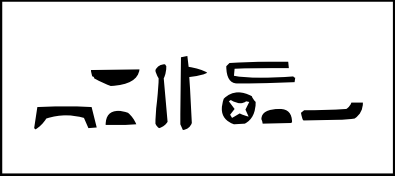
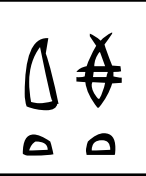
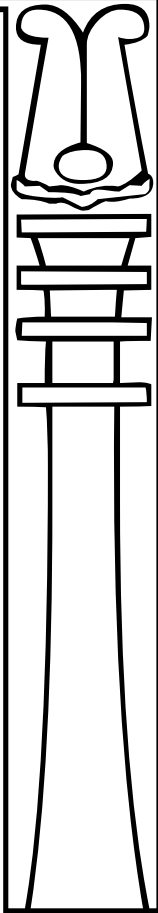


LIBER
 CLVII
 道德經
 TAO
 TEH
 KING





A.:A.:.
Publication in Class B

Preface

The True, The Abiding TAO!
Who Understandeth Hath;
Who Hath the TAO is Here and Now
In Silence of the Path.

LIBER XXI

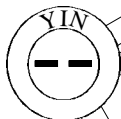
Ko Yuen
his translation
and commentary
made during his incarnation as
Aleister Crowley
during the Great Magical Retirement
upon Aesopus Island

Anno XIV

PART I

The Principles of Tao

TAO



I

The Nature of the Tao

1. The Tao-Path is not the All-Tao.

The Name is not the Thing named.

Tao hath for parallel Pleroma, Shiva, Jod, etc. Teh hath for parallel Logos, Sakti, He, etc. But the conception of Lao Tze unites all these at their highest. The best parallel is given in *Liber CCXX*, Chapters I and II, where Hadit is Tao and Nuit, Teh (yet these are in certain aspects interchanged.) The point of this paragraph is to make discrimination or definition, not to assert the superiority of either conception. The illusion of any such preference would depend on the grade of initiation of a student. A Magus $9^{\circ}=2^{\circ}$ of A.:A.: would doubtless esteem the Path of "Becoming" as his Absolute, for the law of his Grade is Change (see *Liber B vel Magi sub Figura I*). But who knows? As Ipsissimus $10^{\circ}=1^{\circ}$ might find a conception to transcend even this. For instance, one might interpret this first paragraph as saying that Becoming is not Tao, but that Tao is a Being whose nature is Becoming. Matter and Motion cannot exist separately. The reader should regard every verse of this Book as a text worth of the most intense and prolonged meditation. He will not understand the Book thoroughly until he has wrought his mind into its proper shape in the great Forge of Samadhi.

2. Unmanifested, it is the Secret Father of Heaven (☰) and Earth (☷). Manifested, it is their Mother.

This doctrine is the initiated teaching to hint at which priests invented legends of parthenogenesis.

3. To understand this Mystery, one must be fulfilling one's will, and if one is not thus free, one will but gain a smattering of it.

In a moral state, therefore, without desire, frictionless.

4. The Tao is one, and the Teh but a Phase thereof. The abyss of this Mystery is the Portal of Serpent-Wonder.

Cf. *Berashith* for the identity of the phases of "0⁰" and "something." Serpent-Wonder refers to the Magical Force called Kundalini.

II

The Energy—Source of the Self

1. All men know that beauty and ugliness are correlative, as are skill and clumsiness; one implies and suggests the other.
2. So also existence and non-existence pose the one the other;¹ so also is it with ease and difficulty; length and shortness; height and lowness. Also Musick exists through harmony of opposites;² time and space depend upon contraposition.

This shows how the Tao realizes itself through its projection in correlative phases, expressing 0 as + 1 + (-1); to speak like a Qabalist or an electrician.

3. By the use of this method, the sage can fulfill his will without action, and utter his word without speech.

Our activity is due to the incompleteness of the summing up of Forces. Thus a man proceeds to walk East at four miles an hour, though he is already traveling in that direction at over 1,000 miles an hour. The end of the Meditation on Action is the realization of Hadit; wherefore any action would be a disturbance of that perfection. This being understood of the True Self, the mind and body proceed untrammelled in their natural path without desire on the part of the self.

4. All things arise without diffidence; they grow, and none interferes; they change according to their natural order, without lust of result. The work is accomplished; yet continueth in its orbit, without goal. This work is done unconsciously; this is why its energy is indefatigable.

1: I.e., the thought of either implies its opposite.

2: (nay, even)

III

Quieting Folk

1. To reward merit is to stir up emulation; to prize rarities is to encourage robbery; to display desirable things is to excite the disorder of covetousness.
2. Therefore, the sage governeth men by keeping their minds and their bodies at rest, contenting the one by emptiness, the other by fullness. He satisfieth their desires, thus fulfilling their wills, and making them frictionless; and he maketh them strong in body, to a similar end.
3. He delivereth them from the restlessness of knowledge and the cravings of discontent. As to those who have knowledge already, he teacheth them the way of non-action. This being assured, there is no disorder in the world.

A lecture on the labour problem.

IV

The Spring without Source

1. The Tao resembleth the Emptiness of Space; to employ it, we must avoid creating ganglia. Oh Tao, how vast art Thou, the Abyss of Abysses, thou Holy and Secret Father of all Fatherhoods of Things!

See Liber CCXX, I.22, “let there be no difference made among you between any one thing & any other thing.” Inequality (an Illusion) and disorder necessarily result from the departure from homogeneity.

2. Let us make our sharpness blunt;¹ let us loosen our complexes;² let us tone down our brightness to the general obscurity.³ Oh Tao, how still art Thou, how pure, continuous One beyond Heaven!
3. This Tao hath no Father; it is beyond all other conceptions, higher than the highest.

1: For Sharpness implies a concentration.

2: For these are the ganglia of thought, which must be destroyed.

3: On the same principles, *cf.* the Doctrine in *Liber AL vel Legis sub figura CCXX, The Book of The Law*, as to the “spacemarks,” the stars are blemishes, so to speak, on the continuity of Nuit.

The Formula of the Vacuum

1. Heaven and earth proceed without motive, but casually, in their order of nature, dealing with all things carelessly, like used talismans. So also the sages deal with their people, not exercising benevolence, but allowing the nature of all to move without friction.
2. The Space between heaven and earth¹ is their breathing apparatus.² Exhalation is not exhaustion, but the complement of Inhalation, and this equally of that. Speech³ exhausteth; guard thyself, therefore, maintaining the perfect freedom of thy nature.

1: I.e., the six trigrams between ☰ and ☷.

2: And so these must not be interfered with.

3: By interfering with this regular order of breathing.

References to the trigrams of the Yi King must be explained by that Book. It would be impossible to elucidate such passages in a note. Ko Yuen is now at work to prepare an edition of the Yi.*

* Crowley did in fact complete a verse-paraphrase of the hexagrams, and wrote a number of commentaries on the *I Ching*. His versifications of the hexagrams with a brief introduction was published as *Equinox* III (7), *Shi Yi*, in 1971 by H.P. Smith's Thelema Publications. The commentaries were omitted from this edition, although many are still extant. — T.S.

