

Commentary – of Volume 10 (chapters 55 - 60)

Lao Tzu's Poetic, Philosophical Treatise

Tao Te Ching

Volume 10 of 14 (*Chapters 55-60*)

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Tao Te Ching
chapter Fifty-five

(55: 1)

He who is in **harmony**
with the Tao
is like a newborn child.

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(55: 2)

Its bones
are soft,
it's muscles
are weak...

but its **grip**
is powerful.

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(55: 3)

It does NOT know about
the union of male and female...

yet its penis
can stand erect,
so intense
is its vital power.

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(55: 4)

It can scream its head off
all day...

yet it never
becomes hoarse,
so complete
is its **harmony**.

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(55: 5)

The Sage's power
is like this.

(55: 6)

He lets all things
come and go
effortlessly,
without desire.

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(55: 7)

He never expects
results;
thus he is never
disappointed.

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(55: 8)

He is never
disappointed;
thus his spirit
never grows old.

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Harmony's Power

Just as Jedi's strength flows from the force, likewise a sage's power flows from his harmony with the momentum of the way things are. Where the path of yang resists and strives to manipulate the...

universal flow state, however the path of yin acquiesces to the momentum of the Tao. Take an infant, for example, its soft bones and weak muscles make it the epitome of frailty yet it's grip is powerful, and can scream endlessly without...

growing horse. What is the sage's feat of strength? Surrender. As a master of yin he can do what the minions of yang find to be impossible; he can let all things come and go. How does he...

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do that? Just as an infant experiences erection in the absence of a desire, no less awareness of, sexual congress, likewise the sage powerfully flows acquiescently in the absence of desire. Freedom from...

desire, like the falling of dominoes, leads to freedom from expectation, which leads to freedom from disappointment, which leads to freedom from being worn down by life. In his folly, the minion of yang might strive to ignore or suppress his...

desire, whereas the sage of yin is happy to non-conceptually, vulnerably and passively notice each desire as it arises, in rhythm with his inhalations and acquiescently let go, in harmony with each exhalation. This...

is what some Tibetan lamas refer to as relaxing into the nature of mind.

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Tao Te Ching
chapter Fifty-six

(56: 1)

Those who know
do NOT talk.

(56: 2)

Those who talk
do NOT know.

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(56: 3)

Close

your mouth,

block off

your senses...

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This is a rather poetic way of reminding us to not fall prey to the enticements of greed.

Commentary – of Volume 10 (chapters 55 - 60)

blunt

your sharpness,

untie

your knots...

Commentary – of Volume 10 (chapters 55 - 60)

soften

your glare,

settle

your dust.

Commentary – of Volume 10 (chapters 55 - 60)

*Both our greed and aversion are the rather
prolific authors of our turmoil.*

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(56: 4)

**This
is the primal
identity.**

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What is our primal identity? The self-same yin, that serves as an antidote to the foolishness, greed, aggression and turmoil of yin.

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(56: 5)

**Be like
the Tao.**

(56: 6)

**It can NOT be approached
nor withdrawn from...**

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benefited
or harmed,
honored
or brought into disgrace.

Commentary – of Volume 10 (chapters 55 - 60)

We are called to a life-style wherein we habitually let-go of our, so called, possessions and identity; where all we know is here, this, and now. This seemingly tall order, is...

simply the fringe-benefit of mastering Mindfulness, Insight and Spontaneity.

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(56: 7)

It **gives** itself up
continually.

(56: 8)

That is why
it endures.

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We have been conditioned to believe that we must strive valiantly to protect ourselves and our loved ones from a dog-eat-dog world, spinning in a universe that is determined to destroy us. But what if our safety was...

as close as yin's circuitous path and our yielding to its flow within the habit space of noticing and letting-go?

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The villain of the Tao Te Ching

If the Tao Te Ching had a villain it would be the yang sensibility also known as patriarchy for it could turn us into jabbering fools, who's greed, hate and turmoil could fuel our fear and selfishness. Likewise, if the...

Tao Te Ching had a hero it would be the yin orientation of matriarchy. Embracing this momentum helps us to access, no less habituate, our peaceful potential that gives from, what could seem to be, reckless abandon. It is ironic that...

living from a place of compassionately, centered-spontaneity could be the key to surviving as well as thriving. The entrance into the path of yin is not a scarce commodity, like searching for...

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a freeway on-ramp in a strange city or integrity in congress. It is present, in potentiality, within the mind of each being. Thus it can not be fled, and there is no need to chase after it. The Tao is a system, not an entity, thus we strive to...

honor or disgrace it in vain. And culture and media's efforts to opposed the potential of matriarchy latent within each of us (I'm looking at you mainstream news and the corporate agenda) prove unsuccessful for...

the realization of its potential is as close as the vulnerable, and non-conceptual practice of the awareness and acquiescence that fuel our patience, compassion and simplicity's centered spontaneity.

