

When the Gourd Has Dried Leaves¹

When the gourd has dried leaves,
 you can wade the deep river.
 Keep your clothes on if the water's deep;
 hitch up your dress when it's shallow.

The river is rising,
 pheasants are chirping.
 The water is just half a wheel deep,
 and the hen is chirping for the cock.

Wild geese are trilling,
 the rising sun starts dawn.
 If you want to marry me,
 come before the river is frozen.

The ferry-man is gesturing,
 other people are going, but not me,
 other people are going, but not me,
 I'm waiting for you.

TRANSLATED BY TONY BARNSTONE AND CHOU PING

All the Grasslands Are Yellow

All the grasslands are yellow
 and all the days we march
 and all the men are conscripts
 sent off in four directions.

All the grasslands are black
 and all the men like widowers.
 So much grief! Are soldiers
 not men like other men?

We aren't bison! We aren't tigers
 crossing the wilderness,
 but our sorrows
 roam from dawn till dusk.

Hairy tailed foxes slink
 through the dark grass

1. The ancient Chinese used to tie gourds around their waists as a safety device when wading across a river.

as we ride tall chariots
 along the wide rutted roads.

TRANSLATED BY TONY BARNSTONE AND CHOU PING

Confucius (c. 551–479 B.C.) (philosophy)

TRANSLATED BY RAYMOND DAWSON

Confucius is a distant romanization of the Chinese name Kong and the appellation Fuzi, meaning "master" (thus Confucius = Master Kong). Definite evidence about the life of Confucius is scant and legends abound, so modern scholars have tried to detect the man through internal evidence in *The Analects* (a collection of his dialogues and utterances probably recorded by his disciples after his death). Confucius was born in humble circumstances in what is today Shandong province, in the feudal state of Lu, at a time of incessant warfare among the Chinese states. The Zhou dynasty had broken into warring factions, and Confucius sought to restore the lost peace and to guide governments in how to rule fairly and well; he proposed a system of conduct for all people based on an ultimate principle of *ren*, or humanism, goodness. This humanism is to be expressed through etiquette and ritual, or *li*; a government based on such moral principles and order will be reflected in the behavior of its populace. Underlings should be loyal to their rulers, yet critical of them when they part from the Way (*Dao*), and people should behave with empathy for one another: "Do not inflict on others what you yourself would not wish done to you." One should practice self-control and respect for ancestors and behave correctly to family, with a sense of deep filial respect. Family relations function as a microcosm of those of the state.

Confucius had a dream of an ideal society, with virtuous, hardworking people ruled over by incorruptible, wise, and benevolent officials—a system of order and mutual respect. His vision had as profound an effect on Chinese government and ethics as the laws of Manu did on India, as the ancient legal code of the Babylonian king Hammurabi did on the Judeo-Christian tradition, or Plato's dialogic vision on Western civilization. A distinguishing feature of his philosophy is that religion has no part in it, though his thought was later distorted to incorporate supernatural elements and to support tyrannical governments. Confucius never achieved the sort of important position he coveted, despite years of wandering China to spread his ideas and to convince rulers to accept his reforms; but his disciples did, and they spread his thought so successfully that a Confucian education became the essential preparation for entry into the Chinese scholar bureaucracy. *The Analects* of Confucius is only one of a

number of Confucian classics, whose memorization was the moral and intellectual grounding of the Confucian path of study. The classics include such texts as *The Book of Songs* and *The Book of Changes*, and their total number varies between five and thirteen, depending on what source and dynasty is studied. In the first century A.D., a practice began of offering sacrifices and veneration in shrines devoted to Confucius, a practice that has continued through this century. It has been eclipsed at times by other systems of order and religion and was banned in 213 B.C. by the first Qin emperor. But the Confucian canon was reconstructed by Emperor Wu in 136 B.C., and at several times in Chinese history, it became a state religion.

