

Zhang Zai: Zhengmeng

Selected texts with tentative translations

聚亦吾体，散亦吾体，知死之不亡者，可与言性矣。

When condensated (material force/Qi) is my body, just as it is when dispersed. With the one that understands that death is not extinction one can share words on (human) nature.

Ximing 西铭

乾称父，坤称母。予兹藐焉，乃混然中处。故天地之塞，吾其体。天地之帅，吾其性。

Heaven is my father and earth is my mother, and even such a small creature as I live intermingled in their midst. Therefore that which fills the universe I regard as my body and that which directs the universe I consider as my nature.

民吾同胞，物吾与也。大君者，吾父母宗子，其大臣，宗子之家相也。尊高年，所以长其长。慈孤弱，所以幼其幼。圣其合德，贤其秀也。凡天下疲癃残疾，茕独鳏寡，皆吾兄弟之颠连而无告者也。于时保之，子之翼也。乐且不愆，纯乎孝者也。违曰悖德，害仁曰贼。济恶者不才，其践形唯肖者也。知化则善述其事，穷神则善继其志。不愧屋漏为无忝，存心养性为匪懈。。。。富贵福泽，将厚吾之生也。贫贱忧戚，庸玉汝于成也。存吾顺事，没吾宁也。

All people are my brothers and sisters, and all things are my companions. The great noble one/ruler is the eldest son of my father and mother. His great ministers are the stewards of the eldest son. Respect the elders by treating seniority as seniority should be (respected). Take care of the orphans and the weak by treating their youth as youth should be (treated). The sage unites himself with virtue and the worthy is most outstanding. Even those who are tired, infirm, crippled, or sick, those who have no brothers or children, wives or husbands, are all my brothers, all who are in distress and have no one to turn to. When it is time to protect them, the son will take care of it. To rejoice without anxiety is the purest form of filial piety. Disobeying (it) is called violating virtue; harming humaneness is called robbing (from others). Promoting evil is lacking capacity and realizing one's physical appearance (as man) is

then only a resemblance. Knowing the changes means being good at operating your affairs; penetrating spiritual force means being good at setting out your will. Doing nothing shameful in the recesses of your house means bringing no dishonor. Preserving your mind and nourishing your nature means (serving) with untiring effort. ... Wealth, honor, blessings, and benefits are meant for the enrichment of my life, while poverty, humble station, and sorrow are meant to help me to fulfillment. Existing I will follow affairs, perishing I will be tranquil.

Zhengmeng 正蒙

Chap. 1

1.1 太和所谓道，中涵浮沈、升降、动静、相感之性，是生絪縕、相荡、胜负、屈伸之始。其来也几微易简，其究也广大坚固。起知于易者乾乎！效法于简者坤乎！散殊而可象为气，清通而不可象为神。不如野马、絪縕，不足谓之太和。语道者知此，谓之知道；学易者见此，谓之见易。不如此，虽周公才美，其智不足称也已。

Great Harmony is called the Way. It embraces the nature of opposing movements of floating and sinking, rising and falling, movement and calmness. It brings to life the beginning of intermingling and mutual fusion, of overcoming and being overcome, of contraction and extension. At its arrival it is incipient, minute, changing and simple; in the long run it is wide, big, firm and solid. As pure Yang (Qian) it is the rising knowledge of change, as pure Yin (Kun) it models after simplicity. Dispersing into differentiation and being able to form it is material force, clear and penetrating while not being able to form it is spiritual force. If it were not like a wild horse intermingling it would not suffice to be called the Great Harmony. When those talking about the Way know this you may call them to be at knowledge of the Way. When those that study the changes see this they can be called seeing change. Otherwise, even possessing the talents of the Duke of Zhou their wisdom would not live up to its name.