VI

The Perfection of Form

- I. The Teh is the immortal energy of the Tao, its feminine aspect. Heaven and Earth issued from her Gate; this Gate is the root of their World-Sycamore. Its operation is of pure Joy and Love, and faileth never.

Cf. in Liber Aleph vel CXI, The Book of Wisdom or Folly, the doctrine of "The Play of Nuit."

VII

The Concealment of the Light

1. Heaven and Earth are mighty in continuance, because their work is delivered from the lust of result.
2. Thus also the sage, seeking not any goal, attaineth all things; he doth not interfere in the affairs of his body, and so that body acteth without friction. It is because he meddleth not with personal aims that these come to pass with simplicity.

See the Book of The Law as to “lust of result.” The general idea of the Way of the Tao is that all evil is interference. It is unnatural action which is error. Non-action is commendable only as a corrective of such; to interfere with one's own true Way is Restriction, the word of Sin.

VIII

The Nature of Peace

1. Admire thou the High Way of Water! Is not Water the soul of the life of things, whereby they change? Yet it seeketh its level, and abideth content in obscurity. So also it resembleth the Tao, in this Way thereof!

Hydrogen and chlorine (for example) will not unite when properly dry. Dryness is immobility or death. (*Cf.* Liber Aleph vel CXI, The Book of Wisdom or Folly, the doctrine concerning Change.)

2. The virtue of a house is to be well-placed; of the mind, to be at ease in silence as of space; of societies, to be will-disposed; of governments, to maintain quietude; of work, to be skillfully performed; and of all motion, to be made at the right time.

In all these illustrations, Lao Tze deprecates restlessness or friction.

3. Also it is the virtue of a man to abide in his place without discontent; thus offendeth he no man.

This gives point to the previous paragraph. It is all another way of saying "Do what thou wilt."

IX

The Way of Reticence

1. Fill not a vessel, lest it spill in carrying. Meddle not with a sharpened point by feeling it constantly, or it will soon become blunted.

Moderation. Let well alone.

2. Gold and jade endanger the house of their possessor. Wealth and honors lead to arrogance and envy, and bring ruin. Is thy way famous and thy name becoming distinguished? Withdraw, thy work once done, into obscurity; this is the way of Heaven.

Attend to the work; ignore the byproducts thereof.

X

Things Attainable

1. When soul¹ and body² are in the bond of love, they can be kept together. By concentration on the breath³ it is brought to perfect elasticity, and one becomes as a babe. By purifying oneself from Samadhi one becomes whole.

Here we see once more the doctrine of being without friction. Internal conflict leads to rupture. Again, one's Pranayama is to result in perfect pliability and exact adjustment to one's environment. Finally, even Sammasamadhi is a defect, so long as it is an experience instead of a constant state. So long as there are two to become one, there are two.

2. In his dealing with individuals and with society, let him move without lust of result. In the management of his breath, let him be like the mother-bird.⁴ Let his intelligence⁵ comprehend every quarter; but let his knowledge⁶ cease.
3. Here is the Mystery of Virtue.⁷ It createth all and nourisheth all; yet it doth not adhere to them; it operateth all, but knoweth not of it, nor proclaimeth it; it directeth all, but without conscious control.

He must absorb (or understand) everything without conscious knowledge, which is a shock, implying duality, like flint and steel, while understanding is like a sponge, or even like ocean absorbing rivers.

1: Neschamah.

2: Nepesch.

3: Prana.

4: I.e., brooding like the Spirit, quiet, without effort. There is also reference to a certain Legend, known in the Sanctuary of the Gnosis.

5: Binah

6: Daath.

7: Of the Tao and of him that hath it. Virtue – the Teh.

XI

The Value of the Unexpressed

- I. The thirty spokes join in their nave, that is one; yet the wheel dependeth for use upon the hollow place for the axle. Clay is shapen to make vessels; but the contained space is what is useful. Matter is therefore of use only to make the limits of the space which is the thing of real value.

This introduces the doctrine of the Fourth Dimension. Matter is like the lines bounding a plane. The plane is the real thing, the lines infinitely small in comparison, and serving only to define it. So also the "Self" is an imaginary limit marking off the divisions of the "Body of God." The error of Ahankara (the ego-making faculty) is to take the illusory surface for the Sphere. *Cf. The Book of The Law* concerning the Nature of Nuit.

XII

The Withdrawal from the External

1. The five colors film over sight; The five sounds make hearing dull; The five flavors conceal taste; occupation with motion and action bedevil Mind; even as the esteem of rare things begetteth covetousness and disorder.

This is the regular Yogi doctrine, and may be tested by experience of various Shivanas and other proper concentrations. But Lao Tze draws a parallel for social or political use. To excite cupidity leads to theft at home, and war abroad. It is only too evident today how neglect of this rule has destroyed civilization; I need not insist on examples of how A's potash, B's iron, C's coal and D's trade routes have caused E to set the world ablaze.

2. The wise man seeketh therefore to content the actual needs of the people, not to excite them by the sight of luxuries. He banneth these, and concentrateth on those.

The present labour troubles are due to the absurd cult of material complexities miscalled prosperity.

XIII

The Contempt for Circumstance

1. Favour and disgrace are equally to be shunned; honour and calamity to be alike regarded as adhering to the personality.¹

And, therefore, “ganglia” to be loosened, as stated above.

2. What is this which is written concerning favour and disgrace? Disgrace is the fall from favour. He then that hath favour hath fear, and its loss begetteth fear yet greater of a further fall. What is this which is written concerning honour and calamity? It is this attachment to the body which maketh calamity possible; for were one bodiless, what evil could befall him?
3. Therefore let him that regardeth himself rightly administer also a kingdom; and let him govern it who loveth it as another man loveth himself.

This does not mean with extreme devotion, but rather with passionless indifference.

XIV

The Shewing-Forth of the Mystery

1. We look at it, and see it not, though it is Omnipresent; and we name it the Root-Balance.¹
We listen for it, and hear it not, though it is Omniscient; and we name it the Silence.²
We feel for it, and touch it not, though it is Omnipotent; and we name it the Concealed.³
These three Virtues hath it, yet we cannot describe it as consisting of them; but, mingling them aright, we apprehend the One.
2. Above, it shineth not; below, it is not dark. It moveth all continuously, with out Expression, returning into Naught. It is the Form of That which is beyond Form; it is the Image of the Invisible; it is Change, and Without Limit.⁴
3. We confront it, and see not its Face; we pursue it, and its Back is hidden from us. Ah! but apply the Tao as in old Time to the work of the present; know it as it was known in the beginning; follow fervently the Thread of the Tao.

1: Hadit, the root of Yod.

2: Nuit, the root of Hé.

3: Ra-Hoor-Khuit, Kether, the root of Vau.

4: Cf. Ain, Ain Soph, Ain Soph Aur. Also see *Liber Aleph vel CXI, The Book of Wisdom or Folly*.

The Appearance of the True Nature

1. The adepts of past ages were subtle and keen to apprehend this Mystery, and their profundity was obscurity unto men. Since then they were not known, let me declare their nature.
2. To all seeming, they were fearful as men that cross a torrent in winter flood; they were hesitating like a man in apprehension of them that are about him; they were full of awe like a guest in a great house; they were ready to disappear like ice in thaw; they were unassuming like unworked wood; they were empty as a valley; and dull as the waters of a marsh.
3. Who can clear muddy water? Stillness will accomplish this. Who can obtain rest? Let motion continue equably, and it will itself be peace.
4. The adepts of the Tao, conserving its way, seek not to be actively self-conscious. By their emptiness of¹ Self they have no need to show their youth and perfection; to appear old and imperfect is their privilege.

