

The Path of Unity

Lao Tzu

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Introduction

This book; «The Path of Unity» is a faithful rewrite of the Tao-Te-King, a compendium of sentences attributed to Lao-Tzu, a Chinese awakened (buddha) contemporary of Confucius. It would have been written between 600 and 500 years before our era, in China. This version of the book, as you will see, does not use the word “Dao”, because this word has been translated, according to the context, as “the Whole”, “the Unity”, “the Path” or “the One”. The word “Dao” means all that.

My teaching is easy to understand and practice. Yet few seek to understand and practice it. My teaching has deep roots, my actions have an ancient rule. Men don't understand, which is why they pay no attention to my teaching. Few hear me and privileged are those who follow me. The sage, in his banal appearance, hides a real treasure, a treasure of Jade." (The Path of Unity, chapter two, sentence 70)

Book One:

The Path is the goal

1.1

The dao* which can be said, is not the Dao, the Eternal, creator of sky and earth. When things and beings were created, the sound that repeats was heard. To listen to it is to unite with the Whole. To realize it is to be able to merge in its harmony. In the Whole there is the unrevealed and the manifested. Both are profound things and in the depth, one finds the harmony of the Whole.

* dao: this word written with a lowercase “d” means “The Path”, that is to say the practice, the sadhana, The Path that leads to the “Dao”, with a capital “D”. We can talk about «The Path», not at the whole (Dao).

1.2

At first, man was upright, then evil appeared. Man, seeing evil, knew what good was. Opposites exist one by the other, as being and nonbeing, knowledge and ignorance, light and darkness. He who realized, practises the Wu Wei, detached from the fruits of his actions, conscious of the harmony of the Whole. The wise teaches even without saying anything and follows those who want to. He does not believe that his disciples belong to him and expects nothing from them. He doesn't cling to his wisdom, that's how he stays wise.

1.3

A wise prince does not glorify the wise, does not promote luxury and distrusts objects that arouse desire, so that the people remain pure, far from vain knowledge. He also asks scientists to be wary of their science. This prince does no acting*, so all his acts are wise.

*no acting: Wu Wei , Sikh service or Sewa.

1.4

The Whole is an inexhaustible void, the essence of all beings. Eternally, he brings everything back to himself. The Whole has not had a beginning and will not have an end.

1.5

Sky and Earth do not differentiate between human passions or creatures. For the wise, everyone has the same importance. The One is outside and inside. The movement of his will is like a forge bellows. The wise remain attentive to his breath.

1.6

The One is eternal and, ever new, at the origin of the roots of sky and earth.

1.7

The wise man forgets himself in service, so he becomes the first. Detachment keeps his youth and life smiles upon him.

1.8

The wise Man is like the water which, useful to all, flows freely down the slope. He loves places the crowd hates, eager to rise. He likes the depth and the secrecy. What it does, it always does at best, without saying so, in the not act. When he governs, it is for the good of all.

1.9

When you act, do not forget your impermanence and always keep a part of your attention united to harmony. Beware of vanity.

1.10

The soul must command the mind and the body, remain in the Unity, like a small child. Man must free himself from the illusion of his intelligence, free from confusion. Everything opens and closes, acts and rests, alternately. The wise remain discreet. He teaches in no acting. So is The Path.

1.11

Without the hub hole, the chariot would be useless. It's the emptiness that justifies the vase, not the clay. A house, without the emptiness of doors and windows, would be useless. How do you get in, how do you get out, and how can the sun light it? The One is made of being and nonbeing, matter and emptiness.

1.12

The senses, turned only outside, make that Men no longer see, hear, feel the essential. Without inner consciousness, man goes mad. The wise turn inward, that is what makes him wise and free.

1.13

The wise Man fears both glory and disgrace. Honors are a great calamity to him, for vanity breeds confusion and confusion is a great calamity. The sage does not seek praise and serves, forgetting himself in the no acting. As he does not fight against anyone, he cannot be beaten and knows peace.

1.14

They say the One is colourless, silent and without body. These three qualities are

one and the same. Its light does not shine, its energy is in everything, invisible. It is by going to The Path that we can know the beginning, which is also the end. Coming from the All, you go back, that's why it's the beginning and the end.

