

STATEMENTS ON AND ABOUT POVERTY, HUNGER HELPING AND CHARITY FROM THE TAO TE CHING

(As many in the West may be unfamiliar with the Tao Te Ching: it is the teaching of Lao Tsu of China (6th Century B.C.), and the basis of Taoist faith, thought and culture. These quotations are drawn from the very beautiful Gia-fu Feng/Jane English translation, Vintage Books, 1972.)

The ten thousand things rise and fall without cease,
Creating, yet not possessing,
Working, yet not taking credit.
Work is done, then forgotten.
Therefore it lasts forever. - (Two)

Not collecting treasures prevents stealing.
Not seeing desirable things prevents confusion of the heart.
The wise therefore rule by emptying hearts and stuffing bellies,
By weakening ambitions and strengthening bones. - (Three)

Hold fast to the center. - (Five)

The sage stays behind, thus he is ahead.
He is detached, thus at one with all.
Through selfless action, he attains fulfillment. - (Seven)

The highest good is like water.
Water gives life to the ten thousand things and does not strive.
It flows in places men reject and so is like Tao.
In dwelling, be close to the land.
In meditation, go deep in the heart.
In dealing with others, be gentle and kind.
In speech, be true.
In ruling, be just.
In business, be competent.
In action, watch the timing.
No fight; No blame. - (Eight)

Giving birth and nourishing,
Bearing yet not possessing,
Working yet not taking credit,
Leading yet not dominating,
This is the Primal Virtue. - (Ten)

Accept disgrace willingly.
Accept misfortune as the human condition.
What do you mean by "Accept disgrace willingly"?
Do not be concerned with loss or gain.
This is called "accept disgrace willingly."

What do you mean by "Accept misfortune as the human condition"?
Misfortune comes from having a body.
Without a body, how could there be misfortune?
Surrender yourself humbly; then you can be trusted to care for all things.
Love the world as your own self; then you can care for all things. - (Thirteen)

Empty yourself of everything.
Let the mind rest at peace.
The ten thousand things rise and fall while the Self watches their return.
They grow and flourish and then return to the source.
Returning to the source is stillness, which is the way of nature.
The way of nature is unchanging.
Knowing constancy is insight.
Not knowing constancy leads to disaster.
Knowing constancy, the mind is open.
With an open mind, you will be openhearted.
Being openhearted, you will act royally.
Being royal, you will attain the divine.
Being divine, you will be at one with the Tao.
Being at one with the Tao is eternal.
And though the body dies, the Tao will never pass away. - (Sixteen)

He who does not trust enough will not be trusted. - (Seventeen)

Give up sainthood, renounce wisdom,
And it will be a hundred times better for everyone.
Give up kindness, renounce morality,
And men will rediscover filial piety and love.
Give up ingenuity, renounce profit,
And bandits and thieves will disappear.
These three are outward forms alone; they are not sufficient in themselves.
It is more important
To see the simplicity,
To realize one's true nature,
To cast off selfishness
And temper desire. - (Nineteen)

The greatest Virtue is to follow Tao and Tao alone. - (Twenty-One)

Yield and overcome;
Bend and be straight;
Empty and be full;
Wear out and be new;
Have little and gain;
Have much and be confused. - (Twenty-Two)

He who follows the Tao
Is at one with the Tao.
He who is virtuous
Experiences Virtue.
He who loses the way
Feels lost.

When are at one with the Tao,
The Tao welcomes you.
When you are at one with Virtue,
The Virtue is always there.
When you are at one with loss,
The loss is experienced willingly. - (Twenty-Three)

He who stands on tiptoe is not steady.
He who strides cannot maintain the pace.
He who makes a show is not enlightened.
He who is self-righteous is not respected.
He who boasts achieves nothing.
He who brags will not endure.
According to the followers of the Tao,
" These are extra food and unnecessary luggage."
They do not bring happiness.
Therefore followers of the Tao avoid them. - (Twenty-Four)

Just do what needs to be done.
Never take advantage of the power.
Achieve results,
But never glory in them.
Achieve results,
But never boast.
Achieve results,
But never be proud.
Because this is the natural way.
Achieve results,
But not through violence. - (Thirty)

Before receiving
There must be giving. - (Thirty-Six)

A truly good man is not aware of his goodness,
And is therefore good.
A foolish man tries to be good,
And is therefore not good. - (Thirty-Eight)

A truly good man does nothing,
Yet leaves nothing undone.
A foolish man is always doing,
Yet much remains to be done. - (Thirty-Eight)

