

Guanzi, Number 49 : Study of Inner Cultivation
Translated by Bruce R. Linnell, PhD (2011)

Background

The 內業 (“Nei Ye” or “Nei Yeh”), variously translated as “Inner Enterprise”, “Inner Training”, “Inner Cultivation”, or “Inner Development” (and “Inward” may be substituted for “Inner” in any of the previous), is generally considered to have been written around 350-300 BC (after Confucius, but before the Dao De Jing). Its influence can be seen in many aspects of Daoism (including the Dao De Jing itself) and in traditional Chinese medicine. It is a brief work (only 1/5 as long as the Dao De Jing), written in short, often rhymed, verses. It has been preserved in the “Guanzi”, a collection of diverse writings that was compiled during the third century BC. There is no name given for the author.

While available for millennia, the Nei Ye has just started to receive serious scholarly attention in the last few decades. It describes how to build up and store various spiritual forces such as Qi and “essence” (there is no indication that “essence” refers to reproductive fluids, which appeared later in Chinese thought), and how to control one’s heart/mind. It shows no influence of any school of Chinese religious or philosophical thought, other than using a few basic Confucian terms. It does have a few concepts in common with the work by Mencius, but as they were probably both written about the same time it is impossible to tell who influenced who (or if they were both influenced by something else).

While the Nei Ye has many similarities, including writing style, with the Dao De Jing, it also differs significantly in its perspective. For instance, there is no social commentary, no political or military advice, nor any explanation of how the universe was created or how it works. There is no mention of yin and yang, “non-action” or “non-being”, nor does it advocate a feminine/receptive attitude. It does not criticize Confucianism, nor does it present the sage as a person with some kind of better understanding of reality. Even the terms Dao and De apparently don’t mean the same thing in the Nei Ye as they do in the Dao De Jing – for example, both Dao and De are described in some passages as being able to “arrive” and “settle” in a person.

There are two scholarly books that discuss the Nei Ye at length and provide complete translations :

W. Allyn Rickett, “Guanzi : Political, Economic, and Philosophical Essays from Early China”, vol. 2, 1985, revised 1998.

Harold D. Roth, “Original Tao: Inward Training (Nei-yeh) and the Foundations of Taoist Mysticism”, 1999.

There is also another very recent translation available on the web, that is copyright-free as far as I can determine :

www.indiana.edu/~p374/Neiye.pdf - Robert Eno, “Guanzi : The Inner Enterprise”, 2005

Translations often differ significantly because there are at least five early manuscripts to draw upon, dating from around 1300 to 1600 AD. In addition, Chinese scholars in the last few centuries have made many suggested modifications to the existing original sources. Attempting to reverse centuries of possible transcription errors, they replaced many symbols which apparently make no sense with symbols that have a very similar shape and/or sound (often to complete a rhyme), and whose meaning seemed more appropriate. To make matters worse, there are no readily available printed copies of the oldest manuscripts in their original form, so the symbols used here came from various web sites and were cross-referenced against Roth’s book. Every care has been taken to ensure that the symbols used here are correct, but how accurately they match the original manuscripts is unknown.

The Translation Process

Often, translators just try to get the general “feel” of what the Chinese is trying to say, and then write an English sentence that means about the same thing. What I tried to do (for no other reason than to see if it could be done) was to preserve as much of the original Chinese as possible by always using each symbol in the English sentence, and an exact translation of each symbol wherever possible, with as few added English words as possible. This sometimes results in sentences that are somewhat stilted in English, but that I hope retain more of the original Chinese way of thinking. I also tried to use the same English word for the same Chinese symbol whenever possible, so that the English reader could better see what the writer(s) were trying to say. Occasionally more than one English meaning for a symbol fits equally well, and the translator must pick just one. However, I sometimes took both meanings and combined them into a single phrase, such as “heart/mind”, or “fair and just”. Exact translations are interpreted when they either don’t make as much sense literally, or when the resulting phrase would be awkward in English.

The approach used here for the corrected symbols was to always use the original symbol whenever possible, and only use a suggested correction when the original symbol makes no sense.

