

Tao Te Ching

Narration Copy

Several months ago a friend of mine gave my wife a copy of the Tao Te Ching by Stephen Mitchell and this is a work that I had heard of but never read completely heard a few versus never seen a complete copy so it was nice to have a little small pocket edition the Tao to change to read in reference and then I became obsessed with it and went online and found all sorts of versions of that Tao Te Ching and I guess I kind of been looking for the quintessential introduction I think I found it with a version by Tolbert McCarroll and it's very similar to the Stephen Mitchell edition pocket edition that I own but there's a very nice introduction that goes through in Yin and Yang which I'll talk about in a second I wanted to read just from the translator's preface this little book cannot be understood any more than you can understand the river if you wish to experience the river you must jump in it so it is without a chain many things in here will confuse you the confusion is not to be conquered it does not result from a lack of knowledge is confusion is a teacher that can teach you about yourself your story your people your world and the still point of the universe to which we give the crude name the Tao there are no footnotes of commentary here these words of the Tao are to be hung like bills in our heart and run by the motions we make as we move through our daily lives any other sounds make it difficult to hear the bells the Tao is universal it is not Chinese it is found in the quest of Christian Mystics Native Americans Zen monks desert holy men and indeed in every culture and age in the story of the earth before the story began in after it ends there he is the town it consists of stillness and silence and it will enter into any quiet heart beautiful, beautiful words and I found that fascination with wanting to understand one you know what does this mean was that mean in the Tao and I have realize that and just being in those words and letting those words sink in is the understanding so my example is which of these is better night or day which of these is better rain or fire which of these is more profitable north or South right left intuition intellect contraction expansion river desert soft hard as the Tao says one defines the other so you experience all these things you see all these things and there's a Christian song in his time these things are going to confront you or be exposed to you or be experienced by you in the precise time that you need to experience them and it's not to figure out is not to come to a conclusion it's too experienced and understand the extremes of life of night day the solid of the solution of the astral world of the visible world the heart and mind which one is better to use there are better to use together so here is Tao Te Ching three parts and then in a complete reading and I hope you will have lots of questions and keep those questions and not get any answers

- 1) *The Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao the name that can be spoken is not the eternal name the nameless is the beginning of heaven and earth the spoken word is the mother of 10,000 things ever desireless one can see the mystery ever desiring once he's only the manifestations these two spring from the same source but differ in name the source is darkness; darkness within darkness the gateway to all mystery*
- 2) *Under heaven all conceived beauty's beauty only because there is ugliness all can know good as good only because there is evil therefore having and not having a rise together difficult and easy complement each other long and short contrast each other high and low rest upon each other voice and sound harmonize each other front and back follow one another therefore the sage goes about*

