Taoism
Laozi and Zhuangzi

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The Taoists favored the “natural” over the “artificial” (that is, anything created by human beings). They mercilessly criticized the Confucianists for their emphasis on the “artificial,” civilized culture of art and literature, ritual and custom—all those things one is not born with but must learn through an elaborate process of socialization and acculturation. The Taoists were especially critical of the Confucianists’ attempt to promote morality.

To the Taoists, being natural meant living more simply. The Taoists encouraged the practice of *wu wei*, or “nonaction,” by which they meant not acting in too deliberate, purposeful, or self-conscious a way. In other words, they advocated letting things take their natural course. Above all, they warned against forcing things. As the fourth-century neo-Taoist Kuo Xiang (Kuo Hsiang) said in his commentary on the esteemed Taoist Zhuangzi (Chuang Tzu), “‘Nonactivity does not mean folding one’s arms and remaining silent. It means allowing everything to follow what is natural to it, and then its nature will be satisfied.”’ Taoists suggested that we be like Nature and avoid trying too strenuously to do anything. In Nature, they pointed out, the seed sprouts and grows into a mature plant without planning, trying, or thinking about how to do this. As was written in the *Dao De Jing* (Tao Te Ching), “Tao invariably does not do, yet there is nothing that is not done.”

Trying too hard to do anything, the Taoists thought, only proves how lacking one is in that regard. For example, striving to be funny only shows how little natural sense of humor one has. Moreover, the harder we try, the less we will succeed. For example, by *trying* to be relaxed and graceful, I just become even more uptight and awkward! Like humor and light-heartedness, morality cannot be learned or forced, according to Taoist thinking. It must spring from the heart spontaneously, in the same way that a mother takes action automatically to protect her infant. But because morality is generally intended as a constraint on natural impulses, the Taoists were firmly opposed to it as it is commonly understood.

Of course, one could argue that it is possible to assimilate and internalize the social rules that we have learned so that eventually they seem natural
to us. The founder of Chinese philosophy, Kongzi (Kung Tzu, Confucius), had remarked that when he turned seventy, he could do whatever he felt like without fear of doing anything wrong. By age seventy, he had so internalized the virtues of his day that he actually preferred being virtuous. Through a similar process, the skillful pianist or tennis player seems to perform naturally, effortlessly, and spontaneously, though we know that this ability results from many years of practice.

Still, to become a truly righteous person, as the Confucianist moralists wanted us to, is extremely difficult. It becomes habitual or second nature for only a handful of individuals. On the other hand, insisting that people merely follow polite forms of behavior only leads to decadence and a deterioration of the childlike goodness of the natural person. This kind of morality training, the Taoists said, can never be more than a culturally relative characteristic of a particular society—or a particular class within a society.

The Taoists also found themselves at the opposite extreme from the Confucianist moral theory of government. Their basic message to rulers was: Don’t do anything; just let things take their natural course. The reason they advocated this approach is that, according to them, everything happens naturally and spontaneously. The principle that directs the growth and development of everything in the world is not some cause or force from outside, but something that comes from within the individual. Because this is the natural and therefore preferred order of things, the worst thing government leaders can do is to try to improve on this natural order by enacting and enforcing laws.

Of course, one could argue that it is also natural for human beings to try to change and improve things. It seems perfectly natural for people, including government leaders, to feel that life is not going as well as it might and to look for ways (e.g., laws) to make it better. But for the Taoists, it is better for governments to let people alone. Ordinary people, they pointed out, have been managing their affairs from time immemorial—not by following formally enacted laws, but simply by following time-honored traditions and customs. By trying to make things better, the ruler may actually upset these established customs, thereby confusing and angering people, and ultimately making things worse.

Before governments found it necessary to introduce harsh laws to regulate behavior, and punishments to enforce those laws, people lived more simply, without the need for laws. Rulers, the Taoists said, should therefore try to keep things at this primitive level. (It’s better not to give the ordinary people fancy ideas or encourage them to improve their lot, the Taoists advised.
Keep them ignorant and simple, because they may make demands or even rebel.) The Confucianists are wrong, therefore, to encourage knowledge and virtue, because this prodding makes people feel that they are ignorant and immoral.

Ironically, even moral education is bad, according to the Taoists, because it tries to force on people something overly sophisticated and difficult that also goes against their nature. In direct opposition to the Confucianists, Taoists even rejected the indoctrination of the traditional virtues, ren, yi, li, etc. If you have to teach morality, they explained, that is a sure sign that things have been allowed to seriously deteriorate. When society is running smoothly, the people naturally and spontaneously know what to do and how to behave—without thinking about it and without the need for books, instruction, and formal instruction. And just like children, adult members of society are happier this way. They escape the feelings of inadequacy that come from constantly being told how ignorant, sinful, uneducated, or uncultivated they are.

It is also a mistake, the Taoists argued, to encourage the acquisition of expensive goods and a higher standard of living. The resulting inequity just makes people feel envious of their richer neighbors and start plotting how to lie, steal, and even kill to enrich themselves. The wise ruler keeps the people ignorant of fancy, expensive goods. If they never see such things, they will never want them and never be tempted to stray from their simple, everyday lives to get things they can’t afford. Of course, if a ruler does allow these inflated desires and unnecessary competition to arise, then he must promulgate and enforce laws to prevent people from stealing and taking advantage of one another. But the more laws are passed and enforced, the more people see the laws and the government as their enemy. Therefore, the more they will try to break these laws and overthrow the government – requiring still more laws and even more severe punishments. These patterns become a vicious, downward spiral.

An earlier group of philosophers, the Logicians (Ming Jia), talked about what could be named; in the Dao De Jing, excerpted below, the Taoist Laozi talks about what cannot be named (“the tao that can be named is not the constant tao; the name that can be named is not the constant name”). Laozi explained that “to be” is to exist as a thing of a particular kind (a pen, a book, a seed, a tree); that is, something that we can name. So, in order for things to be, there must be linguistic distinctions. If that is true, then anything that is
not so divisible cannot be said to be a specific thing, or to be named, or to exist or cease to exist.

What would the world be like without humanly constructed and imposed linguistic distinctions? In other words, what is it that our language has divided up? Presumably, before human language arose, reality was undivided. Even trying to think or speak about this undivided something is an attempt to break it down into something else. The Taoists refer to this indeterminate, prelanguage reality as the “uncarved block” (bu). It can’t be described or thought about, although once it is “carved” by language, it gives rise to all the things that are said to be, and that we can think about and describe. Through these linguistic confusions we become preoccupied with trivialities, leading to unhappiness.

The most widely read Taoist in China has always been Zhuangzi (399–295 BC). In his writings, Taoist attention shifts from the public arena of political philosophy to the personal search for happiness. Zhuangzi’s language is much more playful and imaginative than that of Laozi—and much more subjective. For Zhuangzi there are different levels or degrees of happiness:

1. relative happiness—follow your human nature (de)
2. higher happiness—follow the higher laws of the universe (Tao)
3. absolute happiness (of the sage)—merge your individuality into the One (Tai Yi)

Zhuangzi also explores the idea of knowledge. As he explained, we can think of knowledge from two points of view—everyday knowledge, which presupposes linguistic distinctions, and absolute knowledge, which transcends such distinctions. From the absolute point of view, i.e., from the standpoint of eternity, there are no real distinctions between things, so all is one. Absolute knowledge “is not [ordinary, everyday] knowledge”; that is, we can’t use it to discuss or experience reality in the ordinary ways—for example, by distinguishing between subject and object. So, Zhuangzi urged, don’t talk about reality, just enjoy being part of it. In this sense, absolute knowledge means forgetting ordinary knowledge.

As you read Laozi and Zhuangzi, notice their very different writing styles. To what extent do you think writing style determines philosophical content? Also, is it possible for human beings to be natural? Is all human inventiveness somehow wrong, or against nature? Finally, if knowledge pre-
supposes linguistic distinctions, is it possible to achieve “absolute knowledge”? If not, how do we even get the idea of such a thing?

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**DAO DE JING**  
(TAO TE CHING)  
LAOZI (LAO TZU)

1. The Tao (Way) that can be told of is not the eternal Tao;  
The name that can be named is not the eternal name,  
The Nameless is the origin of Heaven and Earth;  
The Named is the mother of all things.  
Therefore let there always be non-being so we may see their subtlety,  
And let there always be being so we may see their outcome.  
The two are the same,  
But after they are produced, they have different names.  
They both may be called deep and profound (*hsüan*).  
Deeper and more profound,  
The door of all subtleties!

2. When the people of the world all know beauty as beauty,  
There arises the recognition of ugliness.  
When they all know the good as good,  
There arises the recognition of evil.  
Therefore:  
Being and non-being produce each other;  
Difficult and easy complete each other;  
Long and short contrast each other;  
High and low distinguish each other;  
Sound and voice harmonize with each other;  
Front and back follow each other.  
Therefore the sage manages affairs without action (*wu-wei*)  
And spreads doctrines without words.  
All things arise, and he does not turn away from them.  
He produces them, but does not take possession of them.

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He acts, but does not rely on his own ability.
He accomplishes his task, but does not claim credit for it.
It is precisely because he does not claim credit that his accomplishment remains with him.

3. Do not exalt the worthy, so that the people shall not compete.
Do not value rare treasures, so that the people shall not steal.
Do not display objects of desire, so that the people’s hearts shall not be disturbed.
Therefore in the government of the sage,
   He keeps their hearts vacuous (hsü),
   Fills their bellies,
       Weakens their ambitions,
   And strengthens their bones,
He always causes his people to be without knowledge (cunning) or desire,
   And the crafty to be afraid to act.
By acting without action, all things will be in order.

4. Tao is empty (like a bowl),
   It may be used but its capacity is never exhausted.
It is bottomless, perhaps the ancestor of all things.
It blunts its sharpness,
It unties its tangles.
It softens its light.
It becomes one with the dusty world.
Deep and still, it appears to exist forever.
I do not know whose son it is.
It seems to have existed before the Lord.

