

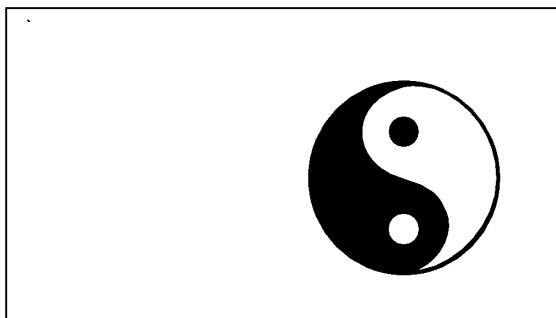
TAO, THE WAY

Lao-tzu

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The Way of Lao-tzu may be depicted in a pictograph of the Yin and *Yang* principles present within nature as two of the four original principles: *Tao* (as intangible, unthinkable and, so, unnameable), Mother Earth and *yin* and *yang*. This pictograph expresses both the reality and the unreality of the *yin* and *yang*. The circle at once depicts the differences between shadow and light, female and male, yet, shows them as inseparable principles of everything within the world of change.



This circle, as the *yin/yang* symbol exemplifies *Mother Nature*, or reality itself and includes the presence of the *Tao* as the *center* generating this circle representing at once continuous change and the four seasons of nature. This *yin/yang* symbol originates in the oriental appreciation of the seasonal cycle of Mother Nature as manifesting the consistent intention to give and nurture new life as typified by Spring. *Tao's*

central presence, therefore, manifests the ultimate and intangible Source of life. After all, geometrically speaking, when one “draws” a circle with a compass, the sharp point of the compass remains stable as the outer-pencil turns, drawing the circumference. So, this pictograph at once depicts the differences between *shadow* and *light*, *female* and *male* respectively, yet, shows both as inseparable yet permeating each the other. This manifests the unity of principles present in every being within the world of change.

This simple pictograph, however, hides a deeper penetration into the oriental view of reality. Neither “half” of this circle may exist without the other and the *light* “half” of the circle which contains within it a smaller *shadow* circle while the *shadow* “half” contains in it a smaller *light* circle. So, just as no *shadow* (or *yin*) can exist without the presence of *light* (or *yang*), the very existence of any *shadow* is *ipso facto* a proof of the existence of *light*! Likewise, the very fact of continuous, yet repetitious seasonal change *is ipso facto* the proof of the existence of *Tao*, the source of Mother Earth, *yin* and *yang* and the subsequent 10,000, a symbolic number for all beings which exists - read tone poem # 42 below, p. 21.

Both “halves” of the circle exist because of the presence of the *center*, or *Tao* and the uniqueness of *Tao* is that it is from the center that the circumference of the circle is drawn, so *Tao* is unmoved and unmovable, *the stability* thanks to which the change of up to down resulting in the circumference is possible. Thus, as ironic as this situation is to the *occidental*, the *Tao* is the stable, unmoving, unchangeable absolute reality because of which change is possible and whose proof is the fact of repetitive but ordered change itself! So, just as the existence of *shadow*

is the proof of the presence of *light*, so the ordered change which permeates nature's seasons is witness to the unchanging presence of *Tao*. This is the origin of the first four combinations of the *yin/yang* and symbolize the four seasons of nature and reflected on the Korean flag:

- - Winter; ___ Spring; ___ Summer; Fall - -
 - - - - — —

Winter, of course, is both a time of most *shadows* as well as the time when seeds are planted to germinate and the deciduous trees and grape vines are at rest, preparing for Spring, so Winter is a time when the *yin* dominates; thus, two sets of *yin* represent winter. Spring, however, is the time of the “on-top” dominance of the *yang*, or sun *light*, yet, the dominance of *yin* as seeds germinate and trees blossom. Also, Summer is the time in which *yang* dominates by its overwhelming presence of *light* so two sets of *yang* represent summer. Then Fall is the time when the sun *light* is farthest from the earth, so deciduous plants and trees show leaves dying from the retreat of the sap to the tap roots, yet, the seeds falling from the seed pods and the fruit bury themselves under the leaves, so the *yin* controls the seed replanting, however, the sun or light or *yang* is diminishing. These same seasonal four *yin/yang* combinations form a circle around the *Tao* symbol on the Korean flag.

Okakura, the nineteenth century A.D. Japanese author of *The Book of Tea*, describes Lao-tzu's *Tao*:

The *Tao* literally means a *Path*. It has been severally translated as *The Way*, the Absolute, the Law, Nature, Supreme Reason, the Mode. These renderings are not incorrect, for the use of the term by the *Taoists* differs according to the subject matter of the inquiry. Lao-tzu himself spoke of it thus: “There is a thing which is all-containing, which was born before the existence of Heaven and Earth. How silent! How solitary! It stands alone and changes not. It revolves without danger to itself and is the mother of the universe. I do not know its name and so call it the *path*. With reluctance I call it the infinite. Infinity is the fleeting, the fleeting is the vanishing; the vanishing is the reverting”. The *Tao* is in the *passage* rather than the path. It is the spirit of cosmic change - the eternal growth which returns upon itself to produce new forms. It recoils upon itself like the dragon, the beloved symbol of the *Taoists*. It folds and unfolds as do the clouds. The *Tao* might be spoken of as the great transition. Subjectively it is the mood of the universe. Its absolute is the relative.

Humans always struggle to express reality in words, but then painters, such as Monet and Van Gogh also struggle to paint the beauty they both feel and see. Okakura's statement sheds some light on *Tao*, however, the final description of *Tao* as “Its absolute is the relative” is mystifying, yet, parallel to Heraclitus' comment that change requires stability. In other words, change is relative, from one point to a second point, from one season, spring to another, summer, then to another, fall, finally to winter, back to spring again. So, change is relative because change in nature is continuous and repetitive. However, continuous, yet repetitive change requires an *absolute*, a stability thanks to which this relative can exist and repeat itself, without which the relative itself as repetitive change neither could exist nor operate. So, the Greeks saw that

cosmos, the ordered world existed notwithstanding *chaos*, the random, or the non-ordered which is limited and requires an absolute called the orderer.

I Speech animals, asset and liability, the weakness of strength:

The very fact that we humans are, as the Greeks described us, “speech animals,” we both possess a perfection and a limitation, an asset and a liability, a weakness within our human strength. Occidental Europeans point with pride to the second description of **Yhwh**’s creation of human beings:

Yhwh God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a helpmate’. So from the soil Yhwh God fashioned all the wild beasts and all the birds of heaven. These he brought to man to see what he would call them; each one was to bear the name the man would give it. The man gave names to all the cattle, all the birds of heaven and all the wild beasts. But no helpmate suitable for man was found for him. So Yhwh God made the man fall into a deep sleep. And while he slept, he took one of his ribs and enclosed it in flesh. Yhwh God built the rib he had taken from the man into a woman and brought her to the man. The man exclaimed: ‘This at last is bone from my bones, and flesh from my flesh! This is to be called woman, for this was taken from me! (**Genesis** 2:18-25)

“These (**Yhwh**) brought to man to see what man would call them; each one was to bear the name the man would give it...This is to be called woman”.

The Judaic sacred scripture emphasizes two things: first, **Yhwh** respected the human condition and that condition included the power to “name” everything created, so human beings introduced human meaning into the world through words, a world which **Yhwh** created and saw “was good”. Secondly, the human being’s act of naming parallels **Yhwh**’s act of creating. Yet, this power, unique to human beings is a mixed blessing. Notwithstanding the scriptural fact that “**Yhwh** saw it (the created) was good”, humans introduced “nakedness” to mean “bad” into this “good creation”. Genesis, therefore, explains Adam’s and Eve’s recognition of biological difference between them to be something to “cover up” - extending this Genesis observation would mean that humans seek to cover up and hide differences, thereby humans seek to avoid and/or condemn being “different”! Thus, the Greeks would seem to have captured this Old Testament story in the one word **alethein** which Anglos translate as “Truth”!

