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## *61. Faithfulness in the Center*

**Faithfulness in the center is auspicious when it reaches even pigs and fish. It is beneficial to cross great rivers. It is beneficial to be correct.**

### **EXPLANATION**

Faithfulness is truthfulness; faithfulness in the center means truthfulness is within. The body of the hexagram has four yangs outside and two yins

inside: Open inside, solid outside, openness and solidity balance each other, inside and outside correspond. Also, the qualities of the hexagram are inner joy and outer accord; traversing the Path with joyful accord, not obsessed and not astray, it is therefore called *faithfulness in the center*.

This hexagram represents seeking fulfillment by being empty; it follows on the previous hexagram *dispersal*. In *dispersal*, yang is trapped by yin; yin sneaks in and yang gradually dissolves. If you want yin not to trap yang but to accord with yang, so that yin and yang conjoin, this is impossible unless you are seriously faithful to the Tao; without faithfulness to the Tao, practice is insubstantial and lacks power, inevitably leading to failure to complete what has been started. But if the mind is faithful and united, and thought is pure and true, myriad ruminations cease and sincerity within reaches outward, so that one can genuinely carry on true practice leading from lowness to exaltation, from shallowness to depth, gradually enabling one to reach the state of profound attainment and self-realization.

Spiritual alchemy, the science of the gold elixir, uses the "yellow woman" as the go-between for yin and yang. The "yellow woman" is true intent; *faithfulness in the center* is truthfulness in the center—truthfulness is associated with earth, which is called the yellow woman. With the yellow woman in the center, it is possible to harmonize yin and yang, to communicate with self and others, to respond to myriad things—there is nothing that cannot be influenced. Therefore "faithfulness in the center is auspicious when it reaches even pigs and fish." Pigs and fish represent those without knowledge; when truthfulness can influence them, those without knowledge can harmonize themselves—how much the more so those with knowledge. If practitioners of Tao can apply the truthfulness that influences even "pigs and fish" to cultivation of essence and life, they will not fail to produce good results.

However, if faithfulness can be carried out in ease but not adversity, that faithfulness is not real, and will surely crumble in the end; even if one is faithful in this way, it does not bode well. There are people who believe in the Tao, and there are those who believe in the Tao and practice it regularly when all is well and comfortable; but there are hardly any who forget themselves for the Tao and do not lose control in situations of great difficulty and stress, when there are great obstacles, when things are topsy-turvy and in a shambles, and it is difficult to bear up patiently.

If one can remain unmoved and unperturbed in situations that are hard to endure, can go on through and get out, this alone is faithfulness that can move pigs and fish. This is why "it is beneficial to cross great rivers" for faithfulness in the center to bode well. Great rivers represent most hazardous places, adverse situations; if one can cross over adverse situations, needless to say one can cross over favorable situations. When able to pass through both favorable and adverse situations, that faithfulness is beneficial and suspicious wherever it goes.

However, the seventy-two aberrant schools, with their three thousand six hundred deviant practices, all cling to voidness or stick to forms; these are not studies that can fulfill our nature and lead to the meaning of

life. The false distorts the real, the aberrant adulterates the correct; if you have faith without discriminating the false and real, the aberrant and correct, this is incorrect faithfulness, which is not beneficial and does not lead to good results. Therefore faithfulness is only beneficial if it is correct. Correct faith and correct practice meet with good results, unhindered in adversity or ease, entering from striving into nonstriving, thereby perfecting essence and life, completing beginning and end; of this one can be sure.

- ***First yang:*** Forethought leads to a good outcome. If there is something else, one is not at rest.

#### EXPLANATION

At the beginning of faithfulness, if one has faith only after forethought assessing what can be believed in, by being able to be careful in the beginning there is naturally a good outcome in the end. If one cannot assess whether something is so or not and carelessly believes now in this and now that, changing back and forth inconsistently, it will be difficult to make faithfulness complete; this is a case of where "there is something else," and so "one is not at rest." This means that faithfulness to the Path requires care in the beginning.

- ***2 yang:*** A calling crane is in the shade, its fledgling joins it; I have a good cup, which I will quaff with you.

#### EXPLANATION

With true faithfulness in the center, knowing the white and keeping the black, subtly penetrating the barrier between yin and yang, spiritual illumination naturally comes: This is like "a calling crane is in the shade, its fledgling joins it; I have a good cup, which I will quaff with you"—mutual response with the same voice, mutual seeking in the same spirit, spontaneously being thus without aiming for it. This is faithfulness in hidden practice of inner refinement.

- ***3 yin:*** Finding enemies, sometimes drumming, sometimes stopping, sometimes crying, sometimes singing.

#### EXPLANATION

Getting into aberrant practices, attached to your own body, attempting forced manipulations, is like faith in which one finds enemies—faith becomes enmity; after a time there inevitably comes a change, as one first believes in this, then that—when this practice doesn't work, one then tries that practice; "sometimes drumming, sometimes stopping, sometimes crying, sometimes laughing," vain and insubstantial, this is what is referred to by the statement, "It's easy to work with what is of the same species, hard to work with what is not of the same kind." Believing in what is not to be

believed will inevitably destroy faith. This is faith that takes the false to be true.

