

39. There are Those Who have been living in Unity with Tao since ancient times. Thanks to Them, the sky is pure and the earth is stable, nature is gentle and rivers are full of water, valleys are covered with flowers, all living beings multiply, and the heroes of the spiritual Path are paragons of virtue. All this is provided by Those Who Have Achieved the Unity!

If They did not help, then the sky would cease to be pure and the earth would crack all over, nature would cease giving its beauty to all the living, valleys would stop blooming and turn into deserts, all living beings would stop multiplying and disappear, and the heroes of the spiritual Path would not be paragons of virtue and would be ridiculed and banished...

People are a base for their rulers. Therefore, those earthly rulers who elevate themselves do not have a strong base. This happens because they do not consider people as their base. It is their mistake.

If you disassemble the chariot that you ride, what would you be left with?

Do not regard yourself as precious jasper! Be simple, like a common stone!

40. The interaction of opposites is the sphere of Tao's activity.

The *Highest Subtlety* is one of the most important qualities of Tao. It is opposed by the coarse qualities of evil people.

All the development of incarnate beings happens with the interaction of these opposites.

However, the world of matter itself originated from the *Subtlest Source*...

41. The wise, having learned about Tao, aspire to self-realization in It.

The unwise, having learned about Tao, sometimes remember about It and sometimes forget about It.

Foolish people, having learned about Tao, ridicule It. They regard Those Who have cognized Tao as insane... They regard the wisdom as insanity..., the higher justice as vice..., the righteousness as depravity..., the great truth as falsity...

Yes, the great square has no corners, the great sound cannot be heard, the great image cannot be seen...

Yes, Tao is hidden from idle looks. It leads only those to Perfection who are worthy of it!

42. Once, One came out from Tao. He took with Himself Two others. Those Two took Three others. And They all began to create various forms of life on the planet.²²

All creatures are subdivided into pairs of opposites – *yin* and *yang* – and are filled with *chi*. All further development comes from their interactions.

Everyone is afraid of *loneliness* and views it as suffering. This concerns earthly rulers as well.

They care only about themselves and refuse to help others.

However, the correct decision is to dedicate oneself to *caring about others*, thereby forgetting about oneself.

Wise spiritual seekers who dedicate their lives to the good of all will not be conquered by death. I prefer these words to all the other precepts of all the sages!

Those Who have attained Tao are merged into *One* in It.

²² Lao Tse tells here about several Holy Spirits (Te) Who guided the evolution of souls on our planet.

43. It happens that the weakest defeat the strongest. The reason for this is that Te is present everywhere, pervades everything, and controls everything.

This is why I view *non-doing* as beneficial.

There is nothing in the world that can be compared, by its importance, to the teachings about the *inner quietness* and the benefit of *non-doing*!

44. What is more necessary: life or glory? What is more valuable: life or wealth? What hurts more: gain or loss?

If you accumulate much, you will lose much!

Show moderation and you will avoid failures. Show moderation and there will be no risk. Thus, you can live life in calm, without worries!

The one who shows moderation does not suffer failure. The one who knows when to stop avoids affliction. Thanks to this, such a person can manage to cognize Primordial and Eternal Tao.

45. People may confuse the Greatest Perfection with insanity, great volume with void, great curvature with straightness, great humor with foolishness, a great speaker with the one unable to speak.

Intense movement overcomes cold. Stillness overcomes heat.

Only calm and harmony can ensure the correct understanding of everything that happens in the world.

46. If a country lives according to the laws of Tao, then horses are used for tilling land.

But if a nation renounces Tao, then war-horses run in the fields.

There is no greater affliction than uncontrolled worldly passions! Nothing destroys man more than the desire to multiply worldly treasures!

Those who are satisfied with what they have are always happy!

47. The wise cognize the world without leaving home. Without looking from a window, they see Primordial Tao. To learn more, they do not need to travel far.

The wise do not travel, yet know everything. They do not look, yet can describe everything. They seem to be non-acting, yet achieve everything.

In *the heart*, they find everything that is necessary.²³

This is why the wise know the things that cannot be reached by walking. And they can see that which is invisible to the common eye.

48. They who learn increase their knowledge every day. They who serve Tao decrease their worldly desires. By constantly decreasing worldly desires, one can achieve *non-doing*.