While I originally intended to present each sentence “as is” (with no additional interpretation of the sentence as-a-whole on my part), there are many sentences which do not seem to make sense without a context. The more I study the Nei Ye, the more I have come to believe that it is talking about aligning the heart/mind, not the physical body, to receive Dao, De, Qi and essence. In particular, I believe that some references to “form” are referring to the “form of the heart/mind” (a phrase which is used explicitly three times), and so have added that phrase in two more places, indicated by [brackets]. In addition, a couple of references to “returning” are assumed to be referring to returning to one’s nature (a phrase which is used explicitly once), and they are also indicated by brackets. There are a few more personal assumptions indicated by brackets. Other scholarly and personal interpretations are explained in the footnotes.

The section and sub-section (blank lines) divisions are entirely due to the hubris of the translator. As far as I know, there are no section markers in the original manuscripts, because Rickett, Roth, and Eno often use different divisions.

Definitions

Some of the terms that are used repeatedly need to be discussed beforehand for clarity :

道 Dao (Tao) : in the Dao De Jing, Dao is both the natural way of things and the process of following that way; here, it is something that is essential for life and that can dwell in the heart/mind; it is left untranslated so that the reader may “fill in the blank” for themselves as they read

德 De (Te) : in the Dao De Jing, De is most often translated as “virtue” or “power” and is described in Chapter 49 as “goodness” or “virtue” and “honesty” or “trust”; here, it is something that can “arrive” in a person and is used daily; it is also left untranslated so that the reader may “fill in the blank” for themselves

氣 “Qi” (Ch’i) : vitality, life force, life energy, vital energy; it can also refer to the breath; here, it is needed for life and dwells in the heart/mind, and is also left untranslated

精 “essence” : this is also something that can “arrive” and “settle” in a person, and is required for life

It should be noted that “Qi” and “essence” are very intimately linked, if not actually referring to the exact same thing (but then why use two names?). Both Qi and essence are required for life and can dwell within the body, and there are lines apparently referring to the “essence of Qi” and the “Qi of essence”.

It seems that the Nei Ye may be saying that Dao, De, Qi, and essence are all-pervasive spiritual things (as opposed to concepts) which are not inherently within us, but which can be obtained by taking (and keeping) certain mental/emotional attitudes. However, it is also possible that the Nei Ye is using these terms to attempt to explain by allegory and metaphor the various feelings experienced as a result of the meditative practices of the writer(s). According to LaFargue, this interpretation is supported by the inconsistent “definitions” given of the various terms (and the relationships between them), and by the sometimes experientially similar descriptions of different terms. The readers can decide for themselves.

心 “heart/mind” : usually translated as either “heart” or “mind” (the symbol means both), it seems that the ancient Chinese may have considered the heart to be the place of understanding, perception, and awareness, so “heart/mind” seems to be the best translation

形 “form” : this appears to sometimes refer to the physical body, but often not, because the “form of the heart/mind” is referred to several times

正 “properly aligned” : literally just “proper” or “correct”, this is taken to mean “to bring into a proper or desirable relationship”

理 “regulated” : to be orderly, well governed, under control; guided by certain rules or principles

亂 “confused” : the opposite of “regulated”, and the normal state for most people; caused by getting caught up in the ten thousand things, love and anger, worry and happiness, etc.

意 “thought”, “intent”, “desire” : regardless of what it is called, as far as the Nei Ye is concerned, it is sometimes a good thing, sometimes a bad thing; it seems to be a mixture of both thought and feelings (similar to “heart/mind”); “intent” is perhaps best because that has connotations of thought and emotion, but “thought” and “desire” sometimes work better in English

平 “equable” : while the symbol literally means “even”, “equal”, “calm”, equable means to be steady, free from extremes, serene; not to be confused with “equitable” (unbiased)

定 “settled” : has connotations of being calm as well as stable or rooted

度 “proper value” : literally “estimate” (which is the process of judging the worth or value of something), this is taken to mean “to have the proper perspective about the importance of a thing”

自 “naturally” : something that happens by itself, spontaneously, without being forced (“of itself”, “of its own accord”, “on its own”)

喜 “love” : often translated as “happiness” or “joy” by others, this seems to be happiness due to something or attached to something, so here it is translated as “love”

天 “heaven” : a complex concept, this symbol has connotations of the sky, nature, and that which is the source of existence, as well as that of being a celestial god-like spirit, and that which controls our destinies

天下 “the world” : literally “heaven under”, it is perhaps better thought of as “all things under heaven”, but it is translated as “the world” because the grammar sometimes gets awkward using the more accurate phrase

天地 “heaven and earth” : everything, the universe, all that is

萬物 “ten thousand creatures” : “ten thousand” as used here does not refer to a specific number, but means “innumerable” or “myriad”; together the symbols are perhaps better thought of as “all creatures and things” (including people)