- doing nothing teaching silence the 10,000 things rise and fall without cease creating yet not possessing working yet not taking credit work is done then forgotten therefore it lasts forever
- 3) Not exalting the gifted prevents quarreling not collecting treasures prevent stealing not seeing desirable things prevents confusion of the heart wise therefore ruled by emptying hearts and stuffing bellies by weakening ambitions and strengthening bones if men lack knowledge and desire then clever people will not try to interfere if nothing is done then all will be well
 - 4) The Tao is an empty vessel it is used but never filled oh unfathomable sorts of 10,000 things blunt the sharpness untangle the knot soften the glare merge with dust oh hidden deep but ever present I do not know from once it comes it is the forefather of the gods
 - 5) Heaven and earth are impartial they see the 10,000 things as straw dogs the wiser impartial they see the people as straw dogs the space between heaven and earth is like a bellow the shape changes but not the form the more it moves the more it yields more words count less hold fast to the center
 - 6) The valley spirit never dies it is the woman primal mother her gateway is the root of heaven and earth it is like a veil barely seen use it, it will never fail
 - 7) Heaven and earth last forever why do heaven and earth last forever they're unborn so ever living the sage stays behind thus he is ahead he is detached thus at one with all through selfless action he attains fulfillment
 - 8) The highest good is like water; water gives life to 10,000 things without effort it flows in the valley rejected by men and so is like the Tao in dwelling be close to the land in meditation go deep in the heart in dealing with others be gentle and kind in speech be true in ruling be just in daily life be competent in action be aware of the time in the season where there is no conflict there is no plane
 - 9) Better to stop short then filled to the brim over sharpen the knife and the blade will lose its strength a massive store of golden jade and no one can protect it claim wealth and titles and disaster will follow retire when the work is done this is the way of heaven
 - 10) Carrying body and soul and embracing the one can you avoid separation attending fully and becoming subtle can you be as a newborn babe washing and cleansing the primal vision can you be without staying loving all men and ruling the country can you be without cleverness opening and closing the gates of heaven can you play the role of womanhood understanding and being open to all things are you able to do nothing giving birth and nourishing bearing yet not possessing working yet not taking credit leading yet not dominating this is the primal virtue
 - 11) Thirty spokes share the wheels hub it is the empty center that accepts the axle and makes it useful she played to a vessel it is the empty space within that makes it useful plan doors and windows for a room is the empty space that is useful therefore ease comes from what is there usefulness from what is not there
 - 12) The five colors blind the eye the five tones deafen the ear the five flavors told to taste racing and hunting create madness in the mind precious things lead one astray therefore the sage is guided by what he feels and not by what he sees let's go with that and chooses this
 - 13) Accept his grace willingly accept misfortune as the human condition what do you mean by accept grace willingly accepting being unimportant do not be concerned with loss or gain this is called accepting disgrace willingly and what do you mean by accept misfortune as the human condition misfortune comes from having a body without a body how could there be misfortune surrender yourself humbly then you can be trusted to care for all things love the world as your own self then you can truly care for all things
 - 14) Look it cannot be seen it is beyond form see the invisible listen it cannot be heard it is beyond sound hear the silence grasp it cannot be held it is intangible hold the intangible these three are indefinable

therefore they are joined as one from above it is not bright from below it is not dark an unbroken thread beyond description it returns to nothingness the form of the formless the image of the imageless it is called indefinable and beyond imagination stand before it and there is no beginning follow it and there is no end stay with the ancient Tao move with the present knowing the ancient beginning is the essence of Tao

- 15) The ancient masters were subtle mysterious profound responsive the depth of their knowledge is unfathomable because it is unfathomable all we can do is describe their appearance watch full like men crossing the winter stream alert like men aware of danger courteous like visiting guests yielding like ice about to melt simple like uncarved blocks of wood hollow like caves opaque like muddy pools who can wait quietly while the mud settles who can remain still until the moment of action observers of the Tao do not seek fulfillment not seeking fulfillment they are not swayed by desire for change
- 16) Empty yourself of everything let the mind become still the 10,000 things rise and fall while the self watch is their return they grow and flourish and then return to the source returning to the source is stillness which is the way of nature the way of nature is unchanging knowing constancy is insight not knowing constancy leads to disaster knowing constancy the mind is open with an open mind you will be open hearted being openhearted you will act royally being royal you will attain the divine being divine you will be at one with the Tao being at one with the Tao is eternal and those are body dies the Tao will never pass away
- 17) The master is the very highest if barely known then comes that which people know and love then that which is feared and then that which is despised who does not trust enough will not be trusted when the masters actions are performed without unnecessary speech people say amazing we did it all by ourselves
- 18) When the great Tao was forgotten kindness and morality rise when wisdom and intelligence are born the great pretense begins when there is no peace within the family filial piety and devotion arise when the country is confused and in chaos loyal ministers appear and patriotism is born
- 19) Give up sainthood renounce wisdom and it will be 100 times better for everyone give up kindness renounce morality and men will be discover filial piety and love give up ingenuity pronounced profit and bandits and thieves will disappear these three are outward forms alone they are not sufficient in themselves it is more important to see the simplicity to realize one's true nature to cast off selfishness and temper desire
- 20) Give up learning and put it into your troubles is there a difference between yes and no is there a difference between good and evil must I fear what others fear what nonsense other people are contented enjoying the sacrificial feast of the ox in spring some go to the park and climb the terrorists but I alone am drifting not knowing where I am like a newborn baby for it learns to smile I am alone without a place to go others have more than they need but I alone have nothing I am a fool Oh yes I am confused others are clear and bright but I alone am dim and weak others are sharp and clever but I alone am dull and stupid oh I drift like the waves of the sea without direction like the restless wind everyone else is busy but I alone am aimless and depressed I am different I am nourished by the great mother
- 21) The greatest virtue is to follow Tao and Tao alone the Tao is elusive an intangible oh it is intangible and elusive and yet within his image oh it is elusive and intangible and yet within his form oh it is dim and dark and yet within his essence this essence is very real and therein lies faith from the very beginning until now its name has never been forgotten thus I perceive the creation how do I know the ways of creation because of this

