



31. Sensitivity

Sensitivity is developmental. It is beneficial to be correct. Marriage brings good fortune.

EXPLANATION

Sensitivity means feeling and influence. As for the qualities of the hexagram, above is *lake* ☱, joyous, and below is *mountain* ☶, still: Firmness rests within, flexibility rests without; stillness is the substance of joyfulness, joyfulness is the function of stillness. This hexagram has the meaning of yin and yang responding to each other, so it is called *sensitivity*.

This hexagram represents harmonization of yin and yang; it follows on the previous hexagram *pitfalls*. In *pitfalls*, yin traps yang—yang is not strong and yin is not docile; yin and yang do not combine. So this work of harmonization is indispensable. But harmonization of yin and yang calls for spontaneity, not force. Spontaneity is nonconscious sensitivity, while force is conscious sensitivity. With nonconscious sensitivity, yin and yang harmonize with each other, without any insensitivity. With conscious sensitivity, yin and yang are individually separate, and sensitivity has limits.

Therefore in sensitivity there is a path of development. But though the path of sensitivity is developmental, there is right and wrong non-consciousness, and there is right and wrong consciousness. You cannot say that the nonconsciousness of a dead tree or cold ashes is the developmen-

tal path of sensitivity; dead trees and cold ashes are purely negative, with no positivity—how could that be called sensitivity? “Sensitivity” means the subtle communion of yin and yang, as in the image of the hexagram, wherein a boy and girl are together, each unminding, till the yin and yang energies are full, and their feelings stir and they naturally become sensitive to each other.

This is unaffected sensitivity—how can you take ignorant mindlessness to be sensitivity? Nonconsciousness, or mindlessness, in the proper sense of the term, means there is no human mentality; when there is no human mentality, there is the mind of Tao. The mind of Tao is a mind that is not minding. Minding means having the human mentality; when one has the human mentality, one lacks the mind of Tao. The mind of the human mentality is not the real mind.

The mind of Tao is real, the human mentality is artificial. When you use the artificial mind, sensing is inaccurate; yin and yang dichotomize. When you use the real mind, sensing is true; yin and yang commune. Whether yin senses and yang responds, or yang senses and yin responds, they are equally ruled by the mind of Tao, and sense correctly. When sensitivity is true, not sensing by mentality, what is there that cannot be sensed, what sensing is not potentially beneficial?

In terms of correct sensitivity, no one in the world compares to a chaste woman. The virtues of a woman are based on chastity and calm; not easily losing herself to others, she will wait for a good partner to have feeling. This is feeling not by the heart but by truth.

In the qualities of the hexagram, first there is stillness, after that joy; joy comes from stillness. When practitioners of the Tao harmonize yin and yang, causing yin and yang to communicate sensitively, if they can take the virtue of a chaste woman as their sensitivity, then whatever they sense will be right; tranquil and imperturbable yet sensitive and effective, sensitive and effective yet tranquil and imperturbable, they rest in the proper place. Whether they go along with things or reverse them, all is as they will, and they attain that good fortune.

- **First yin:** Sensing in the big toe is inauspicious.

EXPLANATION

When one is foolish and low-minded, unable to refine the self and discipline the mind, to arbitrarily imagine great things is like sensing in the big toe. The big toe can move but not walk; to feel something one cannot carry out is not right sensing. This is sensitivity that stirs the human mentality.

- **2 yin:** Sensing in the calf is inauspicious.
Biding is auspicious.

EXPLANATION

Being weak without firmness, inwardly lacking the mind of Tao, being affected by the human mentality, is like sensing in the calf. The calf is something that should be still and not move; if one acts arbitrarily when it is

not appropriate to act, the action will inevitably bring on misfortune. However, if flexible receptivity is balanced, even if one has the human mind, stirred by feeling, if one can abide in rectitude and not be deluded by the human mentality, this too is a way to bring about good fortune in the midst of misfortune. This is sensitivity without the mind of Tao.

- **3 yang:** Sensing in the thighs; when persistence turns to indulgence, to go on is shameful.

EXPLANATION

Positive firmness should keep the mind of Tao and not be moved by external things. In the human mentality, positivity is not balanced; seeing scenes, it gives rise to feelings. This is likened to sensing in the thighs. Sensing in the thighs, one cannot stop in the proper place; giving rise to confusion according to influences, persistence in keeping the mind of Tao is not single-minded, and where there was the mind of Tao one again gives rise to the human mentality. To go on to practice the Tao in this way would inevitably bring one humiliation before the wise. This is sensitivity losing the mind of Tao.