Only in *non-doing* one can master all the mysteries of the universe! Without *non-doing*, one cannot achieve this.

49. The wise have no selfish motives. They live in caring about others.

To good people I do good, to the unkind I also wish good. This is the goodness of Te.

With honest people I am honest, and with the dishonest I am also honest. This is the honesty of Te.

The wise live in calm in their country. Yet, in the same land, other people live: both good and evil, honest and dishonest, reasonable and foolish, selfish and selfless, those who listen to Tao and those who deny it.

²³ Here the author means not the physical but spiritual heart, developed through the methods of buddhi yoga to a large size. Inside this heart one cognizes Tao. From this heart one finds ways leading to other beings.

The wise view people as their children.

50. People are born on the Earth and die. Out of ten, about a third continue onto paradisiacal existence, a third go to hell by the path of death, and a third are those who have not succeeded in the development of the soul due to attachments to worldly affairs.

Those who have mastered the *true life* while living on the Earth are not afraid of rhinoceroses or tigers, in the battle they are not afraid of armed soldiers. A rhinoceros has no place to plunge its horn into them, a tiger has no place to fasten its claws onto them, a soldier has no place to stab them with a sword. It is so because to them there is no death!²⁴

51. Tao creates beings, Te nurses them, raises them, helps them to develop, to mature, takes care of them, and supports them.

These beings grow (as souls), develop, and achieve Perfection.

Therefore, there is no person who would not be obliged to worship Tao and Te.

Tao and Te coerce no one, They give to all beings the possibility to develop naturally, according to their own freedom of will.

To create without feeling ownership of what was created, to make something without boasting, to be older than others and yet not command them, these are the principles of life of Great Te.

52. Everything in the material world has its Source, Which is the Mother of the material world.

²⁴ The one who has become a large spiritual heart (with the help of the methods of buddhi yoga) or has even merged with Tao, quite naturally feels oneself as non-corporeal. Such a person — as a large consciousness — cannot be wounded by animals or weapons. Such a One is Immortal.

When the Mother is cognized, it is easier to recognize Her Children²⁵.

Knowing the Children, one should not forget about the Mother. Then one lives life without troubles.

If one abandons personal desires and becomes free from worldly passions, then such a one lives without getting tired.

On the other hand, if one indulges in passions and becomes immersed in worldly affairs, then troubles are unavoidable.

To see the *Subtlest* is the true *clearness of vision*.

The preservation of the *subtlety of the consciousness* ensures true power.

Contemplate the Light of Tao! Cognize Its *Depths*! It is the true Treasure! Do not lose It, and you will avoid many troubles!

53. The one who possesses the true knowledge walks the Straight Path.

The only thing that I am afraid of is to be absorbed in vanity.

The Straight Path is absolutely straight. Yet, people prefer... meandering trails.

If earthly rulers direct all their attention to the luxury of their palaces, then fields become overgrown with weeds and granaries become empty. Such earthly rulers wear luxurious clothes and sharp swords, they are not satisfied with simple food, they accumulate too much wealth for themselves. This is equal to a robbery and is a violation of the principles of life that are suggested by Tao.

²⁵ Te.

54. By cognizing yourself, you cognize others. By helping others, you will cognize everything.

The one who can stand firmly cannot be overturned. The one who can lean against a support cannot be knocked down. Yes, such a person will be remembered by descendants!

When you achieve a similar stability in Tao, you will shine on others with Its Light like the rising sun!

Try to provide help in this to your family, to people living in your country and everywhere! By doing this you will gain great power of the consciousness!

How have I cognized all this? In this exact way...

55. Those who live in Mergence with Great Te are pure like newborn babies. Poisonous insects do not sting them, snakes do not bite them, wild animals and birds do not attack them. They have refined themselves as consciousnesses and are firmly merged with Tao.

They evaluate people not by their gender or by other outer qualities, but by looking at people's essence: at the soul.

They also perceive others as integral parts of the *Whole*²⁶, in *Unity*.

And They possess the ability to initiate spiritual growth in people.

They can preach all day long without straining their voice because They stay in constant Mergence with Tao!

In this way, They live in happiness!

Common people, on the contrary, having reached the prime of life, immediately begin to fade in old age. It happens because they have not achieved Mergence with Tao.

²⁶ Of the Absolute. (More details can be found in [6]).