1.2 太虚无形，气之本体，其聚其散，变化之客形尔；至静无感，性之渊源，有识有知，物交之客感尔。客感客形与无感无形，惟尽性者一之。

Great vacuity has no form and is the original substance of Qi. Its condensation and dispersion are temporary forms of transforming change. Absolute calmness without any motion is the deep origin of (human) nature. Having consciousness and knowledge is due the temporary

motions of the exchange of things. Only those that exhaust their nature can unify temporary motions and temporary forms with non-motion and non-form.

1.3 天地之气，虽聚散、攻取百涂，然其为理也顺而不妄。气之为物，散入无形，适得吾体；聚为有象，不失吾常。太虚不能无气，气不能不聚而为万物，万物不能不散而为太虚。循是出入，是皆不得已而然也。然则圣人尽道其间，兼体而不异者，存神其至矣。彼语寂灭者往而不反，徇生执有者物而不化，二者虽有间矣，以言乎失道则均焉。

The Qi of heaven and earth creates a smooth structure and does not err, even though it condensates and disperses, moves forth and back on hundreds of paths. When Qi becomes things and disperses into formlessness it's letting loose and achieving is my substance/body. Condensing it has forms without losing my continuity. Great vacuity cannot be without Qi, Qi cannot but condense to make for the myriad things, and the myriad things cannot but disperse and make for great vacuity. This cycle of exiting and entering is in all cases necessarily so. When the sage in the midst of this exerts the Way and impartially embodies (the process) without missing out he preserves spiritual force to its utmost. Those (Buddhists) that speak about silent annihilation, of going away without returning and those (Daoists) that cling to life and hold onto being, not letting things change, are - even though both may differ- the same in missing out on the Way with their words.

1.4 聚亦吾体，散亦吾体，知死之不亡者，可与言性矣。

When condensed, (Qi) is my body, just as it is when dispersed. With the one that understands that death is not extinction one can share words on (human) nature.

1.5 知虚空即气，则有无、隐显、神化、性命通一无二，顾聚散、出入、形不形，能推本所从来，则深于易者也。若谓虚能生气，则虚无穷，气有限，体用殊绝，入老氏「有生于无」自然之论，不识所谓有无混一之常；若谓万象为太虚中所见之物，则物与虚不相资，形自形，性自性，形性、天人不相待而有，陷放浮屠以山河大地为见病

之说。 。 。 。 不悟一阴一阳范围天地、通乎昼夜、三极大中之矩，遂使儒、佛、老、庄混然一涂。 。 。 。

When it is understood that vacuity and void are just Qi, then being and non-being hidden and obvious, spiritual force and change, nature and mandate become one without duality. Turning to condensation and dispersion, exiting and entering, to being formed and not being formed and to the ability of returning to the origin of every coming, means to be deep into change. If you were to say that vacuity was able to produce Qi, then vacuity would be inexhaustible while Qi would be limited. If substance and function were to be cut apart by differentiation you would enter the naturalist theory of the Laoists (saying that) being was born from nothingness. You would then not understand the continuity of the so called undifferentiated unity of being and non-being. If you were to say that the myriad phenomena were (only) things seen in the great vacuity then things and vacuity were not mutually dependent, forms were just forms of themselves while nature was just nature of itself. When (you think that) forms and nature and heaven and man were not mutually depending on each other for being then you would fall into the trap of Buddha that proposes the theory that mountains and rivers as well as the great earth are (simply) sick visions [problematic illusions]. ... If you do not awake to the understanding that interchanging Yin and Yang comprise heaven and earth, run through day and night and form the measure for the three dimension (of heaven, earth and man) then you may mix up Confucianism, Buddhism, Laoism and Zhuangzi. ...

1.9 气之聚散于太虚，犹冰凝释于水，知太虚即气，则无无。故圣人语性与天道之极，尽于参伍之神变易而已。诸子浅妄，有有无之分，非穷理之学也。

Condensation and dispersion of Qi has the same relation to great vacuity as freezing and melting ice to water. If you know that great vacuity is simply Qi, then there is no nothingness. Therefore the sage man when talking about the ultimate aspects of nature and the Way of heaven resorts to the spiritual force and to the transformative change of Yin and Yang and the Five Phases only. Those mistaken thinkers stick (to the idea) of a differentiation between being and non-being have no concept of exerting the principal structures.

