

Lao Tse

Tao Te Ching

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The book Tao Te Ching was written by great Chinese spiritual adept Lao Tse about 2500 years ago. In that incarnation, Lao Tse was a disciple of non-incarnate Huang Di¹ and achieved full spiritual self-realization. At present time, Lao Tse provides spiritual help to incarnate people.

The work on creating this edition of translation of Tao Te Ching was done at personal request of Lao Tse² and with His help.

The book Tao Te Ching is one of the most fundamental textbooks on philosophy and methodology of spiritual development.

¹ One can find more details in the books *Classics of Spiritual Philosophy and the Present* and *How God Can Be Cognized. Book 2. Autobiographies of God's Disciples* under editorship of Vladimir Antonov.

² In this request He added that a competent translation of Tao Te Ching could be made only by a person who traversed the entire Path to the cognition of Tao.

1. One cannot cognize Tao³ only by speaking about It.

One cannot name by a human name that Origin of the sky and earth Which is the Mother of everything.

Only he who is free from worldly passions can see It; and he who has such passions can see only Its Creation.

Tao and Its Creation are One in essence, though called by different names. The passage which exists between them is a door to all the miraculous.

2. When people know the beautiful, they understand also what is ugly.

When they learn what is good, they realize also what is evil.

In this way, beingness and non-beingness, hard and easy, long and short, high and low all knowing each other.

³ Synonyms of this word of Chinese origin are Primordial Consciousness, Creator, God-the-Father, Allah, Svarog, etc.

Different sounds mix and create harmony. And so the preceding and the succeeding follow each other harmoniously.

The wise prefers *non-doing*⁴ and lives in *quietness*⁵. Everything happens around such a person as if by itself. He is not attached to anything on the Earth. He does not own anything made by him. He is not proud about his works.

Since he does not exalt himself, does not boast, does not require special respect from others — he is pleasant to all.

3. If the chosen are not exalted, no one envies them. If material treasures are not praised, no one steals them. In other words, if the objects of passions are not shown off, there are no temptations.

The wise ruler does not create such temptations to people but takes care that people have

⁴ That is the calm of mind and body including stopping of the flow of thoughts. It allows mastering the art of meditation and developing oneself as a consciousness. (Those who are not used to the word *non-doing*, can mentally replace it with the word *meditation*, when reading this text).

⁵ Here Lao Tse means *inner quietness*, which is called *hesychia* in Greek. The ancient direction of the Christian mysticism *Hesychasm* is named after it (see the book *Ecopsychology* by Vladimir Antonov).

enough food. This eliminates passions and strengthens people's health. The wise ruler always strives to prevent temptations and passions and does not let evil people act.

The absence of these problems brings calm.

4. Tao looks like void. Yet, It is omnipotent!

It is in the *Depth*.⁶

It is the Origin of everything.

It controls everything.

It pervades everything.

It is *Shining Light*.

It is the *subtlest*!

It is the Main Essence of everything!

One cannot describe Its origin, for It is Primal.

5. The matter — both in the sky and on the earth — is dispassionate toward all creatures, be they plants, animals, people. Though, it is the base of all of them.

In the same way, the wise is dispassionate toward others.

The space above the earth is void and free like the space inside a bellows or a flute. The

⁶ In the depth of multidimensional space. In other words, at the *subtle* end of the multidimensional scale.

more there is space for action, the more efficient the action can be.

He, who interferes with actions of others and talks too much becomes unbearable for people.

Therefore, it is always better to follow the principle of non-interference and keep inner calm.

6. The life and development of the *Subtlest*⁷ are eternal and infinite.

It is the *Deepest Base* of everything.

On It the material world exists.

It acts without violence.

7. The sky and the Earth are lasting. They last long because they exist not on themselves and *not for the sake of themselves*. They are created by Tao and exist *for It*.

The wise places himself behind others and thus does not hinder other people and can lead them. He does not treasure the life of his body, but his life is guarded by Tao.

This happens because he also exists here *not for the sake of himself*. This is why his personal needs get realized *for him*.

The wise exists *for Tao* and serves It.

⁷ Tao.