- 22) Yield and overcome bend and be straight empty and be full wear out and be new have little and gain have much and be confused therefore the wise embraced the one and set an example to all not putting on a display they shine forth not justifying themselves they are distinguished not boasting that he received recognition not bragging they never falter they do not quarrel so no one quarrels with them therefore the ancient say yield and overcome is that an empty saying be truly whole and all things will come to you
- 23) To talk little is natural high winds do not last all morning heavy rain does not last all day why is this heaven and earth if heaven and earth cannot make things eternal how's it possible for men he who follows the Tao is at one with the Tao he who is virtuous experiences virtue he who loses the way is lost when you were at one with the Tao the Tao welcomes you when you were at one with virtue the virtue is always there when you are at one with loss the loss is experienced willingly he who does not trust enough will not be trusted
- 24) He who stands on tiptoe is not steady he who strides cannot maintain the pace he who makes a show is not enlightened he who is self righteous is not respected he who boasts achieves nothing he who brags will not endure according to the followers of the Tao these are extra food and unnecessary luggage they do not bring happiness therefore followers of the Tao avoid them
- 25) Something mysteriously formed born before heaven and earth in the silence and avoid standing alone an unchanging ever present and in motion perhaps it is the mother of 10,000 things I do not know its name call it Tao for lack of a better word I call it great but great it flows it flows far away having gone far it returns therefore Tao is great heaven is great earth is great the king is also great these are the four great powers of the universe and the kings one of them man follows earth; earth follows heaven; heaven follows the Tao; the Tao follows what is natural
- 26) The heavy is the root of the light the still is the master of unrest therefore the sage traveling all day does not lose sight of his baggage though there are beautiful things to be seen he remains unattached and calm why should the Lord of 10,000 Chariots act lightly in public to be light is to lose one's route to be restless is to lose one's control
- 27) A good traveler has no fixed plans and is not intent upon arriving a good artist lets its intuition leading wherever it wants a good scientist has freed himself of concepts and keeps his mind open to what is thus the master is available to all people and doesn't reject anyone he is ready to use all situations and doesn't waste anything this is called embodying the light what is a good man but a bad man's teacher what is a bad man but a good man's job if you don't understand this you will get lost however intelligent you are it is the great secret
- 28) No the male keep to the female receive the world in your arms if you receive the world the Tao will never leave you and you will be like a little child no the white yet keep to the black be a pattern for the world if you are a pattern for the world the Tao will be strong inside you and there will be nothing you can't do no the personal yet keep to the impersonal accept the world as it is if you accept the world that now will be luminous inside you and you will return to your primal self the world is formed from the void like utensils from a block of wood master knows the utensils yet keeps to the block does she can use all things
- 29) Do you want to improve the world I don't think it can be done the world is sacred it can't be improved if you tamper with it you will ruin it if you treat it like an object you will lose it there is a time for being ahead a time for being behind a time for being in motion the time for being at rest a time for being vigorous a time for being exhausted a time for being safe a time for being in danger the master sees things as they are without trying to control them she lets them go their own way and resides at the center of the circle