1: (the ganglion of)

XVI

The Withdrawal to the Root

1. Emptiness must be perfect, and Silence made absolute with tireless strength. All things pass through the period of action; then they return to repose. They grow, bud, blossom and fruit; then they return to the root. This return to the root is this state which we name Silence; and this Silence is Witness of their Fulfilment.
2. This cycle is the universal law. To know¹ it is the part of intelligence; to ignore it² bringeth folly of action, whereof the end is madness. To know it bringeth understanding and peace; and these lead to the identification of the Self wit the Not-Self. This identification maketh man a king; and this kingliness groweth unto godhood. That godhood beareth fruit in the mastery of the Tao. Then the man, the Tao permeating him, endureth; and his bodily principles are in harmony, proof against³ decay, until the hour of his Change.

1: And acquiescence in.

2: Or to rebel against it.

3: (disorder and)

XVII

The Purity of the Current

1. In the Age of Gold, the people were not conscious of their rulers; in the Age of Silver, they loved them with songs; in the Age of Brass, they feared them; in the Age of Iron, they despised them. As the rulers¹ lost confidence, so also did the people lose confidence in them.
2. How hesitating did they seem, the Lords of the Age of Gold, speaking with deliberation, aware of the weight of their word! Thus they accomplished all things with success; and the people deemed their well-being to be the natural course of events.

1: Becoming self-conscious.

XVIII

The Decay of Manners

1. When men abandoned the Way of the Tao, benevolence and justice became necessary. Then also was need of wisdom and cunning, and all fell into illusion. When harmony ceased to prevail in the six spheres¹ it was needful to govern them by manifesting Sons.² When the kingdoms and races³ became⁴ confused, loyal ministers⁵ had to appear.

It is hard at first for the student to grasp the disdain of Lao Tze for what we call good qualities. But the need for the “good” is created by the existence of “evil,” i.e., the restriction of anything from doing its own will without friction. Good is then merely a symptom of evil, and so itself a poison. A man who finds Mercury and Potassium Iodide “good” for him, is a sick man. Frictionless Nourishment is the order of Change, or Life.

1: The solar system.

2: Dhyana-buddhas.

3: Elements, signs, etc.

4: (self-conscious and therefore)

5: Archangels.

XIX

Returning to the Purity of the Current

1. If we forget our statesmanship and our wisdom, it would be an hundred times better for the people. If we forget our benevolence and our justice, they would become again like sons, folk of good will. If we forget our machines and our business, there would be no knavery.

Samuel Butler in *Erewhon* describes a people who had sense enough to forbid all machinery. Wells, in *The War in the Air* prophesies the results of not doing so. At the hour of writing, An XV ☉ in ♀, we are facing the fulfilment of most of this prophecy. And still we make haste to arm!

2. These new methods despised the olden Way, inventing fine names to disguise their barrenness. But simplicity in the doing of the will of every man would put an end to vain ambitions and desires.

The Withdrawal from the Common Way

1. To forget learning is to end trouble. The smallest difference in words, such as “yes” and “yea” can make endless controversy for the scholar.¹ Fearful indeed is death, since all men fear it; but the abyss of questionings shoreless and bottomless, is worse!
2. Consider the profane man, how he preeneth, as if at feast, or gazing upon Spring from a tower! But as for me, I am as one who yawneeth, without any trace of desire. I am like a babe before its first smile. I appear sad and forlorn, like a man homeless. The profane man hath no definite shape. The profane man looketh lively and keen-witted; I alone appear blank in my mind. They seem eagerly critical; I appear careless and without perception. I seem to be as one adrift upon the sea, with no thought of an harbour. The profane have each one his definite course of action; I alone appear useless and uncomprehending, like a man from the border. Yea, thus I differ from all other men: but my jewel is the All-Mother!

Cf. “Afloat in the aether, O my God, my God!” *Liber VII*. It is the “aimless winging” which gives “joy ineffable” to the self-supported Absolute.

1: Consider the “homoousios-homoiousios” quarrel of early Christianity.*

* “Homo-ousios” (*Grk.* “of the same essence”) is a technical term used in the Nicene Creed to express the relationship between the Son and the Father in the Christian Trinity. “Homoi-ousios”, approx. “of similar essence” was proposed as a compromise between this and the position of the Arian faction which held the Son to be created by, subordinate to, and of different essence to, the Father. It is possible that the slogan “not one iota more” was first raised by adherents of the Nicene orthodoxy in rejection of the “Homoiousian” position (later condemned as the “semi-Arian heresy”). If the extra letter is represented by an iota subscript the two words become virtually indistinguishable. — T.S.

XXI

The Infinite Womb

- I. The sole source of energy¹ is the Tao. Who may declare its nature? It is beyond Sense, yet all form is hidden within it. It is beyond Sense, yet all Perceptibles are hidden within it. It is beyond Sense, yet all Being is hidden within it. This Being excites Perception, and the Word thereof. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, its Name² operateth continuously, causing all to flow in the cycle of Change, which is Love and Beauty. How do I know this? By my comprehension of the Tao.

Zero contains all possibilities, for it may be written $0=X$ plus $(-X)$, where X is anything soever and $-X$ its opposite. However complex X may be, it is always to be cancelled by its $-X$. Thus the universe is always potentially anything and everything, yet actually Nothing.

1: (and matter)

2: Teh.

The Guerdon of Modesty

1. The part becometh the whole. The curve becometh straight; the void becometh full; the old becometh new. He who desireth little accomplisheth his Will with ease; who desireth many things becometh distracted.¹
2. Therefore, the sage concentrateth upon one Will, and it is as light to the whole world. Hiding himself, he shineth; withdrawing himself, he attracteth notice; humbling himself, he is exalted; dissatisfied with himself,² he gaineth force to achieve his Will. Because he striveth not, no man may contend against him.
3. That is no idle say of the men of old; “The part becometh the whole”; it is the Canon of Perfection.

Any part X becomes the whole Zero, by cancelling itself through “love” of -X.

1: Thus he hath none of them.

2: Since the one Will is not yet attained.

XXIII

The Void of Naught

1. To keep silence is the mark of one who is acting in full accordance with his Will. A fierce wind soon falleth; a storm-shower doth not last all day. Yet Heaven and Earth cause these; and if they fail to make violence continue, how much less can man abide in spasm of passion!
2. With him that devoteth him to Tao, the devotees of Tao are in accord; so also are the devotees of Teh,¹ yea, even they who fail in seeking these are in accord.²
3. So then his brothers in the Tao are joyful, attaining it; and his brothers in the Teh are joyful, attaining it; and they who fail in seeking these are joyful, partaking of it. But if he himself realize not the Tao with calm of confidence, then they also appear lacking in confidence.

He who has Tao has all things rightly disposed; his own failure creates the illusion of general failure.

1: Because Teh is part of Tao.

2: Because to him who has Tao all things are realized as harmonious.

