



ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

GENERAL STUDIES COURSE PROPOSAL COVER FORM

Course information:

Copy and paste current course information from Class Search/Course Catalog.

College/School College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Department SILC
Prefix CHI Number 338 Title The Daoist Bible: Daode jing Units:
Is this a cross-listed course? Yes If yes, please identify course(s) REL 338

Is this a shared course? (Choose one) If so, list all academic units offering this course

Note- For courses that are crosslisted and/or shared, a letter of support from the chair/director of each department that offers the course is required for each designation requested.

Is this a permanent numbered course with topics? Yes

If yes, all topics under this permanent numbered course must be taught in a manner that meets the criteria for the approved designation(s). It is the responsibility of the chair/director to ensure that all faculty teaching the course are aware of the General Studies designation(s) and adhere to the above guidelines. (Required)

Course description: At 5,000 words, the Daode Jing (Tao-te ching) is arguably the shortest religious book in the world. It is also the most widely translated, after the Christian Bible. This course will introduce you to the wisdom of the Old One, Laozi himself, and to some of the startlingly wide variety in which his short, gnomic utterances have been interpreted.

Requested designation:

Mandatory Review: No

Humanities, Arts and Design-HU

Note- a separate proposal is required for each designation.

Eligibility:

Permanent numbered courses must have completed the university's review and approval process. For the rules governing approval of omnibus courses, contact Phyllis.Lucie@asu.edu.

Submission deadlines dates are as follow:

For Fall 2016 Effective Date: October 1, 2015

For Spring 2017 Effective Date: March 10, 2016

Area(s) proposed course will serve:

A single course may be proposed for more than one core or awareness area. A course may satisfy a core area requirement and more than one awareness area requirements concurrently, but may not satisfy requirements in two core areas simultaneously, even if approved for those areas. With departmental consent, an approved General Studies course may be counted toward both the General Studies requirement and the major program of study.

Checklists for general studies designations:

Complete and attach the appropriate checklist

- Literacy and Critical Inquiry core courses (L)
Mathematics core courses (MA)
Computer/statistics/quantitative applications core courses (CS)
Humanities, Arts and Design core courses (HU)
Social-Behavioral Sciences core courses (SB)
Natural Sciences core courses (SQ/SG)
Cultural Diversity in the United States courses (C)
Global Awareness courses (G)
Historical Awareness courses (H)

A complete proposal should include:

- Signed course proposal cover form
Criteria checklist for General Studies designation(s) being requested
Course catalog description
Sample syllabus for the course
Copy of table of contents from the textbook and list of required readings/books

It is respectfully requested that proposals are submitted electronically with all files compiled into one PDF.

Contact information:

Name Stephen R. Bokenkamp E-mail sbokenka@asu.edu Phone 480-965-8882

Department Chair/Director approval: (Required)

Chair/Director name (Typed): Nina Berman Date: 9-15-2016



ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

Chair/Director (Signature):

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'W. E. ...', written across a horizontal line.

Arizona State University Criteria Checklist for
HUMANITIES, ARTS AND DESIGN [HU]

Rationale and Objectives

The humanities disciplines are concerned with questions of human existence and meaning, the nature of thinking and knowing, with moral and aesthetic experience. The humanities develop values of all kinds by making the human mind more supple, critical, and expansive. They are concerned with the study of the textual and artistic traditions of diverse cultures, including traditions in literature, philosophy, religion, ethics, history, and aesthetics. In sum, these disciplines explore the range of human thought and its application to the past and present human environment. They deepen awareness of the diversity of the human heritage and its traditions and histories and they may also promote the application of this knowledge to contemporary societies.

The study of the arts and design, like the humanities, deepens the student's awareness of the diversity of human societies and cultures. The arts have as their primary purpose the creation and study of objects, installations, performances and other means of expressing or conveying aesthetic concepts and ideas. Design study concerns itself with material objects, images and spaces, their historical development, and their significance in society and culture. Disciplines in the arts and design employ modes of thought and communication that are often nonverbal, which means that courses in these areas tend to focus on objects, images, and structures and/or on the practical techniques and historical development of artistic and design traditions. The past and present accomplishments of artists and designers help form the student's ability to perceive aesthetic qualities of art work and design.