The woman saw that the tree was good to eat and pleasing to the eye and that it was desirable for the knowledge which it could give. So she took some of its fruit and ate it. She gave some also to her husband who was with her and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they realized that they were naked. So they sewed fig leaves together to make themselves loin clothes. (**Genesis**, 3: 6-8)

In addition, we see that **Yhwh**’s power to create shows no attempt to control, indeed, **Yhwh** waits upon the Adam human to name, give meaning to the created goods provided. We see, however, that the human power of reason, **logos** and its ability to name and give meaning, to

create and to give life harbors within it an identical power to take meaning away, to destroy, to kill. The human ability to reason is as much a liability as it is an asset. The fact that reason is the strength of being human makes it all the more dangerous as the weakness which can undercut, even preclude our acting human. Lao-tzu imitates nature, therefore, rather than pursuing the reason of “rational animal”. Lao-tzu’s viewpoint is simple, yet difficult to understand because our “rational animal” attitude is aggressive, seeking to control by constructing systems in order to eradicate human ignorance. Human ignorance, or not-knowing, after all seeks knowledge. Francis Bacon’s *Novum Organon* (1620), or, as Bacon subtitles is: “TRUE DIRECTIONS CONCERNING THE INTERPRETATION OF NATURE” was the first book which sought to circumscribe the human desire to know and love to applied knowledge and to define human perfection by “workable knowledge,” that is, practical knowledge, such as the knowledge which produced the steam engine and the cotton gin!

If we look at the Taoist Mother Nature, *yin* and *yang* of Lao-tzu, we note two things: first, the major “goddess” of Taoism about 310 B.C. is Zhuangzi who “obtained the *Tao*”, that is, received the *Tao* within herself! She became the divine personification of yin, the so-called female symbol within the world and was honored throughout the Han dynasty from 206 B.C. to 220 A.D. and thereafter as the patron deity of women and a teacher who controlled the length and quality of people’s lives. The Jesuit and missionary to China (1584), Matteo Ricci, S.J. accepted Zhuangzi, comparing her to Mary, the *New Testament* Mother of God.

The fascinating parallel Gerald Manley Hopkins, a Jesuit draws between Mary and the air and God and the sun echoes the oriental relationship of *yin* to *yang*, *yin*, the feminine being the air through which the sun as the *yang* penetrates to warm the Mother earth and nurture life therein. The interesting fact in this oriental comparison when compared to John’s “Prologue” is that the darkness (or absence of light) obstructs the light which is Christ as the “Word made flesh” - “his own received him not”. However, thanks to Mary opening herself up to this Word, as described in Luke’s *New Testament* Annunciation (1: 26-38, the Word of God penetrated the dark air which had obstructed God coming to human beings. So, one could construe, as Hopkins did, Mary as a *yin*, that is, as air through which the *Old Testament* *Yhwh* “God of old” comes to human beings through this human being, Mary within the *New Testament* and “Through her we may see him/Made sweeter, not made dim,/And her hand leaves his light/Sifted to suit our sight...”

70

My doctrines are very easy to understand and very easy to practice,
But none in the world can understand or practice them.
My doctrines have a source, Nature; my deeds have a master, *Tao*.
It is because people do not understand this that they do not understand me.
Few people know me, and therefore, I am highly valued.
Therefore, the sage wears a coarse cloth on top and carries jade within his bosom.

Three thousand years ago, perhaps longer, Lao-tzu observes:

As soon as there were regulations and institutions, there were names.
As soon as there are names, know that it is time to stop:

It is by knowing when to stop that one can be free from danger. (#32, p. 8)

So, Lao-tzu cautions humans:

56 (p. 11)

He who knows, does not speak. He who speaks, does not know.

Tao, after all, is unlimited so, “The name that can be named is not the eternal name”; “*Tao* is eternal and has no name”; “Nature says few words”. Therefore, the more each human “names” and “acts”, the farther the human moves from the source of meaning, self and its end, *Tao*. Our “names” and “acts” narrow and, in the process, establish absolutes, so-called “universals”, such as “chair”, “male”, “female”, “good”, “bad”, “truth” where there are only relative meanings within unique absolute units. Then, these “absolutes” become filters to our self-knowledge and, thereby become obstacles to our understanding of ourselves, the world in which we live and *Tao*, the ultimate and original source of life. We then limit the meaning of say “woman” or “man” to our experiential content of the words and we fit all women or men into our verbal meaning. So, the reality of women becomes the unreality of our verbal meaning.

But, Lao Tzu insists that humans must listen and observe nature, who speaks few words and who has breadth and depth but has only one name, Mother Nature, as the proximate source of life. Whereas *Tao* designates merely way or path, this word Mother immediately posits the word offspring, in this case, *yin* and *yang* followed by the 10,000 which include *yin* and *yang* in each. The New Testament Christ specifies “Father” within the “Our Father”, the prayer Christ offers to the question “How do we pray?” (Matthew 6: 7-15) However, Lao-tzu merely designates the proximate source of life itself, as Mother, and the original source of life as *Tao*, The Way or path because the oriental Lao-tzu’s interest and emphasis is the relationship which all living beings, including human beings have to this original source of life. So, the *Tao* does not specify *Tao*’s relationship to living beings, except in a manner consistent with tone poem 23, p. 7.

Nature is busy giving and nurturing life. Nature is earth, sun, moon, clouds, rain, ocean all intent upon supporting life as do the seasons from Spring through Winter to Spring again. Humans, therefore, should pay more attention to the belly than to the eye, what can be felt rather than what can be seen. Humans should concentrate on the belly, the symbol of the internal life source rather than the eye, the instrument of external information which feeds human rationality, word making and naming. Of course, even Greek culture espoused such a balance between the *anthropos*, translated as human being, but which Plato in his dialogue The Cratylus traces to the Greek *an*, look or see and *tropos*, (*to*) turn, thus, meaning the one who turned up to look. This was the Greek way of differentiating the human biped from the brute animal quadruped. Yet, these same Greeks display the symbol of justice as a woman who is blindfolded (thus, who does not judge by looking through human sight, but judges through human feeling). But, enough of human verbal distinctions; let us move to the text of the *Tao*:

#1

The *Tao* which can be told of is not the eternal *Tao*. (See # 14 below, p. 26.)

The name which can be named is not the eternal name:

The Nameless is the origin of Heaven and Earth;
The Named is the mother of all things.

Therefore, let there always be non-being, so we may see their subtlety.
And let there always be being, so we may see their outcome. The two are the same.
But after they are produced, they have different names.
They both may be called deep and profound.
Deeper and more profound.
The door of all subtleties!

#4

Tao is a hollow vessel,
And its use is inexhaustible!
Fathomless!
Like the fountain head of all things.
Its sharp edges rounded off,
Its tangles untied,
Its light tempered,
Its turmoil submerged,
Yet dark like deep water it seem to remain.
I do not know whose Son it is,
An image of what existed before God.

#6

The Spirit of the Valley never dies.
It is called the Mystic Female (the principle of *yin*).
The Door of the Mystic Female
Is the root of Heaven and Earth.
Continuously, continuously,
It seems to remain.
Draw upon it
And it serves you with ease.

#7

The universe is everlasting.
The reason the universe is everlasting
Is that it gives life to others (through its transformations).
There it can long endure.

Therefore the wise person puts self last,
And finds self in the foremost place;
Regards his body as accidental,
And his body is thereby preserved.
Is it not because he does not live for Self
That his Self is realized?

#21

The marks of great Character (*te*)
 Follow alone from the *Tao*.
 The thing which is called *Tao*
 Is elusive, evasive.
 Elusive, evasive,
 Yet, latent in it are forms.
 Elusive, evasive,
 Yet, latent in it are objects.
 Dark and dim,
 Yet latent in it is the life-force.
 The life-force being very true,
 Latent in it are evidences.

From the days of old till now
 Its Named (manifested forms) have never ceased,
 By which we may view the Father of All Things.
 How do I know the shape of Father of All Things?
 Through These! (The manifested forms).