1.12 由太虚，有天之名；由气化，有道之名；合虚与气，有性之名；合性与知觉，有心之名。

From great vacuity heaven has its denomination and from the change of Qi the Way has its denomination. Where vacuity and Qi unite we have the denomination of nature and where nature and conscious knowledge unite there is the denomination of mind/heart.

1.13 鬼神者，二气之良能也。圣者，至诚得天之谓；神者，太虚妙应之目。凡天地法象，皆神化之糟粕尔。

Ghostly and spiritual forces are the original abilities of the two forces (of Yin and Yang of Qi). Sagacity means achieving heaven with absolute sincerity and spiritual force is the aspect of wonderful reactions of great vacuity. All molds and forms of heaven and earth are in all cases the dregs of change of spiritual force.

1.15 两不立则一不可见，一不可见则两之用息。两体者，虚实也，动静也，聚散也，清浊也，其究一而已。

If duality were not established, unity could not be perceived. If unity could not be perceived then duality's function would cease. This double structure of vacuity and solidity, of movement and rest, of condensation and dispersion, of clarity and turbidity in the end is simply unity.

1.22 万物形色，神之糟粕，性与天道云者，易而已矣。心所以万殊者，感外物为不一也，天大无外，其为感者罔繆二端而已（焉）。物之所以相感者，利用出入，莫知其乡，一万物之妙者与！

The myriad forms and appearances are the dregs of spiritual force. Speaking of nature and the Way of heaven is simply a form of change. The myriad distinctions that the mind makes, are a reaction to the external things not being a unity. (Yet) heaven is so great that it has no outside; as far as the reactions within go, they simply are the intermingling of the two original forces (of Qi, Yin and Yang). In the mutual reaction towards each other of the things,

their use and function their moving out and in there is no way to know their direction as they are united by the mysteriousness of the myriad things.

Chap. 2

2.1. (2.2) 一物两体，气也；一故神，两在故不测。两故化，推行于一。

Qi is one thing with a double structure: Unity makes for spiritual force, the presence of duplicity results in immeasurability. Duplicity is the reason for change, pushing forward to unity.

2.4 (2.6.) 地，物也；天，神也。物无逾神之理，顾有地斯有天，若其配然尔。

Earth is a thing, heaven is spiritual force. Things do not have a principle that exceeds the spiritual force. If you look at earth you will also have heaven, just as with a pair.

Chap. 3

3.2 天体物不遗，犹仁体事无不在也。「礼仪三百，威仪三千」，无一物而非仁也。「昊天曰明，及尔出王，昊天曰旦，及尔游衍」，无一物之不体也。

Heaven incorporates things without anything left over, just like humaneness incorporates affairs without missing a presence. (When the *Zhongyong* says) 'rituality and social order are three hundred-fold, respect and social forms are three thousand-fold' (this means) that there is not one thing that is not humane. (When the *Shijing* says) 'the honourable heaven is called bright as you come and go; the honorable heaven is called dim as you flow and drift' (this means) that there is not one thing that is not incorporated.

3.4 天不言而四时行，圣人神道设教而天下服。诚于此，动于彼，神之道与!

Heaven is without words and the four seasons go along their path; the sage gives the Dao spiritual force and establishes the proper teaching and the world is taken care of. Honesty in this and movement in that, that is the Way of spiritual force.

3.6 天之不测谓神，神而有常谓天。

What of heaven cannot be measured is called spiritual force. When spiritual force has its constancy it is called heaven.

3.16 (3.15) 谷之神也有限，故不能通天下之声；圣人之神惟天，故能周万物而知。

The spiritual force of the valley has its limits and therefore it cannot thoroughly pass on the sounds of the world. The spiritual force of the sage is just heaven and therefore it/he can encompass the myriad things and know.