事 “duties” : one’s personal and business affairs and responsibilities

聖人 “sage” : literally “holy person” or “wise man”

凡 “always” : the first symbol of the document, it is used many times thruout the Nei Ye, and always starts a sentence. Some translators just ignore it, but it seemed important to the writer(s), so I wanted to use it, and consistently. The standard translation of “all” or “every” works in some places, but not in many. Another standard translation of “earthly” works everywhere, but sounds strange when referring to Dao (“earthly Dao”), and would seem to postulate a world-view (“earthly Dao” vs. perhaps “heavenly Dao”?) for which there is no other evidence. However, an interpreted translation of “always” works everywhere.

Confucian concepts (marked by a * in the translation)

智 “wise, wisdom” : as it says

仁 “kindness” : benevolence, kindheartedness

義 “righteousness” : doing the right thing, personal honor, knowing right from wrong, being morally upright

禮 “propriety” : proper etiquette, courtesy; being formal, respectful

敬 “respect” : an inner attitude of respectfulness and/or reverence

君子 “noble man” : literally “son of the ruler”, it can mean “nobleman” (one who belongs to the nobility), but also one who is noble or moral in character; sometimes translated by others as “gentleman” or “superior man”

References

Robert Eno, “Guanzi : ‘The Inner Enterprise’”; 2005

Russell Kirkland, “Neiye : Inner Cultivation”, 1998

Russell Kirkland, “Varieties of Taoism in Ancient China”, 1997

Michael LaFargue, “Tao and Method”, 1994

W. Allyn Rickett, “Guanzi : Political, Economic, and Philosophical Essays from Early China”, vol. 2, 1985

Harold D. Roth, “Original Tao: Inward Training (Nei-yeh) and the Foundations of Taoist Mysticism”, 1999

Fabien Simonis, “A Chinese Model of Cognition: the Neiye”, Master’s Thesis, McGill University, 1998

Arthur Waley, “The Way and its Power”, 1958

凡物之精
此則為生
下生五穀
上為列星
流於天地之間
謂之鬼神
藏於胸中
謂之聖人

Always : the essence of creatures –
This then makes them live.
Below, it gives birth to the five grains;
Above, it acts to arrange the stars.
When it flows in the space between heaven and earth
We call them ghosts and spirits.
When it collects in the center of the breast of people,
We call them sages.

是故民氣
杲乎
如登於天
杳乎
如入於淵
綽乎
如在於海
卒乎
如在於己

Thus the Qi of the citizens :
Is it bright?
As though ascending to heaven.
Is it dark and quiet?
As though entering into an abyss.
Is it wide and spacious?
As though residing in the ocean.
Is it close^A?
As though residing in oneself.

是故此氣也
不可止以力
而可安以德
不可呼以聲
而可迎以意

Thus this Qi –
Can not be brought to rest by using force,
But can be calmed by using De.
Can not be summoned by using your voice,
But can be made welcome by using your intent.

敬守勿失
是謂成德
德成而智出
萬物果得

When you can respectfully* maintain it, and never lose it,
This is called developed De.
When De develops, and wisdom* arises,
The bounty of the ten thousand creatures is attained.

凡心之形
自充自盈
自生自成
其所以失之
必以憂樂喜怒欲利

Always : the form of the heart/mind is
Naturally full, naturally overflowing,
Naturally born, naturally complete.
The reason that you lose it
Is certainly due to worries and happiness, love and anger, desire for profit.

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 能去憂樂喜怒欲利 心乃反濟 | If you can leave behind worries and happiness, love and anger, desire for profit, Your heart/mind then returns [to its original nature] successfully. |
| 彼心之情 利安以寧 勿煩勿亂 和乃自成 | The nature of that heart/mind Benefits from calmness and the tranquility that comes from it. Do not be troubled, do not be confused, And harmony is then naturally achieved. |
| 晢晢乎 如在於側 忽忽乎 如將不得 渺渺乎 如窮無極 | Is it very bright? As though located right by your side. Is it very easy to overlook? As though it will never be attained. Is it very remote and indistinct? As though utterly without boundaries. |
| 此稽不遠 日用其德 | To examine this, you need not go far : You use De daily. |
| <hr/> | |
| 夫道者所以充形也 而人不能固 其往不復 其來不舍 | Now : Dao is the reason that the form [of the heart/mind] is full! But people can not be strong enough to keep it – It goes and does not return, It arrives but does not dwell. |
| 寂乎 莫聞其音 卒乎 乃在於心 冥冥乎 不見其形 淫淫乎 與我俱生 | Is it silent? There is no one who can hear its sound. Is it close ^A ? It is residing in the heart/mind. Is it very dim and obscure? You can not see its form. Is it very prolific? It gives us all life. |
| 不見其形 不聞其聲 而序其成 謂之道 | You can not see its form, You can not hear its voice, Yet there is an order to its accomplishments. We call it Dao. |

