



64. *Unsettled*

Being as yet unsettled is developmental. A small fox, having nearly crossed the river, gets its tail wet, does not succeed.

EXPLANATION

Unsettled means yin and yang are not yet settled. As to the qualities of the hexagram, below is *water* ☰, a pitfall, and above is *fire* ☷, bright: Bright on the outside while dark on the inside, causing downfall by brightness, producing brightness because of danger, yin and yang are awry, and do not correspond; so it is called *unsettled*.

This hexagram represents refining the self and repelling yin, waiting for the appropriate time with suppressed yang; it follows on the previous hexagram *predominance of the small*. In *predominance of the small*, activity and stillness are as one; by smallness (yin) one cultivates the path of non-striving. This is done after yin and yang complete and settle each other. Before they are settled, however, it is first necessary to reach all the yins that trap yang; only after that does true yin manifest and true yang return, so yin and yang balance each other and the gold elixir crystallizes. This is why the work that involves striving, refining the self and waiting for the time, is important.

Once people reach the age of sixteen, *heaven* and *earth* commingle: The yang in the middle of *heaven* ☰ enters the palace of *earth* ☷, so *earth* is filled and becomes *water* ☰; the yin in the middle of *earth* ☷ enters the palace of *heaven* ☰, so *heaven* is hollowed out and becomes *fire* ☷. The yin in *fire* receives the yang energy of *heaven*, yin and yang aggregate, and it turns into fire. The yang in *water* receives the yin energy of *earth*, yin and yang steam, and it becomes water. This fire and water are in the temporal mixing of yin and yang, the confusion of real and artificial; growing day and night, the warm gentle fire changes into violent hot fire, and the water of true unity changes into the water of unbridled lust.

Once the nature of fire erupts, the discriminatory consciousness takes charge of affairs, and the original spirit withdraws. Once the nature of water acts, the polluted vitality causes trouble and the original vitality is depleted. At this point people begin to vie for honor, plunder for profit, contest for victory, and seek power, depriving others to benefit themselves, using intellectual brightness outwardly; indulging in emotions, giving free rein to their desires, deluded by objects of sense, they ravage and abandon themselves, the danger of mundanity being stored within. Bright on the outside but dark on the inside, they bury the real and accept the false; the human mentality looms dangerously, the mind of Tao is now faint—essence is disturbed, life is shaken, yin and yang are out of harmony, the five elements injure one another. All sorts of emotions and cravings are in full force, all sorts of schemes and wiles are there. This is why being unsettled is unsettled.

However, being unsettled means not yet having reached settlement; it does not mean settlement is not possible, only that the person has not yet sought that settlement. If one seeks settlement, ultimately it will be possible to be settled. This is why there is a development aspect to being unsettled. But though there is a way of development in an unsettled state, nevertheless since the negative energy of acquired conditioning has been operative for so long, and the primordial true positivity has sunken so deeply, settlement cannot be effected immediately; the work of self-refinement is necessary before you can see an effect. Self-refinement means refining the human mind. The human mind is the progenitor of all mundanities; once the human mind is gone, accumulated mundanities evaporate, "light arises in the empty room," and true celestial energy gradually approaches restoration.

But before refinement of the self is perfected, the mind is not empty and the light is not true; negativity and mundanity still have not withdrawn completely, and one cannot seek their end in a hurry. If one does not know the firing process and rushes to achieve settlement, this is still the human mentality acting, working with false understanding. Then the unsettled will never be settled. This is like "a small fox, having nearly crossed the river, gets its tail wet and does not succeed." A fox is associated with yin, a creature known for its suspiciousness. Though a small fox is not very suspicious, it cannot be entirely free from doubts. As long as the human mentality is not gone, the mind of Tao does not become manifest; this is like the small fox—though nearly settled, before reaching settlement, if the refinement of the self is incomplete when settlement is nearly reached, though one wants to go ahead one instead falls behind.

Therefore practitioners of the Tao, in refining the self, must reach utter emptiness and tranquility, the yin trapping yang withdrawing completely, before the primordial yang energy comes from within nothingness, and true yin and true yang unite, able to settle what is unsettled. A classic says, "If refinement of the self is imperfect, the restored elixir does not crystallize." So we know refinement of the self is the first step in practicing Tao.

■ *First yin: Getting the tail wet, one is humiliated.*

EXPLANATION

A person of inferior qualities in deep danger must first refine the self and control the mind in order to practice the Tao; entering in gradually, one cannot seek completion all at once. But if one is then foolish and vain and seeks to emulate the way of those of lofty enlightenment and effect settlement, one will be trailed by danger before even moving. This is likened to getting the tail wet and being unable to go forward. One will only be humiliated. This is being unsettled and trying to force settlement.

- **2 yang:** Dragging the wheels, it bodes well to be upright.

EXPLANATION

Strength applied with flexibility, the wise one appears ignorant, the expert appears inept, refining the self and biding one's time; this is like a car dragging its wheels. Nurturing strength for the time being, though in an unsettled time, there is the good prospect of unseen settlement. This is waiting while unsettled for the time to effect settlement.

- **3 yin:** As yet unsettled, it bodes ill to go on an expedition, but it is beneficial to cross great rivers.

EXPLANATION

At the culmination of unsettledness, when the possibility of settlement is nearing, if one does not know the medicinal substances and the firing process but relies on the yin of oneself alone, vainly imagining settlement, acting dangerously in hopes of good luck, the unsettled will never be settled, and it will be unlucky to go to any lengths. It is lucky to live among people imbued with Tao, however, because one can be aided by others to complete oneself, so that yin can be converted and yang can be restored; then even if one crosses perilous "great rivers" it will be auspicious and beneficial. This is seeking a teacher when unsettled and incomplete, to effect settlement and completion.