5. Heaven and Earth are not humane (jen).
They regard all things as straw dogs.
The sage is not humane.
He regards all people as straw dogs.
How Heaven and Earth are like a bellows!
   While vacuous, it is never exhausted.
   When active, it produces even more.
Much talk will of course come to a dead end.
It is better to keep to the center (chung).
6. The spirit of the valley never dies.
   It is called the subtle and profound female.
   The gate of the subtle and profound female
   Is the root of Heaven and Earth.
   It is continuous, and seems to be always existing.
   Use it and you will never wear it out.

7. Heaven is eternal and Earth everlasting.
   They can be eternal and everlasting because they
   do not exist for themselves,
   And for this reason can exist forever.
   Therefore the sage places himself in the background, but finds
   himself in the foreground.
   He puts himself away, and yet he always remains.
   Is it not because he has no personal interests?
   This is the reason why his personal interests are fulfilled.

8. The best (man) is like water.
   Water is good; it benefits all things and does not
   compete with them.
   It dwells in (lowly) places that all disdain.
   This is why it is so near to Tao.
   [The best man] in his dwelling loves the earth.
   In his heart, he loves what is profound.
   In his associations, he loves humanity.
   In government, he loves order.
   In handling affairs, he loves competence.
   In his activities, he loves timeliness.
   It is because he does not compete that he is without reproach.

9. To hold and fill to overflowing
   Is not as good as to stop in time.
   Sharpen a sword-edge to its very sharpest,
   And the (edge) will not last long.
   When gold and jade fill your hall,
   You will not be able to keep them.
   To be proud with honor and wealth
   Is to cause one’s own downfall.
   Withdraw as soon as your work is done.
   Such is Heaven’s Way.
10. Can you keep the spirit and embrace the One without departing from them?
   Can you concentrate your vital force (ch’i) and achieve the highest degree of weakness like an infant?
   Can you clean and purify your profound insight so it will be spotless?
   Can you love the people and govern the state without knowledge (cunning)?
   Can you play the role of the female in the opening and closing of the gates of Heaven?
   Can you understand all and penetrate all without taking any action?
       To produce things and to rear them,
       To produce, but not to take possession of them,
       To act, but not to rely on one’s own ability,
       To lead them, but not to master them—
       This is called profound and secret virtue (hsüan-te).

11. Thirty spokes are united around the hub to make a wheel,
    But it is on its non-being that the utility of the carriage depends.
    Clay is molded to form a utensil,
    But it is on its non-being that the utility of the utensil depends.
    Doors and windows are cut out to make a room,
    But it is on its non-being that the utility of the room depends.
    Therefore turn being into advantage, and turn non-being into utility.

12. The five colors cause one’s eyes to be blind.
    The five tones cause one’s ears to be deaf.
    The five flavors cause one’s palate to be spoiled.
    Racing and hunting cause one’s mind to be mad.
    Goods that are hard to get injure one’s activities.
    For this reason the sage is concerned with the belly and not the eyes,
    Therefore he rejects the one but accepts the other.

13. Be apprehensive when receiving favor or disgrace.
    Regard great trouble as seriously as you regard your body.
What is meant by being apprehensive when receiving favor or disgrace?
Favor is considered inferior.
Be apprehensive when you receive them and also be apprehensive when you lose them.
This is what is meant by being apprehensive when receiving favor or disgrace.
What does it mean to regard great trouble as seriously as you regard the body?
The reason why I have great trouble is that I have a body (and am attached to it).
If I have no body, What trouble could I have?
Therefore he who values the world as his body may be entrusted with the empire.
He who loves the world as his body may be entrusted with the empire.

14. We look at it and do not see it;
   Its name is The Invisible,
We listen to it and do not hear it;
   Its name is The Inaudible.
We touch it and do not find it;
   Its name is The Subtle (formless).
These three cannot be further inquired into, And hence merge into one.
Going up high, it is not bright, and coming down low, it is not dark.
Infinite and boundless, it cannot be given any name;
It reverts to nothingness.
This is called shape without shape, Form (hsiang) without object.
It is The Vague and Elusive.
Meet it and you will not see its head.
Follow it and you will not see its back.
Hold on to the Tao of old in order to master the things of the present.
From this one may know the primeval beginning [of the universe].
This is called the bond of Tao.

15. Of old those who were the best rulers were subtly mysterious and profoundly penetrating;
Too deep to comprehend.
And because they cannot be comprehended,
I can only describe them arbitrarily:
Cautious, like crossing a frozen stream in the winter,
Being at a loss, like one fearing danger on all sides,
Reserved, like one visiting,
Supple and pliant, like ice about to melt,
Genuine, like a piece of uncarved wood,
Open and broad, like a valley,
Merged and undifferentiated, like muddy water.

Who can make muddy water gradually clear through tranquillity?
Who can make the still gradually come to life through activity?
He who embraces this Tao does not want to fill himself to overflowing.
It is precisely because there is no overflowing that he is beyond wearing out and renewal.

16. Attain complete vacuity,
Maintain steadfast quietude.
All things come into being,
And I see thereby their return.
All things flourish,
But each one returns to its root.
This return to its root means tranquillity.
It is called returning to its destiny.
To return to destiny is called the eternal (Tao).
To know the eternal is called enlightenment.
Not to know the eternal is to act blindly to result in disaster.
He who knows the eternal is all-embracing.
Being all-embracing, he is impartial.
Being impartial, he is kingly (universal).
Being kingly, he is one with Nature.
Being one with Nature, he is in accord with Tao.
Being in accord with Tao, he is everlasting,  
And is free from danger throughout his lifetime.

17. The best (rulers) are those whose existence is (merely) known by the people.  
The next best are those who are loved and praised.  
The next are those who are feared.  
And the next are those who are despised.  
It is only when one does not have enough faith in others that others will have no faith in him.  
[The great rulers] value their words highly.  
They accomplish their task; they complete their work.  
Nevertheless their people say that they simply follow Nature (Tzu-jan).

18. When the great Tao declined,  
The doctrines of humanity (jen) and righteousness (i) arose.  
When knowledge and wisdom appeared,  
There emerged great hypocrisy.  
When the six family relationships are not in harmony,  
There will be the advocacy of filial piety and deep love to children.  
When a country is in disorder,  
There will be praise of loyal ministers.

19. Abandon sageliness and discard wisdom;  
Then the people will benefit a hundredfold.  
Abandon humanity and discard righteousness;  
Then the people will return to filial piety and deep love.  
Abandon skill and discard profit;  
Then there will be no thieves or robbers.  
However, these three things are ornament (wen) and not adequate.  
Therefore lot people hold on to these:  
Manifest plainness,  
Embrace simplicity,  
Reduce selfishness,  
Have few desires.

20. Abandon learning and there will be no sorrow.
How much difference is there between “Yes, sir,” and “Of
course not”? How much difference is there between “good” and “evil”? 
What people dread, do not fail to dread. But, alas, how confused, and the end is not yet. The multitude are merry, as though feasting on a day of sacrifice, Or like ascending a tower at springtime. I alone am inert, showing no sign (of desires), Like an infant that has not yet smiled. Wearied, indeed, I seem to be without a home. The multitude all possess more than enough, I alone seem to have lost all. Mine is indeed the mind of an ignorant man, indiscriminate and dull!
Common folks are indeed brilliant; I alone seem to be in the dark. Common folks see differences and are clear-cut; I alone make no distinctions. I seem drifting as the sea; Like the wind blowing about, seemingly without destination. The multitude all have a purpose; I alone seem to be stubborn and rustic. I alone differ from others, And value drawing sustenance from mother (Tao).

21. The all-embracing quality of the great virtue (te) follows alone from the Tao. The thing that is called Tao is eluding and vague. Vague and eluding, there is in it the form. Eluding and vague, in it are things. Deep and obscure, in it is the essence. The essence is very real; in it are evidences. From the time of old until now, its name (manifestations) ever remains, By which we may see the beginning of all things. How do I know that the beginnings of all things are so? Through this (Tao).
22. To yield is to be preserved whole.
    To be bent is to become straight.
    To be empty is to be full.
    To be worn out is to be renewed.
    To have little is to possess.
    To have plenty is to be perplexed.
Therefore the sage embraces the One
And becomes the model of the world.
He does not show himself; therefore he is luminous.
He does not justify himself; therefore he becomes prominent.
He does not boast of himself; therefore he is given credit.
He does not brag; therefore he can endure for long.
It is precisely because he does not compete that the world cannot
    compete with him.
Is the ancient saying, “To yield is to be preserved whole,” empty
    words?
Truly he will be preserved and (prominence, etc.) will come to
    him.

23. Nature says few words.
    For the same reason a whirlwind does not last a whole morning,
    Nor does a rainstorm last a whole day.
    What causes them?
    It is Heaven and Earth (Nature).
    If even Heaven and Earth cannot make them last long,
    How much less can man?
    Therefore he who follows Tao is identified with Tao.
    He who follows virtue is identified with virtue.
    He who abandons (Tao) is identified with the abandonment (of
        Tao).
    He who is identified with Tao—Tao is also happy to have him.
    He who is identified with virtue—virtue is also happy to have
        him.
    And he who is identified with the abandonment (of Tao)—the
        abandonment (of Tao) is also happy to abandon him.
    It is only when one does not have enough faith in others that
        others will have no faith in him.

24. He who stands on tiptoe is not steady.
He who strides forward does not go.
He who shows himself is not luminous.
He who justifies himself is not prominent.
He who boasts of himself is not given credit.
He who brags does not endure for long.
From the point of view of Tao, these are like remnants of food and tumors of action,
Which all creatures detest.
Therefore those who possess Tao turn away from them.

