



2. *Earth*

With earth, creativity and development are achieved in the faithfulness of the female horse. The superior person has somewhere to go. Taking the lead, one goes astray; following, one finds the master. It is beneficial to gain companionship in the southwest and lose companionship in the northeast. Stability in rectitude is good.

EXPLANATION

Earth is submissive; it means flexible, receptive humility. In the body of the hexagram, all six lines are even; this represents pure yin, so it is called *earth*. This hexagram represents convergence in yin, whereby the science of cultivating essence practices submission and receptivity and uses the path of flexibility.

Nothing is more submissive than earth. Earth is originally pure yin and cannot produce or develop things. The reason it does produce and develop myriad things is that it is receptive to the yang energy of heaven, producing and developing by progression and recession. This earth originally does not create or develop; its achievement of creativity and development lies in its capacity for faithfulness.

The receptivity of earth to heaven cannot be seen, but the receptivity of earth can be known by observing the submissiveness of a female horse. “Female” is a general term for the flexibility of yin; whatever is yin in something is classified as female. A “horse” is something that travels strongly: when a mare follows a stallion, the mare can go wherever the stallion goes; so though it is gentle, it is also strong. The benefit of the faithfulness of the receptivity of earth is like the benefit of the faithfulness of the female horse.

Human beings receive the yin energy of earth and take form thereby,

so they have this quality of flexible receptivity. When people are born, this quality of flexible receptivity is their innate capacity: When this capacity mixes with temporal acquired conditioning, it is confined by temperament and stained by accumulated habits; so people do not obey what they should obey, and instead obey their desires, so innate capacity turns into artificial capacity.

When sages teach people to travel the path of submission, this starts from artificial submission and changes into true submission, returning to the pristine state of unconscious obedience to the laws of God. Therefore the text says, "The superior person has somewhere to go. Taking the lead, one goes astray; following, one finds the master." Firmness is the master of flexibility; firmness is able to govern flexibility, whereas flexibility cannot govern firmness—it just follows the firm obediently.

Yielding obedience to strength is not only a matter of the incapable following the capable: Reforming error and returning to rectitude, changing wrong and taking to right, maintaining truth and getting rid of falsehood, is all a matter of the human mind submitting to the mind of Tao. This is all represented in terms of the flexible obeying the firm. "Taking the lead, one goes astray" means that when you act through the human mentality, the mind of Tao is buried away; following human desires, you damage the real by falsehood, losing the master by going astray. "Following, one finds the master" means that when you act through the mind of Tao, the human mind is peaceful and quiet, obedient to natural principle, extinguishing falsehood by reality, finding the master and not straying. If people can develop understanding from confusion, make yin follow yang, use the human mind to return to the mind of Tao, use the mind of Tao to govern the human mind, finding the master after they had previously lost it, even if they are stupid they will become illumined, and even if they are weak they will become strong.

In the path of submission nothing is greater than earth; for a symbol of receptivity, nothing is more obvious than the moon. The moon is basically pure yin, with no yang; it meets the sun in the spacious heights, travels to the southwest, the position of *earth* ䷂, and on the third day of the lunar month gives off a light like a wispy eyebrow, producing the yang spirit within the yin spirit—this is called "gaining companionship." On the fifteenth day, the moonlight waxes full; on the sixteenth, the sunlight begins to shift away gradually, and the moonlight henceforth begins to wane, producing the yin spirit within the yang spirit. When it reaches northeast, the position of *mountain* ䷃, on the twenty-eighth day, the remaining light vanishes—this is called "losing companionship." The moonlight appears in the southwest, yin follows the advance of yang; the moonlight disappears in the northeast, yin follows the receding of yang. When yang advances, the moon brightens; when yang recedes, the moon darkens. The brightening and darkening of the moon also follows the advance and withdrawal of the sun. If superior people practicing the Tao are able to be like the moon following the sun when they travel the path of flexibility by means of submission, then they know what gain and loss are, and they are effective in advancing as well as in withdrawing.

What is efficacy? It is effectiveness in submission to what is right, most effective in abiding in faithfulness to rectitude. Only thus is it an auspicious path that is sound in the beginning and sound at the end. "Stability in rectitude" means resting in what is right; one is at peace because of rectitude, and rests in what is appropriate. One aims for the submission of unruliness, the rectification of error, cultivating oneself and controlling the mind, getting rid of all seeds of vicious circles, not letting any pollution remain in the mind; being utterly empty, serene and sincere, the human mentality does not arise and the mind of Tao comes into being. After rectitude comes creativity, and while flexible one is firm, and while receptive one can be strong: Whatever one creates grows, whatever grows bears fruit, and the fruits are all good. So the submission and receptivity of abiding in rectitude is no small matter.

- ***First yin:* Walking on frost: Hard ice arrives.**

EXPLANATION

In the beginning of submission, on the borderline of true and false, if there is any deviation, external influences will creep in, and one will come to the point where all negative forces gather when one negative force arises. So there is the image of "walking on frost: Hard ice arrives"—therefore submission and receptivity must begin with prudence and care.

- ***2 yin:* Straightforward, correct, great: Unfailing achievement without practice.**

EXPLANATION

Flexible receptivity is balanced correctly; by being balanced the mind is straightforward and capable of prudence and care; being correct, one's activities are orderly. Inwardly straightforward, outwardly correct, following rules and acting in accord with guidelines, one can naturally make good works great. Therefore the text says "unfailing achievement without practice."