- 30) Whoever relies on the Tao in governing men doesn't try to force issues or defeat enemies by force of arms for every
- 31) Whoever relies on the Tao governing men doesn't try to force issues or defeat enemies by force of arms for every force there is a counterforce violence even well intentioned always rebounds on itself the master does his job and then stops he understands that the universe is forever out of control and that trying to dominate events goes against the current of the Tao because he believes in himself he doesn't try to convince others because he is content with himself he doesn't need others approval because he accepts himself the whole world accepts him 31 weapons are the tools of violence all decent men detest them weapons are the tools of fear a decent man will avoid them except in the Diaries necessity and it compelled will use them only with the utmost restraint peace is his highest value if the peace has been shattered how could he be content his enemies are not demons but human beings like himself he doesn't wish them personal harm nor does he rejoice in victory how could he rejoice in victory and delight in the slaughter of men he enters a battle gravely with sorrow and with great compassion as if he were attending a funeral
- 32) The Tao can't be perceived smaller than an electron it contains uncountable galaxies if powerful men and women could remain centered in the Tao all things would be in harmony the world would become a paradise all people would be at peace and the law would be written in their hearts when you have names and forms know that they are provisional when you have institutions know that their functions should end knowing when to stop you can avoid any danger all things end in the Tao as rivers flow into the sea
- 33) Knowing others is intelligence knowing yourself is true wisdom mastering others is strength mastering yourself is true power if you realize that you have enough you are truly rich if you stay in the center and embrace death with your whole heart you will endure forever
- 34) The great Tao flows everywhere all things are born from it and yet it doesn't create them it pours itself into its work yet it makes no claim it nourishes infinite worlds yet it doesn't hold onto them since it is merged with all things and hidden in their hearts it can be called humble since all things vanish into it and it alone in does it can be called great it isn't aware of its greatness thus it is truly great
- 35) She who is centered in the Tao can go where she wishes without danger she perceives the universal harmony even amid great pain because she has found peace in her heart music or the smell of good cooking may make people stop and enjoy but words that point to the Tao seem more not in this and without flavor when you look for it there's nothing to see when you listen for it there's nothing to hear when you use it, it is inexhaustible
- 36) If you want to shrink something you must first allow it to expand if you want to get rid of something you must first allow it to flourish if you want to take something you must first allow it to be given this is called subtle perception of the way things are the soft overcomes the hard the slow overcomes the fast let your workings remain a mystery just show people the results
- 37) The Tao never does anything yet through it all things are done if powerful men and women could center themselves in it the whole world would be transformed by itself in its natural rhythms people would be content with their simple everyday lives in harmony and free of desire when there is no desire all things are at peace
- 38) The master doesn't try to be powerful thus he is truly powerful the ordinary man keeps searching for power thus he never has enough the master does nothing yet he leaves nothing undone the ordinary man is always doing things yet many more are left to be done the kind man does something get something remains undone the just man does something and leaves many things to be done the moral man does something and when no one responds he rolls up his sleeves and uses force when the Tao was

lost there is goodness when goodness is lost there is morality when morality is lost there is ritual; ritual is the husk of true faith the beginning of chaos therefore the master concerns himself with the depths and not the surface with the fruit and not the flower he has no will of his own heat wells in reality and let's all illusions go

