



## 11. Tranquility

**The small goes, the great comes. This is auspicious and developmental.**

### EXPLANATION

*Tranquility* means going through in harmony. As for the qualities of the hexagram, above is *earth* ☷, submissive, and below is *heaven* ☰, strong: Yang is strong inside, yin is submissive outside. Strength and submission unified, yin and yang correspond; it therefore is called *tranquility*.

This hexagram represents the mixing of yin and yang; it follows on the previous hexagram *nurturance by the small*. In *nurturance by the small*, one yin nurtures five yangs; yin energy is in charge, and yang energy is not active. Being small in nurturance and unable to be great in nurturance, the activity cannot succeed; the way to successful activity requires that great and small be unharmed, that yin and yang balance each other, yin obeying yang, yang governing yin.

Only when yin and yang are harmoniously combined is it possible to accomplish things. Therefore the way of *tranquility* is that the small goes and the great comes; it is auspicious and developmental. The small is yin and the great is yang: "The small goes" means yin submits, "the great comes" means yang is strong. With yang strong on the inside and yin submissive on the outside, the primordial gradually returns and acquired conditioning gradually melts away; thereby it is possible to reach the realm of pure yang with no yin. It is a matter of course then to be fortunate in action, and for activity to develop.

However, in the path of bringing about tranquility, there is a firing process, there is a course of work. If advancing and withdrawing are done with the proper timing, and one is strong yet acts docilely, using docility to nurture strength, one can bring about tranquility and preserve it, understanding essence through understanding life, attaining nonstriving through striving, completing the great Way. Of this one can be sure.

- **First yang:** When pulling out a reed by the roots, other reeds come with it. It is auspicious to go forth.

#### EXPLANATION

When one yang subtly arises, all the yangs have motivation. This is like pulling out the connected root of a reed, bringing other reeds with it. One who is going to bring about tranquility sets about cultivation on the appearance of this first yang, gradually gathering and refining positive energy, from subtle to manifest, so there is no yang that is not strong and no yin that is not submissive. This is why it says it is auspicious to go forth. This is firmly taking advantage of the right time to bring about tranquility.

- **2 yang:** Accepting the uncultivated, actively crossing rivers, not missing the remote, partisanship disappears, and one accords with balanced action.

#### EXPLANATION

Firm strength correctly balanced, one is able to adapt to changes, and therefore accepts the uncultivated, actively crosses rivers, does not miss the remote, and ends partisanship. Accepting the uncultivated means being broadminded and tolerant, applying flexibility. Crossing rivers means being courageous, applying firmness. Not missing the remote means calmly observing, quietly examining, the consummation of flexibility. Ending partiality means stopping falsehood and sustaining truth, the consummation of firmness. Having flexibility within firmness, firmness within flexibility, applying both gentle and intense forms of cultivation as appropriate, one can gain accord with balanced action. This is firmness and flexibility balancing each other to bring about tranquility.

- **3 yang:** There is no levelness without incline, no going without returning. If one is upright in difficulty,

**there will be no fault. One should not grieve over one's sincerity; there will be prosperity in sustenance.**

#### EXPLANATION

The three yangs full, as yang culminates it must shift to yin; when tranquility ends there must be misfortune. This is like there being no levelness without incline, no going without return. At this time it is mandatory to know when to advance and when to withdraw. If one remains upright in difficulty, forestalling danger, wary of perils, only then can one be free from the fault of losing what has been gained. Once free from that fault, accomplishment is achieved in society, and one's fame resounds to the heavens; also one is sustained by natural prosperity and enjoys life without end—what grief is there? This is preserving tranquility by remaining upright at the culmination of strength.

- **4 yin:** Unsettled, one is not rich, along with the neighbors, being loyal without admonition.

#### EXPLANATION

When yang culminates and mixes with yin, one cannot forestall danger; one yin subtly arises, and all the yins stir. This is like being unsettled, not being rich, along with the neighbors, joining them loyally without needing to be admonished; the gold elixir, once gained, is again lost. This is losing tranquility by softness injuring firmness.