8. The wise lives like water. Water serves all beings and does not require anything for itself. It exists below all things. In this respect, it is similar to Tao.

Life has to follow the principle of naturalness.

Follow the *path of heart!* Be friendly!

Tell only truth!

When guiding others, follow the principle of being calm!

Every action has to be realizable and done in time.

He who does not strive to be ahead of others can avoid many mistakes.

9. One should not pour water into a full vessel. And there is no sense to sharpen the edge too much. And if the room is overfilled with gold and jasper who will guard it?

Excessiveness in everything leads to troubles.

When the work is finished, one should retire.

Such are the laws of harmony suggested by Tao.

10. In order to maintain calm, one has to feel *Unity with Everything*⁸. Then one does not develop false egocentric desires.

⁸ Feeling of being an integral part of the Absolute.

One has to refine the consciousness. Let man become in this respect similar to a newborn baby. He who became so subtle becomes free from delusions.⁹

One has to rule the country and people with love for them and without violence.

The gate from the world of matter to the hidden world is open when one is in calm. Understanding of this truth comes in *non-doing*.

To educate without violence, to create without boasting, to produce without possessing the products, to be older than others and do not command them: this is the true righteousness of the Great Te¹⁰!

11. Thirty spokes are united in one wheel. But the use of wheel depends also on the space between the spokes.

Vessels are made of clay. Yet their usefulness depends on the empty space inside them.

Buildings consist of walls, doors, windows. Yet the building's usefulness depends also on the space in it.

⁹ Only through this one can cognize Tao.

¹⁰ I.e., the higher morality suggested by Te — by the Holy Spirit (Brahman).

This is the relation between usefulness of objects and emptiness.

12. He who sees only five colors in the world is like the blind.

He who hears only the sounds of the material world is similar to the deaf.

He who partakes only of material food and feels only its taste is deluded.

He who rushes at full speed after his prey is insane.

By accumulating wealth and adornments, people act to the detriment of themselves.

The efforts of the wise are directed at having enough food, and not at accumulating many objects. He, satisfied with little in the world of matter, chooses the *Primordial*.

13. Glory and disgrace are equally feared of. Fame is a great distress in life.

What does it mean that glory and disgrace are equally feared of? It means that people fight for glory and then fear to lose it.

And what does it mean that fame is a great distress in life? It means that I suffer great distress because I treasure my name.

When I cease treasuring my name, I will have no distress.

Thus, the wise does not seek praise from people. He just serves them self-sacrificingly. Therefore, he can live among people in peace. He does not fight with anyone for something — therefore he is invincible.

14. If you look at Tao, you cannot notice It immediately. This is why It is called hard-to-be-seen.

If you listen to Tao, you cannot hear It immediately. This is why It is called hard-to-be-heard.

If you try to grasp Tao, you cannot reach It. This is why It is called hard-to-be-caught.

In Tao are Those Who fill you with delight!¹¹
All They in Tao are merged into *One*.

Tao is equal above and below.

Tao, infinite in size, cannot be called by the name of some of Them.

They come out from Tao manifesting Their Individualities and then come back to the state without individual manifestation — in It.

Tao has no corporeal image and face. Therefore, It is said of as hidden and mysterious.

¹¹ Holy Spirits Who come out from Tao and are coessential to It. In the Christian tradition, They are called, in the aggregate sense, the Holy Spirit.

Meeting Tao, I do not see Its face; following Tao, I do not see Its back.

By following strictly the primal Path of transformation of oneself as a consciousness, one can cognize that *Eternal Origin*. This Path is the Path to Tao.

15. Since ancient times, those capable of spiritual Enlightenment cognized hidden and hardly cognizable small and large steps of this Path.

Such seekers were hard to recognize. Let me just outline their appearance: they were cautious like man crossing a river in winter; they were circumspect, because they bewared strangers; they were alert, because they knew that one's time of staying on the Earth is limited; they were watchful as if they walked melting ice; they were simple; they were vast like a dale; they were hidden from idle looks.

They were those who in calm could transform dirty into pure.

They were those who contributed to the Evolution of Life.

They worshipped Tao and were satisfied with little in the world of matter. Not desiring much, they were satisfied with what they had and did not seek more.