1.15

The words of truth, spoken by the wise, can never be understood. They are unfathomable, cautious, cautious and reserved. Solid, they fade and are filled with space, like a valley. They soothe the trouble of the mind, letting it rest and born to peace, through meditation. He who goes on the Way, loves the emptiness of the Whole. He emptied himself of who he thought he was and doesn't want to be full again.

1.16

Having reached the Unity of the Whole, I let myself be carried by silence. All beings came at the same time. Ending at the beginning, after reaching its goal, each of them returns to the Whole, its origin. It is an eternal law, he who does not want to submit to it loses himself in confusion and suffering. To know this law is to be enlightened. Who has this knowledge is tolerant and just. He who is just is great and attains unity, beyond death.

1.17

In the past, the people knew only the names of wise kings. The next, who were righteous, he loved them. Those who were judging, he feared. We don't trust the one who doesn't. The next ones, who were careful, he despised. Wise kings spoke wisely. They were role models for everyone, so the people said, "*We did everything, we are free.*"

1.18

In past times, Men followed harmony, then harmony was forgotten. Men and their justice became the masters. It was the time of intelligence, of ability and desires knew no limits. When calculation and prudence took hold of the princes' minds, hypocrisy and betrayal were born. Filial piety and affection were replaced by morality and the world fell into disorder. It is then that the wise appear, to say the harmony of the Whole and to offer its help.

1.19

You'll be better off without the vanity of knowledge. Put family virtues above laws and human justice, without neglecting them. Give up luxury, profit and the thieves

will disappear and do not doubt the vanity of appearances. Be simple, true to yourself. Reject vanity, desire, remain master of mind and the Way will open.

1.20

Learning does not bring peace. Small is the difference between human feelings, but great is the difference between good and evil. Remain calm, alien to desires, tumult, fear. Me, I remain like a newborn, looking inward. Men amass possessions. I'm like an ignorant man who lost everything. Men seek to shine. I remain in the shadows, unfathomable and floating like a leaf in the wind. I'm not like everyone else, because I drink from the source of Everything.

1.21

Everything comes from the One, indistinct, deep and unfathomable. In him are the essence and proof of being. His name and energy have always been transmitted to us by the life he gives us. How do I know? By the attendance of his name*.

*Through the diligent practice of meditation and no acting (Wu Wei) which is the frequentation of his name, that is, the Holy Name or «virtue of the Dao».

1.22

What is imperfect will merge into the Unity of the Whole. With little knowledge, peace is won; with a lot of knowledge, confusion is gained. The wise remain in Unity. It is like water, which always goes to the bottom, and because of that, like water, it is indispensable to all. We see him as the last, when he is the first. Detached, he does not fight against anyone. The one who knows how to be flexible and bend remains whole. Everything comes to what is whole, as the waters go to the ocean.

1.23

He who is silent knows harmony. A fast wind does not last; a violent rain does not last. Who produces these two things? The sky and the earth. If sky and earth do nothing eternal, how could man? If man assiduously frequents the harmony of the Whole, he will identify with the harmony of the Whole. If man lives only for pleasures and possessions, he will know suffering, the fruit of his actions. He who identifies with the harmony of the One, wins harmony, he who identifies with his possessions, wins these possessions.

1.24

He who wants to surpass himself does not last long. Attached to what we think we know, we learn nothing. Vanity lowers the vanity, it repels the consciousness and peace of Unity. He who humbly follows The Path is safe.

1.25

Indefinable, immaterial, in everything constantly, the Unity of the Whole existed before sky and Earth. She's the source of everything. Invisible, it is infinite, motionless and everywhere at the same time. The Whole, the universe, the Earth and Man are the four great powers. Man refers to the Earth, the Earth to the universe and the Universe to the Whole and the Whole is based only on the One.

1.26

The roots of lightness are in the depth. Calm is the master of action, so the wise remain in Unity, he does not leave his deep peace. Why should the mind come and go like a madman, losing contact with the source? If you let agitation rule you, you lose touch with who you really are.

1.27

Whoever goes to The parth doesn't generate any residue. He who speaks in Unity speaks in truth. He who assumes his duties, does not need to be. Enlightened twice: once by the light of Unity, once by his own wisdom, the awakened can teach other Men. For the master, the disciple is an opportunity to serve. If one does not esteem his master, if the other neglects his disciple, they are plunged into blindness. One needs the other.

