

# TAO TE CHING

COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL



# CONTENTS

I	What is the Tao	6
II	Self-Development	8
III	Quieting People	10
IV	Tao, Without Origin	12
V	Impartiality	14
VI	The Infinitude of Creative Effort	16
VII	Humility	18
VIII	The Nature of Goodness	20
IX	Moderation	22
X	What is Possible	24
XI	The Value of Non-Existence	26
XII	Avoiding Desire	28
XIII	Loathing Shame	30
XIV	In Praise of The Profound	32
XV	That Which Reveals Teh	34
XVI	Returning to the Source	36
XVII	Simplicity of Habit	38

# CONTENTS

XVIII	The Palliation of The Inferior	40
XIX	Return to Simplicity	42
XX	The Opposite of the Commonplace	44
XXI	The Heart of Emptiness	46
XXII	Increase by Humility	48
XXIII	Emptiness and Not-Doing (Wu Wei)	50
XXIV	Troubles and Merit	52
XXV	Describing the Mysterious	54
XXVI	The Virtue (Teh) of Dignity	56
XXVII	The Function of Skill	58
XXVIII	Returning to Simplicity	60
XXIX	Not Forcing Things (Wu Wei)	62
XXX	Be Stingy of War	64
XXXI	Avoiding War	66
XXXII	The Virtue (Teh) of Holiness	68
XXXIII	The Virtue (Teh) of Discrimination	70
XXXIV	The Perfection of Trust	72
XXXV	The Virtue (Teh) of Benevolence	74
XXXVI	Explanation of a Paradox	76
XXXVII	Administering the Government	78
XXXVIII	A Discussion About Teh	80
XXXIX	The Root of Authority	82
XL	Avoiding Activity	84
XLI	The Unreality of Appearance	86
XLII	The Transformation of Tao	88
XLIII	The Function of the Universal	90

XLIV	Precepts	92
XLV	The Virtue (Teh) of Greatness	94
XLVI	Limitation of Desire	96
XLVII	Seeing the Distant	98
XLVIII	To Forget Knowledge	100
XLIX	The Virtue (Teh) of Trust	102
L	Esteem Life	104
LI	Teh as a Nurse	106
LII	Return to Origin	108
LIII	Gain by Insight	110
LIV	To Cultivate Intuition	112
LV	To Verify the Mysterious	114
LVI	The Teh of the Mysterious	116
LVII	The Habit of Simplicity	118
LVIII	Adaptation to Change	120
LIX	To Keep Tao	122
LX	To Maintain Position	124
LXI	The Teh of Humility	126
LXII	The Practice of Tao	128
LXIII	A Consideration of Beginnings	130
LXIV	Consider the Insignificant	132
LXV	The Teh of Simplicity	134
LXVI	To Subordinate Self	136
LXVII	Three Treasures	138
LXVIII	Compliance With Heaven	140
LXIX	The Function of the Mysterious	142
LXX	The Difficulty of Understanding	144

## CONTENTS

LXXI	The Disease of Knowledge	146
LXXII	To Cherish One's Self	148
LXXIII	Action is Dangerous	150
LXXIV	Overcoming Delusions	152
LXXV	Loss by Greediness	154
LXXVI	Beware of Strength	156
LXXVII	Tao of Heaven	158
LXXVIII	Trust and Faith	160
LXXIX	Enforcing Contracts	162
LXXX	Contentment	164
LXXXI	The Nature of the Essential	166

# I



# WHAT IS THE TAO

The Tao that can be understood cannot be the primal, or cosmic, Tao, just as an idea that can be expressed in words cannot be the infinite idea.

And yet this ineffable Tao was the source of all spirit and matter, and being expressed was the mother of all created things.

Therefore not to desire the things of sense is to know the freedom of spirituality; and to desire is to learn the limitation of matter. These two things spirit and matter, so different in nature, have the same origin. This unity of origin is the mystery of mysteries, but it is the gateway to spirituality.

# II



# SELF- DEVELOPMENT



When every one recognizes beauty to be only a masquerade, then it is simply ugliness. In the same way goodness, if it is not sincere, is not goodness. So existence and non-existence are incompatible. The difficult and easy are mutually opposites. Just as the long and the short, the high and the low, the loud and soft, the before and the behind, are all opposites and each reveals the other.

Therefore the wise man is not conspicuous in his affairs or given to much talking. Though troubles arise he is not irritated. He produces but does not own; he acts but claims no merit; he builds but does not dwell therein; and because he does not dwell therein he never departs.

# III



# QUIETING PEOPLE

Neglecting to praise the worthy deters people from emulating them; just as not prizing rare treasures deters a man from becoming a thief; or ignoring the things which awaken desire keeps the heart at rest.

Therefore the wise ruler does not suggest unnecessary things, but seeks to satisfy the minds of his people. He seeks to allay appetites but strengthen bones. He ever tries by keeping people in ignorance to keep them satisfied and those who have knowledge he restrains from evil. If he, himself, practices restraint then everything is in quietness.

# IV



## TAO, WITHOUT ORIGIN

The Tao appears to be emptiness but it is never exhausted. Oh, it is profound! It appears to have preceded everything. It dulls its own sharpness, unravels its own fetters, softens its own brightness, identifies itself with its own dust.

Oh, it is tranquil! It appears infinite; I do not know from what it proceeds. It even appears to be antecedent to the Lord.

# V



# IMPARTIALITY

Heaven and earth are not like humans, they are impartial. They regard all things as insignificant, as though they were playthings made of straw. The wise man is also impartial. To him all men are alike and unimportant. The space between heaven and earth is like a bellows, it is empty but does not collapse; it moves and more and more issues. A gossip is soon empty, it is doubtful if he can be impartial.

# VI



## THE INFINITUDE OF CREATIVE EFFORT



The Spirit of the perennial spring is said to be immortal, she is called the Mysterious One. The Mysterious One is typical of the source of heaven and earth. It is continually and endlessly issuing and without effort.

# VII



# HUMILITY

Heaven is eternal, earth is lasting. The reason why heaven and earth are eternal and lasting is because they do not live for themselves; that is the reason they will ever endure.

Therefore the wise man will keep his personality out of sight and because of so doing he will become notable. He subordinates his personality and therefore it is preserved.

Is it not because he is disinterested, that his own interests are conserved?

# VIII



## THE NATURE OF GOODNESS

True goodness is like water, in that it benefits everything and harms nothing. Like water it ever seeks the lowest place, the place that all others avoid. It is closely kin to the Tao.

For a dwelling it chooses the quiet meadow; for a heart the circling eddy. In generosity it is kind; in speech it is sincere; in authority it is order; in affairs it is ability; in movement it is rhythm.

Inasmuch as it is always peaceable it is never rebuked.

# IX



# MODERATION

Continuing to fill a pail after it is full the water will be wasted. Continuing to grind an axe after it is sharp will soon wear it away.

Who can protect a public hall crowded with gold and jewels? The pride of wealth and position brings about their own misfortune. To win true merit, to preserve just fame, the personality must be retiring. This is the heavenly Tao.

X



WHAT IS POSSIBLE



By patience the animal spirits can be disciplined. By self-control one can unify the character. By close attention to the will, compelling gentleness, one can become like a little child. By purifying the subconscious desires one may be without fault. In ruling his country, if the wise magistrate loves his people, he can avoid compulsion.

In measuring out rewards, the wise magistrate will act like a mother bird. While sharply penetrating into every corner, he may appear to be unsuspecting. While quickening and feeding his people, he will be producing but without pride of ownership. He will benefit but without claim of reward. He will persuade, but not compel by force. This is *teh*, the profoundest virtue.