凡道無所
善心安處
心靜氣理
道乃可止

Always : Dao is nowhere to be found,
But in a virtuous heart/mind it can calmly dwell.
When the heart/mind is still and Qi is regulated,
Dao can then stay there.

彼道不遠
民得以產
彼道不離
民因以知

That Dao is not remote :
Citizens attain it by being born.
That Dao does not depart :
Citizens rely on it for understanding.

是故卒乎
其如可與索
眇眇乎
其如窮無所

Thus : is it close^A?
As though it could be tied together with you.
Is it very minute and subtle?
As though it is utterly nowhere to be found.

彼道之情
惡意與聲
修心靜意
道乃可得

The nature of that Dao
Detests thoughts and words about it.
But when you cultivate your heart/mind and still your thoughts,
Dao can then be attained.

道也者
口之所不能言也
目之所不能視也
耳之所不能聽也
所以修心而正形也
人之所失以死
所得以生也
事之所失以敗
所得以成也

Dao –
That which your mouth can not speak!
That which your eyes can not see!
That which your ears can not hear!
It is the reason that we cultivate the heart/mind and properly align [its]^B form!
That which when people lose, thus they die.
That which when attained, thus they are born!
That which when duties lose, thus they fail.
That which when attained, thus they are completed!

凡道
無根無莖
無葉無榮
萬物以生
萬物以成

Always : Dao is
Without root, without stalk,
Without leaves, without flowers.
By means of it the ten thousand creatures are born,
By means of it the ten thousand creatures are made complete.

| | |
|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 命之曰道 | This [natural] order, it is called Dao. |
| 天主正 | That which presides over Heaven is proper alignment, |
| 地主平 | That which presides over Earth is equability, |
| 人主安靜 | That which presides over people is calmness and stillness. |
| 春秋冬夏 | Spring, autumn, winter, summer – |
| 天之時也 | The timing of heaven! |
| 山陵川谷 | Mountains, hills, streams, valleys – |
| 地之枝也 | The limbs of the earth! |
| 喜怒取予 | Love, anger, taking, giving – |
| 人之謀也 | The schemes of the people! |
| 是故聖人 | Thus the sage : |
| 與時變而不化 | Takes part in the changing of the seasons, but is not transformed; |
| 從物而不移 | He attends to creatures, but is not changed by them. |
| 能正能靜 | When you can be properly aligned and can be still ^C – |
| 然後能定 | Then, you can be settled. |
| 定心在中 | With a settled heart/mind in your center, |
| 耳目聰明 | Your ears and eyes are acute and clear, |
| 四枝堅固 | Your four limbs are hard and strong, |
| 可以為精舍 | You are able to become a dwelling for essence. |
| 精也者 | This essence – |
| 氣之精者也 | Is essence of Qi! |
| 氣道乃生 | With Qi and Dao, then there is life; |
| 生乃思 | With life, then there is contemplation; |
| 思乃知 | With contemplation, then there is understanding; |
| 知乃止矣 | When you reach understanding, then stop! |
| 凡心之形 | Always : if the form of the heart/mind |
| 過知失生 | Has too much understanding, life is lost. |
| 一物能化 | Knowing the Oneness ^D with creatures can transform them, |
| 謂之神 | We call this being spirit-like ^E . |
| 一事能變 | Knowing the Oneness with your duties can change them, |

謂之智

We call this being wise*.

化不易氣

To transform creatures, without altering your Qi;

變不易智

To change duties, without altering your wisdom*;^F

惟執一之君子

Only a noble man* who maintains Oneness^G

能為此乎

Can do this!

執一不失

When he maintains Oneness^G and does not lose it,

能君萬物

He can rule^H the ten thousand creatures.

君子使物

A noble man* uses creatures,

不為物使

He does not allow creatures to use^I him.

