

## 道德经

### Dao and De – the Natural Law and Moral Law

第一章 道可道，非常道。名可名，非常名。无名天地之始。有名万物之母。故常无欲以观其妙。常有欲以观其徼。此两者同出而异名，同谓之玄。玄之又玄，众妙之门。

Dao that can be spoken of is not the ultimate Dao. A name given is not an eternal name. While the world originates from no name, everything starts with a name. Often, starting from nothing leads you to the essential, while starting from something leads you to the imagination. These two are the two sides of the same coin, which is abstraction. The abstract of abstraction is the entrance to our subject.

第二章 天下皆知美之为美，斯恶矣；皆知善之为善，斯不善已。故有无相生，难易相成，长短相形，高下相倾，音声相和，前後相随。是以圣人处无为之事，行不言之教。万物作焉而不辞。生而不有，为而不恃，功成而弗居。夫唯弗居，是以不去。

We all know that there is beauty because there is ugliness; there is good, because there is bad. Something and nothing coexist. The difficulty comes with the ease. Being long contrasts with being short. Being high depends on being low. The music chimes with the noise. The back follows the front. Wiseman manages without enforcing, educates without indoctrinating. Does anything come along, we accept. We give birth to something but shall not possess it; we accomplish something but shall not rely on the success; we achieve something but shall not sit on the result. We will not lose only if we do not own.

第三章 不尚贤，使民不争。不贵难得之货，使民不为盗。不见可欲，使民心不乱。是以圣人之治，虚其心，实其腹，弱其志，强其骨；常使民无知、无欲，使夫智者不敢为也。为无为，则无不治。

No advocacy to prominence brings no contention among the people; no appreciation to the rare object brings no stealing; no visibility to the desirable brings no disturbance in the people's hearts. So, wiseman governs the subjects by hollowing their minds while filling their bellies, weakening their wills while strengthening their bodies. The subjects are made of no information, no ambition, then the cunning ones dare not action. Doing nothing brings no need to do anything.

第四章 道冲而用之或不盈。渊兮似万物之宗。挫其锐，解其纷，和其光，同其尘，湛兮似或存。吾不知谁之子，象帝之先。

Dao seems hollow but cannot be used up. It is fathomless, pervading everything. It is shapeless, comes out of untying the entanglement. It exists in the light, and it exists in the dirt, which we can vaguely perceive. I do not know where it is from, definitely before the being.

第五章 天地不仁，以万物为刍狗。圣人不仁，以百姓为刍狗。天地之间，其犹橐籥乎？虚而不屈，动而愈出。多言数穷，不如守中。

The God is indifferent, of no kindness and no hostility, to creations, and treat them like sacrificial straw-dogs. Wiseman behaves the same, so the subjects are treated naturally the same. Look at the world between the sky and the earth, does it look like a bellow? Empty while not collapsing; action more producing more. Too much dictation brings lots of failures. Rather, let's stay calm.

第六章 谷神不死是谓玄牝。玄牝之门是谓天地根。绵绵若存，用之不勤。

The mother of the abstraction likes the immortal open valley. Its entrance is the root of the world. The beings flow out continuously, never ends.

第七章 天长地久。天地所以能长且久者，以其不自生，故能长生。是以圣人後其身而身先，外其身而身存。非以其无私邪！故能成其私。

The universe lives forever. It lives forever only because it does not live for the sake of living. Wiseman leads by staying behind, survives by staying outside, and makes him-self by being self-less.

第八章 上善若水。水善利万物而不争，处众人之所恶，故几於道。居善地，心善渊，与善仁，言善信，正善治，事善能，动善时。夫唯不争，故无尤。

The top kindness likes water. Water stays low, benefiting while not contending with anything, which is similar to the Dao we are talking about. For living, the low profile; for attitude, the modesty; for giving, the humaneness; for speaking, the honesty; for governance, the order; for performing, the capability and for action, the timing are the respective kindness. No contending, no worrying.

第九章 持而盈之不如其已；揣而锐之不可长保；金玉满堂莫之能守；富贵而骄，自遗其咎。功遂身退，天之道。

Holding something, it would be better to leave it as it is than to push it to the extreme. Having a knife, to sharpen it to extreme will not survive it for long. A full house of treasure will not stay forever. Wealth and honour bring arrogance, finally leading to the punishment. Stepping down after success is the Dao.

第十章 载营魄抱一，能无离乎？专气致柔，能如婴儿乎？修除玄览，能无疵乎？爱民治国，能无为乎？天门开阖，能为雌乎？明白四达，能无知乎？生之、畜之，生而不有，长而不宰。是为玄德。

Can your ethereal spirit(Hun) and substantive spirit(Po) always stay together so that you are immortal? Can you control your breath so that you are as gentle as a newborn baby? Can you clean your mind reflection so that there is no defect? Can you govern the country so that there is no interference to the people? Can your perception be on and you still stay calm? Can you understand the world so that know everything? (No!) Producing and nurturing, creating while not holding, growing while not controlling is the magic, De.

第十一章 三十辐共一毂，当其无，有车之用。埴埴以为器，当其无，有器之用。凿户牖以为室，当其无，有室之用。故有之以为利，无之以为用。

Thirty spokes and one hub, with the hollow, it comes to a wheel. Moulding clay to a vessel, with the hollow, it comes to a container. Cutting doors and windows to make a house, with the hollow, it becomes a room. Benefitted from the tangibles, void becomes useful.

第十二章 五色令人目盲；五音令人耳聾；五味令人口爽；驰骋田獵，令人心發狂；難得之貨，令人行妨。是以聖人為腹不為目，故去彼取此。

Too many colours blind your eyes; too many sounds deafen your ears; too many flavours dull your taste. Horse racing and hunting around madden your mind. Rare valuables hinder your daily life. Wiseman keeps the basics while disregards the pleasures.