FURTHER READING: Greel, H. G. *Confucius: The Man and the Myth*, 1951. Dawson, Raymond, tr. *Confucius: The Analects*, 1993. Hall, D. L., and R. T. Ames. *Thinking through Confucius*, 1987. Lau, D.C., tr. *Confucius: The Analects*, 1979. Waley, Arthur, tr. *The Analects of Confucius*, 1938.

from *The Analects*

Book 1

2. Master You¹ said: 'Few indeed are those who are naturally filial towards their parents and dutiful towards their elder brothers but are fond of opposing their superiors; and it never happens that those who do not like opposing their superiors are fond of creating civil disorder.² The gentleman concerns himself with the root; and if the root is firmly planted, the Way grows. Filial piety and fraternal duty—surely they are the roots of humaneness.'
3. The Master said: 'Clever words and a plausible appearance have seldom turned out to be humane.'
6. The Master said: 'Young men should be filial when at home and respectful to elders when away from home. They should be earnest and trustworthy. Although they should love the multitude far and wide, they should be intimate only with the humane. If they have any energy to spare after so doing, they should use it to study "culture".'
11. The Master said: 'When his father is alive, you observe a man's intentions. It is when the father is dead that you observe the man's actions. If

1. You Ruo is generally referred to as Master You, and he makes his own pronouncements instead of merely putting questions to Master Kong. Clearly he was a teacher in the Confucian tradition.

2. This sentence is an expression of what later became the standard Confucian view that the political virtues of obedience and loyalty are family virtues writ large.

for three years he makes no change from the ways of his father, he may be called filial.'

16. The Master said: 'One does not worry about the fact that other people do not appreciate one. One worries about not appreciating other people.'

Book 2

2. The Master said: 'The *Songs* number three hundred, but I will cover their meaning with a single quotation: "Let there be no depravity in your thoughts."³
3. The Master said: 'If you lead them by means of government and keep order among them by means of punishments, the people are without conscience in evading them. If you lead them by means of virtue and keep order among them by means of ritual, they have a conscience and moreover will submit.'
11. The Master said: 'If by keeping the old warm one can provide understanding of the new, one is fit to be a teacher.'
12. The Master said: 'A gentleman does not behave as an implement.'⁴
17. The Master said: 'You,⁵ shall I teach you about understanding something? When you understand something, to recognize that you understand it; but when you do not understand something, to recognize that you do not understand it—that is understanding.'
19. Duke Ai⁶ asked: 'What action does one take so that the people will be obedient?' Master Kong replied saying: 'If you promote the straight and set them above the crooked, then the people will be obedient. If you promote the crooked and set them above the straight, then the people will not be obedient.'

3. The *Songs* are *The Book of Songs*, one of the Confucian classics [Editor].

4. This important saying puts in a nutshell the belief that the gentleman's training should not be confined to particular skills so that he may become the tool or implement of others. It must instead develop his moral qualities and powers of leadership. Thus in the later Empire the traditional Chinese education for government service was concerned with the study of Confucian writings rather than with the acquisition of techniques.

5. The personal name of the well-known disciple Zilu, whose character shines clearly through this motley collection of sayings and anecdotes. He was an extrovert man of action and not very fond of learning. Often the exchanges between Zilu and Master Kong, brief though they are, shed an amusing light on the character of Zilu and the Master's attitude towards him.

6. Ruler of Lu between 494 and 468 [B.C.]. The actual power was in the hands of the Three Families, so presumably this was said when he was planning to try to regain power.

22. The Master said: 'If someone is untrustworthy in spite of being a man, I do not know what he will do. If carriages have no means of yoking horses to them, how are they ever made to go?'

Book 4

5. The Master said: 'Riches and honours—these are what men desire, but if this is not achieved in accordance with the appropriate principles, one does not cling to them. Poverty and obscurity—these are what men hate, but if this is not achieved in accordance with the appropriate principles, one does not avoid them. If a gentleman abandons humaneness, how does he make a reputation? The gentleman never shuns humaneness even for the time it takes to finish a meal. If his progress is hasty, it is bound to arise from this; and if his progress is unsteady, it is bound to arise from this.'
8. The Master said: 'If one has heard the Way in the morning, it is all right to die in the evening.'
14. The Master said: 'One is not worried about not holding position; one is worried about how one may fit oneself for appointment. One is not worried that nobody knows one; one seeks to become fit to be known.'
16. The Master said: 'The gentleman is familiar with what is right, just as the small man is familiar with profit.'
17. The Master said: 'When you come across a superior person, think of being equal to him. When you come across an inferior person, turn inwards and examine yourself.'
18. The Master said: 'In serving father and mother, one remonstrates gently. If one sees that they are intent on not following advice, one continues to be respectful and does not show disobedience; and even if one finds it burdensome, one does not feel resentful.'
23. The Master said: 'There are few indeed who fail in something through exercising restraint.'
24. The Master said: 'The gentleman wishes to be slow in speech but prompt in action.'
25. The Master said: 'Virtue is not solitary. It is bound to have neighbours.'

