

## Becoming A Brilliant Star

### Moral Character Domain

(Ch 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 won 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 esteem 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.

(from Ch 7)

The Master stays behind;  
that is why she is ahead.  
She is detached from all things;  
that is why she is one with them.  
Because she has let go of herself,  
she is perfectly fulfilled.

(Ch 15)

The ancient Masters were profound and  
subtle.  
Their wisdom was unfathomable.  
There is no way to describe it;  
all we can describe is their appearance.

They were careful  
as someone crossing an iced-over stream.  
Alert as a warrior in enemy territory.

Courteous as a guest.  
Fluid as melting ice.  
Shapable as a block of wood.  
Receptive as a valley.  
Clear as a glass of water.

Do you have the patience to wait  
till your mud settles and the water is clear?  
Can you remain unmoving  
till the right action arises by itself?

The Master doesn't seek fulfillment.  
Not seeking, not expecting,  
she is present, and can welcome all things.

(Ch 18)

When the great Tao is forgotten,  
goodness and piety appear.  
When the body's intelligence declines,  
cleverness and knowledge step forth.  
When there is no peace in the family,  
filial piety begins.  
When the country falls into chaos,  
patriotism is born.

(from Ch 22)

The Master, by residing in the Tao,  
sets an example for all beings.  
Because he doesn't display himself,  
people can see his light.  
Because he has nothing to prove,  
people can trust his words.  
Because he doesn't know who he is,  
people recognize themselves in him.  
Because he has no goal in mind,  
everything he does succeeds.

When the ancient Masters said,  
"If you want to be given everything,  
give everything up,"  
they weren't using empty phrases.

Only in being lived by the Tao can you be truly yourself.

(From Ch 38)

When the Tao is 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.  
He dwells in reality,  
and lets all illusions go.

(Ch 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 are seems unsophisticated,  
the greatest love seems indifferent,  
the greatest wisdom seems childish.

The Tao is nowhere to be found.  
Yet it nourishes and completes all things.

(Ch 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.  
It doesn't know about the union  
of male and female,  
yet its penis can stand erect,  
so intense is its vital power.  
It can scream its head off all day,  
yet it never becomes hoarse,  
so complete is its harmony.

The Master's power is 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.

(Ch 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.  
I let go of religion,  
and people become serene.  
I let go of all desire for the common good,  
and the good becomes common as grass.

(From Ch. 81)

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.

Compiled by: B. Matthews, July 1999

Source: Lao-Tzu. (1995). *Tao Te Ching* (Trans. by S. Mitchell). Available online:  
[\[http://www.edepot.com/tao4.html\]](http://www.edepot.com/tao4.html)

URL: <http://www.science-philosophy-religion.org/religion/taoism/brilstar/09character.pdf>