



CHAPTER ONE



When asking for help, appeal
to people's self-interest, never
to their mercy or gratitude



Chapter Summary

In seeking assistance, it is crucial to emphasize the benefits to the other party rather than one's past deeds or goodwill. Historical examples, such as Castruccio Castracani's disregard for gratitude and the persuasive tactics used by ambassadors during the Peloponnesian War, illustrate the importance of self-interest over emotional appeals. Engaging with others requires understanding their motivations, focusing on what they stand to gain. While some may prefer altruism, most respond to self-interest. Master the art of appealing to self-interest, and you will unlock a potent tool for influence and power.





The Power of Self-Interest

When seeking help, focus on what benefits the other party rather than invoking past favors. Understand that people's motivations are often rooted in self-interest, not gratitude.



Historical Lessons

Castruccio Castracani's actions highlight the folly of expecting gratitude once in power. His ambition led him to disregard past alliances, prompting betrayal.

The Parable of the Apple-Tree

A peasant almost cuts down an apple-tree, only to discover it hides sweet honey. This symbolizes that self-interest sometimes leads to unexpected rewards.

"Self-interest alone moves some men."

The Diplomacy of Stefano di Poggio

Stefano appealed to mercy and justice in hopes of regaining favor, but this misstep led to his downfall. He should have focused on mutual interests.

"Justice often has dire consequences in ruthless courts."

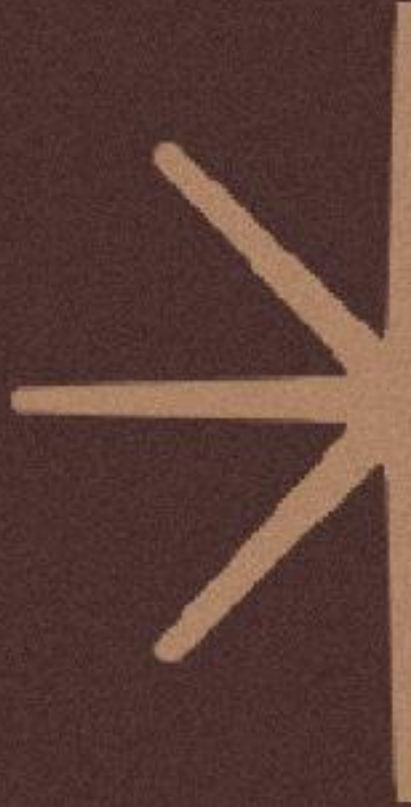
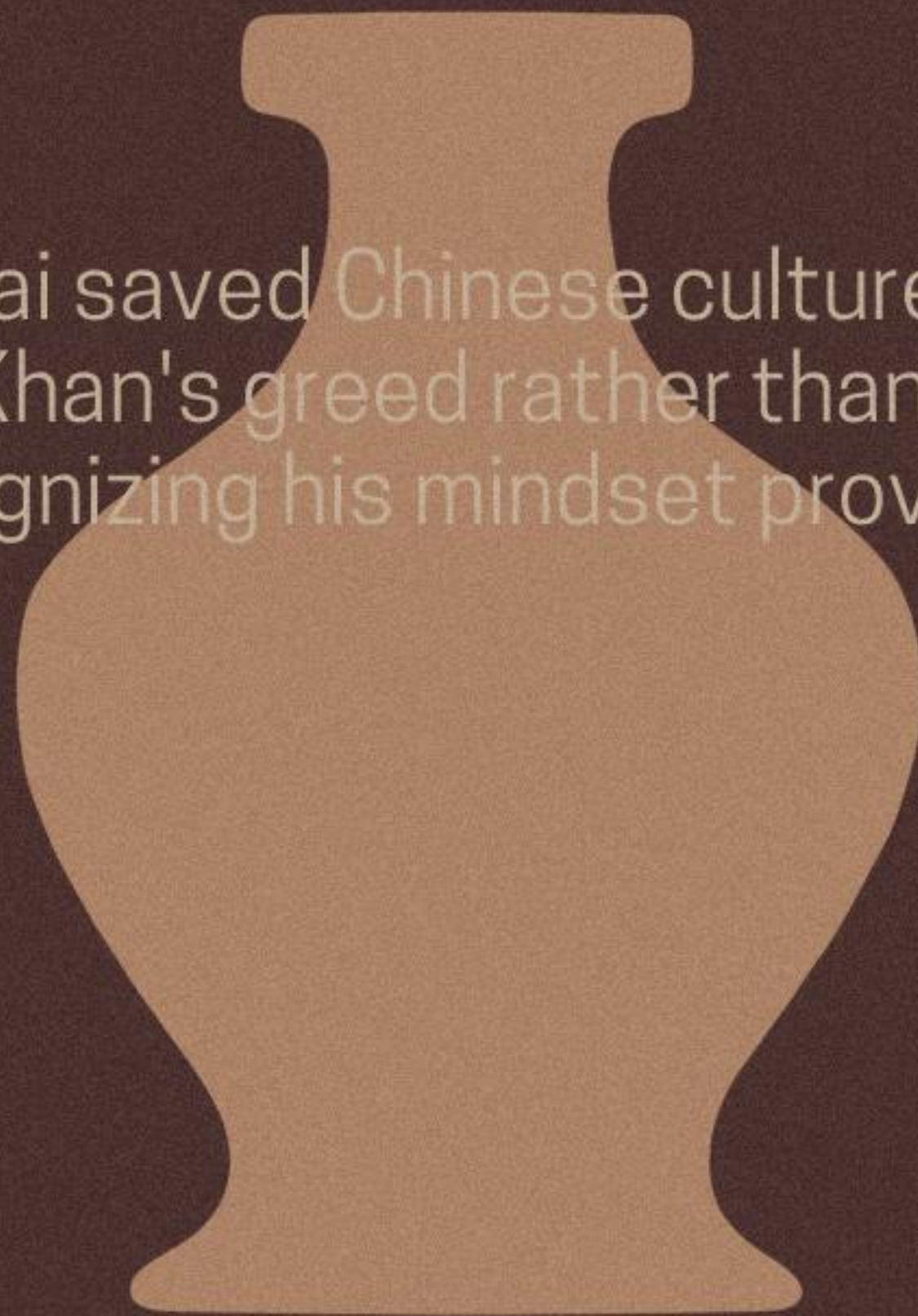
Corcyra and Corinth



During the Peloponnesian War, Corcyra's pragmatic proposal won the allegiance of Athens over Corinth's emotional appeals. Pragmatism often trumps sentiment.

Genghis Khan and Yelu Ch'u-Ts'ai

Yelu Ch'u-Ts'ai saved Chinese culture by appealing to Genghis Khan's greed rather than his sense of mercy. Recognizing his mindset proved essential.



Be Direct in Your Appeals

When asking for help, make it clear how your proposal aligns with their interests. The more explicit the benefit, the easier the persuasion.

Navigating Ego and Altruism

Some individuals prefer to feel noble about helping. If self-interest seems too blatant, frame your request in a way that allows them to feel charitable.



Master the Art of Asking



Asking for help is a delicate art. Attune yourself to the self-interest of others, and propel yourself toward success and influence.



Recap

- "A plea for help must yield to what they stand to gain."
- "Gratitude is a burden to be discarded."
- "Appeal to the future when dealing with the powerful."
- "Know their psychology, and you hold the key."
- "Self-interest is the lever that moves people."



Thank You

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