56. The truth cannot be conveyed only through words! The one who does not understand this cannot fully understand this treatise!²⁷

Those who abandon personal desires, who become free from worldly passions, who reduce personal needs, who achieve clear understanding, who do not aspire to glory, who stay in the subtlest state of the consciousness, represent Primordial and Deepest Tao.

They cannot be tempted, offended, forced, or persuaded to glorification. No one can harm Them!

They shine like the sun! They are like a source that everyone can drink from!

They are the Highest Treasure among people!

57. From Tao originates calm, harmony, and justice.

Yet, among people, there is selfishness, guile, falsity, and violence...

One can enter Tao only through *non-doing*.

When people aspire to accumulation of a multitude of unnecessary things, they become poor spiritually.

When they produce too many weapons, then robbery and disorder unavoidably arise.

When crafty masters direct all their efforts at creating material valuables, then miraculous phenomena cease to happen in such a country.

When laws and repressions become too strict, then the number of unsatisfied people and the opposition grow.

This is why the wise abandon vanity and let everything happen by itself.

²⁷ One can fully understand the truth only by realizing, in practice, everything that is described here.

One has to begin changing the world by changing oneself. If I aspire to quietness and calm, others become calm observing me. If I do not aspire to possessing many material boons, people around me begin to be satisfied with little. If I live without worldly attachments and passions, people around me come to simplicity and naturalness of life.

58. If earthly rulers rule in calm and harmony, people too are calm and peaceful, and they do not aspire to anything outside this wellbeing...

On the contrary, if earthly rulers act with irritation and aggressiveness, then people begin to suffer. Then wellbeing is replaced with troubles and calamities. And people begin to seek the way out, and some of them find it by coming to *non-doing* and becoming immersed into the Light of Infinite Tao. Thus, luck and happiness may result from affliction.

As we can see, happiness and unhappiness give birth to each other...

The wise are always calm, gentle, and just. They do not want to take anything away from others. They are selfless and do not harm anyone. They are honest and live in harmony with Tao, with nature, and with other people.

They are bright but do not glitter.

59. In order to serve Tao successfully by helping other people, one needs to be able to preserve and to accumulate the power of the consciousness. This requires renouncing everything that wastes this power.

Such a renunciation at the higher stages of the Path helps one to grow one's own *Power of Te*, which can become inexhaustible and can help one to cognize Tao completely.

And Tao is the Eternal and Infinite Primordial Foundation of every man and of the entire material world.

The way that unites man with this Foundation is called *root*.

60. The activity of Tao and Te in relation to numerous individual souls of different ages can be likened to cooking a meal of many ingredients in a large cauldron.

As for the majority of people, when realizing the destinies that these people deserve, Tao and Te use spirits, including spirits of lower levels of development.

But if one approaches Tao by the quality of the soul, then such a person goes beyond the sphere of influence of these spirits.

61. The Great Kingdom of Tao²⁸ is located as if behind the mouth of a river.

The *Ocean* is below all rivers, therefore all rivers flow into It.

The *Ocean* is calm and patient. It *waits* for Those Who will approach It and enter It.

The *Ocean* is the *Great Kingdom*. But on the Earth there are small kingdoms composed of people.

The *Great Kingdom* takes care of satisfying all Those Who enter It.

So, let the rulers of small kingdoms also take care that all their people be satisfied.

Then all people will receive everything that they want, both in the *Great Kingdom* and in the small kingdoms.

And let us remember that the Great always has to be below all.

62. Tao is the deepest Base of everything. It is the Treasure of those aspiring to It. But it also acknowledges the existence of evil people.

²⁸ Also known as the Abode of the Creator.

Yes, one has to preach to all people about purity and kind behavior. However, are not evil people necessary?

They help one to cognize the ephemerality of worldly treasures and the illusiveness of hopes for eternally staying on the Earth in one's present body.

In interaction with them, people of goodness make efforts in changing themselves on the Path to Tao in order to become as far from evil as possible. After all, in order to become unreachable by evil, one must perform concrete actions on developing oneself as a consciousness...²⁹

Many people would not strive to become better if evil people did not "help" them!

Earthly rulers, possessing absolute power, and those closest to them value jewelry and luxurious chariots. However, in reality, they are not better than those who live in solitude and calm and who walk the *Deepest Path* to Tao! Wouldn't it be better for those earthly rulers to start leading a calm life and to dedicate it to cognition of Tao?