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Tao Te Ching
chapter Fifty-seven

(57: 1)

If you want to be
a great **leader**,
you must learn
to follow the Tao.

Commentary – of Volume 10 (chapters 55 - 60)

(57: 2)

**Stop trying
to control.**

(57: 3)

Let go of fixed plans
and concepts,
and the world
will govern itself.

Commentary – of Volume 10 (chapters 55 - 60)

(57: 4)

The more prohibitions
you have,
the less virtuous
people will be.

Commentary – of Volume 10 (chapters 55 - 60)

(57: 5)

The more weapons
you have,
the less secure
people will be.

Commentary – of Volume 10 (chapters 55 - 60)

(57: 6)

Therefore
the Sage says:

*“I let go of the law,
and people
become honest.*

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(57: 7)

*I let go of economics,
and people
become prosperous.*

(57: 8)

*I let go of religion,
and people
become serene.*

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(57: 9)

*I let go of all desire
for the common good,
and the good becomes
common as grass.”*

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Controlling Tendencies

*This chapter is full
of counter intuitive observations that
aren't just amusing,
they're liberating.*

*In it we explore how the desire
to control things, beings and circumstance
tend to be profoundly ineffective.*

*For instance desire to
control others, the masses, behavior and peril
through rules, weapons or laws
won't create leadership, virtue, security or honesty.*

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*To the contrary,
it insists that the only way to
manifest prosperity, serenity and the common good...*

*is to release our grasp upon
rules, economics, religion and even
our loving desire for the common good itself.*

*For even a loving intention
is still an intention,
which is an additional way we try
to exert control.*

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*That is why in this chapter
we read that if we let go
of our rigid plans,
the rigid concepts underpinning them,
as well as all others forms of control...*

*and allow all to flow with the Tao,
then the world could govern itself.*

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Tao Te Ching
chapter Fifty-eight

(58: 1)

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

Commentary – of Volume 10 (chapters 55 - 60)

(58: 2)

If a county
is governed with repression,
the people are depressed
and crafty.

Commentary – of Volume 10 (chapters 55 - 60)

(58: 3)

When the will to power
is in charge,
the higher the ideals,
the lower the results.

Commentary – of Volume 10 (chapters 55 - 60)

(58: 4)

Try to make
people happy,
and you lay the groundwork
for misery.

Commentary – of Volume 10 (chapters 55 - 60)

(58: 5)

Try to make
people moral,
and you lay the groundwork
for vice.

Commentary – of Volume 10 (chapters 55 - 60)

(58: 6)

Thus the Sage is content
to serve as an example
and NOT to impose
her will.

Commentary – of Volume 10 (chapters 55 - 60)

(58: 7)

She is pointed,
but does NOT pierce.

(58: 8)

Straight forward,
but supple.

(58: 9)

Radiant,
but easy on the eyes.

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Yang + good intentions = folly

*If yin is the path of the Tao,
then yang is the path of the Anti-tao.
Sounds a little creepy, doesn't it?*

*Let's take a closer look
at the complexity of the path
of the anti-tao.*

*It begins with the "make it happen" mindset,
that we see in Plato's "Republic":
the first play book for totalitarian states,
and the erotica of choice for Joseph Stalin.*

*Well that sounds OK, how bad could it be?
It's what we've been told by far too many self-help gurus
who secretly yearn to be the next Tony Robbins.
What could possibly be the problem with that?*

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*“Making it happen”
is path of controlling tendencies.*

*This chapter teaches that striving to control another,
even with the highest of motivations,
will generate the lowest results
because it is a form of repression.*

*A repression that depresses others
and promotes deceit.*

*It cannot be over emphasized that
even if our lofty goals
are to make others moral and happy...*

*all we’ll really accomplish
is to make them vice-ridden and miserable;
the actual opposite of our intention.*

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*Now that we've taken a look
at the dystopian results of yang's anti-tao
let's explore its polar opposite:
yin's actual path of the Tao.*

*Recognizing that tolerance of others
helps them to be comfortable and honest
a sage forsakes the folly of being willful and domineering
and instead is enthusiastic to simply lead by example.*

*Upon the Tao's path of non-conceptuality, vulnerability,
awareness, acquiescence, and centered-spontaneity
the sage is able to be spontaneously...*

*pointed, straight-forward and utterly radiant
while also being respectful, subtle, and sincerely gentle.*

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*This is the fruit
of the centered path of spontaneous yielding
that non-violently accomplishes the lofty goals
that yang never could.*

*Perhaps that is because yang's methods
are predicated upon the assumption
that folks are not capable
of spontaneous happiness and goodness...*

*and so (in a nod to Shakespeare's Mid Sumer Night's Dream)
must have happiness, goodness and their causes
THRUST upon them.*

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*And maybe yin's path of centered allowing works
because compassion and cooperation
(and their consequential morality and happiness)
are wired into the neural architecture
of every healthy mammal...*

*as cleverness and creativity
is hard-wired into every healthy primate.*

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Tao Te Ching
chapter Fifty-nine

(59: 1)

For governing
a country well
there is nothing better
than **moderation.**

Commentary – of Volume 10 (chapters 55 - 60)

(59: 2)

The mark
of a moderate man
is **freedom**
from his own ideas.