The Humanities, Arts and Design are an important part of the General Studies Program, for they provide an opportunity for students to study intellectual and imaginative traditions and to observe and/or learn the production of art work and design. The knowledge acquired in courses fulfilling the Humanities, Arts and Design requirement may encourage students to investigate their own personal philosophies or beliefs and to understand better their own social experience. In sum, the Humanities, Arts and Design core area enables students to broaden and deepen their consideration of the variety of human experience.

Revised April 2014

Proposer: Please complete the following section and attach appropriate documentation.

ASU - [HU] CRITERIA			
HUMANITIES, ARTS AND DESIGN [HU] courses must meet <i>either</i> 1, 2 or 3 <i>and</i> at least one of the criteria under 4 in such a way as to make the satisfaction of these criteria A CENTRAL AND SUBSTANTIAL PORTION of the course content.			
YES	NO		Identify Documentation Submitted
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Emphasizes the study of values; the development of philosophies, religions, ethics or belief systems; and/or aesthetic experience.	syllabus
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Concerns the interpretation, analysis, or creation of written, aural, or visual texts; and/or the historical development of textual traditions.	syllabus and appended materials
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3. Concerns the interpretation, analysis, or engagement with aesthetic practices; and/or the historical development of artistic or design traditions.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4. In addition, to qualify for the Humanities, Arts and Design designation a course must meet one or more of the following requirements:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	a. Concerns the development of human thought, with emphasis on the analysis of philosophical and/or religious systems of thought.	syllabus and appended
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	b. Concerns aesthetic systems and values, especially in literature, arts, and design.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	c. Emphasizes aesthetic experience and creative process in literature, arts, and design.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	d. Concerns the analysis of literature and the development of literary traditions.	syllabus and appended documents
		THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF COURSES ARE EXCLUDED FROM THE [HU] DESIGNATION EVEN THOUGH THEY MIGHT GIVE SOME CONSIDERATION TO THE HUMANITIES, ARTS AND DESIGN:	
		• Courses devoted primarily to developing skill in the use of a language.	
		• Courses devoted primarily to the acquisition of quantitative or experimental methods.	
		• Courses devoted primarily to teaching skills.	

Course Prefix	Number	Title	General Studies Designation
CHI/ REL	338	The Daoist Bible: Daode jing	HU

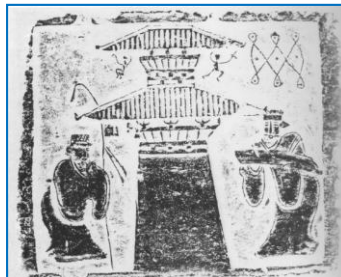
Explain in detail which student activities correspond to the **specific** designation criteria. Please use the following organizer to explain how the criteria are being met.

Criteria (from checksheet)	How course meets spirit (contextualize specific examples in next column)	Please provide detailed evidence of how course meets criteria (i.e., where in syllabus)
1	This course covers some of the ways in which the Laozi contributed to the development of the three major traditions of China -- Daoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. We also cover the development of Western Daoism through particular colonialist understandings.	See the list of topics covered on page two of the Syllabus.
2	Students gradually learn to analyze differing interpretive strategies as applied to an enigmatic text.	Syllabus, page one. In addition, see the list of textual versions and annotations on page two and the appended pages. All of the Chinese texts used in the course are presented in my own translations. This is a course that I call "stealth hermeneutics" in that, without confronting the daunting terminology of the scholarly discipline, students learn to analyze textual interpretations and come to see how they build upon one another.
4a	The Daode jing is one of the primary texts of Daoism, but Confucian and Buddhist authors also used it to buttress their beliefs.	See pages one and two of the syllabus. The "Xiang'er commentary" is a Celestial Master Daoist commentary on the Laozi. We also read excerpts from one Confucian and one Buddhist commentary. (See appended pages)
4d	When we come to Western versions of the Daode jing, I argue that these are the creation of a tradition through (mis)representing a foreign religious text.	See page two of the syllabus.

CHI 338, 85222 / REL 338 85391

Daode jing: The Chinese Bible

Stephen R. Bokenkamp
Office: LL 405C
Hours: email appointment
E-mail: sbokenka@asu.edu



Course Description

At 5,000 words, the **Daode Jing** (Tao-te ching) is arguably the shortest religious book in the world. It is also the most widely translated, after the Christian Bible. This course will introduce you to the wisdom of the Old One, Laozi himself, and to some of the startlingly wide variety in which his short, gnomic utterances have been interpreted.

