



26. Nurturance of the Great

In nurturance of the great it is beneficial to be chaste.
It is good not to eat at home; it is beneficial to cross
great rivers.

EXPLANATION

Nurturance of the great means taking care of the great. As for the qualities of the hexagram, above is *mountain* ䷳, still, and below is *heaven* ䷀, strong; having strength yet being able to be still, it is therefore called *nurturance of the great*.

This hexagram represents incubation nurturing the spiritual embryo; it follows on the previous hexagram *return*. *Return* means restoration of the primordial energy. When the primordial energy comes back within, slight and vague to begin with, then becoming clearly evident, it restores the original self; the foundation of life is stabilized, the spiritual embryo is formed, and one enters from striving into nonstriving. Then one should carefully seal it and store it securely, forestalling danger, incubating and bathing, aiming for the great transformation, the unfathomable state of spiritual sublimation, making it indestructible and incorruptible.

On this path, it is beneficial to still strength, not to use strength. Therefore the text says "it is beneficial to be chaste." Chastity here means quietude. Stilling strength is nurturing strength. The work of nurturing strength is the work of keeping centered, embracing unity; to keep centered and embrace unity, it is good to be still, not active—if one is still, this preserves strength; if one is active, this damages strength.

Stilling is not leaving the world, quietude is not empty inaction: Therein there is a way of adjustment, addition and subtraction; therefore one should not "eat at home." Only thus is one capable of great nurturance, producing good fortune. Not eating at home means externally adjusting the furnace while internally operating the true fire, still within and also still without, continuing subtly, not forgetting, not forcing. Then when one encounters great danger and difficulty one is unmoved, unshaken—only then is it real nurturing, only then is it greatness of nurturance. Therefore it is also "beneficial to cross great rivers."

The crossing of great rivers is that whereby inner nurturance and

outer effectiveness is accomplished. This is the work referred to as “nine years facing a wall.” “Facing a wall” is the state of being like a wall of immense height, detached from all kinds of biases and extremes, stopping in unknowing, breaking through space. When you break through space, the spiritual potential is freed, both body and mind are sublimated, merging with the Tao in reality. With greatness of nurturance comes greatness of development, and one becomes a companion of heaven.

- **First yang:** There is danger; it is beneficial to stop.

EXPLANATION

In the beginning of nurturance of the great, if you promote strength there will be misfortune, if you still strength there will be good fortune; there is danger—it is beneficial to stop. Just at the point of giving up striving and entering into nonstriving, this is nurturing strength in the beginning.

- **2 yang:** A cart is divested of its axles.

EXPLANATION

When strength is used flexibly, protecting the spiritual potential, awaiting the time for its release, it is like a cart divested of axles, so the cart doesn't move. In practice of the Tao, when firmness and strength are in balance, and the spiritual embryo has congealed, one should quickly stop the firing, stop the wheel, and not advance strength any further, lest it damage the basic energy. This is nurturance of strength gaining balance.

- **3 yang:** A good horse gives chase. It is beneficial to struggle for right. Daily practicing charioteering and defense, it is beneficial to go somewhere.

EXPLANATION

When nurturance of strength has been fully accomplished, the energy is full, the spirit complete; truthfulness within is about to reach outside, like a good horse about to give chase. However, though the spiritual embryo is complete, as long as there is negative energy in one's person that hasn't been thoroughly transmuted, it is all-important to struggle to stay right, being single-minded without distraction, like daily practicing charioteering and defense, at all times guarding against stumbling and slipping; in ten months, when the work is complete, there is a spontaneous liberation and transmutation—so “it is beneficial to go somewhere.” This is nurturing strength and stabilizing the basic energy.

- **4 yin:** The horns of a young ox are very auspicious.

EXPLANATION

In correspondence with the first yang, the quality of strength begins to grow, and one then nurtures it; this is like the horns of a young ox. The ox

is docile by nature; its strength is in its horns. When the ox is young, its horns begin to grow. If one can nurture it when it begins to grow, the basic energy does not scatter; gradually nurturing it as it grows, eventually one will nurture it to the point of pure wholeness. The good fortune is already in the nurturing of the incipient strength. This is nurturing strength and stabilizing the basic energy.

- **5 yin:** The tusks of a gelded boar are auspicious.

EXPLANATION

At the time of nurturance of the great, when one uses yin to nurture yang, this is like a gelded boar. When a boar is gelded, its energy and temperament both change; to empty the mind and completely fill the belly is like the tusks of a gelded boar—the boar is soft, but the tusks are hard. Using flexibility and yielding to nurture firmness and strength, when firmness receives the nurturance of flexibility there is no injury. This is nurturing strength and merging yin and yang.

- **Top yang:** Carrying the crossroads of heaven; development.

EXPLANATION

At the end of nurturance of the great, the achievement complete, the practice fulfilled, with a peal of thunder the real person emerges, startling the ignorant, amazing the mundane. Beginning with striving, which no one sees, when one arrives at nonstriving, for the first time one is known to others—who does not extol carrying the crossroads of heaven? When practitioners of the Tao reach liberation and attain reality, there is a body outside the body, beyond heaven and earth. One does not only complete oneself but others as well. From greatness of nurturance comes greatness of manifestation. What can compare to that development? This is nourishing strength culminating in spiritual transformation.

So the path of incubating the spiritual embryo requires clear knowledge of nurturance of the great, strength held in check. Once one is strong and also still, in the beginning there is striving but in the end there is nonstriving. One is strong and healthy and rests in ultimate good without evil, integrated with the absolute. A single energy circulates, indefinable as being or nonbeing; self and others will return to emptiness, and the path of twin cultivation of essence and life is consummated.



26. Great Accumulation

mountain above,
heaven below

Heaven is in the mountains, great accumulation. Thus do superior people become acquainted with many precedents of speech and action, in order to accumulate virtue.

Great accumulation is extensive amassing and assembling. Above is *mountain* ䷳, below is *heaven* ䷁; this is heaven in the mountains. The sky is vast, mountains are small in comparison; being outwardly small yet inwardly great is the image of *great accumulation*.

What superior people see in this is that when people are unable to increase their virtue, it is because they presume upon their talent and knowledge, they aggrandize themselves, and do not know to emulate the sages of yore; therefore superior people become acquainted with many of the words and deeds of people of the past, recording them to foster expansion of consciousness and vision, thereby accumulating and storing their virtue.

The lifeline of the psychological teachings of the sages is stored in books. The speech and action of the ancient sages were speech and action of virtue. If one can study widely with serious intent, question earnestly

and think for oneself, then one comes face to face with the sages, says what the ancients said and does what the ancients did. When speech and action are free from defect, one's virtue accumulates and grows day by day. Only then can one fulfill nature and reach the meaning of life. When both nature and life are comprehended, one is as permanent as heaven, as stable as the mountains. What can compare to the greatness of that accumulation?