

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.