

Dao De Jing

a literal translation

by

Billy Lee Harman

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by

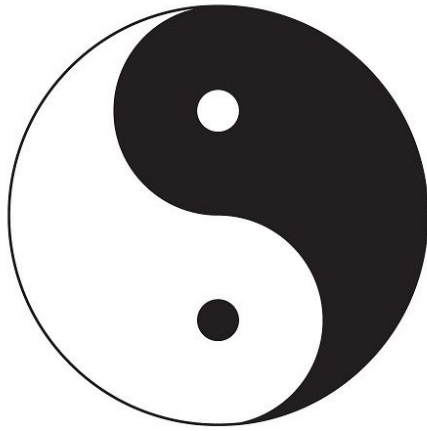
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道德經

for the

Reader

Therefore, O Sariputra, it is because of his non-attainmentness that a Bodhisattva, through having relied on the perfection of wisdom, dwells with no thought-coverings. In the absence of thought-coverings, he has not been made to tremble and has overcome what can upset. And, in the end, one attains nirvana.

The Heart Sutra

(Edward Conze translation)

Om.

Shanti, shanti, shanti.

Amen.

Dao De Jing

a literal translation

Introduction

The *Dào Dé Jīng* is the definitive scripture of Daoism. Its title means “way or path, virtue or power, abiding writing”, and the fundamental premise of Daoism is that the path to virtue is by way of accepting the inevitable power of earth and sky. Most essentially the *Dào Dé Jīng* says happiness arises from maximizing accepting while minimizing preferring.

Daoists say the author of the *Dào Dé Jīng* wrote it as he was retiring from his career as a government official. They say his name was Lǎo Zǐ and that a ferryman asked him to write what we now call the *Dào Dé Jīng* before he crossed a river on his way to a life of seclusion. “*Lǎo zǐ*” means “old child”, and some Daoists say Lǎo Zǐ was eighty years in his mother’s womb, learning the way to virtue. And others say Confucius said he met Lǎo Zǐ and never met anyone wiser. But all of that’s questionable.

Less questionable is that Daoism is the fifth most popular religion. And also less questionable is that the number of translations of the *Dào Dé Jīng* is larger than the number of translations of any other book. So a question is why I’ve produced one more translation of it.

But the answer to that question is in the subtitle of this book. Reading many of those translations, I found each of them to be substantially different from each of the others, and commentary translators included with them suggests that their translating wasn’t translation. Much of it suggests that what they called translation was interpretive extrapolation.

So here are some indicative examples of what some call translation of the *Dào Dé Jīng*'s fortieth segment. That segment, aside from being the shortest of its 81 segments and especially easy to translate, is especially indicative of its fundamental premise. And these examples span more than a century.

The movement of the Tao by contraries proceeds;
And weakness marks the course of Tao's mighty deeds.
All things under heaven sprang from It as existing (and named);
That existence sprang from It as non-existent (and not named).
James Legge, 1891

In Tao the only motion is returning;
The only useful quality, weakness.
For though all creatures under heaven are the products of Being,
Being itself is the product of Not-being.
Arthur Waley, 1934

The movement of the Tao consists in Returning.
The use of the Tao consists in softness.
All things under heaven are born of the corporeal.
The corporeal is born of the Incorporeal.
John C. H. Wu, 1961

Returning is the motion of the Tao.
Yielding is the way of the Tao.
The ten thousand things arise from being.
Being arises from not being.
Gia-Fu Feng & Jane English, 1972

The movement of the Tao is to return
The way of the Tao is to yield
Heaven, Earth, and all things are born of the existent world
The existent world is born of the nothingness of Tao
Jonathan Star, 2001

So let's consider reasons for such variation.

Chinese is a synthetic language. Meaning of words varies more in synthetic languages than in analytic languages. The main reason the Chinese language is synthetic is that each Chinese word is a one-syllable name of a picture. And further ambiguity is because Chinese speech is by way of the words while Chinese writing is by way of the pictures. So, ordinarily, the writing doesn't indicate pronunciation.

Linguists, because the Chinese people write with the pictures, call the pictures pictographs. The Chinese pictograph meaning "pictograph" is 字 and has the name *zì*, and the *zì* meaning "name of a *zì*" is 言 and has the name *yán*. And those two *zì* may indicate another reason for the ambiguity of Chinese language.

The Chinese people, through their millennia of using *zì*, have simplified them to the extent that they now hardly resemble what they originally depicted.

And another reason the Chinese language is so synthetic is that, perhaps because grammatical inflection ordinarily requires adding syllables to words, the Chinese language has no grammatical inflection. So, depending on its context, any *zì* can be of any part of speech or number or tense or case. So meaning of sentences depends on syntax.

And that's why linguists call such languages synthetic. Syntax is the order of words in a sentence, and the English words "syntax" and "synthetic" are Latin inflections of a Greek word meaning "to join". Because of grammatical inflection, Latin and Greek are analytic languages, languages in which changing the syntax of a sentence doesn't change its meaning. And the English words "analytic" and "analysis" are Latin inflections of a Greek word meaning "dissolve" or "loosen".

So, in other words, to synthesize is to put together or to integrate, while to analyze is to take apart or to disintegrate, but another way of saying that in regard to the Chinese

language is to say it's a language of nouns. Nouns are names of persons, places, things, or ideas, and Chinese semantics depends on pictures representing situations to indicate grammatical functions, as a picture of a person running indicates the act of running and thus can operate as a verb. But the *zì* remain pictures of things.

That, in the Chinese language, has somewhat changed. In the millennia since the writing of the *Dào Dé Jīng*, the Chinese people have developed linguist traditions of using many *zì* as particular parts of speech other than nominal. But, before two millennia ago, no such limitation operated in the Chinese language, and the Chinese language remains more synthetic than nearly any other language.

So all of that remains a problem both for translators whose native language is more analytic than Chinese and for Chinese translators.

But, nevertheless, the language of the *Dào Dé Jīng* isn't synthetic enough to justify the variances among the above translations.

That can arise only from people calling themselves translators calling extrapolation translation. That is, it can arise only from exaggerating ambiguity, and that can arise only from choosing to ignore whatever limitations one chooses to ignore, and motives for that may be to excuse one's own limitations or to justify one's attributing to the author the prejudices of the translator. And, of course, excepting from those considerations translators whose native language is Chinese is no more justifiable than is excepting any other translator from them.

An example of the flexibility of Chinese diction is that “*wéi*” is the *yán* for a *zì* that may mean “to act” or “an act”, “acting” or “acted”, “action” or “activity”, or “to enact”, and that *zì* may also mean “to make” or “to do”, as does the French verb “*faire*”. But “*yǒu*”, as the *yán* for the *zì* the

translators of the above translations translated to mean “being”, “existing”, “existent”, and “corporeal,” means only variants of the English verb “have”. So, while it can mean the English gerund “having”, it never refers to any variant of the English verb “be”.

And such unreasonable semantic variance may extend beyond diction. Some scholars argue that lack of internal continuity in the *Dào Dé Jīng* indicates that Lǎo Zǐ didn’t write it. They argue that the lack of semantic continuity from segment to segment suggests that it’s a compilation of writings by more than one writer.

But, however synthetic a language may be, its users are likely to be somewhat consistent in their use of it. So, for the translation I’m presenting in this book, I compared each use of each *zì* in each segment of the *Dào Dé Jīng* to each other use of it in the *Dào Dé Jīng*. And, by that process, I found conspicuous continuity.

And another simple step making those scholars’ notion questionable is considering what English-speaking linguists call radicals while Chinese linguists call them *bù shǒu*. The *zì* to which that use of the *yán*s “*bù*” and “*shǒu*” refer literally mean “division” and “principal”, and together those two *zì* are a phrase referring to 214 *zì* that are components of other *zì*. And most of those 214 “radicals” also have their own meaning.

An example is that a *zì* meaning “mouth” is the principal division of *zì* meaning “speech”. So the principal divisions also make the Chinese language less synthetic than many “translations” suggest that it is. And other indicative examples are that the principal division of “*dào*” in the title *Dào Dé Jīng* is a *zì* meaning “walk” and that the principal division of “*dé*” in that title is a *zì* meaning “step”.

And also relevant may be that a difference between “*tao*” in those translations and “*dào*” in this book is a

difference between the Wade-Giles system and the *pīn yīn* system of using the Roman alphabet to represent Chinese words.

In the early nineteenth century, British sinologist and diplomat Thomas Francis Wade developed a system of doing that. And, in the late nineteenth century, British sinologist and diplomat Herbert Allen Giles made some changes to Wade's system, but the Wade system had people calling Beijing Peking, and Giles' changes didn't adequately correct that. He spelled it "Pei-Ching".

So, in the mid-twentieth century, the Chinese government developed what it calls the *pīn yīn* system, and it accords much more closely with the phonetics of English and every other language ordinarily using the Roman alphabet, than does the Wade-Giles system.

So I use the *pīn yīn* system in this book. But *pīn yīn* also varies somewhat with any indigenous use of the Roman alphabet. So, for readers who prefer not to mispronounce what they read, the last page of this book is a guide to approximate *pīn yīn* pronunciation. And also, for readers who wish to take the trouble to correct the translation of the *Dào Dé Jīng* in this book or any other, the section of this book between that pronunciation guide and the translation immediately following this introduction is each segment of the *Dào Dé Jīng* in both *zì* and *pīn yīn*.

But I deviate from both the Wade-Giles system and the *pīn yīn* system in one way. Both systems, including both the Wade system calling the capital of China Peking and the *pīn yīn* system calling it Beijing, treat idiomatic expressions as though they're compound words. The *zì* to which both of those representations refer literally mean "north" and "capital". So "*Bei Jīng*" would be more accurate both semantically and phonetically than is "*Beijing*". And Wade more accurately could have called it *Pe King*.

And another example is that, while “*pīn yīn*” in strict accordance with the *pīn yīn* system of transliteration would be “*pīnyīn*”, it refers to two *zì* literally meaning “synthesize” and “sound”. And Chinese people, because jamming *zì* together would make some *zì* illegible, jam no *zì* together. So neither do I jam their *pīn yīn yáns* together.

And my reason for that is also semantic. Perhaps the rationale for jamming the words together is a notion that people who don’t read Chinese can’t understand idiomatic expressions if no one synthesizes them for them. But consider taking translation to hell in a handbasket by using only a word literally meaning “debacle” to translate “hell in a handbasket”. No idiom is entirely independent of its components. And that’s true of any language.

But my motive for mentioning that and the other factors I’ve mentioned in this introduction isn’t only to establish the credibility of my translation. I hope recognizing those actualities and reading my other comments and my paraphrases of each of the 81 segments on each page facing my translation of each segment may also help you improve my translation. And my reason for that is that differences between the Chinese language and the English language have also kept me from translating entirely literally. And, perhaps paradoxically, examples of that are my deviations from the literal to help you in that process.

The original manuscripts of the *Dào Dé Jīng* are columns of *zì*. Each of its 81 segments is on a separate page, but the columns on each page have no divisions comparable to poetic line breaks, and neither do the manuscripts have punctuation. Before the nineteenth century, more than 2 ½ millennia after the origination of the *Dào Dé Jīng*, the Chinese language had no punctuation. So, as have other translators, I’ve divided the columns into grammatical

segments on separate horizontal lines. And, as have others, I've also added punctuation.

And, when I found no way to make the Chinese syntax grammatically comprehensible in English, I've also changed the syntax. And, for purposes both grammatical and semantic, I've also added words. And I've also inserted annotation to indicate all that.

So, to facilitate further your finding any faults in my translation, here's an effort to explain that annotation.

Numbers in parentheses after words indicate a change of syntax. An example is that “below (2) sky” at the beginning of a line indicates that in the original syntax the *zì* meaning “below” would be the second *zì* in that line segment. That is, in the original Chinese syntax, the *zì* meaning “sky” precedes the *zì* meaning “below”.

And, of course, those numbers can also help you find the pertinent *zì* and the *pīn yīn* transliteration of it in the presentation of the segments in the section of this book ending with the *pīn yīn* pronunciation guide.

And I've also used parentheses to indicate *zì* having the meaning of question marks or exclamation points. So, if an exclamation point or a question mark in this translation has no parentheses around it, it's punctuation I've added. And I've also enclosed in parentheses each of my translations of “*zhī*” when it's the *yán* for a *zì* indicating possession.

The language of the *Dào Dé Jīng* ordinarily indicates possession either by a *zì* meaning “have” or by simply placing the *zì* for the entity of possession immediately after the *zì* for the entity possessing it. So, in some instances in which more than one entity or idea or phrase is the possessor or entity of possession, that *zhī zì* serves as a possessive pronoun. And it also acts as a possessive pronoun in some instances in which it's syntactically disjunct from the item of possession.

So, in addition to “”, that *zì* can mean “’s”, “its”, “his”, “her”, “their”, “of”, “of that”, “of those”, etc., and it occurs 250 times in the *Dào Dé Jīng*.

And I also used parentheses to indicate using more than one word to translate one *zì*. An example of that is translating the *wú zì* meaning “not having” as such as “(not having)” or “(has no)”, and that *zì* occurs 103 times in the *Dào Dé Jīng*.

But I used brackets to indicate words I added to fulfill grammatical functions for which the Chinese ordinarily don’t use words. Examples are the conjunction “and”, the articles “a”, “an”, and “the”, and forms of “to be”. An example is the clause “[and] thus [is] light”.

But I used neither brackets nor parentheses to indicate my literal translation of the *yán “shì”* as “that’s” when it’s the name of a *zì* meaning “that is”. And neither did I annotate in any way any other contraction. I counted each as one word.

But I found no simple way to annotate the problem that, because the Chinese language has no grammatical inflection, every word in the *Dào Dé Jīng* can be any part of speech or number or case or tense.

And neither did I find a simple way to annotate the problem that neither do most Chinese third person pronouns of the time of the *Dào Dé Jīng* indicate gender, that “*chī*” can mean “she”, “he”, “it”, “they”, or “them”, etc. And neither do I annotate possessive uses of that *chī zì* when it means “her”, “hers”, “his”, “its”, etc. And, excepting the possessive *zhī zì*, neither do I annotate any other indications of possession.

But, in some instances, this translation couldn’t be more literal.

In it, I leave the especially Daoist words “*dào*” and “*dé*” and the especially Daoist phrase “*shēng rèn*” in Chinese. My reasons for not translating those *dào* and *dé zì* in the next section are that I’ve translated “*Dào Dé Jīng*” above and that,

because the other words in the *Dào Dé Jīng* define those terms, the entire translation is a translation of them. And my reason for not translating that phrase “*shēng rèn*” there is that I’ve found no way to translate it with no connotation contrary to its context in the *Dào Dé Jīng*.

Most translators of it into English translate it “holy man” or “sage”, but that *rèn zì* indicates no gender and accordingly can refer to men or boys or to women or girls, and so I’ve translated it as “human” in its other contexts in the *Dào Dé Jīng*, and the word “holy” carries connotations in other religions, and so does the word “sage”.

So the meaning of that *shēng zì* in the context of the *Dào Dé Jīng* may be fundamentally contrary to many uses of the words “holy” and “sage”. And understanding that distinction is fundamental, not only semantically and epistemologically but also historically and culturally, to understanding the *Dào Dé Jīng*. That understanding effectually also translates “*Dào Dé Jīng*”.

The principal division of that *shēng zì* is a *zì* meaning “ear”, and that implies that the notion of either holiness or sagacity in Daoism isn’t preaching or professing, that it’s attention and acceptance. And also relevant are that Hindus call their definitive scriptures what’s heard and that Buddhism is a refinement of Hinduism. So that’s but one of many indications of the monism Daoism shares with Buddhism and Hinduism.

And so such differences in religious doctrine and diction and epistemology may be another reason for the variety of the translations of the *Dào Dé Jīng*.

Suggesting that possibility are Jonathan Star’s Jewish name and James Legge’s having been a Christian missionary, and John C. H. Wu’s having been Chinese but also a Methodist who converted to Roman Catholicism and emigrated from the People’s Republic of China to the

Republic of China and became Taiwan's Ambassador to the Vatican, after graduating from the law school of the University of Michigan and befriending Oliver Wendell Holmes.

And I found the *Dào Dé Jīng* hardly comparable to Judaism or Christianity or Islam but comparable to Buddhism both literally and demonstrably.

That's why the epigraph to this book is a quotation from the *Heart Sutra*. Zen is a synthesis of Daoism into Buddhism, and many Zen monks chant the *Heart Sutra* daily or more frequently, and that quotation effectually defines the basic premise of Daoism. The terms "non-attainmentness" and "no thought-covering" resemble diction with which the *Dào Dé Jīng* refers to greed and the abstraction of words.

And "nirvana" is a Sanskrit word meaning "blowing out" by which Buddhists refer to extinguishing the illusion of differences. And the *Dào Dé Jīng* expresses the relationship between acceptance and unity in many ways. And Zen originated in China.

"Zen" is a Japanese pronunciation of the Chinese word "chán", which is a Chinese pronunciation of the Sanskrit word "dhyana", which means "meditation". And Bodhidharma, the Buddhist monk who originated Zen, was from India but originated Zen at the Shaolin Monastery more than a half millennium before his followers took it to Japan. And the Shaolin Monastery is in China's eastern mountains.

And both Jonathon Starr and Arthur Waley refer to Buddhism in their commentary on their translations. But the next question in that regard is how well one can understand a religion in which one doesn't believe. And those two translators' academic interpretive comparisons tend to be demonstrably abstract extrapolation.

So note that the origin of the word "abstract" is Latin literally meaning "out of touch" and that the origin of the

word “extrapolate” is an inflection of Latin effectually meaning “extraordinary polarity”. And also note that extreme polarity has been a problem in Chinese epistemology for millennia. Consider the famous depiction of *yīn* and *yáng*.

The *zì* to which that use of “*yīn*” and “*yáng*” refers originally represented the shady and sunny sides of a mountain. And the traditional depiction of the referents of those *zì* is a simplification of a view of a mountain from above. And originally it symbolized harmony and unity.

The basis for that symbolism is that, while different parts of a mountain are shady or sunny as the mountain passes beneath the sun, the mountain remains one mountain. But people in China and all over Earth have come to use that metaphorical depiction of harmony and unity to symbolize polarity. And that began long before the writing of either the *Dào Dé Jīng* or the *Yì Jīng*.

The formulation of the *Yì Jīng* began with people in China using *yīn* and *yáng* as binary arithmetic digits and giving the numbers names they developed into a system of augury. They assigned names to the eight possible combinations of three *yīns* or *yángs* and randomly selected from them both to predict and to determine behavior. And eventually, extending that system to the 64 possible combinations of eight *yīns* or *yángs*, emperors used it for that.

The phrase “*yì jīng*” in that title means “changes abiding writing”. And emperors of the *Zhōu* Dynasty used that system to decide how to force subordination of all of China to their control. And what we now call the *Yì Jīng* is a compilation of *Zhōu* Dynasty extrapolations with further extrapolation people traditionally attribute to Confucius. So, if Confucius and Lǎo Zǐ were contemporaries, it’s a culmination of four centuries of augury preceding the writing of the *Dào Dé Jīng*.

But perhaps the most extreme discordance of the *Yi Jīng* with the *Dào Dé Jīng* is that its polarity defines bigotry in general and sexism in particular.

It calls *yáng* positive and good and strong and masculine while it calls *yīn* negative and bad and weak and feminine. But the *Dào Dé Jīng*'s only direct reference to *yīn* and *yáng* is its 42nd segment's saying that everything carries *yīn* and embraces *yáng* and absorbs breath by actuating fusion. So, effectually decrying such as the *Zhōu* conquest, it says *yīn* and *yáng* unify one another into one another.

Yet commentary with other translations suggests that the *Yi Jīng* and the *Dào Dé Jīng* are as complementary to one another as are *yīn* and *yáng*. And English dictionaries further promulgate that problem by defining “yin” and “yang” as the the *Yi Jīng* defines “*yīn*” and “*yáng*”. So neither do I translate “*yīn*” and “*yáng*” in the next section of this book.

But the development of that discordance may be analogous with the development of any language. And Waley and Starr similarly extrapolate from their references to Buddhism into the linguistic abstraction the *Dào Dé Jīng* says is contrary to *dào*. And such is also relevant to another of Bodhidharma's developments at the Shaolin Monastery.

He also synthesized Daoism and Buddhism into an alternative to martial arts with its purpose not to defeat enemies but to actuate the acceptance and unity of Buddhism and Daoism to defeat the extreme polarity of enmity by way of its practitioners' establishing harmony with their opponents by according their motion with the motion of the opponents to make the opponents no longer opponents.

That is, he developed a way to obviate enmity by supplanting discord with harmony, disparity with unity. But now the Shaolin Monastery is an academy not for Bodhidharma's alternative to martial arts but for martial arts English-speaking people call kung fu. And the history of that

alternative to martial arts may illustrate how all of the *Dào Dé Jīng* is an elaboration of its shortest segment, how returning is the common denominator of those five translations of its fortieth segment, how *dào* is by cyclic *dé*.

Eventually, another monk, Zhang Sanfeng, responded to that perversion of Bodhidharma's alternative to martial arts by separating himself from the Shaolin Monastery. He trekked the approximately three hundred miles from that Buddhist monastery to the Daoist monastery on Wudang Mountain. And there, returning to Bodhidharma's purpose, he taught Daoists what people now call *tài jí quán*.

But now, effectually actuating a metaphor for the cycle of *dé*, most people ostensibly practicing *tài jí quán* are reverting to the reversion from it. The phrase "*tài jí quán*" literally means "extreme polarity fist", and now its practitioners and others call the development at the Shaolin Monastery Shaolin fist and deprecate it, but they also ignore the original metaphorical meaning of the phrase "*tài jí quán*". Originally, in that context, the fist was a metaphor for returning from extreme polarity.

Fingers are like poles, and folding them into a fist unifies them, returning them from their disparity. And, by being somewhat spherical, a fist is somewhat like that traditional depiction of *yīn* and *yáng*. But most people ostensibly practicing *tài jí quán* ignore all of that and contradict themselves to do it.

Most of them say Zhang Sanfeng founded *tài jí quán*, but reverting from his reversion from the perversion of Bodhidharma's discipline requires ignoring writings they say define *tài jí quán*, while the same practitioners call those writings the *tài jí quán* abiding writings or classics while also using a term from them to designate the beginning and ending positions of the traditional *tài jí quán* practice sequence.

That term is “*wú jí*” and literally means “having no polarity”, and what Bodhidharma originated is literally “going with the flow,” and many people use that phrase to designate the fundamental premise of Daoism. And “*bodhi dharma*” is Sanskrit for “consciousness of the universal order”, and “*bodhi sattva*” is Sanskrit for “consciousness of the essence of being”, and “*bodhi*” is an inflection of the Pali or Vedic Sanskrit word “*buddha*”. And, in Buddhism, *bodhisattvas* are Buddhists who devote their being to returning all to consciousness of the primal unity.

So comparing the *Dào Dé Jīng* to the *Heart Sutra* is literally interpolation. And, while my mentioning all of that may seem to extrapolate from the simplicity of the *Dào Dé Jīng*, that would require ignoring the *Dào Dé Jīng*'s many references to unity and continuity. So that whole historical process is effectually a metaphor for the cycle of primal unity disintegrating into what the *Dào Dé Jīng* calls the ten thousand things before eventually returning to primal unity.

And the *tài jí quán* abiding writings contain many explicit references to the *Dào Dé Jīng*. So all of that confusion or diffusion is effectually a metaphor for both *tài jí* and *wú jí* and for how *dé* effects *dào*. But, to close this introduction, let's consider the relationship between Daoism and the interrelationships among all of the six most popular religions.

Of the six, three originated in what we call the Far East, and realizing unity is a common theme of the definitive scriptures of each of those three. And, literally linguistically, that theme has also seeped somewhat into the other three of the six, the Abrahamic religions of what we call the Middle East, Judaism and Christianity and Islam. The word “amen” may be a cognate of the syllable “om” meaning “all” that Hindus use to designate and praise the absolute unity of all.

And “*omni*” is a Latin prefix meaning “all”, and Latin is the language of the liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church, and English-speaking Christians use that prefix in the words “omnipotent” and “omnibenevolent” and “omnipresent” to say that what English-speaking people call God is all-powerful and all goodness and present in all places at once.

And the definitive scripture of Judaism is most of the definitive scripture of Christianity, and the definitive scripture of Islam says it confirms the definitive scriptures of Christianity and Judaism, but people claiming those three religions have virtually institutionalized strife with one another.

The strife of Judaism against Christianity began with the founding of Christianity, and the strife of Judaism and Christianity against Islam began with the founding of Islam, and now we’ve given that strife the designations “crusades” and “struggle” and “war on terror”.

The Arabic word for “struggle” in that context is “*jihad*”, and Christians and Jews often mistranslate it to mean “holy war”, and the crusades were Christian efforts to take Jerusalem from Muslims who took it from Jews, and “the war on terror” is a term Christian and Judaic people of the United States coined to refer to the 21st century manifestation of that strife, and it became an expression of the opinion that Muslims are entirely at fault in it.

But the main epistemological difference between those three Middle Eastern religions and those three Far Eastern religions is the difference between what theologians call dualism and what they call monism. That is, the definitive scriptures of Judaism and Christianity and Islam describe God as though he’s separate from his creation, while the definitive scriptures of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Daoism say in various ways that all is one and that all differences are illusion. Effectually they say that the one that’s all imagined the

differences and that the way to both truth and absolute bliss is to extinguish that illusion.

People claiming the Abrahamic religions say Hindus' worshiping different entities makes them polytheistic. But actuality is that Hindus think that, because all is one deific totality, each part of it is deific, imaginary or not. So Hinduism is both monistic and monotheistic while the Abrahamic religions are monotheistic but dualistic.

But the Abrahamic religions aren't literally theistic.

The words "deific" and "theistic" are Latin and Greek forms of a Sanskrit word meaning "glow", but English-speaking people use those words as though they're adjectival forms of the word "god", while the word "god" is Germanic and shares its etymology with the English word "good" by way of the German words "*gott*" and "*gutt*". And Hindus, whose scripture is in Sanskrit, use the origin of the word "deistic" to refer to both what they call *devas* and what they call *asuras*.

In Hinduism, though "deity" is also a form of the word "deva", "*deva*" designates good metaphorical deific personifications while "*asura*" designates evil metaphorical deific personifications. That is, Hindu scriptures use the word "*deva*" to designate indications of unity and thus harmony, while they use "*asura*" to designate imaginings of disparity and strife. But they attribute all of that to the one that's all.

And, in Hindu scripture, the nearest equivalent to an entity like the God of Abraham, a person with both absolute power and human emotions and behaving accordingly, is a metaphorical personification of the king of the *devas*.

But some Hindu scripture personifies "*brahman*".

"*Brahman*" literally means "expansive" and in Hinduism refers to the universal self that's the totality of all separate selves. And "*atman*" is the Sanskrit word Hindus use to refer to each separate self, and the primary Hindu

expression of the fundamental premise of Hinduism is their saying that each separate self and the universal self are identical, that the *atman* is *brahman*. So one may say *brahman*'s also being the *atman* makes it like what English-speaking adherents to the Abrahamic religions call God.