16. Make *emptiness*¹² in yourself complete and achieve the full calm! Let everything around you move by itself. Let everyone bloom spiritually and advance to cognition of their true Essence¹³.

Those who cognized their true Essence — achieve full calm. Thus they attain the common *Abode of All Who Attained*¹⁴.

One's presence in this *Abode* has to become constant. He, who fulfilled this, is called Enlightened, Perfect, possessing the Higher Wisdom.

Those Who attained that *Abode* represent the *United "We"*, which is the *Highest Ruler*. That *Abode* is also called the *Sky*¹⁵. This is the Abode of Eternal Tao.

Tao is non-corporeal. It cannot be caught by anyone. Thus, It is invincible.

17. The *Highest Ruler* provides all His people with the possibility to develop the consciousness. But He does not seek to reward them with something "earthly". He also does not try to make people fear Him.

¹² Here it means the meditative Nirvanic state of Nirrodhi. In this state, the individual "I" completely disappears, dissolves in Tao.

¹³ Atman, Higher Self, Tao.

¹⁴ The Abode of the Creator.

¹⁵ Or Heaven.

Those who foolishly believe do not know about this. But those who cognized Him do not believe foolishly any more.

This truth is so profound!

Having achieved success, I go further, and a greater understanding about *Everything* opens to me.

18. If people in a country denied Great Tao, they begin to talk about 'humanism' and 'justice'... But in this situation, these talks are nothing more than hypocrisy!

In a similar way, when there is discord in the family, then there arise demands of "filial obedience" and "parent's love"...

And when in the whole country there is such disarray — there appear slogans of "patriotism" and "love for motherland"...

19. When falsity and hypocrisy of this kind are removed, people are much happier. Falsity, aspiration to wealth, theft, cruelty toward living beings — all these disappear when people possess true knowledge. It is so because the reason for all people's vices is a lack of knowledge. It is knowledge that makes people understand that it is their personal interest to be simple and kind, to control one's own worldly desires and liberate oneself from pernicious passions.

20. Cease to adhere to the objects to which you are attached — and you will be free from sorrow and self-pity! Only by living so, one can find the true *Base*¹⁶ in life! Isn't this goal worthy renouncing the common beliefs and habits?

So great is the difference between good and evil!

Do not do anything undesired unto others — with this single principle one can reduce chaos and establish order in the society.

But now... all people indulge in vanity... And the society is immersed in chaos...

I alone stay calm and do not elevate myself over people. I am similar to a child who was not born in this world of vanity.

All people are bound by worldly desires. I alone abandoned everything what they value. I am indifferent to this.

All people live in their egocentrism. I alone chose to get rid of it.

I flow as a Stream of Consciousness in Space and do not know when I will stop...

I cognize Tao *in my heart!* It is so *subtle!*

¹⁶ Tao.

I differ from others by valuing That Which created our lives.

21. Te comes out from Tao. And Tao abides in the *Primordial Depth*.

Te is That Which acts and drives. It is as mysterious and hidden as Tao. Yet It also exists!

It can assume a form.

It possesses Power. Its Power is superior to everything existing in this world.

Te can be seen. From ancient times till present, the Voice of Te sounds and tells the Will of the Creator to the entire material world.

Where can I see the countenance of Te? Everywhere!

22. Being satisfied with little, you can gain much. Seeking much you will go astray. The wise heeds this precept. If it could be so with all people!

The wise trusts not only his physical eyes — thus he can see *clearly*.

The wise does not think that he alone is right — thus he knows the truth.

He does not seek glory — yet people respect him.

He does not seek power — yet people follow him.

He does not struggle with anyone — thus no one can vanquish him.

He does not feel pity for himself — thus he can develop successfully.

Only he who does not seek to be ahead of others is capable of living in harmony with everyone.

The wise cares about everyone, and he becomes an example to all.

He does not praise himself — yet he is respectable.

He does not elevate himself — yet he is esteemed by others.

In ancient times, people said that the imperfect moves to becoming perfect. Are these words vain? No! Truly, by achieving *Unity* you come to Perfection!

23. Speak less and be simple!

Strong wind does not blow all the morning; strong rain does not continue all day long. What does this depend on? On the sky and earth.