25. There was something undifferentiated and yet complete,
   Which existed before heaven and earth.
   Soundless and formless, it depends on nothing and does not change.
   It operates everywhere and is free from danger.
   It may be considered the mother of the universe.
   I do not know its name; I call it Tao.
   If forced to give it a name, I shall call it Great.
   Now being great means functioning everywhere.
   Functioning everywhere means far-reaching.
   Being far-reaching means returning to the original point.
   Therefore Tao is great.
   Heaven is great.
   Earth is great.
   And the king is also great.
   There are four great things in the universe, and the king is one of them.
   Man models himself after Earth.
   Earth models itself after Heaven.
   Heaven models itself after Tao.
   And Tao models itself after Nature.

26. The heavy is the root of the light.
   The tranquil is the ruler of the hasty.
   Therefore the sage travels all day
   Without leaving his baggage.
   Even at the sight of magnificent scenes,
   He remains leisurely and indifferent.
   How is it that a lord with ten thousand chariots
Should behave lightheartedly in his empire?
If he is lighthearted, the minister will be destroyed.
If he is hasty, the ruler is lost.

27. A good traveler leaves no track or trace.
   A good speech leaves no flaws.
   A good reckoner uses no counters.
   A well-shut door needs no bolts, and yet it cannot be opened.
   A well-tied knot needs no rope and yet none can untie it.
   Therefore the sage is always good in saving men and
   consequently no man is rejected.
   He is always good in saving things and consequently nothing is
   rejected.
   This is called following the light (of Nature)
   Therefore the good man is the teacher of the bad,
   And the bad is the material from which the good may learn.
   He who does not value the teacher,
   Or greatly care for the material,
   Is greatly deluded although he may he learned.
   Such is the essential mystery.

28. He who knows the male (active force) and keeps to the female
   (the passive force or receptive element)
   Becomes the ravine of the world.
   Being the ravine of the world,
   He will never depart from eternal virtue,
   But returns to the state of infancy.
   He who knows the white (glory) and yet keeps to the black
   (humility),
   Becomes the model for the world.
   Being the model for the world,
   He will never deviate from eternal virtue,
   But returns to the state of the Ultimate of Non-being.
   He who knows glory but keeps to humility,
   Becomes the valley of the world.
   Being the valley of the world,
   He will be proficient in eternal virtue
   And returns to the state of simplicity (uncarved wood).
When the uncarved wood is broken up, it is turned into concrete things (as Tao is transformed into the myriad things). But when the sage uses it, he becomes the leading official. Therefore the great ruler does not cut up.

29. When one desires to take over the empire and act on it (interfere with it),
I see that he will not succeed.
The empire is a spiritual thing, and should not be acted on.
He who acts on it harms it.
He who holds on to it loses it.
Among creatures some lead and some follow.
Some blow hot and some blow cold.
Some are strong and some are weak.
Some may break and some may fall.
Therefore the sage discards the extremes, the extravagant, and the excessive.

30. He who assists the ruler with Tao does not dominate the world with force.
The use of force usually brings requital.
Wherever armies are stationed, briers and thorns grow.
Great wars are always followed by famines.
A good (general) achieves his purpose and stops,
But dares not seek to dominate the world.
He achieves his purpose but does not brag about it.
He achieves his purpose but does not boast about it.
He achieves his purpose but is not proud of it.
He achieves his purpose but only as an unavoidable step.
He achieves his purpose but does not aim to dominate.
(For) after things reach their prime, they begin to grow old,
Which means being contrary to Tao.
Whatever is contrary to Tao will soon perish.

31. Fine weapons are instruments of evil.
They are hated by men.
Therefore those who possess Tao turn away from them.
The good ruler when at home honors the left (symbolic of good omens).
When at war he honors the right (symbolic of evil omens).
Weapons are instruments of evil, not the instruments of a good ruler.
When he uses them unavoidably, he regards calm restraint as the best principle.
Even when he is victorious, he does not regard it as praiseworthy,
For to praise victory is to delight in the slaughter of men.
He who delights in the slaughter of men will not succeed in the empire.
In auspicious affairs, the left is honored.
In inauspicious affairs, the right is honored.
The lieutenant-general stands on the left.
The senior general stands on the right.
That is to say that the arrangement follows that of funeral ceremonies.
For the slaughter of the multitude, let us weep with sorrow and grief.
For a victory, let us observe the occasion with funeral ceremonies.

32. Tao is eternal and has no name.
Though its simplicity seems insignificant, none in the world can master it.
If kings and barons would hold on to it, all things would submit to them spontaneously.
Heaven and earth unite to drip sweet dew.
Without the command of men, it drips evenly over all.
As soon as there were regulations and institutions, there were names (differentiation of things).
As soon as there are names, know that it is time to stop.
It is by knowing when to stop that one can be free from danger.
Analogically, Tao in the world (where everything is embraced by it), may be compared to rivers and streams running into the sea.

33. He who knows others is wise;
He who knows himself is enlightened.
He who conquers others has physical strength.
He who conquers himself is strong.
He who is contented is rich.
He who acts with vigor has will.  
He who does not lose his place (with Tao) will endure.  
He who dies but does not really perish enjoys long life.

34. The Great Tao flows everywhere.  
It may go left or right.  
All things depend on it for life, and it does not turn away from them.  
It accomplishes its task, but does not claim credit for it.  
It clothes and feeds all things but does not claim to be master over them.  
Always without desires, it may be called The Small.  
All things come to it and it does not master them; it may be called The Great.  
Therefore (the sage) never strives himself for the great, and thereby the great is achieved.

35. Hold fast to the great form (Tao),  
And all the world will come.  
They come and will encounter no harm;  
But enjoy comfort, peace, and health.  
When there are music and dainties,  
Passing strangers will stay.  
But the words uttered by Tao,  
How insipid and tasteless!  
We look at Tao; it is imperceptible.  
We listen to it; it is inaudible.  
We use it; it is inexhaustible.

36. In order to contract,  
It is necessary first to expand.  
In order to weaken,  
It is necessary first to strengthen.  
In order to destroy,  
It is necessary first to promote.  
In order to grasp,  
It is necessary first to give.  
This is called subtle light.  
The weak and the tender overcome the hard and the strong.  
Fish should not be taken away from water.
And sharp weapons of the state should not be displayed to the people.

37. Tao invariably takes no action, and yet there is nothing left undone.
If kings and barons can keep it, all things win transform spontaneously.
If, after transformation, they should desire to be active,
I would restrain them with simplicity, which has no name.
Simplicity, which has no name, is free of desires.
Being free of desires, it is tranquil.
And the world will be at peace of its own accord.

38. The man of superior virtue is not (consciously of) his virtue,
And in this way he really possesses virtue:
The man of inferior virtue never loses (sight of) his virtue,
And in this way he loses his virtue.
The man of superior virtue takes no action, but has no ulterior motive to do so.
The man of inferior virtue takes action, and has an ulterior motive to do so.
The man of superior humanity takes action, but has no ulterior motive to do so.
The man of superior righteousness takes action, and has an ulterior motive to do so.
The man of superior propriety takes action,
And when people do not respond to it, he will stretch his arms and force it on them.
Therefore, only when Tao is lost does the doctrine of virtue arise.
When virtue is lost, only then does the doctrine of humanity arise.
When humanity is lost, only then does the doctrine of righteousness arise.
When righteousness is lost, only then does the doctrine of propriety arise.
Now, propriety is a superficial expression of loyalty and faithfulness, and the beginning of disorder.
Those who are the first to know have the flowers (appearance) of Tao but are the beginning of ignorance.
For this reason the great man dwells in the thick (substantial), and does not rest with the thin (superficial). He dwells in the fruit (reality), and does not rest with the flower (appearance). Therefore he rejects the one, and accepts the other.

39. Of old those that obtained the One:
   Heaven obtained the One and became clear.
   Earth obtained the One and became tranquil.
   The spiritual beings obtained the One and became divine.
   The valley obtained the One and became full.
   The myriad things obtained the One and lived and grew.
   Kings and barons obtained the One and became rulers of the empire.
   What made them so is the One.
   If heaven had not thus become clear,
   It would soon crack.
   If the earth had not thus become tranquil,
   It would soon be shaken.
   If the spiritual beings had not thus become divine,
   They would soon wither away.
   If the valley had not thus become full,
   It would soon become exhausted.
   If the myriad things had not thus lived and grown,
   They would soon become extinct.
   If kings and barons had not thus become honorable and high in position,
   They would soon fall.
   Therefore humble station is the basis of honor.
   The low is the foundation of the high.
   For this reason kings and barons call themselves the orphaned, the lonely ones, the unworthy.
   Is this not regarding humble station as the basis of honor?
   Is it not?
   Therefore enumerate all the parts of a chariot as you may, and you still have no chariot.
   Rather than jingle like the jade,
   Rumble like the rocks.
40. Reversion is the action of Tao.
   Weakness is the function of Tao.
   All things in the world come from being.
   And being comes from non-being.

41. When the highest type of men hear Tao,
   They diligently practice it.
   When the average type of men hear Tao,
   They half believe in it.
   When the lowest type of men hear Tao,
   They laugh heartily at it.
   If they did not laugh at it, it would not be Tao.
   Therefore there is the established saying:
   The Tao which is bright appears to be dark.
   The Tao which goes forward appears to fall backward.
   The Tao which is level appears uneven.
   Great virtue appears like a valley (hollow).
   Great purity appears like disgrace.
   Far-reaching virtue appears as if insufficient.
   Solid virtue appears as if unsteady.
   True substance appears to be changeable.
   The great square has no corners.
   The great implement (or talent) is slow to finish (or mature).
   Great music sounds faint.
   Great form has no shape.
   Tao is hidden and nameless.
   Yet it is Tao alone that skilfully provides for all and brings them
to perfection.

42. Tao produced the One.
   The One produced the two.
   The two produced the three.
   And the three produced the ten thousand things.
   The ten thousand things carry the yin and embrace the yang, and
   through the blending of the material force (ch’i) they achieve
   harmony.
   People hate to be the orphaned, the lonely ones, and the
   unworthy.
   And yet kings and lords call themselves by these names.
Therefore it is often the case that things gain by losing and lose by gaining.

