

40

Returning is the motion of the Tao.
Yielding is the way of the Tao.
The ten thousand things are born of being.
Being is born of not being.

41

The wise student hears of the Tao and practices it diligently.
The average student hears of the Tao and gives it thought now and again.
The foolish student hears of the Tao and laughs aloud.
If there were no laughter, the Tao would not be what it is.

Hence it is said:
The bright path seems dim;
Going forward seems like retreat;
The easy way seems hard;
The highest Virtue seems empty;
Great purity seems sullied;
A wealth of Virtue seems inadequate;
The strength of Virtue seems frail;
Real Virtue seems unreal;
The perfect square has no corners;
Great talents ripen late;
The highest notes are hard to hear;
The greatest form has no shape;
The Tao is hidden and without name.
The Tao alone nourishes and brings everything to fulfillment.

40

Return is the movement of the Tao.
Yielding is the way of the Tao.

All things are born of being.
Being is born of non-being.

41

When a superior man hears of the Tao, he immediately begins to embody it.
When an average man hears of the Tao, he half believes it, half doubts it.
When a foolish man hears of the Tao, he laughs out loud.
If he didn't laugh, it wouldn't be the Tao.

Thus it is said:
The path into the light seems dark,
the path forward seems to go back,
the direct path seems long,
true power seems weak,
true purity seems tarnished,
true steadfastness seems changeable,
true clarity seems obscure,
the greatest are seems unsophisticated,
the greatest love seems indifferent,
the greatest wisdom seems childish.

The Tao is nowhere to be found.
Yet it nourishes and completes all things.

40

Reversal is Tao's movement. Yielding is Tao's practice.
All things originate from being. Being originates from non-being.

41

The great scholar hearing the Tao Tries to practice it. The middling scholar hearing the Tao, Sometimes has it, sometimes not.
The lesser scholar hearing the Tao Has a good laugh. Without that laughter It wouldn't be Tao.
Therefore these sayings: The bright road seems dark, The road forward sees to retreat, The level road seems rough.
Great Te seems hollow. Great purity seems sullied. Pervasive Te sees deficient. Established Te seems furtive. Simple truths seem to change. The great square has no corners. The great vessel is finished late. The great sound is scarcely voiced. The great image has no form. Tao hides, no name. Yet Tao alone gets things done.

40

The returning is the movement of the Tao
The weak is the utilization of the Tao
The myriad things of the world are born of being
Being is born of non-being

41

Higher people hear of the Tao
They diligently practice it
Average people hear of the Tao
They sometimes keep it and sometimes lose it
Lower people hear of the Tao
They laugh loudly at it
If they do not laugh, it would not be the Tao
Therefore a proverb has the following:
The clear Tao appears unclear
The advancing Tao appears to retreat
The smooth Tao appears uneven
High virtue appears like a valley
Great integrity appears like disgrace
Encompassing virtue appears insufficient
Building virtue appears inactive
True substance appears inconstant
The great square has no corners
The great vessel is late in completion
The great music is imperceptible in sound
The Tao is hidden and nameless
Yet it is only the Tao
That excels in giving and completing everything

40

All movement returns to the Tao.
Weakness is how the Tao works.

All of creation is born from substance.
Substance is born of nothing-ness.

41

When a superior person hears of the Tao, She diligently puts it into practice.
When an average person hears of the Tao, he believes half of it, and doubts the other half.
When a foolish person hears of the Tao, he laughs out loud at the very idea.
If he didn't laugh, it wouldn't be the Tao.

Thus it is said:
The brightness of the Tao seems like darkness,
the advancement of the Tao seems like retreat,
the level path seems rough,
the superior path seem empty,
the pure seems to be tarnished,
and true virtue doesn't seem to be enough.
The virtue of caution seems like cowardice,
the pure seems to be polluted,
the true square seems to have no corners,
the best vessels take the most time to finish,
the greatest sounds cannot be heard,
and the greatest image has no form.

The Tao hides in the unnamed,
Yet it alone nourishes and completes all things.