XXIV

Evil Manners

- I. He who standeth a-tiptoe standeth not firm; he who maketh rigid his legs walketh ill. He who preeneth himself shineth not; he who talketh positively is vulgar; he who boastheth is refused acceptance; he who is wise in his own conceit is thought inferior. Such attitudes, to him that hath the view given by understanding the Tao, seem like garbage or like cancer, abhorrent to all. They then who follow the Way¹ do not admit them.

1: Tao.

XXV

Images of the Mystery

1. Without Limit and Perfect, there is a Becoming, beyond Heaven and Earth. It hath not motion nor Form; it is alone, it changeth not;¹ it extendeth all ways; it hath no adversary. It is like the All-Mother.²
2. I know not its Name, but I call it the Tao. Moreover, I exert myself, and call it Vastness.
3. Vastness, the Becoming! Becoming, it flieth afar. Afar, it draweth near. Vast is this Tao; Heaven also is Vast. Earth is vast; and the Holy King is vast also.² In the Universe are Four Vastnesses, and of these is the Holy King.
4. Man followeth the⁴ formula of Earth; Earth followeth that of Heaven, and Heaven that of the Tao. The formula of the Tao is its own Nature.

1: Because it comprehendeth Change.

2: Nuit.

3: For they conform to the Tao.

4: (Magick)

XXVI

The Nature of Mass

1. Mass is the fulcrum of mobility; stillness is the father of motion.
2. Therefore the sage King, though he travel afar, remaineth near his supplies. Though opportunity tempt him, he remaineth quietly in proper disposition, indifferent. Should the master of an host of chariots bear himself frivolously? If he attack without support, he loseth his base; if he becomes a raider, he forfeiteth his throne.

This is all obvious military metaphor. If we depart from the Tao, we become engaged in futile activities which lead nowhere and we find ourselves in the Abyss of Choronzon.

XXVII

Skill in the Method

1. The experienced traveler concealeth his tracks; the clever speaker giveth no chance to the critic; the skilled mathematician useth no abacus; the ingenious safesmith baffleth the burglar without the use of bolts, and the cunning binder without ropes and knots.¹ So also the sage, skilled in man-emancipation-craft, useth all men; understanding the value of everything, he rejecteth nothing. This is called the Occult Regimen.
2. The adept is then master to the zelator, and the zelator assisteth and honoreth the adept. Yet unless these relations were manifest, even the most intelligent observer might be perplexed as to which was which. This is called the Crown of Mystery.

The adept has become so absolutely natural that he appears unskillful. *Ars est celare artem.*^{*} It is only he who has started on the Path that can divine how sublime is the Master.

1: The reference is to certain “puzzles,” as we should call them, common in China.

^{*} [Lat. “The art is to hide the art.”]

XXVIII

The Return to Simplicity

1. Balance thy male strength with thy female weakness and thou shalt attract all things, as the ocean absorbeth all rivers; for thou shalt formulate the excellence of the Child eternal, simple, and perfect. Knowing the light, remain in the Dark. Manifest not thy Glory, but thine obscurity. Clothed in this Child-excellence eternal, thou hast attained the Return of the First State. Knowing the splendour of Fame, cling to Obloquy and Infamy; then shalt thou remain as in the Valley to which flow all waters, the lodestone to fascinate all men. Yea, they shall hail in thee this Excellence, eternal, simple and perfect, of the Child.
2. The raw material, wrought into form, produceth vessels.¹ So the sage King formulateth his Wholeness in divers Offices; and his Law is without violence or constraint.²

1: Homogeneous developed into heterogeneous: 0⁰ understood as “something.”

2: Being concordant with the nature of his people.

XXIX

Refraining from Action

1. He that, desiring a kingdom, exerteth himself to obtain it, will fail. A Kingdom is of the nature of spirit, and yieldeth not to activity. He who graspeth it, destroyeth it; he who gaineth it, loseth it.

The usurper merely seizes the throne; the people are not with him, as with one who becomes king by virtue of natural fitness. The usurper has but the mask of power.

2. The wheel of nature revolveth constantly; the last becometh first, and the first last; hot things grow cold, and cold things hot; weakness overcome strength; things gained are lost anon. Hence the wise man avoideth effort, desire and sloth.

Effort is the Rajas-Guna, and makes one go faster than is natural. Sloth is the Tamas-Guna, and makes one go slower than is natural. Desire is the disturbance of the Sattwa-Guna, exciting the lust of Change, in one direction or the other, from the natural. Things gained: see *The Book of The Law*, Chapter II vv. 57-60.

XXX

A Warning Against War

1. If a king summon to his aid a Master of the Tao, let him not advise recourse to arms. Such action certainly bringeth the corresponding reaction.
2. Where armies are, are weeds. Bad harvests follow great hosts.
3. The good general striketh decisively, once and for all. He does not risk¹ by overboldness. He striketh, but doth not vaunt his victory. He striketh according to strict law of necessity, not from desire of victory.

In other words, he acts according to the rules of the game, without losing his head by vain-glory, ambition or hatred.

4. Things become strong and ripe, then age. This is discord with the Tao;² and what is not at one with the Tao soon cometh to an end.

1: (counter-attack)

2: Forcing-on of strength, instead of allowing natural growth.

XXXI

Composing Quarrel

1. Arms, though they may be beautiful, are of ill omen, abominable to all created beings. They who have the Tao love not their use.
2. The place of honour is on the right is wartime; so thinketh the man of distinction. Sharp weapons are ill-omened, unworthy of such a man; he useth them only in necessity. He valueth peace and ease, desireth not violence of victory. To desire victory is to desire the death of men; and to desire that is to fail to propitiate the people.
3. At feasts, the left hand is the high seat; at funerals, the right. The second in command of the army leadeth the left wing, the commander-in-chief, the right wing; it is as if the battle were a rite of mourning! He that hath slain most men should weep for them most bitterly; so them the place of the victor is assigned to him with philosophical propriety.

XXXII

The Wisdom of Teh

1. The All-Tao¹ hath no name.
2. It is That Minute Point,² yet the whole world dare not contend against him that hath it. Did a lord or king gain it and guard it, all men would obey him of their own accord.
3. Heaven and Earth combining under its spell, shed forth dew, extending throughout all things of its own accord, without man's interference.

This “dew” refers to the Elixir of the Fraternity R.C. and of the O.T.O. It has been described, with proper caution, in various passages of *The Equinox* and of *The Book of Lies*.

4. Tao, in its phase of action, hath a name. Then men can comprehend it; when they do this, there is no more risk of wrong or ill-success.
5. As the great rivers and the oceans are to the valley streams, so is the Tao to the whole universe.

1: Comprehending Change within itself.

2: Hadit.

XXXIII

The Discrimination (Viveka) of Teh

1. He who understandeth others understandeth Two; but he who understandeth himself understandeth One. He who conquereth others is strong; but he who conquereth himself is stronger yet.¹ Contentment is riches; and continuous action² is Will.
2. He that adapteth himself perfectly to his environment, continueth for long; he who dieth without dying, liveth forever.³

The last paragraph refers once more to a certain secret practice taught by the O.T.O. See, in particular, "The Book of Lies."

1: For the same reason as in the first sentence.