1.28

He who knows his strength and worth, but who remains gentle and humble, is the center where all roads lead. If he is worthy of being a model, Grace will not abandon him; he will become a child again, with perfect simplicity and the doors of Unity will open for him. His spirit, hungry for truth, will see harmony in the most trivial things.

1.29

The man who wants to govern the world perfectly does not succeed. If he works there, he destroys it; If he wants to own it, he loses it. The world is the perfect work of God. Men advance, others follow; some are strong and others are weak. The

wise avoid inconsistency and all extreme, he lives in the truth.

1.30

The wise do not seek to subdue, nor to rule Men. We suffer the consequences of our actions outside the Unit. War turns fields into bushes and causes famine. The virtuous Man, by necessity, strikes a decisive blow, stops and draws no glory from it, not wishing to be strong. Having reached the fullness of his strength, Man is getting old. He who does not do things in the Unit, goes to his ruin.

1.31

The better the weapons, the more they kill. Those who remain in the Unit use it only when they cannot do otherwise. If he wins a battle, he won't pat himself on the back. To rejoice is to be without compassion and without compassion, you don't achieve mastery. In normal times, peace and happiness are the rule, in trouble, war and death prevail. In times of peace, the heart rules, in times of war, reason rules. The carnage of a multitude of Men must be mourned. He who has defeated in battle must mourn.

1.32

The One is eternal and elusive, in the infinitely small and infinitely large, content and container. If all Men could be united in him, they would live in peace. As soon as her Unity was divided, there were words to name her. Then, Men were divided by country and nation and each received a name to differentiate it. Going to The Path keeps us in Unity. It is like the ocean that unites all the waters.

1.33

He who knows Men learns to be wise. He who knows himself is enlightened. He who leads Men is powerful. Whoever bends his will and keeps it in the center is the strongest. Rich is the one who knows how to settle for little. To be free from desire is to possess the world. He who perseveres, shows will. He who dies in Unity, frees himself and finds the Whole.

1.34

Everything is everywhere, left and right, above and below at the same time. All beings are born and live because of the One. Infinite, he commands all beings, without wanting to be master of them and without desires or ambitions. All living beings return to him. No one can contain it.

1.35

The wise remain in the Unity and the seekers come to him. He does not dominate them and gives them the knowledge of true peace and freedom. When the truth comes out of his mouth, it is bland for the one who wants the pleasure of the senses and vanity, and this truth he looks at, but does not see it, he listens to it without hearing it. Who draws from the source of truth has drawn the inexhaustible.

1.36

Dilation comes before contraction, strength before weakness, splendour before decadence, and wealth before stripping. This is not obvious to everyone. What is soft can triumph over what is hard; What is weak, what is strong. The strength of the One must not be shown to all.

1.37

Unity is in the no acting, yet it does everything. If powerful and less powerful could remain in it, humanity would be at peace. Unity requires more than desire, it requires thirst. Peace comes with the control of desire.

Second Book:

The virtues of Unity

2.38

The wise man does not admire himself. Other men say they are wise without being so. The wise do not think of wisdom, other men do everything to appear wise. Men of worth are without desire, those who have only virtues coming from their education, always end up imposing their principles on others. When one has lost the consciousness of Unity, one pretends to be good, it is a cause of confusion. The knowledge learned, the intelligence, are only flowers without perfume, sources of errors. That is why the wise trust in Unity and not in appearances. He considers the fruit, rather than the flower, ignoring one, he gathers the other.

2.39

In harmony with the Whole, the sky is vast and pure, the Earth is stable and fertile, the spirits are light and deep, the water flows in the valleys, the beings prosper together, satisfied with what they are, constantly renewing themselves, the princes and kings are models. These are the fruits of unity.

If the sky lost its purity, it would evaporate. If the Earth lost its stability, it would collapse. If the spirits lost their transcendence, they would disappear. If the valleys no longer filled, they would dry up. If the beings did not reproduce, they would die and if the princes and kings boasted of their nobility and would no longer be models and would be overthrown.

That is why the nobility regards the people as its cradle and humility as its foundation. What is large, has as a basis what is small. That is why the sovereigns consider themselves worthless and of little merit. They thus manifest their understanding of the profound order of things. Supreme honor is free from vanity. The wise do not seek to shine, nor to be rejected; they live above esteem and contempt.

