

Tao te chingon war,  
violence, and  
leadership  
(novak,#17, #31, #  
57, # 159, pg 156...

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Tao Te Ching on War, Violence and Leadership Taoism is one of the most sophisticated spiritual traditions in China. Taoism is regarded as both a religion as well as philosophy. Taoism emerged in the period termed Hundred Schools of Thought in China. This was between the year 700 and 200 B. C. It is of crucial importance to highlight that Taoism was founded by Lao Tsu (Smith and Phil, 31). Lao Tsu was a contemporary of Confucius who was widely travelled, had several leadership qualities, wisdom as well as rational. The name Tao Tsu means “ old master”. The name can also mean “ old child”. Lao Tzu was born in the year 600 BC and was employed as a state archivist and a librarian (Smith and Phil, 13).

However, due to some personal circumstances that faced him, he decided to quit his job as a librarian. Following this, he moved to far west of China through ox as the main means of transport. However, along his journey, he was barred from proceeding at the border. This followed a condition that he had to write down all his teachings before proceeding with his journey. This led to the emergence of Tao Te Ching, a book that detailed all the teachings of Lao Tsu. This book had several short Chinese characters detailed in of 81 short chapters (Smith and Phil, 71). The teachings documented in Tao Te Ching led to the emergence of the Tao.

It is significant to note that most teachings of Taoism draw a lot from Tao Te Ching. There are several teachings of Taoism. Some of these include Tao, Wu wei, simplicity, gentleness and relativity. Tao’s teachings detail how the nature expresses itself. Wu wei denotes the natural resilience depicting the ideal of effortlessness. Gentleness depicts the virtue of wisdom whereby a

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wise person is expected to shun violence at all costs. This follows that wise people love peace and restraint. This relates well with the expectations that people in positions of leadership should practice. Leaders should always love peace and shun violence at all costs.

A good leader should be in position to relate well with his subjects. This brings the virtue of trust, obedience and confidence to such a leader from his subjects. In this regard, it is expected that people in leadership positions should always look for proper ways of solving disagreements, wars and violence whenever they erupt. Such a leader will get a lot of love from his subjects. It is of critical to note that whatever such a good leader initiates will be welcome by the subjects. In addition, the subjects of such a leader will appreciate all actions taken by such a leader who is gentle, trusts his people, loves peace and is honest to the subjects (Novak, 17). However, if a leader who does not trust his subjects face rejection and the subjects may become untrustworthy to such a leader.

Strong leaders have confidence and integrity. They should be confident that whatever they set their minds upon must succeed. In this manner, a good leader should not have an option of failure and must uphold a high degree of integrity. A leader should be honest, fair and candid. In addition, a leader should make his subjects develop a strong confidence in him. This depicts the Taoism teaching that one must be ready to give up everything in order to be given everything (Novak, 153). A good leader should not base his hope in weapons. The more weapons a leader have the more the worries the leader and his subjects have. A good leader should detest, shun and prevent any

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thing that may lead to wars and violence. This follows that in violence, the enemies are also human beings who should be regarded with compassion. Therefore, in case a leader is involved in war, he should engage his weaponry with utmost restraint (Novak, 157). This relates well with the Taoism teachings regarding weapons, wars and violence.

#### Works Cited

Novak, Philip. *The Worlds Wisdom: Sacred Texts of the Worlds Religions*. San Francisco, Calif.: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994. Internet resource.

Smith, Huston, and Phil Cousineau. *The Way Things Are: Conversations with Huston Smith on the Spiritual Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003. Internet resource.