

# 10 most essential quotes in Tao Te Ching

Translated by Chonghe Zhang

Mindiverse Foundation

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# About Tao Te Ching

Tao Te Ching, authored by Laozi ( 6th century BC), is comparatively well-known in the West and is one of the most translated texts in world literature.

It conveys the tremendous importance of non-doing psychologically, which is totally related to inner peace, clarity and compassion.

To understand Tao Te Ching is to understand fundamental questions in human consciousness, as the brochure presents.

One common misconception is its association with Taoism, in fact, Taoism was invented by later generations after Laozi and based on the incomplete understanding of Tao Te Ching. Laozi is non-religious and non-sectarian and what he says is down-toearth and practical.

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## What is Tao?

道可道，非常道。

The speakable truth is not the eternal truth  
(which is independent of words).

道法自然。

Truth depicts nature.

天之道，利而不害；  
圣人之道，为而不争。

The principle of nature is to benefit and not harm;  
the principle of a sage is to facilitate and not  
compete.



# Non-doing

道常无为而无不为。

Truth is always in the state of non-doing, where the mind and body, which are one, can do anything unknowingly.

(otherwise, the division between the mind and body, which is the disordered activity of thoughts, dissipates the energy.)

为学日益，为道日损，  
损之又损，以至于无为。

A mind that is learning keeps accumulating knowledge; a mind that is living in truth keeps emptying everything, which eventually leads to a state of mind that makes no effort.

无为而无不为，取天下常以无事。

A mind that makes no effort can achieve anything unknowingly, winning over the world by making no trouble.



# Goodness

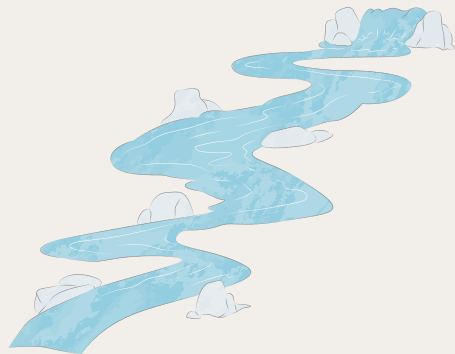
上善若水。  
水善利万物而不争；  
处众人之所恶，故几于道。

Goodness is like water.  
Water is good at nourishing everything but never competes;  
it stays where people don't want, therefore water borders on truth.

居，善地；  
心，善渊；  
与，善仁；  
言，善信；  
政，善治；  
事，善能；  
动，善时。  
夫唯不争，故无尤。

The sage is good at residing in a good place;  
his mind is deep and profound;  
he is good at being generous and considerate  
when interacting with people;  
he is good at being reliable when speaking;  
he is good at governing when it comes to politics;  
he is good at being capable when handling things;  
he is capable of good timing when acting.  
The sage does not compete; therefore, he is  
carefree.

(“Good” is the root of goodness, a state of mind  
where the ego is totally absent.)





## Softness

专气致柔，能婴儿乎？

Can one be tender like a baby?

柔弱胜刚强。

Softness outperforms hardness.

天下之至柔，驰骋天下之至坚。无有入无间。

The utter softness swims freely through the utter hardness. Truth - the nonverbal thing, embodied by the utter softness, can penetrate anything that has no crevice, embodied by the utter hardness created by thoughts with various compulsions behind it.

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## Apply truth to life

上士闻道，勤而行之；  
中士闻道，若存若亡；  
下士闻道，大笑之。不笑不足以为道。

When highly intelligent people hear truth, they diligently apply truth to life.

When fairly intelligent people hear truth, they feel that truth sometimes exists, sometimes not.

When mediocre people hear truth, they laugh out loud; truth sounds absurd and ridiculous to those people.



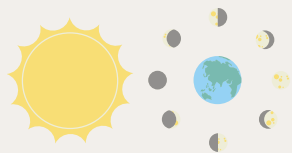
# UnSelfish

天长地久。天地所以能长且久者，  
以其不自生，故能长生。  
是以圣人后其身而身先，外其身而身存。  
非以其无私邪？故能成其私。

The universe is in a permanent state. It does not exist for the concern of itself, so it exists everlastingly.

