

道德經 *Daodejing*

First, try and focus on
Reading very closely the first three chapters,
with attention to the key meanings and images of 道 *Dao*.

Chapter 1. The Nature of *Dao* [Metaphysics/ Ontology, Cosmology or Ecology] <Nameless ; Limitless ; Objectless: Ordinary Flow in and of Being>

道可道、非常道。名可名、非常名。無名天地之始有名萬物之母。故常無欲以觀其妙、常有欲以觀其微。此兩者同出而異名。同謂之玄。玄之又玄、衆妙之門。

Chapter 2. The Seamless Mechanism of *wu-wei* [Epistemology/ Aesthetics/ Ethics] <Co-origination of Opposites; Effortless business, art, of inaction>

天下皆知美之爲美。斯惡已。皆知善之爲善。斯不善已。故有無相生、難易相成、長短相較、高下相傾、音聲相和、前後相隨。是以聖人處無爲之事、行不言之教。萬物作焉而不辭、生而不有、爲而不恃、功成而弗居。夫唯弗居、是以不去。

Chapter 3. The Political Economy of Daoist Governance [Politics/ Economy] <Harmonious Rulership; governing without governing>

不尚賢、使民不爭。不貴難得之貨、使民不爲盜。不見可欲、使民心不亂。是以聖人之治、虛其心、實其腹、弱其志、強其骨。常使民無知無欲、使夫知者不敢爲也。爲無爲、則無不治。

□ 道 (dao, tao)

[Way/Path] “The *dao* is that way along which one walks; once obtained one calls it the way.”

(*The Explanation of the Words and Characters*, the earliest Chinese dictionary, A.D. 100; cited in Zhang Dainian, *Key concepts in Chinese Philosophy*, Yale University Press, 2002, p.12)

cf. [*Analects* 6, Yong Ye] “When on going out does not go out by the door?
Yet how is it that no-one will go out, metaphorically speaking, by this Way?”

(cited in *Key concepts in Chinese Philosophy*, p.13)

[Traces of the Moon/ Will of Heaven] “According to Tu Er-wei, the “head” in the character *tao* is the face of the moon. And the meaning of “road” comes from watching this disembodied face as it moves across the sky.” (Red Pine, Trans. *Lao-Tzu's Taoteching*, Mercury House, 1996, p. ix)

[*I-ching*, Book of Changes; Great Appendix] “The Changes is on a par with heaven and earth; therefore it can follow through the strands of the Way of heaven and earth” [1:4]; “The alteration of *yin* and *yang* is called “the Way.”” [1:5]

[*Chuang Tzu* 12: 4-5] “What penetrates the heaven is the way; what accords with earth is virtue; what applies to the myriad things is justice... the Way belongs to heaven.”

cf. [*Analects* 5, *Gong Zhi*] “The Master’s talk of human nature and of the Way of Heaven cannot be heard.” (cited in *Key concepts in Chinese Philosophy*, p.13)

[*Daodejing* 1/ 4/ 25/ 37]: nameless/ prefigurative/ natural and spontaneous¹/ autonomous²

[Roger Ames trans. *Dao De Jing*, Intro, pp.57-9]: momentum; proactively verbal

□ 德 (de, te)

[**virtue/ value/ inner quality/ differentia**]: If the “Way” points to the universal nature common to all things, then power, the specific identity—phenomenal particularity—of each object by which it differs from the identities of all other things.

[*Daodejing* 38/ 51]: power or efficacy/ nourishment

[*Chuang Tzu* 12: 14-5] “[...] forms without the Way are not produced. What is produced without power (*de*) is not bright”

¹ See gloss on “*Ziran*” in “Important Terms,” *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy*, pp.357-62

² See gloss on “*Wuwei*” in “Important Terms,” *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy*, pp.357-62

Glossary of Daoist Studies Terms

Below is a glossary of common terms in Daoist studies, in both pinyin and Wade-Giles romanization systems. To see the Chinese characters you need to use Microsoft Internet Explorer on Microsoft Windows with a standard Unicode Chinese font.

This glossary is excerpted, with permission, from [Daoism: A Short Introduction](#) by James Miller (Oxford: Oneworld Publications: 2003).

Pinyin	Wade-Giles	CN	English
bagua	pa-kua	八卦	The eight trigrams; the basis of divination scheme in the Book of Changes
beidou	pei-tou	北斗	Lit. northern bushel; the constellation of the Big Dipper or Great Bear
bianhua	pien-hua	變化	Transformation; the underlying principle of change within the world
bigu	pi-ku	閉穀	Abstention from grains; a Daoist longevity practice based on the notion that immortals live off the air and "soak up the dew"
bugang	pu-kang	步綱	Pacing the net; a Daoist ritual whose choreography is based on the Big Dipper
chujia	ch'u-chia	出家	Literally "leave home"; the process of becoming a Daoist monk
dan	tan	丹	Cinnabar; a mineral formed of Mercury Sulphide used in alchemy
dantian	tan-t'ien	丹田	Cinnabar field; one of three locations in the body used in the practice of inner alchemy
dao	tao	道	Lit. "way or speak"; the ultimate cosmic principle in Daoism
daojia	tao-chia	道家	Lit. "Dao-school"; a bibliographical classification used for proto-Daoist texts
daojiao	tao-chiao	道教	Lit. "Dao-tradition"; the Daoist religion
daoshu	tao-shu	道術	Daoist arts; energy practices that may bear only a tenuous connection with Daoist religion
daotan	tao-t'an	道壇	Daoist altar; often erected temporarily to perform a ritual and then disassembled
daozang	tao-tsang	道藏	Lit "Daoist treasury"; the Daoist Canon compiled in 1445
de	te	德	Lit. "power, virtue"; what one obtains by attaining the Dao
dong	tung	洞	Cave, grotto
dongtian	tung-t'ien	洞天	Grotto-heavens; the network of caves connecting China's sacred mountains
falun gongfa-lun kung	fa-lun kung	法輪功	Lit. "Dharma-wheel skill"; the form of Qi cultivation practiced by Falu Dafa, banned in China