Book 5

1. The Master said of Gongye Chang that he might be given a wife for, although he had been put in prison, this was not through any crime of his. He gave him his own daughter in marriage.
9. The Master said to Zigong⁷: 'Out of You and Hui which is the better?' He replied: 'How dare I even have a look at Hui? Hui is the sort of person who, by hearing one thing, understands ten; but I am the sort of person who, by hearing one thing, understands two.' The Master said: 'You are not as good as he is. Both you and I are not as good as he is.'
12. Zigong said: 'If I do not want others to inflict something on me, I also want to avoid inflicting it on others.' The Master said: 'Si, this is not a point you have yet reached.'
20. Ji Wen Zi thought three times before acting. When the Master heard of this, he said: 'Twice will do.'
24. The Master said: 'Who says that Weisheng Gao⁸ was upright? Someone begged vinegar from him and he begged it from his neighbour and handed it over.'

Book 6

11. The Master said: 'A man of quality indeed was Hui! He lived in a squalid alley with a tiny bowlful of rice to eat and a ladleful of water to drink. Other men would not endure such hardships, but Hui did not let his happiness be affected. A man of quality indeed was Hui!'
23. The Master said: 'The wise delight in water, but the humane delight in mountains. For although the wise are active, the humane are at rest. And although the wise will find joy, the humane will have long life.'

Book 7

19. The Duke of She asked Zilu about Master Kong. Zilu did not reply. The Master said: 'Why did you not just say that he is the sort of person who gets so worked up that he forgets to eat, is so happy that he forgets anxieties, and is not aware that old age will come.'

7. Zigong was one of Confucius' best-known disciples. He is also referred to as Si . . . [Editor].
8. He was so insistent on keeping his promises that, having said he would meet his girlfriend in the dried-up bed of a stream, he drowned because the water rose before she turned up; but Master Kong had apparently heard something less flattering about him.

37. The Master said: 'The gentleman is calm and peaceful; the small man is always emotional.'
38. The Master was genial and yet strict, imposing and yet not intimidating, courteous and yet at ease.

Book 8

8. The Master said: 'One is roused by the Songs, established by ritual, and perfected by music.'
9. The Master said: 'The people may be made to follow something, but may not be made to understand it.'
21. The Master said: 'In Yu it seems there is no fault as far as I am concerned. Although he ate and drank abstemiously, he displayed the utmost devotion⁹ towards the ghosts and spirits. Although normally he wore poor garments, he displayed the utmost elegance in his sacrificial robes and headdress. He lived in humble dwellings, but devoted all his energies to drains and ditches. In Yu it seems there is no fault as far as I am concerned.'

Book 9

2. A villager from Daxiang said: 'Great indeed is Master Kong, but despite his broad learning there is nothing for which he has made a reputation.' When the Master heard this, he told his disciples: 'What do I take up? Do I take up charioteering?¹⁰ Or do I take up archery? I take up charioteering.'
11. Yan Hui, sighing heavily, said: 'The more I look up to it,¹¹ the higher it is; the more I penetrate it, the harder it becomes; I see it ahead of me and suddenly it is behind. Our Master skilfully lures people on step by step. He broadens me with culture and restrains me with ritual. If I wanted to stop, I could not; and when I have exhausted all my talents, it seems as if there is something which he has established profoundly; but even though I long to pursue it, I have no way of doing so at all.'
14. The Master wished to dwell among the nine wild tribes of the East. Someone said: 'They are uncivilized, so what will you do about that?'

9. In supplying plentiful sacrificial food in contrast with his own personal abstemiousness.

10. A sarcastic response to the failure to appreciate that the gentleman is a generalist rather than a specialist.

11. Master Kong's teaching. This is a classic account of the disciples' admiration.

The Master said: 'If a gentleman dwelt among them, what lack of civility would they show?'

18. The Master said: 'I have never come across anyone who admires virtue as much as he admires sexual attraction.'
26. The Master said: 'The three armies can be robbed of their commander, but an ordinary person cannot be robbed of his purpose.'

Book 10

11. When the stables caught fire the Master, on returning from court, said: 'Did anyone get hurt?' He did not ask about the horses.

Book 11

9. When Yan Hui¹² died, the Master said: 'Alas, Heaven has bereaved me, Heaven has bereaved me!'
10. When Yan Hui died, the Master became distressed as he bewailed him. His followers said: 'Master, you have become distressed.' 'Have I?' he said. 'Well, if that man is not to be the object of my distress, then for whom am I to be distressed?'