2.40

Emptiness is the nature of the Whole, subtle in essence. You have to give yourself up to go to The Path. Everything is born of being and being is born of emptiness, of nonbeing.

2.41

An enlightened mind, knowing the harmony of Unity, wants to stay there all the time. A weak spirit, initiated to The Path, sometimes practice and sometimes forgets it. The ignorant mocks The Path, if it were otherwise, it would not be The Path. The elders teach us that the blind do not see the light and regard the wise as a simple spirit.

The wise seem banal, he is like a valley; full of space invisible to the blind. He seems to have no merit, he hides them. The simple and true man appears without charm, compared to those endowed with precious apparatus.

You can't see the limits of a space that's too big. Celestial music is beyond the sounds that the deaf hear. The Unity of the Whole is invisible to the eyes, it has no pronouncable name, it is at the same time as it is not, but it is it that holds the world and gives it meaning.

2.42

The One made the Whole, the Whole engendered the "two", which gave birth to the three and the three living beings. All seek movement, forgetting the harmony of breath. The harmony of Unity seems to have no value or merit, yet it has created everything. Man hates what is humble, in his eyes worthless and without merit, but kings say to themselves, knowing that he who belittles himself rises up and that he who wants to rise up belittles himself. When some teach to become strong, I teach the strength of weakness. Violent men don't have a gentle death. I call to The Path, those who have ears to hear.

2.43

Even the hardest things can't resist the water. The invisible and impalpable energy of the One, passes through what seems full. The non-agir does more than a vanity-filled action. Acting without acting, the sage teaches by example.

2.44

We are worth more than glory and wealth. Great desires impose great sacrifices. The more you own, the more you have to lose. He who has few desires, is free from confusion. He who does not want to rise, never falls.

2.45

The wisdom of an awakened person cannot be seen. His constancy keeps him in peace. Full of Unity, it seems empty. His word of truth seems false to the greatest number and does not persuade anyone. The movement triumphs over the cold and the rest of ardour. True happiness is in calm and serenity. Creation is based on the harmony of the Whole.

2.46

When harmony reigned over the world, the war horses were in the fields. Since confusion and vanity have taken power, the war horses are massed at the borders and the fields remain in wasteland. There is no greater mistake than to listen to one's desires, to greater desolation, to not know how to be content, to a greater scourge, than the envy of possessions. He who does not know his desires would lack nothing.

2.47

Without leaving my home, I know the universe. Without looking out my window, I

see the paths of the sky. The more one searches in the world, the more one moves away from the essential and the less one knows the harmony of the Whole. The wise touch the goal without walking; he knows without learning and does great things without acting.

2.48

Those who, through study, constantly want to increase their knowledge, see their vanity grow. He who devotes himself to Unity sees it diminishing, until he knows the non-agir, then the mastery comes and there is nothing he cannot accomplish. He who fights, to gain mastery, never gets it.

2.49

The wise is not attached to his concepts, he trusts in the harmony of the Whole. He treats everyone in the same way, the virtuous as he who is not, this is how a virtuous Man does. He does the same for the sincere Man and for the one who is not, this is how a sincere man does. The wise man does not treat men according to their consciences, but according to his own. Men look upon him with astonishment, calling him a child.

2.50

Man leaves existence for the All and the All for existence. There are thirteen causes that lead to The Path, as there are thirteen opposite causes, to remain in the illusion. As soon as they are born, let these contrary causes lead man and keep him in duality and blindness. This is because of desire and ambition. Those who remain in the Unity fear neither adversity nor death.

NB: the causes leading to spiritual life are: availability (or the emptiness of concepts), attachment to the emptiness of the nonbeing, purity, tranquility, love of discretion, poverty, gentleness, weakness, humility, self-empty, modesty, flexibility, the economy. The thirteen opposite reasons are: to believe oneself full, arrived, attachment, impurity, agitation, desire to shine, wealth, hardness, strength, vanity, excess of opulence, height, inflexibility, prodigality.

2.51

The One creates beings, his energy keeps them alive. The One and his energy give them form and push them on The Path, by a secret impulse. That is why they worship the Whole and honor its strength. No one has decided; doing this, beings simply obey their nature. That is why the One creates beings, keeps them alive, makes them grow, become better and guides them to the end. He creates them without appropriating them; without profit or glory. He reigns over them and leaves them free, as the sun reigns in the midst of heaven.