- 39) In harmony with the Tao the sky is clear in spacious the earth is solid and full all creatures flourish together content with the way they are endlessly repeating themselves endlessly renewed when man interferes with the Tao the skies become filthy the earth becomes depleted the equilibrium crumbles creatures become extinct the master abuses the parts with compassion because he understands the whole his constant practice is humility he doesn't glitter like a jewel but let's himself be shaped by the Tao as rugged and common as a stone
- 40) Return is the movement of the Tao yielding is the way of the Tao all things are born of being; being is born of nonbeing
- 41) When a superior man hears of the Tao he immediately begins to embody it when an average man hears of the Tao he half believes it half doubts it when a foolish man hears of the Tao he laughs out loud if he didn't laugh it wouldn't be the Tao thus it is said the path into the light seems dark the path forward seems to go back the direct path seems long true power seems weak true purity seems tarnished true steadfastness seems changeable true clarity seems obscure the greatest art seems unsophisticated the greatest love seems indifferent the greatest wisdom seems childish the town is nowhere to be found get it nourishes and completes all things
- 42) The Tao gives birth to one, one gives birth to two, two give birth to three, three give birth to all things all things have their backs to the female and stand facing the male when male and female combined all things achieve harmony ordinary men hate solitude, but the master makes use of it embracing his aloneness realizing he is one with the whole universe
- 43) The gentlest thing in the world overcomes the hardest thing in the world that which has no substance enters where there is no space this shows the true value of nonaction teaching without words performing without action this is the master's way
- 44) Fame or integrity which is more important money or happiness which is more valuable success or failure which is more destructive if you look to others for fulfillment, you will never truly be fulfilled if your happiness depends on money, you will never be happy with yourself be content with what you have rejoice in the way things are when you realize there is nothing lacking the whole world belongs to you
- 45) True perfection seems imperfect, yet it is perfectly itself true fullness seems empty, yet it is fully present true straightness seems crooked true wisdom seems foolish true art seems artless the master allows these things to happen she shapes events as they come, she steps out of the way and lets the Tao speak for itself
- 46) When a country is in harmony with the Tao the factories make trucks and tractors when a country goes counter to the Tao warheads are stockpiled outside the cities there is no greater illusion than fear no greater wrong than preparing to defend yourself no greater misfortune than having an enemy whoever can see through all fear will always be safe
- 47) Without opening your door, you can open your heart to the whole world without looking out your window you can see the essence of the Tao the more you know the less you understand the master arises without leaving sees the light without looking achieves without doing a thing
- 48) In the pursuit of knowledge every day something is added in the practice of the Tao every day something is dropped less and less do you need to force things until finally you arrive at nonaction

when nothing is done nothing is left undone true mastery can be gained by letting things go their own way it can't be gained by interfering

- 49) The master has no mind of her own she works with the mind of the people she is good to the people who are good she is also good to the people who aren't good this is true goodness she trusts people who are trustworthy she also trusts people who aren't trustworthy this is true trust the masters mind is like space people don't understand her they looked at her and wait she treats them like her own children
- 50) The master gives himself up to whatever the moment brings he knows that he is going to die, and he has nothing left to hold onto no illusions in the mind no resistance in the body he doesn't think about his actions they flow from the core of his being he holds nothing back from life therefore he is ready for death as a man is ready for sleep after a good day's work
- 51) Every being in the universe is an expression of the Tao it springs into existence unconscious perfect free takes a physical body let circumstances completed that is why every being spontaneously honors the Tao the Tao gives birth to all things nourishes them maintains them cares for them comforts them protects them takes them back to itself creating without possessing acting without expecting guiding without interfering that is why love of the Tao is in the very nature of things
- 52) In the beginning was the Tao all things issue from it all things returned to it to find the origin traced back the manifestations when you recognize the children and find the mother you will be free of sorrow if you close your mind in judgments and traffic with desires your heart will be troubled if you keep your mind from judging and aren't led by the senses your heart will find peace seeing Into Darkness is clarity knowing how to yield his strength use your own light and return to the source of light this is called practicing eternity
- 53) The great way is easy, yet people prefer the side pass be aware when things are out of balance stay centered with the Tao when rich speculators prosper while farmers lose their land when government officials spend money on weapons instead of cures when the upper class is extravagant and irresponsible while the poor have nowhere to turn all this is robbery and chaos it is not keeping with the Tao
- 54) Whoever is planted in the Tao will not be rooted up whoever embraces the Tao will not slip away her name will be held in honor from generation to generation let the Tao be present in your life and you will become genuine let it be present in your family and your family will flourish that it be present in your country and your country will be an example to all countries in the world let it be present in the universe and the universe will sing how do I know this is true by looking inside myself
- 55) He who is in harmony with the Tao is like a newborn child its bones are soft its muscles are weak but its grip is powerful he doesn't know about the union of male and female yet it's humanity is complete so intense is it's vital power it can stream its head off all day yet it never becomes horse so complete is its harmony masters powers like this he lets all things come and go effortlessly without desire he never expects results thus he is never disappointed he is never disappointed thus his spirit never grows old
- 56) Those who know don't talk those who talk don't know close your mouth lock off your senses blunt your sharpness untie your knots soften your glare sadlier dust this is the primal identity be like the Tao he can't be approached or withdrawn from benefited or harmed honored or brought into disgrace it gives itself up continually that is why it endures
- 57) If you want to be a great leader you must learn to follow the Tao stop trying to control let go of fixed plans and concepts and the world will govern itself the more prohibitions you have the less virtuous people will be the more weapons you have the less secure people will be the more subsidies you have the less self-reliant people will be therefore the master says I let go of the law and people become honest I