- **5 yin:** The emperor marries off his younger sister, whereby there is good fortune; this is very auspicious.

#### EXPLANATION

When properly tranquil, one uses yin to nurture yang, so yang energy solidifies. This is likened to an emperor marrying off his younger sister, extending good fortune to his minister, who marries her. Yin loves yang and yang loves yin; yin and yang share the same energy, so that there is spontaneously a natural true fire glowing forever in the furnace. Although tranquility is already a fact, yet one does not lose the fortune of beginning tranquility. This is completing tranquility by using flexibility to nurture firmness.

- **Top yin:** The castle walls crumble back into dry moats. Don't use the army. Giving orders in one's own domain, even if right, there will be regret.

#### EXPLANATION

At the end of tranquility, the culmination of submission, if you just know the submission of tranquility and not the opposition of tranquility, by not preventing it early on you will surely fail in the end. This is like castle walls crumbling back into the dry moats. At this time good things are already



gone, and cannot be used for strength, so the text says "don't use the army"; misfortunes are at hand, and regret does no good, so it says "giving orders in one's own domain, even if right, there will be regret." This is being weak and not knowing to safeguard tranquility early on.

So there is a time to bring about tranquility, and a time to preserve tranquility; striving and nonstriving both have their methods. Acting according to the time, based on the proper method, being strong where appropriate, being docile where appropriate, by strength one effects tranquility and by docility one preserves tranquility. If one is able to effect and preserve tranquility, why worry that one will not be fortunate and not develop, and not accomplish the Path?



## 11. *Tranquility*

earth above,  
heaven below

When heaven and earth commune, there is tranquility. Thus does the ruler administer the way of heaven and earth and assist the proper balance of heaven and earth, thereby helping the people.

Tranquility means success. Above is *earth* ☷, below is *heaven* ☰; the energy of heaven rises from below, the energy of earth descends from above—so the energies of heaven and earth, the celestial and the mundane, mix together, and myriad things are produced. This is the image of *tranquility*.

What the ruler sees in this is that when heaven and earth, yin and yang, mix together, myriad things are born, and when the celestial and earthly elements in humans commune, everything is at peace; on this basis does the ruler then administer the way of heaven and earth and assist the proper balance of heaven and earth.

People are born with the energies of yin and yang and the five elements, so they have these energies of yin and yang and the five elements in their bodies. When these energies are active in the body, they constitute the five virtues. The five virtues in essence have a natural course, which does not require forced effort; this is called the path of following nature. The ruler who understands the principle of the mutual generation of the five elements and causes humanity, justice, courtesy, knowledge, and truthfulness to flow as one energy is administering the natural way of heaven and earth giving life to humans.

The functions of the five virtues have their appropriate balance; it will not do to cling to any of them at the expense of the others. This is what is called the teaching of practicing the Tao. The ruler who understands the principle of the mutual overcoming of the five elements causes benevolence, justice, courtesy, knowledge, and truthfulness each to attain its appropriate proportion, assisting the proper balance of heaven and earth as it endows humans.

Administering the way, assisting in its balance, is the means whereby to accomplish the will of the world and achieve the work of the world, thus helping the people, causing everyone to take the way of heaven and earth as their way, and to take the balance of heaven and earth for their balance, preserving universal harmony intact, each realizing one's true nature and purpose in life.

Who does not have the way of heaven and earth, who does not have the balance of heaven and earth? The only problem is inability to administer and assist the way of its balance. If one can administer and assist the way and balance of heaven and earth, then it is possible to preserve the

primordial complete and to dissolve acquired conditioning. When the primordial is complete and conditioning is dissolved, being is natural and action is appropriate; the five elements are one energy, the five virtues merge, nature and life are stabilized. What is more, one shares in the functions of heaven and earth, one shares the eternity of heaven and earth; what can compare to that tranquility?