What others have taught, I teach also:

“Violent and fierce people do not die a natural death.”

I shall make this the father (basis or starting point) of my teaching.

43. The softest things in the world overcome the hardest things in the world.

Non-being penetrates that in which there is no space.

Through this I know the advantage of taking no action.

Few in the world can understand teaching without words and the advantage of taking no action.

44. Which does one love more, fame or one’s own life?

Which is more valuable, one’s own life or wealth?

Which is worse, gain or loss?

Therefore he who has lavish desires will spend extravagantly.

He who hoards most will lose heavily.

He who is contented suffers no disgrace.

He who knows when to stop is free from danger.

Therefore he can long endure.

45. What is most perfect seems to be incomplete;

But its utility is unimpaired.

What is most full seems to be empty;

But its usefulness is inexhaustible.

What is most straight seems to be crooked.

The greatest skills seems to be clumsy.

The greatest eloquence seems to stutter.

Hasty movement overcomes cold,

(But) tranquillity overcomes heat.

By being greatly tranquil,

One is qualified to be the ruler of the world.

46. When Tao prevails in the world, galloping horses are turned back to fertilize (the fields with their dung).

When Tao does not prevail in the world, war horses thrive in the suburbs.

There is no calamity greater than lavish desires.
There is no greater guilt than discontentment.  
And there is no greater disaster than greed.  
He who is contented with contentment is always contented.  

47. One may know the world without going out of doors.  
One may see the Way of Heaven without looking through the windows.  
The further one goes, the less one knows.  
Therefore the sage knows without going about,  
Understands without seeing,  
And accomplishes without any action.  

48. The pursuit of learning is to increase day after day.  
The pursuit of Tao is to decrease day after day.  
It is to decrease and further decrease until one reaches the point of taking no action.  
No action is undertaken, and yet nothing is left undone.  
An empire is often brought to order by having no activity (laissez-faire).  
If one (likes to) undertake activity, he is not qualified to govern the empire.  

49. The sage has no fixed (personal) ideas.  
He regards the people’s ideas as his own.  
I treat those who are good with goodness,  
And I also treat those who are not good with goodness.  
Thus goodness is attained.  
I am honest to those who are honest,  
And I am also honest to those who are not honest.  
Thus honesty is attained.  
The sage, in the government of his empire, has no subjective viewpoint.  
His mind forms a harmonious whole with that of his people.  
They all lend their eyes and ears, and he treats them all as infants.  

50. Man comes into life and goes out to death.  
Three out of ten are companions of life.  
Three out of ten are companions of death.  
And three Out of ten in their lives lead from activity to death.  
And for what reason?  
Because of man’s intensive striving after life.
I have heard that one who is a good preserver of his life will not meet tigers or wild buffalos, And in fighting will not try to escape from weapons of war. The wild buffalo cannot butt its horns against him, The tiger cannot fasten its claws in him, And weapons of war cannot thrust their blades into him. And for what reason? Because in him there is no room for death.

51. Tao produces them (the ten thousand things). Virtue fosters them. Matter gives them physical form. The circumstances and tendencies complete them. Therefore the ten thousand things esteem Tao and honor virtue. Tao is esteemed and virtue is honored without anyone’s order. They always come spontaneously. Therefore Tao produces them and virtue fosters them. They rear them and develop them. They give them security and give them peace. They nurture them and protect them. (Tao) produces them but does not take possession of them. It acts, but does not rely on its own ability. It leads them but does not master them. This is called profound and secret virtue.

52. There was a beginning of the universe Which may be called the Mother of the Universe, He who has found the mother (Tao) And thereby understands her sons (things) And having understood the sons, Still keeps to its mother, Will be free from danger throughout his lifetime. Close the mouth. Shut the doors (of cunning and desire). And to the end of life there will be (peace) without toil. Open the mouth. Meddle with affairs, And to the end of life there will be no salvation. Seeing what is small is called enlightenment.
Keeping to weakness is called strength.
Use the light.
Revert to enlightenment,
And thereby avoid danger to one’s life—
This is called practicing the eternal.

53. If I had but little knowledge
   I should, in walking on a broad way,
   Fear getting off the road.
   Broad ways are extremely even,
   But people are fond of by-paths.
   The courts are exceedingly splendid,
   While the fields are exceedingly weedy,
   And the granaries are exceedingly empty.
   Elegant clothes are worn,
   Sharp weapons are carried,
   Foods and drinks are enjoyed beyond limit,
   And wealth and treasures are accumulated in excess.
   This is robbery and extravagance.
   This is indeed not Tao (the way).

54. He who is well established (in Tao) cannot be pulled away.
   He who has a firm grasp (of Tao) cannot be separated from it.
   Thus from generation to generation his ancestral sacrifice will
       never be suspended.
   When one cultivates virtue, in his person, it becomes genuine
       virtue.
   When one cultivates virtue in his family, it becomes overflowing
       virtue.
   When one cultivates virtue in his community, it becomes lasting
       virtue.
   When one cultivates virtue in his country, it becomes abundant
       virtue.
   When one cultivates virtue in the world, it becomes universal.
   Therefore the person should be viewed as a person.
   The family should be viewed as a family.
   The community should be viewed as a community.
   The country should be viewed as a country.
   And the world should be viewed as the world.
How do I know this to be the case in the world?
Through this (from the cultivation of virtue in the person to that in the world).

55. He who possesses virtue in abundance
   May be compared to an infant.
   Poisonous insects will not sting him.
   Fierce beasts will not seize him.
   Birds of prey will not strike him.
   His bones are weak, his sinews tender, but his grasp is firm.
   He does not yet know the union of male and female,
   But his organ is aroused.
   This means that his essence is at its height.
   He may cry all day without becoming hoarse,
   This means that his (natural) harmony is perfect.
   To know harmony means to be in accord with the eternal.
   To be in accord with the eternal means to be enlightened.
   To force the growth of life means ill omen.
   For the mind to employ the vital force without restraint means violence.
   After things reach their prime, they begin to grow old,
   Which means being contrary to Tao.
   Whatever is contrary to Tao will soon perish.

56. He who knows does not speak.
   He who speaks does not know.
   Close the mouth.
   Shut the doors (of cunning and desires).
   Blunt the sharpness.
   Untie the tangles.
   Soften the light.
   Become one with the dusty world.
   This is called profound identification.
   Therefore it is impossible either to be intimate and close to him or to be distant and indifferent to him.
   It is impossible either to benefit him or to harm him.
   It is impossible either to honor him or to disgrace him.
   For this reason he is honored by the world.

57. Govern the state with correctness.
Operate the army with surprise tactics.
Administer the empire by engaging in no activity.
How do I know that this should be so?
Through this:
The more taboos and prohibitions there are in the world,
The poorer the people will be.
The more sharp weapons the people have,
The more troubled the state will be.
The more cunning and skill man possesses,
The more vicious things will appear.
The more laws and orders are made prominent,
The more thieves and robbers there will be.
Therefore the sage says:
I take no action and the people of themselves are transformed.
I love tranquillity and the people of themselves become correct.
I engage in no activity and the people of themselves become prosperous.
I have no desires and the people of themselves become simple.

58. When the government is non-discriminative and dull,
The people are contented and generous.
When the government is searching and discriminative,
The people are disappointed and contentious.
Calamity is that upon which happiness depends;
Happiness is that in which calamity is latent.
Who knows when the limit will be reached?
Is there no correctness (used to govern the world?)
Then the correct again becomes the perverse
And the good will again become evil.
The people have been deluded for a long time.
Therefore the sage is as pointed as a square but does not pierce.
He is as acute as a knife but does not cut.
He is as straight as an unbent line but does not extend.
He is as bright as light but does not dazzle.

59. To rule people and to serve Heaven there is nothing better than to be frugal.
Only by being frugal can one recover quickly.
To recover quickly means to accumulate virtue heavily.
By the heavy accumulation of virtue one can overcome everything.
If one can overcome everything, then he will acquire a capacity the limit of which is beyond anyone’s knowledge.
When his capacity is beyond anyone’s knowledge, he is fit to rule a state.
He who possesses the Mother (Tao) of the state will last long.
This means that the roots are deep and the stalks are firm, which is the way of long life and everlasting existence.

60. Ruling a big country is like cooking a small fish. If Tao is employed to rule the empire, Spiritual beings will lose their supernatural power. Not that they lose their spiritual power, But their spiritual power can no longer harm people. Not only will their supernatural power not harm people, But the sage also will not harm people. When both do not harm each other, Virtue will be accumulated in both for the benefit [of the people].

61. A big country may be compared to the lower part of a river. It is the converging point of the world; It is the female of the world. The female always overcomes the male by tranquillity, And by tranquillity she is underneath. A big state can take over a small state if it places itself below the small state; And the small state can take over a big state if it places itself below the big state. Thus some, by placing themselves below, take over (others), And some, by being (naturally) low, take over (other states). After all, what a big state wants is but to annex and herd others, And what a small state wants is merely to join and serve others. Since both big and small states get what they want, The big state should place itself low.

62. Tao is the storehouse of all things. It is the good man’s treasure and the bad man’s refuge. Fine words can buy honor, And fine deeds can gain respect from others.
Even if a man is bad, when has (Tao) rejected him?
Therefore on the occasion of crowning an emperor or installing the three ministers,
Rather than present large pieces of jade preceded by teams of four horses,
It is better to kneel and offer this Tao.
Why did the ancients highly value this Tao?
Did they not say, “Those who seek shall have it and those who sin shall be freed”?
For this reason it is valued by the world.

63. Act without action.
Do without ado.
Taste without tasting.
Whether it is big or small, many or few, repay hatred with virtue.
Prepare for the difficult while it is still easy.
Deal with the big while it is still small.
Difficult undertakings have always started with what is easy,
And great undertakings have always started with what is small.
Therefore the sage never strives for the great,
And thereby the great is achieved.
He who makes rash promises surely lacks faith.
He who takes things too easily will surely encounter much difficulty.
For this reason even the sage regards things as difficult,
And therefore he encounters no difficulty.