- **4 yang:** Remaining correct brings good results, regret vanishes; rising up to conquer the barbarians, in three years one will have the reward of a great country.

EXPLANATION

When strength is in a weak position, it seems to have lost correctness, to bode ill and cause regret; however, that whereby it can bring good results and banish regret by remaining correct, is vigorous effort using strength and firmness to rise up and conquer the barbarians, meaning to get rid of the mundanity of acquired conditioning. Then, cultivating inner refinement privately, using flexibility, in three years one will have the reward of a great country, meaning the restoration of primordial celestial energy. The reason three years are needed to gain the reward is that the real will be hard to restore, and the false will be hard to get rid of. It requires penetrating work over a long period of time before there can be completion. This is gradually proceeding from unsettled incompleteness to settled completion.

- **5 yin:** Remaining correct brings good results, without regret; the light of a superior person has truth and goodness.

EXPLANATION

Emptying the human mind and seeking the mind of Tao, not being led astray by false brilliance, is whereby “remaining correct brings good results.” This line corresponds with the yang in the second place: Taking the fullness in the *water* ☰ of the other and using it to fill in the emptiness in the *fire* ☷ of the self, emptying the mind and being able to fill the belly, this is why there is no regret. Correctness bringing good results with no regret, yin and yang join, false brilliance leaves and true illumination arises, calm and undisturbed yet sensitive and effective, sensitive and effective yet calm and undisturbed: This is called the light of the superior person. Starting out unsettled, in the end there is a great settlement; its goodness is already truly in the empty mind. This is the ability of the unsettled to bring about settlement by emptying the mind.

- **Top yang:** Having faith, one drinks wine without blame. When one gets one’s head wet, having faith ceases to be right.

EXPLANATION

At the end of being unsettled, when settlement is taking place, one can believe yin and yang will settle each other, this proceeding naturally and not depending on forced effort. So one can drink wine, have a party, without blame. However, although there is complete settlement in terms of celestial time, still human affairs cannot be neglected; one does one’s best in human affairs, thereby assisting the Way of heaven. Then heaven and humanity act together; having faith in settlement, this faith is right. Otherwise, settlement in celestial time will be no more than a chance interval: Without the accomplishment of adjusting water and fire, the primordial treasure that has come will go again. When settling is unstable, it eventually becomes unsettled: This is like getting the head wet, having faith that is no longer right. This is effecting settlement by taking advantage of the time to use human power to accomplish it.

So the path of settling the unsettled has two aspects. When yang energy is trapped, one must refine the self, biding the time, thereby preventing danger. Once yang energy has emerged from the trap, one should use illumination to dispel darkness, thereby converting yin. Only when intensity and relaxation, advancing and withdrawing, are properly timed is this the path of twin cultivation of essence and life in which yin and yang settle and complete each other. So students who would practice the Tao should start by self-refinement.



64. Not Yet Settled

fire above,
water below

Fire is above water, not yet settled. Thus superior people carefully discern things and keep them in their places.

Not yet settled means something has not yet reached settlement. Above is fire ☰, below is water ☲; the fire is above water. When fire is above water, the fire cannot heat the water and the water cannot control the fire; water and fire in separate places is the image of being *not yet settled*.

What superior people see in this is that once people get mixed up in temporal conditioning, the real is obscured and the artificial comes forth, body and mind are unstable, vitality and spirit are clouded, volatility erupts and greed arises; taking misery for pleasure, they go to any lengths, and become extremely unsettled.

Nevertheless, sages have a way of restoring the primordial within the temporal; it is just that people have never thought of this settlement. If they wanted this settlement, they would be capable of settlement. Therefore superior people carefully discern things and keep them in their places.

"Things" here means the primordial and the temporal, the real and false earthly and celestial; "place" means where these things abide. Carefully discerning whether things are real or false, it is necessary to be perfectly clear in mind, with genuine knowledge and perception, free from any doubt or confusion whatsoever. This is the work of investigating things to produce knowledge. In respect to the reality or falsehood of things, keeping them in their places, so that the real is recognized as real and the false is recognized as false and the two are not mixed up, is the science of rectifying the mind and making the intent sincere.

When one discerns things and understands truth, and also keeps things in their place and does not act recklessly, the mundane and the celestial are not mixed up, the real and the false are distinguished; then there is settlement in the midst of the unsettled. This is like water conveying moisture and fire conveying heat, each accomplishing what it can accomplish, each on a separate path.

The primordial is that whereby the real body is made, the temporal is that whereby the phantasmic body is made. Before the primordial and temporal are settled, the mundane and the celestial are mixed up, the real and the false are confused. If one can distinguish the real from the false, one will know the places of the primordial and the temporal. The tem-

poral has its place in the temporal, which is clearly obvious; one should not mistake something temporal for something primordial and forcibly seek settlement.

The words "carefully discern" have a most profound meaning. Discernment requires investigation and penetration of every subtlety, without any carelessness allowed. This is particularly so because the primordial and the temporal are so close that it is easy to mistake them; only by careful, minute discernment is it possible to recognize truly and know clearly that each has its place. When one knows that each has its place, then one can keep each one in its place. When one can keep each in its place, then the primordial can be preserved and temporal conditioning will not act up. Then the unsettled can be settled; the true earthly and the true celestial conjoin, water and fire commingle, and the spiritual embryo forms. The reasons the sages put the hexagram *not yet settled* at the end was so that when people are not yet settled they will investigate the truth and hasten to seek settlement.