第十三章 宠辱若惊，贵大患若身。何谓宠辱若惊？宠为下。得之若惊失之若惊是谓宠辱若惊。何谓贵大患若身？吾所以有大患者，为吾有身，及吾无身，吾有何患。故贵以身为天下，若可寄天下。爱以身为天下，若可托天下。

Being favour or disgrace to you likes the health issue to your body. What is the being favour or disgrace? Being favour or disgrace means you are bothered by the gaining or losing of others favour. It is of less important than yourself. What is the body in health issue? I have health issue only because I have body. If my body does not exist, where would the health issue exist? If someone values the country the same as his body, he is entrusted to look after the country. If he loves the country the same as his body, he is entrusted to manage the country.

第十四章 视之不见名曰夷。听之不闻名曰希。抟之不得名曰微。此三者不可致诘，故混而为一。其上不皦，其下不昧，绳绳不可名，复归於无物，是谓无状之状，无物之象，是谓惚恍。迎之不见其首，随之不见其後。执古之道以御今之有。能知古始，是谓道纪。

You do not see it while looking, which is unfamiliar. You do not hear it while listening, which is unusual. You do not feel it while touching, which is tiny. Dao is of all above three, which we can hardly differentiate, so roughly we treat it as the one. There is no light on its top, no shadow on its bottoms. Continuously it comes from no-name and ends with nothing. Its status is really no status; its shape is really no shape, which is dimly. Facing it, you cannot see its head; while following it, you cannot see its tail. We govern the present world by following the Dao learned from the past. Knowing how it works in the past is the beginning of the Dao.

第十五章 古之善为道者，微妙玄通，深不可识。夫不唯不可识，故强为之容；豫兮若冬涉川；犹兮若畏四邻；俨兮其若客；涣兮其若凌释；敦兮其若朴；旷兮其若谷；混兮其若浊；孰能浊以静之徐清？孰能安以动之徐生？保此道者，不欲盈。夫唯不盈，故能蔽而新成。

The ancients who are good at the Dao understand the general and appreciate the subtle. They are unfathomable. Because of unfathomable, we try our best to describe them as following, being cautious like crossing icy river in winter, vigilant like hazard being around, courteous like being a guest, touching like ice melting, simple like un-carved raw wood, mind-opening like a valley, profound like muddy water. Who can wait patiently till mud settles and water is clear? Who can sit still until movement starts and life begins gently? The people keeping practice the Dao are never satisfied, so they can manage the existing and master the coming.

第十六章 致虚极，守静笃；万物并作，吾以观复。夫物芸芸，各复归其根。归根曰静，静曰复命。复命曰常，知常曰明。不知常，妄作凶。知常容，容乃公，公乃全，全乃天，天乃道，道乃久，没身不殆。

Being extremely hollow and extremely quiet, suddenly, ten thousand things come into being, of which I have always seen a final return. No matter how flourish they were, they go back to their root. Being back to root means quietness. Quietness is the fulfilment of destiny. Fulfilling destiny is the ultimate. Understanding the ultimate means enlightened. Without knowing that, our misbehaving brings misfortunate. Knowing that, we become tolerant. Being tolerant leads to being public-spirited. Being public-spirited leads to being kingly. Being kingly leads to the Dao. The Dao leads to the eternal. Finally, we are immortal.

第十七章 太上，不知有之；其次，亲而誉之；其次，畏之；其次，侮之。信不足焉，有不信焉。悠兮，其贵言。功成事遂，百姓皆谓我自然。

The best governor rules while being unknown to his subjects; the second to which, being loved and appraised; the next, being feared; the last, being slighted. Lack of trust brings people's distrust. He better lives his own leisure life, while dictating little. With all things done, people say, we have done all these by ourselves, naturally.

第十八章 大道废，有仁义，智慧出，有大伪；六亲不和，有孝慈；国家昏乱，有忠臣。

When the Dao ceases to work, earthly kindness and justice appear, together with wisdom and hypocrisy. When families are not in harmony, filial piety plays. When state falls into disorder, loyal ministers show up.

第十九章 绝圣弃智，民利百倍；绝仁弃义，民复孝慈；绝巧弃利，盗贼无有。此三者以为文不足，故令有所属；见素抱朴，少私寡欲；绝学无忧。

To abandon the virtuous and the wise people benefits one hundred times more. To abandon kindness and justice, people go back to filial and kindly. To abandon the exquisite and the profitable, people see no burglary. These three points are not enough, we add following, to show original and keep raw, to lessen selfishness and cut down ambition, to give up learning and stop worrying.

第二十章 唯之与阿，相去几何？美之与恶，相去若何？人之所畏，不可不畏。荒兮，其未央哉！众人熙熙，如享太牢，如春登台。我独泊兮，其未兆；沌沌兮，如婴儿之未孩；傥傥兮，若无所归。众人皆有余，而我独若遗。我愚人之心也哉！俗人昭昭，我独昏昏。俗人察察，我独闷闷。澹兮，其若海；颺兮，若无止。众人皆有以，而我独顽且鄙。我独异于人，而贵食母。

How different is the flattering and the scolding? How different is the beautiful and the ugly? What people fear, I fear too, broadly, endlessly. Others are bustling, feasting. They are happy like mounting the terrace in spring. I stay mild alone, showing no sign of happiness. I look like a newborn baby, yet smiling, and so unattached like a homeless. Others seem have enough to spare, while I am left out. I look like a fool. The ordinaries are luminous, while I am confused. The ordinaries are observing, while I am depressed. I am drifting like in the sea, aimless like with the wind. All others feel like useful, while I am stubborn and uncouth. I alone differ to them, valuing drawing sustenance from the Dao.