- let go of economics and people become prosperous and let go of religion and people become serene 1 let go of all desire for the common good and the good becomes common as grass
- 58) If a country is governed with tolerance that people are comfortable and honest if a country is governed with repression the people are depressed and underhanded when the will to power is in charge the higher the ideals the lower the results try to make people happy and you lay the groundwork for misery try to make people moral and you lay the groundwork for vice thus the master is content to serve as an example and not to impose his will he is pointed but does not Pierce straightforward but supple radiant but easy on the eyes
- 59) For governing a country well there is nothing better than moderation the mark of a moderate man is freedom from his own ideas tolerant like the sky all-pervading like sunlight firm like a mountain subtle like a tree in the wind he has no destination in view and makes use of anything life happens to bring his way nothing is impossible for him because he is let go he can take care of for the people's welfare as a mother cares for her child
- 60) Governing a large country is like frying a small fish you spoil it with too much preparation center your country in the Tao and evil have no power not that it isn't there but you'll be able to step out of its way give evil nothing to oppose and it will disappear by itself
- 61) When a country obtains great power it becomes like the sea all streams run downward into it the more powerful it grows the greater the need for humility humility means trusting in the Tao thus never needing to be defensive a great nation is like a great man when he makes a mistake he realizes it having realized that he admits it having admitted it he corrects it he considers those who point out his faults as his most benevolent teachers he thinks of his enemy as the shadow that he himself casts if a nation is centered in the Tao if it nourishes its own people and doesn't meddle in the affairs of others it will be a light to all nations in the world
- 62) The Tao is the center of the universe the good man's treasure the bad man's refuge honors can be bought with fine words respect can be one with good deeds but the Tao is beyond all value and no one can achieve it thus when a new leader is chosen don't offer to help him with your wealth or your expertise offer instead to teach him about the Tao why did the ancient masters steam the Tao because being one with the Tao when you seek you find and when you make a mistake you are forgiven that is why everybody loves it
- 63) Act without doing work without effort think of the small as large and the few as many confront the difficult while it is still easy accomplish the great task by a series of small acts the master never reaches for the great thus, he achieves greatness when he runs into difficulty he stops and gives himself to it he doesn't cling to his own comfort those problems are no problem for him
- 64) What is rooted is easy to nourish what is recent is easy to correct what is brittle is easy to break what is small is easy to scatter prevent trouble before it arises put things in order before they exist the giant pine tree grows from a tiny sprout the journey of 1000 miles starts from right beneath your feet rushing into action you fail trying to grasp things you lose them forcing a project to completion you ruined what was almost ripe therefore the master takes action by letting things take their course he remains as calm at the end as at the beginning he has nothing thus has nothing to lose what he desires is non desire what he learns is to unlearn he simply reminds people of who they have always been he cares about nothing but the Tao thus he can care for all things
- 65) The ancient masters didn't try to educate the people but kindly taught them to not know when they think that they know the answers people are difficult to guide when they know that they don't know people can find their own way if you want to learn how to govern avoid being clever or rich the

simplest pattern is the clearest content with an ordinary life you can show all people the way back to their own true nature