fangshi	fang-shih	方士	"Magico-technicians"; Han dynasty practitioners of alchemy and immortality whose methods influenced the later flourishing of Daoism
fuguang	fu-kuang	服光	Absorb the light; a Daoist energy practice
fuqi	fu-ch'i	服氣	Absorb qi; a Daoist energy practice
hun	hun	魂	Heavenly soul; the soul that ascends to heaven and is venerated in the form of ancestral tablets
hundun	hun-tun	混沌	Chaos; the state of pregnant non-being from which everything arises, and to which Daoists aim to return
jiao	chiao	醮	Daoist ritual of renewal; the main ritual performed by Daoist priests today
jiazi	chia-tzu	甲子	The first year of the 60-year cycle
jing	ching	精	Essence; a form of qi manifested in sexual fluids
jing	ching	經	Scripture; weft of a piece of fabric
Laozi	Lao-tzu	老子	Old Master or Old Child; the traditional author of the <i>Daode jing</i>
li	li	禮	Ceremony, ritual
lingbao	ling-pao	靈寶	Numinous Treasure or Numinous Jewel; a classical Daoist religious movement
lu	lu	錄	Register; a listing of the names of spirits possessed by those initiated into the Way of the Celestial Masters
ming	ming	命	Fate, destiny, life; the physiological element of one's person in Complete Reality cultivation
neidan	nei-dan	內丹	Inner alchemy
niwan	ni-wan	泥丸	Mud-pill; the cinnabar field in the head
po	p'o	魄	Earthly soul; the yin soul that descends into the earth when the body is properly buried.
qi	ch'i	氣	Breath, vital energy, pneuma; life-force
qigong	ch'i-kung	氣功	Qi-skill; an energy practice that became popular in the 19 th century
qingjing	ch'ing-ching	清淨	Purity and stillness; the aims of meditation in the Way of Complete Perfection
quanzhen	ch'üan-chen	全真	Complete Perfection; Total Reality; the monastic Daoist movement founded by Wang Zhe
shangqing	shang-ch'ing	上清	Highest Clarity, Supreme Purity; the classical Daoist movement
shen	shen	神	Spirit; spirits; divine; the most refined form of qi
taiji	t'ai-chi	太極	Supreme Ridgepole; the centre of the heavens; Supreme Ultimate the foundational metaphysical principle
taiji quan	t'ai-chi ch'üan	太極拳	Supreme Ultimate Fist; Tai Chi
taiqing	t'ai-ching	太清	Great Clarity; a Daoist alchemical movement
tianming	t'ien-ming	天命	Mandate of Heaven, conferred upon the Emperor, giving him authority to rule

tianshi	t'ien-shih	天師	Celestial Master, Heavenly Teacher; a title bestowed upon Zhang Daoling and his descendants; the first Daoist religious community
tianxia	t'ien-hsia	天下	All under Heaven; the empire
tong	t'ung	通	Communicate; go through; used as a synonym for <i>dong</i>
tui	t'uei	推	Extend; the process of bringing things into correlation with each other
waidan	wai-tan	外丹	Lit. "outer alchemy"; laboratory or operative alchemy
wang	wang	王	King; the one who unifies the three realms of heaven, earth and humankind
wuwei	wu-wei	無為	Lit. "non-action"; actionless-action; non-assertive action; action as though non-action
xianren	hsien-jen	仙人	Immortal, transcendent being; sometimes translated in popular literature as "fairy" or "wizard"
xin	hsin	心	Heart, mind; the seat of the personality and the object of Confucian self-cultivation
xing	hsing	性	Inner nature; the psychological element of one's person in Complete Perfection cultivation
yang	yang	陽	Sunny; the complement of yin
yin	yin	陰	Shady; the complement of yang
zhai	chai	齋	Ritual of purification; a retreat or fast that was the main Numinous Treasure ritual, and became incorporated into the present-day <i>jiao</i> ritual
zhengyi	cheng-i	正一	Orthodox Unity; the branch of Daoism founded by the Celestial Master; one of two branches officially recognised in China today
zhenren	chen-jen	真人	Perfected person; a Daoist sage
zhonghe	chung-ho	中和	Central harmony; the ideal state attained in the Way of Great peace
zhongmin	chung-min	種民	Seed-people; the name given to those who would survive the impending apocalypse foretold in the southern Celestial Masters tradition
ziran	tzu-jan	自然	Self-so, spontaneous, natural; the basic principle that the Dao follows in its evolution; and the core value of Daoism