The sky and earth, though large, cannot give birth to anything *eternal*. Neither can man. Therefore, it is better to serve *Eternal Tao*.

He who serves Tao with his deeds receives the right to attain Mergence with It.

He who has refined himself¹⁷ to the state of Te becomes coessential to Te.

He who has refined himself to the state of Tao becomes coessential to Tao.

He who is coessential to Te gains the bliss of Te.

He who is coessential to Tao gains the bliss of Tao.

But if he ceases to be deserving — he is deprived of this.

It is unwise to doubt this truth!

24. He who stands on tiptoes cannot stand for long.

He who walks with long strides cannot walk for long.

He who is seen by everyone cannot keep his power for long.

He who praises himself cannot win glory.

He who lives pitying himself becomes weak and cannot develop.

He who is envious cannot achieve success by himself.

He who praises himself cannot gain prestige.

¹⁷ Refined the consciousness (soul).

He who indulges in gluttony does meaningless things; everything irritates him. Such a person cannot find peace.

Looking from Tao, one can see that all this is caused by vicious desires. All this is an absurd behavior. Everyone turns away from such people.

Man who aspires to Mergence with Tao does not do anything like that.

25. Oh That Which was born before the sky and earth were created, living in calm, having no form, the subtlest, the only existing, abiding everywhere, boundless, invincible, the Mother of everything! You are called Tao. I call You also the Greatest, That Which is eternal in Its infinite development!

Man, earth, sky depend on Tao. But Tao exists by Itself.

26. Hard work allows one to achieve an easy life in future.

Yet we know also that calm is the main thing in movement.

Therefore, the wise works hard all day long and does not avoid hard work. Nevertheless, he stays in the state of perfect calm.

He can even live in luxury and does not get depraved by it.

Why the owner of 10 000 chariots is haughty and disdains the entire world? Disdain destroys the soul!

And the absence of calm leads to the loss of the *Base!*...

27. He who knows the Path can find the right direction even if there are no traces. He who can speak does not make mistakes. He who can count does not miscount. The best treasury has no lock, yet no one can open it. The best fetters are those which bind by nothing material, yet cannot be broken.

The wise can save people, and he saves them constantly. He can help and does not leave anyone in trouble without help. Thus acts the deep wisdom!

He also instructs people of evil, and they with his help can find the *Base*.

But if the people of evil do not value his help and do not like the *Base* — the wise leaves them: he does not value relations with such people.

This principle is very important!

28. If you are brave — be humble! And then the entire nation will follow you.

If you became a leader among people, let Great Te be your Guide. And be pure, gentle, and subtle by the soul — like a child!

Abiding in the good, do not forget about the existence of evil! And be an example of righteousness for everyone.

He who became such an example for everyone does not differ by the quality of the soul from Great Te. He moves then to the Mergence with the Eternal Tao.

Such a person, though knowing about his own achievements and merits, stays unknown — and he becomes a wise leader.

It is favorable that such a wise person be a leader among people — then there will be order in such a country.

29. Some people have a great desire to rule the entire world, and they try to succeed in this aspiration. I do not see how it can be possible, since the world is a container of wonderful, invincible Tao! And no one can rule Tao!

He, who aspires to this anyway, will fail for sure!

Everyone has a choice: to oppose the harmonious flow of the events of beingness or to follow it. The former struggle and lose strength; the latter bloom in harmony and strengthen.

The wise never aspires to power, glut, luxuries, prodigality.

30. A ruler faithful to Tao will not send his army to a foreign country. This would incur calamity onto him, first of all.¹⁸

The land where an army passed becomes desolated. After a war, lean years come.

A wise commander is never bellicose. A wise warrior never gets angry. He who can defeat the enemy does not attack. He who has achieved victory stops and does not do violence to the defeated enemies. The victorious does not praise himself. He wins, but does not feel proud. He does not like to wage wars. He wins because he is forced to fight. Though he wins, he is not bellicose.

If man in the prime of life begins to weaken and gets ill — this happens only because he has lived not in harmony with Tao. The life of such a person ends before the due time.

31. Weapon is a means causing affliction; it must be discarded.

Therefore, he who follows Tao does not use weapon.