- **4 yin:** The moon approaches fullness. The pair of horses is gone. No fault.

#### **EXPLANATION**

In the space where above is yang and below is yin, yielding yet remaining upright, following the yang and not the yin, is like “the moon approaches fullness. The pair of horses is gone.” The human body is pure yin, with no yang, just as the moon has no light of its own; it must borrow the gift of another before it can produce the elixir, just as the moon borrows the light of the sun. At the time of the new moon, it meets with the sun, and moon-light arises in the first three days of the lunar month. On the fifteenth, when it faces the sun, its light is round and full. This is yin following yang. On the sixteenth, one yin subtly arises, and increases until the thirtieth, when the moon turns away from the sun and has no light at all. This is yin turning away from yang. The science of the gold elixir begins with yin seeking yang, to return to pure heaven. This is like the moon approaching fullness. Having used yang to repel yin so as to transmute the temperament and constitution is like a pair of horses having gone. Following the yang to eliminate the yin, a precious pearl hangs in space, round and bright, clean and bare, illuminating everything. Nothing can deceive it, so what fault could there still be that would not disappear? This is the faithfulness of weakness seeking strength.

- **5 yang:** With faithfulness that is firm, there is no fault.

#### **EXPLANATION**

Being strong and also balanced and correctly oriented, yin and yang blended, essence, feeling, vitality, and spirit all return to the center, benevolence, justice, courtesy, and wisdom all return to the mind; the five elements aggregate, truthfully unified without division. This is faithfulness that is firm; it is secure and cannot be dissolved. This is what is meant by the saying, “When a grain of gold elixir is swallowed into the belly, for the first time you know your destiny depends on you and not on heaven.” When the work reaches this point, you are integrated with natural principle, the celestial design, and all entanglements are void; there is naturally no fault. This is faithfulness in which strength and flexibility are one.

- **Top yang:** The voice of a pheasant reaches the skies; even if devoted, the outlook is bad.

#### **EXPLANATION**

If one uses one’s own intelligence to indulge in guesswork and personalistic interpretation, unable to humble oneself to seek from others and thor-

oughly investigate true principles, and plunges into practices impetuously, one who advances rapidly regresses swiftly; though one originally wanted to climb to the heights, instead one falls. This is just the call of a pheasant, incapable of soaring to the heavens to accomplish that which is rare in the world. This is faith that misuses intellect.

So the path of faithfulness in the center values faithfulness that is balanced, and above all faith that is correct. When faithfulness is balanced, the will is stable and endures unchanged; when faith is correct, right and wrong are clear, and practice of the Tao is very easy. Able to be balanced and correctly oriented, faithful to the Tao, one can then practice the Tao; by practicing the Tao one can attain the Tao. By this one faithfulness there is unfailing fortune and benefit.



## 61. *Truthfulness Within*

wind above,  
lake below

**There is wind above a lake, with truthfulness between them. Thus superior people consider judgments and postpone execution.**

Truthfulness within means there is sincerity in the center. Above is *wind* ☰, below is *lake* ☷; there is wind above a lake. The form of a lake is facing upward, the nature of wind is penetrating; wind blows on the lake, the lake receives the wind, as though there is feeling between them. This is the image of *truthfulness within*.

What superior people see in this is that adjudication of criminal cases concerns people's nature and life, and if there is any carelessness the innocent are harmed; therefore after a conviction is established, they do not immediately carry out the sentence—even if the crime is unpardonable, they still postpone execution and reconsider the case, seeking a way of life in the midst of death.

Practitioners of the Tao search out the recondite and find out the hidden, fish out the profound and reach the remote, so as to thoroughly investigate the abstruse and subtle truth; this requires genuine knowledge and clear vision, without the slightest trace of confusion in the mind. In this sense it is like adjudication of criminal cases. When one understands truth in the mind and puts it into actual practice, the mind dies and the spirit comes to life; gradually cultivating this without seeking immediate results is like postponing execution.

Consideration is whereby life is sought in the midst of death, freeing the innocent and condemning the guilty, enlivening what should be alive and killing what should be dead. If consideration is not thoroughgoing, one has no independent perception, and one does not have too much self-confidence, how could it be appropriate to "kill" rashly? Postponement means reconsideration of whether or not "death" is appropriate.

Inasmuch as the way of life is perforce difficult, the way of death is not easy either. If one does not postpone death but rather hastens death, hoping for quick accomplishment, one may become a nihilistic quietist. So it is a matter of "death" after consideration, and then reconsideration at the time of death whether it is right or wrong, true or false. Only when this is

perfectly clear in one's mind will one avoid the mistake of taking the spurious for the genuine.

In the image of the hexagram, above is *wind*, representing gradual advance, while below is *lake*, representing harmonious and joyful action. Gradualism means one can avoid haste, harmony means one can be considerate. With consideration and relaxation, truthfulness within being put into practice outwardly, an all-out effort will dissolve away all the pollution of conditioning and expose the primordial original being, so that one will surely reach the realm of eternal life.