得一之理

When he attains the regulation of Oneness :

治心在於中

A regulated heart/mind resides in his center,

治言出於口

Regulated speech comes from his mouth,

治事加於人

Regulated duties are assigned to people.

然則天下治矣

Then, the world is regulated!

一言得而天下服

One word^J is attained by him, and the world obeys him;

一言定而天下聽

One word^J settles him, and the world listens to him.

公之謂也

We call him fair and just!

形不正

If the form [of the heart/mind] is not properly aligned,

德不來

De will not arrive.

中不靜

If the center is not still,

心不治

The heart/mind will not be regulated.

正形攝德

When the properly aligned form takes in De,

天仁地義

The kindness* of heaven and the righteousness* of earth

則溘然而自至

Then naturally arrive, and overwhelmingly.

神明之極

This highest of spirit-like understanding^K –

照乎

Is it illuminating?

知萬物

You will understand the ten thousand creatures.^L

中義守不忒

Maintain the righteousness* of the center, and you will not err :

不以物亂官

Do not allow creatures to confuse your senses,

不以官亂心
是謂中得

Do not allow the senses to confuse your heart/mind.
This is called attaining the center.

有神自在身
一往一來
莫之能思
失之必亂
得之必治

There exists a spirit[-like understanding] naturally located in the self –
One moment it goes, one moment it arrives;
There is no one who can contemplate it.
Lose it and you will certainly be confused,
Attain it and you will certainly be regulated.

敬除其舍
精將自來
精想思之
寧念治之
嚴容畏敬
精將至定

Respectfully* empty its dwelling^M,
And essence will naturally arrive.
This essence – consider it and contemplate it,
Rather than study ways to regulate it.
Keeping a serious appearance, and an attitude of awe and respect*,
Essence will arrive and settle.

得之而勿捨
耳目不淫
心無他圖
正心在中
萬物得度

When you attain it and never let go of it,
Your ears and eyes will be restrained,
Your heart/mind will have no other plans.
With a properly aligned heart/mind located in the center,
The ten thousand creatures attain their proper value.

道滿天下
普在民所
民不能知也

Dao fills the world
Every place the citizens are located,
But the citizens can not understand this!

一言之解
上察於天
下極於地
蟠滿九州

With the liberation of one word^J:
Your head can observe what is in heaven,
Your lowest extreme is on earth,
And your coils fill the nine provinces.^N

何謂解之
在於心安
我心治官乃治
我心安官乃安
治之者心也

What does it mean to be liberated by it?
You will reside in a calm heart/mind.
I regulate my heart/mind and my senses are then regulated;
I calm my heart/mind and my senses are then calm.
That which regulates them is the heart/mind!

安之者心也
心以藏心
心之中又有心焉

That which calms them is the heart/mind!
The heart/mind thus contains a heart/mind;
The center of the heart/mind also has a heart/mind!

彼心之心
意以先言
意然後形
形然後言
言然後使
使然後治
不治必亂
亂乃死

In that heart/mind of the heart/mind :
Thought thus comes before words;
After thought comes form;
After form comes words;
After words comes manifestation;
After manifestation comes regulation.
Without regulation, there will certainly be confusion;
Confusion, then death.

精存自生
其外安榮
內藏以為泉原
浩然和平

Where essence exists, there is naturally life –
Outside you, calmness flourishes;
It collects inside you, thus acting as a primal spring.
Like a vast lake^O, it is harmonious and equable.

以為氣淵
淵之不涸
四體乃固

It thus becomes a fountainhead of Qi.
As long as the fountainhead does not dry up,
The four limbs are then strong.

泉之不竭
九竅遂通
乃能窮天地
被四海

When the spring is not used up,
The nine bodily openings^P are then open [to the flow of Qi].
Then you can span the limits of heaven and earth,
And cover the four seas^Q.

中無惑意
外無邪蓄
心全於中
形全於外
不逢天蓄
不遇人害
謂之聖人

When the center is without doubt or desire,
The outside is without demonic disasters.
Those whose heart/mind is whole and complete in the center :
Their form is whole and complete on the outside,
They do not happen to meet heavenly disasters,
They do not encounter people who cause harm –
We call them sages.

人能正靜
皮膚裕寬
耳目聰明
筋伸而骨強

When people can be properly aligned and still :
Their hair and skin are abundant and smooth,
Their ears and eyes are acute and clear,
Their muscles are supple and their bones are strong.

