



40. *Liberation (Solution)*

For liberation, the southwest is beneficial. When going nowhere, the return brings good fortune; when going somewhere, promptness brings good fortune.

EXPLANATION

Liberation means freeing. As for the qualities of the hexagram, above is *thunder* ䷳, active, and below is *water* ䷜, dangerous. When positive energy moves out of danger, action beyond danger moves according to the will; so it is called liberation.

This hexagram represents taking advantage of the right time to gather the medicine. It follows on the previous hexagram *disharmony*. *Disharmony* means yin and yang are not in harmony, delight and attention are not appropriate, negative energy is in charge of affairs, while positive energy is trapped. So this work of liberating the positive energy is essential.

Liberating the positive energy is “gathering the medicine.” In gathering the medicine it is important to know the right time; otherwise you will fumble, and negative energy will remain while positive energy will again slip away—then even though the medicine be nearby, you cannot avail yourself of it.

Understanding Reality says, “When lead meets winter, hasten to gather it; after the full moon, metal is worthless.” When the first yang is born on the ground of *earth* ䷁ (thereby producing *thunder* ䷳), the primordial energy comes from within nothingness, and the heart of heaven and earth turns. This is what is called “finding companionship in the south-

west." Just when "lead meets winter" and the great medicine appears, when the mind of Tao becomes active and the human mind is still, this spontaneous liberation is the portent of good fortune. Therefore, "for liberation, the southwest is beneficial; when going nowhere, the return brings good fortune." Returning without going anywhere does not come about by human effort; it appears spontaneously at a given time, and comes from nature.

But once nature's time has arrived, human exertion is necessary; one should hasten to set about fostering positive energy and suppressing negative energy. When the celestial and the human act together, one uses the return of this one bit of positive energy to go back, back to where there is pure positivity without negativity, so the mind of Tao is always present and the human mentality is forever extinguished. Only then is one liberated from danger and difficulty, and able to act freely in any way, just as one wills.

This is why "when going somewhere, promptness brings good fortune." If one is prompt, when the medicinal energy has just arisen it belongs to the primordial; if one is tardy, once the medicinal energy has passed it belongs to the temporal. If you promptly gather the medicinal energy when it has just arisen, then the primordial is stable and you gain good fortune. If you gather it only when the medicinal energy has passed, then temporal conditioning will reassert itself and you will be unfortunate. There is profound meaning in the words "promptness brings good fortune." There is that which requires promptness; that is to say, when you reach the point where the first yang has just become active, you should advance the fire without delay.

■ **First yin: No blame.**

EXPLANATION

In extreme danger, weak and helpless, unable to get out by oneself, still if one knows to associate with people imbued with the Tao, borrowing the knowledge and wisdom of others to solve one's own ignorance, one who is blameworthy can still become blameless. This is borrowing strength when weak to be released from danger.

■ **2 yang: Catching three foxes on a hunt, having golden arrows, correctness brings good fortune.**

EXPLANATION

With one yang between two yins, one is firm yet can be flexible. Precise and singleminded, keeping to the center, one doesn't let the human mind do evil, like catching foxes in the fields and not letting the foxes run wild; yet neither does one seek forced extinction of the human mind, like having golden arrows and not hurting the foxes. Not indulging, not injuring, going along with its desires to gradually guide it, one causes it to naturally dissolve, so one is liberated without trying to be liberated. This is the

most fortunate liberation. This is being strong and using flexibility to be released from danger.

- **3 yin:** Riding bearing a burden causes enemies to arrive. Even being righteous one is humiliated.

EXPLANATION

Being ignorant and acting arbitrarily, with vain imaginings about the celestial treasure, trying to coerce the human mind without having the mind of Tao, using the mind to rule the mind, one is not only unable to get rid of the human mentality, one in fact invites the human mentality. This is like trying to get on a cart while carrying something, bringing injury on oneself. Even though one's resolution be correct, still if one relies on one's personal yin and does not seek yang from another, this brings humiliation on a practitioner of the Tao. This is trying to force release from danger when one is weak.

- **4 yang:** Releasing your big toe, when the companion comes, then trust.

