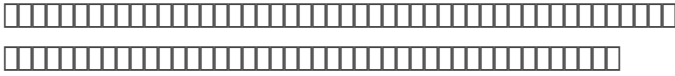


Chapter 51



Translation

Dao brings them to life, De tends to their keeping,
things set them in motion, and circumstance completes them.
So among the ten thousand beings, none fail
to revere Dao and hold De precious.

The reverence Dao commands, the worth De carries —
no title is conferred upon them,
yet always, of themselves, it is so.

Therefore Dao brings them to life and tends to their keeping,
rears them and fosters them,
steadies them and tempers them,
nourishes them and shelters them.

It gives life yet lays no claim,
it acts yet does not lean upon its works,
it rears yet does not lord over them.

This is called the far-reaching De.

Word Notes

- 𠄎 — "**to nurture; to rear**": also carries the sense of generating life.
- 𠄎 — "**rank; title of nobility**": a conferral of position or honors.
- 𠄎 — "**to bring to stand; to establish**": the appearance of standing tall and fully formed.
- 𠄎 — "**to bring to ripeness; to temper**": subjecting the myriad beings to frost and cold in order to mature them.

Chapter Explanation

All things in the world are generated by Dao. Yet Dao's generation of things cannot be seen. When Dao stirs, it becomes De. De endows the myriad beings with their natures and generates all the various kinds. It further borrows the qi of yin and yang to give them form. Following the natural

momentum of things, they grow to completion. For this reason, **the myriad beings all revere Dao and prize De. The reverence for Dao, the preciousness of De** — no one has ever conferred rank or title upon them, yet naturally, of themselves, they are revered and prized.

Therefore **Dao gives life to the myriad beings**, and **De nurtures** them. It further **rears** and **fosters** them, **brings them to stand** and **brings them to ripeness**, **sustains** and **shelters** them. And yet Dao **gives life to the myriad beings without claiming it as its own**; it **acts to cultivate the myriad beings without leaning upon its works**; it **rears the myriad beings without lording over them**. This is called **the most profoundly far-reaching De**.

Discourse

The myriad beings are all generated by Dao and nurtured by De. Though human beings are the most sentient among the myriad beings, they remain but one member of that company. The life that human beings receive and are nourished by is nothing other than Dao and De. Since we are generated and nourished by Dao and De, we need only revere Dao and hold De precious — why must we cling to life alone?

People cling to life for no other reason than their wish to be honored in the world. But they do not realize that worldly honor is not truly honorable. What Zhao Meng ennobles, Zhao Meng can debase. How much better to revere Dao and hold De precious, bestowing De upon others, so that people naturally honor you. And though people honor you, you lay no claim to it and do not lean upon your De, so that no one can ennoble you or debase you. Only then can one be honored forever.

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