

## **Becoming A Brilliant Star** **Conative Development**

(Ch 26)

The heavy is the root of the light.  
The unmoved is the source of all movement.

Thus the Master travels all day  
without leaving home.  
However splendid the views,  
she stays serenely in herself.

Why should the lord of the country  
flit about like a fool?  
If you let yourself be blown to and fro,  
you lose touch with your root.  
If you let restlessness move you,  
you lose touch with who you are.

(From Ch 33)

Mastering others is strength;  
mastering yourself is true power.

(Ch 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 the 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.

(Ch 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 value of non-action.

Teaching without words,  
performing without actions:  
that is the Master's way.

(Ch 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 things to happen.  
She shapes events as they come.  
She steps out of the way  
and lets the Tao speak for itself.

(Ch 58)

If a country is governed with tolerance,  
the people are comfortable and honest.  
If a country is governed with repression,  
the people are depressed and crafty.

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 her will.  
She is pointed, but doesn't pierce.  
Straightforward, but supple.  
Radiant, but easy on the eyes.

(Ch 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 she achieves greatness.  
When she runs into a difficulty,  
she stops and gives herself to it.  
She doesn't cling to her own comfort;  
thus problems are no problem for her.

(From Ch 64)  
Prevent trouble before it arises.  
Put things in order before they exist.  
The giant pine tree  
grows from a tiny sprout.  
The journey of a thousand miles  
starts from beneath your feet.

Rushing into action, you fail.  
Trying to grasp things, you lose them.  
Forcing a project to completion,  
you ruin what was almost ripe.

(Ch 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 a teaching,  
so that people will have nothing to learn.

(Ch 76)  
Men are born soft and supple;  
dead, they are stiff and hard.  
Plats 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.

(Ch. 77)  
As it acts in the world, the Tao  
is like the bending of a bow.  
The top is bent downward;  
the bottom is bent up.  
It adjusts excess and deficiency  
so that there is perfect balance.  
It takes from what is too much  
and give to what isn't enough.

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 her wealth.  
She acts without expectation,  
succeeds without taking credit,  
and doesn't think that she is better  
than anyone else.

(Ch 79)  
Failure is an opportunity.  
If you blame someone else,  
there is no end to the blame.

Therefore the Master  
fulfills her own obligations  
and corrects her own mistakes.  
She does what she needs to do  
and demands nothing of others.

Compiled by: B. Matthews, July 1999

Source: Lao-Tzu. (1995). Tao Te Ching (Trans. by S. Mitchell). Available online:  
[<http://rhino.harvard.edu/elwin/pJoy/toatechingNoFrame.html>]

URL: <http://chiron.valdosta.edu/whuitt/religion/taoism/05conative.pdf>