#23

Nature says few words.
 For the same reason a whirlwind does not last a whole morning:
 Nor does a rainstorm last a whole day:
 What causes them?
 It is Heaven and Earth (Nature).
 If even Heaven and Earth cannot make them last long,
 How much less can man?
 Therefore, he who follows *Tao* is identified with *Tao*
 He who follows virtue is identified with virtue.
 He who abandons *Tao* is identified with the abandonment of *Tao*.
 He who is identified with *Tao* - *Tao* is also happy to have him.
 And he who is identified with the abandonment - the abandonment is also happy to abandon him.
 It is only when one does not have enough faith in others that others will have no faith in him.

#24

He who stands on tiptoe does not stand (firm);
 He who strains his strides does not walk (well)
 He who reveals himself is not luminous;
 He who justifies himself is not far-famed;
 He who boasts of himself is not given credit;
 He who prides himself is not chief among men.
 These in the eyes of *Tao*
 Are called 'the dregs and tumors of Virtue',
 Which are things of disgust.
 Therefore the man of *Tao* spurns them.

#32

Tao is eternal and has no name.

Though its simplicity seems insignificant, no one in the world can master it.

If kings and barons would hold on to it, all things would submit to them spontaneously.

Heaven and earth unite to drip sweet dew.

Without the command of men, it drips evenly over all.

As soon as there were regulations and institutions, there were names.

As soon as there are names, know that it is time to stop:

It is by knowing when to stop that one can be free from danger.

Analogically, *Tao* in the world may be compared to rivers and streams running into the sea.

#33

He who knows others is wise;

He who knows himself is enlightened.

He who conquers others has physical strength.

He who conquers himself is strong.

He who is contented is rich.

He who acts with vigor has will;

He who does not lose his place (with *Tao*) will endure.

He who dies but does not really perish enjoys long life.

#35

Hold the Great Symbol (Nature, Heaven or Earth)

And all the world follows,

Follows without meeting harm,

(and lives in) health, peace, commonwealth.

Offer good things to eat

And the Wayfarer stays.

But *Tao* is mild to the taste.

Looked at, it cannot be seen;

Listened to, it cannot be heard;

Applied, its supply never fails.

#37

The *Tao* never does,

Yet, through it everything is done,

If princes and dukes can keep the *Tao*,

The world will of its own accord be reformed.

When reformed and rising to action,

Let it be restrained by the Nameless pristine simplicity.

The Nameless pristine simplicity

Is stripped of desire (for contention).

By stripping of desire quiescence is achieved,

And the world arrives at peace of its own accord.

#43

The softest substance of the world
 Goes through the hardest (when working according to the natural constitution of the animal).
 That-which-is-without-form penetrates that-which-has-no-crevice;
 Through this I know the benefit of taking no action.
 The teaching without words and the benefit of taking no action
 Are without comparison in the universe.

#44

Fame or oneself, which does one love more?
 Oneself or material goods, which has more worth?
 Loss (of self) or possession (of goods), which is the greater evil?

Therefore: he who loves most spends most,
 He who hoards much loses much.
 The contented man meets no disgrace;
 Who knows when to stop runs into no danger -
 That person can long endure.

#47

One may know the world without going out of doors.
 One may see The Way of Heaven without looking through
 the windows.
 The further one goes, the less one knows.
 Therefore, the wise person knows without going about;
 Understands without seeing.
 And accomplishes without any action.

#49

The wise person has no decided opinions and feelings (*hsin*, literally “heart” which denotes both thinking and feeling in Chinese; indeed, knowing for a Chinese is feeling as in the belly).
 But regards the people’s opinions and feelings as his own.

The good ones I declare good;
 The bad ones I also declare good.
 That is the goodness of Virtue.
 The honest ones I believe;
 The liars I also believe;
 That is the faith of Virtue.

The wise person dwells in the world peacefully, harmoniously.
 The people of the world are brought into a community of heart,
 And the wise regard them all as their own children.

#50

Out of life, death enters (once born, we are mortal, so we are subject to death).

The organs of life are thirteen (four limbs and nine external cavities, indicating a male);
 The organs of death are also thirteen (a female has fourteen with a womb as life-giving).
 What send man to death in this life are also these thirteen.
 How is it so?
 Because of the intense activity of multiplying life.

It has been said that he who is a good preserver of his life
 Meets no tigers or wild buffaloes on land.
 Is not vulnerable to weapons in the field of battle,
 The horns of the wild buffalo are powerless against him;
 The paws of the tiger are useless against him;
 The weapons of the soldier cannot avail against him.
 How is it so?
 Because he is beyond death.

#52

There was a beginning of the universe
 Which may be called the Mother of the universe.
 He who has found the Mother (*Tao*)
 And thereby understands her sons (things),
 And having understood the son,
 Still keeps to its mother,
 Will be free from danger throughout his lifetime.
 Close the mouth.
 Shut the doors (of cunning and desires)
 And to the end of life there will be (peace) without toil.
 Open the mouth,
 Meddle with affairs and to the end of life there will be no salvation.
 Seeing what is small is called enlightenment.
 Keeping to weakness is called strength.
 Use the light,
 Revert to enlightenment
 And thereby avoid danger to one's life -
 This is called practicing the eternal.

#54

Who is firmly established is not easily shaken.
 Who has a firm grasp does not easily let go.
 From generation to generation his ancestral sacrifices shall be continued without fail.

Cultivated in the individual, character will become genuine;
 Cultivated in the family, character will become abundant;
 Cultivated in the village, character will multiply;
 Cultivated in the state, character will prosper;
 Cultivated in the world, character will become universal.
 Therefore, according to character of the individual, judge the individual;

According to character of the family, judge the family;
 According to character of the village, judge the village;
 According to character of the state, judge the state;
 According to character of the world, judge the world.
 How do I know the world is so:
 From within myself.

#55

Who is heavy (see # 26, p. 20) in character is like a child.
 No poisonous insects sting him,
 No wild beasts attack him,
 And no birds of prey pounce upon him.
 His bones are soft, his sinews tender, yet his grip is strong.
 Not knowing the union of male and female, yet his organs are complete,
 Which means his vigor is unspoiled.
 Crying the whole day, yet his voice never runs hoarse,
 Which means his (natural) harmony is perfect.
 To know harmony is to be in accord with the eternal,
 (And) to know eternity is called discerning.
 (But) to improve upon life is called an ill-omen;
 To let go the emotions through impulse (*hsin*, mind/heart, see #49, p. 9) is called assertiveness.
 (For) things age after reaching their prime;
 That (assertiveness, heart/mind) would be against *Tao*.
 And he who is against *Tao* perishes young.

#56

He who knows, does not speak.
 He who speaks, does not know.

Close the mouth.
 Shut the doors.
 Blunt the sharpness.
 Unite the tangles.
 Soften the light.
 Become one with the dusty world.
 This is called profound identification.
 Therefore, it is impossible either to be intimate and close to *Tao* or to be distant and indifferent to *Tao*.
 It is impossible either to benefit *Tao* or to harm *Tao*.
 It is impossible either to honor *Tao* or to disgrace *Tao*.
 For this reason *Tao* is honored by the world.

#65

In ancient times, those who practiced *Tao* well
 Did not seek to enlighten the people, but to make them ignorant.
 People are difficult to govern because they have too much knowledge.

Therefore, he who rules the state through knowledge is a robber of the state.
 He who rules a state not through knowledge is a blessing to the state.
 One who knows these two things also (knows) the standard.
 Always to know the standard is called profound and secret virtue.
 Virtue becomes deep and far-reaching.
 And with it all things return to their original state.
 Then complete harmony will be reached.

#72

When the people do not fear what is dreadful,
 Then, what is greatly dreadful will descend on them.
 Do not reduce the living space of their dwelling.
 Do not oppress their lives.
 It is because you do not oppress them that they are not oppressed.
 Therefore, the wise person knows himself but does not show himself.
 He loves himself but does not exalt himself.
 Therefore, he rejects the one but accepts the other.

#73

To know that you do not know is the best.
 To pretend to know when you do not know is a disease.
 Only when one recognizes this disease as a disease can one be free from the disease.
 The wise person is free from the disease.
 Because he recognizes this disease to be a disease, he is free from it.

#81

True words are not beautiful;
 Beautiful words are not true.
 A good man does not argue;
 He who argues is not a good man.
 A wise person has no extensive knowledge;
 He who has extensive knowledge is not a wise person.

