



32. *Constancy*

Constancy is developmental. Impeccable. It is beneficial to be correct. It is beneficial to have a place to go.

EXPLANATION

Constancy means long persistence. As for the qualities of the hexagram, above is *thunder* ䷳, active, and below is *wind* ䷴, penetrating: Acting gently as the breeze, active yet serene, neither identifying nor detaching, the mind steadfast and the will far-reaching, it is therefore called *constancy*.

This hexagram represents genuine application in real practice; it follows on the previous hexagram *fire*. *Fire* means illumining the inward as well as the outward, aiming at profound attainment of personal realization, so that illumination is all-pervasive. But the path of pervasive illumination is not possible without a constant mind. *Constancy* means single-mindedly applying the will, the longer the stronger, not becoming lazy and slacking off. Thereby one can comprehend essence and life; so there is

a path of development in constancy, and it is also possible to be impeccable thereby.

However, though constancy can lead to development and impeccability, it is only beneficial if constancy is correct. If it is not correct, abandoning the real and entering into the false, then it is not developmental, and is faulty. The blind practitioners in the world who go into deviant paths, taking what is wrong to be right, aggrandizing themselves, boasting of their practices and cultivating vain reputations, striving all their lives without ever awakening, most assuredly are capable of constancy, but they are constant in aberrated paths, not constant in the right path. If you want to seek eternal life in this way, you will on the contrary hasten death; when your time is up, you will have no way out, and cannot escape the blame—how could you gain good fortune? Therefore constancy in the developmental, impeccable way is only brought to fruition by correctness.

Even so, the benefit of correctness of constancy is preeminently the benefit in correctness of constant practice; so the text says “it is beneficial to have a place to go.” The benefit lies only in constant practice of what is correct. What is correct is true principle, which is the Tao of body and mind, essence and life. This path appropriates yin and yang, takes over creation, sheds birth and death, escapes compulsive routine. This is a great work involving constancy and persistence; it cannot be accomplished in a day and a night. It requires flexible, gentle, gradual advance, ascending from low to high, going from shallow to deep, step by step treading in the realm of reality; only then can one be effective.

Generally speaking, a great affair which endures long unchanging requires great work that endures long unceasing before it can be achieved. The constancy that is beneficial if correct is the constancy that is beneficial if it is going somewhere. But if you want to practice what is right, first you must know what is right, investigating truth, reaching the basis of essence, thereby arriving at the universal order. The work of comprehending essence and arriving at the universal order of life is all a matter of thoroughly penetrating truth.

- **First yin:** Deep constancy; fidelity brings misfortune. No benefit.

EXPLANATION

In the beginning of constancy, if one does not distinguish right and wrong and enters deeply into false ideas so that they persist extensively, this is “deep constancy.” If one plunges in deeply without clearly understanding true principle, even if one wants to seek what is right, on the contrary one will bring on misfortune. This is constancy that brings no profit.

- **2 yang:** Regret disappears.

EXPLANATION

When strength is balanced and one deeply understands the firing process, masters the ability to adjust effectively to changes, is constant in timing

rather than by minding, constant in the Path rather than in things, constancy being without form or trace, this is constancy in which regret disappears.

- **3 yang:** If one is not constant in virtue, one may be shamed; even if right, one is humiliated.

EXPLANATION

As long as one is strong and remains correct, one is still determined in practice of the Tao. But if strength is not balanced, and one is in a hurry to achieve attainment, advancing keenly yet regressing rapidly, this is not being constant in virtue and so being shamed. What is the shame about? It is the shame of setting the heart on virtue but not being able to be constant in virtue, setting the will on what is right yet being unable to constantly practice what is right. Following the path in practice yet giving up along the way, even though one be correctly oriented one is humiliated. This is constancy with a beginning but no end.

- **4 yang:** Fields, no game.

EXPLANATION

When strength is in the body of action, the time is for doing—this is like having fields to plow. If one then dwells in a position of weakness, the will is inactive, constantly embracing the Tao but unable to put it into practice, that is like empty fields with no game to watch for. This is constancy without any action.

- **5 yin:** Constancy in virtue; this righteousness is good for a woman, bad for a man.

EXPLANATION

When one is flexible and balanced, keeping to one's lot calmly and constantly, without thought or effort, sincere and single-minded, this can be called constancy in this one virtue. However, fidelity to this single-mindedness is suitable for cultivating quietude apart from society, but it is difficult to thereby comprehend essence and reach the destiny of life. Therefore it is good for a woman but bad for a man. This is constancy in solitary cultivation of tranquility.

- **Top yin:** Constancy of excitement is bad.

EXPLANATION

Thinking one has what one lacks, that one is fulfilled when one is really empty, elevating and aggrandizing oneself, concerned with oneself and ignoring others, is called constancy of excitement. With constant excitement, the culmination of aggrandizement is inevitably followed by ruin, the culmination of elevation is inevitably followed by a fall. Ultimately one

winds up being destroyed. This is constancy fooling oneself and bringing on misfortune.

So practitioners of the Tao should be constant in the right way, especially in practice of the right path. Only then can they get somewhere beneficially, comprehend essence and arrive at the meaning of life, and perform the great work in the world that is eternally unchanging. But it is necessary to know the medicinal substances, the firing process, and when to advance or retreat quickly or slowly, not losing the proper way.



32. *Perseverance*

thunder above,
wind below

Thunder and wind are perpetual. Thus does the superior person stand without changing places.

Perseverance is persistence. Above is *thunder* ䷳, below is *wind* ䷴; when thunder is in motion, wind follows along. Thunder and wind grasp each other; with wind the sound of thunder reaches afar, following thunder the blowing of the wind is powerful. This is the image of *perseverance*.

What superior people see in this is that just as the nature of thunder is strong while the nature of wind is gentle, strength and gentility balancing one another so as to be able to stir myriad beings, in the same way there is strength and gentility in people, which require one another so as to enable people to persist in carrying out the Way. Thereby they stand without changing places.

To stand means to be decisive, to have stability of concentration. One's place means the path that is to be traveled, the Way that is to be carried out. There are students who are decisive in doing things, there are those who are decisive but do not know the proper way to go, and there are those who know the way to go but eventually slack off after an earnest start, alter their plans along the way, and change their places. All of them lack the determination to persevere consistently, so they are unable to practice the eternally unchanging Tao.

Superior people consider the nature and life of mind and body to be the one important matter, and they know that to accomplish the Tao that is eternally unchanging requires a permanently unchanging will. Emulating the strength and vigor of thunder and the flexible gentility of wind, they single out what is good and hold to it, gradually advancing in an orderly manner, growing ever stronger the longer they persevere. Wealth and rank cannot make them dissolute, poverty and ignominy cannot move them, authority and arms cannot suppress them. Everything in existence being void of absoluteness, they rest in the appropriate place, thus able to reach profound attainment of self-realization, in which the earthly and celestial are combined, lasting forever without corruption.