3.18 (3.17) 形而上者，得意斯得名，得名斯得象；不得名，非得象者也。故语道至于不能象，则名言亡矣。

When that which is above form gains intention it will also gain name. Having gained name it will also gain representation. Without gaining name there is no such thing as gaining representation. If my Dao arrives at that which cannot be represented then name and words perish.

Chap. 4

4.1 神，天德，化，天道。德，其体，道，其用，一于气而已。

Spiritual force is heavenly virtue (de); change is heavenly Way (dao). Virtue is its substance while the Way is its function. Within Qi they are just one.

4.4 (4.5) 鬼神，往来、屈伸之义，故天曰神，地曰示，人曰鬼。

(When we speak of) ghostly and spiritual force it means going out and coming back, contraction and extension. Therefore heaven is called spirit(ual force), earth is called sign and humans are called ghosts.

4.6 (4.7) 气有阴阳，推行有渐为化，合一不测为神。其在人也，〈智〉羲利〈用〉，则神化之事备矣。德盛者穷神则〈智〉不足道，知化则义不足云。天之化也运诸气，人之化也顺夫时；非气非时，则化之名何有？化之实何施？

Qi has Yang and Yin, pushing and going it has steadiness that makes for change, uniting to oneness without calculation it makes for spiritual force. When this takes place with humans, wisdom is bestowed and profit functions. Then the affair/the effect of the change of spiritual force is complete. Searching for spiritual force with the flourishing of virtue (de) (only) does not (allow) wisdom to fully express (dao) it and when knowledge changes then words are not enough to (grasp) its meaning. Heaven's change is the rotation of Qi, men's change is following time (seasons). Without Qi and time (seasons), how could even the name of change exist, how could the reality of change spread out?

4.7 (4.8) 「变则化」，由粗入精也；「化而裁之谓之变」，以著显微也。谷神不死，故能微显而不揜。

When (the Zhongyong says that) 'transformation means change', then (that means) coming from the rough and entering the refined; when (it says) that change being framed means alteration, (that means) illustrating the minute by the means of the obvious. (Laozi's saying of) the spiritual force of a valley not dying, (means) that even though it may be minute it becomes obvious without being covered up.

4.8 (4.9) 鬼神常不死，故诚不可揜；人有是心在隐微，必乘间而见，故君子虽处幽独，防亦不懈。

Ghostly and spiritual forces endure without dying; therefore honesty cannot be covered up. If a man has such a heart/mind that is hidden in the minute it must come out in between and become visible; therefore even if the noble man may live in obscurity and solitarily he still won't be loose.

4.9 (4.10) 神化者，天之良能，非人能；故大而位天德，然后能穷神知化。

The change of spiritual force is the excellent ability of heaven; it is not an ability of man. Therefore (once) heaven's virtue has become great and established, he then is able to search for spiritual force and know change.

4.14 (4.15) 无我而后大，大成性而后圣，圣位天德不可致知谓神。故神也者，圣而不可知。

Without self/I there is greatness; greatness completes nature and then there are sagacity; sagacity takes heavenly virtue as position and cannot be fully known and thus is called spiritual force. Therefore spiritual force is that in sagacity that cannot be known.

4.15 (4.16) 见几则义明，动而不括则用利，屈伸顺理则身安而德滋。穷神知化，与天为一，岂有我能勉哉？乃德盛而自致尔。

To see the minute then the meaning is clear, to move without restraint then the function is profitable. When contraction and extension follow principle then the person is at peace and the virtue flourishes. To explore spiritual force and make the heaven be one, could that be achieved as you have a self/I? Virtue simply flourishes and arrives of itself.

4.20 惟神伪能变化，以其一天下之动也。人能知变化之道，其必知神之为也。

Only the spiritual force is able to conceive change as it unites/makes one the movement of all under heaven. If man wants to be able to know the Way of the changes he must know the doings of spiritual force.

4.27 无我然后得正己之尽，存神然后妙应物之感。

Only without self/I can the extension of proper self be achieved, only by preserving spiritual force can the sentiment for reacting to things be smooth.