Comment [SB1]: 4a

Textbooks

There are no required texts for this course. All material will be available online or on course reserve.

Comprehension and Analysis

In this course we will focus on the following learning objectives:

By the end of this course, students will be able to

- comprehend and critically analyze translations of Daoist writings.
- comprehend and critically analyze scholarly writings about Chinese religion.
- comprehend and critically analyze websites related to course content.

Comment [SB2]: 2

Communication

By the end of this course, students will be able to

- read and summarize course content-related material.
- read and summarize in writing course content-related material, to include the analyses of fellow students.
- write short analytical papers on representations of the *Daode jing* applying the analytical skills we have learned in class to evaluate the interpreter's or translator's biases.
- edit fellow students' writings and provide constructive analyses.
- benefit from the instructor's and others' suggestions in rewriting.

Course Topics, Schedule, & Grading

Activities used for assessment of learning include: instructor presentations; readings; one- to two- page responses to readings; assessment of fellow students' writing.

Week	Topic	Writing Assignments
0 8/18-20	Introduction	Write two sentences on the historical Laozi.
1 8/20-26	The Guodian Ms.	What sort of person is the sage?
2 8/27-9/2	The Mawangdui Ms.	Explain what difference the order 21-24-22 makes.
3 9/3-9	The Hanfeizi commentary	How does Hanfeizi imagine the sage?

Comment [sb3]: 1.

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4 9/10-16	Chinese Science	What are the four humours? (Search online)
5 9/17-23	The Heshang Gong commentary	How does Heshang Gong imagine the sage?
6 9/24-30	The Xiang'er commentary 1	How does the author of the Xiang'er imagine his audience?
7 10/1-7	The Xiang'er commentary 2	What is the attitude of the Xiang'er commentary toward Confucianism?
10/8-11	Fall Break –following this, our week begins on Wednesdays until week 15.	PAY ATTENTION – Calendar shift
8 10/12-18	The Wang Bi commentary	How does Wang Bi employ Confucian morality?
9 10/19-25	Deqing's commentary	How does Deqing employ Buddhist concepts?
10 10/26-11/1	The translations of James Legge and Paul Carus	Choose one. Who does he imagine Laozi is addressing?
11 11/2-8	The translations of Witter Bynner and Lin Yutang	Choose one. How does he alter the text to present his message?
12 11/9-15	The translations of Wayne Dyer and Stephen Mitchell	Choose one passage from either. How is it reformulated to make a point?
13 11/16-22	Cultural Borrowing, an overview.	Culture in your life?
11/24-26	Thanksgiving Break	
14 11/28-12/2	The Wrap-up Report	Get out of jail free card!

Comment [SB4]: 4a

Comment [SB5]: 4d. James Legge is a missionary translator and the remaining translations are all Western revisionings.

Grading

- A – 90-100%
- B – 80-89%
- C – 70-79%
- D – 60-69%
- E – 59% and below

There will be no tests, quizzes, or final papers for this course. Your grade will be determined entirely on the basis of your participation and the writing assignments you complete.

Course Evaluation

Your grade will be based on your writing assignments (60%), the quality and helpfulness of your peer edit (20%), and timeliness (20%). For grading standards, see the “Writing Rubrics” below. Late assignments will result in a 20% deduction but late peer edits will result in a grade of zero for the week (since your classmates will be negatively influenced).

Withdrawals, and Incompletes

<http://www.asu.edu/aad/catalogs/general/ug-enrollment.html#grading-system>

Academic Honesty and Courtesy

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The instructor for this course abides by ASU's Office of Student Life: "Student Academic Integrity Policy."

See: <https://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity>.

Online Course

This is an online course. There are no face-to-face meetings.

Communicating With the Instructor

This course uses a discussion board called "Hallway Conversations" for general questions about the course. Prior to posting a question, please check the syllabus, announcements, and existing posts. If you do not find an answer, post your question. You are encouraged to respond to the questions of your classmates.

Email questions of a personal nature to your instructor or assigned TA. You can expect a response within 24 hours.

Email and Internet

ASU email is an [official means of communication](#) among students, faculty, and staff. Students are expected to read and act upon email in a timely fashion. Students bear the responsibility of missed messages and should check their ASU assigned email regularly.