2.52

The harmony of the Whole is the mother of the world. As soon as you know the mother, you know her children. The one who knows the children and who keeps a link with the mother, will live long and serenely. If he turns his senses inward, he will live in full consciousness. But if he turns only to the outside and has nothing but desire, that one cannot be saved. He who sees subtle things is enlightened; He who remains humble is strong of Grace. If he practices The Path and returns to the light of the Whole, he will have no more fears. That's what it means to cultivate the consciousness of Unity.

2.53

If I were called to high office, here is what I would teach: The path is simple, but Men like to wander on side roads, shortcuts that are only dead ends. Before you stands a superb palace, but it is only an illusion: look around; The fields are empty, the attics are empty. The wealth of some is at the expense of the majority. This is what we call stealing and being proud of. This is very far from the consciousness of the harmony of the Whole.

2.54

He who is well planted in the practice of The Path, cannot be torn from it. His accomplishment accomplished, his name will be honored from generation to generation. For those who cultivate the consciousness of Unity, their virtue becomes reality. The more minds aware of harmony, the more harmony grows, reigning over the world. In the multiple, the sage sees Unity. How do I know all this? By the above.

2.55

He for whom the consciousness of Unity is firmly established, is like a newborn who is not afraid of anything. His bones and nerves are fragile, but what strength his little hands have! He does not yet know fleshly love, yet his manhood is already manifested. He cries all day long and his voice remains clear, so much in harmony. To know harmony is to know the Whole and its light. Abusing pleasures is harmful. To be strong is to subject desire to breath. Too much energy spent takes us away from Unity, so the end is near.

2.56

He who is conscious of harmony cannot speak of it. He who does not have this consciousness, speaks of it wisely. He who knows the Unity closes his mouth, his ears and his eyes. He remains in the nonacting, free from all ties, and veils the

brilliance of his radiance, resembling everyone, making, in this, as the discreet harmony of the Whole. He takes in the same way friendship and enmity, evil and good, profit and loss, honor and anonymity. Through the Observance, he arrived at the true detachment.

2.57

With honesty, you govern a country, with cunning, you wage war, with the nonacting, you become master of yourself. How do I know this is so? Considering this: the more forbidden there are, dictated by Men, the more confusion and disorder reign. The more weapons there are, the more violence there is. The more ingenious and skillful men are, the more harmful are their inventions. That is why the wise say that things improve by nonacting* and peace. Wealth comes when we do not seek it. Free from all desires, we find the happiness of a simple life.

* Nonacting is not doing nothing. It is the Wu Wei, a meditation discipline in action, thanks to a particular technique.

2.58

When administration is simple; the people are honest and prosperous. When she is suspicious, the people are red-headed and mean-spirited. Happiness takes root in unhappiness, unhappiness is hidden in the midst of happiness. Who can predict the future? If the prince is not upright, the others will be twisted. Men have been blinded and twisted for a long time! Therefore the wise man admonishes without hurting; advises without offence, straightens without coercion. It lights without dazzling.

2.59

Nothing better than sobriety, when one wants to govern Men by remaining in Unity. It must be a priority for man. When this is the case, the consciousness of Unity in him becomes great and everything becomes possible. No one knows its limits. Without limits, those who diligently observe the pillars of the Path will know the harmony of Unity and happiness without object, with deep roots and a solid stem. This is how to live long in joy.

2.60

You run a state like you cook a small fish, carefully. When the prince governs in consciousness of harmony, vanity is disarmed. It is not that it disappears, it is that it no longer commands the mind of the wise. It is not that vanity is made incapable of doing evil, it is that the wise remain gentle, humble, not hurting anyone. He subdues vanity, so that it can no longer harm. This state of affairs is a manifestation of Grace in the world.

*Grace, the virtue of the Whole.

2.61

A great kingdom must be like a plain where all the waters come. The role of the woman in the world is like this plain: by remaining the one who waits and receives, she takes precedence over the man. This posture is the strength of the woman, which makes her constantly triumph over the man. By wanting to be a man, a woman is nothing. If a great kingdom is modest, in front of the little ones, it will win them to its cause.

If the small kingdoms are modest, in front of the great kingdom, they will gain its protection. This is why some are humble, to receive, others to be received. What the great kingdom wants is to unite and govern others. The only wish of a small kingdom is to be admitted alongside the princes. Thus, everyone gets what they wanted. But the great must be humble!