¹⁸ At least, according to the *law of karma*.

A good leader is yielding. He uses power only for defense. He exerts every effort to maintain peace.

To glorify oneself with a military victory means to rejoice at killing of people. Is it right to respect him who is glad about killing?

Respect leads to wellbeing. Wellbeing contributes to the creative process.

Violence leads to afflictions.

If many people are killed, it is a grievous event. The victory has to be "celebrated" with a funeral ceremony.

32. Tao is eternal and has no human appearance.

Though Tao is a tender Being, no one in the whole world can subjugate It.

If the nobility and rulers of the country lived in harmony with Tao — the common people would be peaceful and calm. The sky and earth would unite then in harmony; prosperity and wellbeing would come; people would quiet down without orders!

For the sake of establishing order in a country, the laws are created. Yet the laws must not be too severe.

Tao is like the ocean. The ocean is lower than all rivers, yet all rivers flow into it.

33. He who knows people is reasonable. He who cognized himself is enlightened.¹⁹ He who can conquer enemies is strong. He who conquered himself²⁰ is powerful.

He who has material wealth is rich. He who acts resolutely possesses willpower. He who indulges his desires is weak and fool.

He who attains the Mergence with Tao and does not lose it — he attains the Highest Beingness. After the death of the body, he continues to live in Tao as truly Immortal.

34. The Eternal Tao pervades everything. It is present to the left and to the right. Thanks to It, souls arise, live, and develop.

Though Tao is so great and performs so great work — It does not seek to glorify Itself.

It raises all beings with love. It does not exert violence over them. It does not insist that people realize all Its desires.

It is Great, though It does not insist on this.

¹⁹ I.e., he who cognized his own multidimensional organism.

²⁰ I.e., he who conquered his own vices, including their base — the lower self with its egocentrism.

Wise people aspire to It — to the Great.

35. Into the Great Tao, merge all the Perfect Ones.

Follow you too this path! By doing so you will not harm yourself; on the contrary, you will achieve calm, harmony, and the fullness of life.

I, in the state of *non-doing*, travel in the Infinity of Tao. One cannot convey this with words! Tao is the Most Subtle and Blissful!

36. Worldly passions make man weak. Resoluteness fills man with power!

Worldly passions cripple man. Resoluteness elevates man and strengthens the consciousness.

Worldly passions enslave man. Resoluteness makes man free.

Dispassionate, gentle, and yielding conquers passionate, hard, and coarse.

37. Tao does not act in the world of matter.²¹ Yet the entire Creation is a product of Its creativity.

Act you too in the same manner, and then all the living will develop in a natural way!

When you live with simplicity, without paying attention to gossips and hostile attitude, in

²¹ It is Te that acts.

harmony with Tao, then you come to the state when you have no attachments and passions.

The absence of worldly desires brings one to the state of inner calm — and then everything around comes in order.

38. Man representing Great Te does not force Himself to making good deeds: behaving righteously is natural for him.

Man who is far from Te may try to force himself to performing good deeds: righteousness is not natural for him.

Man representing Great Te does not aspire to activity in the world of matter: He acts in the state of *non-doing*.

Man who is far from Te lives in vanity and acts under the influence of his passions. In the religious aspect of life, his activity is reduced only to rituals; but believing in the “magic” of rituals signifies the degradation of religion! Such man also forces others to act as he does.

This happens only to those who do not have Tao in their lives. They cannot be trusted; they betrayed Tao already and can betray anyone.

The wise who cognized Tao is capable of distinguishing people by these features. He chooses to communicate only with the people of good.

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

If there were no Their help, then the sky would cease to be pure, the earth would crack all over, the nature would cease giving its beauty to all the living; the valleys would stop blooming and turn into desert; the living beings would stop multiplying and would disappear; 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 one disassembled the chariot which he rides — what would he be left with?

Do not regard yourself as precious jasper! Be simple — as common stone!

40. Interaction of the opposites is the sphere of Tao's activity.

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

All the development of incarnate beings goes on in interaction of these opposites.

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

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

The unwise, having learned about Tao, sometimes remembers about It and sometimes forgets.