EXPLANATION

When adamant but incorrect, and also in correspondence with initial negativity, the human mentality is mixed in with the mind of Tao, so one is not effectively liberated from negativity; this is like "releasing your big toe." Dispelling the human mentality is the way to activating the mind of Tao: The human mind is dispelled when the mind of Tao arrives—trusting the latter, you release the former. In the big toe, there is the ability to move but not to walk; you can see the human mind is perilous here and the mind of Tao here is faint. This is strength being dragged by weakness, so not being liberated from danger.

- **5 yin:** In this the superior person has liberation, which is fortunate; there is earnestness in regard to the inferior person.

EXPLANATION

Emptying the human mind to seek the mind of Tao is wherein lies the liberation of the superior person. The mind of Tao is the mind of the superior person, the human mind is the mind of the inferior person. Whether the mind of Tao has become liberated or not can be checked in the human mind. Only when the human mind has been thoroughly sublimated is the mind of Tao released from difficulty. If there is even a bit of the human mentality, the mind of Tao has not yet been released from difficulty. Therefore, those who practice the Tao should make the utmost effort to strike a balance between looseness and tightness, and not let there be the slightest pollution. This is liberation sublimating the aggregate of yin.

- **Top yin:** The prince shoots at a hawk on a high wall and gets it, to the benefit of all.

EXPLANATION

At the end of liberation, when all acquired energies have been dissolved, but there still remains the human mentality, which hasn't died yet, this bit of human mind, greedy and ambitious beyond compare, is the greatest of villains, like a hawk on a high wall, and should be promptly dispatched. Luckily, at the end of liberation, sane energy is strong and aberrant energy is weak; using the mind of Tao, one dismisses the human mentality, directly obliterating it, to the benefit of all. This is great impartiality clearing away danger.

So on the path of liberation from difficulty and escape from danger it is important to know the proper timing, and it is most important that firmness and flexibility balance each other. Not getting ahead, not falling behind, not tense, not lax, taking advantage of the right time to get to work, anyone will obtain benefit. But the way to obtain benefit requires knowledge of the southwest, the position of *earth* ☷. "The medicine comes from the southwest—this is the position of *earth*. If you want to look for the position of *earth*, is it apart from the human being? I clearly explain; you should remember. I'm only afraid when you encounter it your recognition won't be true." Do you suppose the southwest position of *earth* is easy to know?



40. Dissolution

thunder above,
water below

Thunder and rain act, dissolving. Thus do superior people forgive faults and pardon crimes.

Dissolution means shedding, dispersing. Above is *thunder* ☳☳, below is *water* ☵☵; thunder rolls, rain falls, thunder and rain both act and the celestial and earthly energies commune. This is the image of *dissolution*.

What superior people see in this is that when the force of mundanity is congealed and stagnant, practitioners of the Tao should use intense effort to burn it away; then when the celestial energy has returned, they should use gentle effort to nurture it. Each phase has its proper time, which does not allow deviation or delay. Therefore, after the force of mundanity has been dissolved, they "forgive faults and pardon crimes," going along naturally to cause it to evaporate and disappear of itself, not allowing any force.

People have faults and commit crimes because of obeying acquired conditioning, which obscures the primal; indulging emotions and giving free rein to cravings, they will go to any lengths. This is why there needs to be effort to attain self-mastery and self-control. Mastery and control means correcting faults and eliminating misdeeds, using energy to transform the temperament. When the temperament has been sublimated, the primordial comes back; with the mind of Tao always present, the human mentality does not arise. Once faults and wrongdoings are eliminated, there is no more need to work on mastery and control.

To forgive means to forgive past faults, to pardon means to pardon past misdeeds. Forgiving and pardoning, sane energy grows strong and aberrant energy spontaneously disappears, the real remains and the false does not come. Otherwise, if one does not know when to stop at sufficiency, and still keeps thinking about misdeeds and faults, after all this is doing things with the human mentality, which again calls on faults and errors after they had been eliminated. What had been dissolved now does not dissolve; the danger of mundanity still remains, and celestial energy is not pure. This is what is meant by the saying "To try to eliminate errant thoughts doubles the affliction; to aim for reality as it is also is a mistake."