So Hindus might say the reason Jesus said loving one's neighbor is like loving God may be that, because God is everything, one's neighbor *is* God. But, because the Abrahamic religions are dualistic, none of the adherents of those three religions say that. Yet, in various ways, Buddhists and Daoists might.

And Daoists might say it most plainly. Excepting in the way in which the German word "*gott*" and the English word "god" share their etymology with the German word "*gut*" and the English word "good", neither do Buddhist *suttas* or *sutras* deploy a word equivalent to the English word "god", and neither does the *Dào Dé Jīng*. But the *Dào Dé Jīng*, while also extensively metaphorical, makes the problem of linguistic abstraction more explicit.

Because Buddhism developed from Hinduism in India, Buddhist *Suttas* and *Sutras* occasionally refer to Hindus' deistic personifications to use them metaphorically as do Hindus, but Daoism and the *Dào Dé Jīng* originated in China among a variety of folk religions with no single pervasive system of such metaphorical personifications or rituals.

The *Dào Dé Jīng* eight times deploys a *zì* meaning "spirit", once deploys a *zì* meaning "ghost", and once refers to a shrine. But spirit in Daoism is a generally a driving force like the common denominator of the phrases "human spirit" and "spirited horse". And the ghost and shrine references are to Chinese folk religions and are somewhat deprecatory.

And, in the monism of Daoism, the spirit is universal. And, because, accordingly, Daoists are effectually

monotheistic, that spirit is universally conscientious. And, for both reasons, Daoists strive only not to strive.

So, moreover, a reason estimates of the number of Daoists range from fewer than 24 million to more than 173 million may be that the 24 million practice rituals in temples while the *Dào Dé Jīng* prescribes none of that and constrains no one from accepting any religion or anything else that's as accepting as Daoism. That is, if either Hindus and Buddhists or Jews and Christians and Muslims can find a way to reconcile their scriptures with the *Dào Dé Jīng*, they may also be Daoist. But, whether or not proponents of the other five religions recognize that, it can work both ways.

When Hindus worship one metaphorical personification more than others, the reason is that it helps them settle their minds, diminish their distraction.

It isn't direct realization of absolute unity but a step toward it through the labyrinth of ordinary human imaginings of disparity. So the alternative would be what Christian scripture says Christ called kicking against the prick. And that's opposite to what the *Dào Dé Jīng* calls *dào*.

And Hindus' rituals are metaphorical representations of their scriptures. And Hindus' reasons for involving themselves in the rituals and studying their scriptures are the same as their reason for worshiping imaginary entities. All of it's for them to remind themselves of the actuality of the primal and eternal unity they call *yoga*.

"*Yoga*" is a Sanskrit word meaning "*union*" that Hindus use to refer to realizing the unity of the universe, and they call an approach to that that's more direct than is worship or ritual *dhyana yoga*, essentially meditating on the alternative to meditating on anything in particular.

And, fundamentally, the only difference between Hinduism and Buddhism is that Buddhists limit their direct efforts toward extinguishing the illusion of differences to

what Hindus call *dhyana yoga* or to what Hindus call *jnana yoga*, effectually meditating on how the illusions relate to one another and thus are one, and to a more Daoist approach to quotidian life.

So Hindus call realizing the unity of all *yoga*, while Buddhists call it *nibbana* or *nirvana*, while Daoists call it returning. So, both epistemologically and essentially, those three religions are fundamentally identical. And much of what the Bible says Jesus said also promotes that *dé* and *dào*.

And one of the proverbs in the Bible's entirely Judaic section succinctly defines the problem that *dé* and *dào* and attempts at *yoga* and *nibbana* or *nirvana* seek to solve. That proverb of the ostensibly wise king Solomon says that, through desire, a man, having separated himself, seeks and intermeddles with all wisdom. And the *Qur'an* also contains stories of Solomon while specifying that other Abrahamic scriptures it confirms are the Torah and the gospels.

So treating this closing of this introduction as a Zen koan or as *jnana yoga* may tell you that Kipling was both wrong and right when he said "East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet, Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat."

"Koan" is a Japanese pronunciation of a Chinese phrase idiomatically referring to a judge's desk but literally referring to a public incident. And, in Zen, it refers to words that apparently are *non sequitur* and to trying to understand how they nevertheless ultimately relate to one another and thus ultimately are *sequitur*. And they're public in that monks who ordinarily meditate alone work on them together and in that Zen Buddhists share them with all as *bodhisattvas* try to help all achieve *nirvana*.

And relevance of all of that to Daoism is in that the *Dào Dé Jīng*, while deprecating the abstraction of words, uses words to express that deprecation.

But I've tried to present the *Dào Dé Jīng* in a way giving you a way to decide reasonably for yourself what it means. So you, the reader, can ignore most of this introduction and my other comments and my paraphrasing and use my textual annotations to create your own translation and commentary, or you can ignore my annotations and extrapolate it entirely into your own presuppositions, etc. Or, by not reading this book, you can ignore all of it.

But, moreover and nevertheless, whatever you do or don't do with this book, and however you come upon deciding how or whether to do it, the translation in the next section of this book says only what the *Dào Dé Jīng* says.

So it's only a Daoist sharing.

Dào Dé Jīng

1

Dào can [be] *dào* (contrary to) continuing *dào*.
Names can [be] names (contrary to) continuing names.
(Having no) names [is the] origin (6) (of)(5) sky [and] earth.
Having names [is the] (ten thousand) things(‘) mother.
Thus, continually (having no) desire
[is] by perceiving their essence,
[and] continually having desire
[is] by perceiving their manifestation.
[And} these two [are] one’s unity.
While (2) emitting different names,
unity [is] called (its) obscuring
obscurity(‘s) again obscuring
everything’s essence(‘s) gate.

Paraphrase

Neither *dào* nor names must be continuous. Originally neither the sky nor the earth had names. Having names is the mother of the many things.

So continually having no desire is how one perceives the many things' essence, and continually having desire is how one perceives their manifestation, but those two are one's unity.

So, while emitting different names, one calls unity unity's obscuring unity's repeatedly obscuring everything's essence's gate.

Comment

This segment, expressing the fundamental premise of both Hinduism and Buddhism that all is one but imagined itself into the multiplicity of differences we call reality that makes want possible, attributes that process to the abstraction of words.

So, by effectually expressing the main difference between Hinduism and Buddhism, that Hindu scriptures generally express that in terms of complex metaphors while Buddhist scripture expresses it more directly, it says how words and extreme polarity are analogous, and effect greed.

And it extends that motif into effectually saying the word "*dào*" is no exception to that abstraction and that perceiving essence and having no desire and perceiving manifestations and having desire are no exception to unity. And the first sentence of this segment also expresses the basic notion of the *Dào Dé Jīng* that *dào* is nevertheless going with the flow. And the Chinese word for "by" in this segment is in the *Dào Dé Jīng* 162 times and can refer to any relationship of cause or intent.

So, with this segment's closing sentence's effectually using a Chinese word for "gate" as a synonym for "*dào*", it introduces both the purpose of the *Dao De Jing* and its framework.

2

Below (2) sky, all know beauty, action (of)(6) beauty,
(because of) already (3) disdaining,
[and] all know good, action (of)(4) good,
(because of) already (4) (not being) good.
Thus: Having [and] (not having) mutually live;
difficulty [and] ease mutually complete;
long [and] short mutually compare;
lofty[and] low mutually support;
sound [and] melody mutually fuse;
[and] front [and] back mutually follow.
By (that is) *shēng rēns*' (staying in) (having no) acting,
their work's progress (not being) word(s') teaching, [and]
the (ten thousand) things arise therein while not refusing.
Living while not having, acting while not relying,
[and] serving while not stopping
largely [is] only not stopping.
That's by not abandoning.

Paraphrase

Below the sky, only by having disdained or having been other than good does anyone know beauty or goodness or their action.

And, in the same way: Having and not having live together, as difficulty and ease complete one another, as length and shortness are in comparison to one another, as loftiness and lowness support one another, as sound and melody infuse one another, as front and back follow one another.

And that's how *shēng rěns* sustain having no acting: Their work's progress isn't words' teaching,

So, while not refusing, the many things arise in that. So, largely, living while not having, acting while not relying, and serving while not stopping, is only not stopping. It's by not abandoning.

Comment

This segment extends the first segment's notion of the interrelationship of having and not having to other conditions. So, effectually, it extends the notion of the interrelationship of *yīn* and *yáng* into the notion that universal unity depends only on its being what it is. And it says *shēng rěns* behave accordingly and that, by accepting the benefits of that, ultimately so do others.

3

Not honoring worth causes people not (to contend).
Their (5) not valuing goods (6) difficult (to attain)
causes people not (to enact) robbery.
Not seeing ability (to desire)
causes people's (not to be) discordant.
That's by *shēng rèns*(') governance.
Emptying their minds (to fill) their stomachs
yields their will [and] strengthens their bones.
Continually causing people (to have no) cunning
[and] (have no) desire
causes largely cunning ones not (to risk) acting (!)
Action (having no) acting [is] next (having no) not governing.

Paraphrase

Not honoring worth keeps people from contending. Not valuing goods difficult to obtain constrains people from robbery. And not seeing ways to be greedy keeps people from being discordant.

So that's how *shēng rěns* govern:

Emptying people's minds to fill their stomachs yields their will but to strengthening their bones. And continually causing people to have no cunning and have no desire keeps largely cunning ones from risking acting. And action having no acting prevents anarchy.

Comment

Wéi wú wéi, action having no acting, practically defines *dào*. And the emptying of minds here is emptying them of the abstraction of words' creating artificial notions of value causing people to desire more than they need or to desire things or situations for which they have no use. So this segment, through effectually arguing that those misconceptions of value wreak havoc, practically defines *wéi wú wéi*.

And, initiating the *Dào Dé Jīng*'s using government as a metaphor for that, this segment effectually says *shēng rěns* would govern by making governing unnecessary. It says, essentially, that they'd relinquish governing to the absolute interrelationship of cause and effect Hindus call *karma*. So it expresses the quotidian practicality of the first two segments.

4

Dào absorbs while use (of it) perhaps doesn't fill.

Deep (!) [It] seems [to be the] (ten thousand) things(?) ancestor,
blunting their edges, loosening their knots,
fusing their brightness, uniting their dust.

Dark (!) [It] seems perhaps (to remain).

I don't know who [are] (its) children.

Imagining creation [is] (its) precedent.

Paraphrase

Dào absorbs while using it may not fill. And, deep, it seems to be the many things' ancestor, blunting their edges and loosening their knots, fusing their brightness and uniting their dust. But, dark, it seems perhaps to remain.

So I don't know who *dào*'s children are.

But imagining creation is its precedent.

Comment

This segment, beginning by referring to the perpetual inclusiveness of *dào*, concisely defines both its clarifying and simplifying unifying quiescence and its primal origin. But it also expresses its obscurity, the difficulty of understanding it through the abstraction of words, and such obscurity is a theme not only in the *Dào Dé Jīng* but also in Buddhist and Hindu scripture. An example is that the *Upanishads* use the word “*upanishad*” as though it means “secret”.

But more obscurity may be in that, considering that the Chinese language depends on context to indicate number for pronouns, a question is whether the first person pronoun in the last sentence of this segment is the author, or all *shēng rěns*, or all of us.

And that question also applies to other uses of that *wú zì* in the *Dào Dé Jīng*.

And the Chinese often omit pronouns when their inferable.

5

Sky [and] earth don't (feel as humans)
by [the] (ten thousand) things' (acting as) straw dogs.
Shēng rēns don't (feel as humans)
by [the] hundred (family names') (acting as) straw dogs.
Sky [and] Earth, (their) space: It's like bellows pipes (!),
emptying while not collapsing,
moving while emitting (4) more.
Many words, counting [to] exhaustion,
aren't like keeping [the] center.

Paraphrase

As sky's earth doesn't feel as humans feel for the many things acting as kindling, *shēng rěns* don't feel as other humans feel for the many families acting as kindling. The space of sky and earth is like a bellows, emptying while not collapsing while their motion emits more. Yet many words, counting to exhaustion, aren't like keeping to the core.

Comment

Straw dogs, bundles of twigs for starting fires, here are a metaphor for expendability. And most Chinese families have one of about a hundred names, making the hundred family names synecdoche for all humans, as the ten thousand things are synecdoche for all things. And comparing the space of sky and Earth to bellows is like the fourth segment's saying *dào* absorbs while perhaps not filling.

So the beginning of this segment basically says *shēng rěns* are like the sky and the earth in their lack of human sentiment. And, effectually making this entire segment a metaphor for the superficiality of the abstraction of words, it closes by effectually saying words are a distraction. So, with this segment expressing the basis for pejorative uses of the word "sentimental", what the things and families kindle is a bonfire of the vanities,

6

Valleys' spirit doesn't die:

That's called obscure femininity.

Obscure femininity [is] (its) gate:

That's called sky's earth root.

Perpetually perpetuating resembling remaining,
use (of it) isn't labor.

Paraphrase

Valleys' spirit doesn't die. That's called obscure femininity. So one calls obscure femininity the gate to valleys' spirit. So one calls that relationship between obscure femininity and valleys' spirit the root of the sky in earth. And, perpetually perpetuating seeming to remain, use of it is effortless.

Comment

Valleys, throughout the *Dào Dé Jīng*, are a metaphor for the free flow of all to all. And femininity, throughout the *Dào Dé Jīng*, is a metaphor for passive acceptance of that flow. And this segment, saying that's the relationship between the sky and Earth, effectually says it's easy acceptance of the perpetuity of the primal unity however obscure it may be

7

Sky continues. Earth endures.

Sky [and] Earth,

by (2) wherein one (7) can continue [and] yet endure,

don't (3) live (5) by their self

[and] thus can continue life.

By (2) (that are) *shēng rěns*.

[Is] their bodies [being] behind (1) while bodies precede

[and] rejecting their bodies while bodies remain

(contrary to) [being] by their (having no) self-interest (?)

Thus [is] ability (to complete) their self-interest.

Paraphrase

Sky continues, and earth endures, but how and wherein can they do that? They don't live by their self, and thus they can continue life, and that's how *shēng rěns* are! So neither their bodies' being behind while others' bodies precede theirs, nor their rejecting their bodies while others' bodies remain, is contrary to their self-interest.

It's how they can complete their self-interest!

Comment

This segment, elaborating on the sixth segment by expressing the notion Hindus express more succinctly by saying the *atman* is *brahman*, points to the linguistic problem of how selflessness fulfills one's self and why Buddhists, while completely agreeing with that Hindu expression, say they deny that any *atman* is.

And the *zì* meaning "self" in this segment and throughout the *Dào Dé Jīng* is also a primary division while the primary division of the *zì* in this segment meaning "self-interest" means "grain" and thus connotes multiplicity.

So completing one's self-interest is returning the self to consciousness of the primal unity rather than promulgating the disparity.

8

High good resembles water.

Water's good (is advantageous to) [the] (ten thousand) things
while not contending

[and is] wherein staying all humans(?) disdain
is thus near to *dào*.

Stopping [is] good [on] earth. Mind [is] good [in] depth;

Sharing [is] good [in] (human feeling),

Words [are] good [in] honesty.

Norms [are] good [in] governing. Work [is] good [in] ability;

Motion [is] good [in] timeliness.

Largely only not contending thus (has no) fault.

Paraphrase

High good is like water.

So, while not contending, water's good is advantageous to the many things and is wherein and how staying all humans' disdain is close to *dào*.

And stopping is good on earth as mind is good in depth. And sharing is good in human sentiment as words are good in honesty. And norms are good in governing as work is good in ability as motion is good in timeliness.

So, largely, only not contending has no fault.

Comment

This segment extends the metaphor of valleys into the goodness of water's accepting the flow rather than contending and then extends that into suggesting how other entities can behave accordingly.

And it closes by saying that's how one can be faultless.

9

Grasp while filling (of it) isn't as it's done.

Secure while sharpness (of it) isn't able long (to protect).

Gold [and] jade filling halls, none (of it) can [be] kept.

Valuing (2) abundance while [being] (proud of) self
[is] losing and its downfall.

Service achieved, body retreating, [is] sky('s) *dào*.

Paraphrase

If one fills halls with gold and jade, one can keep none of it. So grasp while what the grasping would fill isn't as though its already full. And secure while the sharpness of what one would secure can't long protect it from being secured. Valuing abundance while being proud of the self will be the loss of the abundance and the downfall of the self. So the *dào* of the sky is to withdraw one's body when one has achieve one's service.

Comment

This segment is the first of the *Dào Dé Jīng*'s many ways of saying that essential to *dào* is knowing what's enough.

10

(To carry) managing personalities,
embracing oneness can (have no) separateness (!)
Concentrating breath (to send) pliancy
[is an] ability [of] infant children (!)
Washing [and] clearing obscure vision can (have no) fault (!)
Loving people [and] governing nations can (have no) knowing (!)
Sky's gate's opening [and] closing can (act as a) hen (!)
Light's brightening [the] four reaches can (have no) acting (!)
(Its)(2) life [and] (its)(4) domesticity
enliven while not having, actuate while not relying,
[and] prolong while not controlling.
That's called obscure *dé*.

Paraphrase

Carrying out managing personalities embracing unity can have no disparity; concentrating breath to send pliancy is an ability of infant children.; and washing and clearing obscure vision can have no fault. And neither loving people nor governing nations requires knowing, as the opening and closing of the gate of the sky can act as a hen, as light requires no acting to brighten all around. And light's life and domesticity enliven and actuate and prolong while possessing or depending on or controlling nothing.

But that's called obscure *dé*.

Comment

Carrying managing personalities is governing, and concentrating breath to bring pliancy is infants' waving their arms and legs as they wail, and this segment uses the second of those functions as a metaphor for taking a wholistic approach to the first.

And, effectually, this segment says clarity of vision is essential to the faultlessness of that wholistic approach. But, by also including loving people in that approach while also saying knowledge isn't necessary for it, this segment excludes from that approach the abstraction of such as scholarship. And it uses behaving as a hen as a metaphor for that love.

But, while using light as a metaphor for *wéi wú wéi*, it closes by says one calls that obscure *dé*.

So it defines the need for *shēng rēns*.

11

Three tens [of] spokes share one hub.

(By way of) their (not having), carts (5) have (their) use.

By (3) shaping clay [is] actuating implements.

(By way of) their (not having), implements (5) have (their) use.

By (4) chiseling doors [and] windows [is] actuating rooms.

(By way of) their (not having), rooms (5) have (their) use.

Thus, having [is] (their) acting by advantage.

(Not having) [is] (their) action by use.

Paraphrase

Thirty spokes share one hub. So carts have their use by way of the spokes not having the hub. And, as actuating implements is by shaping clay for the implements to have their use by way of not having the space within them, actuating rooms is by chiseling doors and windows for the rooms to have their use by way of their not having that space. So having is those entities' acting by advantage. But not having is their action by use.

Comment

Bowls are a kind of clay implement. And this segment is an effort to explain *wéi wú wéi* in terms of the *Dào Dé Jīng*'s notion of not having being not only the origin of having but also ultimately more useful than groping for possession. And all of that's also another way of expressing the notion that essential to *dào* is knowing what's enough.

12

[The] five colors make human's eyes blind.

[The] five sounds make humans' ears deaf.

[The] five flavors make humans' mouths insipid.

[And] chasing excessively [in] fields hunting
makes human's minds turn mad.

[And] difficulty (of)(3) attaining goods
makes humans practice hindrance.

By (2) (that is) *shēng rěns'*

actuating stomachs [and] not actuating eyes,

thus abandoning [the] latter (to capture) [the] former.

Paraphrase

The five colors blind humans' eyes as the five pitches deafen their ears as the five flavors make their mouths tasteless. And, as excessively chasing in fields hunting maddens humans' minds, difficulty of attaining goods makes humans hinder others from obtaining them. So *shēng rěns*, by actuating stomachs and not eyes, appeal to stomachs but leave eyes as they are.

Comment

The five colors and pitches and flavors, like the primary colors and the chromatic scale and the five taste types, are traditional taxonomies of those sensations. But this segment, using them as examples of artificial complexity, elaborates further on the *Dào Dé Jīng*'s fundamental notion that the abstract disparity that's the alternative to acceptance and clarity the tenth segment also says is obscure *dé* is detrimental distraction. So it makes those taxonomies a metaphor for departure from the primal unity and thus a motive for *shēng rěns*' governing by such as emptying minds of such to fill stomachs.

13

Favor [and] dishonor resemble fear.

Value [and] great grief resemble bodies.

What's called favor [and] dishonor resembling fear?

Favor actuates [being] below.

Attainment (of it) resembles fear [as] loss (of it) resembles fear.

That's called favor [and] dishonor resembling fear.

What's called value [and] great grief resembling bodies?

We, by (3) wherein, have great grief?

One's actuating our having bodies reaches our having no bodies,
[and] we have what grief?

Thus, by (3) valuing bodies' action below (7) sky,

one can entrust below (5) sky,

[and], by (2) cherishing bodies' action below (6) sky,

one can trust below (5) sky.

Paraphrase

Favor and dishonor are like fear as value and great grief are like bodies.

But what is what one calls favor and dishonor being like fear? It's that, as favor actuates subordination, attainment of it is like fear as loss of it is like fear! That's what's called favor and dishonor being like fear.

But what's called value and great grief being like bodies? The wherein by which we have great grief is that one's actuating our having bodies eventually reaches our not having them! But, having no bodies, we have what grief.

Thus, valuing bodies' action below the sky is how one can entrust below the sky, but cherishing bodies' action below the sky is how one can trust below the sky.

Comment

A plainer paraphrase of how both favor and dishonor are like fear would be to say acquiring favor incurs fear of losing it.

But the conclusion here may be that the transience of the physical component of personality makes entrusting dependent on extrapolation into abstraction, that the distinction between entrusting and trusting is in that trust doesn't require relinquishing responsibility, and that the distinction between valuing and cherishing is that valuing depends more on reasoning.

But, of course, the notion of the primal unity obviates that distinction along with all distinctions and the need for reasoning.

14

Perceiving('s) not seeing names speaks smoothly.
Listening('s) not hearing names speaks quietly.
Grasping('s) not attaining names speaks subtly.
[To] these three, one isn't able (to send) inquiry.
Thus, mixing while actuating oneness,
their above isn't bright, [and] their below isn't dim.
Boundless boundlessness isn't able (to name)
returning [and] reverting to (having no) things.
That's called (having no) shape('s) shape
[and] (having no) thing('s) image,
[and] that's called vague [and] elusive.
(Its) (2) front doesn't see its face, [and]
[and] (its) (2) rear doesn't see its back.
Seizing [the] primal('s) *dào* by directing now
(its) having ability (to know) [the] primal origin,
that's called *dào*'s thread.

Paraphrase

Perceiving's not seeing names speaks smoothly; listening's not hearing names speaks quietly; and grasping's not attaining names speaks subtly.

So one can't send inquiry to those three. Blending into actuating unity, the top of those three isn't bright, and their bottom isn't dim. And boundless boundlessness can't name returning to reverting to having no things.

So returning to reverting to having no things is called having no shape's shape and having no thing's image. And, with that returning's front not seeing its face and its rear not seeing its back, that's called vague and illusive. But grasping the primal's *dào* by directing having in the present the ability to know the primal origin is called *dào*'s thread.

Comment

This segment somewhat succinctly expresses both the metaphysical basis of Daoism and the ineffectuality of trying to explain it in words. And, with historians generally saying Lǎo Zǐ's life was approximately contemporaneous with the Buddha's, it suggests that the Buddha may have been conscious of Lǎo Zǐ. So it may say why Buddhists call their scripture threads.

But it may also refer to what Hindus call *dhyana yoga* and to why "zen" is a Japanese pronunciation of "chan", a Chinese pronunciation of "*dhyana*", Sanskrit for "meditation". And also those analogies may only be evidence that both Lǎo Zǐ and the Buddha were conscious of the primal unity and accordingly said everyone eventually and inevitably shares. And Hindus also meditate on the question of how one can perceive the perceiver.

And, incidentally, the principal division of the *gǔ zì* meaning "primal" in the *Dào Dé Jīng* means "mouth".

15

Primal('s) good actuates mastering one's subtle essence,
obscurely penetrating depth not able [to be] understood.
Largely only not (being able) (to understand)
thus forces calling (its) demeanor cautious,
therein resembling fording [a] stream [in] winter; [and],
vigilant (!), resembling fearing four sides; [and]
reverent (!), it resembles tolerance; [and]
yielding (!), resembling ice, (its) beginning (to melt).
Kind (!), it resembles [the] uncut.
Open (!), it resembles valleys.
Mixed (!) , it resembles mud.
What can mud, by (its)(6) stillness, gradually clear?
What can stillness, by (its)(7) enduring motion, gradual enliven?
Protecting this *dào*, one doesn't desire filling
[and] largely only not filling thus enables shielding,
not new completion.

Paraphrase

The good of the primal, obscurely penetrating to incomprehensible depth, actuates mastering the subtlety of one's essence. So, largely, only incomprehensibility forces calling the primal good's demeanor cautious, as though it's fording a stream in winter or vigilant as though it's fearing all around or reverent as though it's tolerant or yielding, like ice's beginning to melt. But, kind, it's like the uncut; and, open, it resembles valleys; and, mixed, it's like mud.

So what, by its stillness, can mud gradually clear, and what can stillness gradually enliven, by its enduring motion?

Protecting that *dào*, not desiring filling and thus largely only not filling, enables shielding instead of needing new completion.

Comment

The *zì* meaning “uncut” in this segment originally referred to an uncut block of wood and now idiomatically means “whole” or “simple”. So, in its eight occurrences in the *Dào Dé Jīng*, it's a metaphor for the continuity of primal wholeness. And mixing of mud is a metaphor for returning to unity.

So *dào*, being that returning, would enable keeping all as it always is, and the *zì* meaning “mastery” here is also a principal division meaning “scholar”, making this segment another reference to the apparent but ultimately not actual distinction between abstraction and the clarity of direct comprehension.

And filling is a sort of grasping.

16

Sending voiding polarity keeps quiescence firm.
[The] (ten thousand) things together arise.
We, by perception, return.
Largely things bloom, [and], blooming, each returns,
(reverts to) its root.
(Reverting to) root speaks stillness.
That's called returning [to] destiny.
Returning [to] destiny speaks continuity.
Knowing continuity speaks light.
Not knowing continuity [is] error raising disaster.
Knowing continuity's demeanor, demeanor is broad.
Broad is noble. Noble is [the] sky.
Sky is *dào*. *Dào* is endurance.
Ending bodies isn't danger.

Paraphrase

Sending voiding polarity keeps quiescence firm. So, as the multiplicity of things arise, our perception returns us. So, largely, as things bloom, the blooming returns us, reverts us to our root.

And reverting to root speaks the stillness that's called returning to destiny, and returning to destiny speaks continuity, and knowing continuity speaks light.

And not knowing continuity is error raising disaster.

But knowing continuity's demeanor is to know its demeanor is broad. And broad is noble, and noble is the sky, and the sky is *dào*. And *dào* is endurance.

So ending bodies isn't danger.

Comment

The word for “polarity” here is the *jí zì* of “*tài jí*” and “*wú jí*”, and this segment begins by literally expressing the *tài jí quán* purpose of returning from extreme polarity to *wú jí*, no polarity. And, while treating the *gǔ zì* meaning “primal” as a synonym for “*wú jí*” in each of the *Dào Dé Jīng*'s eight deployments of it, the *Dào Dé Jīng* deploys the *cháng zì* meaning “continue” or “continuing” or “continuity” or “continual” thirty times. And it repeats the *fù zì* meaning “return” fifteen times and the *guī zì* meaning “revert” eleven times.