When a truly kind man does something, he leaves nothing undone.
When a just man does something, he leaves a great deal to be done.
When a disciplinarian does something and no one responds,
He rolls up his sleeves in an attempt to enforce order. - (Thirty-Eight)

Therefore when Tao is lost, there is goodness.
When goodness is lost, there is kindness.
When kindness is lost, there is ritual.
Now ritual is the husk of faith and loyalty, the beginning of confusion. - (Thirty-Eight)

Therefore the truly great man dwells on what is real
And not what is on the surface,
Upon the fruit and not the flower.
Therefore accept the one and reject the other. - (Thirty-Eight)

Too much success is not an advantage.
Do not tinkle like jade
Or clatter like stone chimes. - (Thirty-Nine)

Yielding is the way of the Tao. - (Forty)

For one gains by losing
And loses by gaining. - (Forty-Two)

The softest thing in the universe
Overcomes the hardest thing in the universe. - (Forty-Three)

He who is attached to things will suffer much.
He who saves will suffer heavy loss. - (Forty-Four)

Stillness and tranquility set things in order in the universe. - (Forty-Five)

There is no greater sin than desire,
No greater curse than discontent,
No greater misfortune than wanting something for oneself. - (Forty-Six)

The sage has no mind of his own.
He is aware of the needs of others. - (Forty-Nine)

I am good to people who are good.
I am also good to people who are not good.
Because Virtue is goodness.
I have faith in people who are faithful.
I also have faith in people who are not faithful.
Because Virtue is faithfulness. - (Forty-Nine)

Respect of Tao and honor of Virtue are not demanded,
But they are in the nature of things.
Therefore all things arise from Tao.
By Virtue they are nourished,
Developed, cared for,
Sheltered, comforted,
Grown, and protected,
Creating without claiming,
Doing without taking credit,
Guiding without interfering,
This is the Primal Virtue. - (Fifty-One)

When the court is arrayed in splendor,
The fields are full of weeds,
And the granaries are bare.

Some wear gorgeous clothes,
Carry sharp swords,
And indulge themselves with food and drink;
They have more possession than they can use.
They are robber barons.
This is certainly not the way of Tao. - (Fifty-Three)

Cultivate Virtue in your self,
And Virtue will be real.
Cultivate it in the family,
And Virtue will abound.
Cultivate it in the village,
And Virtue will grow.
Cultivate it in the nation,
And Virtue will be abundant.
Cultivate it in the universe,
And Virtue will be everywhere. - (Fifty-Four)

In caring for others and serving heaven,
There is nothing like using restraint.
Restraint begins with giving up one's own ideas.
This depends on Virtue gathered in the past.
If there is a good store of Virtue, then nothing is impossible.
If nothing is impossible, then there are no limits.
If a man knows no limits, then he is fit to be a ruler. - (Fifty-Nine)

Sweet words can buy honor;
Good deeds can gain respect. - (Sixty-Two)

If a man is bad, do not abandon him. - (Sixty-Two)

See simplicity in the complicated.
Achieve greatness in little things.
In the universe the difficult things are done as if they are easy.
In the universe the great acts are made up of small deeds.
The sage does not attempt anything very big,
And thus achieves greatness. - (Sixty-Three)

Peace is easily maintained;
Trouble is easily overcome before it starts.
The brittle is easily shattered;
The small is easily scattered.
Deal with it before it happens.
Set things in order before there is confusion. - (Sixty-Four)

I have three treasures which I hold and keep.
The first is mercy; the second is economy;
The third is daring not to be ahead of others.
From mercy comes courage; from economy comes generosity;
From humility comes leadership. - (Sixty-Seven)

When men lack a sense of awe, there will be disaster. - (Seventy-Two)

Why are the people starving?
Because the rulers eat up the money in taxes.
Therefore the people are starving. - (Seventy-Five)

A man is born gentle and weak.
At his death he is hard and stiff.
Green plants are tender and filled with sap.
At their death they are withered and dry.
Therefore the stiff and unbending is the disciple of death.
The gentle and the yielding is the disciple of life. - (Sixty-Six)

The Tao of heaven is to take from those who have too much
And give to those who do not have enough. - (Seventy-Seven)

Man's way is different.
He takes from those who do not have enough
To give to those who already have too much. - (Seventy-Seven)

The sage never tries to store things up.
The more he does for others the more he has.
The more he gives to others, the greater his abundance. - (Eighty-One)