- 66) All streams flow to the sea because it is lower than they are humility gives it its power if you want to govern people you must place yourself below them if you want to lead the people you must learn how to follow them the master is above the people and no one feels oppressed he goes ahead of the people and no one feels manipulated the whole world is grateful to him because he competes with no one no one can compete with him
- 67) Some say that my teaching is nonsense others call it lofty but impractical but to those who have looked inside themselves this nonsense makes perfect sense and to those who put it into practice this loftiness has roots that go deep I have just three things to teach simplicity patience compassion these three are your greatest treasures simple inactions and in thoughts you return to the source of being patient with both friends and enemies you accord with the way things are compassionate toward yourself you reconcile all beings in the world
- 68) The best athlete wants his opponent at his best the best general enters the mind of his enemy the best businessman serves the communal good the best leader follows the will of the people all of them embody the virtue of non-competition not that they don't love to compete, but they do it in the spirit of play in this they are like children and in harmony with the Tao
- 69) The generals have a saying rather than make the first move it is better to wait and see rather than advancing inch it is better to retreat a yard this is called going forward without advancing pushing back without using weapons there is no greater misfortune than underestimating your enemy underestimating your enemy means thinking that he is evil thus you destroy your three treasures and become an enemy yourself when two great forces oppose each other the victory will go to the one that knows how to yield
- 70) My teachings are easy to understand and easy to put into practice, yet your intellect will never grasp them and if you try to practice them you will fail my teachings are older than the world how can you grasp their meaning if you want to know me look inside your heart
- 71) Not knowing is true knowledge presuming to know is a disease first you realize that you are sick then you can move toward health the master is his own physician he has healed himself of all knowing thus he is truly whole
- 72) When they lose their sense of awe people turn to religion when they no longer trust themselves, they begin to depend upon authority therefore the master steps back so that people won't be confused he teaches without teaching so that people will have nothing to learn
- 73) The Tao is always at ease it overcomes without competing answers without speaking a word arrives without being summoned accomplishes without a plan it's net covers the whole universe and though its meshes are wide it doesn't let anything slip through
- 74) If you realize that all things change, there is nothing you will try to hold onto if you aren't afraid of dying there is nothing you can't achieve trying to control the future is like trying to take the master carpenter's place when you handle the master carpenter's tools chances are that you'll cut your hand
- 75) When taxes are too high people go hungry when the government is too intrusive people lose their spirit act for the people's benefit trust them leave them alone
- 76) Men are born soft and supple dead they are stiff and hard plants are born tender and pliant dead they are brittle and dry thus whoever is stiff and inflexible is a disciple of death whoever is soft, and yielding is a disciple of life the hard and stiff will be broken the soft and supple will prevail

- 77) As it acts in the world the Tao is like the bending of a bow the top is bent toward the bottom is bent up it adjusts excess and efficiency so that there is perfect balance those who try to control who use force to protect their power go against the direction of the Tao they take from those who don't have enough and give to those who have far too much the master can keep giving because there is no end to his wealth he acts without expectation succeeds without taking credit and doesn't think he is better than anyone else
- 78) Nothing in the world is as soft and yielding as water yet for dissolving the hard and inflexible nothing can surpass it the soft overcomes the hard the gentle overcomes the rigid everyone knows this is true, but few put it into practice therefore the master remains serene in the midst of sorrow evil cannot enter his heart because he has given up helping he is the people's greatest help true words seem paradoxical
- 79) Failure is an opportunity if you blame someone else there is no end to the blame therefore the master fulfills his own obligation and corrects his own mistakes, he does what he needs to do and demands nothing of others
- 80) If a country is governed wisely its inhabitants will be content they enjoy the labor of their hands and don't waste time inventing labor saving machines since they dearly love their homes they aren't interested in travel there may be a few wagons and boats but these don't go anywhere there may be an arsenal of weapons but nobody ever uses them people enjoy their food take pleasure in being with their families spend weekends working in their gardens delight in the doings of the neighborhood and even though the next country is so close that people can hear its Roosters crowing and its dogs barking they're content to die of old age without ever having gone to see it
- 81) True words aren't eloquent; eloquent words aren't true wise men don't need to prove their point men who need to prove their point aren't wise the master has no possessions the more he does for others the happier he is the more he gives to others the wealthier he is the Tao nourishes by not forcing by not dominating the master leads