So, effectually saying *tài jí* is blooming, this segment effectually says *wú jí* is the destiny of all, and it ends by effectually extending that into saying *dào* effects that continuity as broadly and nobly as does the sky. And, with this segment's *zì* meaning “noble” also meaning “king” and it's *zì* for “broad” also meaning “minister”, its concluding that ending bodies isn't danger effectually says nobility is broader than temporal titles. So it says why kings and ministers should govern as would *shēng rèn*s.

It effectually says governing should be by *shēng rèn*s' *dé*.

17

Extreme height [is the] below knowing [the] having (of it).

Next [is] (their)(6) (personal attachment) while extolling.

Next [is] (their)(4) awe.

Next [is] (their)(4) contempt.

Honesty isn't enough therein, [and] having isn't honesty therein.

Reticence (!) Its value [is the] words:

“Service complete, work achieved,

[the] hundred (family names) all call our self so.”

Paraphrase

Extreme height is the below knowing one has it. Next in that extremity is the low personally attaching themselves to the high in exaltation. And next in it is their awe.

And next is their contempt. And honesty isn't enough in that. And having isn't honesty in it.

So reticence is the value in words saying service is complete when work is achieved with the many families all saying it's as though they did it.

Comment

With the word for “extreme” here being the *tài zì* of “*tài jǐ*”, this segment decries the alternative to what the 16th segment says of nobility and breadth, and the reason honesty isn't enough in that is that, as preaching isn't practicing, words aren't service.

So this segment, elaborating on what the 16th segment says of the hypocrisy of kings and ministers, says rhetoric with no service is only arrogant divisive fraud.

But, more importantly in regard to reverting to the primal unity, this segment most essentially says the nobility of government depends on helping people accord with their communal integrity.

18

Great *dào* abolishes having (human feeling) and morality,
intellect [and] cunning emitting having great hypocrisy,
the six personal attachments not fusing
having reverent devotion, [and]
nations' [and] households' murky discord,
having loyal ministers.

Paraphrase

Great dao abolishes having human sentiment and morality. It abolishes intellect and cunning producing having great hypocrisy. It abolishes the six personal attachments' not infusing having reverent devotion.

And it abolishes the murky discord of nations' and households' having loyal ministers.

Comment

Morality is arbitrary rules of conduct. And the six personal attachments Confucius designates are to one's father and mother, to one's older brother and younger brother, and to one's wife and male children. And what the *Dào Dé Jīng* otherwise says of women in regard to how a *shēng rèn* would govern gives particular significance to the exclusion of women from those relationships other than as mothers or spouses.

And this segment, in the context of the *Dào Dé Jīng*, effectually extends that further. Essentially, it says *shēng rèn*s would govern other than by such as leaders' and sycophant ministers' capitalizing on sentimentality by preaching abstraction, and it says a result of such is discord throughout society. And the *zì* meaning "minister" in this segment isn't the one also meaning "broad".

So this segment, concisely elaborating on the seventeenth segment, further indicates the alternative to how *shēng rèn*s would govern.

19

Severing *shēng* [and] rejecting cunning,
people [are] advantageous [a] hundred times.
Severing (human feeling) [and] rejecting morality,
people return [to] reverent devotion.
Severing scholarship [and] rejecting advantage,
robbery [and] theft (have no) having.
These three, by one's actuating rhetoric, aren't enough.
Thus, (to make) having wherein [is] dependability,
see plainly, embrace [the] uncut,
belittle self-interest, [and] diminish desire.

Paraphrase

Breaking from sanctimoniousness and cunning is advantageous to people a hundred times, as breaking from sentimentality and morality returns people to reverent devotion, as breaking from scholarship and advantage eliminates gain from thievery.

But saying all that isn't enough. So, to provide the wherein of dependability, see plainly. And, embracing the whole, belittle self-interest and diminishes desire.

Comment

This segment, including *shēng* among the sorts of abstraction open to hypocrisy, elaborates on the seventeenth segment's assertion that being honestly abstract isn't enough. So it effectually paraphrases the seventeenth and eighteenth segments. And it offers a solution.

And it also says that in the solution and absolution is realizing that the advantage one gains by breaking from the scholarship to which the twentieth segment refers is also the advantage one relinquishes to eliminate gain from thievery.

And all of this segment refers to the abstraction of words and to the discontinuity of them to which the first segment refers.

The breaking is detachment from the distraction.

20

Sever scholarship (to have no) sorrow.
(Its)(2) only sharing
mutual abandonment [is] near what good?(?)(1)
(Its) sharing disdain [is]
mutual abandonment resembling what humans?
Wherein (2) [is] their fear not able (not to be) fear?
Wild (!) It lacks limit (!)
Every human [is] joyful, joyful like enjoying great feasts,
like climbing (3) spring terraces.
I alone [am] calm (!) They lack significance,
like infant children, their lacking sons.
Weary, weary (!),
resembling (having no) place (to revert), [is] every human.
All have surplus while I alone resemble losing.
My foolish humans(‘) mind (!) [is] muddled, muddled (!)(?)(7)
Common humans [are] bright, bright; I alone [am] murky, murky.
Common humans [are] sharp, sharp; I alone confuse, confuse.
Calm(!) They resemble ocean gales(!),
resembling (having no) ceasing.
Every human: All have purpose
while I alone stupidly seem base.
I alone differ from humans while valuing mothers’ (9) food.

Paraphrase

Break from scholarship to have no sorrow.

What good does scholarship's only being abandoning one another approach? What humans does sharing the disdain of abandoning one another resemble? In what can those humans' fear not be fear?

Wild, their fear lacks limits! Yet every human is joyful, as though they're enjoying great feasts or climbing terraces in spring, while I alone am calm. Lacking significance, like infants having no sons, they're as weary as one would be having no place to which to return. And yet, while I alone seem to be losing, all of them have surplus. Is the foolishness of my human mind muddled?

Commonly, humans are bright and sharp, while I alone am murky and confused. But, while I'm calm, they're like seemingly incessant ocean gales! So I alone, while every other human has purpose, stupidly seem base.

Yet, while I alone am different from other humans, I value mothers' nurturance.

Comment

Extending the deprecation of words and other abstraction specifically to scholarship and on into scholars' social interaction indicates fundamental disparity between Lǎo Zǐ and Confucius. Confucius effectually formulated the Chinese tradition of basing government advancement on academic success. And in no other segment does the author refer to his or her self so directly.

And also pertinent to scholarship is that scholars saying the *Dào Dé Jīng* lacks continuity ignore the transitional value of this segment's first sentence to say its similarity to words in the nineteenth segment indicates that its being here and not there is a transcription error.

21

Inclusive, *dé*(’s) demeanor [is] wholly *dào*:

That’s following *dào*.

(Its) action [is] things wholly illusive [and] wholly vague.

Vague (!) Illusive (!) Its center has images.

Illusive (!) Vague (!) Its center has things.

Hidden (!) Dim (!) Its center has quiescence.

Its quiescence quite genuine, its center has honesty.

Self’s primal reaches now. Its naming doesn’t abandon.

By watching every creation,

we by what know every creation(’s) condition (?)

By this.

Paraphrase

Dé is inclusive. So its demeanor is wholly *dào*. So that's following *dào*.

Vague and illusive, *dé*'s center has images!

Illusive and vague, its center has things!

Hidden and dim, its center has quiescence!

And, with its quiescence quite genuine, its center has honesty. So, with the primal of the self reaching now, its naming doesn't abandon it! So by what do we know every creature's condition?

By watching it.

Comment

The question this segment addresses is how the first segment can be correct in what it says of *dào* and names. And, effectually, it replies that, while we may not perceive it, the primal self is perpetually in everything, honestly keeping its identity, whatever one calls it. And, by identifying *dé* with *dào*, this segment effectually specifies all creatures and selves and names in that assertion.

That is, this segment, by saying in one more way how all is all, reconciles the abstraction of the dichotomy of abstract and concrete, the dichotomy of down to earth and ethereal.

It says that, for the *yoga* of all and each with the primal and the eternal, all one must do is quietly pay attention.

22

Bent [js] next whole. Crooked [is] next correct.
Hollow [is] next full. Worn [is] next new.
Little next attains. Much next confounds.
By (that is) *shēng rēns*' embracing oneness
to actuate sky's below's standard.
Don't regard (3) self. Thus [is] light;
Don't [be] selfish. That's thus prominence;
Don't boast (3) self. Thus have service;
Don't arrogate (3) self. Thus prolong.
Largely only don't contend.
Thus, below (3) sky, none can share their contention.
[The] primal (of it),
wherein [is] calling bending next whole,
[is] what (2), one's empty words (?)
Truth [is] (its)(5) wholeness while reverting.

Paraphrase

What's bent is next whole as what's crooked is next correct. What's hollow is next full as what's worn is next new. Paucity next attains as multiplicity next confounds.

That's how and why *shēng rěns* embrace unity to actuate the standard below the sky. So not regarding the self results in light, as not being selfish results in prominence as not boasting of the self results in having service, and not arrogating the self thus sustains it. But, largely, only not contending results in all below the sky being unable to share their contention .

So is the primal of that, wherein one calls bending next whole, one's empty words?

Truth is its wholeness while reverting.

Comment

This segment effectually presents both the *shēng rěns*' ethic and the means by which anyone can find the way by which one can return from *tài jí* to *wú jí*. And what it says of light and service and sustenance and regarding the self as though it's separate from or superior to other selves one may imagine most basically says how truth can make one free. And note that, as “confuse” in the twentieth segment may refer to fusion, “confound” in this segment can mean “mix” as mud in the fifteenth segment is a metaphor for the return to unity.

23

[And] hope [and] words [and] self [are] so.
Thus, gusty wind doesn't outlast mornings,
[and] torrential rain doesn't outlast days.
What actuates this? One's sky's earth!
Sky's earth doesn't (4) honor ability (to endure),
while (more so) [is] from humans(!)
Thus follow work from one's (6) *dào*.
Dào [is] one's uniting to *dào*.
Dé [is] one's uniting to *dé*.
Loss [is] one's uniting to loss.
Uniting to *dào*, one's *dào* also enjoys attainment (of it).
Uniting to *dé*, one's *dé* also enjoys attainment (of it).
Uniting to loss, one's loss also enjoys attainment (of it).
Honesty isn't enough therein, and having isn't honesty therein.

Paraphrase

And hope and words and self are so. So gusty wind doesn't last all morning, and torrential rain doesn't last through days, and what actuates that is one's sky's earth. And, with sky's earth not honoring ability to endure, more of such is from humans.

So follow the workings of one's *dào*. *Dào* is one's uniting with *dào*, and *dé* is one's uniting with *dé*, and so is loss one's uniting with loss. And uniting with each is also each enjoying its attainment. So honesty isn't enough in that. And, in it, having isn't honesty.

Comment

This segment succinctly synthesizes and paraphrases the first and 17th and 22nd segments. The following in it is of the work of the self, as it winds through the twists and turns of *tài jí* in the *dé* of its *dào* returning it to *wú jí*, to each being only what all is. And the not honoring in it is of the having that's neither honesty nor enough.

And hope is like words and the self in that, while it springs eternal in the universal self, it's a relatively abstract notion in the hypothetically separate self. So this segment specifically includes it in the notion that all words are abstract. So this segment uses it as another effort to obviate that obscurity.

And such efforts to use words to obviate the obscurity of the abstraction of words is how Zen koans work and thus may be how Bodhidharma reconciled Daoism with Buddhism.

The loss is only of the obfuscation.

24

Erect, one isn't steady.

Striding, one isn't progressing.

Self: Regarding [it] isn't (4) one's light.

Self: That's ones not promoting [it]

Self: Boasting [it] isn't (4) one's service.

Self: Arrogating [it] isn't one's prolonging.

It's (present in) *dào* (!),

speaking [of] surplus food [and] superfluous progress
[as] things perhaps (of)(4) disdain.

Thus, having *dào*, one doesn't stay.

Paraphrase

Erect, one isn't steady. And, striding, one doesn't progress. And self regard isn't one's light as the self doesn't promote the self. So, as boasting of the self isn't one's service, arrogating the self isn't one's sustenance. So the self's presence in *dào* speaks of surplus food and superfluous progress as things perhaps of disdain. And thus, having *dào*, one isn't static.

Comment

This segment's beginning by effectually using walking as a metaphor for arrogating the separate self but closing by effectually saying not arrogating the self is how *dao* is fluid may seem paradoxical.

But the reference to superfluous progress may clarify that. And, generally concluding that surplus is a product of having by dishonesty and not knowing what's enough, paraphrases the 22nd and 23rd segments' elaboration on the first segment's saying *dào* can meander. So it's one more way of saying the self is in *dào* by way of the primal unity being all and thus having all anyone can have under any circumstances.

And, at least in the *Dào Dé Jīng*, that makes any progress other than quiescent acceptance of the *dào* of returning to the primal unity superfluous..

25

Having things mixed completely
preceded sky [and] earth [and] life:
Silent (!) Void (!) Alone, steady, not changing,
everywhere progressing while not endangering,
by (2) ability (to act as) sky's below's mother.
While (2) we know its name, (its)(6) children speak *dào*,
Forcing actuating (its) name speaks greatness;
greatness speaks reaching;
reaching speaks distance;
distance speaks returning.
Thus: *dào* [is] great; sky [is] great; earth [is] great;
[and] nobility [is] also great.
Countries' centers have four greats,
while nobility stops its oneness there.
Humans emulate earth; earth emulates sky;
sky emulates *dào*; [and] *dào* emulates self so.

Paraphrase

Having things mixed completely preceded sky and earth and life. Silent, empty and alone, steady and not changing, by its ability to act as sky's below's mother, it progresses everywhere while not endangering. So, while we know its name, its children speak of *dào*,

But forcing actuating its name speaks greatness. And greatness speaks reaching, and reaching speaks distance, and distance speaks returning. So *dào* is great, and so are sky and earth, and so is nobility.

So, at their core, countries have four greats. But, while nobility stops its oneness there, humans emulate earth as earth emulates sky as sky emulates *dào*. And that's how *dào* emulates self.

Comment

This segment, beginning by describing *wú jí* in terms Hindus use to describe *brahman*, expresses the basis for the *Dào Dé Jīng* in and especially its 24th segment. So, with “*brahman*” literally meaning “expansive”, it says that what it engenders expresses *dào*, whatever one calls it. And next it describes the cycle from *wú jí* to *tài jí* and back to *wú jí* or *brahman*.

But it closes by describing that cycle in political terms expressing both the limitation of the nobility of kings and the limitlessness of *dào* and the self. And, while the *guó zì* meaning “nation” is in the *Dào Dé Jīng* 28 times, the *yù zì* meaning “country” is in no segment other than this one. So, essentially, this segment elaborates on how *dào* meanders while retaining its integrity.

In other words, in the Vedic Sanskrit terms of Hinduism, it says the *atman* (self) is *brahman* (all).

26

Weight actuates light roots.

Quiescence actuates restless masters.

By (2) (that is) *shēng rěns*' outlasting [a] day's progress,
not (separating from) [the] baggage weight,
though having honorable perceivings,
[and] calmly staying indifferent so.

How [and] what [are] (ten thousand) chariots(') chiefs
while, by bodies [being] light below (6) sky,
lightness next loses root,
[and] restlessness next loses mastery?

Paraphrase

Weight makes roots light as quiescence makes masters restless, and that's why *shēng rēns* outlast a day's progress calmly and indifferently staying with the heavy baggage, though having honorable sights.

So how and what are chiefs of ten thousand chariots, while loss of bodies' roots results from their lightness below the sky, and loss of mastery results from restlessness?

Comment

The *Dào Dé Jīng* asks several of what one calls rhetorical questions. And this one presumably implies that levity makes chiefs of ten thousand chariots less substantial than *shēng rēns*. So, effectually, it expresses the ultimate ineffectuality of the notion of nobility of kings to which the 25th segment refers.

And it also implies that the solution is to govern as would *shēng rēns*.

Good progress (has no) (wheel ruts) [or] footprints.
Good words (have no) flaw [or] blame.
Good counting doesn't use tally slips.
Good closing (has no) bolt bar
while (not being) (able to be) opened.
Good knots (have no) rope binding
while (not being) (able to be) loosened.
By (2) (that is) *shēng rěns'* [being]
continually good [at] liberating humans,
thus (having no) rejecting humans,
thus continually [being] (good at) liberating things,
[and] thus (having no) rejecting things.
That's called following light, [and] thus:
[Being a] good humans, one isn't good humans(?) instructors;
[and], (not being) [a] good human,
one [is] good humans(?) resources.
Not valuing their instructing
(is not) cherishing their resources,
though knowing great delusion.
That's called important essence.

Paraphrase

As good progress has no wheel ruts or footprints, good words have no flaw or blame. As good counting uses no tally slips, good closing has no bolt bar but can't be opened, and good knots have no rope restraint but can't be loosened. And that's how *shēng rēns* are continually good at liberating humans and things and thus don't reject them.

And that's called following light. So good humans don't instruct good humans. And humans who aren't good are good humans' resources. So, not valuing instructing them while being aware of their great delusion, is good humans' not cherishing their resources. And that's called important essence.

Comment

Beginning by effectually saying the best way to avoid acting is to make acting unnecessary and that that's why *shēng rēns* practice *wéi wú wéi*, this section ends by effectually saying good and resourceful people don't waste their effort by instructing people who don't need instructing, and that they should cherish important and essential opportunities to instruct those who do need instructing.

28

Knowing its roosters [and] keeping its hens
actuates sky's below's creeks.

Actuating sky's below's creeks,

dé (6) continually doesn't (separate from) returning,
reverting to infant childhood.

Knowing its white [and] keeping its black
actuates sky's below's standard.

Actuating sky's below's standard,

dé (6) continually doesn't (deviate from) returning,
reverting to (having no) polarity.

Knowing its honor [and] keeping its dishonor
actuates sky's below's valleys.

Actuating sky's below's valleys

continues *dé* enough (to return),

(to revert) to (the uncut).

Dispersing (the uncut) next actuates implementing *shēng rèns*,

[and] (their)(2) use next actuates lasting (6) officiality,

thus greatly regulating, not injuring.

Paraphrase

Knowing sky's below's roosters while keeping its hens actuates sky's below's creeks, and actuating sky's below's creeks continually keeps *dé* from separating from returning, from reverting to infant childhood.

And knowing sky's below's white while keeping its black actuates sky's below's standard, and actuating sky's below's standard continually keeps *dé* from deviating from returning, from reverting to having no polarity.

So knowing sky's below's honor while keeping its dishonor actuates sky's below's valleys, and actuating sky's below's valleys continues *dé* enough to return, to revert to the whole.

But next the whole disperses, and that actuates implementing *shēng rēns*, and use of *shēng rēns* actuates lasting officiality, and thus great regulating, not injuring.

Comment

Compare this segment to the Gospel According to St. John saying Jesus said that, “except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

But, effectually, this segment closes by saying how *shēng rēns* would implement that through government. And of course the standard in this segment is the standard in the 22nd segment it exemplifies throughout. And the *zì* for “(having no) polarity” here are “*wú jí*.”

So this segment, describing the cycle from the *wú jí* that's the whole, through the dispersal that's *tài jí* and back to *wú jí* by way of *shēng rēns*' governance, closes by saying how it's cyclic and thus regular, and ultimately harmless.

29

Beginning (to desire) capturing sky's below
while [the] acting (of it) [is] our seeing
it isn't attained already [is]
sky's below's spirit implementing (not being) able (to act) (!)
Acting [is] one('s)(4) ruin.
Seizing [is] one('s)(4) loss.
Thus things' perhaps progressing [are] perhaps following;
perhaps exhaling [is] perhaps inhaling;
perhaps force [is] perhaps weakness;
[and] perhaps blunting [is] perhaps succumbing.
By (2) (that is) *shēng rèns*' abandoning,
quite abandoning, extravagance, abandoning excess.

Paraphrase

Beginning to desire acquiring below the sky while the acting of that beginning is our seeing that one hasn't already acquired it is sky's below's spirit implementing the inability to act.

So, with acting being one's ruin, seizing is one's loss. And, thus, things perhaps progressing may be following as what's perhaps exhaling may be inhaling. And force may be weakness as oppressing may be succumbing.

So that's why *shēng rěns*, quite abandoning extravagance, abandon excess.

Comment

This segment basically says desire is contrary to *dào* and that the spirit of sky's below actuates the standard the 22nd segment defines. And, elaborating on *wéi wú wéi* and its unifying effect, effectually it also says sky's below's spirit is what motivates *shēng rěns*. So this segment comes nearer than any other segment of the *Dào Dé Jīng* to personifying *dào*.

That is, it comes nearer than does any other segment to suggesting that *dào* has a personality, as Hindu scripture metaphorically personifies *brahman*.

But, in both instances, the spirit is pervasive.

30

By *dào*'s aiding human chiefs,
one doesn't, by weapons, force sky's below.
Their work usually rebounds,
teaching [that], wherein [is] (their) staying,
briars [and] brambles live there.
Great wars(') aftermath surely has disastrous crops.
Good ones resolve already (5) while
not risking capturing (4) by force.
Resolving while (having no) arrogance,
resolving while (having no) boasting,
resolving while (having no) pride,
[and] resolving while not attaining
[are] already resolving while (having no) force.
Things developing [and] next decaying:
That's called (not being) *dào*,
[and it] isn't *dào* early [and] already.

Paraphrase

With *dào* aiding human chiefs, one doesn't use weapons to force what's below the sky. And weapons' work, teaching that briars and brambles live where weapons abide, usually rebounds. So disastrous crops follow great wars while good wars are already resolving, not risking capturing by force, and with no arrogance, boasting, or pride. So one calls things' developing and decaying not being *dào*. And it isn't *dào* early and already.

Comment

This segment, alluding to what the 24th segment says of self, and to the light roots and lack of mastery of the chiefs of ten thousand chariots in the 26th segment, to extend to war the notion that doing only what's necessary for perpetuating the general welfare is essential to *dào*, says that what force develops is decadent and temporal and that one can accomplish its ostensible goals by simply letting all be.

And, while, idiomatically, that phrase literally meaning “early and already” now means “long ago”, here it refers to the fleeting temporality of the polarity during the *dào* of returning from it to the primal unity.

And, of course, the eventuality of that makes all temporality never anything.

31

Largely, one's excellent weapons,
(not being) fortune('s) implements,
[are] things perhaps (of)(4) disdain.
Thus, having *dào*, one doesn't stay.
Masters [and] children stop [and] next value [the] left.
Using weapons next values [the] right.
One's (2) weapons aren't fortune('s) implements,
aren't masters' [or] children('s) implements,
[and] don't attain already
while using (their) peace insipidly (to act) highly.
Conquering, while not beautiful, while [being] one('s)(7) beauty:
That's enjoying killing humans.
Largely, enjoying killing humans,
one next isn't able (to attain)(6) by will from sky's below (!)
Prosperous work honors [the] left.
Disastrous work honors [the] right.
Subordinates beginning war stop (on the left),
Superiors beginning war stop (on the right).
By (2) (its)(6) words, mourning's propriety stays
by (5) [the] killing (of) every human,
(their)(4) lamentation, sorrow [and] weeping.
By (3) battles' conquering, mourning('s)(7) propriety stays.

Paraphrase

Largely one's excellent weapons aren't implements of fortune but things perhaps of disdain. So, having *dào*, one doesn't abide by them, and masters and children stop abiding by them and then value the left, as using weapons values the right. So, being neither fortune's implements nor masters' or children's implements, one's weapons aren't already attaining while insidiously using masters' and children's peace to act highly. And conquering, while being one's glory, isn't glory but enjoying killing humans. So it can't attain from below the sky by sky's below's will.

So prosperous work honors the left as disastrous work honors the right, and subordinates beginning war stand on the left as superiors beginning war stand on the right, and that's how mourning's propriety's words abide by every human's lamentation of the killing of every human, by every human's sorrow and weeping, because of battles' conquering.

Comment

The left and right in this complexly metaphorical expression refer to traditions for standing at Chinese funerals and military ceremonies.

Propriety is ceremony, tradition, etc.

32

Dào, continually (having no) name, [is] uncut.
Though small, below (4) sky, (no one) can administer [it] (!)
Princes' nobility resembles (its)(6) ability (to keep)
[the] (ten thousand) things' beginning self homage.
Sky [and] earth mutually combine by dropping sweet dew.
People, while (5) none (of them) make self harmony,
originate governing having names.
Names also finish,
having largely also begun knowing ceasing.
Knowing [the] ceasing wherein [is] ability not (to endanger)
illustrates *dào*(’s) presence below (6) sky
like streams [and] valleys,
(their) flowing to (great rivers) [and] oceans.

Paraphrase

Dào, continually having no name, is whole. Yet, though it's small, no one below the sky can administer it. So princes' nobility is like *dào*'s ability to keep the many things' original self honor.

And sky and Earth unite by dropping sweet dew. But people, while none of them make harmony with the self, originate governing while having names. And names, also largely having begun to know ceasing, also finish.

But knowing the ceasing wherein is the ability not to endanger illustrates *dào*'s presence below the sky like streams' and valleys' flowing to great rivers and oceans.

Comment

This segment, extending what the first segment says of names and *dào*, calls for political leaders to recognize that they're noble only in so far as they accept that and try to refrain from trying to obstruct the inevitable return to the harmony that's the primal unity.

And rivers flowing into oceans is also a Vedic metaphor for the separate selves Hindus call the *atman* finding their way back to realizing their unity with the universal self Hindus call *brahman*.

33

Knowing humans [is] one's wisdom.

Self knowing [is] one's light.

Conquering humans [is] one's having force.

Self conquering [is] one's strength.

Knowing sufficiency [is] one's abundance.

Strengthening progress [is] one's having will.

Not losing it [is] wherein one endures.

Dying while not perishing [is] one's immortality.

Paraphrase

Knowing humans is one's wisdom, but knowing the self is one's light. Conquering humans is one's having force, but conquering the self is one's strength. And knowing what's enough is one's abundance.

And strengthening progress is one's having will, but not losing it is wherein one endures.

So dying while not perishing is one's immortality.

Comment

Compare this to *Sun Zi's* assertion in his treatise *Art of War* that one who knows both one's self and one's enemy will find no danger in a hundred engagements, that one who doesn't know one's enemy but knows one's self will sometimes win and sometimes lose, and that one who knows neither will always lose.

But also compare it to Luke's gospels' saying Jesus said that the kingdom of God is within you and to the Hindu premise that each separate self and the universal self are all one self. And also compare it to John's gospel's saying Jesus said that "except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." And also note that focal to the abiding writings of *tài jí quán* is this segment's distinction between strength and force.

So also note that progress here is returning to the primal unity, that the second "conquering" here effectually is accepting, and that *dào* is accepting one's self.

34

Great *dào* pervades(!) It can [be] left [and] right
[of the] (ten thousand) things(')(4) relying while living.
While not refusing, serving completely doesn't name having
[but] clothes [and] feeds [the] (ten thousand) things.
While not acting,
chiefs continually (having no) desire can name from little,
[and the] (ten thousand) things revert there.
While not acting,
chiefs can name action's greatness by their outlasting.
(Not being) selfish actuates greatness
[and] thus can complete one's greatness.