The wise person does not accumulate for himself.
 The more he uses for others, the more he has himself.
 The more he gives to others, the more he possesses of his own.
The Way of Heaven is to benefit others and not to injure.
The Way of the wise person is to act but not to compete.

II Naming and Knowing, analyzing and synthesizing, uniting and separating, being one and many, the same and different, peace and war:

The human power of naming feeds the human power of knowing and generates a power to control. This human power to control, generating comparisons and, therefore, contention which leads into the power to wage war with ourselves, the world of nature and other human beings. Not-knowing, on the contrary, fosters receptivity and generates the capacity to receive

and, therefore, the ability to unite with *Tao*. Competition and contention come or came from human imposed limitation fed by the human attitude to know everything - as we read in the *Genesis* story of the “tree of knowledge of good and evil”. On the contrary, complementarily, tolerance and balance within nature result from acceptance of *Tao*. Wise people recognize these virtues, imitate nature and are peaceful. The wise look within and foster non-action to be receptive whereas the knowledgeable look outside and act. The wise, following nature’s laws (tone poems #6, p.6 and 10, p. 24) feel and take no action, allowing nature to act. The knowledgeable, on the contrary, act to control nature, to contain, even to kill, just as the Athenians did to Socrates. Socrates even chided them for not letting nature take its course, for being impatient about not waiting for him to die naturally since he was already 70 years of age. So the Athenians by taking action caused their own problems. Lao-tzu states the difference simply:

#73 (p. 21)

He who is brave in daring will be killed.
He who is brave in not daring will love.

Competition and contention are human by-products of naming and knowing. They result from the human inability to accept contraries as complementary and are the source of violence, *li*. Therefore, orientals see *li*, or violence to be opposed to virtue, *te*. So, war and strife result from naming and knowing who your enemies are and by assigning differences which are mutually exclusive; such naming and knowing narrows human perspective and divides human beings into two groups, friends and enemies, rewarding the former and punishing the latter. Of course, the basis of any peace within society, as, for instance, a village roots and radiates from within the individual citizen’s family (ultimately, of course, from within oneself), so the relationships in the person’s family are critical, if peace is to exist. Laotzu (and Confucius later) saw six (#18, p.14) basic relationships within a given family: the first two between father and son, the second two between the elder and younger brother and, of course, the third two between the husband and wife. Peace and tranquility, however, are the result of openness and lack of limit so any closing off or limiting through the misuse of words can result in contention, not peace.

#3

Do not exalt the worthy, so that the people shall not compete.
Do not value rare treasures, so that the people shall not steal.
Do not display objects of desire so people's hearts shall not be disturbed.
Therefore, in the government of the wise,
He keeps their hearts vacuous,
Fills their bellies,
Weakens their ambitions,
And strengthens their bones.
He always causes his people to be without knowledge or desire.
And the crafty to be afraid to act.
By acting without actions, all things will be in order.

#9

To hold and fill a cup to overflowing
Is not as good as to stop in time.

Sharpen a sword-edge to its very sharpest,
 And the (edge) will not last long.
 When gold and jade fill your hall,
 You will not be able to keep them.
 To be proud with honor and wealth
 Is to cause one's own downfall.
 Withdraw as soon as your work is done.
 Such is Heaven's Way.

#12

The five colors cause one's eyes to be blind.
 The five tones cause one's ears to be deaf.
 The five flavors cause one's palate to be spoiled.
 Racing and hunting cause one's mind to be mad.
 Goods that are hard to get injure one's activities.
 For this reason the wise person is concerned with the belly
 and not the eyes.
 Therefore, he rejects the one but accepts the other.

#13

“Favor and disgrace cause one dismay;
 What we value and what we fear are within the Self”.

What does this mean:

“Favor and disgrace cause one dismay?”

Those who receive a favor from above are dismayed when they receive it,
 And dismayed when they lose it.

What does this mean:

“What we value and what we fear are within the Self?”

We have fears because we have a self (literally, a mortal body).
 When we do not regard that self as self,
 What have we to fear?

Therefore, he who values the world as self
 May then be entrusted with the government of the world;
 And he who loves the world as self -
 The world may then be entrusted to his care.

#15

The wise of old had subtle wisdom and depth of understanding,
 So profound that they could not be understood.
 And because they could not be understood,
 Perforce must they be so described:
 Cautious, like crossing a wintry stream,
 Irresolute, like one fearing danger all around,

Grave, like one acting as a guest,
 Self-effacing, like ice beginning to melt,
 Genuine, like a piece of undressed wood,
 Open-minded, like a valley and mixing freely, like murky water.
 Who can find repose in a muddy world?
 By lying still, it becomes clear.
 Who can maintain his calm for long?
 By activity, it comes back to life.
 He who embraces this *Tao*
 Guards against being over-full.
 Because he guards against being over-full,
 He is beyond wearing out and renewal.

#17

Of the best rulers
 The people do not know that they exist;
 The next best they love and praise;
 The next they fear;
 And the next they revile.
 When they do not command the people's faith,
 Some will lose faith in them,
 And then they resort to oaths!
 But (of the best) when their task is accomplished, their work is done,
 The people all remark, 'We have done it ourselves'.

#18

When the great *Tao* declined, the doctrine of humanity and righteousness arose.
 When knowledge and wisdom appeared, there emerged great hypocrisy.
 When the six family relationships are not in harmony,
 There will be the advocacy of filial piety and deep love of children.
 When a country is in disorder,
 There will be the praise of loyal ministers.

#19

Abandon being wise and discard wisdom;
 Then the people will benefit a hundredfold.
 Abandon humanity and discard righteousness;
 Then the people will return to filial piety and deep love.
 Abandon skill and discard profit;
 Then there will be no thieves or robbers.
 However, these three things are ornaments (*wen*) and are not adequate.
 Therefore, let people hold on to these:
 Manifest plainness,
 Embrace simplicity,
 Reduce selfishness,
 Have few desires.

#20

Banish learning and vexations end.
 Between 'Ah!' (approval) and 'Ugh!' (disapproval)
 How much difference is there?
 Between 'good' and 'evil'
 How much difference is there?
 That which men fear is indeed to be feared;
 But, alas, distant yet is the dawn (of awakening)!
 The people of the world are merry-making,
 As if partaking of the sacrificial feasts,
 As if mounting the terrace in spring;
 I alone am mild, like one unemployed,
 Like a new-born babe who cannot yet smile, unattached, as without a home.
 The people of the world have enough and to spare,
 But I am like one left out,
 My heart must be that of a fool,
 Being muddled, nebulous!
 The vulgar are knowing, luminous;
 I alone am dull, confused.
 The vulgar are clever, self-assured;
 I alone, depressed.
 Patient as the sea,
 Adrift, seemingly aimless.

The people of the world all have a purpose;
 I alone appear stubborn and uncouth.
 I alone differ from the other people,
 And value drawing milk from Mother (Nature).

#36

He who is to be made to dwindle (in power)
 Must first be caused to expand. He who is to be weakened
 Must first be made strong,
 He who is to be laid low
 Must first be exalted to power.
 He who is to be taken away from
 Must first be given,
 -This is the Subtle Light.
 Gentleness overcomes strength:
 Fish should be left in the deep pool,
 And sharp weapons of the state should be left where none can see them.

#38

The man of superior virtue is not conscious of his virtue,
 And in this Way he really possesses virtue.

The man of inferior virtue never loses sight of his virtue,
 And in this Way he loses his virtue.
 The man of superior virtue takes no action, but has no ulterior motive to do so.
 The man of inferior virtue takes action and has an ulterior motive to do so.
 The man of superior humanity takes action, but has no ulterior motive to do so.
 The man of superior righteousness takes action and has an ulterior motive to do so.
 The man of superior propriety takes action,
 And when people do not respond to it, he will reach for his arms and force it upon them.