All instructor correspondence will be sent to your ASU email account.

Course Time Commitment

This three credit course requires approximately 135 hours of work. Please expect to spend around 18 hours each week preparing for and actively participating in this course.

Excused Late or Missed Assignments

Please follow the appropriate University policies to request an [accommodation for religious practices](#) or to accommodate a missed assignment [due to University sanctioned activities](#). You must notify the instructor at least three days before the assignment is due.

Submitting Assignments

All assignments, unless otherwise announced, MUST be submitted to the designated area of Blackboard. Do not submit an assignment via email.

Drop and Add Dates/Withdrawals

This course adheres to schedule C and the established deadlines to [drop or add the course](#). Consult with your advisor and notify your instructor to add or drop this course. If you are considering a withdrawal, review the following ASU policies: [Withdrawal from Classes](#), [Medical/Compassionate Withdrawal](#), and a [Grade of Incomplete](#).

Grade Appeals

Grade disputes must first be addressed by discussing the situation with the instructor. If the dispute is not resolved with the instructor, the student may appeal to the department chair per the [University Policy for Student Appeal Procedures on Grades](#).

Student Conduct and Academic Integrity

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ASU expects and requires its students to act with honesty, integrity, and respect. Required behavior standards are listed in the [Student Code of Conduct and Student Disciplinary Procedures, Computer, Internet, and Electronic Communications policy, ASU Student Academic Integrity Policy](#), and outlined by the [Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#). Plagiarism may be the most common form of academic dishonesty and is often unintentional. Protect yourself by understanding how to avoid plagiarism with these resources:

The Governors of Acadia University's [interactive video on plagiarism](#)

The Purdue Online Writing Lab's (OWL) [Avoiding Plagiarism](#)

Anyone in violation of these policies is subject to sanctions.

[Students are entitled to receive instruction free from interference](#) by other members of the class. An instructor may withdraw a student from the course when the student's behavior disrupts the educational process per [Instructor Withdrawal of a Student for Disruptive Classroom Behavior](#). Appropriate online behavior (also known as *netiquette*) is defined by the instructor and includes keeping course discussion posts focused on the assigned topics. Students must maintain a cordial atmosphere and use tact in expressing differences of opinion. Inappropriate discussion board posts may be deleted by the instructor.

The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities accepts [incident reports](#) from students, faculty, staff, or other persons who believe that a student or a student organization may have violated the Student Code of Conduct.

Prohibition of Commercial Note Taking Services

In accordance with [ACD 30406 Commercial Note Taking Services](#), written permission must be secured from the official instructor of the class in order to sell the instructor's oral communication in the form of notes. Notes must have the notetaker's name as well as the instructor's name, the course number, and the date.

Course Evaluation

Students are expected to complete the course evaluation. The feedback provides valuable information to the instructor and the college and is used to improve student learning. Students are notified when the online evaluation form is available.

Syllabus Disclaimer

The syllabus is a statement of intent and serves as an implicit agreement between the instructor and the student. Every effort will be made to avoid changing the course schedule but the possibility exists that unforeseen events will make syllabus changes necessary. Please remember to check your ASU email and the course site often.

Content Advisory

Certain lessons in this course discuss sex, gender issues, and views of gestation, both from Western and from Chinese writings. If you are uncomfortable with such discussion, please notify the instructor.

Accessibility Statement

In compliance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, and the Americans with Disabilities Act as amended (ADAAA) of 2008, professional disability specialists and support staff at the Disability Resource Center (DRC) facilitate a comprehensive range of academic support services and accommodations for qualified students with disabilities.

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Qualified students with disabilities may be eligible to receive academic support services and accommodations. Eligibility is based on qualifying disability documentation and assessment of individual need. Students who believe they have a current and essential need for disability accommodations are responsible for requesting accommodations and providing qualifying documentation to the DRC. Every effort is made to provide reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities.

Qualified students who wish to request an accommodation for a disability should contact the DRC by going to <https://eoss.asu.edu/drc>, calling (480) 9651234 or emailing DRC@asu.edu. To speak with a specific office, please use the following information:

Tempe Campus	Polytechnic Campus
4809651234	4807271165
(Voice)	(Voice)

West Campus
University Center Building (UCB), Room 130
6025438145
(Voice)

Downtown Phoenix Campus and ASU Online
University Center Building, Suite 160
6024964321
(Voice)

Computer Requirements

This course requires Internet access and the following:

A web browser (Chrome, Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, or Safari)
Adobe Acrobat Reader (free)
Adobe Flash Player (free)
Microphone (optional) and speaker

Technical Support

This course uses LearningStudio to deliver content. It can be accessed through MyASU at <http://my.asu.edu> or the LearningStudio home page at <http://ecollege.asu.edu>.