Paraphrase

Great *dào* pervades. It can be on both sides of the many things' as they rely on it for their life. While not refusing, serving completely doesn't name having, but it clothes and feeds the many things. So, while not acting and continually having no desire, chiefs can name from little.

So the many entities revert to that. So, while not acting, chiefs can name action's greatness by their outlasting acting. So not being selfish actuates greatness and thus is how one can complete one's greatness.

Comment

This segment effectually says that, by accepting the *dào* that's all around everything, anyone can be a *shēng rèn* and genuinely great instead of being a grandiosely greedy flash in the pan.

The naming in this segment is what we colloquially call making a name for oneself. And, of course, the selfishness in this segment isn't a characteristic of the all-inclusive universal self. It's what the 33rd segment says one must conquer to accept the universal self.

So, however obscure and whether or not it has a name, the outlasting in this segment refers to the self or selves eventually and inevitably reverting to the primal unity.

35

Seizing great images, sky's below wanders,
wanders while not excessively (7) losing stillness' peace.
(To enjoy) sharing cake, guests' passing ceases.
Dào('s) mouth's emission (3) [is] insipid (!) It (has no) taste.
Perceiving doesn't see enough (of it).
Listening doesn't hear enough (of it).
Using doesn't finish enough (of it).

Paraphrase

Beholding great scenery sky's below wanders, but it wanders while not excessively losing the peace of stillness, until passing guests stop to enjoy sharing cake.

So *dào*'s mouth's emission is insipid.

It has no taste. So, as perceiving doesn't see enough of it, listening doesn't hear enough of it. And using doesn't finish enough of it.

Comment

This segment, though the 46th segment says no calamity is greater than not knowing what's enough, may suggest that one never has enough of *dào*.

But the lack is perceiving's and listening's and of accepting *dào*. And, at least in the *Dào Dé Jīng*, all of that lack is by way of lack of what Buddhist *suttas* and *sutras* call detachment. So the passing guests are the 34th segment's flashes in the pan.

Dào's only use, as the *Dào Dé Jīng* defines it, is to return from the schizoid delusional perception of the *atman*'s being separate from *brahman*.

36

Beginning desire('s)(4) withdrawal
surely confirms (its) (4) (having drawn).
Beginning desire('s(4)) yielding
surely confirms (its) (4) (having forced).
Beginning desire('s)(4) abolishing
surely confirms (its) (4) (having arisen).
Beginning desire('s)(4) depriving
surely confirms (its) (4) (having been shared).
That's called subtle light.
Pliant yielding conquers rigid force.
Fish aren't able (to be taken) from [the] deep.
Nations(') advantageous implements
aren't able (to be revealed) by (3) humans.

Paraphrase

As beginning to withdraw from desire surely confirms that it has drawn, beginning to yield to desire surely confirms that it has forced. And, as beginning to abolish desire surely confirms that it has arisen, beginning desire's depriving surely confirms that it (has been shared). And that's called subtle light.

But pliant yielding conquers rigid force,

So, as fish can't be taken from the deep, humans can't reveal the advantageous instruments of nations.

Comment

This segment begins with more examples of how *yīn* and *yáng*, however obscure their relationship may be and however antonymous to one another they may seem to be, are complimentary. But then, saying that's called subtle light, it extends that expression of universal but obscure unity through referring to the literally obscure benefit of the depths of the sea to fish and to the political obscurity of the *dào* of national governance. So this segment elaborates on the failure of perception and listening and use in the 35th segment.

But, though obvious may be that suffering from deprivation depends on both the desires of both the person depriving and the person from whom that person deprives, most obscure may be this segment's calling that sharing.

37

Dào continually (has no) acting while (having no) not acting.
Princes' nobility resembles (their)(6) ability (to keep)
[the] (ten thousand) things' beginning self evolving,
evolving while desiring (to rise).
We begin suppression (of it) by
(not having) name(s') uncutness.
(Not having) name(s') uncutness [is]
largely also beginning (not having) desire.
Not desiring, by stillness,
sky's below begins [to] self settle.

Paraphrase

Dào, while having no acting, continually has no not acting. But princes' nobility is like their ability to keep the many things' beginning to evolve their self but evolving while desiring to rise. So our way to begin to suppress that desire is by the integrity of namelessness that's largely also the beginning of having no desire.

So, by the stillness of that not desiring, sky's below shall begin to settle into the self.

Comment

This segment effectually says that, unlike the alternative to the governance to which the 36th segment less directly refers, combining the *wéi wú wéi* of *dào* with eliminating the artificial divisiveness of names leads to actuating contentment through such insipidness.

That is, further explaining the interdependence of cause and effect to which the 36th segment refers, it also illustrates how monarchs' temporal pretensions to nobility deviate from the primal nobility.

And the referent of the first person pronoun here may be the generality of being that effects the inevitability of return to the primal unity.

And the keeping here is as a gatekeeper keeps a gate.

38

High *dé* isn't *dé*. That's by having *dé*.
Low *dé* doesn't lose *dé*. That's by (having no) *dé*.
High *dé*'s (having no) acting [is] while (having none) by action.
Low *dé*('s)(4) action [is] while having (7) by acting.
High (human feeling)('s)(4) acting
[is] while (not having) by acting.
High morality('s)(5) acting [is] while having by acting.
High propriety('s)(4) acting,
its (3) [being] while (no one) responds,
[is] next its (6) baring arms while forcing.
Thus [is] losing *dào* while afterward *dé*,
losing *dé* while afterward (human feeling),
losing (human feeling) while afterward morality,
[and] losing morality while afterward propriety.
Largely, propriety [is] one's loyalty [and] honesty,
(their) thinness while discord [is] (its) face.
Confronting understanding one's *dào*('s) flowering
while foolishness [is] (its) origin:
That's by great reverence largely (staying in) its solidity.
Not stopping its thinness [is] (staying in) its losing.
Not stopping its flowering
thus abandons (the latter),
capturing (the former).

Paraphrase

High *dé* isn't *de* by having *dé*. And low *dé* doesn't lose *dé* by having no *dé*. So high *dé*'s having no acting is while it has none by action as low *dé*'s action is while having it by acting.

But high human sentiment's acting is while not having by acting as high morality's acting is while having by acting. And high propriety's acting is while no one responds. And next it bares its arms and forces.

So thus is losing *dào* and next losing *dé*. And after that is losing human sentiment and next losing morality. And after that is losing propriety.

So, largely, propriety is the thinness of one's loyalty and honesty while discord is it's face. But confronting understanding one's *dào* while foolishness is propriety's origin is largely by great reverence abiding by *dào*'s solidity. So not stopping the thinness of one's loyalty and honesty is abiding by propriety's loss.

So not stopping *dào*'s flowering thus abandons loyalty's and honesty's thinness to acquire *dào*'s solidity.

Commentary

What previous segments say of arrogance and humility, sentimentality and morality, and propriety and reverence, helps cut through the labyrinthine ambiguity of this segment's diction, and so does what previous segments say of *dào*. But, if one can cut through it, one may find this segment extraordinarily explicit in regard to *dé* and how it relates to *dào* and *wéi wú wéi*. *Dé*, generally, is the relationship between *dào* and action.

And high and low, gaining and losing, and thinness and solidity are as relative as *yīn* and *yáng*. So that makes this segment a paraphrase of the 36th and 37th segments. They're the fabric of its net.

39

Of (2) those (5) anciently attaining oneness:

sky attained oneness by clarity;

earth attained oneness by rest;

spirit attained oneness by alertness;

valleys attained oneness by filling;

[the] (ten thousand) things attained oneness by life;

[and] princes' nobility attained oneness

by enacting refinement (5) below (4) sky.

That's their (3) sending:

sky, by (3) (having no) clarity, beginning (to fear) rending;

earth, by (3) (having no) rest, beginning (to fear) evolving;

spirit, by (3) (having no) alertness, beginning (to fear) stagnation;

valleys, by (3) (having no) filling, beginning (to fear) depletion;

[the] (ten thousand) things,

by (2) (having no) living, beginning (to fear) dying;

[and] princes' nobility,

by (2) (having no) lofty (6) value, beginning (to fear) falling.

Thus, value [is] by humble action's root,

[and] loftiness [is] by low action's foundation.

(Is that) by princes' nobility calling (6) themselves orphans,

diminutive, not worthy?

[Is] this (contrary to) by humble action's root (?) Contrary (!)

Thus [is] sending (counting as) exalted (having no) exaltation.

Don't desire shining. Shine as jade,

Drop. Drop as stones.

Paraphrase

Of those anciently attaining unity: Sky attained it by clarity; earth attained it by rest; spirit attained it by alertness; valleys attained it by filling; the many things attained it by living; and princes' nobility attained it by enacting refinement below the sky.

But that has sent: sky, by having no clarity, beginning to fear rending; earth, by having no rest, beginning to fear evolving; spirit, by having no alertness, beginning to fear stagnating; valleys, by having no filling, beginning to fear depleting; the many things, by having no living, beginning to fear dying; and princes' nobility, by having no lofty value, beginning to fear falling.

So humble action is the root of value, and low action is the foundation of loftiness. But is that by the nobility of princes calling themselves orphans and diminutive and unworthy or contrary to it? It's contrary to it!

Such sends counting as exalted what has no exaltation. So, instead of desiring to shine, shine as does jade. Drop as do stones.

Comment

This segment, the *Dào Dé Jīng*'s longest, elaborates on its long 38th segment, summarizes many of the *Dào Dé Jīng*'s themes and premises, and indicates possible results of straying from *dào*. It concludes that living well is living by *dào* and thus not fearing the return to primal unity. And it bemoans the false humility of princes' posturing.

And it points out that jade, however much one may value it, is but stone and shines only with the *wéi wú wéi* of stones dropping.

Consider the lilies of the field.

40

Returning [is] one's *dào*('s) motion.

Yielding [is] one's *dào*('s) use.

Sky's below's (ten thousand) things live from having.

Having lives from (not having).

Paraphrase

Returning is the motion of one's *dào* as yielding is the use of it, and the many things of sky's below live from having, as having lives from not having.

Comment

This, the shortest segment of the *Dào Dé Jīng*, succinctly says what all of it says. The not having is the primal unity before one imagines it to fragment into things having other things. And the yielding is the return to consciousness of the primal unity.

41

High masters hearing (of)(8) *dào* labor while progressing.

Middle masters hearing *dào*

resemble retaining [and] resemble losing.

Low masters hearing (of)(7) *dào* greatly laugh.

Not laughing isn't enough. By actuating *dào*,
thus one confirms (its)(5) words:

Lighting, *dào* resembles dimming;

advancing, *dào* resembles retreating;

smooth, *dào* resembles flawed;

high *dé* resembles valleys;

excessive whiteness resembles dishonor;

broad *dé* resembles (not being) enough;

firm *dé* resembles unsteadiness;

solid [and] genuine resemble changing;

great places (have no) boundaries;

great implements [are] slow (to complete);

great sounds [are] quietly melodious;

great images (have no) shape;

[and] *dào* conceals, (having no) name.

Largely only *dào* [is] good [and] giving and complete.

Paraphrase

High masters hearing of *dào* labor while progressing.
Mediocre masters hearing of *dào* seem to retain it while seeming to lose it. Low masters hearing of *dào* greatly laugh.

But not laughing isn't enough. Thus, by actuating *dào*, one confirms its words: Brightening, *dào* seems to dim; advancing, *dào* seems to retreat; smooth, *dào* seems flawed; and high *dé* resembles valleys, as excessive whiteness resembles dishonor; and broad *dé* seems insufficient as firm *dé* seems unsteady, as what's solid and genuine seems to change, as great places have no boundaries, as great implements are slow to complete, as great sounds are quietly melodious, as great images have no shape. So, having no name, *dào* conceals.

Yet largely only *dào* is good and giving and complete.

Comment

That the superior masters labor indicates that they lack the completeness of *dào*. And their inferiority is in that they fail to recognize easily how difference is a kind of relationship. That is, they fail to accept completely how everything is everything, that polarity eventually and inevitably resolves into unity. So this segment, listing more examples of apparent but not actual differences, says how having lives from not having. And it's numerically at the center of the *Dào Dé Jīng*.

And the *zì* meaning "masters" here is also the principal division also meaning "scholar". And, with the *zì* meaning "smooth" here also meaning "level", pertinent may be that "leveling" was a term the English used to refer to movements toward having English "nobility" share its privileges with "commoners." But "public" education was one of those privileges.

So this segment also says how the *Dào Dé Jīng* is obscure.

Dào enlivened one.

One enlivened two.

Two enlivened three.

Three enlivened [the] (ten thousand) things.

[The] (ten thousand) things carry *yīn* while embracing *yáng*,
absorbing breath by actuating fusion.

Humans: Wherein (3) [is] their disdain only
orphans' diminution (not being) worthy

while nobility broadens by enacting titles?

Thus things(')(5) perhaps diminishing while gaining

[is] perhaps (their)(3) gaining while diminishing.

Wherein (3) [is] humans(') teaching mine also?

Teaching (their) force [and] aggression [is]

one's not attaining [and] (their) death.

I begin by actuating teaching fathering.

Paraphrase

Dào engendered one; the one engendered two; the two engendered three; and the three engendered the many things.

But the many things, supporting *yīn* while embracing *yáng*, absorb breath by actuating fusion! Is humans' disdain only wherein orphans' diminution isn't worthy while nobility broadens by enacting titles? Thus things' perhaps diminishing while gaining is perhaps their gaining while diminishing!

So wherein is humans' teaching also mine? Teaching their force and aggression is one's not attaining and their death! So I begin by actuating teaching fostering.

Comment

This segment, beginning by effectually saying *dào* is the *wú jí* from which *tài jí* originated and by sharing with *tài jí quán* and the *Satipatthana Sutta* and what Hindus call *hatha yoga* the notion that breath can be a dynamic in the return to *wú jí*, ends with the author saying he or she or *shēng rěns* in general teach against futile efforts to obstruct that cycle. And this segment, with another instance of ambiguous use of the words for “king” and “minister” that more literally mean “noble” or “broad”, may also say kings use ministers to effect that obstruction. And, during the time Lǎo Zǐ may have been a government official, calling themselves orphans was a form of false humility of emperors.

And, if Lǎo Zǐ was a government official, this may be the only segment in which the author uses the first person pronoun to refer to himself and not to *shēng rěns* in general or to all of us. And, at least in the *Dào Dé Jīng*, an alternative to diminishing orphans is to absorb them into the fusion while kings and ministers ironically but effectually orphan themselves by claiming separate entitlement. So emphasizing all that is that *Zhōu* emperors originated the *Yì jīng*'s extreme polarity during that time.

43

Sky's below('s) utmost pliancy's chasing
exceeds sky's below('s) utmost firmness.

(Having no) having enters (having no) space.

By (3) (that is) our (1) knowing

(having no) acting('s) having gain isn't words(') teaching.

(Having no) acting('s) gain [is] sky below('s)(9) quiet reach.

Paraphrase

What's most pliant below the sky, as nothingness penetrates spacelessness, outruns what's most firm below the sky. And that's how we know the gain from having no acting isn't a teaching of words. It's sky's below's quiet reach.

Comment

What's most pliant below the sky, in the context of the *Dào Dé Jīng*, is water. And this segment, to argue the power of *wéi wú wéi* and the inefficacy of words, effectually points out water's *dé*. Consider how the Colorado River dug the Grand Canyon.

44

Names share bodies. Which (personally relates)?
Bodies share goods. Which [is] more?
Attainment shares loss. Which [is] disease?
That's thus: Extreme cherishing assures great cost;
much hoarding assures solid loss;
knowing sufficiency doesn't dishonor;
knowing ceasing doesn't endanger.
Ability [is] by continual endurance.

Paraphrase

Names and bodies interact, but which relates personally?
Bodies and belongings interact, but which is more valuable? And
gain and loss interact, but which discomfits?

Answers are that extreme cherishing assures great cost, that
much hoarding of goods assures substantial loss, that knowing
what's sufficient doesn't dishonor, that knowing when to stop
doesn't endanger, and that ability is by continual endurance.

Comment

This segment, referring to more ways in which abstraction
distracts from actuality, elaborates further on both abstraction's
counterproductivity and its insubstantiality.

So, effectually, it paraphrases the assertion at the end of the
33rd segment that dying while not perishing is one's immortality.

Losing, as the *Dào Dé Jīng* generally says, requires
gaining.

45

Great completion resembles lack.

Its use doesn't deter.

Great filling resembles absorption.

Its use doesn't exhaust.

[And] great correcting resembles bending

[as] great cleverness resembles clumsiness

[as] great disputing resembles stammering.

[And] restlessness conquers cold [as] quiescence conquers heat.

Clearly quiescence actuates sky's below's norm.

Paraphrase

Great completion, its use not deterring, is like lack as great filling is like absorption as use of it isn't exhaustive. And great correcting resembles bending as great cleverness resembles clumsiness as great disputing resembles stammering. And restlessness conquers cold as quiescence conquers heat.

So, clearly, quiescence actualizes sky's below's norm.

Comment

What great completing doesn't deter is other completing while it's like lack in that no completion can't be more complete as great filling is like absorption in that one can't over-absorb and thus can't use it exhaustively.

But this segment also extends that notion into another list of apparent but not actual polarity, and it ends by saying settling into resolution of those apparent but not actual disparities brings normality to what's below the sky, and also relevant is that "completing" and "filling" or "fulfilling" are etymologically synonymous.

So, effectually, this segment says quietly accepting the unity of *yīn* and *yáng* is the norm below the sky as the humble acceptance the 22nd segment describes is the standard below the sky.

46

Sky's below, having *dào*,
draws, by (4) race horses, manure.

Sky's below, (having no) *dào*,
war horses live at (the outskirts).

Calamities: None [is] greater than not knowing sufficiency.

Downfalls: None [is] greater than desiring (to attain).

Thus, knowing sufficiency('s) sufficiency continues sufficiency(!)

Paraphrase

If sky's below has *dào*, one uses race horses to draw manure; but, if sky's below has no *dào*, war horses live in the suburbs. So no calamity is greater than not knowing what's enough, as no downfall is greater than greed. So knowing the sufficiency of sufficiency perpetuates sufficiency.

Commentary

This segment, especially succinctly exemplifying the continuity of the *Dào Dé Jīng*, effectually defines the quotidian relationship between the 44th and 45th segments and the the 35th and 36th segments by clarifying the ninth segment.

47

Don't (egress from) doors (to know) sky's below.

Don't (watch from) windows (to see) sky's *dào*.

It, [the] egression, increasing [the] distance,

it, [the} knowing, [is] increasingly small.

That's by *shēng rèn*'s not progressing while knowing,

not seeing while naming, [and] not acting while completing.

Paraphrase

Don't egress from doors to know sky's below or watch from windows to see the sky's *dào*. That egression, increasing the distance, would diminish the knowledge. So, by that, *shēng rēns* know while not progressing.

And it's how they see while not naming and complete while not acting.

Comment

Compare that to the *Chandogya Upanishad*'s saying the space within the heart contains both the earth and the sky and to Luke's gospel's saying Jesus said: "Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you."

But difficulty for some readers in the relationship between this translation and this paraphrase may be in the relationship of time to the *ér zì* meaning "while". But semantically the conjunction "while" most purely indicates simultaneity and not causation or opposition. And many translators translate that *ér zì* as "and".

So that's a little like the problem with the *yǐ zì* meaning "by" also referring to any kind of causality and accordingly also meaning "because of" but most frequently meaning "how" or "why", or both "how" and "why", and connoting "for".

48

Actuating scholarship daily gains.

Actuating *dào* daily diminishes.

Diminishing('s) again diminishing

[is] by [the] utmost from (having no) acting.

(Having no) acting while (having no) not acting

captures below (3) sky continually by (having no) work.

Reaching its having work

isn't enough by capturing below (6) sky.

Paraphrase

Actuating scholarship daily gains. Actuating *dào* daily diminishes and perpetuates that diminishing by maximizing having no acting. And having neither acting nor not acting continually acquires below the sky by having no work.

So reaching sky's below's having work by acquiring below the sky isn't enough.

Comment

This segment, relatively concisely, says *wéi wú wéi* with no academic abstraction attains the eventuality that's all one actually ever can have. And it and the *Dào Dé Jīng*'s other references to academic learning make questionable the notion that Confucius met Lǎo Zǐ and said he was the wisest person he'd met. Chinese tradition attributes to Confucius China's tradition of government advancement by scholarship.

But, while this segment effectually says scholarship is spurious, its main point is that *wéi wú wéi* achieves both continually and effortlessly. And it also clarifies the relationship between *wéi wú wéi* and work. It effectually says action isn't necessarily labor.

49

Shēng rěns' (having no) continual mind [is]
by [the] hundred (family names'), minds actuating minds.

Good ones: We're (their)(5) good.

Not good ones: We're also (their)(7) good.

Dé [is] good.

Honest ones: We're (their)(5) honesty.

Not honest ones: We're also (their)(7) honesty.

Dé [is] honest.

Shēng rěns' presence below (5) sky [is] shy,
shyly actuating sky's below('s)(7) muddy minds
[as the] hundred (family names) all
(take note with) their ears [and] eyes.

Shēng rěns [are] all('s)(5) sons.

Paraphrase

That *shēng rěns*' minds change is because of the many families'. It's that, because minds actuate minds, we're the good of both good people and people who aren't good and the honesty of both honest people and people who aren't honest. So *dé* is both good and honest.

So *shēng rěns*' presence below the sky, shyly actuating sky's below's muddy minds as all the many families take note with their ears and eyes, is shy.

So *shēng rěns* are everyone's sons.

Comment

The shyness here is humility. And, traditionally, in Chinese and other cultures, sons inherit responsibility for their families, as *shēng rěns* accept responsibility for everyone. And both sons and *shēng rěns* do what they do under the careful watch of those for whom they accept responsibility.

And, further indicating the continuity of the *Dào Dé Jīng*, this segment somewhat elaborates on what the 27th segment says of people who aren't good being good people's resources. But, perhaps more fundamentally, this segment also elaborates on the first sentence of the first segment. And its primary focus remains unity.

It effectually says good and evil and honesty and dishonesty are no exception to the actuality of all being one. And the antecedent of the first person pronoun in this segment is all of us. So neither does it make *shēng rěns* an exception.

50

Egressing from life [is] entering death.
Life('s) companions [are] ten having three,
[and] death('s) companions [are] ten having three.
[And] humans(') life motion [and] (their) death [on] Earth
[are] also ten having three.
Thus (3) largely by (4) what [is] their living life('s) solidity?
Hear (2) good (3) cover (to maintain) one's (6) life:
Progressing (2) [on] land,
not encountering tigers [or] rhinoceroses
[or] entering war not (clad in) armor [or] weapons,
rhinoceroses (have no) wherein (to thrust) their horns,
[and] tigers (have no) wherein (to attach) their claws,
[and] weapons (have no) wherein (to demeanor) their blades.
Thus (3), largely by (4) such, they (have no) dying [on] earth.

Paraphrase

To egress from life is to enter death. And both life and death have thirteen companions. So humans' life motion and their death on earth are also thirteen.

So largely by what is humans' living life's solidity?

So hear what's good covering to maintain one's life!

Traveling on land, don't encounter tigers or rhinoceroses, and don't enter war not clad in armor or weapons. By that, rhinoceroses and tigers have no place in which to thrust their horns or attach their claws, and weapons have no place in which to impress their blades. So, largely by such, humans have no dying on earth.

Comment

At least one translator, saying three having ten is three tenths, round it to a third and further adjusts other vocabulary and the syntax beyond the literal. And translators saying saying three having ten is thirteen disagree regarding whether the thirteen are body parts or senses or emotions or other human qualities. And many translators omit one of the negatives to say this segment says people who know how to live have nothing to fear in the presence of rhinoceroses or tigers or in battle with no weapons or armor. But, whatever the meaning or referent of ten having three may be, in no way does the *Dào Dé Jīng* promote deliberately looking for trouble.

51

Dào(’s)(3) life [is] *dé*(’s)(6) domesticating things,
shaping (their) circumstances [and] (their)(6) completion.
By (2) (that are) [the] (ten thousand) things.
None don’t esteem *dào* while valuing *dé*.
Dào(’s) esteeming [and] *dé*(’s) valuing [are] largely neither.
Their destiny [is] (to continue) self so.
Thus *dào*(’s)(4) life [is] *dé*(’s)(7) domestication,
(its)(2) prolonging [and] (its)(4) developing,
(its)(2) protecting [and] (its)(4) preparing,
(its)(2) feeding [and] (its)(4) sheltering.
Living while not having [and] acting while not asserting
prolongs while not controlling.
That’s called obscure *dé*.

Paraphrase

Dào's life is *dé*'s domesticating things, shaping their circumstances and their completion, and that's how the many things are with all of them esteeming *dào* while valuing *dé*. But, largely, *dào*'s esteem and *dé*'s value neither esteem nor value. And their destiny is to continue the self in that way,

So, thus, *dào*'s life's is *dé*'s domestication, its prolonging and developing, its protecting and its preparing, and its feeding and sheltering. Yet living while not having and acting while not asserting prolongs while not controlling. But one calls that obscure *dé*.

Comment

Obscurity here may be in that the things know neither that *dào* and *dé* are what they esteem nor that the relationship between the *wéi wú wéi* of *dào* and the feeding and sheltering and controlling of *dé* are what they value. But also important to recognize while reading this segment is that prolonging and developing, protecting and preparing, and feeding and sheltering, define "domestication". And the reference to obscurity in this segment literally more directly refers to how that shaping isn't controlling but *wéi wú wéi*.

52

Sky's below's origin, by (acting as) sky's below's mother,
finishes attaining its mothering by knowing its children.
Finishing knowing its children [is] returning.
Keeping its mothering, ending bodies isn't danger.
Shutting their mouths, closing their gates,
(in the end) bodies don't labor.
Open their mouths, busy their work,
(in the end) bodies aren't liberated.
Seeing smallness speaks light.
Keeping pliancy speaks strength.
Using their brightness (to return) reverts them [to] light,
(having no) losing bodies [to] calamity.
That's called following continuity.

Paraphrase

Sky's below's origin, by acting as sky's below's mother, finishes attaining its mothering by knowing its children.

But finishing that knowing is returning.

So, perpetuating that mothering, ending bodies isn't danger. So, shutting bodies' mouths and closing their gates, in the end bodies don't labor. So, with their mouths open and their work busy, in the end they aren't liberated.

And seeing smallness speaks light as retaining pliancy speaks strength. And using the brightness of smallness and pliancy to return reverts bodies to light and loses none to calamity. So one calls that following continuity.

Comment

This segment synthesizes metaphorical imagery of other segments into a relatively concise statement of the purpose of *dào* and *dé*.

So bodies' mouths are gates for words.

53

Our (2) cause [is] transitional
[and] so has knowing progress from great *dào*,
Only straying: that's fear.
Great *dào* [is] quite smooth
while people usually deviate.
Mornings quite clear, fields quite weedy,
[and] granaries quite empty,
(dressed in) rhetoric, (clothed in) carrying advantageous blades,
[and] excessively drinking [and] eating,
[the] wealthy have surplus goods.
That's called robbery [and] pride, [and] (contrary to) *dào* (!)(?)