Therefore, when **Tao** is lost, only then does the doctrine of virtue arise.
 When virtue is lost, only then does the doctrine of humanity arise.
 When humanity is lost, only then does the doctrine of righteousness arise.
 When righteousness is lost, only then does the doctrine of propriety arise.
 Now, propriety is a superficial expression of loyalty and faithfulness and the beginning of disorder.
 Those who are the first to know have the flowers of **Tao** but are the beginning of ignorance.
 For this reason, the great man dwells in the thick and does not rest with the thin.
 He dwells in the fruit and does not rest with the flower.
 Therefore, he rejects the one and accepts the other.

#57

Govern the state with correctness.
 Operate the army with surprise tactics.
 Administer the empire by engaging in no activity.
 How do I know that this should be so?
 Through this:
 The more taboos and prohibitions there are in the world, the poorer the people will be.
 The more sharp weapons the people have,
 The more troubled the state will be.
 The more cunning and skill man possesses,
 The more vicious things will appear.
 The more laws and orders are made prominent,
 The more thieves and robbers there will be.
 Therefore, the wise person says:
 I take no action and the people of themselves are transformed.
 I love tranquility and the people of themselves become correct.
 I engage in no activity and the people of themselves become prosperous.
 I have no desires and the people of themselves become simple.

#68

A skillful leader of troops is not oppressive with his military strength.
 A skillful fighter does not become angry.
 A skillful conqueror does not compete with people.
 One who is skillful in using men puts himself below them.

This is called the virtue of non-competing.

This is called the strength to use men.
This is called matching Heaven, the highest principle of old.

#69 (p.

There is the maxim of military strategists;
I dare not be the first to invade (to be host), but rather be the invaded (to be the guest).
Dare not press forward an inch, but rather retreat a foot.
That is, to march without formations,
To roll not up the sleeves,
To charge not in frontal attacks,
To arm without weapons.
There is no greater catastrophe than to underestimate the enemy.
To underestimate the enemy might entail the loss of one's treasures (see # 67, p. 30).
Therefore, when two equally matched armies meet,
It is the man of sorrow (who hates killing) who wins.

#73

He who is brave in daring will be killed.
He who is brave in not daring will love.
Of these two, one is advantageous and one is harmful.
Who knows why Heaven dislikes what it dislikes?
Even the wise person considers it a difficult question.

The Way of Heaven does not compete and yet, it skillfully achieves victory; (See # 8, p.19 for the wise not competing.)

It does not speak, and yet, it skillfully responds to things.
It comes to you without your invitation.
It is not anxious about things and yet it plans well. Heaven's net is indeed vast.
Though its meshes are wide, it misses nothing.

#77

Heaven's Way is indeed like the bending of a bow.
When the string is high, bring it down.
When it is low, raise it up.
When it is excessive, reduce it.
When it is insufficient, supplement it.
The Way of Heaven reduces whatever is excessive and supplements whatever is insufficient.

The Way of man is different.

It reduces the insufficient to offer to the excessive.
Who is able to have excess to offer to the world?
Only the man of *Tao*.
Therefore, the wise person acts, but does not rely on his own ability.
The wise person accomplishes his task, but does not claim credit for it.
The wise person has no desire to display his excellence.

#79

Patching up a great hatred is sure to leave some hatred behind.
 How can this be regarded as satisfactory?
 Therefore the wise person holds the left (inferior) tally,
 And does not put the guilt on the other party.
 The virtuous man is for patching up;
 The vicious is for fixing guilt.
 But the 'Way of Heaven is impartial and sides only with the good man'.

III Opposites as complimentary versus opposites as mutually destructive, oriental both/and versus occidental either/or:

Lao-tzu views opposites as intrinsic, complimentary life principles, inherent and basic to nature, nurture and growth. Opposites balance (*yin, female; yang, male*), *shadow* and *light, moist* and *dry, soft* and *hard, not-being* and *being, feeling* and *knowing, listening* and *speaking, non-acting* and *acting*, rivers and ocean, so opposites are part and parcel of being alive and are complementary to life itself. Indeed, Lao-tzu underscores the importance of water to birth as well as rebirth (through the seasonal repetition of Spring). Not only are wise people like water, tone poem # 8, p.18, but the characterization of *yin* is *moisture* and, indeed, biologically speaking mothers give birth to children once the water "breaks". Even science underscores the probability that all life ultimately came from the ocean's salty waters - the very composition of a human being, after all is ninety-eight percent water.

Conflict enters into the viewpoint of "opposites" only if and when humans seek to control even to remove one or other of these natural opposites, deeming one good, the other bad, whereas both opposites are good. Then, this induced conflict seeks to eradicate one or other opposite and thus, stands in contradiction of nature, thereby, upsetting the balance in oneself and between oneself and nature, even occasioning death rather than encouraging life. So, "violent and fierce people do not die a natural death", observes Lao-tzu. Nature, on the other hand, provides us with a vehicle, water, which works continuously, adapting to, yet, controlling, conforming, even, changing whatever opposes its progress. So, water provides us with nature's example of how *Tao* works. Indeed, even Heraclitus uses water as the model to understand the stability within the change of nature itself.

#8

The best man is like water.
 Water is good; it benefits all things and does not compete with them.
 Water dwells in lowly places which all disdain.
 This is why it is so near to *Tao*.
 The best man in his dwelling loves the earth.
 In his heart, he loves what is profound.
 In his associations, he loves humanity.
 In his words, he loves faithfulness.
 In government, he loves order.
 In handling affairs, he loves competence. (See # 73, p.32 for *Tao* not competing.)
 In his activities, he loves timeliness.

It is because he does not compete that he is without reproach.

#11

Thirty spokes are united around the hub to make a wheel,
 But, it is on its non-being that the utility of the carriage depends.
 Clay is molded to form a utensil,
 But, it is on its non-being that the utility of the utensil depends.
 Doors and windows are cut out to make a room,
 But, it is on its non-being that the utility of the room depends.
 Therefore, turn being into advantage, and turn non-being into utility.

#26

The Solid (heaviness as the earth, so stability as honesty) is the root for the light (frivolity and instability);
 The Quiescent is the master of the Hasty.

Therefore the wise person travels all day
 Yet never leaves his provision-cart (what is heavy).
 In the midst of honor and glory,
 He lives leisurely, undisturbed (what is weightless).
 How can the ruler of a great country
 Make light of his body in the empire (by rushing about)?
 In light frivolity, the Center is lost; In hasty action, self-mastery is lost.

#27

A good runner leaves no track.
 A good speech leaves no flaws for attack.
 A good reckoner makes use of no counters.
 A well-shut door makes use of no bolts,
 And yet cannot be opened.
 A well-tied knot makes use of no rope and yet cannot be untied.

Therefore the wise person is good at helping men;
 For that reason there is no rejected (useless) person.
 He is good at saving things;
 For that reason there is nothing rejected (the wise use whatever nature provides).
 This is called stealing (*hsi*) the Light.
 Therefore the good man is the Teacher of the bad.
 And the bad man is the lesson (*Tse*) of the good.
 He who neither values his teacher
 Nor loves the lesson
 Is one gone far astray,
 Though he be learned.
 Such is the subtle secret.

#28

He who knows male and keeps to the female becomes the ravine of the world.
 Being the ravine of the world,
 He will never depart from eternal virtue,
 But returns to the state of infancy.
 He who knows white (*yang* being *light* and, thus *white*), yet keeps to the black (*yin* being *shadow* and, thus *darkness*) becomes the model for the world.
 Being the model for the world,
 He will never deviate from eternal virtue,
 But returns to the state of the non-ultimate.
 He who knows glory but keeps to humility becomes the valley of the world.
 He will be proficient in eternal virtue,
 And returns to the state of un-carved wood.
 When the un-carved wood is broken up, it is turned into concrete things.
 But, when the wise person uses it, he becomes the learning official.
 Therefore, the great ruler does not cut up.

#29

There are those who will conquer the world
 And make of it (what they conceive or desire).
 I see that they will not succeed.
 (For) the world is God's own Vessel
 It cannot be made (by human interference).
 He who makes it spoils it. He who holds it loses it.
 For: Some things go forward,
 Some things follow behind;
 Some blow hot,
 And some blow cold;
 Some are strong,
 And some are weak;
 Some may break,
 And some may fall.
 Hence the wise eschew (avoid) excess, eschew extravagance, eschew pride.