Therefore, the sage gives precedence to others, inadvertently making himself outstanding; the sage puts himself out of consideration, unintentionally preserving himself.

Isn't it selflessness that leads to the result the selfish mind wants to achieve?



# Silence

致虚极，守静笃；  
万物并作，吾以观复。

In full attention, the mind empties its consciousness to the utmost; the mind stays silent to the utmost.

Such a mind can see everything develops, flourishes, and dies, which is the circle of life and nature.



## Three treasures

我有三宝，持而保之：

一曰慈，二曰俭，三曰不敢为天下先。

慈故能勇；俭故能广；

不敢为天下先，故能成器长。

I have three “treasures”, and live them to keep them: first is compassion, second is staying unknown, third is humility and never preceding the world.

Being compassionate, the mind is brave; staying unknown, the mind has boundless space; never preceding the world, the mind can be the leader of the world.



## Live in this violent world

盖闻善摄生者，  
陆行不遇兕虎，入军不被甲兵。  
兕无所投其角，虎无所用其爪，  
兵无所容其刃。夫何故？以其无死地。

I hear that one good at guaranteeing one's living does not encounter rhinos or tigers when walking on land, neither wears armor nor uses weapons when conscripted.

A rhino won't use its horn; a tiger won't use its paws; and a weapon won't use its blade.

Why? Because such a person is never violent and, therefore, does not cause violence from the other side. (Things are reflexive.)

善有果而已，不敢以取强。

When there is no alternative and force has to be used, it is only used to achieve the necessary result, not to flex muscles or to show self-importance.



# The art of negation

反者道之动，弱者道之用。

Counter-intuitiveness is the movement of truth;  
softness is the effect of truth.

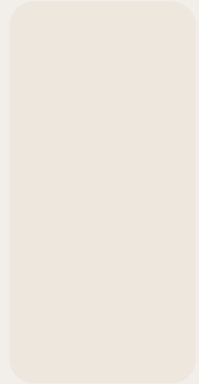
(The egocentric thinking is intuitive because it is convenient in the direction of the movement of the thoughts. In thoughts, there is effort. The ego is full of effort, which embodies hardness.)

知不知，尚矣；  
不知知，病也。

A mind that observes itself completely stays unknown, which is virtuous; an ignorant mind thinks it knows, which is disorder.



## About the translator & lecturer



The lecturer, Chonghe Zhang (Cico), lives what he teaches, and teaches what he lives. There is no hypocrisy in any sense.

He is geographically from China and has been living in Amsterdam for 10 years.

Since 2018, when he was doing his PhD at Vrije University Amsterdam, he has offered 250 free meditation and self-inquiry sessions in Amsterdam to help people from all walks of life deeply

understand themselves and solve various life challenges.

He is a generalist in many topics, including mathematics, AI, biology, cognition, English & Chinese language, western and eastern realities, human consciousness, and meditation.

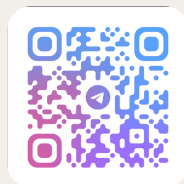
He lives an egoless life and founded Foundation Mindiverse, Stichting (ANBI, Algemeen nut beogende instelling), a 100% non-profit that aims to bring compassion back to society.

## Event, channel and eBook

Mindiverse is going to host 10 sessions on Tao Te Ching in Amsterdam, every Wednesday from 16 October to 27 November 2024. Free and open to donation.

More details can be checked here:  
[Tao & True Meditation on Meetup](#)

For event announcement and quotes from Tao Te Ching, please join the Telegram Channel:



The eBook of complete translation of Tao Te Ching by Chonghe Zhang is available on [Google play](#). (Via this link can one access to the eBook for free) .

This event can take place in different locations, like university, community and so on. Any support on venue, fund and spreading the event to more people is welcomed. Please contact via [goodness@mindiverse.foundation](mailto:goodness@mindiverse.foundation)

**The end**

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