Fool people, having learned about Tao, ridicule It. They consider insane those who cognized Tao... They regard the wisdom as insanity..., the higher justice — as vice, the righteousness — as depravity, the great truth — as false...

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 to Perfection only those deserving!

42. Once One came out from Tao. He took with Himself other Two. Those Two took other Three. And all They began to create various

forms of life on the planet.²²

All creatures are subdivided into pairs of the opposite *yin* and *yang* and are filled with the *chi* energy. All further development comes from their interaction.

All beings are afraid of *loneliness* and see it as suffering. This concerns, in particular, earthly rulers.

All such people care only about themselves and refuse helping others.

Yet the correct decision consists in dedicating oneself to caring about others and forgetting about oneself.

The wise spiritual seeker, who dedicated his life to the good of all, will not be conquered by death. I prefer these words to all other precepts of all sages.

Those Who attained Tao merge in It into *One*.

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

²² Lao Tse says here about several Holy Spirits (Te) Who guided the evolution of souls on our planet (see more details about this in the book *Classics of Spiritual Philosophy and the Present*).

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

There is nothing in the world that can compare 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!

He who shows moderation does not suffer failure. He who knows when to stop avoids affliction. Thanks to this, he can manage to know 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 unable to speak.

Intense movement overcomes cold; stillness overcomes heat.

Calm and harmony just ensure 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 the nation renounced Tao, then war-horses run over fields.

There is no greater affliction than uncontrolled worldly passions! Nothing destroys people more than the desire to multiply “earthly” treasures!

He who is satisfied with what he has is always happy!

47. The wise cognizes the world without leaving his house. Without looking from the window, he sees Primordial Tao. He does not need to travel far to learn more.

The wise does not travel — yet he knows everything; he does not look — yet he can describe everything; he seems to be non-acting — yet he achieves everything.

In *his heart* he finds everything what is necessary.²³

This is why the wise knows the things which cannot be reached by walking. And he can see

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 invisible to the common eye.

48. He who learns increases his knowledge every day. He who serves Tao decreases his worldly desires. In constant decrease of worldly desires, man can achieve *non-doing*.

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

49. The wise has no selfish motives. He lives in caring about others.

To good people I do good; to the unkind I also wish good. This is the goodness of Tao.

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

The wise lives in calm in his country. Yet, in the same land other people live: both good and evil, honest and dishonest, reasonable and fool, selfish and selfless, those listening to Tao and those denying It.

The wise views people as his children.

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

He who mastered the *true life* when living on the Earth is not afraid of rhinoceros or tigers; in the battle he is not afraid of armed soldiers. A rhinoceros has no place to plunge its horn into him; a tiger has no place to fasten its claws onto him; soldiers have no place to stab him with swords. It is so, because to him there is no death.²⁴

51. Tao creates beings; Te nurses them, raises them, helps them to develop, to mature, takes care about 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 according to one's own freedom of will, in a natural way.

To produce without owning the products, to create without boasting, to be older than others and do not command them! These are the principles of life of Great Te.

²⁴ He who with the help of the methods of buddhi yoga became a large spiritual heart or even merged with Tao — quite naturally feels himself non-corporeal. He — as a large consciousness — cannot be wounded by animals or weapon. He is Immortal.

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

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 person lives without getting tired.

On the other hand, if one indulges his 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. He who possesses the true knowledge walks the Straight Path.

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

²⁵ Te.

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

If the earthly rulers direct all their attention at the luxury of their palaces, then weeds overgrow fields and granaries become empty. Such earthly rulers wear luxury 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 Tao.

54. By cognizing yourself, you cognize others. Help others — and you will cognize everything.

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

But when you achieve a similar stability in Tao, you will shine at other people 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 a great power of the consciousness.

How did I cognize it? By doing this...

55. He who lives in Mergence with Great Te is pure like a newborn baby. Poisonous insects do not sting him; snakes do not bite him; wild ani-

mals and birds do not attack him. He has the refined consciousness and is firmly merged with Tao.

He evaluates people not by the feature of sex or other outer qualities but looks at their essence: at the soul.

He also perceives others as integral parts of the *Whole*²⁶, in *Unity*.