2: (equable and carefree)

XXXIV

The Method of Attainment

1. The Tao is immanent; it extendeth to the right hand as to the left.
2. All things derive from it their being; it createth them, and all comply with it. Its work is done, and it proclaimeth it not. It is the ornament of all things, yet it claimeth not fief of them; there is nothing so small that it inhabiteth not, and informeth it. All things return without knowledge of the Cause thereof; there is nothing so great that it habiteth not, and informeth it.
3. In this manner also may the Sage perform his Works. It is by not thrusting himself forward that he winneth to his success.

XXXV

The Good Will of the Teh

1. The whole world is drawn to him that hath the Likeness of the Tao.¹ Men flock unto him and suffer no ill, but gain repose, find peace, enjoy all ease.
2. Sweet sounds and cates lure the traveler from his way. But the Word of the Tao, though it appear harsh and insipid, unworthy to hearken or to behold; hath his use all inexhaustible.

1: I.e., the Teh.

XXXVI

The Hiding of the Light

1. In order to draw breath, first empty the lungs; to weaken another, first strengthen him; to overthrow another, first exalt him; to despoil another, first load him with gifts; this is called the Occult Regimen.
2. The soft conquereth the hard; the weak pulleth down the strong.
3. The fish that leaveth ocean is lost; the method of government must be concealed from the people.

The single argument that can be aduced in favour of an Enlightened Democracy is that it provides more completely for the fooling of the Sovereign People than any other known system.

XXXVII

The Right Use of Government

1. The Tao proceedeth by its own nature, doing nothing; therefore there is no doing which it comprehendeth not.
2. If kings and princes were to govern in this manner, all things would operate aright by their own motion.
3. If this transmutation were my object, I should call it Simplicity. Simplicity hath no name nor purpose; silently and at ease all things go well.

PART II

The Application of Tao

XXXVIII

Concerning the Teh

1. Those who possessed perfectly the powers¹ did not manifest them, and so they preserved them. Those who possessed them imperfectly feared to lose them, and so lost them.
2. The former did nothing, nor had need to do. The latter did, and had need to do.
3. Those who possessed benevolence exercised it, and had need it; so also was it with them who possessed justice.
4. Those who possessed the conventions displayed them; and when men would not agree, they made ready to fight them.

Teh appears as Chokmah-Binah, Benevolence as Chesed, Justice as Geburah, Convention as Tiphereth. Thus Kether alone is “safe”; even Chokmah-Binah risks fall unless it keeps Silence.

5. Thus, when the Tao was lost, the Magick Powers appeared; then, by successive degradations, came Benevolence, Justice, Convention.
6. Now convention is the shadow of loyalty and good will, and so the herald of disorder. Yea, even Understanding is but a Blossom of the Tao, and foreshadoweth Stupidity.

This repeats the doctrine of the danger of Binah. The attack on Tiphereth is to be regarded as a reference to the “Fall,” death of Hiram at high noon, etc.

7. So then the Tao-Man holdeth to Mass, and avoideth Motion; he is attached to the Root, not to the flower. He leaveth the one, and cleaveth to the other.

That is, if his road be towards the Tao. In our language, he adores Nuit; but the Perfect Man, when he needs to manifest, is on the opposite curve. Cf. *The Book Of Lies*: “The Brothers of A.:A.: are Women: the Aspirants to A.:A.: are Men.”

1: Teh.

XXXIX

The Law of the Beginning

1. These things have possessed the Tao from the beginning; Heaven, clear and shining; Earth, steady and easy; Spirits, mighty in Magick; Vehicles, overflowing with Joy; all that hath life; and the rulers of men. All these derive their essence from the Tao.

“Spirits” and “Vehicles” refer to the Lance and Cup, correlatives of Heaven and Earth.

2. Without the Tao, Heaven would dissolve, Earth disrupt; Spirits become impotent; Vehicles empty; living things would perish and rulers lose their power.

3. The root of grandeur is humility, and the strength of exaltation is its base. Thus rulers speak of themselves as “Fatherless,” “Virtueless,” “Unworthy,” proclaiming by this that their Glory is their shame.¹ So also the virtue of a Chariot is not any of the parts of a Chariot, if they be numbered.² They do not seek to appear fine like jade, but inconspicuous like common stone.

English good manners are similarly inconspicuous, and were so devised as a protection. Jade is liable to be seized and carved; ordinary stone may escape. Cf. Kwang-tze on the rotten tree, *etc.* *Zan Kien Shieh*, Sacred Books of the East, No. XXXIX, p. 217.*

1: It is the invisible that is all-important: See Chapter II.

2: Cf. *The Questions of King Milinda*, where is the discussion of what a carriage really is.

* “... the material of it is good for nothing, and hence it is that it has attained to so great an age.”

XL

Omitting Utility

1. The Tao proceeds by correlative curves, and its might is in weakness.
2. All things arose from the Teh, and the Teh budded from the Tao.

The law of the Tao is constant compensation; its method is always to redress the balance, and reduce the equation to zero. In its action it resembles very closely the form of Energy which we call gravitation; it is an inertia always tending to minimize stress.

XLI

The Identity of the Differential

1. The best students, learning of the Tao, set to work earnestly to practice the Way. Mediocre students now cherish it, now let it go.
2. Thus spake the makers of Saws: the Tao at its brightest is obscure. Who advanceth in that Way, retireth. Its smooth Way is rough. Its summit is a Valley. Its beauty is ugliness; its wealth is poverty. Its virtue, vice. Its stability is vacancy. Its utterance is silence. Its reality is illusion.
3. Nameless and imperceptible is the Tao; but it informeth and perfecteth all things.

XLII

The Veils of the Tao

1. The Tao formulated the One.¹
The One exhaled the Two.²
The Two were parents of the Three.³
The Three were parents of all things.⁴
All things pass from Obscurity to Manifestation, inspired harmoniously by the Breath of the Void.⁵
2. Men do not like to be fatherless, virtueless, unworthy: yet rulers describe themselves by these names. Thus increase bringeth decrease to some, and decrease to others.
3. Others have taught thus; I consent to it. Violent man and strong die not by natural death. This fact is the foundation of my law.

1: Kether or the Æthyr.*

2: Chokmah-Binah or Yin and Yang.

3: The second Triad.

4: The third Triad and Malkuth.

5: The Tao.

* v.l. "the First Æthyr" (see *The Vision and the Voice*). I am not sure which is correct. — T.S.

XLIII

The Cosmic Method

- I. The softest substance¹ hunteth down the hardest:² the unsubstantial³ penetrateth where there is no opening. Here is the Virtue of Inertia.
2. Few are they who attain: whose speech is Silence, whose Work is Inertia.

1: Water-Yoni.

2: Rock-Lingam.

3: The Luminiferous Æther.

XLIV

Monitorial

1. What shall it profit a man if he gain fame or wealth, and lose his life?
2. If a man cling to fame or wealth, he risketh what is worth more.
3. Be content, not fearing disgrace. Act not, and risk not criticism. Thus live thou long, without alarm.

XLV

The Overflowing of Teh

1. Despise thy masterpieces; thus renew the vigor of thy creation. Deem thy fullness emptiness; thus shall thy fullness never be empty. Let the straight appear crooked to thee, thy Craft clumsiness; thy Musick discord.
2. Exercise moderateth cold; stillness heat. To be pure¹ and to keep silence, is the True Law of all that are beneath Heaven.