64. What remains still is easy to hold.
What is not yet manifest is easy to plan for.
What is brittle is easy to crack.
What is minute is easy to scatter.
Deal with things before they appear.
Put things in order before disorder arises.
A tree as big as a man’s embrace grows from a tiny shoot.
A tower of nine storeys begins with a heap of earth.
The journey of a thousand li starts from where one stands.
He who takes an action fails.
He who grasps things loses them.
For this reason the sage takes no action and therefore does not fail.
He gasps nothing and therefore he does not lose anything.
People in their handling of affairs often fail when they are about to succeed.
If one remains as careful at the end as he was at the beginning, there will be no failure.
Therefore the sage desires to have no desire.
He does not value rare treasures.
He learns to be unlearned, and returns to what the multitude has missed (Tao).
Thus he supports all things in their natural state but does not take any action.

65. In ancient times those who practised Tao well
Did not seek to enlighten the people, but to make them ignorant.
People are difficult to govern because they have too much knowledge.
Therefore he who rules the state through knowledge is a robber of the state;
He who rules a state not through knowledge is a blessing to the state.
One who knows these two things also (knows) the standard.
Always to know the standard is called profound and secret virtue.
Virtue becomes deep and far-reaching,
And with it all things return to their original natural state.
Then complete harmony will be reached.

66. The great rivers and seas are kings of all mountain streams
Because they skillfully stay below them.
That is why they can be their kings.
Therefore, in order to be the superior of the people,
One must, in the use of words, place himself below them.
And in order to be ahead of the people,
One must, in one’s own person, follow them.
Therefore the sage places himself above the people and they do not feel his weight.
He places himself in front of them and the people do not harm him.
Therefore the world rejoices in praising him without getting tired of it.  
It is precisely because he does not compete that the world cannot compete with him.

67. All the world says that my Tao is great and does not seem to resemble (the ordinary).  
It is precisely because it is great that it does not resemble (the ordinary).  
If it did resemble, it would have been small for a long time.  
I have three treasures. Guard and keep them:  
The first is deep love.  
The second is frugality,  
And the third is not to dare to be ahead of the world.  
Because of deep love, one is courageous.  
Because of frugality, one is generous:  
Because of not daring to be ahead of the world, one becomes the leader of the world.  
Now, to be courageous by forsaking deep love,  
To be generous by forsaking frugality,  
And to be ahead of the world by forsaking following behind—This is fatal.  
For deep love helps one to win in the case of attack,  
And to be firm in the case of defense.  
When Heaven is to save a person,  
Heaven will protect him through deep love.

68. A skillful leader of troops is not oppressive with his military strength.  
A skillful fighter does not become angry.  
A skillful conqueror does not compete with people.  
One who is skillful in using men puts himself below them:  
This is called the virtue of not-competing.  
This is called the strength to use men.  
This is called matching Heaven, the highest principle of old.

69. The strategists say:  
“I dare not take the offensive but I take the defensive;  
I dare not advance an inch but I retreat a foot.”  
This means:
To march without formation,
To stretch one’s arm without showing it,
To confront enemies without seeming to meet them,
To hold weapons without seeming to have them.
There is no greater disaster than to make light of the enemy.
Making light of the enemy will destroy my treasures.
Therefore when armies are mobilized and issues joined,
The man who is sorry over the fact will win.

70. My doctrines are very easy to understand and very easy to practice,
But none in the world can understand or practice them.
My doctrines have a source (Nature); my deeds have a master (Tao).
It is because people do not understand this that they do not understand me.
Few people know me, and therefore I am highly valued.
Therefore the sage wears a coarse cloth on top and carries jade within his bosom.

71. To know that you do not know is the best.
To pretend to know when you do not know is a disease:
Only when one recognizes this disease as a disease can one be free from the disease.
The sage is free from the disease.
Because he recognizes this disease to be disease, he is free from it.

72. When the people do not fear of what is dreadful,
Then what is greatly dreadful will descend on them.
Do not reduce the living space of their dwellings.
Do not oppress their lives.
It is because you do not oppress them that they are not oppressed.
Therefore the sage knows himself but does not show himself.
He loves himself but does not exalt himself.
Therefore he rejects the one but accepts the other.

73. He who is brave in daring will be killed.
He who is brave in not daring will live.
Of these two, one is advantageous and one is harmful.
Who knows why Heaven dislikes what it dislikes? 
Even the sage considers it a difficult question. 
The Way of Heaven does not compete, and yet it skillfully 
achieves victory. 
It does not speak, and yet it skillfully responds to things. 
It comes to you without your invitation. 
It is not anxious about things and yet it plans well. 
Heaven’s net is indeed vast. 
Though its meshes are wide, it misses nothing.

74. The people are not afraid of death. 
Why, then, threaten them with death? 
Suppose the people are always afraid of death and we can seize 
those who are vicious and kill them, 
Who would dare to do so? 
There is always the master executioner (Heaven) who kills. 
To undertake executions for the master executioner is like hewing 
wood for the master carpenter. 
Whoever undertakes to hew wood for the master carpenter rarely 
escapes injuring his own hands.

75. The people starve because the ruler eats too much tax-grain. 
Therefore they starve. 
They are difficult to rule because their ruler does too many 
things. 
Therefore they are difficult to rule. 
The people take death lightly because their ruler strives for life 
too vigorously. 
Therefore they take death lightly. 
It is only those who do not seek after life that excel in making life 
valuable.

76. When man is born, he is tender and weak. 
At death, he is stiff and hard. 
All things, the grass as well as trees, are tender and supple while 
alive. 
When dead, they are withered and dried. 
Therefore the stiff and the hard are companions of death. 
The tender and the weak are companions of life. 
Therefore if the army is strong, it will not win.
If a tree is stiff, it will break.
The strong and the great are inferior, while the tender and the weak are superior.

77. Heaven’s Way is indeed like the bending of a bow.
When (the string) is high, bring it down.
When it is low, raise it up.
When it is excessive, reduce it.
When it is insufficient, supplement it.
The Way of Heaven reduces whatever is excessive and supplements whatever is insufficient.
The way of man is different.
It reduces the insufficient to offer to the excessive.
Who is able to have excess to offer to the world?
Only the man of Tao.
Therefore the sage acts, but does not rely on his own ability.
He accomplishes his task, but does not claim credit for it.
He has no desire to display his excellence.

78. There is nothing softer and weaker than water,
And yet there is nothing better for attacking hard and strong things.
For this reason there is no substitute for it.
All the world knows that the weak overcomes the strong and the soft overcomes the hard.
But none can practice it.
Therefore the sage says:
He who suffers disgrace for his country is called the lord of the land.
He who takes upon himself the country’s misfortunes becomes the king of the empire.
Straight words seem to be their opposite.

79. To patch up great hatred is surely to leave some hatred behind.
How can this be regarded as good?
Therefore the sage keeps the left-hand portion (obligation) of a contract
And does not blame the other party.
Virtuous people attend to their left-hand portions,
While those without virtue attend to other people’s mistakes.
“The Way of Heaven has no favorites. It is always with the good man.”

80. Let there be a small country with few people.
   Let there be ten times and a hundred times as many utensils
   But let them not be used.
   Let the people value their lives highly and not migrate far.
   Even if there are ships and carriages, none will ride in them.
   Even if there are armor and weapons, none will display them.
   Let the people again knot cords and use them (in place of writing).
   Let them relish their food, beautify their clothing, be content with their homes, and delight in their customs.
   Though neighboring communities overlook one another and the crowing of cocks and barking of dogs can be heard,
   Yet the people there may grow old and die without ever visiting one another.

81. True words are not beautiful;
   Beautiful words are not true.
   A good man does not argue;
   He who argues is not a good man.
   A wise man has no extensive knowledge;
   He who has extensive knowledge is not a wise man.
   The sage does not accumulate for himself.
   The more he uses for others, the more he has himself.
   The more he gives to others, the more he possesses of his own.
   The Way of Heaven is to benefit others and not to injure.
   The Way of the sage is to act but not to compete.

THE ZHAUNGZI (CHUANG TZU)

In the Northern Ocean there is a fish, the name of which is Khwan—I do not know how many lî in size. It changes into a bird with the name of Phang, the back of which is (also)—I do not know how many lî in extent. When this bird rouses itself and flies, its wings are like clouds all round the sky. When the sea is moved (so as to bear it along) it prepares to remove to

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the Southern Ocean. The Southern Ocean is the Pool of Heaven.

There is the (book called) Khî Hsieh,—a record of marvels. We have in it these words:—‘When the Phang is removing to the Southern Ocean it flaps (its wings) on the water for 3000 lî. Then it ascends on a whirlwind 90,000 lî, and it rests only at the end of six months.’ (But similar to this is the movement of the breezes which we call) the horses of the fields, of the dust (which quivers in the sunbeams), and of living things as they are blown against one another by the air. Is its azure the proper colour of the sky? Or is it occasioned by its distance and illimitable extent? If one were looking down (from above), the very same appearance would just meet his view.

And moreover, (to speak of) the accumulation of water;—if it be not great, it will not have strength to support a large boat. Upset a cup of water in a cavity, and a straw will float on it as if it were a boat. Place a cup in it, and it will stick fast;—the water is shallow and the boat is large. (So it is with) the accumulation of wind; if it be not great, it will not have strength to support great wings. Therefore (the phang ascended to) the height of 90,000 lî, and there was such a mass of wind beneath it; thenceforth the accumulation of wind was sufficient. As it seemed to bear the blue sky on its back, and there was nothing to obstruct or arrest its course, it could pursue its way to the South.