People say that in ancient times no one aspired to worldly wealth, and criminals were not executed. In those ancient times, people worshipped Tao...

63. Rid yourself of the bustle of the mind and unnecessary actions, keep calm, and be satisfied with simple food!

Thus one begins walking the Path towards cognition of Great Tao, Which is *the One Whole* consisting of many Great Souls.

There are also many small souls that get incarnated into bodies.

²⁹ Such examples are given in [5,18].

Having cognized this, the wise know that one should requite hatred with good.

Start difficult work with an easy beginning. Every great work consists of small components. In this way—gradually—one fulfills great tasks.

If someone promises to perform great work quickly, such a person cannot be trusted...

But the wise never start “great undertakings” in the world of matter! This is why they can perform great work in the spiritual world. It is not hard for them.

64. It is easy to help those who have mastered harmony.

It is easy to show the way to a seeker who has not found it yet. However, one has to remember that a weak person can easily fall off the Path, and the one who is a weak soul will run away from difficulties.

It is better to begin constructing where you do not need to destroy old walls. It is better to introduce spiritual knowledge where you are not attacked by angry and foolish people.

And then, a great tree grows from a small sapling, a nine-story tower begins to be constructed from a handful of earth, a journey of a thousand *li* begins with one step.

In the world of matter, entrepreneurs go bankrupt, owners of property lose it. This is why the wise do not act like this and thus do not suffer failures. They possess nothing and thus have nothing to lose.

The wise do not live in worldly passions, do not strive to gain something material that requires much effort. They live in natural simplicity and are satisfied with what is refused by other people.

They walk the Path to Tao.

65. Those who have cognized Tao do not exhibit themselves in front of the ignorant. They also refuse to

“rule the crowd”, and therefore they can continue their personal development and helping deserving people.

Confidential higher knowledge about the methods of the development of the consciousness can be harmful to people who are not ready to receive it.

The wise who know about this and act according to this knowledge become examples for others.

Thus acts Great Te.

In order to understand this, one has to recognize that Great Te is the Opposite of evil people. Great Te is located at an unreachable distance in relation to such people.

This is what Great Te is! It possesses the Highest Power and takes care of all the multitude of living beings! It unites and separates people, It controls everything! It is the Ruler deserving the strongest love and respect!

By learning from It, you will achieve the highest wellbeing!

66. Great rivers are so powerful because they flow down into the sea, accumulating in themselves water from the entire neighborhood.

Likewise, the wise who desire to help people have to put themselves below others. This is why despite being superior, they are not a burden to people, and people do not harm them. People gladly follow them and do not turn away from them.

They do not compete with anyone, therefore they are unconquerable.

They constantly advance further, yet people do not envy them.

They do not struggle against anyone, and thus no one in the whole world can force them to act against their will.

67. Tao is Great and has no equals or anything similar to It!

It resides so *deeply* and is so *subtle* that no one can catch It or force It to do something!

I possess three treasures that I value: the first is love for people, the second is frugality, and the third is that I do not dare to be ahead of others. I love people, thus I can be brave. I am frugal, thus I can be generous. I do not dare to be ahead of others, thus I can be a wise leader.

All those who are brave without love, generous without frugality, or try to be ahead of others and push them away, suffer failure.

On the contrary, those who are full of love achieve victory and become unconquerable because Tao constantly guards such people.

68. A wise leader is never bellicose. A wise soldier never gets angry. The one who knows how to win does not attack first. The one who knows how to lead people does not humiliate them but puts oneself in a lower position.

Such are the laws of Te that reject anger, self-praise, and violence. This is the way of acting of Those Who represent Te and guide people to Primordial and Eternal Tao.

69. Military art teaches: I do not begin first, I have to wait. I do not advance even an inch, but rather retreat a foot. This is called acting without action, winning without violence. In this case, I have no enemies, thus, I can avoid wasting power.

There is no affliction worse than hating enemies! Hatred towards enemies is the path leading to the loss of the most important – Tao!

Therefore, those who avoid battles come out victorious.

70. My words are easy to understand and to realize. Yet, many people cannot understand them and cannot realize them.

Behind my words, there is the *Origin* of everything. But those people do not know It, thus they do not understand me.