See also the *Khing Kang King*, Liber XXI.*

1: Brahmacharya – Chastity in the secret Parzifal - O.T.O. sense.

* [Appended to the present volume.]

XLVI

The Withdrawal from Ambition

1. When the Tao beareth away on Earth, men put swift horses to night-carts. When it is neglected, they breed chargers in the border marches.
2. There is no evil worse than ambition; no misery worse than discontent; no crime greater than greed. Content of mind is peace and satisfaction eternal.

XLVII

The Vision of the Distant

1. One need not pass his threshold to comprehend all that is under Heaven, not to look out from his lattice to behold the Tao Celestial. Nay! but the farther a man goeth, the less he knoweth.
2. The sages acquired their knowledge without travel; they named all things aright without beholding them; and, acting without aim, fulfilled their Wills.

XLVIII

Oblivion Overcoming Knowledge

1. The scholar seeketh daily increase of knowing; the sage of Tao daily decrease of doing.
2. He decreaseth it, again and again, until he doeth no act with the lust of result. Having attained this Inertia all accomplisheth itself.
3. He who attracteth to himself all that is under Heaven doeth so without effort. He who maketh effort is not able to attract it.

XLIX

The Adaptability of the Teh

1. The wise man hath no fixed principle; he adapteth his mind to his environment.
2. To the good I am good, and to the evil I am good also; thus all become good. To the true I am true, and to the false I am true; thus all become true.
3. The sage appeareth hesitating to the world, because his mind is detached. Therefore the people look and listen to him as his children; and thus doth he shepherd them.

L

The Estimation of Life

1. Man cometh into life, and returneth again into death.
2. Three men in ten conserve life; three men in ten pursue death.
3. Three men also in ten desire to live, but their acts hasten their journey to the house of death. Why is this? Because of their efforts to preserve life.
4. But this I have heard. He that is wise in the economy of his life, whereof he is warden for a season, journeyeth with no need to avoid the tiger or the rhinoceros, and goeth uncorseted among the warriors with no fear of sword or lance. The rhinoceros findeth in him no place vulnerable to its horn, the tiger to its claws, the weapon to its point. Why is this? Because there is no house of death in his whole body.

LI

The Teh as the Nurse

1. All things proceed from the Tao, and are sustained by its forth-flowing virtue.¹ Everyone taketh form according to his nature, and is perfect, each in his own particular way. Therefore, each and every one of them glorify the Tao, and worship its forth-flowing Virtue.
2. This glorifying of the Tao, this worship of the Teh, is constantly spontaneous, and not by appointment of Law.
3. Thus the Tao buddeth them out, nutureth them, developeth them, sustaineth them, perfecteth them, ripeneth them, upholdeth them, and reabsorbeth them.
4. It buddeth them forth, and claimeth not lordship over them; is overseer of their changes, and boasteth not of his puissance; perfecteth them, and interfereth not with their Ways; this is called the Mystery of its Virtue.

1: The Teh.

LII

The Withdrawal into the Silence

1. The Tao buddeth forth all things under Heaven; it is¹ the Mother of all.
2. Knowing the Mother, we may know her offspring. He that knoweth his Mother, and abideth in Her nature, remaineth in surety all his days.
3. With the mouth closed, and the Gates of Breath² controlled, he remaineth at ease all his days. With the mouth open, and the Breath² directed to outward affairs, he hath no surety all his days.
4. To perceive that Minute Point³ is True Vision; to maintain the Soft and Gentle⁴ is True Strength.
5. Employing harmoniously the Light Within⁵ so that it returneth to its Origin, one guardeth even one's body from evil, and keepeth Silence before all men.

Paragraphs 3-5 refer to certain technical practices which may be studied in *Book 4, The Equinox* and *The Book Of The Law*.

1: (in its manifestation as the Teh)

2: Prana.

3: Hadit.

4: Nuit.

5: Ra-Hoor-Khuit.

LIII

The Witness of Greed

1. Were I discovered by men, and charged with government, my first would be lest I should become proud.
2. The true Path is level and smooth; but men love bypaths.
3. They adorn their courts, but they neglect their fields; and leave their storehouses empty. They wear elaborate and embroidered robes; they gird themselves with sharp swords; they eat and drink with luxury; they heap up goods; they are thievish and vainglorious. All this is opposite to the Way of Tao.

The Witness of Wisdom

1. If a man plant according to the Tao it will never be uprooted; if he thus gather, it will never be lost. His sons and his son's, one following another, shall honour the shrine of their ancestor.
2. The Tao, applied to oneself, strengtheneth the Body,¹ to the family, bringeth wealth;¹ to the district, prosperity;¹ to the state, great fortune.¹ Let it be the Law of the Kingdom, and all men will increase in virtue.¹

Teh is always the Magick Power; it need not be explained diversely as in the text.

3. Thus we observe its effect in every case, as to the person, the family, the district, the state and the kingdom.
4. How do I know that this is thus universal under Heaven?
By experience.

1: Teh.

The Spell of the Mystery

1. He that hath the Magick powers¹ of the Tao is like a young child. Insects will not sting him or beasts or birds of prey attack him.
2. The young child's bones are tender and its sinews are elastic, but its grasp is firm.² It knoweth nothing of the Union of Man and Woman, yet its organ may be excited. This is because of its natural perfection. It will cry all day long without becoming hoarse, because of the harmony of its being.
3. He who understandeth this harmony knoweth the mystery of the Tao, and becometh a True Sage. All devices for inflaming life, and increasing the vital Breath,³ by mental effort⁴ are evil and factitious.
4. Things become strong, then age. This⁵ is in discord with the Tao, and what is not at one with the Tao soon cometh to an end.

1: Teh.

2: A baby can hang from a bough for quite an indefinitely long period. This is because of monkey-atavism; in other words, it is the subconscious of the child that is at work. This subconsciousness is of its true nature, therefore, in accord with the Tao.

3: Prana.

4: Hatha-Yoga, etc.

5: Forcing-on of strength instead of allowing natural growth.

The Excellence of the Mystery

1. Who knoweth the Tao keepeth Silence. He who babbleth knoweth is not.

This is rather amusing, from one who has been speaking of it without intermission for so many pages. Strive as I will, I can find no excuse for the stupidity of this Utterance. The deeper I dive into Metaphysick, the more absurd I (or my author) seem. However, one ignorant folly more or less can make little difference on this planet.

2. Who knoweth it closeth his mouth and controlleth the Gates of his Breath.¹ He will make his sharpness blunt; he will loosen his complexes; he will tone down his brightness to the general obscurity. This is called the Secret of Harmony.
3. He cannot be insulted either by familiarity or aversion. He is immune to ideas of gain or loss, of honour or disgrace; he is the true man, unequalled under Heaven.

One may compare the character of Prince Muishkin in *The Idiot* of Dostoevski.

1: Prana.

LVII

The True Influence

1. One may govern a state by restriction; weapons may be used with skill and cunning; but one acquireth true command only by freedom, given and taken.
2. How am I aware of this? By experience that to multiply restrictive laws in the kingdom impoverisheth the people; the use of machines causeth disorder in state and race alike. The more men use skill and cunning, the more machines there are; and the more laws there are, the more felons there are.
3. A wise man has said this: I will refrain from doing, and the people will act rightly of their own accord; I will love Silence, and the people will instinctively turn to perfection; I will take no measures, and the people will enjoy true wealth; I will restrain ambition, and the people will attain simplicity.

