

A truly good man is not aware of his goodness,  
And is therefore good.  
A foolish man tries to be good,  
And is therefore not good.

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

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

Therefore when Tao is lost, there is  
goodness.  
When goodness is lost, there is kindness.  
When kindness is lost, there is justice.  
When justice is lost, there ritual.  
Now ritual is the husk of faith and loyalty,  
the beginning of confusion.  
Knowledge of the future is only a flowery  
trapping of Tao.  
It is the beginning of folly.

Therefore the truly great man dwells on  
what is real and not what is on the  
surface,  
On the fruit and not the flower.  
Therefore accept the one and reject the  
other.

The Master doesn't try to be powerful;  
thus he is truly powerful.  
The ordinary man keeps reaching for  
power;  
thus he never has enough.

The Master does nothing,  
yet he leaves nothing undone.  
The ordinary man is always doing things,  
yet many more are left to be done.

The kind man does something,  
yet something remains undone.  
The just man does something,  
and leaves many things to be done.

The moral man does something,  
and when no one responds  
he rolls up his sleeves and uses force.

When the Tao is lost, there is goodness.  
When goodness is lost, there is morality.  
When morality is lost, there is ritual.  
Ritual is the husk of true faith,  
the beginning of chaos.

Therefore the Master concerns himself  
with the depths and not the surface,  
with the fruit and not the flower.  
He has no will of his own.  
He dwells in reality,  
and lets all illusions go.

High Te? No Te! That's what Te is. Low Te  
doesn't lack Te; That's what Te is not.  
Those highest in Te take no action And  
don't need to act. Those lowest in Te take  
action And do need to act.  
Those highest in benevolence take action  
But don't need to act. Those highest in  
righteousness take action And do need to  
act. Those highest in propriety take action  
And if people don't reciprocate Roll up  
their sleeves and throw them out.  
Therefore Lose Tao And Te follows. Lose Te  
and benevolence follows. Lose  
benevolence And righteousness follows.  
Lose righteousness and propriety follows.  
Propriety dilutes loyalty and sincerity:  
Confusion begins. Foreknowledge  
glorifies the Tao: Stupidity sets in.  
And so the ideal person dwells In  
substance, not dilution, In reality, not  
glory, Accepts one, rejects the other.

High virtue is not virtuous  
Therefore it has virtue  
Low virtue never loses virtue  
Therefore it has no virtue  
High virtue takes no contrived action  
And acts without agenda  
Low virtue takes contrived action  
And acts with agenda  
High benevolence takes contrived action  
And acts without agenda  
High righteousness takes contrived action  
And acts with agenda  
High etiquette takes contrived action  
And upon encountering no response  
Uses arms to pull others  
Therefore, the Tao is lost, and then virtue  
Virtue is lost, and then benevolence  
Benevolence is lost, and then  
righteousness  
Righteousness is lost, and then etiquette  
Those who have etiquette  
Are a thin shell of loyalty and sincerity  
And the beginning of chaos  
Those with foreknowledge  
Are the flowers of the Tao  
And the beginning of ignorance  
Therefore the great person:  
Abides in substance, and does not dwell  
on the thin shell  
Abides in the real, and does not dwell on  
the flower  
Thus they discard that and take this

The highest good is not to seek to do good,  
but to allow yourself to become it.  
The ordinary person seeks to do good  
things,  
and finds that they can not do them  
continually.

The Master does not force virtue on  
others,  
thus she is able to accomplish her task.  
The ordinary person who uses force,  
will find that they accomplish nothing.

The kind person acts from the heart,  
and accomplishes a multitude of things.  
The righteous person acts out of pity,  
yet leaves many things undone.  
The moral person will act out of duty,  
and when no one will respond  
will roll up his sleeves and use force.

When the Tao is forgotten, there is  
righteousness.  
When righteousness is forgotten, there is  
morality.  
When morality is forgotten, there is the  
law.  
The law is the husk of faith,  
and trust is the beginning of chaos.

Our basic understandings are not from  
the Tao  
because they come from the depths of our  
misunderstanding.  
The master abides in the fruit and not in  
the husk.  
She dwells in the Tao,  
and not with the things that hide it.  
This is how she increases in wisdom.