#30

He who by *Tao* purposes to help the ruler of men
 Will oppose conquest by force of arms (the "arms" pictograph is a "spear" over "footprints"; for more: read the *Art of Strategy* by Sun Tzu).
 For such things are wont to rebound.
 Where armies are, thorns and brambles grow.
 The raising of a great host
 Is followed by a year of dearth.

Therefore, a good general effects his purpose and stops.
 He dares not rely upon the strength of arms;
 Effects his purpose and does not glory in it;
 Effects his purpose and does not boast of it;

Effects his purpose and does not take pride in it;
 Effects his purpose as a regrettable necessity;
 Effects his purpose but does not love violence.
 (For) things age after reaching their prime.
 That (violence) would be against the *Tao* and he who is against the *Tao* perishes young.

#31

Of all things, soldiers (or weapons, ping) are instruments of evil, hated by men.
 Therefore, the religious man (possessed of *Tao*) avoids them.
 The gentleman favors the left (good omen, the creative) in civilian life,
 But on military occasions favors the right (bad omen, the destructive).
 Soldiers are weapons of evil.
 They are not the weapons of the gentlemen.
 When the use of soldiers cannot be helped,
 The best policy is calm restraint.
 Even in victory, there is no beauty,
 And who calls it beautiful
 Is one who delights in slaughter.
 He who delights in slaughter
 Will not succeed in his ambition to rule the world.

#42

Tao produced the One.
 The One produced the two.
 The two produced the three.
 And the three produced the ten thousand things.
 The ten thousand things carry the *yin* and embrace the *yang*, and even through the blending of
 the material force they achieve harmony.
 People hate to be children without parents, lonely people without spouses, or men without food
 to eat.
 And yet, kings and lords call themselves by these names.
 Therefore, it is often the case that things gain by losing and lose by gaining.

What others have taught, I teach also:
 "Violent and fierce people do not die a natural death."
 I shall make this the father of my teaching.

#61

A big country may be compared to the lower part of a river.
 It is the converging point of the world;
 It is the female of the world.
 The female always overcomes the male by tranquility.
 And by tranquility she is underneath.
 A big state can take over a small state if it places itself below the small state.
 And the small state can take over a big state if it places itself below the big state.
 Thus, some, by placing themselves below, take over others,

And some, by being naturally low, take over other states.
 After all, what a big state wants is but to annex and herd others.
 And what a small state wants is merely to join and serve others.
 Since both big and small states get what they want,
 The big state should place itself low.

#78

There is nothing softer and weaker than water,
 And yet, there is nothing better for attacking hard and strong things.
 For this reason, there is no substitute for it.
 All the world knows that the weak overcomes the strong and the soft overcomes the hard -
 shades of the *New Testament*, *Matt.5:1-12;18;1-4*; *Luke 9 :46-8*!
 But none can practice it.

IV The source originates and sustains life, so the closer we are to our source the more life we experience; the farther away we are from our source, the less life we enjoy:

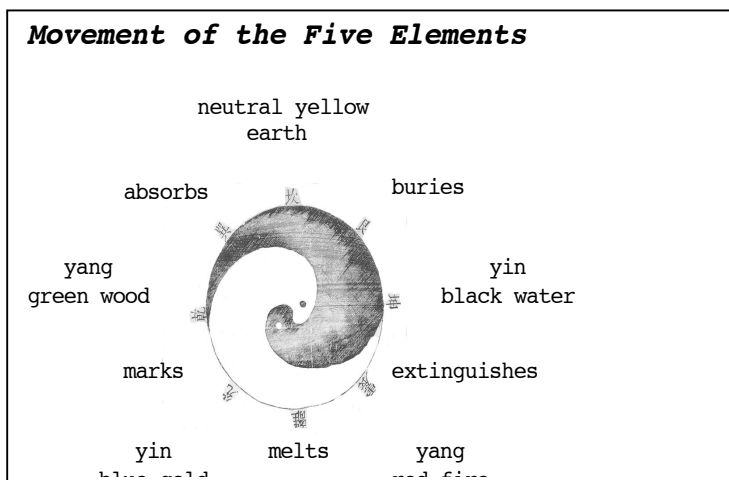
The closer any natural being, including the human being approaches its source, the self, the closer that being comes to *Tao* the end, the source of life itself whose presence is found in the self. So also, the farther humans move from "words", "actions", "regulations", "institutions", imperfection, division, contention and war, the closer humans approach the source and, consequently, the less limited humans become because the less humans limit themselves as to what they know and what they can accomplish.

Obviously, then the farther humans move away from the self and its source, *Tao*, the more humans use and rely upon "words", perform "actions", issue "regulations", establish "institutions"; the more, in a word, humans limit themselves as well as others and, therefore, close themselves off from life and living.

A graphic example is the word group: human being, in a sense, a source of human meaning. As we "know" and "name", we first divide this human unity into male and female; then we divide male into homosexual and heterosexual, into bisexual and transvestite; we divide female into lesbian and heterosexual, bisexual and transvestite. We further divide male into husband and father, perhaps into sperm donor, a step-father, a foster father; then into a bastard, a child-abuser, a wife-beater and we continue, on and on, dividing up the reality human-being into bits and pieces, some of which we love, others we hate, until we lose all direct contact with a living human being, ourselves and have only that indirect contact with ourselves through our words, what Camus calls "the rest is construction": an artificial word house in which we choose to live and act.

These verbal stereotypes then provide us with the rational to kill, to maim, to hate, to ignore without any remorse because we have lost contact with any real persons whom we have buried and covered over with words, primarily, of course, because we have lost contact with the source of self-knowledge and of human being, the self. Yet, the farther we remove ourselves from living beings through our knowledge and words, the farther removed from reality our attitudes become with the result that the farther we are removed from ourselves and never "know" the self until it is too late - we are dead! Indeed, we reach a point when whatever we do

not
that



know, simply does not exist! At point, the **yang** has become an absolute reality since its counterpart, **yin** has been lost to human consciousness.

as well as living. This emptiness, this vacuum &

The **Taoists** claimed that the comedy of life could be made more interesting if everyone would preserve the

unities. To keep the proportion of things and give place to others without losing one's own position was the secret of success in the mundane drama. We must know the whole play in order to act our parts properly; the conception of totality must never be lost in that of the individual. This Lao-tzu illustrates by his favorite metaphor of the vacuum. He claimed that only in vacuum lay the truly essential. The reality of a room, for instance, was to be found in the vacant space enclosed by the roof and walls, not in the roof and walls themselves. The usefulness of a water pitcher dwelt in the emptiness where water might be put, not in the form of the pitcher or the material of which it was made. Vacuum is all potent because it is all containing. In vacuum alone motion becomes possible. One who could make of himself a vacuum into which others might freely enter would become master of all situations. The whole can always dominate the part.

Okakura's description of **Tao** leads to the heart of **Taoist** cosmology, literally, the **logos**, the study or explanation of the **cosmos**, or ordered universe. The world began with **Tao**, an empty void (that is, the uncarved wood described in tone poem #s 15, 32, 40, 60, 61). Out of this emptiness came **qi (chi)** or the breath characteristic of living beings, what martial artists refer to as vital energy. Characteristic of this **qi (chi)** is a bipolarity, that is, a **yin**, or dryness and a **yang**, the wetness, the fundamental elements within nature of which five exist: gold, wood, water, fire and earth and called the **Five Agents**, or **Elements**. The changing balance of **yin** and **yang** circulates throughout these **Five Agents**, moving from one to the other as the seasons progress in any given year as the earth and sun move through the planetary system.

To understand this "Movement of the Five Elements" we must turn to the basic bipolarity of the **Tao**, the **yin**, female principle, as darkness and the **yang**, male principle, as light and use the analogy of the air in its relation to the sun. We then see the fundamental and common sense of the relationship of darkness to light: the darkness of the air, as **yin** allows the light of the sun, as **yang** to permeate it, so the earth is warmed and light generates and nourishes life within Mother earth. Without the air, earth would be singed and burnt up by sun's rays.

