

# Tao Te Ching

by Lao-tzu

## 1

The Tao that can be trodden is not the enduring and  
unchanging Tao.

The name that can be named is not the enduring and  
unchanging name.

(Conceived of as) having no name, it is the Originator of heaven  
and earth; (conceived of as) having a name, it is the Mother of all  
things.

Always without desire we must be found,  
If its deep mystery we would sound;  
But if desire always within us be,  
Its outer fringe is all that we shall see.

Under these two aspects, it is really the same; but as development  
takes place, it receives the different names. Together we call them  
the Mystery. Where the Mystery is the deepest is the gate of all that  
is subtle and wonderful.

**J. Legge, Translator**  
**(Sacred Books of the East, Vol 39) [1891]**