The one who has cognized Tao is quiet and unnoticeable, though behaves with dignity. Such a person wears simple clothes and hides the treasure³⁰ within.

71. The one who possesses knowledge and keeps silence about it is honorable.

The one who has no knowledge, yet pretends to know is not healthy.

Those who are wise heal themselves. The wise never fall ill because they rid themselves of the causes of illnesses. They abide in Tao. How can they be ill then?

72. The one who lives with fear cannot become strong. The strength of the consciousness can only be gained if one lives without fear.

Also, rid yourself of the ability to despise others! The one who despises others is despicable in front of Tao!

Rid yourself of violence in relations with others! The one who does violence to others will be subjected to violence.

Renounce the ability to deceive people! The one who deceives others deceives oneself.³¹

Live in love!

³⁰ Wisdom.

³¹ Because such a person does not take into account God and His principles of the formation of people's destinies.

Do not strive to show yourself off! The one who has cognized one's own Higher Essence is not engaged in self-admiration and does not elevate oneself above others.

The one who has gotten rid of egocentrism gains an opportunity to achieve Tao.

73. The one who is brave and bellicose will be killed. The one who is brave but is not bellicose will live.

What is the reason for disliking bellicose people? Even a sage has difficulty explaining it.

Great Tao abides in calm, It does not fight against anyone. It wins without violence.

Great Tao is silent, yet It answers questions and comes to those who call It.

In calm, Great Tao controls everything.

Great Tao selects worthy people for Itself.

74. It makes no sense to threaten to kill a person who is not afraid of death.

But the one who threatens others with death and takes pleasure in this will be destroyed.

The subject of life and death is under the control of Tao alone. No one is allowed to control it instead of Tao! The one who decides to do such a thing only harms oneself.

75. Looking at the majority of people, one may think that they are constantly hungry. For they are always concerned with accumulation and multiplication of their supplies and they cannot stop in this activity!

In all affairs, they aspire only to personal profit, by any means!

They do not understand the principles of life suggested by Tao about loving others and caring about them, about *non-doing*.

They live without looking at Tao, ignoring Tao, wasting their vital force doing things that have no true value. Their “love for life” is too strong, therefore they die too early.

On the contrary, those who neglect their earthly lives for the sake of everyone’s good, increase the value of their lives before Tao.

76. The body of man at birth is gentle and flexible, but after death it becomes hard. All vegetal beings are also gentle and flexible at birth, but after death they become dry and easily broken.

A powerful tree either breaks in a storm or is cut down by an axe. A flexible and gentle tree has an advantage here.

The one who is gentle and flexible walks the path of life. The one who is not gentle and flexible walks the path of death.

77. Let the Life of Primordial Tao be an example for us!

The one who does violence to people, who humiliates and robs them opposes Tao.

But the one who never acts selfishly, who gives one’s own surplus to others, who performs deeds not for the sake of glory, who lives with calm and without worldly passions, who submerges into the tender and subtle calm of Tao and helps deserving people on this Path, such a person becomes similar to Tao.

78. Water is gentle and yielding, yet it erodes away that which is hard. Nothing compares to it in overcoming that which is hard.

Gentle and tender overcome hard and coarse. Only wise people understand the essence of this statement...

79. A big emotional disturbance has consequences. That is why calm can be regarded as good.

And, therefore, the wise give an oath not to condemn anyone.

Kind people live in accordance with this rule; evil people do not.

Primordial Tao is always on the side of kind people.

80. About the state structure, I think the following:

It is good if a country is small and its population is sparse.

Even if there are many weapons, they should not be used. War ships and chariots should not be used either. Warriors should not wage war.

One has to make life in a country such that people do not want to leave this country.

It is good if everyone has tasty food, beautiful clothes, cozy houses, and a joyful life.

It is good to look with love at neighboring states, to listen to how roosters crow there and dogs bark.

It is good if people, having reached an old age, recognize Perfection and leave this world so that they do not need to return here again.

81. The right words are not necessarily elegant. Beautiful words are not necessarily trustable.

A kind person is not necessarily eloquent. An eloquent person is not necessarily kind.

Those who know do not argue, those who do not know argue.

The wise are not selfish, they act for the good of others.

Great Tao is concerned about the welfare of all living beings. Everything that Tao does towards living beings does not contain violence and does not harm anyone.

The wise also act without violence and do not harm anyone.