Better to stop short than fill to the brim. Oversharpen the blade, and the edge will soon blunt. Amass a store of gold and jade, and no one can protect it. Claim wealth and titles, and disaster will follow. Retire when the work is done. This is the way of heaven.

Fill your bowl to the brim and it will spill. Keep sharpening your knife and it will blunt. Chase after money and security and your heart will never unclench. Care about people's approval and you will be their prisoner.

Do your work, then step back. The only path to serenity.

Hold and fill it - No as good as stopping in time. Measure and pound it - It will not long survive. When gold and jade fill the hall, They cannot be guarded. Riches and pride Bequeath error. Withdrawing when work is done: Heaven's Tao.

Holding a cup and overfilling it Cannot be as good as stopping short Pounding a blade and sharpening it Cannot be kept for long Gold and jade fill up the room No one is able to protect them Wealth and position bring arrogance And leave upon oneself disasters When achievement is completed, fame attained, withdraw oneself This is the Tao of Heaven.

It is easier to carry an empty cup than one that is filled to the brim. The sharper the knife the easier it is to dull. The more wealth you possess the harder it is to protect. Pride brings its own trouble.

When you have accomplished your goal simply walk away. This is the path way to Heaven.

Carrying body and soul and embracing the one,
Can you avoid separation?
Attending fully and becoming supple,
Can you be as a newborn babe?
Washing and cleansing the primal vision,
Can you be without stain?
Loving all men and ruling the country,
Can you be without cleverness?
Opening and closing the gates of heaven,
Can you play the role of woman?
Understanding and being open to all things,
Are you able to do nothing?
Giving birth and nourishing,
Bearing yet not possessing,
Working yet not taking credit,
Leading yet not dominating,
This is the Primal Virtue.

Can you coax your mind from its wandering
and keep to the original oneness?
Can you let your body become supple as a newborn child's?
Can you cleanse your inner vision until you see nothing but the light?
Can you love people and lead them without imposing your will?
Can you deal with the most vital matters by letting events take their course?
Can you step back from your own mind and thus understand all things?

Giving birth and nourishing, having without possessing, acting with no expectations, leading and not trying to control: this is the supreme virtue.

Can you balance your life force And embrace the One Without separation?
Can you control your breath Gently Like a baby?
Can you clarify Your dark vision Without blemish?
Can you love people And govern the country Without knowledge?
Can you open and close The gate of heaven Without clinging to earth?
Can you brighten The four directions Without action?
Give birth and cultivate. Give birth and do not possess. Act without dependence. Excel but do not rule. This is called the dark Te.

In holding the soul and embracing oneness
Can one be without straying?
In concentrating the energy and reaching relaxation
Can one be like an infant?
In clearing away the worldly view
Can one be without imperfections?
In loving the people and ruling the nation
Can one be without manipulation?
In the heavenly gate's opening and closing
Can one hold to the feminine principle?
In understanding clearly all directions
Can one be without intellectuality?
Bearing it, rearing it
Bearing without possession
Achieving without arrogance
Raising without domination
This is called the mystic virtue

Nurture the darkness of your soul until you become whole.
Can you do this and not fail? Can you focus your life-breath until you become supple as a newborn child? While you cleanse your inner vision will you be found without fault? Can you love people and lead them without forcing your will on them? When Heaven gives and takes away can you be content with the outcome? When you understand all things can you step back from your own understanding?

Giving birth and nourishing, making without possessing, expecting nothing in return. To grow, yet not to control: This is the mysterious virtue.