Chap. 5

5.1 动物本诸天，以呼吸为聚散之渐；植物本诸地，以阴阳升降伪聚散之渐。物之初生，气日至而滋息；物生既盈，气日反而游散。至之谓神，以其伸也；反之为鬼，以其归也。

Animals originate with heaven as their breathing is the continuity of condensation and dispersion (of Qi). Plants originate with earth as the rising and falling of Yin and Yang is the continuity of condensation and dispersion (of Qi). At the beginning of the coming to life of things, Qi continuously arrives and nourishes breath. Once things are born and reach their completeness then Qi continuously returns and drifts into dispersion. Arriving is called the spiritual force due to the extension of (Qi) and returning is called ghostly force due to the returning of (Qi).

5.2 气于人，生而不离、死而游散者谓魂；聚成形质，虽死而不散者谓魄。

Qi in human beings as that which comes with life and does not leave and as that which drifts into dispersion with death is called hun-soul. When it condensates to make for a physical form and does not disperse even upon death it is called the po-soul.

5.3 海水凝则冰，浮则沤，然冰之才，沤之性，其存其亡，海不得而与焉。推是足以究死生之说。

When the water of the seas freezes it becomes ice, when it drifts to the top it becomes foam. Yet the potentiality of ice and the nature of foam, their existence and extermination make no difference for the sea. This analogy suffices to fully explore the theories of death and life.

Chap. 6

6.1 诚明所知乃天德良知，非闻见小知而已。

What truthful brightness knows is the excellent knowledge of heavenly virtue (de) and is not the petty knowledge of hearing and seeing.

6.7 性者万物之一源，非有我之得私也。惟大人伪能尽其道，是故立必俱立，知必周知，爱必兼爱，成不独成。披自蔽塞而不知顺吾理者，则亦末如之何矣。

Nature is the unitarian source of the myriad things and is not something that a self/I could gain as selfishness. Only great people are able to exhaust their Way; therefore something is set up it must be fully set up; if one knows one must know the whole sphere; if one loves one must universally love and if one completes one must not just complete himself. If others overshadow and block themselves not knowing how to follow our principle then there is nothing that could be done about it.

6.8 (6.9/6.10) 尽性然后知生无所得则死无所丧。未尝无之谓体，体之谓性。

(When one) exerts nature then he may know that life has no attainment and death has no loss. What has never yet not existed is called substance and substance is called nature.

6.9 (6.11) 天所性者通极于道，气之昏明不足以蔽之；天所命者通极于性，遇之吉凶不足以戕之；不免乎蔽之戕之者，未之学也。性通乎气之外，命行乎气之内，气无内外，假有形而言尔。故思知人不可不知天，尽其性然后能至于命。

The nature (provided) by heaven runs all the way through to the Dao and the darkness and light of Qi does not suffice to overshadow it. That which is mandated by heaven runs all the way through to nature and encountering fortune or misfortune does not destroy it. Someone that does not escape overshadowing and destruction has not yet learned about it. Nature runs through to the outside of Qi and mandate runs to the inside of Qi. Yet Qi has no inside and outside if we assume and speak of it as having form. If you therefore think to understand/know humans you cannot but understand/know heaven, only if you exhaust its nature will you be able to arrive at its mandate.

6.10 (6.12, 13) 知性知天，则阴阳、鬼神皆吾分内尔。天性在人，正犹水性之在冰，凝释虽异，伪物一也；受光有小大、昏明，其照纳不二也。

If you know nature and know heaven then Yin and Yang, ghostly and spiritual forces will all share to my inside. Heavenly nature is within man just like the nature of water is in ice: even

though (the states of) frozen or dissolved differ, they really are only one thing. Your given light might differ in size and brightness, but its taking in of reflection is never (split into) duality.

6.11 (6.14) 天良能本吾良能，顾为有所丧尔。

The excellent ability/goodness of heaven is originally my own excellent ability/goodness; yet it is to be considered that it may be lost by acting out the self/I.