To monitor the status of campus networks and services, visit the System Health Portal at <http://syshealth.asu.edu/>.

To contact the help desk you have two options:
chat/email: 247support.cust.com
call toll free at 18552785080, option 5, then 3

Student Success

This is an online course. To be successful:

- A) check our Blackboard site daily
- B) read announcements
- Γ) read and respond to course email messages as needed
- Δ) complete assignments by the due dates specified
- E) create a study and/or assignment schedule to stay on track

Supplemental Materials:

From Wang Bi's Commentary to the LZ

*translated by Stephen R. Bokenkamp
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I.

The Dao that can be spoken of is not the constant Dao. The name that can be named is not the constant Name.

“The Dao that can be spoken” and “the name that can be named” point to a thing and create the form of the thing named. Neither of these is constant. Thus the Dao can neither be spoken of nor named.

Nameless, it is the origin of the ten-thousand beings. Named, it is the mother of the ten-thousand beings.

All existence originated in nothingness. Thus the Dao's origination of the ten thousand beings lay in a time of shapelessness and namelessness. When beings came to have shape and name, the Dao then caused them to grow, nurtured them, established them, and worried over them like their mother. This passage tells how the Dao began to form the ten-thousand beings when it was itself shapeless and nameless. It is that which originates and that which completes and yet no one knows how it is accomplished. This is the mystery wrapping the mystery.

Thus, if one is continually without desire, one might observe their wondrousness. If one is continually desirous, one might observe their outlines.

“Wondrous” means the utmost in subtlety. The ten-thousand beings originate in subtlety and end in completion; they originate in nothingness and later end in life. So you should constantly lack desire and maintain emptiness so that you can observe the wondrousness of how it originates beings.

These two emerge from the same source but have different names. Together, we call them “the Mysterious.” They are the mystery wrapped in mystery; the door to the myriad wonders.

The “two” are the origin and the mother. “Emerge from the same source” means that they both emerge from the mystery. Because two names are applied, they cannot be the same. At the beginning, it is called the “origin;” at the end, it is called “the mother.” The “mystery” is the unseen. It is silent nothingness. The origin is where the mother emerges. At that point it cannot be perceived or named and so cannot be spoken. Their joint name is the “Mystery.” This name is chosen because they cannot be perceived and, with this name, cannot be definitely fixed. But the single word “mystery” misses it by a great distance. Thus we call it the “mystery wrapped in mystery.” And since all wondrous beings come from this same source, we call it the “door to the myriad wonders.”

Han Fei Tzu 6 “Explaining Laozi”

Translated by Stephen R. Bokenkamp
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³⁸Virtue (*de*) is internal; attainment (*de*) is external. “Superior virtue is not virtuous” means that one’s [internal] spirits do not overflow to the outside. When one’s spirits do overflow, one’s body is not whole. When one’s body is whole it is called “attainment.” What is “attained” is (wholeness of) body.

Now, virtue is assembled through lack of purposive action, formed from lack of desire, brought to rest by lack of thought, and made secure by lack of use. If one acts purposefully and has desires, virtue has nowhere to dwell. When virtue has nowhere to dwell there is lack of wholeness. If one uses it and gives thought to it, it will not be made secure. What is not secure lacks efficacy. Lack of efficacy brings forth self-assertive virtue. Such virtue lacks virtue; not acting virtuously, one possesses virtue. Thus the *Laozi* (hereafter: LZ) says “superior virtue is not virtuous, thereby they possess virtue.”

LZ values lack of purposive action and lack of thought for the sake of emptiness. This means that one’s intentions are not controlled. When one lacks strategies, one becomes empty through lack of purposive action and thought. Now, if one is intent on achieving emptiness through lack of purposive action and thought, one will never forget emptiness. This is to be controlled by emptiness. If emptiness means that one’s intentions are not controlled, to be controlled by emptiness is no emptiness. The lack of purposive action of one (truly) empty thus does not take lack of purposive action as a constant goal. Since this is not his constant goal, he is (truly) empty. Empty, his virtue is full. The fullness of virtue is the highest virtue. Thus, the LZ says “Those of highest virtue take no purposive action and thus there is nothing that they do not accomplish.”