乃能戴大圓
而履大方
鑒於大清
視於大明

Then they can support the great circle of heaven,
And walk on the great square of earth.
They are a reflection of great purity,
They see with great clarity.

敬慎無忒
日新其德
遍知天下
窮於四極

Respectful* and cautious, they are without error;
Each day they renew their De.
They understand the whole world
Thoroughly out to the four extremes.

敬發其充
是謂內得
然而不反
此生之忒

They respectfully* develop their fullness;
This is called inner attainment.
However, if they do not return [to their original nature],
This creates errors.

凡道
必周必密
必寬必舒
必堅必固

Always : Dao is
Certainly complete, certainly all-pervasive,
Certainly magnanimous, certainly relaxed,
Certainly hard, certainly strong.

守善勿舍
逐淫釋薄
既知其極
反於道德

Maintain your virtue and never give up;
To pursue excess disperses and weakens it.
Once you understand the extremes,
Return to Dao and De.

全心在中
不可蔽匿
知於形容
見於膚色

When your whole and complete heart/mind is in the center,
It can not be hidden or concealed –
It is known in your form's appearance,
It is seen in your skin's color.

善氣迎人

When with virtuous Qi you meet people,

親於弟兄
惡氣迎人
害於戎兵
不言之聲
疾於雷鼓

They will love you as they would their brothers.
When with wicked Qi you meet people,
They will harm you with their weapons of war.
This is because the sound of that which is un-spoken
Travels faster than a clap of thunder.

心氣之形
明於日月
察於父母
賞不足以勸善
刑不足以懲過
氣意得而天下服
心意定而天下聽

The form of the heart/mind's Qi
Is brighter than the sun and moon,
More observant than a father or mother.
Rewards are not enough to encourage virtue,
Punishments are not enough to discipline excesses.
Qi's intent is attained, and the world obeys;
The heart/mind's intent becomes settled, and the world listens.

搏氣如神
萬物備存
能搏乎
能一乎
能無卜筮而知吉凶乎
能止乎
能己乎

Because they consolidate^R Qi like spirits,
The ten thousand creatures are prepared for existence.
Can you consolidate^R it?
Can you unify it?
Can you foretell bad fortune and good fortune, but without divining?
Can you then stop?
Can you?

能勿求諸人
而得之己乎
思之思之又重思之
思之而不通
鬼神將通之
非鬼神之力也
精氣之極也

How can you never seek it from anyone,
Yet attain it yourself?
Contemplate it, contemplate it, and again repeatedly contemplate it.
Should you contemplate it yet not comprehend it,
Know that ghosts and spirits can comprehend it.
However, it is not comprehended by the power of ghosts and spirits –
But by the utmost of essence's Qi!

四體既正
血氣既靜
一意搏心
耳目不淫
雖遠若近

Once the four limbs are properly aligned,
Once blood and Qi are still :
Unify your intent, consolidate^R your heart/mind;
And the ears and eyes will be restrained
Even though what is remote seems near.

| | |
|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 思 索 生 知 | Deep contemplation creates understanding; |
| 慢 易 生 憂 | Disdain and laxity creates worries; |
| 暴 傲 生 怨 | Cruelty and arrogance creates resentment; |
| 憂 鬱 生 疾 | Worries and melancholy create sickness. |
| 疾 因 乃 死 | Sickness then causes death. |
| 思 之 而 不 捨 | If you contemplate these and do not let go of them, |
| 內 困 外 薄 | Inside you will be distressed, outside you will be weak. |
| 不 蚤 為 圖 | Do not neglect ^S to make plans for this, |
| 生 將 讓 舍 | Or life will leave its dwelling. |
| 食 莫 若 無 飽 | Do not eat as if you were starving, |
| 思 莫 若 勿 致 | Do not contemplate as if you were indifferent. |
| 節 適 之 齊 | When you restrain these appropriately and simultaneously, |
| 彼 將 自 至 | That [Dao] ^T will naturally arrive. |
| <hr/> | |
| 凡 人 之 生 也 | Always : at the birth of people – |
| 天 出 其 精 | Heaven produces their essence, |
| 地 出 其 形 | Earth produces their form; |
| 合 此 以 為 人 | These combine in order to make people. |
| 和 乃 生 | When these are in harmony then there is life; |
| 不 和 不 生 | No harmony, no life. |
| 察 和 之 道 | Observe the Dao of harmony : |
| 其 精 不 見 | Its essence is not seen, |
| 其 徵 不 醜 | Its manifestations are not wicked. |
| 平 正 擅 匈 | When equability and proper alignment completely fill your breast, |
| 論 治 在 心 | And the principles of regulation are in your heart/mind, |
| 此 以 長 壽 | This gives long life. |
| 喜 怒 之 失 度 | When love and anger lose their proper value, |
| 乃 為 之 圖 | Then use this plan of action : |
| 節 其 五 欲 | Restrain your five desires ^U , |
| 去 其 二 凶 | Leave behind your two misfortunes – |
| 不 喜 不 怒 | Do not love, do not be angry. |
| 平 正 擅 匈 | Then equability and proper alignment will completely fill your breast. |