And He possesses the ability to initiate spiritual growth in people.

He can preach all day long, and his voice remains strong: He stays in constant Mergence with Tao!

In this way, He lives life in happiness!

Common people, having reached the prime of life, immediately begin to fade in old age... It happens so because they do not achieve Mergence with Tao.

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

He who abandons personal desires, becomes

²⁶ Of the Absolute. (More details can be found the book *Ecopsychology* by Vladimir Antonov).

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

free from worldly passions, reduces personal needs, achieves clear understanding, does not aspire to glory, stays in the subtlest state of the consciousness — He represents Primordial and Deepest Tao.

He cannot be tempted, offended, forced, persuaded to glorification. No one can harm Him!

He shines like the sun! He is like a source that everyone can drink from!

He is the Highest Treasure among people!

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

Yet among people, there are selfishness, cunning, falsity, 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 much weapon, then unavoidably robbery and disorder 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 grow the number of unsatisfied people and opposition.

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

One has to begin changes with himself. I aspire to quietness and calm — and others will be calm observing me. I do not aspire to possessing many material boons — and people around me begin to be satisfied with little. I live without worldly attachments and passions — and people around me come to simplicity and naturalness of life.

58. When 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. Wellbeing is replaced then 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 is always calm, gentle, and just. He does not want to take something away from others. He is selfless and does not harm anyone.

He is honest and lives in harmony with Tao, with nature, and with other people.

He is bright but does not glitter.

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

Such a renunciation on the higher stages of the Path helps one to grow one's own *Power of Te*,²⁸ which can become inexhaustible and can help one to cognize Tao in fullness.

And Tao is the Eternal and Infinite Primordial Foundation of every man and of the entire material world. The way which unites one with that Foundation is called *root*.

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

For realization of the destinies of most people which they deserved, Tao and Te use spirits; some of these spirits may be of lower levels of development.

²⁸ Power of Te, in other terms, is the Brahmanic component of an individual consciousness developed through the methods of buddhi yoga.

Yet if man approaches Tao by the quality of the soul, he goes beyond the sphere of influence of such spirits.

61. The Great Kingdom of Tao²⁹ is located as if behind the mouth of a river.

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

The *Ocean* is calm and patient. It *waits* those who approach It and enter It.

The *Ocean* is a *Great Kingdom*, but on the Earth there are only small kingdoms composed of people.

The *Great Kingdom* takes care of satisfying with Itself all who enter It.

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

Then all will receive everything what they want — both in the *Great Kingdom* and in 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 who aspire to It. But it also acknowledges the existence of evil people.

²⁹ In other terms — the Abode of the Creator.

Yes, one has to preach to all people about purity and kind behavior. However, aren't evil people necessary?

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

In interaction with them, the people of good make efforts on changing themselves on the path to Tao — so that to become farther from evil as much as possible. After all, in order to become unreachable for evil, one must perform concrete actions on developing oneself as a consciousness...³⁰

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

The earthly rulers possessing absolute power and their servants value their jewelry and luxurious chariots... Yet in reality, they are not better than those living in solitude and calm and walking the *Deepest Path* to Tao! Wouldn't it be better for those earthly rulers to lead a calm life and dedicate it to cognition of Tao?

³⁰ Such examples are given, in particular, in the book *How God Can Be Cognized. Book 2. Autobiographies of God's Disciples.*

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

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

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

Also there are many small souls incarnated in bodies.

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

Start difficult work with 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 starts “great undertakings” in the world of matter! Therefore, he can perform great work in the spiritual world. It is not hard for him.

64. It is easy to help those who 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 out of the path. He, who is a weak soul, runs away from difficulties.

It is better to begin constructing there where one does not have to destroy old walls. It is better to introduce spiritual knowledge there where one is not attacked by angry and fool people.

And then — a great tree grows from a small sapling; a nine-storey 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 does not act like this — and he does not suffer failures. He possesses nothing — and thus has nothing to lose.

The wise does not live in worldly passions; he does not strive to gain something material that requires much effort. He lives in natural simplicity and is satisfied with that refused by other people.

He walks the Path to Tao.

65. He who cognized Tao does not shows off in front of ignorant people. He also refuses to

“rule the crowd”, and therefore he can continue his 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 for receiving it.

