



## 7. *The Army*

For the leader of the army to be right, a mature person is good; then there is no error.

### EXPLANATION

The army is a group. This has the meaning of one person leading a group. The qualities of the hexagram are *earth* ☷ above, submissive, and *water* ☵ below, dangerous: Following obediently in danger, it is therefore called *the army*. This hexagram represents using yang to drive back yin; it follows on the previous hexagram *waiting*. *Waiting* is advancing yang in accord with the time, and advancing yang is the way to drive yin back.

The method of repelling yin is to get rid of wrong by means of right, to destroy falsehood by truth, like righteousness in the leader of an army. The "leader of the army" is the way of punishment and execution; it requires both firmness and flexibility, both humanity and justice, command of authority and ability to change, in order to be effective. Otherwise, if one can be firm but not flexible, or if one is only humane and does not know how to apply justice, or if one is only dutiful and does not know how to act humanely, none of this is right, and without correctness good fortune cannot be attained—instead one will provoke censure.

Only mature and developed people understand good and bad, distinguish wrong from right, know what bodes well and what bodes ill, perceive when to hurry and when to relax, are not confined to either firmness or flexibility, apply both humanity and justice together, are able to obey in danger and by obedience neutralize danger, use the temporal to restore the primordial, use the primordial to transmute the temporal, not only do not let yin trap yang, but even get all yin to follow yang—this is the path of good fortune without error.

If people are immature, their perception of truth is not clear. They do not distinguish wrong from right, and so enter aberrated detours. They set out impulsively and not only are unable to make yin retreat, they even accentuate yin. They are sure to bring on error; how can they effect good results and achieve the Tao?

When people have not yet lost the primordial, this is pure natural reality. It is like when the nation is at peace—even if there are intelligent knights and good generals, there is no need for them. Then when people get mixed up in acquired conditioning, their senses trouble them and their emotions run wild. It is like when there is trouble in the land, with rebels causing disturbance; if there is no way of rooting them out by punishment and execution, it is impossible to restore peace in perilous times.

Therefore the method of striving in spiritual alchemy is to burn away all the pollution of acquired conditioning, and not let the slightest flaw remain in the heart, so that one may eventually reexperience original completeness. This is why the path of direction is valued.

- **First yin:** The army is to go forth in an orderly manner: Otherwise, even good turns out bad.

## EXPLANATION

In the beginning of direction, it is necessary to know the stages of the firing process, the rules of advance and withdrawal, to progress according to the proper order and act in accord with the appropriate method; if one is able to be careful in the beginning, one will naturally be victorious in the end. This is like an army going forth in an orderly manner. If one rushes to act without understanding the firing process, that is like an unruly army, which is disastrous regardless of whether its intentions are good or bad. In causing yin to retreat, it is important to understand the process.

- **2 yang:** At the center of the army, good fortune, no error; the king gives orders thrice.

## EXPLANATION

With flexibility in the midst of firmness, in command of both advance and withdrawal, changing effectively according to the time, one is not only not harmed by negative energy, but is also able to transmute all negativities and restore them to their proper place. This is like gaining good fortune at the center of the army, and being able to be free from error. This good fortune in the middle of the army relates to the effort of adjustment of the external furnace, and also requires the mind, as leader, to be sincere and single-minded, without fragmentation; only when inside and outside assist each other is it possible to be completely fortunate, without error. This is also like a king giving orders thrice; if the king trusts the ministers and the ministers respond to the king, all can accomplish their tasks. So causing yin to retreat requires mutual assistance of inside and outside.

- **3 yin:** The army has casualties; bad luck.

## EXPLANATION

If one acts ignorantly on one's own without knowing the method of advance and withdrawal of the firing process, courting danger on the chance of striking it lucky, though one seeks long life one instead hastens death. This is the calamity of casualties. This represents the adventurers who do not know how to make yin withdraw.

- **4 yin:** If the army retreats and camps, there is no error.

## EXPLANATION

Being flexible and yielding, knowing one does not have the science of building life, one does not dare to pretend or act arbitrarily, but keeps to one's place. This is like an army retreating and camping; though one cannot effect good, one can yet avoid error in this way. This represents those who cannot repel negativity and yet are able to keep to what is proper.



- **5 yin:** There are animals in the fields—it is beneficial to catch them; there will be no blame. A mature person is to lead the army; if it is an immature person, there will be casualties, for even if he is righteous the outlook is bad.

## EXPLANATION

Flexible receptivity in balance, one opens the mind and manages oneself, responding appropriately to whatever comes, causing external influences to dissolve of themselves. This is like when there are animals in the fields it is beneficial to catch them. However, reason convinces superior people, while law restrains petty people: It is necessary to have both firmness and flexibility to manage affairs successfully. If one is only flexible, without firmness, that can cause failure. A “mature person leading the army” means flexibility balanced by firmness can accomplish affairs; “if it is an immature person, there will be casualties” means being only flexible without firmness can ruin affairs. This means to cause yin to retreat requires firmness and flexibility to balance and equalize each other.

- **Top yin:** The great leader has orders, to establish states and families; do not employ petty people.

## EXPLANATION

At the end of direction of the army, acquired energy has all been sublimated; the basis stable, the country peaceful, the mental ruler at peace, there is no more need for punishment and execution. Then when external ills have been removed and the master sits peacefully in the center, it is possible to discern subtleties, keeping even a single thought of good and getting rid of even a single bad thought, rewarding those of meritorious achievement and chastising those of no merit. This is also like a great leader with orders to establish states and families, for which petty people should not be employed. It is necessary to root out the seeds of ages of vicious circles before one is done. This means making negativity withdraw requires inward and outward purity and calm.

The six lines each have a path of repulsing yin, but they are not equal in terms of boding good or ill. Only the yang in the second place has both firmness and flexibility, masters authority yet is capable of change, and thereby is able to transmute negativities and not be injured by negativities. Great is the accomplishment of striving.



## 7. *The army*

earth above,  
water below

There is water in the earth, the army. Thus does the superior person embrace the people and nurture the masses.

The army is one leading a multitude. Above is *earth* ☷, below is *water* ☵; this is the presence of water in the earth. The earth is broad, water is wet; in the earth there is water—one earth embraces myriad waters, myriad waters moisten one earth. This is the image of *the army*.

What superior people see in this is that the human body is like a country, and the mind is like the ruler; the vitality, spirit, nature, feeling, and energy in the body are like the people; the benevolence, justice, courtesy, knowledge, and truthfulness in the nature are like the masses. These people, these masses, are the basis of human life, and must be protected and cared for. Therefore the root is stabilized by embracing the people, external afflictions are prevented by nurturing the masses.

But it is first necessary to embrace the people, in the sense of first mastering oneself inwardly; after that one nurtures the masses, in the

sense of managing externally. Inward mastery protects one from externals; managing externally affords one inner peace. When the inner and the outer balance each other, then everything follows the mind, whether in adversity or comfort. Such is the path of the leader of the army, and such is the path of the superior person embracing and nurturing.