A cicada and a little dove laughed at it, saying, ‘We make an effort and fly towards an elm or sapanwood tree; and sometimes before we reach it, we can do no more but drop to the ground. Of what use is it for this (creature) to rise 90,000 lî, and make for the South?’ He who goes to the grassy suburbs, returning to the third meal (of the day), will have his belly as full as when he set out; he who goes to a distance of 100 lî will have to pound his grain where he stops for the night; he who goes a thousand lî, will have to carry with him provisions for three months. What should these two small creatures know about the matter? The knowledge of that which is small does not reach to that which is great; (the experience of) a few years does not reach to that of many. How do we know that it is so? The mushroom of a morning does not know (what takes place between) the beginning and end of a month; the short-lived cicada does not know (what takes place between) the spring and autumn. These are instances of a short term of life. In the south of Khu there is the (tree) called Mingling’ whose spring is 500 years, and its autumn the same; in high antiquity there was that called Takhun, whose spring was 8000 years, and its autumn the same. And Phang Tzu is the one man renowned to the present day for his length of life:—if all men were (to wish) to match him, would they not be miserable?
In the questions put by Thang, to Kî we have similar statements:—‘In the bare and barren north there is the dark vast ocean,—the Pool of Heaven. In it there is a fish, several thousand lî in breadth, while no one knows its length. Its name is the khwan. There is (also) a bird named the phang; its back is like the Thai mountain, while its wings are like clouds all round the sky. On a whirlwind it mounts upwards as on the whorls of a goat’s horn for 90,000 lî, till, far removed from the cloudy vapours, it bears on its back the blue sky, and then it shapes its course for the South, and proceeds to the ocean there.’ A quail by the side of a marsh laughed at it, and said, ‘Where is it going to? I spring up with a bound, and come down again when I have reached but a few fathoms, and then fly about among the brushwood and bushes; and this is the perfection flying. Where is that creature going to?’ This shows the difference between the small and the great.

Thus it is that men, whose wisdom is sufficient for the duties of some one office, or whose conduct will secure harmony in some one district, or whose virtue is befitting a ruler so that they could efficiently govern some one state, are sure to look on themselves in this manner (like the quail), and yet Yung-tze of Sung would have smiled and laughed at them. (This Yung-Tze), though the whole world should have praised him, would not have for that have stimulated himself to greater endeavour, and though the whole world should have condemned him, would not have exercised any more repression of his course; so fixed was he in the difference between the internal (judgment of himself) and the external (judgment of others), so distinctly had he marked out the bounding limit of glory and disgrace. Here, however, he stopped. His place in the world indeed had become indifferent to him, but still he had not planted himself firmly (in the right position).

There was Lieh-tze, who rode on the wind and pursued his way, with an admirable indifference (to all external things), returning, however, after fifteen days, (to his place). In regard to the things that (are supposed to) contribute to happiness, he was free from all endeavours to obtain them; but though he had not to walk, there was still something for which he had to wait. But suppose one who mounts on (the ether of) heaven and earth in its normal operation, and drives along the six elemental energies of the changing (seasons), thus enjoying himself in the illimitable,—what has he to wait for? Therefore it is said, ‘The Perfect man has no (thought of) self; the Spirit-like man, none of merit; the Sagely-minded man, none of fame.

Yâo, proposing to resign the throne to Hsü Yü, said, ‘When the sun and moon have come forth, if the torches have not been put out, would it not be
difficult for them to give light? When the seasonal rains are coming down, if we still keep watering the ground, will not our toil be labour lost for all good it will do? Do you, Master, stand forth (as sovereign), and the kingdom will (at once) be well governed. If I still (continue to) preside over it I must look on myself as vainly occupying the place;—I beg to resign the throne to you.’ Hsü Yü said, ‘You, Sir, govern the kingdom, and the kingdom is well governed. If I in these circumstances take your place, shall I not be doing so for the sake of the name? But the name is but the guest of the reality;—shall I be playing the part of the guest? The tailor-bird makes its nest in the deep forest, but only uses a single branch; the mole drinks from the Ho but only takes what fills its belly. Return and rest in being ruler,—I will have nothing to do with the throne. Though the cook were not attending to his kitchen, the representative of the dead and the officer of prayer would not leave their cups and stands to take his place.’

Kien Wû asked Lien Shû, saying, ‘I heard Khieh-yü talking words which were great but had nothing corresponding to them (in reality);—once gone, they could not be brought back. I was frightened by them,—they were like the Milky Way which cannot be traced to its beginning or end. They had no connection with one another, and were not akin to the experience of men.’ ‘What were his words?’ asked Lien Shû, and the other replied, (He said) that ‘Far away on the hill of Kû-shih there dwelt a Spirit-like man whose flesh and skin were (smooth) as ice and (white) as snow; that his manner was elegant and delicate as that of a virgin; that he did not eat any of the five grains, but inhaled the wind and drank the dew; that he mounted on the clouds, drove along the flying dragons, rambling and enjoying himself beyond the four seas; that by the concentration of his spirit-like powers he could save men from disease and pestilence, and secure every year a plentiful harvest.’ These words appeared to me wild and incoherent and I did not believe them. ‘So it is,’ said Lien Shû. ‘The blind have no perception of the beauty of elegant figures, nor the deaf of the sound of bells and drums. But is it only the bodily senses of which deafness and blindness can be predicated? There is also a similar defect in the intelligence; and of this your words supply an illustration in yourself. That man, with those attributes, though all things were one mass of confusion, and he heard in that condition the whole world crying out to him to be rectified, would not have to address himself laboriously to the task, as if it were his business to rectify the world. Nothing could hurt that man; the greatest floods, reaching to the sky, could not drown him, nor would he feel the fervour of the greatest heats melting metals and stones.
till they flowed, and scorching all the ground and hills. From the dust and chaff of himself, he could still mould and fashion Yaos and Shuns;—how should he be willing to occupy himself with things?’

A man of Sung, who dealt in the ceremonial caps (of Yin), went with them to Yüeh, the people of which cut off their hair and tattooed their bodies, so that they had no use for them. Yâo ruled the people of the kingdom, and maintained a perfect government within the four seas. Having gone to see the four (Perfect) Ones on the distant hill of Kû-shih, when (he returned to his capital) on the south of the Fan water, his throne appeared no more to his deep-sunk oblivious eyes.

Hui-tze told Chuang Tzü, saying, ‘The king of Wei sent me some seeds of a large calabash, which I sowed. The fruit, when fully grown, could contain five piculs (of anything). I used it to contain water, but it was so heavy that I could not lift it by myself. I cut it in two to make the parts into drinking vessels; but the dried shells were too wide and unstable and would not hold (the liquor); nothing but large useless things! Because of their uselessness I knocked them to pieces.’ Chuang Tzü replied, ‘You were indeed stupid, my master, in the use of what was large. There was a man of Sung who was skillful at making a salve which kept the hands from getting chapped; and (his family) for generations had made the bleaching of cocoon-silk their business. A stranger heard of it, and proposed to buy the art of the preparation for a hundred ounces of silver. The kindred all came together, and considered the proposal. “We have,” said they, “been bleaching cocoon-silk for generations, and have only gained a little money. Now in one morning we can sell to this man our art for a hundred ounces;—let him have it.” The stranger accordingly got it and went away with it to give counsel to the king of Wu, who was then engaged in hostilities with Yüeh. The king gave him the command of his fleet, and in the winter he had an engagement with that of Yüeh, on which he inflicted a great defeat, and was invested with a portion of territory taken from Yüeh. The keeping the hands from getting chapped was the same in both cases; but in the one case it led to the investiture (of the possessor of the salve), and in the other it had only enabled its owners to continue their bleaching. The difference of result was owing to the different use made of the art. Now you, Sir, had calabashes large enough to hold five piculs;—why did you not think of making large bottle-gourds of them, by means of which you could have floated over rivers and lakes, instead of giving yourself the sorrow of finding that they were useless for
holding anything. Your mind, my master, would seem to have been closed against all intelligence!

Hui-tze said to Chuang Tzu, ‘I have a large tree, which men call the Ailantus. Its trunk swells out to a large size, but is not fit for a carpenter to apply his line to it; its smaller branches are knotted and crooked, so that disk and square cannot be used on them. Though planted on the wayside, a builder would not turn his head to look at it. Now your words, Sir, are great, but of no use;—all unite in putting them away from them.’ Chuang Tzu replied, ‘Have you never seen a wild cat or a weasel? There it lies, crouching and low, till the wanderer approaches; east and west it leaps about, avoiding neither what is high nor what is low, till it is caught in a trap, or dies in a net. Again there is the Yak, so large that it is like a cloud hanging in the sky. It is large indeed, but it cannot catch mice. You, Sir, have a large tree and are troubled because it is of no use;—why do you not plant it in a tract where there is nothing else, or in a wide and barren wild? There you might saunter idly by its side, or in the enjoyment of untroubled ease sleep beneath it. Neither bill nor axe would shorten its existence; there would be nothing to injure it. What is there in its uselessness to cause, you distress? . . .

Nan-kwo Tze-khî was seated, leaning forward on his stool. He was looking up to heaven and breathed gently, seeming to be in a trance, and to have lost all consciousness of any companion. (His disciple), Yen Khang Tze-yu, who was in attendance and standing before him, said, ‘What is this? Can the body be made to become thus like a withered tree, and the mind to become like slaked lime? His appearance as he leans forward on the stool today is such as I never saw him have before in the same position.’ Tze-khî said, ‘Yen, you do well to ask such a question, I had just now lost myself; but how should you understand it? You may have heard the notes of Man, but have not heard those of Earth; you may have heard the notes of Earth, but have not heard those of Heaven.’

Tze-yu said, ‘I venture to ask from you a description of all these.’ The reply was, ‘When the breath of the Great Mass (of nature) comes strongly, it is called Wind. Sometimes it does not come so; but when it does, then from a myriad apertures there issues its excited noise;—have you not heard it in a prolonged gale? Take the projecting bluff of a mountain forest;—in the great trees, a hundred spans round, the apertures and cavities are like the nostrils, or the mouth, or the ears; now square, now round like a cup or a mortar; here like a wet footprint, and there like a large puddle. (The sounds issuing from them are like) those of fretted water, of the arrowy whizz, of the stem com-
mand, of the inhaling of the breath, of the shout, of the gruff note, of the
deep wail, of the sad and piping note. The first notes are slight, and those that
follow deeper, but in harmony with them. Gentle winds produce a small
response; violent winds a great one. When the fierce gusts have passed away,
al the apertures are empty (and still);—have you not seen this in the bending
and quivering of the branches and leaves?'

