

THE DAO OF HIKING

Translations by Dr. Christopher Kirby

Laozi's *Daodejing*: Chapter 4

The Path is empty, yet it never runs out of use.

Running deep, it gives rise to everything.

Blunt the edges.

Untie the knots.

Soften the glare.

Join the dust.

In the depths, yet right at the surface.

I know not from whence it comes.

The ancestor of ancestors.

Laozi's *Daodejing*: Chapter 27

The best hiking leaves no trace.

The best speech is not overworked.

The best counting needs no tally.

The best door requires no bolt to stay locked.

The best knot requires no rope to stay tied.

That is why the Sage assists others and abandons none.

Assists everything and abandons nothing.

This is called “sharing enlightenment.”

This is how the good person can be a model to the bad.

And how the bad, like clay, can be shaped by the good.

Not to value one's role-model, not to love one's clay,
may seem wise but belies great confusion.

This is called the deepest secret.

Excerpt from *The Book of Liezi*:

At first, Liezi liked to hike. His master Huzi asked: "Why do you like hiking so much?" Liezi replied: "The joy of hiking is the change in scenery. Others hike for the scenery. I hike for the change. There's hiking... and then there's real hiking! Most can't tell the difference."

Huzi responded: Isn't your hiking the same as theirs? Do you say there's really a difference? Everything we see as permanent is already changing. You delight that things never stay the same, but you're oblivious that you yourself never stay the same. You attend to what is outside while hiking, but do not attend to the internal sights. Hiking outside is to search external objects for something we lack inside, by observing what is inside we find plenty within ourselves. You hike towards something in the external world, but you won't arrive until you look within."

After this Liezi stopped hiking, figuring he didn't understand it. But Huzi exclaimed: "Hike until you arrive! Arrive at your destination without realizing where you were going; find what you need without realizing you were searching; hiking to each and every thing; discovering each and every thing; now that's what I call real hiking; that's what I call discovering. That's why I say: 'How thoroughgoing it is to hike! How thoroughgoing!'"