2.62

The One is at the origin of all beings; the treasure of the initiate and the refuge of the one who is not. The words of truth* are profitable, the nonacting elevates the consciousness. We must not reject those who are not initiated. It was to enlighten him that one awakened master and three of his disciples were established.

On the day when the awakened master is enthroned, together with his three disciples, what is the most precious of the offerings? The jade jewels, to adorn his hands? The horses for his processions? Or the consciousness that Unity gives? Why did the ancients respect The Path so much? This is because it is the answer to the seeker and the redemption of the one who failed. That is why she is the greatest Grace.

*Satsang.

2.63

The wise acts without acting and savours what is without flavor. He looks at all things, large or small, numerous or rare with the same look. He responds to insults with detachment and serenity.

He's doing the hard part, starting with the easy part. The most complicated things necessarily began by being simple: all things have their origins in what is simple, the Unity of the Whole.

It is for this reason that the wise man does not seek to accomplish great things and that, in the end, he does them. He who promises lightly, very rarely keeps his

commitments. He who finds everything easy, encounters many obstacles. The wise find everything of equal difficulty, so he does everything without trouble.

2.64

The calm already installed is easy to keep; what has not yet happened is easy to avoid; what is fragile is easy to break; Light is easy to disperse. Don't let evil settle in; Prevent the mess before it breaks.

A giant tree is born from a root as thin as a hair; a tower came out of a handful of earth; A long journey begins at the end of his foot. He who acts according to his will fails; He who attaches himself to something, loses it.

Hence the wise man acts without acting, therefore he does not fail. He doesn't get attached to anything, which is why he doesn't lose anything. When people do things, when they are about to succeed, they always relax and fail.

Be focused from start to finish and you will never fail. The wise man has a desire not to have any. It does not value hard-to-earn property. He knows without learning and thus avoids confusion. It gives everyone the opportunity to follow their own will.

2.65

In antiquity, those who excelled in the Observance of The path did not instruct the people in vain knowledge, but sought to keep it simple. Teaching Unity to the people is difficult because they are too suspicious. He who governs, in harmony and simplicity, makes the world happy. He who governs, according to this principle, has a correct view, he has, to guide him, the model of the models. The truth of Unity is profound, immense, different from that of creatures. Through it, we know a perfect peace.

2.66

The rivers and seas stand below the waters, that is how they are emperors. Being below, they get all the water from above! Therefore, when the wise man wishes to enlighten the people, he must stand below him. If he wants to guide him, he must consider himself the last of all, hence that the wise are considered the first, that he does not oppress anyone and that no one is lowered. Also, we like to put it forward and never tire of it. As he does not claim the first row, there is no one who can argue with him.

2.67

The path I teach is great, but they say I look like a small Man. It is precisely

because great is The Path that I am small. As for those who think they are enlightened, their ignorance is great!

There are three treasures I keep in me: the first is harmony, the second is frugality; The third is the humility that keeps me from thinking better than I am. In the harmony of Unity, I have no enemy. Master of my desires, I control my expenses. I place myself last, which is why I can teach men.

Now, we abandon peace, to show courage, we abandon sobriety, to spend without counting, we believe that we are the first, when we are the last. This is what leads to a violent death. Conscious of harmony, we don't have to fight. Grace comes to the aid of those who remain in Unity, this Grace is, for him, like a shield.

2.68

The best general is not a warmonger. A good fighter has neither anger nor hatred. He wins without a fight. A leader is humble and those who follow him do so out of love. This is so when one has the properties of the nonacting. It is the strength of a lord of peace, having the art of leading men; living in the harmony that governs nature. He who wins against himself is the true triumphant.

2.69

A great warrior of ancient times said: I do not carry the first blow, I prefer to wait for the enemy's. I'd rather take a step back than a step forward. Thus, we win without fighting, it is not having proud ambition, enemies to pursue, or weapons to seize. There is no greater disaster than underestimating the enemy. It's about losing your humanity. If it is necessary to engage the battle, the forces being equal, the winner will be the one who did not wish to fight. He will conquer with invisible weapons. His triumph will be greater than his witnessing his victory over himself."