#2

When the people of the world all know beauty as beauty (that is, as the universal, or the absolute),

There arises the recognition of ugliness.
 When they all know the good as good (again as the universal),
 There arises the recognition of evil.
 Therefore:
 Being and non-being produce each other;
 Difficult and easy complete each other;
 Long and short contrast each other;
 High and low distinguish each other;
 Front and behind accompany each other.

Therefore, the wise person manages affairs without action,
 And spreads doctrines without words.
 All things arise, and he does not turn away from them.
 He produces them but does not take possession of them.
 He acts but does not rely on his own ability.
 He accomplishes his task but does not claim credit for it.
 It is precisely because he does not claim credit that his accomplishment remains with him.

#4

Tao is empty (like a bowl).
 It may be used but its capacity is never exhausted.
 It is bottomless, perhaps the ancestor of all things.
 It blunts its sharpness.
 It unites its tangles.
 It softens its light.
 It becomes one with the dusty world.
 Deep and still, it appears to exist forever.
 I do not know whose son it is.
 It seems to have existed before the Lord.

#10

Can you keep the spirit and embrace the One without departing from them?
 Can you concentrate your vital force and achieve the highest degree of weakness like an infant?
 Can you clean and purify your profound insight so it will be spotless?
 Can you love the people and govern the state without knowledge?
 Can you play the role of the female in the opening and closing of the gates of Heaven?
 Can you understand all and penetrate all without taking any action?
 To produce things and to rear them
 To produce, but not to take possession of them.
 To act, but not to rely on one's own ability,
 To lead them, but not to master them -
 This is called profound and secret virtue.

#14

We look at it (**Tao**) and do not see it;
 Its name is The Invisible.

We listen to it and do not hear it;
 Its name is The Inaudible.
 We touch it and do not find it;
 Its name is The Subtle (Formless) (See # 1, page 4.)

These three cannot be further inquired into;
 And hence merge into one.
 Going up high, it is not bright, and coming down low, it is not dark.
 Infinite and boundless, it cannot be given any name;
 It reverts to nothingness.
 This is called shape without shape,
 Form without objects.
 It is The Vague and Elusive.
 Meet it and you will not see its head.
 Follow it and you will not see its back.
 Hold on to the *Tao* or (the) Old in order to master the things of the present.
 From this one may know the primeval beginning (of the universe).
 This is called the bond (or, thread) of *Tao*.

#16

Attain complete emptiness,
 Maintain steadfast quiet.

All things come into being.
 And I see thereby their return.
 All things flourish,
 But, each one returns to its root.
 This return to its root means tranquility.
 It is called returning to one's destiny.
 To return to destiny is called the eternal (*Tao*).
 To know the eternal is called enlightenment.
 Not to know the eternal is to act blindly and results in disaster.
 He who knows the eternal is all-embracing.
 Being all-embracing, he is impartial.
 Being impartial, he is kingly (universal).
 Being kingly, he is one with Nature.
 Being one with Nature, he is in accord with *Tao*.
 Being in accord with *Tao*, he is everlasting,
 And is free from danger throughout his lifetime.

#22

To yield is to be preserved whole,
 To be bent is to become straight.
 To be empty is to be full.
 To be worn out is to be renewed.
 To have little is to possess.

To have plenty is to be perplexed.
 Therefore, the wise person embraces the One
 And becomes the model of the world.
 He does not show himself, therefore he is luminous.
 He does not justify himself, therefore, he becomes prominent.
 He does not boast of himself, therefore, he is given credit.
 He does not brag; therefore, he can endure for long.

It is precisely because he does not compete that the world cannot compete with him.
 Is the ancient saying, "To yield is to be preserved whole". Empty words?
 Truly, he will be preserved and prominence and credit will come to him.

#25

There was something undifferentiated and yet complete
 Which existed before heaven and earth.
 Soundless and formless, it depends on nothing and does not change.
 It operates everywhere and is free from danger.
 It may be considered the Mother of the universe.
 I do not know its name; I call it *Tao*.
 If forced to give it a name, I shall call it Great.
 Now being great means functioning everywhere.
 Functioning everywhere means to be far-reaching.
 Being far-reaching means returning to the original point.
 Therefore, *Tao* is great.
 Heaven is great.
 Earth is great.
 And the king is also great.
 There are four great things in the universe and the king is one of them.
 Man models himself after Earth.
 Earth models itself after Heaven.
 Heaven models itself after *Tao*.
 And *Tao* models itself after Nature.

#34

The Great *Tao* flows everywhere.
 It may go left or right.
 All things depend on it for life, and it does not turn away from them.
 It accomplishes its task, but does not claim credit for it.
 It clothes and feeds all things, but does not claim to be master over them.
 Always without desires, it may be called The Small.
 All things come to it and it does not master them;
 It may be called The Great.
 Therefore, the wise person never strives himself for the great and thereby the great is achieved.

#40

Reversion is the action of *Tao*.

Weakness is the function of *Tao*.
 All things in the world come from *being*.
 And *being* comes from *non-being*.

#41

When the highest type of men hear *Tao*, they diligently practice it.
 When the average type of men hear *Tao*, they half believe in it.
 When the lowest type of men hear *Tao*, they laugh heartily at it.
 If they did not laugh at it, it would not be *Tao*.
 Therefore, there is the established saying:
 The *Tao* which is bright (*yang*) appears to be dark (*yin*).
 The *Tao* which goes forward appears to fall backward.
 Great virtue appears like a valley.
 Great purity appears like disgrace.
 Far-reaching virtue appears as if insufficient.
 True substance appears to be changeable.
 The great square has no corners.
 The great implement (or talent) is slow to mature.
 Great music sounds faint.
 Great form has no shape.
Tao is hidden and nameless.
 Yet, it is *Tao* alone that skillfully provides for all and brings them to perfection.

#45

What is most perfect seems to be incomplete;
 But it, utility is unimpaired.
 What is most full seems to be empty;
 But its usefulness is inexhaustible.
 What is most full seems to be empty;
 But, its usefulness is inexhaustible.
 What is most straight seems to be crooked.
 The greatest skill seems to be clumsy.
 The greatest eloquence seems to stutter.
 Hasty movement overcomes cold,
 (But), tranquility overcomes heat.
 By being greatly tranquil,
 One is qualified to be the ruler of the world.

#46

When *Tao* prevails in the world, galloping horses are turned back to fertilize the fields.
 When *Tao* does not prevail in the world, war horses thrive in the suburbs.
 There is no calamity greater than lavish desires.
 There is not greater guilt than discontentment.
 And there is no greater disaster than greed.
 He who is contented with contentment is always contented.

#48

The pursuit of learning is to increase day after day.

The pursuit of **Tao** is to decrease day after day.

It is to decrease and further decrease until one reaches the point of taking no action.

No action is undertaken, and yet, nothing is left undone.

An empire is often brought to order by having no activity.

If one undertakes activity, he is not qualified to govern the empire.

#51

Tao produces them.

Virtue fosters them.

Matter gives them physical form.

The circumstances and tendencies complete them.

Therefore, the ten thousand things esteem **Tao** and honor virtue.

Tao is esteemed and virtue is honored without anyone's order:

They always come spontaneously.

Therefore, **Tao** produces them and virtue fosters them.

They rear them and virtue fosters them.

They rear them and develop them.

They give them security and give them peace.

They nurture them and protect them.

Tao produces them but does not take possession of them.

Tao acts, but does not rely on its own ability.

Tao leads them but does not master them.

This is called profound and secret virtue.

#58

When the government is lazy and dull,

Its people are unspoiled;

When the government is efficient and smart,

Its people are discontented.

Disaster is the avenue of fortune,

(And) fortune is the concealment for disaster.

Who would be able to know its ultimate results?

(As it is), there would never be the normal (**cheng**, normal, righteous),

But, the normal would (immediately) revert to the deceitful (**ch'i**, the deceitful, abnormal)

And the good revert to the sinister.

Thus long has mankind gone astray!

Therefore, the wise person has firm principles, but not cutting (sharp-cornered),

Has integrity but does not hurt (others),

Is straight, but not high-handed,

Bright, but not dazzling.

