

二十三章

希言自然。故飄風不終朝，驟雨不終日。孰為此者？天地。天地尚不能久，而況於人乎？故從事於道者，道者同於道；德者同於德；失者同於失。同於道者，道亦樂得之；同於德者，德亦樂得之；同於失者，失亦樂得之。信不足，焉有不信焉。

He does not brag, and so has merit;

He does not boast, and so endures.

- 50c It is because he does not contend that no one in the empire is in a position to contend with him.
- 50d The way the ancients had it, 'Bowed down then preserved', is no empty saying. Truly it enables one to be preserved to the end.

XXIII

- 51 To use words but rarely

Is to be natural.

- 51a Hence a gusty wind cannot last all morning, and a sudden downpour cannot last all day. Who is it that produces these? Heaven and earth. If even heaven and earth cannot go on for ever, much less can man. That is why one follows the way.

- 52 A man of the way conforms to the way; a man of virtue conforms to virtue, a man of loss conforms to loss. He who conforms to the way is gladly accepted by the way; he who conforms to virtue is gladly accepted by virtue; he who conforms to loss is gladly accepted by loss.*

- 53 When there is not enough faith, there is lack of good faith.

*There is a play on the words *te* (virtue) and *te* (to get), the latter being contrasted with *shih* (to lose).

二十四章

企者不立；跨者不行。自見者不明；自是者不彰；自伐者無功；自矜者不長。其在道也，曰餘食贅行。物或惡之，故有道者不處。

二十五章

有物混成，先天地生。寂兮寥兮，獨立
[而]不改，周行而不殆。可以為天下母。
吾不知其名，字之曰道。強為之名曰大。大曰逝，逝曰遠，遠曰反。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。

XXIV

- 54 He who tiptoes cannot stand; he who strides cannot walk.
- 55 He who shows himself is not conspicuous;
He who considers himself right is not illustrious;
He who brags will have no merit;
He who boasts will not endure.
- 55a From the point of view of the way these are 'excessive food and useless excrescences'. As there are Things that detest them, he who has the way does not abide in them.

XXV

- 56 ✓ There is a thing confusedly formed,
Born before heaven and earth.
✓ Silent and void
It stands alone and does not change,
Goes round and does not weary.
✓ It is capable of being the mother of the world.
I know not its name
So I style it 'the way'.
- 56a I give it the makeshift name of 'the great'.
Being great, it is further described as receding,
Receding, it is described as far away,

二十六章

✓ 重為輕根，靜為躁君。是以（聖人）〔君子〕
終日行不離輜重。雖（唯）有榮（營）觀燕
處超然。奈何萬乘之主而以身輕天
下？輕則失本，躁則失君。

Being far away, it is described as turning back.

- 57 Hence the way is great; heaven is great; earth is great; and the king is also great. Within the realm there are four things that are great, and the king counts as one.
- 58 Man models himself on earth,
Earth on heaven,
Heaven on the way,
✓ And the way on that which is naturally so.

XXVI

- 59 ✓ The heavy is the root of the light;
✓ The still is the lord of the restless.
- 59a Therefore the gentleman when travelling all day
Never lets the heavily laden carts out of his sight.
It is only when he is safely behind walls and watch-towers
That he rests peacefully and is above worries.
How, then, should a ruler of ten thousand chariots
Make light of his own person in the eyes of the empire?
- 59b If light, then the root is lost;
If restless, then the lord is lost.

二十七章

善行無轍迹；善言無瑕謫；善數不用籌策；善閉無關鍵而不可開；善結無繩約而不可解。是以聖人常善救人，故無棄人；常善救物，故無棄物。是謂襲明。故善人者，不善人之師；不善人者，善人之資。不貴其師，不愛其資，雖智大迷。是謂要妙。

二十八章

知其雄，守其雌，為天下谿。為天下谿，常德不離，復歸於嬰兒。知其白，守其

XXVII

- 60 One who excels in travelling leaves no wheel tracks;
One who excels in speech makes no slips;
One who excels in reckoning uses no counting rods;
One who excels in shutting uses no bolts yet what he has shut cannot be opened;
One who excels in tying uses no cords yet what he has tied cannot be undone.
- 61 Therefore the sage always excels in saving people, and so abandons no one; always excels in saving things, and so abandons nothing.
- 61a This is called following one's discernment.
- 62 Hence the good man is the teacher the bad learns from;
And the bad man is the material the good works on.
Not to value the teacher
Nor to love the material
Though it seems clever, betrays great bewilderment.
- 62a This is called the essential and the secret.

XXVIII

- 63 Know the male
But keep to the role of the female
And be a ravine to the empire..

黑，為天下式。為天下式，常德不忒，復
歸於無極。知其榮，守其辱，為天下谷。
為天下谷，常德乃足，復歸於樸。樸散
則為器。聖人用之，則為官長。故大制
不割。

If you are a ravine to the empire,

Then the constant virtue will not desert you

✓ And you will again return to being a babe.

Know the white

But keep to the role of the black

And be a model to the empire.

If you are a model to the empire,

Then the constant virtue will not be wanting

And you will return to the infinite.

Know honour*

But keep to the role of the disgraced

And be a valley to the empire.

If you are a valley to the empire,

Then the constant virtue will be sufficient

And you will return to being the uncarved block.

64 When the uncarved block shatters it becomes vessels.† The sage
makes use of these and becomes the lord over the officials.

65 Hence the greatest cutting

Does not sever.

*The six lines beginning with 'But keep to the role of the black' are almost certain to be an interpolation, but of an early date. If that is the case, then the line following should be translated 'But keep to the role of the sullied', thus forming a contrast to the line 'Know the white' with which it is continuous. This conjecture is supported by the fact that as quoted in the *T'ien hsia* chapter in the *Chuang tzu* the line 'Know the white' is, in fact, followed by the line 'But keep to the role of the sullied'. Cf. also 'The sheerest whiteness seems sullied' (91).

†I.e. officials whose specialist knowledge and ability make them fit to be officials but unfit to be rulers. Cf. the phrase 'lord over the vessels' (164).