2.70

My teaching is easy to understand and practice. Yet few seek to understand and practice it. My teaching has deep roots, my actions have an ancient rule. Men don't understand, which is why they pay no attention to my teaching. Few hear me and privileged are those who follow me. The wise, in his banal appearance, hides a real treasure, a treasure of Jade.

2.71

To know and to realize that one does not know much is the humility of one who knows. Not knowing and believing that we know, is a common disease among men. If you don't realize it, if you have this disease, how can you cure it? The wise is

aware of the difficulties and of his mistakes. Thus, he can, serenely, continue to progress.

2.72

When men do not fear what they should fear, then comes what is greatly to fear. Do not be dissatisfied with your stay, do not disgust yourself with your fate. I don't disgust myself with mine, which is why I don't disgust it. The wise man is content with his life, he does not boast. This is why, in all, he can freely make his choice and it is in the depth, and not on the surface, that he draws his knowledge.

2.73

He who puts his courage to dare, finds death. He who puts his courage not to dare, finds life. Of these two things, one is good, the other bad. Who can understand the ways of the One? That is why the wise do not take sides. This is The Path. The One wins without even fighting. He does not speak and all beings obey him. He doesn't call them and they come by themselves. He seems motionless, invisible, but no one escapes him.

2.74

When the people don't fear death, why threaten them with death? But, if he fears death and someone does evil, I can seize him and kill him, then few will follow his example. There is a supreme judge, master of life and death. He who wishes to replace himself, to inflict death, looks like the clumsy, who would like to rebuild his roof without the help of a carpenter. When you want to cut wood instead of a carpenter, it is rare that you do not get hurt.

2.75

The people are hungry, because their princes charge them with taxes. The people whisper and move, because their princes harass them. The people are not afraid to die, when their life is painful, and therefore they grumble, despising death, ready for anything. Only those who are not reduced to struggling to survive, can wisely enjoy life. The wise man does not live only to live, so he can appreciate the value of life.

2.76

When man is born, he is supple and weak; When he dies, he's stiff and strong. When trees and plants are born, they are supple and tender; When they die, they're stiff and dry. Stiffness and strength are the companions of death; flexibility and weakness are those of life. Therefore, a strong army does not win. When a tree has

become strong, it is cut down. What is strong and great loses; what is flexible and weak wins.

2.77

The Path can be compared to a bow that is stretched. The top is pulled down. The bottom is pulled up. If the rope is too long, it is shortened, if it is too short, it is lengthened. The Path takes to the one who has too much, to give to the one who does not have enough. The ways of men is different: they take from the one who has not enough, to give to the one who already has too much. Who knows how to part with the superfluous and give it to others? Only the one who goes to The Path. This one does all things in the nonacting, without the desire to show what he knows how to do.

2.78

Nothing is more fluid and inconsistent than water and yet water attacks and takes away what is hard and powerful. In the eternal struggle between water and rock, water always wins. Nothing can resist it and nothing can defeat it. Because flexibility imposes itself on hardness. Everyone knows this, but no one conforms to this reality and the wise says, "*The spirit of the soil receives all the rubbish of the land and becomes the lord of the harvest.*" Thus, he who accepts failures becomes master of himself. The words of truth look like a paradox.

2.79

Even appeased, a serious quarrel leaves a grudge. What can be done by following the precepts of The Path? By responding to resentment by harmony, this is why the wise give without waiting anything. It is honouring its commitments and it does not want more. The Man who does not know The path wants to appropriate the maximum of things. The path fills with Grace the Man of Good.

2.80

If I ruled a small kingdom, with few inhabitants, I would forbid them to use their weapons. The people should consider death to be dreadful and stay at home. Although he had weapons, he would not use them to war far from his borders. He'd leave them in their hiding places. He would keep alive the customs of his ancestors and be content with what he can produce. He would gladly consider the men of the neighboring country, hearing their cocks sing and barking their dogs. He would live to the rhythm of the seasons, and die of old age, without having known the neighboring country, if not to share.

2.81

True words are not always pleasant, pleasant words are not always true. The truth does not argue. The arguments are empty words. The ignorant man thinks he knows everything. The wise man thinks he knows nothing. The wise man keeps nothing for himself. The more he gives to others, the richer he becomes and he possesses a precious treasure: what he has given to others. Having given everything, everything is returned to him by Grace. The Path is to act without asking, to obtain without struggle, to enrich oneself by giving. This is the way of harmony, Unity, All, One.