6.13 (6.16) 性其总，合两也；命其受，有则也；不极总之要，则不至受之分，尽性穷理而不可变，乃吾则也。天所自不能已者谓命，〈物所〉不能无感者谓性。虽然，圣人犹不以所可忧而同其无忧者，有相之道存乎我也。

(Making) nature one's sum (means) uniting duality; (making) mandate what one received (means) to have rules. If you do not arrive at the essence of the sum then you will not reach your given lot. To exhaust nature and explore principle not letting it transform that is our rule. That which heaven cannot finish itself is called mandate; to that which things cannot but respond is called nature. Yet, that the sage does not equate that which he can worry about with that which he won't worry about means that the Way of having an opposite exists within myself.

6.16 (6.19) 尽其性能尽人物之性，至于命者亦能至人物之命，莫不性诸道，命诸天。我体物未尝遗，物体我知其不遗也。至于命，然后能成已成物，不失其道。

Exhausting one's nature gives the ability to exhaust the nature of other humans and things; those that arrive at the mandate will also be able to arrive at other people's and things' mandate and there will be nothing on Way that is not nature and (nothing) with heaven that (will not) be mandate. I incorporate things and nothing is left out, things incorporate me and nothing is left out. Arriving at mandate one is able to complete oneself and the things so that nothing misses out its Way.

6.18, 19 (6.21, 22) 性于人无不善，系其善反不善反而已，过天地之化，不善反者也；命于人无不正，系其顺与不顺而已，行险以侥幸，不顺命者也。形而后有气质之性，善反之则天地之性存焉。故气质之性，君子有弗性者焉。

Nature in respect to humans has nothing that is not good(ness), it just depends on his being good in turning back or not being good in turning back. If someone exceeds the changes of heaven and earth he is someone that is not good in turning back. Mandate in respect to humans has nothing that is not right; it all depends on following or not following it. If someone walks in dangerous places pushing his luck then he does not follow the mandate. Within the forms there is the nature of the materiality of Qi; being good at turning back means preserving therein the nature of heaven and earth. Therefore, there is something with the nature of the materiality of Qi that the perfected man should not take as nature.

6.21 (6.24) 德不胜气，性命于气；德胜其气，性命于德。穷理尽性，则性天德，命天理，气之不可变者，独死生修夭而已。故论死生则曰「有命」，以言其气也；语富贵则曰「在天」，以言其理也。。。。

When virtue does not win over Qi then mandated nature lies in Qi. When virtue wins over Qi then mandate nature lies in virtue. If one exerts structures and nature then he makes nature heavenly virtue and mandates heavenly structure. What cannot be transformed by Qi is just (the cycle of) death and life of maturing and dying. When the Lunyu talks about death and life it says 'they have mandate' in order to talk about their Qi. (When Confucius in the Zhongyong says) that wealth and honor 'lie in heaven' that is in order to talk about their structure. ...

Chap. 7

7.1 大其心则能体天下之物，物有未体，则心为有外。世人心，止于闻见之狭。圣人尽性，不以见闻梏其心，其视天下无一物非我，孟子谓尽心则知性知天以此。天大无外，故有外之心不足以合天心。见闻之知，乃物交而知，非德性所知；德性所知，不萌于见闻。

Making your mind great means to be able to incorporate the things of the whole world; if things are not incorporated yet, then the mind has something that is outside. The mind of the worldly people stops within the narrowness of hearing and seeing. The wise man (on the other hand) exhausts his nature without subjugating his mind to seeing and hearing. When he looks at the world there is not one single thing that is not self/I. When *Mengzi* speaks of 'exhausting mind and then knowing nature and knowing heaven' that is what it is about. Heaven is so great that it has no without and therefore a mind that has a without does not suffice to unite with heaven's mind. The knowledge (resulting from) seeing and hearing is a knowledge (resulting from) the exchange with things and it is not the knowledge of the virtuous nature. The knowledge of virtuous nature does not crop up in seeing and hearing.