Commentary – of Volume 10 (chapters 55 - 60)

The Specter of Moderation

“Everything in moderation, especially moderation.”

*Said Buddha **never!***

*And now we see this word has crept into
a translation of the “Tao Te Ching.”*

*But stay tuned,
for I suspect you’ll find
the contextual definition
to be quite surprising.*

*Instead of reading
that it is freedom from extremes,
we read that it is, rather,
freedom from one’s own preconceptions.*

What could that look like?

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(59: 3)

Tolerant
like the sky,
all-pervading
like sunlight...

Commentary – of Volume 10 (chapters 55 - 60)

firm

like a mountain,

supple

like a tree in the wind...

Commentary – of Volume 10 (chapters 55 - 60)

The Role of Yin

*Here, we see, tolerance as well as suppleness
are the opposite of rigidity
and all-pervasive
is the opposite of constriction.*

*How can one be firm
without being rigid and constricted?
The answer lies in the simile,
“like a mountain.”*

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*It is inferred that one's suppleness
comes from the water element
whereas firmness
comes from earth;*

*both of which are considered
to be Yin, feminine and yielding.*

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he has NO destination
in view...

and makes use
of anything
life happens to bring
his way.

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(59: 4)

Nothing
is impossible
for him.

Commentary – of Volume 10 (chapters 55 - 60)

(59: 5)

Because he
has let go...

he can care
for the people's welfare
as a mother cares
for her child.

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Freedom from the Constraints of Goals

*Contemporary self-help
would condemn his lack of goals,
yet here we read that his freedom FROM goals
has liberated him from all limitations.*

*Consequently his maternal love
is spontaneous and utterly uncontrived,
thus it's effectiveness
is of epic proportions.*

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The definition and benefits of moderation

Nothing is better than moderation.

But what is it?

*It's not what we are the dictionary
typically tells us it is.*

This chapter defines it as freedom from one's ideas.

NOT freedom from the presence of ideas

BUT freedom from their tyranny.

In other words we who would be sages of the Tao

practice passive and vulnerable awareness

of our inner and outer worlds

in harmony with our inhalation...

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*and also practice acquiescence
to these perceptions,
and our analysis of them
in harmony with our exhalation.*

*This marriage of awareness and acquiescence
allows us to be deeply grounded
in the here and now
which strengthens our spontaneous perception...*

*and gives us the flexibility to exercise
the sincere: suppleness, tolerance, and resourcefulness
that can only come
from having absolutely no agenda whatsoever.*

*This deeply centered spontaneity
is the key to the universal, maternal compassion
that is truly limitless in its ability
to meet the needs of all beings everywhere.*

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Tao Te Ching
chapter Sixty

(60: 1)

Governing
a large country
is like frying
a small fish.

Commentary – of Volume 10 (chapters 55 - 60)

(60: 2)

**You spoil it
with too much poking.**

Commentary – of Volume 10 (chapters 55 - 60)

(60: 3)

**Center your country
in the Tao
and evil
will have NO power.**

Commentary – of Volume 10 (chapters 55 - 60)

(60: 4)

NOT that it
is **NOT** there,
but you will be able to
step out of its way.

Commentary – of Volume 10 (chapters 55 - 60)

(60: 5)

Give evil
nothing to oppose
and it will disappear
by itself.

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Avoiding the Bear Trap of Micromanagement

*This chapter begins
by reminding us...*

*that the most efficient way to ruin a project,
whether it is the cooking of a small meal
or the governance of a large country,
is by being intrusive and interfering.*

*Of course we don't want anything bad
to happen to our country
but the best way to prevent that
is for all its citizens to be centered in the Tao.*

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*Well great,
how do we do that,
without being coercive, commanding or manipulative?*

*By leading by example,
as taught in the sixth sentence
of the fifty-eighth chapter
of the Tao Te Ching.*

*Yes, there are destructive influences
that could undermine our country,
no less our project,
so we must implement a strategy.*

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*Rather than use yang's
linear, direct, aggressive, controlling approach
(which has never proven remotely sustainable)
let's take yin's path...*

*of non-conceptual, vulnerable,
acquiescent, centered spontaneity
that could be as circuitous as it is effective.*