“Benevolence” means that one cherishes people gladly from the center of one’s heart. It is to rejoice at the good fortune of others and to detest their misfortune. It is born in the heart without volition and not generated for the sake of recompense. Thus LZ says “When those of superior benevolence act, they have no motive for their actions.” “Dutifulness” is a matter of lord and minister, high and low rank. It exemplifies the distinction between father and son, separates the noble from the base, covers exchanges between acquaintances and friends, and marks the divisions between near and distant, inner and outer. It is appropriate that minister serve lord, that lower cherish the higher, that son serve father, that the base respect the exalted, that acquaintances and friends aid one another, and that intimates be kept within, while those distant in relationship are kept outside. “Dutifulness” (*yi*) means “appropriate” (*yi*). It is appropriate to act in this way. Thus the LZ states: “Those of superior dutifulness, in acting, have a motive for their actions.”

“Rites” are the means by which one gives outward form to sentiments. The patterns of the various rites include the relations of lord and minister, father and son. They are the means by which distinction is made between the respected and the base, the worthy and the unworthy. (For example) when one has a heartfelt sentiment (toward someone) that cannot be expressed, one rushes after that person and bows low to make it clear.

Deqing Explains the Daode jing

Chapter 10

This chapter teaches the method of drawing near to the Dao. One must first reach “forgetfulness of knowledge” and obliterate all traces, and only then can one join tallies with the mysterious wondrousness.

A person’s cloudsouls and whitesouls move about wildly, causing their minds to be full of worries and fantasies. This is why they cannot “maintain unity.” Thus the *Lankāvatāra sūtra* says: “The spirits, the cloudsouls and whitesouls, all depart and join again by turns.” Now maintaining unity means to control the cloudsouls and whitesouls so that they cannot depart. If they are joined, then one can move in constant stillness and nothing will harry you. If they are joined, then one can be still in constant movement, so that one will not sink into black obscurity. If reaches the Dao like this, then stillness is no different than movement. Laozi thus queries his students, asking if they can achieve this.

“Can you control your *qi* to achieve suppleness?” People rely on *qi* to live, but some wildly collect *qi* within and falsely call it their “heart/mind.” *Qi* follows the movement of their mind, thus their mind becomes increasingly active and the *qi* ever stronger. Strong *qi* moves the mind even more. This evil cycle is what we call “oneness of mind that moves the will.” The method of studying the Dao requires that one first control one’s *qi* so that it cannot move wildly and fan the flames of the mind; then control one’s mind so that it cannot drum up one’s *qi*. Once the mind is pacified, the *qi* will reach suppleness. If one’s technique reaches this point, then anger will emerge from lack-of-anger, just like an infant crying out without bawling. Thus Laozi inquires whether or not his students can master this technique.

“Cleanse and purify your mystic gaze.” The “mystic gaze” refers to the aforementioned holding to the One and concentrating the *qi*. If one becomes adept at this, one can reach the regions of mysterious wonder. If one observes these regions of mysterious wonder within the breast and holds onto them without changing, this is, contrary to what one imagines, the “sickness of the ultimate Dao.” One needs to cleanse and purify this as well, so that not a trace is left and one reaches the state of forgetfulness and tracelessness. This is, in fact, the ultimate in the pursuit of the Dao. Laozi thus asks his followers whether or not they are able to accomplish this.

The above three sentences elucidate the method for entering the Dao as well as the substance of what it means to gain the Dao. Laozi means to convey that though the substance of the Dao is pure and one cannot fathom its utility, yet if one follows the traceless in utilizing it, one can achieve its wondrousness. Now he questions its utility for lesser things. An ancillary use of the Dao is to cherish the people and rule the kingdom. The main use of the Dao is to govern the body; its ancillary, secondary use is for the kingdom. Thus the sage possesses the realm but does not give himself to it. He cherishes the people and rules the kingdom through lack of purposive action. Thus Laozi asks whether he is able to act without acting. If he is not able to act without conscious purpose, he certainly will not be traceless, and thus, though seemingly wondrous, he will lack wondrousness.