

Principles of Good Governance*

*In Memory of Two Eminent Torontonians:
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& Mr. Charles Roach, LL.B (1933-2012)*

I—Background Paper

- 1) Educate the electorate.
- 2) *Illiteracy rots Democracy.*
- 3) Equality? Fine schools, fine teachers, in *every* district.
- 4) *The Arsenal of Reason?* The Library.
- 5) Good governors cite *History*; quote *Scripture*; Recite *Poetry*.
- 6) Do not plague the people by shouting opinions.
Do not demonize opponents.
Do not mislead or confuse.
Produce *Facts*.
- 7) *Honesty* is State *Treasure*.
- 8) A governor's speech must be as clear as water.
- 9) *Clarity* is a branch of *Charity*.
- 10) To be decisive,
First be incisive.
- 11) *Judgment* must be as cool as steel, as sharp as steel.
- 12) To convince is better than to conquer.
- 13) *Complaint* is *Revelation*.
- 14) *News* perpetually startles,
Yet its truths are ancient:
To the *Perceptive*.
- 15) Do not pander; also, do not puff up superiors.
- 16) *Flattery* is bribery; it is slush.
- 17) *Excuses* enshrine *Cowardice*.
- 18) Remember: Great *Thought* leaps upward—
To try to discern *Divinity*.

II—On Lawmaking

- 1) Political success? A silver tongue and a heart of gold.
- 2) Elected? Serve the people.
- 3) *Sobriety, Punctiliousness, Generosity, and Intelligence:*
These qualities demand allegiance.
- 4) *Ethics* is a scythe,
Separating the correct from the corrupt.
- 5) Even the bad governor envies good policies.
- 6) The heedless governor is soon headless.
- 7) Good laws set themselves good examples.
- 8) *Extremism* is good only for thermometers.
- 9) *Excess* breeds *Dysfunction*.
- 10) *Egoism* is *Inefficiency*.
- 11) *Envy* fosters conspiracies.
- 12) Err in one law?
Correct it in the next.
- 13) The law suit never fits.
- 14) First, comprehend *Justice*;
Then, apprehend criminals.
- 15) Dust dwells and swells—
When the broom is stayed.
- 16) Police secrecy equals *Sedition*.
- 17) Citizens must be activists;
Lest they be oppressed.
- 18) Plant vineyards, not prisons.
Plant vineyards; cart home the city wine.

III—On Economy

- 1) The *Treasury* is for the citizens' convenience.
- 2) Sacrosanct is *Renminbi*.
- 3) *Capital* flows;
Labour pools.
- 4) Greatness? Public works, public art.
- 5) Spend: Do not let potholes become sinkholes.
- 6) *Beauty* demands *Maintenance*.
- 7) When in *Debt*, build.
When in *Doubt*, build.
Paper *Wealth* is air:
Build.
- 8) *Beauty* rouses *Diversity*.
(Light does not discriminate.)
- 9) Nurture
Infrastructure,
Agriculture,
Manufacture,
Architecture,
Arts & Culture—
To prosper.
- 10) Create, profit; save, invest;
Create, profit; save, invest.
- 11) To secure heaven, help the lowly.
- 12) *Benevolence* staves off *Violence*.
- 13) *Plutocracy* breeds black bread, black flags, and black batons.
- 14) *Arms* dig *Deficits*.
- 15) *Spending* should be like planting,
Never like eating.
- 16) *Taxation* should be transfusion,
Not vampirism.

17) Squander revenues, spark revolts.

18) *Paltry* is that government careless of *Poetry*.

IV—On Beauty

- 1) *Youth* creates; *Age* preserves.
- 2) Revere children; respect elders.
- 4) Sun is balm; rain is ointment.
- 5) *Light* allows no doubt.
- 6) Good *Style* wins popularity;
Good *Deeds* inspire reverence.
- 7) Be a Sphinx to peers and Caesar to adversaries.
- 8) *Beauty* escapes *Chastisement*.
- 9) Good wine precedes good *Poetry*.
Good wine succeeds good *Poetry*.

* By George Elliott Clarke, Poet Laureate of Toronto (2012-15).

Note: The poem riffs on Confucius (via Pound), Machiavelli, Sun Tzu, several T'ang Dynasty and Song Dynasty poets.