Book 12

2. Zhonggong¹³ asked about humaneness. The Master said: 'When you are away from home, behave as if receiving an important guest. Employ the people as if you were officiating at a great sacrifice. Do not impose on others what you would not like yourself. Then there will be no resentment against you, either in the state or in the family.' Zhonggong said: 'Although I am not clever, I beg to put this advice into practice.'
3. Sima Niu¹⁴ asked about humaneness. The Master said: 'The humane person is hesitant in his speech.' He said: 'Hesitant in his speech! Is that all that is meant by humaneness?' The Master said: 'To do it is difficult, so in speaking about it can one avoid being hesitant?'
7. Zigong asked about government. The Master said: 'If there is enough food and if there are enough weapons, the people will put their trust in

12. Yan Hui was Confucius' favorite disciple [Editor].

13. Zhonggong (alias Ran Yong) was a disciple [Editor].

14. Sima Niu was a disciple [Editor].

it.' Zigong said: 'Suppose you definitely had no alternative but to give up one of these three, which would you relinquish first?' The Master said: 'I would give up weapons.' Zigong said: 'Suppose you definitely had no alternative but to give up one of the remaining two, which would you relinquish first?' The Master said: 'I would give up food. From of old death has come to all men, but a people will not stand if it lacks trust.'

8. Ji Zicheng said: 'A gentleman is merely the stuff he is made of. Why take account of culture?' Zigong said: 'It is a pity you said that, sir, about the gentleman, since a team of four horses will not catch up with the tongue. Culture is just as important as the stuff one is made of, and the stuff one is made of is just as important as culture. The skin of a tiger or leopard is no different from the skin of a dog or a sheep.'
17. Ji Kang Zi¹⁵ asked Master Kong about government. Master Kong replied: 'To govern means to correct. If you take the lead by being correct, who will dare not to be corrected?'
19. Ji Kang Zi asked Master Kong about government, saying: 'Suppose I were to kill those who lack the Way in order to advance those who have the Way, how would that be?' Master Kong replied: 'You are running the government, so what is the point of killing? If you desire good, the people will be good. The nature of the gentleman is as the wind, and the nature of the small man is as the grass. When the wind blows over the grass it always bends.'
22. Fan Chi¹⁶ asked about humaneness. The Master said: 'It is to love others.' He asked about understanding. The Master said: 'It is to understand others.' Fan Chi had not yet fathomed his meaning, so the Master said: 'If one raises the straight and puts them above the crooked one can make the crooked become straight.'

Book 13

3. Zilu said: 'If the Lord of Wei were waiting for you to run the government, what would you give priority to?' The Master said: 'What is necessary is to rectify names, is it not?' Zilu said: 'If this were to take place, it would surely be an aberration of yours. Why should they be rectified?' The Master said: 'How uncivilized you are. With regard to what he does not understand the gentleman is surely somewhat reluctant to offer an

15. Ji Kang Zi was the head of one of the powerful three families who ousted the rulers of Lu, Confucius' home state [Editor].

16. A disciple.

opinion. If names are not rectified, then words are not appropriate. If words are not appropriate, then deeds are not accomplished. If deeds are not accomplished, then the rites and music do not flourish. If the rites and music do not flourish, then punishments do not hit the mark. If punishments do not hit the mark, then the people have nowhere to put hand or foot. So when a gentleman names something, the name can definitely be used in speech; and when he says something, it can definitely be put into practice. In his utterances the gentleman is definitely not casual about anything.'

5. The Master said: 'A man may know by heart the three hundred *Songs*, but if he is given a post in government and cannot successfully carry out his duties, and if he is sent to far places and cannot react to the circumstances as he finds them, then even if he has learnt to recite many of them, of what use is this to him?'
11. The Master said: "If good men ran a state for a hundred years, they might therefore vanquish cruelty and abolish killing." How true is this saying!'
15. Duke Ding¹⁷ asked if there was a single saying with which one might make a state prosperous. Master Kong replied: 'A saying cannot be quite like that. But there is a saying among men which runs "to be a ruler is difficult and to be a subject is not easy." If one understands that to be a ruler is difficult, then does this not come close to making a state prosperous through one saying?' He said: 'Is there a single saying with which one might ruin a state?' Master Kong replied: 'A saying cannot be quite like that. But there is a saying among men which runs "I have no pleasure in being a ruler, except that nobody opposes me with his words." As far as his good points are concerned, it is surely good, isn't it, that nobody opposes him? But as far as his bad points are concerned, if nobody opposes him, is this not close to ruining a state with a single saying?'
18. The Duke of She told Master Kong: 'In my locality there is a certain paragon, for when his father stole a sheep, he, the son, bore witness against him.' Master Kong said: 'In my locality those who are upright are different from this. Fathers cover up for their sons¹⁸ and sons cover up for their fathers. Uprightness is to be found in this.'