| | |
|---------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 凡人之生也 | Always : at the birth of people – |
| 必以平正 | They certainly have equability and proper alignment. |
| 所以失之 | The reason that they lose it |
| 必以喜怒憂患 | Is certainly due to love, anger, worries, suffering. |
| 是故止怒莫若詩 | Thus : there is nothing that stops anger like poetry, |
| 去憂莫若樂 | There is nothing that removes worries like music, |
| 節樂莫若禮 | There is nothing that restrains music like propriety,* |
| 守禮莫若敬 | There is nothing that maintains propriety* like respect*. ^V |
| 守敬莫若靜 | [But,] there is nothing that maintains respect* like stillness. |
| 內靜外敬 | Inwardly still and outwardly respectful*, |
| 能反其性 | You can return to your [original] nature, |
| 性將大定 | And your nature will be exceptionally settled. |

| | |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 凡食之道 | Always : regarding the Dao of eating – |
| 大充傷而形不臧 | Over-filling causes injury, and your form will not be right; |
| 大攝骨枯而血沍 | Over-fasting ^W makes your bones wither and your blood congeal. |
| 充攝之間 | When you reach the space between filling and fasting ^W , |
| 此謂和成 | This is called achieving harmony – |
| 精之所舍 | That which is the dwelling place of essence |
| 而知之所生 | And that which is the creation of understanding. |

| | |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| 飢飽之失度 | When hunger and satiation lose their proper value, |
| 乃為之圖 | Then use this plan of action : |
| 飽則疾動 | When you are satiated, then move about quickly. |
| 飢則曠思 | When you are hungry, then neglect your contemplation. |
| 老則長慮 | When you are old, then take charge of your concerns. |

| | |
|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| 飽不疾動 | If you are satiated and do not move about quickly, |
| 氣不通於四末 | Your Qi will be obstructed in your four extremities. |
| 飢不曠思 | If you are hungry and do not neglect your contemplation, |
| 飽而不廢 | When you eat you will get full but you will not stop. |
| 老不長慮 | If you are old and do not take charge of your concerns, |
| 困乃速竭 | When you are distressed, then you will be quickly exhausted. |

| | |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 大心而放 | When you expand your heart/mind and free it, |
| 寬氣而廣 | When your Qi is magnanimous and vast, |
| 其形安而不移 | When your form is calm and unchanging : |
| 能守一而棄萬苟 | You can maintain Oneness ^G and reject the ten thousand trivialities, |
| 見利不誘 | You see profit and are not tempted, |
| 見害不懼 | You see trouble and are not frightened. |
| 寬舒而仁 | You are magnanimous, relaxed, and kind*; |
| 獨樂其身 | When alone, you are happy with your self. |
| 是謂雲氣 | This is called cloud-like Qi – |
| 意行似天 | Your intent and behavior resemble that of heaven. |

| | |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 凡人之生也 | Always : at the birth of people – |
| 必以其歡 | They certainly have joy. |
| 憂則失紀 | When they are worried, then they lose these tenets ^X . |
| 怒則失端 | When they are angry, then they lose the source. |
| 憂悲喜怒 | Where there is worry, grief, love, anger, |
| 道乃無處 | Then Dao does not dwell. |

| | |
|------|----------------------------------------------------|
| 愛慾靜之 | Love and desire : still them. |
| 愚亂正之 | Foolishness and confusion : properly align them. |
| 勿引勿推 | When you do not pull and do not push, ^Y |
| 福將自歸 | Good fortune will naturally return to you : |
| 彼道自來 | That Dao will naturally arrive, |
| 可藉與謀 | Which you can rely on and consult with. |
| 靜則得之 | When you are still, then you attain it, |
| 躁則失之 | When you are impatient, then you lose it. |

