

Chapter 76

➤ 中文文本注释 (陈鼓应)

(1) 柔弱：指人体的柔软。(2) 坚强：指人体的僵硬。(3) 柔脆：指草木形质的柔软脆弱。(4) 枯槁：形容草木的干枯。(5) 死之徒：属于死亡的一类。(6) 生之徒：属于生存的一类。

➤ **English Translation by James Legge**

1. Man at his birth is supple and weak; at his death, firm and strong. (So it is with) all things. Trees and plants, in their early growth, are soft and brittle; at their death, dry and withered.
2. Thus it is that firmness and strength are the concomitants of death; softness and weakness, the concomitants of life.
3. Hence he who (relies on) the strength of his forces does not conquer; and a tree which is strong will fill the out-stretched arms, (and thereby invites the feller.)
4. Therefore the place of what is firm and strong is below, and that of what is soft and weak is above.

➤ **English Translation by Robert G. Henricks**

When people are born, they're supple and soft;
When they die, they end up stretched out firm and rigid;
When the ten thousand things and grasses and trees are alive, they're supple and pliant;
When they're dead, they're withered and dried out.
Therefore we say that the firm and rigid are companions of death,
While the supple, the soft, the weak, and the delicate are companions of life.
If a soldier is rigid, he won't win;
If a tree is rigid, it will come to its end.
Rigidity and power occupy the inferior position;
Suppleness, softness, weakness, and delicateness occupy the superior position.

➤ **English Translation by D. C. Lau**

A man is supple and weak when living, but hard and stiff when dead.
Grass and trees are pliant and fragile when living, but dried and shrivelled when dead.
Thus the hard and the strong are the comrades of death;
The supple and the weak are the comrades of life.

Therefore a weapon that is strong will not vanquish;
A tree that is strong will suffer the axe.
The strong and big takes the lower position,
The supple and weak takes the higher position.

Chapter 67

➤ 中文文本注释 (陈鼓应)

(1) 人之道则不然：人之道，指社会的一般律则。

➤ **English Translation by James Legge**

1. May not the Way (or T'ao) of Heaven be compared to the (method of) bending a bow? The (part of the bow) which was high is brought low, and what was low is raised up. (So Heaven) diminishes where there is superabundance, and supplements where there is deficiency.
2. It is the Way of Heaven to diminish superabundance, and to supplement deficiency. It is not so with the way of man. He takes away from those who have not enough to add to his own superabundance.
3. Who can take his own superabundance and therewith serve all under heaven? Only he who is in possession of the T'ao!
4. Therefore the (ruling) sage acts without claiming the results as his; he achieves his merit and does not rest (arrogantly) in it:--he does not wish to display his superiority.

➤ **English Translation by Robert G. Henricks**

The Way of Heaven is like the flexing of a bow.
The high it presses down; the low it raises up.
From those with a surplus it takes away; to those without enough it adds on.
Therefore the way of Heaven—
Is to reduce the excessive and increase the insufficient;
The Way of Man—
Is to reduce the insufficient and offer more to the excessive.
Now, who is able to have a surplus and use it to offer to Heaven?
Clearly, it's only the one who possesses the Way.
Therefore the Sage—
Take actions but does not possess them;
Accomplishes his tasks but does not dwell on them.
Like this, is his desire not to make a display of his worthiness.

➤ **English Translation by D. C. Lau**

Is not the way of heaven like the stretching of a bow?
The high it presses down,
The low it lifts up;
The excessive it takes from,
The deficient it gives to.

It is the way of heaven to take from what has in excess in order to make good what is deficient.

The way of man is otherwise: it takes from those who are in want in order to offer this to those who already have more than enough.

Who is there that can take what he himself has in excess and offer this to the empire?
Only he who has the way.

Therefore the sage benefits them yet exacts no gratitude,
Accomplishes his task yet lays claim to no merit.

Is this not because he does not wish to be considered a better man than others?

Chapter 68

➤ 中文文本注释（陈鼓应）

(1) 无以易之：没有什么能代替它。(5) 受国之垢：承担全国的屈辱。(7) 承担全国的祸难。(8) 正言若反：正面的话好像反话一样。

➤ **English Translation by James Legge**

1. There is nothing in the world more soft and weak than water, and yet for attacking things that are firm and strong there is nothing that can take precedence of it;--for there is nothing (so effectual) for which it can be changed.

2. Every one in the world knows that the soft overcomes the hard, and the weak the strong, but no one is able to carry it out in practice.

3. Therefore a sage has said,
He who accepts his state's reproach,
Is hailed therefore its altars' lord;
To him who bears men's direful woes
They all the name of King accord.'

4. Words that are strictly true seem to be paradoxical.

➤ **English Translation by Robert G. Henricks**

In the whole world, nothing is softer and weaker than water.
And yet for attacking the hard and strong, nothing can bear it,
Because there is nothing you can use to replace it.
That water can defeat the unyielding—
That the weak can defeat the strong—
There is no one in the whole world who doesn't know it,
And yet there is no one who can put it into practice.
For this reason, the words of the Sage say:
To take on yourself the disgrace of the state—this is called being the lord of [the altars of]
earth and grain;
To assume responsibility for all ill-omened events in the state—this is called being the king
of the world.
Correct words seem to say the reverse [of what you expect them to say].

➤ **English Translation by D. C. Lau**

In the world there is nothing more submissive and weak than water.
Yet for attacking that which is hard and strong nothing can surpass it.
This is because there is nothing that can take its place.
That the weak overcomes the strong,
And the submissive overcomes the hard,
Everyone in the world knows yet no one can put this knowledge into practice.
Therefore the sage says,
One who takes on himself the humiliation of the state
Is called a ruler worthy of offering sacrifices to the gods of earth and millet.
One who takes on himself the calamity of the state
Is called a king worthy of dominion over the entire empire.
Straightforward words seem paradoxical.