17. The Duke of Lu.

18. This encapsulates the Chinese regard for the importance of the family as compared with the state. Informing against parents in antiquity, as more recently in the Cultural Revolution, represents the antithesis of Confucian values.

Book 14

22. Ziliu asked about serving a ruler. The Master said: 'It means don't be deceitful. But do stand up to him.'
27. The Master said: 'The gentleman is ashamed that his words have outstripped his deeds.'
30. The Master said: 'One does not worry about the fact that other people do not appreciate one. One worries about the fact that one is incapable.'
34. Someone said: 'What about "Repay hostility with kindness"? The Master said: 'How then do you repay kindness? Repay hostility with uprightness and repay kindness with kindness.'
35. The Master said: 'Nobody understands me, do they?' Zigong said: 'Why is it that none of them understands you?' The Master said: 'I do not feel resentful towards Heaven and I do not put blame on men. But although my studies are of lowly things they reach up above, and the one that understands me will be Heaven, will it not?'

41. The Master said: 'If their superior loves the rites,¹⁹ the people will be easy to command.'

43. Yuan Rang was waiting in an oafish manner. The Master said: 'When he was young he was not deferential, so when he grew up nothing was passed on by him, and now he is an old man he does not die—this seems terrible.' And he struck his shins with a stick.

Book 15

2. When they were in Chen they suffered an interruption in the supply of provisions, so the followers became ill and nobody was capable of getting up. Feeling aggrieved, Ziliu addressed the Master: 'Does suffering exist even for the gentleman?' he said. The Master said: 'The gentleman remains firm in the face of suffering, but if the small man suffers, he is carried away on a flood of excess.'

8. The Master said: 'Not to talk with people although they can be talked with is to waste people. To talk with people although they can't be talked with is to waste words. A man of understanding does not waste people, but he also does not waste words.'

19. Refers to religious practice, but ritual also suggests a sense of reverence toward life.

12. The Master said: 'If a man avoids thinking about distant matters he will certainly have worries close at hand.'

21. The Master said: 'What the gentleman seeks in himself the small man seeks in others.'

23. The Master said: 'Gentlemen do not promote someone because of what he says, and do not reject what is said because of who said it.'

24. Zigong asked: 'Is there a single word such that one could practise it throughout one's life?' The Master said: 'Reciprocity perhaps? Do not inflict on others what you yourself would not wish done to you.'

30. The Master said: 'If one commits an error and does not reform, this is what is meant by an error.'

35. The Master said: 'The people's connection with humaneness is more important than water or fire. As for water and fire, I have come across people who have died through stepping on them, but I have never come across people who have died through stepping on humaneness.'

Book 16

7. Master Kong said: 'There are three things which the gentleman guards against: in the time of his youth, when his vital powers have not yet settled down, he is on his guard in matters of sex; when he reaches the prime of life and his vital powers have just attained consistency, he is on his guard in matters of contention; and when he becomes old and his vital powers have declined, he is on his guard in matters of acquisition.'

8. Master Kong said: 'There are three things which the gentleman holds in awe: he is in awe of the decree of Heaven, he is in awe of great men, and he is in awe of the words of sages. The small man, being unaware of the decree of Heaven, is not in awe of it. He is rude to great men and ridicules the words of sages.'

Book 17

2. The Master said: 'Only the most intelligent and the most stupid do not change.'

6. When Bi Xi sent for him, the Master wanted to go. Ziliu said: 'Master, I once heard the following from you: "If someone in his own person does those things which are not good, the gentleman does not enter his domain." Bi Xi is carrying out a rebellion using Zhongmou as his base, so what is the point of your going there?' The Master said: 'Yes, I have said such a thing, but is it not said that "hard indeed is that which is not worn

thin by grinding" and "while indeed is that which will not turn black from dyeing"? Surely I am not just a bitter gourd!²⁰ How can I hang there and not be eaten?