- **4 yang:** Rectitude brings good fortune, and regret disappears. Coming and going with an unsettled mind: companions follow your thoughts.

EXPLANATION

Positive strength originally has the mind of Tao; this resembles being upright and gaining good fortune. Also, being strong yet able to be flexible, without influence but also without harm, is like having regret disappear—so there is correspondence with the first yin; being pulled by personal desires, mixing the human mind in with the mind of Tao, there is no influence outside but there is influence inside—therefore “coming and going with an unsettled mind: companions follow your thoughts.” Thoughts that “come along with companions” obscure the mind of Tao by the human mentality. The essence disturbed, feelings confused, the whole being is affected by the human mentality. This is sensitivity that arouses the human mentality and again obscures the mind of Tao.

- **5 yang:** Sensing in the flesh of the back, there is no regret.

EXPLANATION

At the border of yin above and yang below, controlling both, using them in a balanced way, the mind of Tao is always present, the human mentality does not arise; dealing with things as they are, all takes place without minding. This is likened to sensing in the flesh of the back. The flesh of the back is above the heart; it is near the heart yet apart from the heart. What separates the mind of Tao from the human mind is but a hairbreadth; sensing it in the flesh of the back means it is near the heart (mind) but really

not the heart (mind)—the mind that is not mind is called the true mind. The true mind is immaterial, yet not void; it has no location, it is open awareness unobscured—this is called no-mind. Sensing mind with no-mind, though there be mind it too returns to no-mind. No mind, no regret; integrated with celestial principle, one rests in the highest good without vacillation. This is sensitivity preserving the mind of Tao without the human mentality.

■ *Top yin:* Sensing in the jaws and tongue.

EXPLANATION

At the end of sensitivity, and also at the culmination of joy, following one's desires, working on the external and losing the internal, using clever words and a commanding appearance—all is artificial; this is called sensing in the jaws and tongue. These move whenever the mouth talks or laughs—and when the mouth moves, the mind moves. This is sensitivity using the human mentality, utterly lacking the mind of Tao.

The six lines each have a path of sensitivity: one may sense with the human mind, or one may sense with the mind of Tao; one may have the mind of Tao and also sense with the human mind, or one may turn away from the human mind and only sense with the mind of Tao. These are not equal in terms of right and wrong. Only when one rests in the highest good and senses it is the mind of Tao always present, while the human mentality vanishes forever; true yin and true yang subtly commune, crossing the gap, like magnet attracting iron, and then the gold elixir spontaneously forms out of nothingness.

31. *Sensing*

lake above,
mountain below

There is a lake on a mountain. Thus does the superior person accept people with openness.

Sensing means feeling. Above is *lake* ☱, below is *mountain* ☶; there is a lake on a mountain. A lake is open, a mountain is high; to be high yet capable of openness—this is the image of *sensing*.

What superior people see in this is that just as there can be no lake atop a mountain if there is no open space, similarly people can't be sensitive to anything if their minds are not open. Therefore they empty themselves of what they have, and receive enhancement from another.

The Taoist master Tz'u-yang said, "Stop exercising clever artifice as though it were effective practice; recognize the other's method of immortality." "The other" is another person, but it does not mean an ordinary person in the world—it means the original immortal true person inherent in oneself. Because of mixing with acquired conditioning, it has run away and become ineffective; long covered up and buried away, it is lost and does not return. Though it may show up occasionally, students who cling to the temporal, who stick to the conditioned, miss it even when it is right before them, and are unable to sense it.

This is all because of inability to refine the self. If one is unable to refine oneself, personal desires fill the being, and their sprouts clog the opening of awareness. Being filled and not open, whenever another comes there is no room for reception.

Superior people who practice the Tao refine themselves and master their minds, getting rid of all acquired pollutants, so that their minds are open. When the mind is open, the primordial energy comes from nothingness, so that one can receive enhancement from "the other" and become fulfilled. One senses by openness, the other responds with fulfillment; the small goes and the great comes, the gold elixir of immortality spontaneously crystallizes. This is like a high mountain being empty and open on top and receiving the moisture of a lake; it happens spontaneously, without any intention that it be so.