#60

Who rules the world in accord with *Tao*
 Shall find that the spirits lose their power.
 It is not that the spirits lose their power,
 But that they cease to do people harm.
 It is not (only) that they cease to do people harm,
 The wise person also does no harm to the people.
 When both do not do each other harm,
 The original character is restored.

#62

Tao is the storehouse of all things.
 It is the good man's treasure and the bad man's refuge.
 Fine words can buy honor,
 And fine deeds can gain respect from others.
 Even if a man is bad, when has *Tao* rejected him?
 Therefore, on the occasion of crowning an emperor or installing the three ministers,
 Rather than present large pieces of jade preceded by teams of four horses,
 It is better to kneel and offer this to *Tao*.
 Why did the ancients highly value this *Tao*?
 Did they not say, "Those who seek shall have *Tao* and those who sin shall be freed"?
 For this reason, *Tao* is valued by the world.

#63

Act without action.
 Do without doing.
 Taste without tasting.
 Whether it is big or small, many or few, repay hatred with virtue.
 Prepare for the difficult while it is still easy.
 Deal with the big while it is still small. Difficult undertakings have always started with what is easy.
 And great undertakings have always started with what is small.
 Therefore, the wise person never strives for the great,
 And thereby the great is achieved.
 He who makes rash promises surely lacks faith.
 He who takes things too easily will surely encounter much difficulty.
 For this reason even the wise regard things as difficult.
 And therefore encounter no difficulty.

#64

That which lies still is easy to hold;
 That which is not yet manifest is easy to forestall;
 That which is brittle (like ice) easily melts;
 That which is minute easily scatters.
 Deal with a thing before it is there;
 Check disorder before it is rife.
 A tree with a full span's girth begins from a tiny sprout;

A nine-storied terrace begins with a clod of earth.
A journey of a thousand *li* begins at one's feet.

He who acts, spoils;
He who grasps, lets slip.
Because the wise person does not act, he does not spoil,
Because he does not grasp, he does not let slip.
The affairs of men are often spoiled within an act of completion,
By being careful at the end as at the beginning
Failure is averted.
Therefore, the wise person desires to have no desire,
And values not objects difficult to obtain.
Learns that which is unlearned,
And restores what the multitude has lost.
That he may assist in the course of Nature
And not presume to interfere.

#65

In Ancient times those who practiced *Tao* well
Did not seek to enlighten the people, but to make them ignorant.
People are difficult to govern because they have too much knowledge.
Therefore, he who rules the state through knowledge is a robber of the state.
He who rules a state not through knowledge is a blessing to the state.
One who knows these two things also knows the standard.
Always to know the standard is called profound and secret virtue.
Virtue becomes deep and far-reaching.
And with it all things return to their original state.
Then complete harmony will be reached.

#66

How did the great rivers and seas become the Lords of the Ravines?
By being good at keeping low. That was how they became the Lords of the Ravines (see # 8, p. 18)
Therefore in order to be the chief among the people,
One must speak like their inferiors.
In order to be foremost among the people,
One must walk behind them.
Thus, it is that the wise stay above,
And the people do not feel the weight;
Walk in front,
And the people do not wish them harm.
Then the people of the world are glad to uphold the wise forever.
Because the wise person does not contend,
No one in the world can contend against him.

#67

All the world says that my *Tao* is great and does not seem to resemble the ordinary.
 It is precisely because *Tao* is great that *Tao* does not resemble the ordinary.
 If *Tao* did resemble it, *Tao* would have been small for a long time.
 I have three treasures; guard and keep them:
 The first is the maternal heart of mercy.
 The second is frugality.
 And the third is not to dare to be ahead of the world.
 Because of deep love, one is courageous.
 Because of frugality, one is generous.
 Because of not daring to be ahead of the world, one becomes the leader of the world.
 Now, to be courageous by forsaking the maternal heart of mercy,
 To be generous by forsaking frugality.
 And to be ahead of the world by forsaking following behind -
 This is fatal.
 For deep love helps one to win in the case of attack.
 And to be firm in the case of defense.
 When Heaven is to save a person,
 Heaven will protect him through the maternal heart of mercy.

#73

He who is brave in daring will be killed.
 He who is brave in not daring will live.
 Of these two, one is advantageous and one is harmful.
 Who knows why Heaven dislikes what it dislikes?
 Even the wise person considers it a difficult question.
The Way of Heaven does not compete, and yet, it skillfully achieves victory.
The Way does not speak, and yet, it skillfully responds to things.
The Way comes to you without your invitation.
The Way is not anxious about things and yet, it plans well.
 Heaven's net is indeed vast.
 Though its meshes are wide, it misses nothing.

#76

When a man is born, he is tender and weak.
 At death, he is stiff and hard. All things, the grass as well as trees, are tender and supple while alive.
 When dead, they are withered and dried.
 Therefore, the stiff and the hard are companions of death.
 The tender and the weak are companions of life.
 Therefore, if the army is strong, it will not win.
 If a tree is stiff, it will break.
 The strong and the great are inferior, while the tender and the weak are superior.

Lao-tzu of *Tao* is perhaps many people, similar to the four *New Testament* evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. We simply do not know. Yet, however much scholars can not "know" what is true in respect to the author(s?) of these and other texts, whether oriental, or

occidental, even the Judaic scriptures themselves, we observe striking similarities, for instance, the central theme of water and the ultimate superiority and success of the weak rather than the strong, the ultimate promise of peace rather than war.

Lao-tzu centers on water as the symbol for life, its source, nourishment and growth and goes so far as to identify a co-principle of life to be *yin*, the *moist*, also called “the valley”, the residing place, both as to destination (from the mountain rainfall) and the source of living beings. The *yang*, of course, is the *sun*, the *dry*, also called “the mountain”. Indeed, Lao-tzu compares the water of nature to the wise humans. Both dwell in lowly places, close to the earth which he characterizes as Mother, the originator of life - so it is not unexpected that the word we call “humility”. literally means “earth”. Also called *humus*. Neither water nor earth competes, rather both adapt themselves to the “obstacles”, such as rocks, ultimately “wearing them down” so that in spite of themselves the self-styled “obstacles” become earth, loamy soil again which the flooding and flowing river deposits back upon its banks, refurbishing soil life and, thus, nourishing plant life and growth.

Okakura provides us with a Japanese perspective on the origin and historical meaning of *Tao*:

... after the disintegration of the Chou dynasty and the establishment of innumerable independent kingdoms...(the *Tao*) was able to blossom forth in the luxuriance of free thought. Lao-tzu and Soshi (Chuang-tzu) were both Southerners and the greatest exponents of the New School. On the other hand, Confucius with his numerous disciples aimed at retaining ancestral conventions. Taoism cannot be understood without some knowledge of Confucianism and vice versa.

We have said that the Taoist absolute was the relative. In ethics the Taoist railed at the laws and moral codes of society, for to them right and wrong were but relative terms. Definition is always limitation - the “fixed” and “unchangeless” are but terms expressive of a stoppage of growth. Said Kuzugen, “The wise people move the world”. Our standards of morality are begotten of the past needs of society, but is society to remain always the same? The observance of communal traditions involves a constant sacrifice of the individual to the state. Education, in order to keep up the mighty delusion, encourages a species of ignorance. People are not taught to be really virtuous, but to behave properly. We are wicked because we are frightfully self-conscious. We never forgive others because we know that we ourselves are in the wrong. We nurse a conscience because we are afraid to tell the truth to others; we take refuge in pride because we are afraid to tell the truth to ourselves. How can one be serious with the world when the world itself is so ridiculous! The spirit of barter is everywhere. Honor and chastity! Behold the complacent salesman retailing the good and true. One can even buy a so-called religion, which is really but common morality sanctified with flowers and music. Rob the church of her accessories and what remains behind? Yet the trusts thrive marvelously, for the prices are assuredly cheap - a prayer for a ticket to heaven, a diploma for an honorable citizenship. Hide

yourself under a bushel quickly, for if your real usefulness were known to the world you would soon be knocked down to the highest bidder by the public auctioneer. Why do men and women like to advertise themselves so much? Is it not but an instinct derived from the days of slavery?

(quote to the *Tao* notes as taken from Okakura's *The Book of Tea*)

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