures









The chapter concludes by showing how compassion leads to victory - a paradoxical concept that true power comes through gentleness





天 將 救 之

以 慈 靠 之 by-means-of compassion guard them "chapters/chapter\_68.xml"

### Chapter 68

This chapter explores the paradoxical nature of true mastery - how the best leaders achieve their aims through restraint rather than force.



Notice the parallel structure starting with 善 (good-at) in these opening lines, building a powerful rhythm.





Note how  $\uparrow$  (below/beneath) here carries the profound meaning of humbling oneself to lead effectively.



The repeated structure  $\not$ E iii (this-called) introduces three powerful conclusions about non-contention.



person one-who

Chapter 68

#### 是調用人之力 this called use person of strength

The final line elevates these principles to cosmic significance, linking them to Heaven itself.



"chapters/chapter\_69.xml"

## Chapter 69

·用兵有言 use weapon have word

This sets up a military metaphor that will be used to discuss non-aggressive strategy



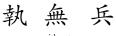


A profound paradox: how does one 'march without marching'? This introduces a series of such paradoxical statements.



攘 無 臂 wave without arms

扔 無 敵 wield without enemy



grasp without weapons

Note how  $\hbox{\it ii}$  (disaster) is paired with  $\c \xi \c \xi$  (none greater) - a powerful warning about underestimating others







The final line reveals that the truly victorious are those who maintain compassion even in conflict



"chapters/chapter\_70.xml"

### Chapter 70

The opening presents a paradox that runs throughout Daoist thought - what seems simple is often profound









'Zong' (宗) means ancestral temple but here refers to deeper underlying principles





'Wu zhi' (無知) literally means 'without knowledge' but suggests a state of openness rather than ignorance









This begins the concluding metaphor of the chapter



 $\boldsymbol{\Lambda}$  powerful closing image: wearing rough cloth but carrying jade inside - appearance vs. essence



"chapters/chapter\_71.xml"

### Chapter 71

This opening line plays with the contrast between knowing and not-knowing, suggesting that claiming to know what one doesn't know is problematic.



This line reverses the previous pattern, suggesting that not recognizing one's own knowledge is a form of sickness.



The character  $\xi$  here serves as an emphatic opener, while  $\alpha$  emphasizes the following statement about recognizing sickness.





only sickness



indeed

This line uses 其 to refer back to the sage's recognition of sickness.

以其病病。

by-means-of their sickness sickness

是以不病 this by-means-of not sickness "chapters/chapter\_72.xml"

### Chapter 72

This opening line sets up a key principle about the relationship between authority and fear





An elegant parallel construction warning against taking things for granted





Note how 夫 marks the start of an explanation section



Introduction of the sage (聖人) as exemplar

Beautiful parallel construction showing paradox of self-knowledge



Classic Daoist conclusion preferring this (此) over that (彼)



"chapters/chapter\_73.xml"

### Chapter 73

This opening presents a paradox about bravery that challenges our usual thinking

· 勇 於 敢

則 殺

勇於不敢 brave in not dare

則 then live

此 兩 者 或 利 或 害
these two ones perhaps benefit perhaps harm

A profound rhetorical question about the mysteries of heaven's preferences

天之所惡孰知其故 heaven 's that-which hate who know its reason

#### 是以聖人猶難之 this by-means-of sage person still difficult it



These next four lines describe the paradoxical power of non-action (wuwei)







A powerful metaphor comparing heaven's justice to a vast net



疏 而 不 失
loose yet not lose

"chapters/chapter\_74.xml"

### Chapter 74

This opening line sets up a profound observation about human nature and fear

民不畏死 people not fear death

奈何以死懼之。 how what by-means-of death frighten them

若使民常 畏死 if cause people always fear death

This line introduces the concept of authority and punishment

而為奇者吾得執而殺之。 and do strange one-who I can seize and kill them ·

孰 敢。 who dare。

常有司殺者 always exist officer kill one-who This passage uses the metaphor of carpentry (勤) to discuss authority and responsibility

- (•) 夫代司殺者殺。
  that replace officer kill one-who kill ·
- 是謂代大匠斵。 this called replace great carpenter chop。
- (•) 夫代 大匠 斲 者
  that replace great carpenter chop one-who