Paraphrase

Our cause is transitional. So it has knowing the progress of great *dào*. So only straying from it is fear.

Yet, while its progress is quite free of obstruction, people usually deviate from it. So, while mornings are quite clear, fields are quite weedy with granaries quite empty. And yet, dressed in rhetoric, in the cover of carrying blades of advantage, and excessively drinking and eating, the wealthy have surplus goods.

So one call that robbery and pride!

And isn't it contrary to *dào*?

Comment

Here again is the question of whether the antecedent of a first person pronoun is *shēng rěns* or all of us. But, with the answer to the rhetorical question with which this segment closes being affirmative, this segment's basic question is why anyone makes it affirmative. And this segment effectually calls the answer to that question terrorism.

Good firming isn't uprooted.
Good clinging, one isn't taken.
[And] children [and] grandchildren,
by offering [and] sacrifice, don't cease.
From (3) cultivating bodies,
their *dé* [is] then genuine.
From (3) cultivating households,
their *dé* [is] then surplus.
From (3) cultivating villages,
their *dé* [is] then continuous.
From (3) cultivating nations,
their *dé* [is] then abundant.
From (3) cultivating sky's below,
its *dé* then pervades.
Thus: by bodies, perceive bodies;
by households, perceive households;
by villages, perceive villages;
by nations, perceive nations;
[and], by sky's below, perceive sky's below.
We, by (3) what, know sky's below [is] so (?)
By this.

Paraphrase

Good firming isn't uprooted. One isn't taken from good clinging. And, by offering and sacrifice, progeny doesn't stop.

From cultivating bodies, their *dé* becomes genuine; from cultivating households, their *dé* becomes surplus; from cultivating villages, their *dé* becomes continuous; from cultivating nations, their *dé* becomes abundant; and, from cultivating sky's below, its *dé* becomes pervasive. So perceive bodies, households, villages, and nations, and all else below the sky, for what each is.

And how do we know what's below the sky is like that?

By that perceiving.

Comment

This segment, effectually elaborating on the notion that *dé* is deeds, effectually describes the relationship between the first “*wéi*” and the second “*wéi*” of “*wéi wú wéi*”, effectually describes the relationship between *dé*'s “*wéi*” and *dào*'s “*wú wéi*”, and thus effectually defines the practical relationship between *dé* and *dào*.

So, with the *wéi* of this segment effectually being the *wú wéi* of letting things be what they are, this segment also essentially says that, by being essential to the primal unity, they're identical.

But, ignoring the developmental continuity from providing for children through the cultivation of nations, some translators treat the offering and sacrificing in this segment as though they're dualistic religious ritual, rather than being relinquishing disparity for the sake of accepting eventual and perpetual unity.

And yet plainly the principle purport of this segment is simply to accept what plainly is and to behave accordingly by recognizing that each is what it is while also being all.

55

Possessing *dé*(’s) solidity [is] comparable to infant children.
Wasp tails [and] serpent snakes don’t sting.
Fierce beasts don’t attack. Predatory birds don’t grab.
Bones yield, [and] tendons [are] pliant, while grasp [is] firm.
Lacking knowing combining (6) (of)(5) females [and] males,
while wholly arising, (their)(6) quiescence [is] utmost (!)
Outlasting [a] day’s wailing while not hoarse,
(their)(2) fusion [is] utmost (!)
Knowing fusion speaks continuity,
[and] knowing continuity speaks light.
[But] gaining life speaks fortune,
[and] minds cause breath (to speak) force,
[and] things developing next decay,
[and] that’s called (not being) *dào*
[and] isn’t *dào* early [and] already.

Paraphrase

Possessing *dé*'s solidity is comparable to infant children.

Wasps and snakes don't sting them, and neither do fierce beasts attack them, and predatory birds don't grab them.

Their bones yield, while their tendons are pliant, and yet their grasp is firm. And, lacking knowledge of the intercourse of females and males, they rise fully with the utmost vitality. And, with their fusion utmost, they outlast a day of wailing while not being hoarse.

And knowing fusion speaks continuity as knowing continuity speaks light. But gaining life speaks fortune, and minds cause breath to speak force, and things develop and next decay. And one calls that not being *dào*.

And it isn't *dào* early and already.

Comment

Literally true or not, this segment says infant children are evidence of what the 54th segment says of *wéi wú wéi*. It effectually says that, by being what they are, they have nothing to fear. And the fusion here is that of the 42nd segment.

So it's the primal unity. And the fortune and force and decay are *tài jí* before *dào* returns it to *wú jí*. So what makes it not *dào* early and already is the eventuality of the primal unity.

So, also considering continuity and *dào* also eventually returning to fusion with the primal unity, note that the thirtieth segment ends exactly as does this one.

But some may also interpret this segment as a reference to a sort of dualistic child sacrifice.

56

Knowing isn't (3) one's words,
[and] words aren't (3) one's knowing.
Shut their mouth; close their gate.
Blunt their edges; loosen their knots.
Diffuse their brightness; unite their dust.
That's called obscure unity [and] thus
isn't able (to be attained) while (personally relating),
isn't able (to be attained) while shunning,
isn't able (to be attained) while [being] advantageous,
isn't able (to be attained) while losing,
isn't able (to be attained) while valuing,
[and] isn't able (to be attained) while humiliating.
Thus acts sky's below's valuing.

Paraphrase

Knowing isn't one's words, and words aren't one's knowing. So shut words' mouth, and close their gate; blunt their edges, and loosen their knots; diffuse their brightness, and unite their dust. But that's called obscure unity.

And thus one can't attain unity while personally relating or shunning, while taking advantage or losing, or while valuing or humiliating.

Thus is the acting of sky's below's valuing.

Comment

Here diffusing the brightness is eliminating the abstraction of words by fusing enlightenment to unite into the one actuality the things that are as many ten thousands as are the particles of dust.

So this segment is another way of saying that silencing words would eliminate the artificial divisiveness of their abstraction in order to return to the primal unity. And, effectually, this segment says valuing below the sky accords neither with *wéi wú wéi* nor with what the 22nd and 45th segments say are sky's below's standard and norm. So this segment, in terms specific to the first segment, explains the 9th segment.

So, as the phrase “*wéi wú wéi*” refers to action having no acting, this segment refers to value having no valuing.

57

By normality [is] governing nations.

By abnormality [is] using weapons.

By (having no) work [is] capturing sky's below.

We by (3) what know that's so (?) By this:

Below (2) sky [are] many constraints [and] prohibitions
while people increase poverty;

people's many advantageous

implements, nations, [and] households augment murk;

humans' many skills

cleverly abnormally augment (5) things' arising;

[and] emulation makes [the] augmentation prominent,

having (4) many (3) robbers [and] thieves.

Thus *shēng rěns* say:

We (have no) acting while people's self evolves;

we use stillness while people's self [is] normal;

we (have no) work while people's self abounds;

[and] we (have no) desire while people's self [is] uncut.

Paraphrase

Governing nations is by normality, while using weapons is by abnormality, while acquiring what's below the sky is by having no work.

And we know that by this: Many constraints and prohibitions are below the sky while people's poverty increases; the multiplicity of their advantageous implements and nations and households augment that murk as humans' many skills cleverly but abnormally further augment the arising of things; and emulation makes that augmentation prominent, to have many robbers and thieves.

So *shēng rěns* say they have no acting while people's self evolves, implement stillness when people's self is normal, and do no work when people's self abounds.

And they say they have no desire when peoples' self is whole.

Comment

The multiplicity in this segment is of the *tài jí* that takes us from the uncut wholeness of *wú jí*, and the evolving in it is the cycle that returns us to *wú jí* after *tài jí* takes us from it, and the normality is the norm of the 45th segment.

And, of course, the having no work is *wéi wú wéi*.

58

Their government dull, dull, its people [are] genuine, genuine.
Their government sharp, sharp, its people [are] deficient, deficient.
Calamity (!) (Their)(4) happiness [is] by (6) wherein?
Happiness (!) (Their)(4) calamity depends wherein?
Who knows their polarity, its (having no) norm?
Normality (returning to) acting abnormally
[and] good (returning to) acting ominously,
humans(´) delusion daily affirms its (4) endurance.
By (2) (that is) wherein (5) *shēng rèns*, while not injuring,
corner while not disfiguring,
correct while not overreaching,
[and] brighten while not dazzling.

Paraphrase

If people's government is dull, its people are genuine. And, if their government is sharp, its people are deficient! So, in calamity, how and wherein is people's happiness? And, in happiness, wherein does their calamity depend? So who knows people's polarity's having no norm?

With normality returning to acting abnormally and good returning to acting ominously, humans' delusion daily affirms polarity's endurance, but that's wherein *shēng rèns* shape and correct and brighten while not disfiguring or overreaching or dazzling, and do all that harmlessly.

Comment

This segment, continuing the 57th segment's elaboration on the relevance to government of the normality of the 45th segment and the standard of the 22nd segment, specifies sharpness of government as a deviation from that norm and standard.

And, to define the function of *shēng rèns*, it also makes plain the relationship between the delusion of disparity and desperation.

But it also decries the susceptibility of people to all that delusion.

59

Governing humans [and] work [and] sky,
none resemble restraint.

Largely, only restraint, that's called early dressing.

Early dressing [is] called weight (of)(4) accumulating *dé*.

Weight [of] accumulating *dé* next (has no) not subduing.

(Having no) not subduing [is] next none knowing their polarity.

None knowing their polarity (can be) by having nations.

Having nation(s') mothering

(can be) by continuing (to endure).

[And] that's called deep roots [and] firm stems

continuing life [and the] enduring perception (of) *dào*.

Paraphrase

No one governing humans or work or the sky seems to be in restraint. But, largely, only restraint is called the early dressing called the weight of accumulating *dé*. And next it has no not subduing.

But next is no one knowing one's polarity. And no one's knowing one's polarity can be by having nations. And having nations' mothering can be by continuing to endure.

So one calls that deep roots and firm stems continuing life and the enduring perception of *dào*.

Comment

Early is primal, and the dressing is the abstraction that's the need to accumulate *dé* to restrain the abnormality the 58th segment decries, in order to return by way of *dào* to the primal. So the political notion here is that using *dé* to govern nations as would *shēng rěns* wouldn't subdue people as governments generally try to do but instead would be using government to root the nation's people in *dào*. The premise is that *shēng rěns*' restraining themselves from trying to restrain the people would let the people accept the lack of restraint that's the *dào* of the sky.

So this segment says how nations would be were their governments to restrain themselves from subduing the mothering the *Dào Dé Jīng* says is normal to obviate the susceptibility to artificial disparity the 58th segment decries.

So, effectually, it say early dressing is to *dé* as early and already is to *dào*.

60

Governing great nations resembles boiling small fish.
By *dào* ruling sky's below, its ghosts aren't spiritual.
(Contrary to) its ghosts (not being) spiritual,
their spirit doesn't harm humans.
(Contrary to) its spirit not harming humans,
shēng rēns also don't harm humans.
Largely [the] two don't mutually harm.
Thus *dé* reciprocally reverts there.

Paraphrase

Governing great nations is like boiling small fish.

But, by *dào* ruling sky's below, its ghosts aren't spiritual. But that isn't that sky's below's ghosts aren't spiritual but that their spirit doesn't harm humans. But it isn't only that their spirit doesn't harm humans but also that *shēng rěns* don't harm humans.

Largely, it's that *shēng rěns* and other humans don't harm one another, and thus therein is *dé*'s reciprocal return.

Comment

Perhaps the small fish governing great nations resembles boiling are the many Chinese folk religions, but more certain is that this segment elaborates on the relationship between government and *dào* and *dé* to which the 59th segment refers, and it makes the reciprocation in the 59th segment more explicit and effectually extends it into the relationship between the monism of Hinduism and Buddhism and Daoism and the dualism of Judaism and Christianity and Islam and the pluralism of many folk religions.

So more likely, in the context of the *Dào Dé Jīng*, is that the small fish are the countless disagreements to which the abstraction of words opens us.

61

Great nations [are] ones below stream;
sky's below's integrity [is] sky's below's femininity;
[and] femininity, by (3) continual stillness,
conquers masculinity by stillness acting below.
Thus, great nations, by [being] below small nations,
next capture small nations,
[and] small nations, by [being] below great nations,
next capture great nations.
Thus, perhaps [being] below [is] by [being] captured,
[and] perhaps [being] below [is] while capturing.
Great nations don't bypass
desiring concurrently domesticating humans,
[and] small nations don't bypass
desiring entering working [for] humans.
Largely, [the] two, one [and] each, attain wherein (7) they desire,
great ones properly acting [as] below.

Paraphrase

Great nations are nations downstream; the integrity of what's below the sky is its femininity; and femininity, by continual stillness, conquers masculinity by stillness acting from below. Thus: By being below small nations, great nations next conquer them; and, by being below great nations, small nations next conquer great nations. So perhaps being below is either by being captured or while capturing.

And, with great nations willingly domesticating small nations' people along with theirs, small nations willingly enter into working for people.

So largely, both nations, one and each, if the great ones properly act as below, attain what they desire.

Comment

This segment, perhaps partly because of Lǎo Zǐ's having been a government official, extends the metaphors of valleys and femininity as unity and acceptance directly and specifically into both national and international politics and economics.

So remember that domestication is prolonging and developing, protecting and preparing, and feeding and sheltering.

62

Dào [is] one's (ten thousand) things('s) storehouse,
good humans(') treasure [and] not good humans('),
wherein [is] protection.

Beautiful words, by (4) ability,

sell esteeming progress by (5) humans' (6) ability (to increase).

Humans, (their) (not being) good, what rejects (their) having
[and] thus strengthening sky's child's appointing the three broad,
though having tribute jade preceded (6) by four horses
isn't as sitting [and] advancing this *dào*?

Primal? By (4) wherein [is] its (2) value?

This *dào* [is] one's what?

Don't speak by seeking attaining having crime by salvation (!)

Thus acts sky's below's valuing.

Paraphrase

Dào is a storehouse of one's many things wherein is protection of the treasure of both good humans and humans who aren't good. But, because they can, beautiful words sell esteeming progress by people's ability to gain! So what protects from that?

What keeps humans who aren't good from having and thus strengthening sky's child's appointing the three broad, though their having tribute jade behind teams of four horses isn't like settling into advancing this *dào*?

Is that primal? If so, wherein is its value, and how is it one's *dào*? So don't speak for attaining having crime for salvation.

That's how sky's below's valuing acts.

Comment

During the *Zhōu* Dynasty, the time during which Lǎo Zǐ presumably was a government official, the three broad appointees were the ministers of works and education and war, and Child of the Sky was a designation for the emperor. So this segment's direct deprecation of that strength and breadth suggests that the *Dào Dé Jīng*'s deprecation of government that isn't as *shēng rěns* would govern is specific to both the behavior of the *Zhōu* government and the abstract polarity of the *Yi Jīng*. And, elaborating on what the 56th segment says of valuing below the sky, it further indicates the continuity of the *Dào Dé Jīng*.

63

Action (having no) acting,
work (having no) working, [and]
taste (having no) tasting,
great [is] small, [and] many [is] few.
Requiting malice by *dé*,
planning difficulty from its [being] easy,
[and] actuating greatness from its [being] small,
sky's below's difficult work surely arises from ease,
[and] sky's below's great work surely arises from small.
By (2) (that is) *shēng rěns'* (at last) not acting greatly
[and] thus (being able) (to complete) their greatness.
Largely, light promises assure diminishing honesty,
[and] much ease assures much difficulty.
[And] by (2) (that are) *shēng rěns'* [being] like difficulty
[and] their thus (at last) (having no) difficulty (!)

Paraphrase

Action having no acting, work having no working, and taste having no tasting, great and many are small and few. So, requiting malice by way of *dé*, planning difficulty from its being easy, and actuating greatness from its being small, sky's below's difficult work surely arises from what's easy, and its great work surely arises from what's small. And that's how, while not acting greatly, *shēng rěns* at last can complete their greatness.

But largely, light promises assure diminishing honesty as much ease assures much difficulty, and that's why *shēng rěns* are like difficulty.

And thus it's how in the end they have no difficulty.

Comment

Tasting having no tasting is an example of what Buddhists call nonattachment. So note that, while most of this segment is elaboration on the notion of the facility and integrity of *wéi wú wéi*, the only difference in pronunciation between the *yán* for “action” and “acting” in “*wéi wú wéi*” and the *yán* for “taste” and “tasting” in this segment is that the pitch of “*wéi*” rises while the pitch of “*wèi*” falls. And, excepting the first three words of this translation's last line segment of its third segment, the first three words of this segment are the *Dào Dé Jīng*'s only exact iteration of the phrase “*wéi wú wéi*”.

64

Still (2), it's easily grasped.

Lacking significance, it's (5) easily planned.

Frail (2), it's easily dissolved. Subtle (6), it's easily dispersed.

Acting('s) lack [is] from having.

Governing('s) lack [is] from discord.

Combined embrasures (of) trees live from tiny seeds.

Nine levels (of) terraces arise from accumulating soil.

[A] thousand miles (of) progress originate from below (8) feet.

Acting [is] one('s)(4) ruin [and] seizes one('s)(8) loss.

By (2) (that is) *shēng rèns'* (having no) acting,

thus (having no) ruin,

[and] (having no) seizing, thus (having no) loss.

People('s) pursuing work

continues to near (its)(7) completion while ruining [it].

Caution lasting as originating next has no ruining work.

That's by *shēng rèns'* desiring not (to desire).

Not valuing difficult attainment (of) goods

[or] scholarship's (not being) scholarship

returns every human [to the] wherein (of their)(5) past

by helping [the] (ten thousand) things(') self so,

while not risking acting.

Paraphrase

What's still is easily grasped as what's insignificant is easily planned; what's frail is easily dissolved as what's subtle is easily dispersed; and, as governing's lack is from discord, acting's is from having. Tiny seeds engender forests; nine levels of terraces arise from accumulating soil; and a journey of a thousand miles begins beneath one's feet. And acting, being one's ruin, seizes one's loss.

So, because of that, *shēng rěns* have no acting and thus have no ruin and have no seizing and thus have no loss, but people pursue their work until they've nearly completed it and then ruin it, though caution from beginning to end would result in having no ruining of work. So that's why *shēng rěns* desire not to desire.

Not valuing difficult attainment of goods or valuing scholarship's not being scholarship returns every human to the wherein of humans' past, by helping the many things' self in that way, while not risking acting.

Comment

This segment, adding some images to images from other segments, is more elaboration on the futility and counterproductive artificiality of striving instead of accepting the benefit of the *wéi wú wéi* of the ultimately inevitable cycle from *wú jí* through *tài jí* to return to *wú jí*.

And this treating of a *zì* meaning “scholarship” as the *Dào Dé Jīng* treats the *wéi zì* in “*wéi wú wéi*” effectually says scholarship isn't learning as acting isn't action.

And *shēng rěns*' desire not to desire is similar to that.

65

Primal('s) good actuates one's (6) *dào*.
(Contrary to) by light, people begin, by (their)(8) foolishness,
people('s) difficulty governing by (their) much (8) cunning.
Thus, by cunning, governing nations [is] nations(') theft,
[and], by (2) (not being) cunning,
governing nations [is] nations('s) happiness.
Knowing these two, one also models [the] standard,
[and], continually knowing modeling [the] standard,
that's called obscure *dé*. [And] obscure *dé*,
deep (!) [and] distant (!) from disdain, returns (!).
So back [is] then utmost great conforming.

Paraphrase

The good of the primal actuates one's *dào*. But, contrary to by light, people by their foolishness begin their difficulty governing by much cunning. And, accordingly, governing by cunning is nations' theft.

So, by not being cunning, governing nations is nations' happiness. And, knowing those two factors, one also model's the standard. And one calls continually modeling the standard obscure *dé*,

But, though obscure *dé* is deep, it's distant from disdain and returns and in that way turns back to the utmost greatly conforming.

Comment

Of course, the standard here is what the 22nd segment lists, and the obscurity of *dé* in this segment is like the obscurity of the phrase “*wéi wú wéi*”. And the abstract artificiality of the cunning by which governments rob people is the abstraction of the scholarship not being scholarship to which the 64th segment refers. And *dé* isn't obscure in the light of knowing what enables modeling the standard.

And this segment closes by effectually calling returning from *tài jí* to the primal *wú jí* returning the distance from disdain to absolute conformity through the otherwise obscure depths of *dé*.

66

(Great rivers) [and] oceans:

By (2) wherein can one (8) actuate [a] hundred valleys' nobility?

By their goodness [and] (their)(4) lowness:

Thus [is] ability to actuate [a] hundred valleys' nobility.

By (2) (that is) humans' desiring high people

surely by (their)(5) low words

[and] desiring (precedence of) people

surely by (their)(5) bodies' [being] behind.

By (2) (that is) *shēng rěns*' staying high

while people aren't weighted

[and] staying (in front) while people aren't lost.

[And] by (2) (that is) sky's below's

joyously exalting while not excessively.

By their not contending,

thus, below (2) sky, none can share (their) contention.

Paraphrase

Consider great rivers and oceans. In what way can one actuate the nobility of a hundred valleys? By their goodness and lowness is how!

And that's surely why humans desire high people by the high people's low words and desire the precedence of people by those people's bodies being behind theirs.

And it's how *shēng rēns'* stay high while people aren't burdened and stay in front while people aren't lost, for what's below the sky to exalt joyously, but not excessively.

And its how peoples' not contending below the sky can keep everyone below the sky from contending with one another.

Comment

This segment further extends the metaphor of valleys and rivers and oceans into political unification for peace. But also, like the 65th segment, this segment illustrate how that *zì* meaning “by” can also mean “how” and both “because of” and “for the purpose of”. So, like metaphors, that's a way the Chinese make ambiguity resulting from the simplicity of their language a dynamic of expression.

And, of course, other examples of such are the somewhat ironic uses of the words “nobility” and “broad” in other segments. And another example in this segment is its effectually saying *shēng rēns'* can be both behind and ahead and both above and below. And all of that also illustrates what the first segment says of the continuity of names and how the Chinese language remains essentially a language of nouns.

But all of that also says why the *Dào Dé Jīng* says *dào* and *dé* are obscure.

Below (2) sky,
all call our *dào* greatly seeming not similar.
Largely only greatness, thus seeming not similar,
resembles similarly enduring (!) It's small (!)
Largely we have three treasures, (their) grasping while protecting:
First, speaking devotion; second, speaking frugality; third,
speaking not risking (acting as) sky's below's precedent.
Devotion thus can dare;
frugality thus can broaden);
not risking (acting as) sky's below's precedent
thus can complete, implement, [and] prolong.
Now, shunning devotion but daring,
shunning frugality but broadening,
[and] shunning (being behind) but preceding, [are] dying (!)
[And], largely, devotion by battling [is] next,
[and] conquering by keeping [is] next.
Thus, sky('s)(5) beginning (to liberate)
[is] by devotion('s)(4) protection.

Paraphrase

All below the sky say our *dào* seems greatly extraordinary. But, largely, only greatness seems extraordinary in that way, seeming similarly to endure, but small. So, largely, we have three treasures' grasping and protecting.

The first speaks devotion; the second speaks frugality; the third speaks not risking acting as though one's the precedent of what's below the sky. Accordingly: devotion can dare; frugality can broaden; and not risking acting as though one's the precedent of what's below the sky can complete, implement, and sustain. So, now, shunning devotion but daring, shunning frugality but broadening, and shunning being behind to precede, are dying.

And, largely, battling for devotion is next to die. And annexation for further conquering is to die after that. So the sky's beginning to liberate is by the protection of devotion.

Comment

This segment effectually says that what it says seems extraordinary is recognizing the deficiencies of abstraction. It says that, by way of devotion, frugality, and humility, one can dare, broaden, and endure; and it says the cycle of departing from and returning to the primal unity is beginning to turn toward the return, from the decadence of disparity to acceptance of those coherent qualities of being. And, effectually, it says all of that will occur by way of protection of devotion to treasuring *dao*.

And, effectually, what it says of devotion by battling and conquering by keeping predicts the fall of the *Zhōu* empire.

And, of course, that occurred.

68

Good action mastering: One isn't violent.

Good battling: One isn't angry.

Good conquering opponents: One isn't sharing.

Good using humans: One (acts as) (their) below.

That's called not contending('s) *dé*.

That's called using humans(') strength.

That's called connecting sky('s)(6) primal polarity.

Paraphrase

Mastering action well, one isn't violent; and, battling well, one isn't angry. Conquering opponents well, one doesn't reciprocate; and, using humans well, one acts as though one's below them. And one calls that the *dé* of not contending but using humans' strength.

So one calls it reuniting the sky's primal polarity.

Comment

What the good conquerors don't share is contention. And connecting the sky's primal polarity is returning literally from *tài jí* to *wú jí*. And, less generally, this segment may well have defined for Bodhidharma what we now call *tài jí quán*.

And, with more irony, the *zì* meaning "mastering" here is a principal division and can also mean "scholar".

69

Using weapons has words:

We don't risk (acting as) chiefs while (acting as) guests,
[and] we don't risk advancing [an] inch while retreating [a] foot.

That's called progress, (having no) progress,

[and] (baring arms), (having no) arms,

(to force), (having no) opposition,

(to seize) (having no) weapons.

Calamity: None [is] great from light opposition.

Lightness [is] (contrary to) approaching mourning our treasure.

[And], thus, matching weapons mutually
increases lamenting one's conquering (!)

Paraphrase

Words of using weapons are that we shouldn't risk acting as chiefs while acting as guests or risk advancing an inch while retreating a foot.

One calls doing that progress with no progress. One calls it baring arms one doesn't have, to force opposition one doesn't have, to seize weapons no one has. And no calamity is great from light opposition.

Thus, as lightness is contrary to mourning our treasure, mutually matching weapons increases one's lamenting one's conquering.

Comment

A more succinct way of paraphrasing this segment may be what Paul's apostle Luke's Book of Acts says Jesus said to Paul from the sky while Paul was on his way to persecute people who later came to call themselves Christians under his governance:

“It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.”

But Bodhidharma may have found this segment to bridge the 68th segment into practical application. And, presumably, the treasure isn't the gold and jade of the ninth segment but the devotion and frugality and graciousness of the 67th segment. And the matching of weapons is the weapons' being equal between the two sides for the combatants to kill one another, while the lightness is refraining from kicking against nonexistent pricks, as the words of using weapons refer to subverting one's purpose.

But keeping to the goal of translating the *Dào Dé Jīng* literally requires pointing out that Chinese inches and feet aren't precisely British inches or feet.

70

Our words, quite easy (to know),
[are] quite easy (to practice) below (5) sky.
[But] none can know, [and] none can practice.
Words have ancestors, [and] work has masters,
largely only (having no) knowledge:
That's by our (4) not knowing.
Knowing, we're one's quiet; next we're one's value.
That's by *shēng rěns* clad [in] wool concealing jade.

Paraphrase

Our words are quite easy to know and quite easy to practice, and yet no one below the sky can know or practice them. And words have ancestors as work has masters largely having no knowledge, but largely having no knowledge is by our ignoring. And knowing we're one's quiet, and next we're one's value. So that's how *shēng rēns*, clad in wool, conceal jade.