The United States of America had this idea once, long ago. Therefore they prospered. But now?

LVIII

Adaptation to Environment

1. The government which exerciseth the least care serveth the people best; that which meddleth with everybody's business worketh all manner of harm. Sorrow and joy are bedfellows; who can divine the final result of either?
2. Shall we avoid restriction? Yea; restriction distorteth nature, so that even what seemeth good in it is evil. For how long have men suffered from misunderstanding of this.
3. The wise man is foursquare, and avoids aggression; his corners do not injure others. He moves in a straight line¹ and turns not aside therefrom; he is brilliant² but does not blind with his brightness.³

1: According to his Will.

2: Like a Star.

3: Because he keeps to his own orbit.

LIX

Warding the Tao

1. To balance our earthly nature and cultivate our heavenly nature, tread the Middle Path.
2. This Middle Path alone leadeth to the Timely Return to the True Nature. This Timely Return resulteth from the constant gathering of Magick Powers.¹ With that Gathering cometh control. This Control we know to be without Limit² and he who knoweth the Limitless may rule the state.
3. He who possesseth the Tao continueth long. He is like a plant with well-set roots and strong stems. Thus it secureth long continuance of its life.

1: Teh.

2: Like the Tao.

The Duty of Government

1. The government of a kingdom is like the cooking of a fish.

This means, it is the simplest possible operation.

2. If the kingdom be ruled according to the Tao, the spirits of our ancestors will not manifest their Teh.¹ These spirits have this Teh, but will not turn it against men. It is able to hurt men; so also is the Wise King, but he doth not.

3. When these powers² are in accord, their Good Will produceth the Teh, endowing the people therewith.

1: *i.e.*, their Magick Powers, from indignation at the mischief wrought by their descendents.

2: The spirits and the Wise King.

LXI

The Modesty of the Teh

1. A state becometh powerful when it resembleth a great river, deep-seated; to it tend all the small streams under Heaven.
2. It is as with the female, that conquereth the male by her Silence. Silence is a form of Gravity.

The nearer one gets to the centre of Gravity, the greater the attraction. It is not that there is any “virtue” in humility; it is simply that all lines converge at the center of the Web.

3. Thus a great state attracteth small states by meeting their views, and small states attract the great state by revering its eminence. In the first case this Silence gaineth supporters; in the second, favour.
4. The great state uniteth men and nurtureth them; the small state wisheth the good will of the great, and offereth service; thus each gaineth its advantage. But the great state must keep Silence.

LXII

The Workings of the Tao

1. The Tao is the most exalted of all things. It is the ornament of the good, and the protection and purification of the evil.
Cf. “Soul of goodness in things evil.”*
2. Its words are the fountain of honour, and its deeds the engine of achievement. It is present even in evil.
3. Though the Son of Heaven were enthroned with his three Dukes appointed to serve him, and he were offered a round symbol-of-rank as great as might fill the hands, with a team of horses to follow; this gift were not to be matched against the Tao, which might be offered by the humblest of men.
4. Why did they of old time set such store by the Tao? Because he that sought it might find it, and because it was the Purification from all evil. Therefore did all men under Heaven esteem it the most exalted of all things.

* “There is some soul of goodness in things evil, would men observingly distill it out.”
—Shakespeare, *King Henry V*, Act IV, Scene 1.

LXIII

Forethought at the Outset

1. Act without lust of result; work without anxiety; taste without attachment to flavour; esteem small things great and few things many; repel violence with gentleness.
2. Do great things while they are yet small; hard things while they are yet easy; for all things, how great or hard soever, have a beginning when they are little and easy. So thus the wise man accomplisheth the greatest tasks without undertaking anything important.
3. Who undertaketh thoughtlessly is certain to fail in attainment; who estimateth things easy findeth them hard. The wise man considereth even easy things hard, so that even hard things are easy to him.

LXIV

Attending to Details

1. It is easy to grasp what is not yet in motion, to withstand what is not yet manifest, to break what is not yet compact, to disperse what is not yet coherent. Act against things before they become visible; attend to order before disorder ariseth.
2. The tree which filleth the embrace grew from a small shoot; the tower nine-storied rose from a low foundation; the ten-day journey began with a single step.
3. He who acteth worketh harm; he who graspeth findeth it a slip. The wise man acteth not, so worketh no harm; he doth not grasp, and so doth not let go. Men often ruin their affairs on the eve of success because they are not as prudent at the end as in the beginning.
4. The wise man willeth what others do not will,¹ and valueth not things rare.² He learneth what others learn not, and gathered up what they despise. Thus he is in accord with the natural course of events, and he is not overbold in action.

1: He does his own Will, instead of aiming at a standard goal.

2: And so sought after by others.

LXV

The Purity of the Teh

1. They of old time that were skilled in the Tao sought not to enlighten the people, but to keep them simple.
2. The difficulty of government is the vain knowledge of the people. To use cleverness in government is to scourge the kingdom; to use simplicity is to anoint it.
3. Know these things, and make them thy law and thine example. To possess this Law is the Secret Perfection of rule. Profound and Extended is this Perfection; he that possesseth it is indeed contrary to the rest, but he attracteth them to full accordance.

LXVI

Putting One's Self Last

1. The oceans and the rivers attract the streams¹ by their skill in being lower than they; thus are they masters thereof. So the Wise Man, to be above men, speaketh lowly; and to precede them acteth with humility.
2. Thus, though he be above them, they feel no burden; nor, thought he precede them, do they feel insulted.
3. So then do all men delight to honour him, and grow not weary of him. He contendeth not against any man; therefore no man is able to contend against him.

1: As it were, tribute and worship.

LXVII

The Three Jewels

1. They say that while this Tao of mine is great, yet it is inferior. This is the proof of its greatness. If it were like anything else, its smallness would have long been known.
2. I have three jewels of price whereto I cleave; gentleness, economy and humility.
3. That gentleness maketh me courageous, that economy generous, that humility honoured. Men of today abandon gentleness for violence, economy for extravagance, humility for pride: this is death.
4. Gentleness bringeth victory in fight; and holdeth its ground with assurance. Heaven wardeth the gentle man by that same virtue.

LXVIII

Assimilating One's Self to Heaven

1. He that is skilled in war maketh no fierce gestures; the most efficient fighter bewareth of anger. He who conquereth refraineth from engaging in battle; he whom men most willingly obey continueth silently with his work. So it is said: "He is mighty who fighteth not; he ruleth who uniteth with his subjects; he shineth whose will is that of Heaven."

LXIX

The Use of the Mysterious Way

1. A great strategist said: “I dare not take the offensive. I prefer the defensive. I dare not advance an inch; I prefer to retreat a foot.” Place, therefore, the army where there is no army; prepare for action where there is no engagement; strike where there is no conflict; advance against the enemy where the enemy is not.

This is quite orthodox strategy, to avoid battle where the enemy is strong, to concentrate on the weak points of his line.

2. There is no error so great as to engage in battle without sufficient force. To do so is to risk losing the gentleness¹ which is beyond price. Thus when the lines actually engage, he who regreteth the necessity is the victor.