The final line delivers the key insight through a powerful metaphor

希 \_ 不 傷 其 手 矣 (●)
rare not harm their hand indeed (◆)

"chapters/chapter\_75.xml"

### Chapter 75

This chapter explores how the actions of rulers/those above affect the common people below



A powerful statement on how taxation leads to hunger - note the causative structure with  $\ensuremath{\aleph}$ 







Note 為 (doing/action) is a key concept in Daoism, often contrasted with 無為 (non-action)



是以難 by-means-of difficult govern

people light

厚 (thick/rich) here refers to excessive or extravagant ways of living

以 其求生之厚。 by-means-of their seek life thick

death this by-means-of light

indeed

夫唯 often marks an important conclusion or truth. This line presents the ideal of simple living.

doing

(•) 夫唯無以生為 by-means-of

worthy

only

"chapters/chapter\_76.xml"

## Chapter 76

· 人之生也柔弱

其死也堅強。 their death is hard strong

Notice how the text uses natural metaphors from plants to illustrate its philosophical points about strength and weakness

萬物草木之生也柔脆ten-thousand things grass tree possessive life is soft tender

其死也枯槁。

(•)故 堅 強 者 死 之 徒 • therefore hard strong one-who death possessive follower •

柔弱者生之徒。
soft weak one-who life possessive follower

This line uses military metaphor to illustrate the paradox that excessive strength leads to defeat







This final line completes the paradox - what seems weak actually has the superior position



"chapters/chapter\_77.xml"

### Chapter 77

This line uses a bow as metaphor for natural balance - a powerful image familiar to ancient readers











Notice how this phrase repeats from the opening, creating a structural frame



Chapter 77

損有餘而補不足 reduce have excess and supplement not enough

Here begins the contrast between heaven's way and human way

人之道則不然 human 's way then not thus

損不足以奉有餘 reduce not enough by-means-of serve have excess

熟能有餘(而)奉[於]天下 who can have excess (and) serve [to] heaven below

唯有道者。 only have way one ·

是以聖人 this by-means-of sage person

This famous line speaks to acting without attachment to results

為而不恃 do and not rely-on 功成而不處。 achievement complete and not dwell。

其不欲見賢 his not desire appear worthy "chapters/chapter\_78.xml"

### Chapter 78

This opening line presents water as a metaphor for softness and adaptability - a key Daoist concept



Yet water can overcome the hardest things - introducing the paradox







A core principle of Daoism - the power of yielding



The sage leader takes on the 'dirt' of the nation - showing humility

A famous line suggesting that truth often seems paradoxical

正言若反

correct

words

seem

opposite

"chapters/chapter\_79.xml"

## Chapter 79

This opening line introduces a profound observation about reconciling grievances





This line questions the conventional wisdom about what constitutes 'good'





The 'left' side of the contract typically represents the debtor's portion - an interesting metaphor



而不責於人 yet not demand from person

[(•)故] 有 德 司 契
[therefore] have virtue manage contract

無德司 徹
without virtue manage collection

This is one of the most quoted lines about the impartial nature of the Dao

天 道 無 親
heaven way without favoritism

常 與 善 人
always with good person

"chapters/chapter\_80.xml"

#### Chapter 80

· 小國寡民 · small state few people

使有什伯之器而不用。 cause have ten hundred of tool but not use

使民重死而不遠徙 cause people value death but not far move

Note how  $\mu \pi$  (although-have) creates a hypothetical scenario that is then negated - a common Classical Chinese construction

雖有身輿無所乘之 although have boat carriage none place ride it

雖有甲兵無所陳之 although have armor weapon none place display it

使(民) 復結繩而用之 cause (people) return tie rope and use it The next four lines show contentment through parallel structure, each starting with an adjective followed by 其 (their)



sweet









This vivid image of hearing neighboring roosters and dogs suggests both proximity and separation



# 不相往來 not mutual go come

"chapters/chapter\_81.xml"

#### Chapter 81

This opening line establishes a key Daoist paradox about the relationship between truth and beauty in language





A profound statement about the relationship between goodness and argumentation





These lines contrast deep understanding with mere accumulation of knowledge





This begins a section about the sage's relationship to accumulation and giving



A beautiful paradox about gaining by giving





This describes the beneficial but non-harmful nature of the Dao



The final line beautifully summarizes the sage's way of non-contention