Comment

This segment succinctly states the absurdity of the abstraction of words. It, perhaps as plainly as words can, says direct experience is all one needs to know or can know. And, with concealing jade beneath wool being a metaphor for that, some people call Daoism quietism. But it's also the primary theme of the *Diamond Sutra*. So it's also how Zen is Buddhist.

Of course, presumably, the antecedent of first person pronoun that's the first word of this segment is *shēng rēns*. And, presumably, the antecedent of the other first person pronoun in this segment is humans in general. But, further indicating how synthetic is the Chinese language, all of that depends on context.

So, further indicating the similarity of Daoism to Buddhism, that may be another use of the ambiguity inherent in the Chinese language to overcome the abstraction of words in the manner of Zen koans.

71

Knowing not knowing [is] high.
Not knowing knowing [is] disease.
Largely only disease diseases.
(That is), by not diseasing,
shēng rěns don't disease
by their disease diseasing.
That's by not diseasing.

Paraphrase

Knowing one doesn't know is high; not knowing one knows is disease; and largely only disease diseases. So that's why and how *shēng rēns* don't disease by their disease diseasing. It's how not to disease.

Comment

This segment effectually paraphrases the seventieth segment. So note that the literal meaning of the components of the English word "disease" mean "apart from" and "free of difficulty". And then consider the phrase "*wú wéi*".

But both the seventieth segment and this one may also parody the abstraction of words by somewhat literally doing what some might call talking in circles.

People not fearing awe, next great awe [is] utmost,
(having no) constraint wherein (4) it stops.
(Not having) [the] excess wherein (4) it lives
[is] largely only (not being) excessive.
That's by (not being) excessive, [and]
that's by *shēng rěns*' knowing (6) self [and]
not regarding (3) self,
cherishing (2) self [and] not valuing (5) self, [and]
thus abandoning (the latter) (to capture) (the former).

Paraphrase

If people don't fear awe, next great awe is at its utmost, lacking the constraint wherein it might stop. But, largely, not having the excess wherein great awe lives is only not being excessive. So that's how *shēng rěns* know the self but don't regard the self.

And it's why they cherish the self but don't value the self and thus abandon valuing the self to acquire cherishing the self.

Comment

And this segment is a concise practical guide to how to comply with the 70th and 71st segments. But also consider the difference in meaning between the word “awesome” and the word “awful” and between loving and prizing. And, considering what these three segments say of the abstraction of words, also consider how they vary their way of using words to say that.

And, of course, consider the colloquial meaning of the phrase “self regard” in regard to both this segment and the 22nd and 24th segments.

73

Dare to risk. Next (be killed).

Dare not (3) to risk. Next survive.

These two [are] one's perhaps advantage [and] perhaps loss.

Wherein (3) [is] sky('s) disdain? Who knows it?

Thus that's by *shēng rěns'* (being) like [the] difficulty (of)

sky('s) *dào's* not contending while conquering (7) well,

(not being) words while responding (5) well,

[and] not summoning while selves come.

Slowly so while planning (5) well,

sky's net [is] vast, vastly shunning while not losing.

Paraphrase

Dare to risk, and next be killed! Dare not to risk, and next survive! But either may be either to one's advantage or to one's loss! So wherein is the sky's disdain? And who knows it?

But, thus, that's how *shēng rěns* are like the difficulty of the *dào* of the sky: not contending while conquering well; not being words, while responding well; and not summoning while selves come to them.

So, vastly shunning while not losing anything, sky's net is vast while planning well.

.

Comment

And this segment, effectually paraphrasing the 63rd segment, further explains how *shēng rěns*' lack of human sentiment is neither malicious nor irresponsible

So, of course, the difficulty isn't *shēng rěns*' or the sky's but of others' failure to understand them.

74

People not fearing dying,
how [and] by (3) what [is] dying('s)(6) threat?
Resembling causing people (to continue) fearing dying,
while ones (4) acts abnormally,
we attain their seizing while killing.
What risk [is] continually having officials kill?
One's killing [is] largely officials [being] one's killers.
[And] that's great artisan hewers'
largely (substituting for) great artisan hewers
ones quietly having not harming their hands (!)

Paraphrase

How and by what, if people don't fear death, is the threat of dying? And, seeming to cause people to continue to fear dying while we attain the seizing and killing of ones acting abnormally, what risk is in continually having officials do that killing? Largely it's officials being one's killers!

And, largely, that's great artisan hewers standing in for great artisan hewers quietly having not harming their hands!

Comment

Questions here are whether capital punishment is a deterrent, whether executioners or legislators or judges execute, and why.

75

People('s) starving [is] by those high's food,
(their)(2) taxing much.

By (2) (that is) starving.

People('s) difficulty governing [is]

by those high('s) having acting.

By (2) (that is) difficulty governing.

People('s) lightly dying [is]

by their seeking life('s) solidity.

By (that is) lightly dying.

Largely, only by (not having) life's acting,
that's (2) one's worth from valuing life.

Paraphrase

People's starving is because of those who are high taxing much for the high ones' food. So the difficulty of governing people is because of the acting of the high people. So people's lightly dying is because of the high ones' seeking life's solidity.

So, largely, one's worth from valuing life is only by not having life's acting.

Comment

This segment, perhaps more than the 74th segment and any other, indicts the norms of tyrannical government. And it quite plainly says the solution is governing by *wéi wú wéi*. But it doesn't say how that's early or already.

It leaves that to the segments saying ending bodies isn't danger.

76

Humans: (Their) living (!) [is] pliant, yielding;
their dying (!) [is] firm, forcing.
[The] (ten thousand) things, grass [and] trees:
(Their) living (!) [is] pliant, frail;
their dying (!) [is] brittle, dry.
Thus firm force [is] one's dying('s) companion,
[and] pliant yielding [is] one's living('s) companion.
By (that is) weapons' force next not conquering
[and] trees' force next [being] weapons.
Greatly (2) forcing stays low;
pliantly yielding stays high.

Paraphrase

Humans' living, pliant and yielding, their dying is firm and forcing! And the life of the grass and the trees and the many other things is pliant and frail! But their death is brittle and dry!

So firmness and force accords with one's dying as pliant yielding accords with one's life, and that's why weapons' force next fails to conquer, and how trees' force next becomes weapons.

So, as greatly forcing stays low, pliantly yielding stays high.

Comment

Trees force may become weapons by their becoming spears or bows or arrows after they die. But such is by the forcefulness of the acting to which the 75th segment refers. And so is the killing the weapons do.

So this segment is another expression of *wéi wú wéi*.

Sky('s) *dào*: It's like drawing [a] bow, sharing;
lofty, one(s) lowering lifts (6) one(s)(8) low.
Having surplus [is] one's diminishing
[and] isn't enough (of)(1) one('s)(6) completing.
Sky's *dào* diminishes having surplus
while completion isn't enough.
Humans(') *dào*, next (not being) so,
diminishes (not being) sufficient by providing having surplus.
What can have surplus by providing below (8) [the] sky?
Only one's (4) having *dào*!
That's by *shēng rěns'* action while not asserting
[and] serving completely while not staying,
They don't desire seeing worth.

Paraphrase

Sky's *dào* is like drawing a bow. It shares as drawing a bow lowers its lofty to lift its low. But, with having surplus being one's diminishing, it isn't enough of one's completing. So, when completion isn't enough, sky's *dào* diminishes having surplus. But human's *dào* isn't so.

Next it diminishes what isn't sufficient in order to provide having surplus. So what below the sky can have surplus by providing? Only one's having *dào*!

And that's how *shēng rěns'* action while not asserting serves completely and why they then move on.

They don't desire seeing worth.

Comment

Of course the action while not asserting in this segment is *wéi wú wéi*. And the *dào* that can gain while giving below the sky can do that because, lacking preference as *shēng rěns* lack human sentiment, it's particular neither to the sky nor to humans. So this segment's distinction between the sky's *dào* and human's *dào* before using the word "*dào*" as though it has no such polarity exemplifies the obscurity of the semantic ambiguity of the phrase "*wéi wú wéi*".

So human's *dào* is different from the sky's *dào* only in humans' failure to penetrate that obscurity. So, though some irony may be in that the bow in this segment is less pliant than the water in the 78th segment but more pliant than the acting in the 76th segment, that confusion of diction shouldn't be excessively obscure. So how the desiring to see worth in this segment is like self regard should be clear to anyone who carefully has read the *Dào Dé Jīng*.

78

Below (2) sky nothing [is as] pliant [and] yielding as water
while attacking one's (5) firm force.
(No one)(s) can conquer it by (7) (not having) (its)(9) ease.
(Its)(2) yielding conquers force;
(its)(5) pliancy conquers rigidity;
[and], below (2) sky, (no one) doesn't know [it],
[And] (no one) can practice [it].
By (2) (that is) *shēng rěns*' saying:
Keeping nations(') humility,
that's called grain (4) shrines' chief;
[and] keeping nations' (not being) fortunate,
that's called sky's below's nobility.
Normal words resemble returning.

Paraphrase

Below the sky, while attacking one's firm force, nothing's as pliantly yielding as water. Yet, by not having water's ease, with its yielding conquering force, and its pliancy conquering rigidity, no one's firm force can conquer it. And no one below the sky doesn't know that.

But neither can anyone practice it. So that's why *shēng rěns* say that keeping nations' humility is called being chief of the grain shrines and that keeping nations unfortunate is calls sky's below's nobility. Normal words are like returning.

Comment

This segment begins by again deploying water as a metaphor for the power of acceptance and saying it's common knowledge. But next, referring to the inability of people to behave accordingly, it effectually says *shēng rěns* attribute at least some of that to the governmental hypocrisy of using folk religions to impoverish and humiliate people. And it closes by calling for words leading to returning to the primal unity.

So, however ironic may be this segment's uses of the *zì* meaning "nobility" and "shrine", it's a concise summary of the *Dào Dé Jīng*.

79

Fusing great malice surely has surplus malice.

Stillness (can be) by actuating good.

By (2) (that is) *shēng rěns*' seizing [the] left [of] agreements
while not claiming from humans.

Having *dé*, officials agree.

(Having no) *dé*, officials claim.

Sky's *dào*, (having no) (personal attachment),
continually shares human goodness.

Paraphrase

Fusing great malice surely has surplus malice. But stillness can be by actuating good, and that's why *shēng rěns* take the creditor's copy of contracts, while not claiming from people. Officials having *dé* agree while officials having no *dé* claim, as the *dào* of the sky has no personal attachments, but continually shares human goodness.

Comment

In China, in the time of the writing of the *Dào Dé Jīng*, two copies of contracts were on one bamboo surface with the creditor's copy on the left side. And contracts can be agreements either for beneficial sharing or for malicious deprivation. So, effectually, this segment says officials with *dé* follow *dào*.

But, while one may interpret this segment to refer to Lǎo Zǐ's behavior when he was a government official, nowhere in the *Dào Dé Jīng* does its author directly claim to be a *shēng rěn*. And yet, in its broader context, this segment draws minor officials into the *Dào Dé Jīng*'s assessment of government responsibility. And that makes this segment an effective transition from the *Dào Dé Jīng* in general to the next segment.

And this segment closes by effectually saying again why and how *shēng rěns* are beneficent while lacking human sentiment.

80

Small nations' (diminution of) people
causes (their)(5) having tenfold hundred implements
while not use,
causes people (to weigh) dying
while not distantly migrating
though exalting (4) having boats
[and] (having no) wherein (of their)(4) chariots
though having armor [and] weapons
[but] (having no) wherein (of their)(4) wielding,
[and] causes humans (to return) (to knotting) [on] cords
[the] wherein (of their)(4) use.
Sweet their food, beautiful their dress, [and]
still their stopping, enjoying their customs,
neighboring nations mutually seeing [and]
(their)(3) birds' [and] dogs' melodies mutually hearing,
people (at utmost) decay [and] die,
not mutually coming (4) (to see).

Paraphrase

Diminishing the population of small nations causes people to have many implements while having no use for them. It causes them to weigh dying rather than distantly migrating, though they exalt in having boats and not having the wherein of their chariots, though they have armor and weapons but no ways to wield them. And it causes people to return to knotting on cords the ways to use all that.

So, with their food sweet, their clothing beautiful, and their dwellings quiet, neighboring nations seeing one another with their birds and dogs hearing one another's melodies, people ultimately decay and die not visiting one another.

Comment

Knotting on cords was a way of keeping count. So this segment, elaborating on the calamity of not knowing what's enough, basically asks why people take the trouble to inventory the hypothetical usefulness of their surplus belongings instead of either using them to save their lives or sharing them with their neighbors. And this segment's final sentence suggests that the reason the population is diminishing is that the people's valuing their useless possessions and their particular habits alienates them not only from the neighboring nations but also from one another.

But, more broadly, it expresses the transience of worldly goods and the ultimate artificiality of valuing them as prizes and not as what the 56th segment calls value. And, effectually saying *wú jí* is real while *tài jí* isn't, it includes social interaction in its tenet of unity. That is, effectually, it says any alienation is *tài jí*.

So, elaborating on the 28th segment's elaboration on sky's below's standard, this segment is an effective transition from the *Dào Dé Jīng* in general to its closing segment.

81

Honest words aren't beautiful; beautiful words aren't honest.

Good ones aren't disputing; disputing ones aren't good.

Knowing ones aren't learned; learned ones aren't knowing.

[And] *shēng rěns* don't accumulate.

Finishing by acting, humans' self has (7) more;

finishing by sharing, humans' self [is] much (7) more.

Sky('s) *dào*'s advantage isn't (6) while losing;

shēng rěns(') *dào*'s action isn't while contending.

Paraphrase

As honest words aren't beautiful, beautiful words aren't honest. As good words aren't disputing words, disputing words aren't good. And, as knowing words aren't learned, learned words aren't knowing.

And *Shēng rěns* don't hoard. By acting, in the end, humans' self has more. But, by sharing, in the end humans' self is much more.

So, as the advantage of the *dào* of the sky isn't while losing, the action of *shēng rěns'* *dào* isn't while contending.

Comment

This, the final segment of the *Dào Dé Jīng*, is a concise expression of its ethos. It begins by deprecating the abstraction of words and especially of using them for hypocrisy and contention and academics. Next, deprecating the self-destructive greed to which the eightieth segment somewhat dramatically refers, it effectually says *wéi wú wéi* is the way to return to the primal unity.

And it closes the *Dào Dé Jīng* by effectually saying acceptance that all is all anyway is the *dào* of both *shēng rěns* and the sky.

道
德
經

(Dào Dé Jīng)

1

道可道非常道 (*Dào kě dào fēi cháng dào*)

名可名非常名 (*Míng kě míng fēi cháng míng*)

無名天地之始 (*Wú míng tiān dì zhī shǐ*)

有名萬物之母 (*Yǒu míng wàn wù zhī mǔ*)

故常無欲 (*Gù cháng wú yù*)

以觀其妙 (*Yǐ guān qí miào*)

常有欲 (*Cháng yǒu yù*)

以觀其徼 (*Yǐ guān qí jiǎo*)

此兩者同 (*Cǐ liǎng zhě tóng*)

出而異名 (*Chū ér yì míng*)

同謂之玄 (*Tóng wèi zhī xuán*)

玄之又玄 (*Xuán zhī yòu xuán*)

衆妙之門 (*Zhòng miào zhī mén*)

天下皆知美之為美 (Tiān xià jiē zhī měi zhī wèi měi)

斯惡已 (Sī è yǐ)

皆知善之為善 (Jiē zhī shàn zhī wéi shàn)

斯不善已 (Sī bù shàn yǐ)

故有無相生 (Gù yǒu wú xiāng shēng)

難易相成 (Nán yì xiāng chéng)

長短相較 (Cháng duǎn xiāng jiào)

高下相傾 (Gāo xià xiāng qīng)

音聲相和 (Yīn shēng xiāng hé)

前後相隨 (Qián hòu xiāng suí)

是以聖人處無為 (Shì yǐ shèng rén chù wú wéi)

之事行不言 (zhī shì xíng bù yán zhī jiào)

萬物作焉而不辭 (Wàn wù zuò yān ér bù cí)

生而不有為而不恃 (Shēng ér bù yǒu wéi ér bù shì)

功成而弗居 (Gōng chéng ér fú jū)

夫唯弗居 (Fū wéi fú jū)

是以不去 (Shì yǐ bù qù)

3

不尚賢使民不爭 (Bù shàng xián shǐ mǐn bù zhēng)

不貴難得之貨 (Bù guì nán dé zhī huò)

使民不為盜 (Shǐ mǐn bù wéi dào)

不見可欲 (Bù jiàn kě yù)

使心不亂 (Shǐ xīn bù luàn)

是以聖人之治 (Shì yǐ shèng rén zhī zhì)

虛其心實其腹 (Xū qí xīn shí qí fù)

弱其志強其骨 (Ruò qí zhì qiáng qí gǔ)

常使民無知 (Cháng shǐ mǐn wú zhī)

無欲 (Wú yù)

使夫知者不敢為也 (Shǐ fū zhī zhě bù gǎn wéi yě)

為無為則無不治 (Wéi wú wéi zé wú bù zhì)

4

道沖而用之或不盈 (*Dào chōng ér yòng zhī huò bù yíng*)

淵兮似萬物之宗 (*Yuān xī shì wàn wù zhī zōng*)

挫其銳解其紛 (*Cuò qí ruì jiě qí fēn*)

和其光同其塵 (*Hé qí guāng tóng qí chén*)

湛兮似或存 (*Zhàn xī shì huò cún*)

吾不知誰之子 (*Wú bù zhī shuí zhī zǐ*)

象帝之先 (*Xiàng dì zhī xiān*)

5

天地不仁 (Tiān dì bù rén)

以萬物為芻狗 (Yǐ wàn wù wèi chú gǒu)

聖人不仁 (Shèng rén bù rén)

以百姓為芻狗 (Yǐ bǎi xìng wèi chú gǒu)

天地之間其猶橐籥乎 (Tiān dì zhī jiān qí yóu tuó yuè hū)

虛而不屈動而愈出 (Xū ér bù qū dòng ér yù chū)

多言數窮不如守中 (Duō yán shù qióng bù rú shǒu zhōng)

谷神不死 (*Gǔ shén bù sǐ*)

是謂玄牝 (*Shì wèi xuán pìn*)

玄牝之門 (*Xuán pìn zhī mén*)

是謂天地根 (*Shì wèi tiān dì gēn*)

綿綿若存 (*Mián mián ruò cún*)

用之不勤 (*Yòng zhī bù qín*)

天長地久 (Tiān cháng dì jiǔ)

天地 (Tiān dì)

所以能長且久者 (Suǒ yǐ néng zhǎng qiě jiǔ zhě)

以其不自生 (Yǐ qí bù zì shēng)

故能長生 (Gù néng cháng shēng)

是以聖人 (Shì yǐ shèng rén)

後其身而身先 (Hòu qí shēn ér shēn xiān)

外其身而身存 (Wài qí shēn ér shēn cún)

非以其無私耶 (Fēi yǐ qí wú sī yé)

故能成其私 (Gù néng chéng qí sī)

8

上善若水 (*Shàng shàn ruò shuǐ*)

水善利萬物 (*Shuǐ shàn lì wàn wù*)

而不爭 (*Ér bù zhēng*)

處衆人之所 (*Chù zhòng rén zhī suǒ*)

惡故幾於道 (*È gù jī yú dào*)

居善地心善淵 (*Jū shàn dì xīn shàn yuān*)

與善仁 (*Yǔ shàn rén*)

言善信 (*Yán shàn xìn*)

正善治事善能 (*Zhèng shàn zhì shì shàn néng*)

動善時 (*Dòng shàn shí*)

夫唯不爭故無尤 (*Fū wéi bù zhēng gù wú yóu*)

2

持而盈之不如其已 (*Chí ér yíng zhī bù rú qí yì*)

揣而銳之不可長保 (*Chuāi ér ruì zhī bù kě cháng bǎo*)

金玉滿堂莫之能守 (*Jīn yù mǎn táng mò zhī néng shǒu*)

富貴而驕自 (*Fù guì ér jiāo zì*)

遺其咎 (*Yí qí jiù*)

功遂身退天之道 (*Gōng suì shēn tuì tiān zhī dào*)

10

載營魄 (Zài yíng pò)

抱一能無離乎 (Bào yī néng wú lí hū)

專氣致柔 (Zhuān qì zhì róu)

能嬰兒乎 (Néng yīng'ér hū)

滌除玄覽能無疵乎 (Dí chú xuán lǎn néng wú cī hū)

愛民治國能無知乎 (Ài mín zhì guó néng wú zhī hū)

天門開闔能為雌乎 (Tiān mén kāi hé néng wéi cí hū)

明白四達能無知乎 (Míng bái sì dá néng wú zhī hū)

生之畜之 (Shēng zhī chù zhī)

生而不有為而不恃 (Shēng ér bù yǒu wéi ér bù shì)

長而不宰 (Cháng ér bù zǎi)

是謂玄德 (Shì wèi xuán dé)

11

三十輻共一轂 (*Sān shí fú gòng yī gǔ*)

當其無有車之用 (*Dāng qí wú yǒu chē zhī yòng*)

埴埴以為器 (*Shān zhí yǐ wéi qì*)

當其無有器之用 (*Dāng qí wú yǒu qì zhī yòng*)

鑿戶牖以為室 (*Záo hù yǒu yǐ wéi shì*)

當其無有室之用 (*Dāng qí wú yǒu shì zhī yòng*)

故有之以為利 (*Gù yǒu zhī yǐ wéi lì*)

無之以為用 (*Wú zhī yǐ wéi yòng*)

12

五色令人目盲 (Wǔ sè lìng rén mù máng)

五音令人耳聾 (Wǔ yīn lìng rén ěr lóng)

五味令人口爽 (Wǔ wèi lìng rén kǒu shuǎng)

馳騁田獵 (Chí chǒng tián liè)

令人心發狂 (Lìng rén xīn fā kuáng)

難得之貨 (Nán dé zhī huò)

令人行妨 (Lìng rén xíng fang)

是以聖人 (Shì yǐ shèng rén)

為腹不為目 (Wéi fù bù wéi mù)

故去彼取此 (Gù qù bǐ qǔ cǐ)

13

寵辱若驚 (Chǒng rǔ ruò jīng)

貴大患若身 (Guì dà huàn ruò shēn)

何謂寵辱若驚 (Hé wèi chǒng rǔ ruò jīng)

寵為下 (Chǒng wèi xià)

得之若驚失之若驚 (Dé zhī ruò jīng shī zhī ruò jīng)

是謂寵辱若驚 (Shì wèi chǒng rǔ ruò jīng)

何謂貴大患若身 (Hé wèi guì dà huàn ruò shēn)

吾所以有大患 (Wú suǒ yǐ yǒu dà huàn)

者為吾有身及吾無身 (Zhě wèi wú yǒu shēn jí wú wú shēn)

吾有何患 (Wú yǒu hé huàn)

故貴以身為天下 (Gù guì yǐ shēn wéi tiān xià)

若可寄天下 (Ruò kě jì tiān xià)

愛以身為天下 (Ài yǐ shēn wéi tiān xià)

若可託天下 (Ruò kě tuō tiān xià)

視之不見名曰夷 (Shì zhī bù jiàn míng yuē yí)

聽之不聞名曰希 (Tīng zhī bù wén míng yuē xī)

搏之不得名曰微 (Bó zhī bù dé míng yuē wēi)

此三者不可致詰 (Cǐ sān zhě bù kě zhì jié)

故混而為一 (Gù hùn ér wéi yī)

其上不皦其下不昧 (Qí shàng bù jiǎo qí xià bù mèi)

繩繩不可名 (Shéng shéng bù kě míng)

復歸於無物 (Fù guī yú wú wù)

是謂無狀之狀 (Shì wèi wú zhuàng zhī zhuàng)

無物之象 (Wú wù zhī xiàng)

是謂惚恍 (Shì wèi hū huǎng)

迎之不見其首 (Yíng zhī bù jiàn qí shǒu)

隨之不見其後 (Suí zhī bù jiàn qí hòu)

執古之道以御今 (Zhí gǔ zhī dào yǐ yù jīn)

之有能知古始 (Zhī yǒu néng zhī gǔ shǐ)

是謂道紀 (Shì wèi dào jì)

15

古之善為士者微妙 (Gǔ zhī shàn wéi shì zhě wéi miào)

玄通深不可識 (Xuán tōng shēn bù kě shí)

夫唯不可識 (Fū wéi bù kě shí)

故強為之容豫 (Gù qiáng wéi zhī róng yù)

兮若冬涉川 (Xī ruò dōng shè chuān)

猶兮若畏四鄰 (Yóu xī ruò wèi sì lín)

儼兮其若容 (Yǎn xī qí ruò róng)

渙兮若冰之將釋 (Huàn xī ruò bīng zhī jiàng shì)

敦兮其若樸 (Dūn xī qí ruò pǔ)

曠兮其若谷 (Kuàng xī qí ruò gǔ)

混兮其若濁 (Hùn xī qí ruò zhuó)

孰能濁以靜之徐清 (Shú néng zhuó yǐ jìng zhī xú qīng)

孰能安以久動之徐生 (Shú néng ān yǐ jiǔ dòng zhī xú shēng)

保此道者不欲盈 (Bǎo cǐ dào zhě bù yù yíng)

夫唯不盈故能蔽 (Fū wéi bù yíng gù néng bì)

不新成 (Bù xīn chéng)

致虛極守靜篤 (Zhì xū jí shǒu jìng dǔ)

萬物並作 (Wàn wù bìng zuò)

吾以觀復 (Wú yǐ guān fù)

夫物芸芸各復 (Fū wù yún yún gè fù)

歸其根 (Guī qí gēn)

歸根曰靜 (Guī gēn yuē jìng)

是謂復命 (Shì wèi fù mìng)

復命曰常 (Fù mìng yuē cháng)

知常曰明 (Zhī cháng yuē míng)

不知常妄作凶 (Bù zhī cháng wàng zuò xiōng)

知常容容乃公 (Zhī cháng róng róng nǎi gōng)

公乃王王乃天 (Gōng nǎi wáng wáng nǎi tiān)

天乃道道乃久 (Tiān nǎi dào dao nǎi jiǔ)

沒身不殆 (Méi shēn bù dài)

17

太上下知有之 (*Tài shàng xià zhī yǒu zhī*)

其次親而譽之 (*Qí cì qīn ér yù zhī*)

其次畏之 (*Qí cì wèi zhī*)

其次侮之 (*Qí cì wǔ zhī*)

信不足焉有不信焉 (*Xìn bù zú yān yǒu bù xìn yān*)

悠兮其貴言 (*Yōu xī qí guì yán*)

功成事遂 (*Gōng chéng shì suì*)

百姓皆謂我自然 (*Bǎi xìng jiē wèi wǒ zì rán*)

18

大道廢有仁義 (*Dà dào fèi yǒu rén yì*)

智慧出有大偽 (*Zhì huì chū yǒu dà wěi*)

六親不和 (*Liù qīn bù hé*)

有孝慈 (*Yǒu xiào cí*)

國家昏亂 (*Guó jiā hūn luàn*)

有忠臣 (*Yǒu zhōng chén*)

19

絕聖棄智 (Jué shèng qì zhì)

民利百倍 (Mín lì bǎi bèi)

絕仁棄義 (Jué rén qì yì)

民復孝慈 (Mín fù xiào cí)

絕巧棄利 (Jué qiǎo qì lì)