Tze-yu said, ‘The notes of Earth then are simply those which come from
its myriad apertures; and the notes of Man may just be compared to those
which (are brought from the tubes of) bamboo;—allow me to ask about the
notes of Heaven.’ Tze-khî replied, ‘When (the wind) blows, (the sounds
from) the myriad apertures are different, and (its cessation) makes them stop
of themselves. Both of these things arise from (the wind and the apertures)
themselves:—should there be any other agency that excites them?’

Great knowledge is wide and comprehensive; small knowledge is partial
and restricted. Great speech is exact and complete; small speech is (merely)
so much talk. When we sleep, the soul communicates with (what is external
to us); when we awake, the body is set free. Our intercourse with others then
leads to various activity, and daily there is the striving of mind with mind.
There are hesitancies; deep difficulties; reservations; small apprehensions
causing restless distress, and great apprehensions producing endless fears.
Where their utterances are like arrows from a bow, we have those who feel it
their charge to pronounce what is right and what is wrong; where they are
given out like the conditions of a covenant, we have those who maintain
their views, determined to overcome. (The weakness of their arguments),
like the decay (of things) in autumn and winter, shows the failing (of the
minds of some) from day to day; or it is like their water which, once voided,
cannot be gathered up again. Then their ideas seem as if fast bound with
cords, showing that the mind is become like an old and dry moat, and that it
is nigh to death, and cannot be restored to vigour and brightness.

Joy and anger, sadness and pleasure, anticipation and regret, fickleness
and fixedness, vehemence and indolence, eagerness and tardiness;—(all
these moods), like music from an empty tube, or mushrooms from the warm
moisture, day and night succeed to one another and come before us, and we
do not know whence they sprout. Let us stop! Let us stop! Can we expect to
find out suddenly how they are produced?

If there were not (the views of) another, I should not have mine; if there
were not I (with my views), his would be uncalled for:—this is nearly a true
statement of the case, but we do not know what it is that makes it be so. It
might seem as if there would be a true Governor concerned in it, but we do not find any trace (of his presence and acting). That such an One could act so I believe; but we do not see His form. He has affections, but He has no form.

Given the body, with its hundred parts, its nine openings, and its six viscera, all complete in their places, which do I love the most? Do you love them all equally? or do you love some more than others? Is it not the case that they all perform the part of your servants and waiting women? All of them being such, are they not incompetent to rule one another? or do they take it in turns to be now ruler and now servants? There must he a true Ruler (among them) whether by searching you can find out His character or not, there is neither advantage nor hurt, so far as the truth of His operation is concerned. When once we have received the bodily form complete, its parts do not fail to perform their functions till the end comes. In conflict with things or in harmony with them, they pursue their course to the end, with the speed of a galloping horse which cannot be stopped;—is it not sad? To be constantly toiling all one’s lifetime, without seeing the fruit of one’s labour, and to be weary and worn out with his labour, without knowing where he is going to:—is it not a deplorable case? Men may say, ‘But it is not death;’ yet of what advantage is this? When the body is decomposed, the mind will be the same along with it:—must not the case be pronounced very deplorable? Is the life of man indeed enveloped in such darkness? Is it I alone to whom it appears so? And does it not appear to be so to other men?

If we were to follow the judgments of the predetermined mind, who would be left alone and without a teacher? Not only would it be so with those who know the sequences (of knowledge and feeling) and make their own selection among them, but it would be so as well with the stupid and unthinking. For one who has not this determined mind, to have his affirmations and negations is like the case described in the saying, ‘He went to Yüeh to-day, and arrived at it yesterday.’ It would be making what was not a fact to be a fact. But even the spirit-like Yu could not have known how to do this and how should one like me be able to do it?

But speech is not like the (of the wind); the speaker has (a meaning in) his words. If, however, what he says, be indeterminate (as from a mind not made up), does he really speak or not? He thinks that his words are different from the chirpings of fledgelings; but is there any distinction between them or not? But how can the Tao be so obscured, that there should he ‘a True’ and ‘a False’ in it? How can speech he so obscured that there should be ‘the Right’ and ‘the Wrong’ about them? Where shall the Tao go to that it will not
be found? Where shall speech be found that it will be inappropriate? Tao becomes obscured through the small comprehension (of the mind), and speech comes to be obscured through the vain-gloriousness (of the speaker). So it is that we have the contentions between the Literati and the Mohists, the one side affirming what the other denies, and vice versa. If we would decide on their several affirmations and denials, no plan is like bringing the (proper) light (of the mind) to bear on them.

All subjects may be looked at from (two points of view),—from that and from this. If I look at a thing from another’s point of view, I do not see it; only as I know it. Hence it is said, ‘That view comes from this; and this view is a consequence of that:’—which is the theory that that view and this—(the opposite views)—produce each the other. Although it be so, there is affirmed now life and now death; now death and now life; now the admissibility of a thing and now its inadmissibility; now its inadmissibility and now its admissibility. (The disputants) now affirm and now deny; now deny and now affirm. Therefore the sagely man does not pursue this method, but views things in the light of (his) Heaven (ly nature), and hence forms his judgment of what is right.

This view is the same as that, and that view is the same as this. But that view involves both a right and a wrong;—and this view involves also a right and a wrong:—are there indeed, or are there not the two views, that and this? They have not found their point of correspondency which is called the pivot of the Tao. As soon as one finds this pivot, he stands in the centre of the ring (of thought), where he can respond without end to the changing views;—without end to those affirming, and without end to those denying. Therefore I said, ‘There is nothing like the proper light (of the mind).’

By means of a finger (of my own) to illustrate that the finger (of another) is not a finger is not so good a plan as to illustrate that it is not so by means of what is (acknowledged to be) not a finger; and by means of (what I call) a horse to illustrate that (what another calls) a horse is not so, is not so good a plan as to illustrate that it is not a horse, by means of what is (acknowledged to be) not a horse. (All things in) heaven and earth may be (dealt with as) a finger; (each of) their myriads may be (dealt with as) a horse. Does a thing seem so to me? (I say that) it is so. Does it seem not so to me? (I say that) it is not so. A path is formed by (constant) treading on the ground. A thing is called by its name through the (constant) application of the name to it. How is it so? It is so because it is so. How is it not so? It is not so, because it is not so. Everything has its inherent character and its proper capability. There is noth-
ing which has not these. Therefore, this be so, if we take a stalk of grain and a (large) pillar, a loathsome (leper) and (a beauty like) Hsi Shih, things large and things insecure, and things strange;—they may in the light of the Tao all be reduced to the same category (of opinion about them).

It was separation that led to completion, from completion ensued dissolution. But all things, without regard to their completion and dissolution, may again be comprehended in their unity;—it is only the far reaching in thought who know how to comprehend them in this unity. This being so, let us give up our devotion to our own views, and occupy ourselves with the ordinary views. These ordinary views are grounded on the use of things. (The study of that) use leads to the comprehensive judgment, and that judgment secures the success (of the inquiry). That success gained, we are near (to the object of our search), and there we stop. When we stop, and yet we do not know how it is so, we have what is called the Tao.

When we toil our spirits and intelligence, obstinately determined (to establish our own view), and do not know the agreement (which underlies it and the views of others), we have what is called ‘In the morning three.’ What is meant by that ‘In the morning three?’ A keeper of monkeys, in giving them out their acorns, (once) said, ‘In the morning I will give you three (measures) and in the evening four.’ This made them all angry, and he said, ‘Very well. In the morning I will give you four and in the evening three.’ His two proposals were substantially the same, but the result of the one was to make the creatures angry, and of the other to make them pleased:—an illustration of the point I am insisting on. Therefore the sagely man brings together a dispute in its affirmations and denials, and rests in the equal fashioning of Heaven. Both sides of the question are admissible.

Among the men of old their knowledge reached the extreme point. What was that extreme point? Some held that at first there was not anything. This is the extreme point, the utmost point to which nothing can be added. A second class held that there was something, but without any responsive recognition of it (on the part of men).

A third class held that there was such recognition, but there had not begun to be any expression of different opinions about it.

It was through the definite expression of different opinions about it that there ensued injury to (the doctrine of) the Tao. It was this injury to the (doctrine of the) Tao which led to the formation of (partial) preferences. Was it indeed after such preferences were formed that the injury came? or did the injury precede the rise of such preferences? If the injury arose after their forma-
tion, Kâo’s method of playing on the lute was natural. If the injury arose before their formation, there would have been no such playing on the lute as Kâo’s.

Kâo Wan’s playing on the lute, Shih Kwang’s indicating time with his staff, and Hui-tze’s (giving his views), while leaning against a dryandra tree (were all extraordinary). The knowledge of the three men (in their several arts) was nearly perfect, and therefore they practised them to the end of their lives. They loved them because they were different from those of others. They loved them and wished to make them known to others. But as they could not be made clear, though they tried to make them so, they ended with the obscure (discussions) about ‘the hard’ and ‘the white.’ And their sons, moreover, with all the threads of their fathers’ compositions, yet to the end of their lives accomplished nothing. If they, proceeding in this way, could be said to have succeeded, then am I also successful; if they cannot be pronounced successful, neither I nor any other can succeed.

Therefore the scintillations of light from the midst of confusion and perplexity are indeed valued by the sagely man; but not to use one’s own views and to take his position on the ordinary views is what is called using the (proper) light.

But here now are some other sayings.—I do not know whether they are of the same character as those which I have already given, or of a different character. Whether they be of the same character or not when looked at along with them, they have a character of their own, which cannot be distinguished from the others. But though this be the case, let me try to explain myself.

There was a beginning. There was a beginning before that beginning. There was a beginning previous to that beginning before there was the beginning.