| | |
|------|-----------------------------------------------|
| 靈氣在心 | This potent Qi in your heart/mind : |
| 一來一逝 | One moment it arrives, one moment it departs. |
| 其細無內 | It is so tiny there is nothing inside it, |
| 其大無外 | It is so great there is nothing outside it. |

| | |
|------|---------------------------------------------|
| 所以失之 | The reason that you lose it |
| 以躁為害 | Is because impatience causes harm. |
| 心能執靜 | When the heart/mind can maintain stillness, |

| | |
|-------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| 道將自定 | Dao will naturally settle there. |
| 得道之人 | For people who attain Dao : |
| 理丞而屯泄 | Regulation supports it and it will not dissipate easily, |
| 胸中無敗 | So that the center in their breast does not fail them. |
| 節欲之道 | When following the Dao of restraining desire, |
| 萬物不害 | The ten thousand creatures do not cause harm. ^Z |

A : altho the modern translation of this symbol is “sudden” or “abrupt” (among other things), and is translated different ways by different translators, I have chosen “close” (as in “within reach”, “accessible”) based on the answers given each time this question is asked

B : using “its” here (rather than “the”) is significant, making the difference between referring to the “form of the heart/mind” or referring separately to “the heart/mind” and “the form”

C : this and the next 5 lines could still be talking about the sage, but because it seems to be a different section, it is translated in this fashion

D : Simonis claims that the grammatical sense in which 一 is being used means “one-ing creatures”, hence knowing (or seeing, sensing, perceiving, etc.) your oneness with them

E : “spirit-like” is taken to mean that your understanding of Dao has reached the same level as that of the spirits, who are presumably not confused by having senses or a heart/mind (from Simonis)

F : in this and the 5 lines above, it is assumed that it is the creatures and duties that are being transformed and changed, because earlier it is said that the sage takes part in changes but is not himself transformed or changed

G : usually translated as “grasps the One” or “holds to the One” (the one what? principle? Dao?), “maintaining Oneness” is taken to mean being able to keep the sense of Oneness referred to above

H : he “rules” creatures in that they do not confuse his senses or heart/mind (referred to below)

I : creatures do not “use” him in that they do not confuse his senses or heart/mind (referred to below)

J : it is unclear what 一 言 means here : “one word”, “one saying”, “word of the One” (“One” perhaps referring to Dao?), “word of Oneness”, “sound of Oneness”, possibly even “the whole utterance”, etc.; so it is just left literally translated as “one word”

K : “spirit-like understanding” is taken to refer to a state of consciousness where you can intuitively understand Dao very clearly (from Simonis)

L : you will “understand” them in that you will understand their proper value (mentioned below), you will not allow them to confuse your senses or heart/mind (referred to immediately below), etc.

M : presumably the heart/mind, or perhaps the “center”

N : the image seems to be that of a dragon – your head is in heaven, your tail is on the earth, and your coils fill the “nine provinces” (the whole world)

O : 浩然 (literally “like a vast body of water”) is usually translated as “flood-like” (to match Mencius), but a flood does not seem to be as harmonious and equable as a wide, calm lake

P : two eyes, two ears, one nose, one mouth, two elimination, one sexual

Q : “four seas” also indicates the whole world

R : there are three possible symbols here, 搏 “to grasp or catch” (which Roth says is the original symbol), 搏 “to roll into a ball with the hands”, and 專 “to concentrate”, and all are equally likely (as far as I can tell), so the word used is a combination of all three

S : the symbol given (“flea”) makes no sense; however it seems that it must complete a double negative (do not [neglect/hesitate/fail] to...), because twice below the Nei Ye encourages the reader to make plans

T : there is no subject in this sentence in the original Chinese! But the phrase “that Dao” is used 4 other times, and “that Dao will naturally arrive” appears below (using different symbols)

U : the five senses

V : these 4 lines are expressing very Confucian ideas; Confucius himself said “Let a person be stimulated by poetry, established in character by the rules of propriety, and perfected by music.” (Analects 8.8)

W : the given symbol makes no sense here, but presumably means the opposite of “gorging”

X : while the standard definition of 紀 is “discipline”, according to Waley it literally means “main thread” (as in “of the teaching”)

Y : presumably, do not pull desirable things towards you and push undesirable things away

Z : creatures will not “cause harm” in that they will not confuse the senses or the heart/mind (mentioned above)

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