盜賊無有 (Dào zéi wú yǒu)

此三者以為文不足 (Cǐ sān zhě yǐ wéi wén bù zú)

故令有所屬 (Gù lìng yǒu suǒ shǔ)

見素抱樸 (Jiàn sù bào pǔ)

少私寡欲 (Shǎo sī guǎ yù)

絕學無憂 (Jué xué wú yōu)

唯之與 (Wéi zhī yǔ)

阿相去幾何善 (Ā xiāng qù jǐ hé shàn)

之與惡 (Zhī yǔ è)

相去若何人 (Xiāng qù ruò hé rén)

之所畏不可不畏 (Zhī suǒ wèi bù kě bù wèi)

荒兮其未央哉 (Huāng xī qí wèi yāng zāi)

衆人熙熙如享太牢 (Zhòng rén xī xī rú xiǎng tài láo)

如春登臺 (Rú chūn dēng tái)

我獨怕兮其未兆 (Wǒ dú pà xī qí wèi zhào)

如嬰兒之未孩 (Rú yīng ér zhī wèi hái)

儻儻兮 (Léi léi xī)

若無所歸衆人 ruò wú suǒ guī)

皆有餘而我獨若遺 (Zhòng rén jiē yǒu yú ér wǒ dú ruò yí)

我愚人之心也哉沌沌兮 (Wǒ yú rén zhī xīn yě zāi dùn dùn xī)

俗人昭昭我獨若昏 (Sú rén zhāo zhāo wǒ dú ruò hūn)

俗人察察我獨悶悶 (Sú rén chá chá wǒ dú mèn mèn)

澹兮其若海颯兮 (Dàn xī qí ruò hǎi liù xī)

若無止 (Ruò wú zhǐ)

衆人皆有以 (Zhòng rén jiē yǒu yì)

而我獨頑似鄙 (Ér wǒ dú wán sì bǐ)

我獨異於人而貴食母 (Wǒ dú yì yú rén ér guì shí mǔ)

21

孔德之容唯道 (Kǒng dé zhī róng wéi dào)

是從道 (Shì cóng dào)

之為物唯恍唯惚 (Zhī wéi wù wéi huǎng wéi hū)

忽兮恍兮其中有象 (Hū xī huǎng xī qí zhōng yǒu xiàng)

恍兮忽兮其中有物 (Huǎng xī hū xī qí zhōng yǒu wù)

窈兮冥兮其中有精 (Yǎo xī míng xī qí zhōng yǒu jīng)

其精甚真其中有信 (Qí jīng shén zhēn qí zhōng yǒu xìn)

自古及今其名不去 (Zì gǔ jí jīn qí míng bù qù)

以閱衆甫 (Yǐ yuè zhòng fǔ)

吾何以知衆甫之狀哉 (Wú hé yǐ zhī zhòng fǔ zhī zhuàng zāi)

以此 (Yǐ cǐ)

曲則全枉則直 (Qū zé quán wǎng zé zhí)

窪則盈弊則新 (Wā zé yíng bì zé xīn)

少則得多則惑 (Shǎo zé dé duō zé huò)

是以聖人抱一 (Shì yǐ shèng rén bào yī)

為天下式 (Wéi tiān xià shì)

不自見故明 (Bù zì jiàn gù míng)

不自是故彰 (Bù zì shì gù zhāng)

不自伐故有功 (Bù zì fá gù yǒu gōng)

不自矜故長 (Bù zì jīn gù zhǎng)

夫唯不爭 (Fū wéi bù zhēng)

故天下莫能與之爭 (Gù tiān xià mò néng yǔ zhī zhēng)

古之 (Gǔ zhī)

所謂曲則全 (Suǒ wèi qū zé quán)

者豈虛言哉 (Zhě qǐ xū yán zāi)

誠全而歸之 (Chéng quán ér guī zhī)

希言自然 (*Xī yán zì rán*)

故飄風不終朝 (*Gù piāo fēng bù zhōng cháo*)

驟雨不終日 (*Zhòu yǔ bù zhōng rì*)

孰為此者天地 (*Shú wèi cǐ zhě tiān dì*)

天地尚不能久 (*Tiān dì shàng bù néng jiǔ*)

而況於人乎 (*Ér kuàng yú rén hū*)

故從事於道者 (*Gù cóng shì yú dào zhě*)

道者同於道 (*Dào zhě tóng yú dào*)

德者同於德 (*Dé zhě tóng yú dé*)

失者同於失 (*Shī zhě tóng yú shī*)

同於道者道亦樂得之 (*Tóng yú dào zhě dào yì lè dé zhī*)

同於德者德亦樂得之 (*Tóng yú dé zhě dé yì lè dé zhī*)

同於失者失亦樂得之 (*Tóng yú shī zhě shī yì lè dé zhī*)

信不足焉有不信焉 (*Xìn bù zú yān yǒu bù xìn yān*)

企者不立 (Qǐ zhě bù lì)

跨者不行 (Kuà zhě bù xíng)

自見者不明 (Zì jiàn zhě bù míng)

自是者不彰 (Zì shì zhě bù zhāng)

自伐者無功 (Zì fá zhě wú gōng)

自矜者不長 (Zì jīn zhě bù cháng)

其在道也 (Qí zài dào yě)

曰餘食贅行 (Yuē yú shí zhuì xíng)

物或惡之 (Wù huò è zhī)

故有道者不處 (Gù yǒu dào zhě bù chù)

有物混成 (Yǒu wù hǔn chéng)

先天地生 (Xiān tiān dì shēng)

寂兮寥兮獨立不改 (Jì xī liáo xī dú lì bù gǎi)

周行而不殆 (Zhōu xíng ér bù dài)

可以為天下母 (Kě yǐ wéi tiān xià mǔ)

吾不知其名字之曰道 (Wú bù zhī qí míng zì zhī yuē dào)

強為之名曰大 (Qiáng wéi zhī míng yuē dà)

大曰逝 (Dà yuē shì)

逝曰遠 (Shì yuē yuǎn)

遠曰反 (Yuǎn yuē fǎn)

故道大天大地大 (Gù dào dà tiān dà dì dà)

王亦大 (Wáng yì dà)

域中有四大 (Yù zhōng yǒu sì dà)

而王居其一焉 (Ér wáng jū qí yī yān)

人法地地法天 (Rén fǎ de dì fǎ tiān yān)

天法道道法自然 (Tiān fǎ dào dào fǎ zì rán)

重為輕根 (Zhòng wèi qīng gēn)

靜為躁君 (Jìng wèi zào jūn)

是以聖人終日行 (Shì yǐ shèng rén zhōng rì xíng)

不離輜重 (Bù lí zī zhòng)

雖有榮觀 (Suī yǒu róng guān)

燕處超然 (Yàn chù chāo rán)

奈何萬乘之主 (Nài hé wàn chéng zhī zhǔ)

而以身輕天下 (Ér yǐ shēn qīng tiān xià)

輕則失本 (Qīng zé shī běn)

躁則失君 (Zào zé shī jūn)

善行無轍迹 (Shàn xíng wú zhé jī)

善言無瑕譏 (Shàn yán wú xiá zhé)

善數不用籌策 (Shàn shǔ bù yòng chóu cè)

善閉無關鍵 (Shàn bì wú guān jiàn)

而不可開 (Ér bù kě kāi)

善結無繩約 (Shàn jié wú shéng yuē)

而不可解 (Ér bù kě jiě)

是以聖人 (Shì yǐ shèng rén)

常善救人 (Cháng shàn jiù rén)

故無棄人 (Gù wú qì rén)

常善救物 (Cháng shàn jiù wù)

故無棄物 (Gù wú qì wù)

是謂襲明故 (Shì wèi xí míng gù)

善人者不善人之師 (Shàn rén zhě bù shàn rén zhī shī)

不善人 (Bù shàn rén)

者善人之資 (Zhě shàn rén zhī zī)

不貴其師 (Bù guì qí shī)

不愛其資 (Bù ài qí zī)

雖智大迷 (Suī zhì dà mí)

是謂要妙 (Shì wèi yào miào)

知其雄守其雌 (Zhī qí xióng shǒu qí cǐ)

為天下谿 (Wéi tiān xià xī)

為天下谿 (Wéi tiān xià xī)

常德不離復 (Cháng dé bù lí fù)

歸於嬰兒 (Guī yú yīng ér)

知其白守其黑 (Zhī qí bái shǒu qí hēi)

為天下式 (Wéi tiān xià shì)

為天下式 (Wéi tiān xià shì)

常德不忒復 (Cháng dé bù tè fù)

歸於無極 (Guī yú wú jí)

知其榮守其辱 (Zhī qí róng shǒu qí rǔ)

為天下谷 (Wéi tiān xià gǔ)

為天下谷 (Wéi tiān xià gǔ)

常德乃足復 (Cháng dé nǎi zú fù)

歸於樸 (Guī yú pǔ)

樸散則為器聖人 (Pǔ sàn zé wèi qì shèng rén)

用之則為官長 (Yòng zhī zé wèi guān zhǎng)

故大制不割 (Gù dà zhì bù gē)

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將欲取天下 (Jiāng yù qǔ tiān xià)

而為之吾見 (Ér wéi zhī wú jiàn)

其不得已 (Qí bù dé yǐ)

天下神器不可為也 (Tiān xià shén qì bù kě wéi yě)

為者敗之 (Wéi zhě bài zhī)

執者失之 (Zhí zhě shī zhī)

故物或行或隨 (Gù wù huò xíng huò suí)

或歔或吹 (Huò xū huò chuī)

或強或羸 (Huò qiáng huò léi)

或挫或隳 (Huò cuò huò huī)

是以聖人去 (Shì yǐ shèng rén qù)

甚去奢去泰 (Shén qù shē qù tài)

以道佐人主 (Yǐ dào zuǒ rén zhǔ)

者不以兵強天下 (Zhě bù yǐ bīng qiáng tiān xià)

其事好還 (Qí shì hào huán)

師之所處 (Shī zhī suǒ chù)

荊棘生焉 (Jīng jí shēng yān)

大軍之後必有凶年 (Dà jūn zhī hòu bì yǒu xiōng nián)

善有果而已 (Shàn yǒu guǒ ér yǐ)

不敢以取強 (Bù gǎn yǐ qǔ qiáng)

果而勿矜 (Guǒ ér wù jīn)

果而勿伐 (Guǒ ér wù fá)

果而勿驕 (Guǒ ér wù jiāo)

果而不得 (Guǒ ér bù dé)

已果而勿強 (Yǐ guǒ ér wù qiáng)

物壯則老 (Wù zhuàng zé lǎo)

是謂不道 (Shì wèi bù dào)

不道早已 (Bù dào zǎo yǐ)

夫佳兵者 (Fū jiā bīng zhě)

不祥之器 (Bù xiáng zhī qì)

物或惡之 (Wù huò è zhī)

故有道者不處 (Gù yǒu dào zhě bù chù)

君子居則貴左 (Jūn zǐ jū zé guì zuǒ)

用兵則貴右 (Yòng bīng zé guì yòu)

兵者不祥之器 (Bīng zhě bù xiáng zhī qì)

非君子之器 (Fēi jūn zǐ zhī qì)

不得已 (Bù dé yǐ)

而用之恬淡為上 (Ér yòng zhī tián dàn wéi shàng)

勝而不美而美之者 (Shèng ér bù měi ér měi zhī zhě)

是樂殺人 (Shì lè shā rén)

夫樂殺人 (Fū lè shā rén)

者則不可以得志於天下矣 (Zhě zé bù kě yǐ dé zhì yú tiān xià yǐ)

吉事尚左 (Jí shì shàng zuǒ)

凶事尚右 (Xiōng shì shàng yòu)

偏將軍居左 (Piān jiāng jūn jū zuǒ)

上將軍居右 (Shàng jiàng jūn jū yòu)

言以喪禮處之 (Yán yǐ sāng lǐ chǔ zhī)

殺人之衆以 (Shā rén zhī zhòng yǐ)

哀悲泣之 (Āi bēi qì zhī)

戰勝以喪禮處之 (Zhàn shèng yǐ sāng lǐ chǔ zhī)

道常無名樸 (Dào cháng wú míng pǔ)

雖小天下莫能臣也 (Suī xiǎo tiān xià mò néng chén yě)

侯王若能守之 (Hóu wáng ruò néng shǒu zhī)

萬物將自賓 (Wàn wù jiāng zì bīn)

天地相合以降甘露 (Tiān dì xiāng hé yǐ jiàng gān lù)

民莫之令而自均 (Mín mò zhī lìng ér zì jūn)

始制有名 (Shǐ zhì yǒu míng)

名亦既 (Míng yì jì)

有夫亦將知止 (Yǒu fū yì jiāng zhī zhǐ)

知止所以不殆 (Zhī zhǐ suǒ yǐ bù dài)

譬道之在天下 (Pì dào zhī zài tiān xià)

猶川谷 (Yóu chuān gǔ)

之與江海 (Zhī yǔ jiāng hǎi)

33

知人者智 (*Zhī rén zhě zhì*)

自知者明 (*Zì zhī zhě míng*)

勝人者有力 (*Shèng rén zhě yǒu lì*)

自勝者強 (*Zì shèng zhě qiáng*)

知足者富 (*Zhī zú zhě fù*)

強行者有志 (*Qiáng xíng zhě yǒu zhì*)

不失其所者久 (*Bù shī qí suǒ zhě jiǔ*)

死而不亡者壽 (*Sǐ ér bù wáng zhě shòu*)

34

大道汎兮其可左右 (Dà dào fàn xī qí kě zuǒ yòu)

萬物恃之而生 (Wàn wù shì zhī ér sheng)

而不辭功成不名有 (Ér bù cí gōng chéng bù míng yǒu)

衣養萬物 (Yī yǎng wàn wù)

而不為 (Ér bù wéi)

主常無欲可名於小 (Zhǔ cháng wú yù kě míng yú xiǎo)

萬物歸焉 (Wàn wù guī yān)

而不為 (Ér bù wéi)

主可名為大以其終 (Zhǔ kě míng wéi dà yǐ qí zhōng)

不自為大 (bù zì wéi dà)

故能成其大 (Gù néng chéng qí dà)

35

執大象天下往 (*Zhí dà xiàng tiān xià wǎng*)

往而不害安平大 (*Wǎng ér bù hài ān píng dà*)

樂與餌過客止 (*Lè yǔ ěr guò kè zhǐ*)

道之出口淡乎其無味 (*Dào zhī chū kǒu dàn hū qí wú wèi*)

視之不足見 (*Shì zhī bù zú jiàn*)

聽之不足聞 (*Tīng zhī bù zú wén*)

用之不足既 (*Yòng zhī bù zú jì*)

將欲歛之 (Jiāng yù shè zhī)

必固張之 (Bì gù zhāng zhī)

將欲弱之 (Jiāng yù ruò zhī)

必固強之 (Bì gù qiáng zhī)

將欲廢之 (Jiāng yù fèi zhī)

必固興之 (Bì gù xìng zhī)

將欲奪之 (Jiāng yù duó zhī)

必固與之 (Bì gù yǔ zhī)

是謂微明 (Shì wèi wēi míng)

柔弱勝剛強 (Róu ruò shèng gang qiáng)

魚不可脫於淵 (Yú bù kě tuō yú yuán)

國之利器 (Guó zhī lì qì)

不可以示人 (Bù kě yǐ shì rén)

37

道常無為而無不為 (*Dào cháng wú wéi ér wú bù wéi*)

侯王若能守之 (*Hóu wáng ruò néng shǒu zhī*)

萬物將自化 (*Wàn wù jiāng zì huà*)

化而欲作 (*Huà ér yù zuò*)

吾將鎮之以 (*Wú jiāng zhèn zhī yǐ*)

無名之樸 (*Wú míng zhī pǔ*)

無名之樸 (*Wú míng zhī pǔ*)

夫亦將無欲 (*Fū yì jiāng wú yù*)

不欲以靜 (*Bù yù yǐ jìng*)

天下將自定 (*Tiān xià jiāng zì dìng*)

上德不德是以有德 (Shàng dé bù dé shì yǐ yǒu dé)
 下德不失德是以無德 (Xià dé bù shī dé shì yǐ wú dé)
 上德無為而無以為 (Shàng dé wú wéi ér wú yǐ wéi)
 下德為之而有以為 (Xià dé wéi zhī ér yǒu yǐ wéi)
 上仁為之 (Shàng rén wéi zhī)
 而無以為 (Ér wú yǐ wéi)
 上義為之而有以為 (Shàng yì wéi zhī ér yǒu yǐ wéi)
 上禮為之 (Shàng lǐ wéi zhī)
 而莫之應 (Ér mò zhī yīng)
 則攘臂而扔之 (Zé rang bì ér rēng zhī)
 故失道而後德 (Gù shī dào ér hòu dé)
 失德而後仁 (Shī dé ér hòu rén)
 失仁而後義 (Shī rén ér hòu yì)
 失義而後禮 (Shī yì ér hòu lǐ)
 夫禮者忠信 (Fū lǐ zhě zhōng xìn)
 之薄而亂之首 (Zhī báo ér luàn zhī shǒu)
 前識者道之華 (Qián shí zhě dào zhī huá)
 而愚之始 (Ér yú zhī shǐ)
 是以大丈夫處其厚 (Shì yǐ dà zhàng fū chù qí hòu)
 不居其薄處其實 (Bù jū qí báo chù qí shí)
 不居其華 (Bù jū qí huá)
 故去彼 (Gù qù bǐ)
 取此 (Qǔ cǐ)

昔之得一者 (Xī zhī dé yī zhě)

天得一以清 (Tiān dé yī yǐ qīng)

地得一以寧 (De dé yī yǐ níng)

神得一以靈 (Shén dé yī yǐ líng)

谷得一以盈 (Gǔ dé yī yǐ yíng)

萬物得一以生 (Wàn wù dé yī yǐ sheng)

侯王得一 (Hóu wáng dé yī yǐ)

以為天下貞 (Yǐ wéi tiān xià zhēn)

其致之 (Qí zhì zhī)

天無以清將恐裂 (Tiān wú yǐ qīng jiāng kǒng liè)

地無以寧將恐發 (Dì wú yǐ níng jiāng kǒng fā)

神無以靈將恐歇 (Shén wú yǐ líng jiāng kǒng xiē)

谷無以盈將恐竭 (Gǔ wú yǐ yíng jiāng kǒng jié)

萬物 (Wàn wù)

無以生將恐滅 (Wú yǐ shēng jiāng kǒng miè)

侯王 (Hóu wáng)

無以貴高將恐蹶 (Wú yǐ guì gāo jiāng kǒng jué)

故貴以賤為本 (Gù guì yǐ jiàn wéi běn)

高以下為基 (Gāo yǐ xià wéi jī)

是以侯王自稱孤 (Shì yǐ hóu wáng zì chēng gū)

寡不穀 (Guǎ bù gǔ)

此非以賤為本耶非乎 (Cǐ fēi yǐ jiàn wéi běn yé fēi hū)

故致數譽無譽 (Gù zhì shù yù wú yù)

不欲碌碌如玉 (Bù yù lù lù rú yù)

珞珞如石 (Luò luò rú shí)

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反者道之動 (Fǎn zhě dào zhī dòng)

弱者道之用 (Ruò zhě dào zhī yòng)

天下萬物生於有 (Tiān xià wàn wù shēng yú yǒu)

有生於無 (Yǒu shēng yú wú)

上士聞道勤而行之 (Shàng shì wén dào qín ér xíng zhī)

中士聞道 (Zhōng shì wén dào)

若存若亡 (Ruò cún ruò wáng)

下士聞道大笑之 (Xià shì wén dào dà xiào zhī)

不笑不足以為道 (Bù xiào bùzú yǐ wéi dào)

故建言有之 (Gù jiàn yán yǒu zhī)

明道若昧 (Míng dào ruò mèi)

進道若退 (Jìn dào ruò tuì)

夷道若類 (Yí dào ruò lèi)

上德若谷 (Shàng dé ruò gǔ)

太白若辱 (Tài bái ruò rǔ)

廣德若不足 (Guǎng dé ruò bù zú)

建德若偷 (Jiàn dé ruò tōu)

質真若渝 (Zhì zhēn ruò yú)

大方無隅 (Dà fāng wú yú)

大器晚成 (Dà qì wǎn chéng)

大音希聲 (Dà yīn xī shēng)

大象無形 (Dà xiàng wú xíng)

道隱無名 (Dào yǐn wú míng)

夫唯道善貸且成 (Fū wéi dào shàn dài qiě chéng)

道生一 (*Dào shēng yī*)

一生二 (*Yī shēng èr*)

二生三 (*Èr shēng sān*)

三生萬物 (*Sān shēng wàn wù*)

萬物負陰而抱陽 (*Wàn wù fù yīn ér bào yang*)

沖氣以為和 (*Chōng qì yǐ wéi hé*)

人之所惡唯 (*Rén zhī suǒ è wei*)

孤寡不穀 (*Gū guǎ bù gǔ*)

而王公以為稱 (*Ér wáng gōng yǐ wéi chēng*)

故物或損之而益 (*Gù wù huò sǔn zhī ér yì*)

或益之而損 (*Huò yì zhī ér sǔn*)

人之所教我亦 (*Rén zhī suǒ jiào wǒ yì*)

教之強梁 (*Jiào zhī qiáng liáng*)

者不得其死 (*Zhě bù dé qí sǐ*)

吾將以為教父 (*Wú jiāng yǐ wéi jiào fù*)

43

天下之至柔馳 (Tiān xià zhī zhì róu chí)

騁天下之至堅 (Chěng tiān xià zhī zhì jiān)

無有入無間 (Wú yǒu rù wú jiàn)

吾是以知 (Wú shì yǐ zhī)

無為之有益不言之教 (Wú wéi zhī yǒu yì bù yán zhī jiào)

無為之益天下希及之 (Wú wéi zhī yì tiān xià xī jí zhī)

44

名與身孰親 (*Míng yǔ shēn shú qīn*)

身與貨孰多 (*Shēn yǔ huò shú duō*)

得與亡孰病 (*Dé yǔ wáng shú bìng*)

是故甚愛必大費 (*Shì gù shèn ài bì dà fèi*)

多藏必厚亡 (*Duō cáng bì hòu wáng*)

知足不辱 (*Zhī zú bù rǔ*)

知止不殆 (*Zhī zhǐ bù dài*)

可以長久 (*Kě yǐ cháng jiǔ*)

45

大成若缺 (*Dà chéng ruò quē*)

其用不弊 (*Qí yòng bù bì*)

大盈若沖 (*Dà yíng ruò chōng*)

其用不窮 (*Qí yòng bù qióng*)

大直若屈 (*Dà zhí ruò qū*)

大巧若拙 (*Dà qiǎo ruò zhuō*)

大辯若訥 (*Dà biàn ruò nè*)

躁勝寒靜勝熱 (*Zào shèng hán jìng shèng rè*)

清靜為天下正 (*Qīng jìng wéi tiān xià zhèng*)

天下有道 (Tiān xià yǒu dào)

卻走馬以糞 (Què zǒu mǎ yǐ fèn)

天下無道 (Tiān xià wú dào)

戎馬生於郊 (Róng mǎ shēng yú jiāo)

禍莫大於不知足 (Huò mò dà yú bù zhī zú)

咎莫大於欲得 (Jiù mò dà yú yù dé)

故知足之足常足矣 (Gù zhī zú zhī zú cháng zú yǐ)

47

不出戶知天下 (*Bù chū hù zhī tiān xià*)

不闕牖見天道 (*Bù kuā yǒu jiàn tiān dào*)

其出彌遠 (*Qí chū mí yuǎn*)

其知彌少 (*Qí zhī mí shǎo*)

是以聖人不行而知 (*Shì yǐ shèng rén bù xíng ér zhī*)

不見而名不為而成 (*Bù jiàn ér míng bù wéi ér chéng*)

為學日益 (*Wéi xué rì yì*)

為道日損 (*Wéi dào rì sǔn*)

損之又損 (*Sǔn zhī yòu sǔn*)

以至於無為 (*Yǐ zhì yú wú wéi*)

無為而無不為 (*Wú wéi ér wú bù wéi*)

取天下常以無事 (*Qǔ tiān xià cháng yǐ wú shì*)

及其有事 (*Jí qí yǒu shì*)

不足以取天下 (*Bù zú yǐ qǔ tiān xià*)

聖人無常心 (Shèng rén wú cháng xīn)

以百姓心為心 (Yǐ bǎi xìng xīn wéi xīn)

善者吾善之 (Shàn zhě wú shàn zhī)

不善者吾亦善之 (Bù shàn zhě wú yì shàn zhī)

德善 (Dé shàn)

信者吾信之 (Xìn zhě wú xìn zhī)

不信者吾亦信之 (Bù xìn zhě wú yì xìn zhī)

德信 (Dé xìn)

聖人在天下歛 (Shèng rén zài tiān xià shè)

歛為天下渾其心 (Shè wéi tiān xià hún qí xīn)

百姓皆 (Bǎi xìng jiē)

注其耳目 (Zhù qí ěr mù)

聖人皆孩之 (Shèng rén jiē hái zhī)

出生入死 (Chū sheng rù sǐ)

生之徒十有三 (Shēng zhī tú shí yǒu sān)

死之徒十有三 (Sǐ zhī tú shí yǒu sān)

人之生動之死地 (Rén zhī sheng dòng zhī sǐ dì)

亦十有三 (Yì shí yǒu sān)

夫何故以其生生之厚 (Fū hé gù yǐ qí sheng shēng zhī hòu)

蓋聞善攝生者 (Gài wén shàn shè shēng zhě)

陸行 (Lù xíng)

不遇兇虎 (Bù yù sī hǔ)

入軍不被甲兵 (Rù jūn bù bèi jiǎ bīng)

兇無所投其角 (Sī wú suǒ tóu qí jiǎo)

虎無所措其爪 (Hǔ wú suǒ cuò qí zhǎo)

兵無所容其刃 (Bīng wú suǒ róng qí rèn)

夫何故以其無死地 (Fū hé gù yǐ qí wú sǐ dì)

道生之德畜之物 (Dào shēng zhī dé chù zhī wù)

形之勢成之 (Xíng zhī shì chéng zhī)

是以萬物 (Shì yǐ wàn wù)

莫不尊道而貴德 (Mò bù zūn dào ér guì dé)

道之尊德之貴夫莫 (Dào zhī zūn dé zhī guì fū mò)

之命常自然 (Zhī mìng cháng zìrán)

故道生之德畜之 (Gù dào shēng zhī dé chù zhī)

長之育之 (Zhǎng zhī yù zhī)

亭之毒之 (Tíng zhī dú zhī)

養之覆之 (Yǎng zhī fù zhī)

生而不有為而不恃 (Shēng ér bù yǒu wéi ér bù shì)

長而不宰 (Cháng ér bù zǎi)

是謂玄德 (Shì wèi xuán dé)

天下有始以為天下母 (*Tiān xià yǒu shǐ yǐ wéi tiān xià mǔ*)

既得其母以知其子 (*Jì dé qí mǔ yǐ zhī qí zǐ*)

既知其子復 (*Jì zhī qí zǐ fù*)

守其母 (*Shǒu qí mǔ*)

沒身不殆 (*Méi shēn bù dài*)

塞其兌閉其門 (*Sāi qí duì bì qí mén*)

終身不勤 (*Zhōng shēn bù qín*)