- ***3 yin:* Hiding one's excellence, one can be correct: If one works in government, there is completion without fabrication.**

EXPLANATION

Nature flexible, will firm, hiding one's refinements, one obeys and maintains rectitude, not allowing external falsehood to damage internal reality. So when there are events where one cannot but obey externally, if one works in government, one will want to accord with others, yet will not lose oneself; therefore there can be "completion without fabrication."

■ **4 yin:** Closing the bag, there is no blame, no praise.

EXPLANATION

Remaining flexible by giving way, thoughts do not come out from within, or come in from outside; one accords with the times, submitting to the decree of fate, not causing trouble yet not seeking good fortune. This is like tying up the opening of a bag, inside and out one emptiness; so there is no blame and no praise.

■ **5 yin:** A yellow garment is very auspicious.

EXPLANATION

Flexible receptivity open and balanced, one's virtue is sufficient to make people obey; one is trusted without speaking, one educates without teaching. This is like a yellow garment on the body, representing the sun emerging in the darkness; the refinement and virtue within naturally show outwardly. Therefore it is the great auspicious manifestation of the path of submission.

■ **Top yin:** Dragons battle in the field;
the blood is dark yellow.

EXPLANATION

Self-aggrandizement making softness hard, being unable to obey others but wanting others to obey oneself, is like dragons battling in the field. One turns away from harmony and loses balance; yin is off kilter, yang is amiss. Without yet having won others, one has already harmed oneself; therefore the blood is dark yellow.

■ **Using yin:** It is beneficial to always be correct.

EXPLANATION

As I see submission and receptivity in the six lines, they are unequal in being right and wrong. They are each different in terms of error and correctness. When we look for the submissive receptivity that is beneficial to oneself, it is only in the yin in the second place; submissive receptivity that can influence others seems to be only in the fifth place. The path of submission and receptivity is not easy; the slightest slip and one is far off the track. If one is not careful in the beginning, one will surely fail in the end.

The sage specially wrote "in using yin, it is beneficial to always be correct," opening up a great road for people of later times, so that those who travel the path of submission and receptivity would be constant in rectitude, for only then can submission be receptive to truth, and only thus can it be beneficial. The way to use yin is to use the path of submission and receptivity. Using submission and receptivity is the way to seek fulfillment by means of emptiness, to seek truth by openness, to seek being by nonbeing.

Students past and present have presumed on their intelligence, relying on their own views alone, engaging in arbitrary guesswork and personalistic interpretation, unwilling to humbly seek the aid of others. For this reason they grow old without attainment. Then again, there are those who seek out teachers and colleagues, but are unable to distinguish the false from the true, and get off into tangents and twisted byroads, never understanding all their lives. Also there are those who can distinguish false and true, who investigate and understand the principles of essence and life, and who proceed along the path, and yet give up along the way. Those who are not constant in rectitude are not using yin correctly; they cannot attain the Tao.

If you want to attain the Tao, you need to know how to submit to it and be receptive to it, and you must follow it correctly. It is also necessary to follow it correctly forever. If you are able to follow it correctly forever, there will be firmness in flexibility, unconcealed, unobscured, never changing till death. Shedding the conditioned temperament, you expose the original face of primordial unconscious obedience to the laws of God; both essence and life are perfected. So the path of eternal rectitude and flexible receptivity is consummated.



2. *Earth*

earth above,
earth below

The configuration of earth is receptive; superior people support others with warmth.

Earth is the ground; its quality is receptivity. In this image, earth ☷ is above and below: The earth above is the high places, the earth below is the low places; this is the image of receptivity, the configuration of earth being high and low. What superior people see in this is that since humans are born with the energy of earth, they have this earthy quality of receptivity. Because of this, once their intellect is activated, they misuse intelligence and follow what should not be followed; obeying the temperament, they lose the essence of pure innocence. Inwardly unable to empty themselves, outwardly they cannot admit others; taking the artificial to be real, taking misery for pleasure, in the end they pass away.

Therefore, the wise take as their model the receptivity of earth, and bear others with warmth. Warmth is the quality of receptivity, which is inner openness and outward genuineness. Only by receptivity can one be open, only by warmth can one be genuine.

Inner openness means emptying the mind; by emptying the mind one can accept others. Outward genuineness means genuine action; by genuine action one can respond to others. Accepting others and responding to others is being able to support others. There being no end of people, there is no end to support; one becomes warmer the more support one gives, and one is able to be more supportive as one becomes warmer. The ability of superior people to support others means that superior people have the quality of warmth.

However, if one is supportive of others in favorable circumstances but not in adverse circumstances, this is not called warmth. Strong exertion outwardly without inner openness is not called warmth. The warmth that is supportive of others requires genuine practice, true application, bearing insult and attack, bearing all difficulty, hardship, sickness, and calamity, just as the earth bears the mountains, as the ocean takes in the rivers, as the plants and trees endure injury. Such is the warmth of the earth, such

too is the warmth of superior people; this is how the earth bears things, and how the superior person bears things, too. The work of cultivating one's nature is summed up in warmth; this is the science of taking earth as a model.