

PART 1

“ALL THINGS FLOW INTO FORM”

“All Things Flow into Form”

English Translation

All things flow into form; what brings them to completion?
Flowing forms complete the body; what makes them never
die?
Having been completed, having been born, what makes them
cry?
Having budded, having taken root, what do they follow, and
what do they precede?
The respective abodes of yin and yang, what keeps them stable?
The harmony of water and fire, what keeps them from being
at odds? (slips 1–2)

It has been said:
People flow into form; how do they get to be born?
Flowing forms complete the body; how do they lose it and die?
It is that upon being completed, one does not know the reality
of what is left and [what is] right, or the beginnings and ends
as established by Heaven and Earth.
Heaven sends down the five measures, what makes me know
to go up or down?
The five energies arrive in unison, what makes me able to
distinguish them?
Among the five teachings of the people, which one is
common to all?
For lands beyond the nine territories, who decides their
boundaries? (slips 2–4)

When I have grown frail and old, who will serve me?
If ghosts are born from people, for what reason are they
divinely intelligent?
What makes it that, when flesh and bones have disintegrated,
their wisdom is even more manifest?
What place do they go upon bidding farewell? Who knows
their domain?
Ghosts are born from people. What requires me to serve them?
When flesh and bones have disintegrated, their bodies no
longer visible, why do I feed them?
Their coming and going have no regularity, how do I wait for
them by the grave?
How do sacrifices reach them? What do I do to satiate them?
In complying with the Way of Heaven, what do I make my
first priority?
If I want to have harmony among the people, on which
affairs do I place the greatest weight?
In what way is Heaven's brilliance attained? In what way are
ghosts fed, numinous as they are? By what means was the
wisdom of the kings of old so complete? (slips 4–8)

It has been said:

Ascending high, one starts low; traveling far, one begins near.
For a tree of ten armspans, its initial growth is from a shoot.
Feet that are about go a thousand miles must begin with a
single inch.

The sun has an ear, what does it hear?

The moon has an army, what does it attack?

Water flows eastward, what does it ever fill?

When the sun first emerges, why is it big but not hot?

At noon, why is it small so that one puts on cool clothes?

(slips 8–11)

It is asked:

How high is Heaven? How expansive is Earth?

What is Heaven? What is Earth?

What are thunder and lightning?

What is the Thearch?

How does soil get to be level? How does water get to be clear?

How do plants get to grow? How do birds and animals get to sing?

When rain falls, who is spitting and sweating it?

When the wind arrives, who is breathing and spreading it?

(slips 11, 12A, 13B, 14)

It has been said:

Discerning the Way, one sits and does not descend from the sitting mat.

Wearing the dark sacrificial robe and cap, one makes plans and needs not involve himself in actual affairs.

One knows about the four seas before others, having his hearing extend a thousand miles, and having his vision reach a hundred miles.

Thus, while the sage resides in his home, he is able to know before others the state's perils and prospects, the insurgence of thieves and robbers. (slips 14, 16, 26)

It has been said:

If the mind does not prevail over the mind, then great chaos arises;

If the mind is able to prevail over the mind, this is called “arriving in the morning.”

What is meant by “arriving in the morning”? That one reveals oneself for inspection by others.

How is it known that one has revealed himself? That one is at ease with himself for all his life.

Is one capable of speaking few words? Capable of being One? This is called “paring down what is completed.”

It is said:

It is only the ruler that the hundred clans value. It is only the mind that the ruler values. It is only One that the mind values.

If it gets to be released, then upward it fills up Heaven, and downward it coils up in the abyss.

Reflecting while one is seated, one plans what is a thousand miles away.

Getting to action as one arises, one displays it to the four seas. (slips 26, 18, 28, 15)

It has been said:

One knows by understanding the reality of things, becomes divine by discerning knowledge, becomes the same by discerning divineness, becomes reserved by discerning sameness, becomes distressed by discerning what has been reserved, and starts over again after discerning distress.

Thus the old is new, people die and go back to being people, and water returns to Heaven.

As a general rule the hundred things do not die, like the moon, which comes out and goes back in, terminates and starts again, arrives and returns.

Examine this teaching, and one can rise up from a single strand. (slips 15, 24, 25)

It has been said:

One begets two, two begets three, three begets four, and four are crisscrossed.

Thus, when there is One, there is nothing in the world that cannot be had; and without it, there is also not one thing in the world that can be had.

Even without one's eyes, one knows its name. Even without one's ears, one hears its sound.

The plants grow on its account; the birds and animals sing because of it.

At a distance, it can be offered to Heaven, and close at hand, to people.

Thus, examination of the Way is the way to cultivate oneself and govern the state. (slips 21, 13A, 12B, 22)

It has been said:

If one is capable of discerning Oneness, then the hundred things will not be lost.

If one is not capable of discerning Oneness, then the hundred things will all be lost.

If one wishes to discern Oneness, look up and one sees it, look down and one manages it. Do not gauge it from afar, but examine it within oneself.

To obtain Oneness and to make plans with it, it is like unifying the world and seizing hold of it.

To obtain Oneness and to contemplate it, it is like unifying the world and ordering it.

One maintains Oneness in order to examine Heaven and Earth.

For this reason, Oneness is tasteful when it is chewed, pungent when it is smelled, sonorous when it is drummed, visible when one draws near, handy when it is handled, but lost when one tries to grasp it, parched when it is ruined, and destroyed when it is cheated.

Examine this teaching, and one can rise up from a single strand. (slips 22, 23, 17, 19, 20)

It has been said:

This one teaching is never exhausted, this one teaching wins the multitude.

This one teaching brings profit to the myriad people, this one teaching enables one to examine Heaven and Earth.

Grasp it, it is too small to hold; spread it out, it can be contained by nothing.

Enlarged, one knows the world with it; and reduced, one orders the state with it. (slips 20, 29, 30)