開其兌濟其事 (*Kāi qí duì jì qí shì*)

終身不救 (*Zhōng shēn bù jiù*)

見小曰明 (*Jiàn xiǎo yuē míng*)

守柔曰強 (*Shǒu róu yuē qiáng*)

用其光復歸其明 (*Yòng qí guāng fù guī qí míng*)

無遺身殃 (*Wú yí shēn yāng*)

是為習常 (*Shì wèi xí cháng*)

使我介 (*Shǐ wǒ jiè*)

然有知行於大道 (*Rán yǒu zhī xíng yú dà dào*)

唯施是畏 (*Wéi shī shì wèi*)

大道甚夷 (*Dà dào shén yí*)

而民好徑 (*Ér mǐn hǎo jìng*)

朝甚除田甚蕪 (*Cháo shén chú tián shén wú*)

倉甚虛 (*Cāng shén xū*)

服文綵帶利劍 (*Fú wén cǎi dài lì jiàn*)

厭飲食 (*Yàn yǐn shí*)

財貨有餘 (*Cái huò yǒu yú*)

是謂盜夸非道也哉 (*Shì wèi dào kuā fēi dào yě zāi*)

善建不拔 (Shàn jiàn bù bá)

善抱者不脫 (Shàn bào zhě bù tuō)

子孫 (Zǐ sūn)

以祭祀不輟 (Yǐ jì sì bù chōu)

修之於身 (Xiū zhī yú shēn)

其德乃真 (Qí dé nǎi zhēn)

修之於家 (Xiū zhī yú jiā)

其德乃餘 (Qí dé nǎi yú)

修之於鄉 (Xiū zhī yú xiāng)

其德乃長 (Qí dé nǎi zhǎng)

修之於國 (Xiū zhī yú guó)

其德乃豐 (Qí dé nǎi fēng)

修之於天下 (Xiū zhī yú tiān xià)

其德乃普 (Xià qí dé nǎi pǔ)

故以身觀身 (Gù yǐ shēn guān shēn)

以家觀家 (Yǐ jiā guān jiā)

以鄉觀鄉 (Yǐ xiāng guān xiāng)

以國觀國 (Yǐ guó guān guó)

以天下觀天下 (Yǐ tiān xià guān tiān xià)

吾何以知天下然哉 (Wú hé yǐ zhī tiān xià rán zāi)

以此 (Yǐ cǐ)

含德之厚比於赤子 (Hán dé zhī hòu bǐ yú chì zǐ)

蜂蠆虺蛇不螫 (Fēng chài huī shé bù shì)

猛獸不據攫鳥不搏 (Měng shòu bù jù jué niǎo bù bó)

骨弱筋柔而握固 (Gǔ ruò jīn róu ér wò gù)

未知牝牡之合 (Wèi zhī pìn mǔ zhī hé)

而全作精之至也 (Ér quán zuò jīng zhī zhì yě)

終日號而不嗶 (Zhōng rì hào ér bù á)

和之至也 (Hé zhī zhì yě)

知和曰常 (Zhī hé yuē cháng)

知常曰明 (Zhī cháng yuē míng)

益生日祥 (Yì shēng yuē xiáng)

心使氣曰強 (Xīn shǐ qì yuē qiáng)

物壯則老 (Wù zhuàng zé lǎo)

謂之不道 (Wèi zhī bù dào)

不道早已 (Bù dào zǎo yǐ)

知者不言 (Zhì zhě bù yán)

言者不知 (Yán zhě bù zhī)

塞其兌閉其門 (Sāi qí duì bì qí mén)

挫其銳解其分 (Cuò qí ruì jiě qí fēn)

和其光同其塵 (Hé qí guāng tóng qí chén)

是謂玄同故 (Shì wèi xuán tóng gù)

不可得而親 (Bù kě dé ér qīn)

不可得而踈 (Bù kě dé ér shū)

不可得而利 (Bù kě dé ér lì)

不可得而害 (Bù kě dé ér hài)

不可得而貴 (Bù kě dé ér guì)

不可得而賤 (Bù kě dé ér jiàn)

故為天下貴 (Gù wéi tiān xià guì)

以正治國 (Yǐ zhèng zhì guó)

以奇用兵 (Yǐ qí yòng bīng)

以無事取天下 (Yǐ wú shì qǔ tiān xià)

吾何以知其然哉以此 (Wú hé yǐ zhī qí rán zāi yǐ cǐ)

天下多忌諱 (Tiān xià duō jì huì)

而民彌貧 (Ér mǐn mí pín)

民多利 (Mín duō lì)

器國家滋昏 (Qì guó jiā zī hūn)

人多伎 (Rén duō jì)

巧奇物滋起 (Qiǎo qí wù zī qǐ)

法令滋彰 (Fǎ lìng zī zhāng)

盜賊多有 (Dào zéi duō yǒu)

故聖人云 (Gù shèng rén yún)

我無為而民自化 (Wǒ wú wéi ér mǐn zì huà)

我好靜而民自正 (Wǒ hǎo jìng ér mǐn zì zhèng)

我無事而民自富 (Wǒ wú shì ér mǐn zì fù)

我無欲而民自樸 (Wǒ wú yù ér mǐn zì pǔ)

其政悶悶其民淳淳 (Qí zhèng mèn mèn qí mín chún chún)

其政察察其民缺缺 (Qí zhèng chá chá qí mín quē quē)

禍兮福之所倚 (Huò xī fú zhī suǒ yǐ)

福兮禍之所伏 (Fú xī huò zhī suǒ fú)

孰知其極其無正 (Shú zhī qí jí qí wú zhèng)

正復為奇 (Zhèng fù wéi qí)

善復為妖 (Shàn fù wéi yāo)

人之迷其日固久 (Rén zhī mí qí rì gù jiǔ)

是以聖人方而不割 (Shì yǐ shèng rén fāng ér bù gē)

廉而不歲 (Lián ér bù suì)

直而不肆 (Zhí ér bù sì)

光而不耀 (Guāng ér bù yào)

治人事天 (Zhì rén shì tiān)

莫若嗇 (Mò ruò sè)

夫唯嗇是謂早服 (Fū wéi sè shì wèi zǎo fú)

早服謂之重積德 (Zǎo fú wèi zhī zhòng jī dé)

重積德則無不克 (Zhòng jī dé zé wú bù kè)

無不克則莫知其極 (Wú bù kè zé mò zhī qí jí)

莫知其極可以有國 (Mò zhī qí jí kě yǐ yǒu guó)

有國之母 (Yǒu guó zhī mǔ)

可以長久 (Kě yǐ cháng jiǔ)

是謂深根固柢 (Shì wèi shēn gēn gù dǐ)

長生久視之道 (Cháng shēng jiǔ shì zhī dào)

治大國若烹小鮮 (Zhì dà guó ruò pēng xiǎo xiān)

以道蒞天下其鬼不神 (Yǐ dào lì tiān xià qí guǐ bù shén)

非其鬼不神 (Fēi qí guǐ bù shén)

其神不傷人 (Qí shén bù shāng rén)

非其神不傷人 (Fēi qí shén bù shāng rén)

聖人亦不傷人 (Shèng rén yì bù shāng rén)

夫兩不相傷 (Fū liǎng bù xiāng shāng)

故德交歸焉 (Gù dé jiāo guī yān)

大國者下流 (Dà guó zhě xià liú)

天下之交天下之牝 (Tiān xià zhī jiāo tiān xià zhī pìn)

牝常以靜 (Pìn cháng yǐ jìng)

勝牡以靜為下 (Shèng mǔ yǐ jìng wèi xià)

故大國以下小國 (Gù dà guó yǐ xià xiǎo guó)

則取小國 (Zé qǔ xiǎo guó)

小國以下大國 (Xiǎo guó yǐ xià dà guó)

則取大國 (Zé qǔ dà guó)

故或下以取 (Gù huò xià yǐ qǔ)

或下而取 (Huò xià ér qǔ)

大國不過 (Dà guó bù guò)

欲兼畜人 (Yù jiān chù rén)

小國不過 (Xiǎo guó bù guò)

欲入事人 (Yù rù shì rén)

夫兩者各得其所 (Fū liǎng zhě gè dé qí suǒ yù)

大者宜為下 (Dà zhě yí wèi xià)

道者萬物之奧 (Dào zhě wàn wù zhī ào)

善人之寶不善人之 (Shàn rén zhī bǎo bù shàn rén zhī)

所保 (Suǒ bǎo)

美言可以 (Měi yán kě yǐ)

市尊行可以加人 (Shì zūn xíng kě yǐ jiā rén)

人之不善何棄之有 (Rén zhī bù shàn hé qì zhī yǒu)

故立天子置三公 (Gù lì tiān zǐ zhì sān gōng)

雖有拱璧以先駟馬 (Suī yǒu gǒng bì yǐ xiān sì mǎ)

不如坐進此道 (Bù rú zuò jìn cǐ dào)

古之所以貴 (Gǔ zhī suǒ yǐ guì)

此道者何 (Cǐ dào zhě hé)

不曰以求得有罪以免耶 (Bù yuē yǐ qiú dé yǒu zuì yǐ miǎn yé)

故為天下貴 (Gù wéi tiān xià guì)

為無為 (Wéi wú wéi)

事無事 (Shì wú shì)

味無味 (Wèi wú wèi)

大小多少 (Dà xiǎo duō shǎo)

報怨以德 (Bào yuàn yǐ dé)

圖難於其易 (Tú nán yú qí yì)

為大於其細 (Wéi dà yú qí xì)

天下難事必作於易 (Tiān xià nán shì bì zuò yú yì)

天下大事必作於細 (Tiān xià dà shì bì zuò yú xì)

是以聖人終不為大 (Shì yǐ sheng rén zhōng bù wéi dà)

故能成其大 (Gù néng chéng qí dà)

夫輕諾必寡信 (Fū qīng nuò bì guǎ xìn)

多易必多難 (Duō yì bì duō nán)

是以聖人猶難 (Shì yǐ sheng rén yóu nán)

之故終無難矣 (Zhī gù zhōng wú nán yǐ)

其安易持 (Qí ān yì chí)

其未兆易謀 (Qí wèi zhào yì móu)

其脆易泮其微易散 (Qí cuì yì pàn qí wēi yì sàn)

為之於未有 (Wéi zhī yú wèi yǒu)

治之於未亂 (Zhì zhī yú wèi luàn)

合抱之木生於毫末 (Hé bào zhī mù shēng yú háo mò)

九層之臺起於累土 (Jiǔ céng zhī tái qǐ yú lèi tǔ)

千里之行始於足下 (Qiān lǐ zhī xíng shǐ yú zú xià)

為者敗之執者失之 (Wèi zhě bài zhī zhí zhě shī zhī)

是以聖人無為 (Shì yǐ shèng rén wú wéi zhī)

故無敗 (Gù wú bài)

無執故無失 (Wú zhí gù wú shī)

民之從事 (Mín zhī cóng shì)

常於幾成而敗之 (Cháng yú jǐ chéng ér bài zhī)

慎終如始則無敗事 (Shèn zhōng rú shǐ zé wú bài shì)

是以聖人欲不欲 (Shì yǐ shèng rén yù bù yù)

不貴難得之貨 (Bù guì nán dé zhī huò)

學不學 (Xué bù xué)

復衆人之所過 (Fù zhòng rén zhī suǒ guò)

以輔萬物之自然 (Yǐ fǔ wàn wù zhī zì rán)

而不敢為 (Ér bù gǎn wéi)

古之善為道者 (Gǔ zhī shàn wéi dào zhě)

非以明民將以愚之 (Fēi yǐ míng mín jiāng yǐ yú zhī)

民之難治以其智多 (Mín zhī nán zhì yǐ qí zhì duō)

故以智治國國之賊 (Gù yǐ zhì zhì guó guó zhī zéi)

不以智 (Bù yǐ zhì)

治國國之福 (Zhì guó guó zhī fú)

知此兩者亦稽式 (Zhī cǐ liǎng zhě yì jì shì)

常知稽式 (Cháng zhī jì shì)

是謂玄德玄德 (Shì wèi xuán dé xuán dé)

深矣遠矣與物反矣 (Shēn yǐ yuǎn yǐ yǔ wù fǎn yǐ)

然後乃至大順 (Rán hòu nǎi zhì dà shùn)

江海 (Jiāng hǎi)

所以能為百谷王者 (Suǒ yǐ néng wéi bǎi gǔ wáng zhě)

以其善下之 (Yǐ qí shàn xià zhī)

故能為百谷王 (Gù néng wéi bǎi gǔ wáng)

是以聖人欲上民 (Shì yǐ sheng rén yù shàng mín)

必以言下之 (Bì yǐ yán xià zhī)

欲先民 (Yù xiān mín)

必以身後之 (Bì yǐ shēn hòu zhī)

是以聖人處上 (Shì yǐ sheng rén chù shàng)

而民不重 (Ér mín bù chóng)

處前而民不害 (Chù qián ér mín bù hài)

是以天下 (Shì yǐ tiān xià)

樂推而不厭 (Lè tuī ér bù yàn)

以其不爭 (Yǐ qí bù zhēng)

故天下莫能與之爭 (Gù tiān xià mò néng yǔ zhī zhēng)

天下 (Tiān xià)

皆謂我道大似不肖 (Jiē wèi wǒ dào dà sì bù xiào)

夫唯大故似不肖 (Fū wéi dà gù sì bù xiào)

若肖久矣其細也 (Ruò xiào jiǔ yǐ qí xì yě)

夫我有三寶持而保之 (Fū wǒ yǒu sān bǎo chí ér bǎo zhī)

一曰慈二曰儉三 (Yī yuē cí èr yuē jiǎn sān)

曰不敢為天下先 (Yuē bù gǎn wéi tiān xià xiān)

慈故能勇 (Cí gù néng yǒng)

儉故能廣 (Jiǎn gù néng guǎng)

不敢為天下先 (Bù gǎn wéi tiān xià xiān)

故能成器長 (Gù néng chéng qì zhǎng)

今舍慈且勇 (Jīn shě cí qiě yǒng)

舍儉且廣 (Shě jiǎn qiě guǎng)

舍後且先死矣 (Shě hòu qiě xiān sǐ yǐ)

夫慈以戰則 (Fū cí yǐ zhàn zé)

勝以守則 (Shèng yǐ shǒu zé)

固天將救之 (Gù tiān jiāng jiù zhī)

以慈衛之 (Yǐ cí wèi zhī)

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善為士者不武 (*Shàn wéi shì zhě bù wǔ*)

善戰者不怒 (*Shàn zhàn zhě bù nù*)

善勝敵者不與 (*Shàn shèng dí zhě bù yǔ*)

善用人者為之下 (*Shàn yòng rén zhě wéi zhī xià*)

是謂不爭之德 (*Shì wèi bù zhēng zhī dé*)

是謂用人之力 (*Shì wèi yòng rén zhī lì*)

是謂配天古之極 (*Shì wèi pèi tiān gǔ zhī jí*)

用兵有言 (Yòng bīng yǒu yán)

吾不敢為主而為客 (Wú bù gǎn wéi zhǔ ér wéi kè)

不敢進寸而退尺 (Bù gǎn jìn cùn ér tuì chǐ)

是謂行無行 (Shì wèi xíng wú xíng)

攘無臂 (Rǎng wú bì)

扔無敵 (Rēng wú dí)

執無兵 (Zhí wú bīng)

禍莫大於輕敵 (Huò mò dà yú qīng dí)

輕敵幾喪吾寶 (Qīng dí jǐ sàng wú bǎo)

故抗兵相 (Gù kàng bīng xiàng)

加哀者勝矣 (Jiā āi zhě shèng yǐ)

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吾言甚易知(*Wú yán shén yì zhī*)

甚易行天下 (*Shén yì xíng tiān xià*)

莫能知莫能行 (*Mò néng zhī mò néng xíng*)

言有宗事有君 (*Yán yǒu zōng shì yǒu jūn*)

夫唯無知 (*Fū wéi wú zhī*)

是以不我知 (*Shì yǐ bù wǒ zhī*)

知我者希則我者貴 (*Zhī wǒ zhě xī zé wǒ zhě guì*)

是以聖人被褐懷玉 (*Shì yǐ sheng rén pī hè huái yù*)

知不知上 (*Zhī bù zhī shàng*)

不知知病 (*Bù zhī zhī bìng*)

夫唯病病 (*Fū wéi bìng bìng*)

是以不病 (*Shì yǐ bù bìng*)

聖人不病 (*Shèng rén bù bìng*)

以其病病 (*Yǐ qí bìng bìng*)

是以不病 (*Shì yǐ bù bìng*)

民不畏威則大威至 (*Mín bù wèi wēi zé dà wēi zhì*)

無狎其所居 (*Wú xiá qí suǒ jū*)

無厭其所生 (*Wú yàn qí suǒ shēng*)

夫唯不厭 (*Fū wéi bù yàn*)

是以不厭 (*Shì yǐ bù yàn*)

是以聖人自知 (*Shì yǐ shèng rén zì zhī*)

不自見 (*Fu jì mǐ*)

自愛不自貴 (*Zì ài bù zì guì*)

故去彼取此 (*Gù qù bǐ qǔ cǐ*)

勇於敢則殺 (Yǒng yú gǎn zé shā)

勇於不敢則活 (Yǒng yú bù gǎn zé huó)

此兩者或利或害 (Cǐ liǎng zhě huò lì huò hài)

天之所惡孰知其 (Tiān zhī suǒ è shú zhī qí)

故是以聖人猶難之 (Gù shì yǐ shèng rén yóu nán zhī)

天之道不爭而善勝 (Tiān zhī dào bù zhēng ér shàn shèng)

不言而善應 (Bù yán ér shàn yīng)

不召而自來 (Bù zhào ér zì lái)

緝然而善謀 (Chǎn rán ér shàn móu)

天網恢恢疎而不失 (Tiān wǎng huī huī shū ér bù shī)

民不畏死 (Mín bù wèi sǐ)

柰何以死懼之 (Nài hé yǐ sǐ jù zhī)

若使民常畏死 (Ruò shǐ mín cháng wèi sǐ)

而為奇者 (Ér wéi qí zhě)

吾得執而殺之 (Wú dé zhí ér shā zhī)

孰敢常有司殺 (Shú gǎn cháng yǒu sī shā)

者殺夫司殺者 (Zhě shā fū sī shā zhě)

是大匠斲 (Shì dà jiàng zhuó)

夫代大匠斲 (Fū dài dà jiàng zhuó)

者希有不傷其手矣 (Zhě xī yǒu bù shāng qí shǒu yǐ)

民之飢以其上食 (*Mín zhī jī yǐ qí shàng shí*)

稅之多 (*Shuì zhī duō*)

是以飢 (*Shì yǐ jī*)

民之難治 (*Mín zhī nán zhì*)

以其上之有為 (*Yǐ qí shàng zhī yǒu wéi*)

是以難治 (*Shì yǐ nán zhì*)

民之輕死 (*Mín zhī qīng sǐ*)

以其求生之厚 (*Yǐ qí qiú shēng zhī hòu*)

是以輕死 (*Shì yǐ qīng sǐ*)

夫唯無以生為 (*Fū wéi wú yǐ shēng wéi*)

者是賢於貴生 (*Zhě chī xián yú guì shēng*)

人之生也柔弱 (Rén zhī shēng yě róu ruò)

其死也堅強 (Qí sǐ yě jiān qiáng)

萬物草木 (Wàn wù cǎo mù)

之生也柔脆 (Zhī shēng yě róu cuì)

其死也枯槁 (Qí sǐ yě kū gǎo)

故堅強者死之徒 (Gù jiān qiáng zhě sǐ zhī tú)

柔弱者生之徒 (Róu ruò zhě shēng zhī tú)

是以兵強則不勝 (Shì yǐ bīng qiáng zé bù shèng)

木強則共 (Mù qiáng zé gong)

強大處下 (Qiáng dà chǔ xià)

柔弱處上 (Róu ruò chù shàng)

天之道其猶張弓與 (Tiān zhī dào qí yóu zhāng gōng yǔ)

高者抑之下者舉之 (Gāo zhě yì zhī xià zhě jǔ zhī)

有餘者損 (Yǒu yú zhě sǔn)

之不足者補之 (Zhī bù zú zhě bǔ zhī)

天之道損有餘 (Tiān zhī dào sǔn yǒu yú)

而補不足 (Ér bǔ bù zú)

人之道則不然 (Rén zhī dào zé bù rán)

損不足以奉有餘 (Sǔn bù zú yǐ fèng yǒu yú)

孰能有餘以奉天下 (Shú néng yǒu yú yǐ fèng tiān xià)

唯有道者 (Wéi yǒu dào zhě)

是以聖人為而不恃 (Shì yǐ shèng rén wéi ér bù shì)

功成而不處 (Gōng chéng ér bù chù)

其不欲見賢 (Qí bù yù jiàn xián)

天下莫柔弱於水 (Tiān xià mò róu ruò yú shuǐ)

而攻堅強者 (Ér gōng jiān qiáng zhě)

莫之能勝其無以易之 (Mò zhī néng shēng qí wú yǐ yì zhī)

弱之勝強 (Ruò zhī shèng qiáng)

柔之勝剛 (Róu zhī shèng gāng)

天下莫不知 (Tiān xià mò bù zhī)

莫能行 (Mò néng xíng)

是以聖人云 (Shì yǐ shèng rén yún)

受國之垢 (Shòu guó zhī gòu)

是謂社稷主 (Shì wèi shè jì zhǔ)

受國不祥 (Shòu guó bù xiáng)

是謂天下王 (Shì wèi tiān xià wáng)

正言若反 (Zhèng yán ruò fǎn)

和大怨必有餘怨 (Hé dà yuàn bì yǒu yú yuán)

安可以為善 (Ān kě yǐ wéi shàn)

是以聖人執左契 (Shì yǐ shèng rén zhí zuǒ qì)

而不責於人 (Ér bù zé yú rén)

有德司契 (Yǒu dé sī qì)

無德司徹 (Wú dé sī chè)

天道無親 (Tiān dào wú qīn)

常與善人 (Cháng yǔ shàn rén)

小國寡民 (*Xiǎo guó guǎ mín*)

使有什伯之器 (*Shǐ yǒu shé bó zhī qì*)

而不用 (*Ér bù yòng*)

使民重死 (*Shǐ mín zhòng sǐ*)

而不遠徙 (*Ér bù yuǎn xǐ*)

雖有舟輿 (*Suī yǒu zhōu yú*)

無所乘之 (*Wú suǒ chéng zhī*)

雖有甲兵 (*Suī yǒu jiǎ bīng*)

無所陳之 (*Wú suǒ chén zhī*)

使民復結繩 (*Shéng shǐ mín fù jié*)

而用之 (*Ér yòng zhī*)

甘其食美其服 (*Gān qí shí měi qí fú*)

安其居樂其俗 (*Ān qí jū lè qí sú*)

鄰國相望 (*Lín guó xiāng wàng*)

雞犬之聲相聞 (*Jī quǎn zhī shēng xiāng wén*)

民至老死 (*Mín zhì lǎo sǐ*)

不相往來 (*Bù xiāng wǎng lái*)

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信言不美美言不信 (*Xìn yán bù měi měi yán bù xìn*)

善者不辯辯者不善 (*Shàn zhě bù biàn biàn zhě bù shàn*)

知者不博博者不知 (*Zhī zhě bù bó bó zhě bù zhī*)

聖人不積 (*Shèng rén bù jī*)

既以為人已愈有 (*Jì yǐ wéi rén jǐ yù yǒu*)

既以與人已愈多 (*Jì yǐ yǔ rén jǐ yù duō*)

天之道利而不害 (*Tiān zhī dào lì ér bù hài*)

聖人之道為而不爭 (*Shèng rén zhī dào wéi ér bù zhēng*)

Pīnyīn
phonetics
(approximate English equivalents)

<i>Pīnyīn</i>	Equivalent	<i>Pīnyīn</i>	Equivalent	<i>Pīnyīn</i>	Equivalent
<i>.. a</i>	far	<i>iong</i>	<i>y + u + ng</i>	<i>uang</i>	<i>ua + ng</i>
<i>ai</i>	kite	<i>iu</i>	yo <u>ke</u>	<i>üe</i>	<i>ü + e</i>
<i>an</i>	f <u>an</u>	<i>j</i>	g <u>en</u> ial	<i>ueng</i>	was + <i>ng</i>
<i>ang</i>	o <u>n</u> + <i>ng</i>	<i>k</i>	ke <u>y</u>	<i>ui</i>	wa <u>y</u>
<i>ao</i>	ho <u>w</u>	<i>l</i>	la <u>w</u>	<i>un</i>	pu <u>t</u> + pu <u>n</u>
<i>b</i>	be <u>e</u>	<i>m</i>	mi <u>n</u> d	<i>ün</i>	<i>ü + pu<u>n</u></i>
<i>c</i>	it <u>s</u>	<i>n</i>	no <u>w</u>	<i>uo</i>	wa <u>ll</u>
<i>ch</i>	cho <u>o</u> se	<i>ng</i>	si <u>n</u> g	<i>w</i>	wa <u>y</u>
<i>d</i>	da <u>y</u>	<i>.. o</i>	o <u>ff</u>	<i>x</i>	she <u>e</u> r
<i>e</i>	ye <u>s</u>	<i>ong</i>	pu <u>t</u> + <i>ng</i>	<i>y</i>	ye <u>s</u>
<i>ei</i>	wa <u>y</u>	<i>ou</i>	ow <u>n</u>	<i>z</i>	bed <u>s</u>
<i>en</i>	w <u>e</u> nd	<i>p</i>	pu <u>t</u>	<i>zh</i>	jo <u>y</u>
<i>eng</i>	su <u>n</u> g	<i>q</i>	che <u>e</u> r	Tone marks	
<i>f</i>	f <u>an</u>	<i>r..</i>	mir <u>a</u> ge	(The diacritical marks over vowels, indicating pitch)	
<i>g</i>	g <u>i</u> ve	<i>.. r</i>	fa <u>r</u>		
<i>h</i>	ha <u>v</u> e	<i>s</i>	si <u>n</u> g		
<i>.. i</i>	se <u>e</u> m or si <u>t</u>	<i>sh</i>	sh <u>i</u> ne	H <u>igh</u>	
<i>ia</i>	ya <u>r</u> d	<i>t</i>	ti <u>m</u> e	R <u>ising</u>	
<i>ian</i>	ya <u>n</u> k	<i>u</i>	pu <u>t</u>		
<i>iang</i>	ya <u>r</u> d + <i>ng</i>	<i>ü</i>	<i>u + i</i>	Fall b <u>efore</u> rising	
<i>iao</i>	yo <u>n</u> + bo <u>w</u>	<i>ua</i>	wa <u>n</u> d		
<i>ie</i>	ye <u>t</u>	<i>uai</i>	wi <u>s</u> e		
<i>in</i>	in	<i>uan</i>	wa <u>n</u> gle	F <u>alling</u>	
<i>ing</i>	si <u>n</u> g	<i>üan</i>	<i>ü + an</i>		

Books
by
Billy Lee Harman

Dust
a novel
2005

Ashes
some memories
2015

Angels
summaries of scripture
2020

Dao De Jing
a literal translation
2021

Tai Ji Quan
(fundamentally)
2021

Annie
(how children are)
2021

Space and Light
2023