7.3 人谓己有知，由耳目有受也；人之有受，由内外之合也。知合内外于耳目之外，则共知也过人远矣。

When a person says he himself has knowledge this comes through the reception of ears and eyes. Having a human reception comes from the unity of inside and outside. To know that the unity of inside and outside is beyond/outside (the capacity of) ears and eyes then this is common knowledge that is well beyond humans.

7.5 耳目虽为性累，然合内外之德，知其为后之之要也。

Even though ears and eyes are not related to nature they unite the virtue of the inside and the outside and are essential to get the process of knowledge on its way.

7.6 成吾身者，天之神也。不知以性成身而自谓因身发智，贪天功为己力，吾不知其知也。

That which completes my person is the spiritual force of heaven. If someone does not know that person(ality) is completed by nature and states that wisdom comes from person(ality) itself then he usurps heavens capacity as his own power. I know nothing of such a knowledge.

7.7 体物体身，道之本也，身而体道，其为人也大矣。道能物身故大，不能物身而累于身，则藐乎其卑矣。

To incorporate things and to incorporate persons that is the root of the Way. If a person then incorporates the Way, he is great in being a human. If the Way is able to (become) a thing or person then that is greatness. If one is not able to do so and remain restricted to a person then it is little in its vileness.

7.9 成心忘然后可与进于道。

Having completed the mind in a forgetting way then it is possible to enter the Way.

7.10 化则无成心矣。成心者，意之谓与！

In change there is no completion of the mind. The completed mind is an expression of the intention!

7.11 (7.11, 12) 无成心者，时中而已矣。心存无尽性之理，故圣不可知谓神。

The one that has no completed mind is simply (stuck) in the middle of time. The mind preserves the not (yet) exhausted principle of nature. Therefore the sage calls that which cannot be known the spiritual force.

7.12 (7.13) 以我视物则我大，以道体物我则道大。故君子之大也大于道，大于我者容不免狂而已。

If you look upon things (from the perspective) of the self/I then the self/I will be great; if you incorporate things by the Way then the Way will be great. Therefore the true man's greatness is a greatness in respect to the Way. If one instead is great in respect to the self/I (only) he will not evade madness.

Chap. 17

17.6 有无一，内外合，{庸圣同。} 此人心之所自来也。若圣人则不专以闻见为心，故能不专以闻见为用。无所不感者虚也，感即合也，咸也。以万物本一，故一能合异；以其能合异，故谓之感；若非有异则无合。天性，乾坤、阴阳也，二端故有感，本一故能合。天地生万物，所受虽不同，皆无须臾之不感，所谓性即天道也。

When being and non-being are one and inside and outside unite that is where the mind of humans comes from. If you were a sage you would not exclusively depend on hearing and seeing for your mind and thus would be able not to exclusively function based on hearing and seeing. That by which there is nothing that does not affect, is emptiness; affection is the same as uniting, as composure. If you incorporate the myriad things into oneness then oneness is able to unite difference. The ability of uniting differences is called affection. Without the existence of difference there is no unity. Heavenly nature is qian and kun, Yin and Yang. The respective duality necessarily has affection, but rooting in oneness makes for its ability to unite. Heaven and earth bring forth the myriad things and while their lot differs there is not a single moment in which they don't have affection. (In that sense) what is called nature is the same as the heavenly Way.

17.7 感者性之神，性者感之体。{在天在人，其究一也。} 惟屈伸、动静、终始之能一也，故所以妙万物而谓之神，通万物而谓之道，体万物而谓之性。

Affection is the spiritual force of nature and nature is the structure of affection. Only in so far as contraction and extension, movement and calmness, ending and beginning are able to be one that by which the myriad things are wonderful can be called spiritual force, that which runs through all things can be called the Way, and that which incorporates the myriad things can be called nature.

Zhangzi yulu 张子语录

113 万物生死成坏，均为有知。

Birth and death, completion and destruction of the myriad things are equal in their being knowledgeable.