There was existence; there had been no existence. There was no existence before the beginning of that no existence. There was no existence previous to the no existence before the beginning of the no existence. If suddenly there was non-existence, we do not know whether it was really anything existing, or really not existing. Now I have said what I have said, but I do not know whether what I have said be really anything to the point or not.

Under heaven there is nothing greater than the tip of an autumn down, and the Thai mountain is small. There is no one more long-lived than a child which dies prematurely, and Phang Tzu did not live out his time. Heaven, Earth, and I were produced together, and all things and I are one. Since they are one, can there be speech about them? But since they are spoken of as one, must there not be room for speech? One and Speech are two; two and
one are three. Going on from this (in our enumeration), the most skilful reckoner cannot reach (the end of the necessary numbers), and how much less can ordinary people do so! Therefore from non-existence we proceed to existence till we arrive at three; proceeding from existence to existence, to how many should we reach? Let us abjure such procedure, and simply rest here.

The Tao at first met with no responsive recognition. Speech at first had no constant forms of expression. Because of this there came the demarcations (of different views). Let me describe those demarcations:—they are the Left and the Right; the Relations and their Obligations; Classifications and their Distinctions; Emulations and Contentions. These are what are called ‘the Eight Qualities.’ Outside the limits of the world of men, the sage occupies his thoughts, but does not discuss about anything; inside those limits he occupies his thoughts, but does not pass any judgments. In the Khun Khiu, which embraces the history of the former kings, the sage indicates his judgments, but does not argue (in vindication of them). Thus it is that he separates his characters from one another without appearing to do so, and argues without the form of argument. How does he do so? The sage cherrishes his views in his own breast, while men generally state theirs argumentatively, to show them to others. Hence we have the saying, ‘Disputation is a proof of not seeing clearly.’

The Great Tao does not admit of being praised. The Great Argument does not require words. Great Benevolence is not (officiously) benevolent. Great Disinterestedness does not vaunt its humility. Great Courage is not seen in stubborn bravery.

The Tao that is displayed is not the Tao. Words that are argumentative do not reach the point. Benevolence that is constantly exercised does not accomplish its object. Disinterestedness that vaunts its purity is not genuine. Courage that is most stubborn is ineffectual. These five seem to be round (and complete), but they tend to become square (and immovable). Therefore the knowledge that stops at what it does not know is the greatest. Who knows the argument that needs no words, and the Way that is not to be trodden?

He who is able to know this has what is called ‘The Heavenly Treasure-house.’ He may pour into it without its being filled; he may pour from it without its being exhausted; and all the while he does not know whence (the supply) comes. This is what is called ‘The Store of Light.’
Therefore of old Yâo asked Shun, saying, ‘I wish to smite (the rulers of) Tung, Kwei, and Hsü-ao. Even when standing in my court, I cannot get them out of my mind. How is it so?’ Shun replied, ‘Those three rulers live (in their little states) as if they were among the mugwort and other brushwood;—how is it that you cannot get them out of your mind? Formerly, ten suns came out together, and all things were illuminated by them;—how much should (your) virtue exceed (all) suns!’

Nieh Khüeh asked Wang I, saying, ‘Do you know, Sir, what all creatures agree in approving and affirming?’ ‘How should I know it?’ was the reply. ‘Do you know what it is that you do not know?’ asked the other again, and he got the same reply. He asked a third time,—Then are all creatures thus without knowledge?’ and Wang I answered as before, (adding however), ‘Notwithstanding, I will try and explain my meaning. How do you know that when I say “I know it,” I really (am showing that) I do not know it, and that when I say “I do not know it,” I really am showing that I do know it. And let me ask you some questions:—‘If a man sleep in a damp place, he will have a pain in his loins, and half his body will be as if it were dead, but will it be so with an eel? If he be living in a tree, he will be frightened and all in a tremble; but will it be so with a monkey? And does any one of the three know his right place? Men eat animals that have been fed on grain and grass; deer feed on the thickset grass; centipedes enjoy small snakes; owls and crows delight in mice; but does any one of the four know the right taste? The dog-headed monkey finds its mate in the female gibbon; the elk and the axis deer cohabit; and the eel enjoys itself with other fishes. Mao Thiang and Li Ki were accounted by men to be most beautiful, but when fishes saw them, they dived deep in the water from them; when birds, they flew from them aloft; and when deer saw them, they separated and fled away. But did any of these four know which in the world is the right female attraction? As I look at the matter, the first principles of benevolence and righteousness and the paths of approval and disapproval are inextricably mixed and confused together:—how is it possible that I should know how to discriminate among them?’

Nieh Khüeh said (further), ‘Since you, Sir, do not know what is advantageous and what is hurtful, is the Perfect man also in the same way without the knowledge of them?’ Wang I replied, ‘The Perfect man is spirit-like. Great lakes might be boiling about him, and he would not feel their heat; the Ho and the Han might be frozen up, and he would not feel the cold; the hurrying thunderbolts might split the mountains, and the wind shake the ocean, without being able to make him afraid. Being such, he mounts on the clouds
of the air, rides on the sun and moon, and rambles at ease beyond the four seas. Neither death nor life makes any change in him, and how much less should the considerations of advantage and injury do so!

Khü Thiao-tze asked Khang-wu Tze, saying, ‘I heard the Master (speaking of such language as the following):—“The sagely man does not occupy himself with worldly affairs. He does not put himself in the way of what is profitable, nor try to avoid what is hurtful; he has no pleasure in seeking (for anything from any one); he does not care to be found in (any established) Way; he speaks without speaking; he does not speak when he speaks; thus finding his enjoyment outside the dust and dirt (of the world).” The Master considered all this to be a shoreless flow of mere words, and I consider it to describe the course of the Mysterious Way.—What do you, Sir, think of it?’ Khang-wu Tze replied, ‘The hearing of such words would have perplexed even Hwang-Ti, and how should Khü be competent to understand them? And you, moreover, are too hasty in forming your estimate (of their meaning). You see the egg, and (immediately) look out for the cock (that is to be hatched from it); you see the bow, and (immediately) look out for the dove (that is to be brought down by it) being roasted. I will try to explain the thing to you in a rough way; do you in the same way listen to me.

‘How could any one stand by the side of the sun and moon, and hold under his arm all space and all time? (Such language only means that the sagely man) keeps his mouth shut, and puts aside questions that are uncertain and dark; making his inferior capacities unite with him in honouring (the One Lord). Men in general bustle about and toil; the sagely man seems stupid and to know nothing. He blends ten thousand years together in the one (conception of time); the myriad things all pursue their spontaneous course, and they are all before him as doing so.

‘How do I know that the love of life is not a delusion? and that the dislike of death is not like a young person’s losing his way, and not knowing that he is (really) going home? Li Ki was a daughter of the border Warden of Ai. When (the ruler of) the state of Tin first got possession of her, she wept till the tears wetted all the front of her dress. But when she came to the place of the king, shared with him his luxurious couch, and ate his grain-and-grass-fed meat, then she regretted that she had wept. How do I know that the dead do not repent of their former craving for life?

‘Those who dream of (the pleasures of) drinking may in the morning wail and weep; those who dream of wailing and weeping may in the morning be going out to hunt. When they were dreaming they did not know it was a
dream; in their dream they may even have tried to interpret it; but when they awoke they knew that it was a dream. And there is the great awaking, after which we shall know that this life was a great dream. All the while, the stupid think they are awake and with nice discrimination insist on their knowledge; now playing the part of rulers, and now of grooms. Bigoted was that Khiu! He and you are both dreaming. I who say that you are dreaming am dreaming myself. These words seem very strange; but if after ten thousand ages we once meet with a great sage who knows how to explain them, it will be as if we met him (unexpectedly) some morning or evening.

‘Since you made me enter into this discussion with you, if you have got the better of me and not I of you, are you indeed right, and I indeed wrong? If I have the got better of you and not you of me, am I indeed right and you indeed wrong? Is the one of us right and the other wrong? are we both right or both wrong? Since we cannot come to a mutual and common understanding, men will certainly continue in darkness on the subject.

‘Whom shall I employ to adjudicate in the matter? If I employ one who agrees with you, how can he, agreeing with you, do so correctly? And the same may be said if I employ one who agrees with me. It will be the same if I employ one who differs from us both or one who agrees with us both. In this way I and you and those others would all not be able to come to a mutual understanding; and shall we then wait for that (great sage)? (We need not do so.) To wait on others to learn how conflicting opinions are changed is simply like not so waiting at all. The harmonising of them is to be found in the invisible operation of Heaven, and by following this on into the unlimited past. It is by this method at we can complete our years (without our minds being disturbed).

‘What is meant by harmonising (conflicting opinions) in the invisible operations of Heaven? There is the affirmation and the denial of it; and there is the assertion of an opinion and the rejection of it. If the affirmation be according to the reality of the fact, it is certainly different from the denial of it:—there can be no dispute about that. If the assertion of an opinion be correct, it is certainly different from its rejection:—neither can there be any dispute about that. Let us forget the lapse of time; let us forget the conflict of opinions. Let us make our appeal to the Infinite, and take up our position there.’

The Penumbra asked the Shadow, saying, ‘Formerly you were walking on, and now you have stopped; formerly you were sitting, and now you have risen up:—how is it that you are so without stability?’ The Shadow replied,
'I wait for the movements of something else to do what I do, and that something else on which I wait waits further on another to do as it does. My waiting,—is it for the scales of a snake, or the wings of a cicada? How should I know why I do one thing, or do not do another?

‘Formerly, I, Kwang Kau, dreamt that I was a butterfly, a butterfly flying about, feeling that it was enjoying itself. I did not know that it was Kau. Suddenly I awoke, and was myself again, the veritable Kau. I did not know whether it had formerly been Kau dreaming that he was a butterfly, or it was now a butterfly dreaming that it was Kau. But between Kau and a butterfly there must be a difference. This is a case of what is called the Transformation of Things.’