8. The Master said: 'My young friends, why do none of you study the *Songs*? The *Songs* may help one to be stimulated, to observe, to be sociable, and to express grievances. One uses them at home to serve one's father, and one uses them in distant places to serve one's ruler. One also gains much knowledge concerning the names of birds and beasts and plants and trees.'

The Master said to Boyu: 'Have you done the *Zhounan* and *Shao-nan*?' If although one is a man one has not done the *Zhounan* and *Shaoan*, surely it is like standing with one's face to the wall!

13. The Master said: 'Is it really possible to serve one's ruler alongside vulgar persons? For while they have not yet obtained something, they are worried about obtaining it; and when they have obtained it, they are worried about losing it. And if they are worried about losing it, there are no lengths to which they will not go.'

23. The Master said: 'Only women²² and small men seem difficult to look after. If you keep them close, they become insubordinate; but if you keep them at a distance, they become resentful.'

Book 19

21. Zigong said: 'The errors of the gentleman are like eclipses of the sun and moon. When he errs everyone observes him; and when he makes a correction, everyone looks up to him.'

☐ Laozi (Lao Tzu) (c. Fourth to Third Centuries B.C.) (poems/philosophy)

TRANSLATED BY CIA-FU FENG AND JANE ENGLISH

Laozi was the legendary author of the *Dao De Jing*, a collection of prose and verse wisdom literature that is considered the seminal and essential work of Daoism. Yet about Laozi and the *Dao De Jing* mysteries abound. It is

20. A potent symbol of Master Kong's frustration at not obtaining employment. This time the employment would have been in the state of Jin rather than in his native state of Lu. The sayings about grinding and dyeing are meant to indicate the Master's incorruptibility.

21. First two books of the *Book of Songs*.

22. Commentators of course attempt to soften the misogyny.

by no means certain that a historical personage named Laozi ever existed. The title *Dao De Jing* (*Classic of the Way and Its Power*) is a later name for the collection that originally was called simply *Laozi*. Since Laozi also means "old man," and there is evidence of a body of wisdom literature whose various book titles all translate as "elder" or "old man," it may be that this collection is the lone survivor of this lost genre. It may be that the *Dao De Jing* is an anthology of sayings by diverse authors linked by common themes or the work of one author augmented by later redactors. The traditional Laozi is said to have been an older contemporary of Confucius (551–479 B.C.) who instructed the younger sage in the rites, but this story seems not to have circulated until the third century B.C. It is now thought that the text dates from no earlier than the third or fourth centuries B.C. In the first century B.C., the famous historian Sima Qian recounted the Confucius encounter and other stories about Laozi, which he gathered from sources now lost. The story about Laozi's writing the *Dao De Jing* follows:

Laozi cultivated the way and virtue, and his teachings aimed at self-effacement. He lived in Zhou for a long time, but seeing its decline he departed; when he reached the Pass, the Keeper there was pleased and said to him, "As you are about to leave the world behind, could you write a book for my sake?" As a result, Laozi wrote a work in two books, setting out the meaning of the way and virtue in some five thousand characters, and then departed. None knew where he went to in the end.¹

The book itself has more than the five thousand characters mentioned by Sima Qian and is divided into eighty-one chapters in two sections. Unlike the *Zhuangzi*, the *Dao De Jing* is not a work of anecdotes and parables; it is a general, didactic work of great poetic beauty, mystery, and ambiguity. Central to the work and to Daoism is the concept of the *Dao*, which means the way, method, or reason.² The *Dao* is ineffable—it can't be captured in words; it is as small as the essential nature of the smallest thing and as large as the entire universe. The term *De* means "virtue" and refers to the nature of a thing—its inherent virtue and energy. The term *jing* means "classic," and thus the title of the book translates as *The Classic of the Dao and the De*. The *Dao* in this work is seen as the source of the world, as everything and at the same time, nothing. It is fluid, weak, and passive, yet it conquers all and is the source of all action. Its nature is paradoxical because it is so large that it contains both ends of all oppositions. The *Dao* is also a contemplative method for understanding oneself and for merging with the *Dao*. Different interpreters see it either as a method of survival through passive resistance written in a time of great insecurity and turmoil or as a more mystical treatise. In any case, a number of passages treat the proper behavior of citizen and ruler and suggest that true self-interest lies in selflessness

1. D. C. Lau, tr. *Lao Tzu: Tao Te Ching* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), 9. The Wade-Giles transliteration of this quotation has been changed to the Pinyin system.

2. In the translation that follows, "Dao" is transliterated as "Tao."