That wise, who knows about this and acts according to this knowledge, becomes an example for others.

Thus acts Great Te.

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

This is what Great Te is. It possesses the Highest Power and contains in Itself all the multitude of living beings! It unites and separates people; It controls everything! It is the Ruler deserving the most strong love and respect!

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

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

The wise, who desires to help people, also has to put himself below others. Therefore,

though he is superior to people, he is not a burden to them — and people do not harm him. People gladly follow him and do not turn away from him.

He does not compete with anyone and therefore he is unconquerable.

He constantly advances further — yet people do not envy him.

He does not struggle with anyone — thus no one in the whole world can force him to act against his will.

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

It resides so *deeply* and is so *subtle* that one cannot catch It or force It to do something!

I possess three treasures which I value: the first is benevolence, the second is frugality, and the third is that I am not ahead of others. I am benevolent, thus I can be brave. I am frugal, thus I can be generous. I am not ahead of others, thus I can be a wise leader.

He who is brave without love, generous without frugality, who tries to be ahead of others and pushes others away — such a person suffers failure.

On the contrary, he who is full of love achieves victory. And he is unconquerable because Tao constantly guards him.

68. The wise leader is never bellicose. The wise soldier does not get angry. He who can win does not attack first. He who can lead people does not humiliate them but puts himself into a lower position.

Such are the laws of Te that reject anger, self-praise, and violence. In this way act 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 to hate enemies! Hatred toward enemies is the path leading to the loss of the most important — Tao!

Thus in battle those achieve victory who avoid it.

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

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

He who cognized Tao is quiet and unnoticeable, though he behaves with dignity. He wears simple clothes and hides the treasure³¹ within.

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

He who has no knowledge yet pretends knowing... is not healthy.

He who is wise heals himself. The wise never falls ill because he rids himself of the causes of illness. He abides in Tao. How can he be ill then?

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

So rid yourself of the ability to despise others! He who despises others is despicable before Tao!

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

Renounce the ability to deceive people! He who deceives others deceives himself.³²

³¹ Wisdom.

Live in love!

Do not strive to show yourself off! The wise who cognized his Higher Essence is not engaged in self-admiration and does not elevate himself over others.

He who got rid of egocentrism gains the possibility to achieve Tao.

73. He who is brave and bellicose will be killed; he who is brave but not bellicose will live.

What is the reason for dislike toward bellicose people? Even a sage cannot answer.

Great Tao abides in calm; It does not fight with anyone. It wins without violence.

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

In calm, It controls everything.

It selects worthy people for Itself.

74. It makes no sense to threaten with death him who is not afraid of death.

But he who threatens others with death and takes pleasure in this — will be destroyed.

³² Because such a person does not take into account God and His principles of formation of people's destinies.

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

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

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

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

They live not looking at Tao, ignoring Tao, wasting their life power for doing things which have no true value. They have too strong “love for life”, and therefore they die too early.

Yet he who neglects his earthly life for the sake of everyone’s good increases his life’s value before Tao.

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

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

He who is gentle and lithe walks the path of life. He who is not gentle and lithe walks the path of death.

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

He who does violence to people, humiliates and robs them — opposes Tao.

But he who never acts selfishly, who gives his surplus to others, who performs deeds not for the sake of glory, who lives with calm, 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 destroys the hard. Nothing compares to it in overcoming the hard.

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

79. Big resentment leaves consequences. Therefore, calm can be regarded as goodness.

Therefore, the wise gives 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 the country is small and the population is rare.

Even if there are many weapons, they should not be used. War ships and chariots should be used neither. Warriors should not wage war.

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

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

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

It is good that people who reach old age recognize Perfection and leave this world so that they do not need to return here again.

81. True words are not necessarily exquisite. Beautiful words are not necessarily trustable.

The kind is not necessarily eloquent. The eloquent is not necessarily kind.

He who knows does not argue, but he who does not know argues.

The wise is not selfish; he acts for the good of others.

Great Tao takes care about the good of all living beings. Everything that It does toward living beings does not contain violence and does not harm anyone.

The wise also acts without violence and does not harm anyone.