A general who is compelled to fight at any point has lost the initiative at that point.

1: Elasticity.

The Difficulty of Right Apprehension

1. My words are easy to understand and to perform; but is there anyone in the world who can understand them and perform them?
2. My words derive from a creative and universal Principle, in accord with the One Law. Men, not knowing these, understand me not.
3. Few are they that understand me; therefore am I the more to be valued. The Wise Man weareth sack-cloth, but guardeth his jewel in his bosom.

The Distemper of Knowledge

1. To know, yet to know nothing, is the highest; not to know, yet to pretend to knowledge, is a distemper.
2. Painful is this distemper; therefore we shun it. The Wise Man hath it not. Knowing it to be bound up with Sorrow, he putteth it away from him.

LXXII

Concerning Love of Self

1. When men fear not that which is to be feared, that which they fear cometh upon them.¹
2. Let them not live, without thought, the superficial life.² Let them not weary of the spring of Life!³
3. By avoiding the superficial life,⁴ this weariness cometh not upon thee.

One must make a habit of doing one's True Will; at first it is irksome, because of conflict with the accidents of life.

4. These things the Wise Man knoweth, not showeth: he loveth himself, without isolating his value.⁵ He accepteth the former and rejecteth the latter.

1: They should fear Restriction of their True Wills; if not, they become slaves.

2: They must discover the True Will, and do it. See *Liber Aleph vel CXI, The Book of Wisdom or Folly*.

3: The true, subconscious Will.

4: Rational, instead of subconscious reaction to environment.

5: Confounding the space-marks, etc.

LXXIII

Establishing the Law of Freedom

1. One man, daring, is executed; another, not daring, liveth. It would seem as if the one course were profitable and the other detrimental. Yet when Heaven smiteth a man, who shall assign the cause thereof? Therefore the sage is diffident.

This difficult passage deprecates the security afforded by worldly prudence. He who fights and runs away may get cut down by pursuing cavalry. The only way is to adapt oneself to one's environment; that is, to the Way of the Tao, which is everywhere.

2. The Tao of Heaven contendeth not, yet it overcometh); it is silent, yet its need is answered; it summoneth none, but all men come to it of their free will. Its method is quietness, yet its will is efficient. Large are the meshes of Heaven's Net; wide open, yet letting none escape.¹

1: Cf. 'Though the mills of God', etc.

A Restraint of Misunderstanding

1. The people have no fear of death;¹ why then seek to awe them by the threat of death? If the people feared death² and I could put to death evil-doers, who would dare to offend?
2. There is one appointed to inflict death.³ He who would usurp that position resembleth a hewer of wood doing the work of a carpenter. Such an one, presumptuous, will be sure to cut his own hands.

This chapter is again difficult. Par. 2 shows capital punishment as interference with Heaven's privilege. Yet in Par. 1 we see the threat of it kept as a ruler's last resort. Only, this is a Fool's Knot proposal; for such punishment is effective only when the people are so happy that they fear it infinitely, so that none ever incurs it. Hence it need never be carried out.

-
- 1: For the meddlesome governments have made their lives intolerable.
 - 2: Their lives being pleasant.
 - 3: Azrael in the lore of Islam.

LXXV

The Injury of Greed

1. The people suffer hunger because of the weight of taxation imposed by their rulers. This is the cause of famine.
2. The people are difficult to govern because their rulers meddle with them. This is the cause of bad government.
3. The people welcome death because the toil of living is intolerable.¹ This is why they esteem death lightly.² In such a state of insecurity it is better to ignore the question of living than to set store by it.

These chapters (LXXIV & LXXV) are an interpolation, describing the conditions resulting from neglect of the Tao. The last sentence is not to be taken as didactic, as though a counsel of despair. It is the climax of the lamentation. Lao Tzu was 'agin the Government'; he shows here as well as elsewhere, the influence of his Irish blood.

1: Owing to the meddlesome, tax-increasing, Tao-neglecting rulers.

2: And so take the risk of brigandage, etc.

A Warning against Rigidity

1. At the birth of man, he is elastic and weak; at his death, rigid and unyielding.¹ This is the common law; trees also, in their youth, are tender and supple; in their decay, hard and dry.
2. So then rigidity and hardness are the stigmata of death; elasticity and adaptability, of life.
3. He then who putteth forth strength is not victorious; even as a strong tree filleth the embrace.²
4. Thus the hard and rigid have the inferior place, the soft and elastic the superior.

1: Unable to adapt himself to his environment

2: Is ready for cutting, and also, unable to grow further, decays.

LXXVII

The Way of Heaven

1. The Tao of Heaven is likened to the bending of a bow, whereby the high part is brought down, and the low part raised up. The extreme is diminished, and the middle increased.
2. This is the Way of Heaven, to remove excess, and to supplement insufficiency. Not so is the way of man, who taketh away from him that hath not to give to him that hath already excess.¹
3. Who can employ his own excess to the weal of all under Heaven? Only he that possesseth the Tao.
4. So the Wise Man acteth without lust of result; achieveth and boasteth not; he willeth not to proclaim his greatness.

1: This knavish idea was advocated by the fabulous founder of Christianity; it is the favourite precept of his most eminent followers.

LXXVIII
A Creed

1. Nothing in the world is more elastic and yielding than water; yet it is preeminent to dissolve things rigid and resistant; there is nothing which can match it.
2. All men know that the soft overcometh the hard, and the weak conquereth the strong; but none are able to use this law in action.
3. A Wise Man hath said: “He that taketh on the burden of the state is a demigod worthy of sacrificial worship; and the true King of a people is he that undertaketh the weight of their sorrows.”
4. Truth appears a paradox.

LXXIX

Truth in Covenant

1. When enemies are reconciled, there is always an aftermath of ill will. How can this be useful?
2. Therefore, the Wise Man, while he keepeth his part of the record of a transaction, doth not insist on its prompt execution. He who hath the Teh considereth the situation from all sides, while he who hath it not seeketh only to benefit himself.

The Magick Powers must be exerted only according to the whole Will of the Universe without partiality.

3. In the Tao of Heaven, there is no distinction of persons in its love; but it is for the True Man to claim it.

LXXX

Isolation

1. In a little kingdom of few people it should be the order that though there were men able to do the work of ten men or five score, they should not be employed.¹ Though the people regard death as sorrowful, yet they should not wish to go elsewhere.
2. They should have boats and wagons, yet no necessity to travel; corslets and weapons, yet no occasion to fight.
3. For communication they should use knotted cords.

The curse of modern society is the Press: babble of twaddle, like a drunk prostitute vomiting. One should say only things strictly necessary.

4. They should deem their food sweet, their clothes beautiful, their homes, their customs delightful.
5. There should be another state within view, so that its fowls and dogs should be heard; yet to old age, even to death, the people should hold no traffic with it.

1: At this high pressure.

LXXXI

The Shewing-Forth of Simplicity

1. True speech is not elegant; elaborate speech is not truth. Those who know do not argue; the argumentative are without knowledge. Those who have assimilated are not learned; those who are gross with learning have not assimilated.
2. The Wise Man doth not hoard. The more he giveth, the more he hath; the more he watereth, the more is he watered himself.
3. The Tao of Heaven is like an Arrow, yet it woundeth not; and the Wise Man, in all his Works, maketh no contention.

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