

30. *Fire*

**Fire is beneficial for correctness and development.
Raising a cow brings good fortune.**

EXPLANATION

Fire is clinging, and it is illuminating. In the body of the hexagram, one yin is stuck between two yangs; this represents illumination with inner openness. As for the qualities of the hexagram, above is *fire* ☲, luminous, and below is also *fire* ☲, luminous; by inner illumination reaching outer illumination, by outer illumination perfecting inner illumination, illuminating inside and illumining outside, inwardly illumined and outwardly illumined—a thousand illuminations, myriad illuminations, are all two illuminations, inward illumination and outward illumination, which in totality are one illumination; therefore it is called *fire*.

This *fire* embraces the female within it; the hexagram symbolizes the presence of yin within yang, and follows on the preceding hexagram *excess of the great*. In *excess of the great*, there is too much yang strength, exercising creativity at will, misusing its light. Illumination is the energy of open awareness in the palace of *fire* (the heart); it is the spirit of humans, the master of mind. When the mind is open it is aware; the original spirit is in

charge of affairs, and illumination is managed properly. One can thereby balance yang. When the mind is unruly, it wanders; the discriminatory consciousness handles affairs, and illumination is not properly directed. This is sufficient to damage yang. Therefore *fire* is beneficial to correctness and development.

However, although *fire* is beneficial to correctness and development, if you only know how to use illumination and do not know how to nurture illumination, you will not attain development. Using illumination means outer illumination; nurturing illumination means inner illumination. Outer illumination has to be based on inner illumination; using illumination requires that one first nurture illumination: Therefore "raising a cow brings good fortune." Raising means nurturing; the cow is a symbol of receptivity. The cow does not use its strength; its nature is most docile. If people can nurture illumination with flexible receptivity, turning the light of consciousness around to shine inward, shutting out deviation and preserving truthfulness, first illumining inside, then illumining outside, then inside and outside will both be illumined, open awareness will be clear; nothing can deceive it, nothing can influence it—naturally illumining the qualities of enlightenment and resting in the highest good, what can compare to that fortune?

But the path of illumination and production of good fortune has a process, a course of work; if there is the slightest carelessness, illumination will not develop. Therefore illumination must reach inside and outside, so that both are illumined and both are correct; only this is the benefit of illumination, the development of illumination, the good fortune of illumination.

- **First yang:** The steps are awry. If you are heedful of this, there will be no fault.

EXPLANATION

In the beginning of illumination, if you immediately exercise illumination without knowing how to nurture illumination, your steps will surely go awry; not only will you be unable to advance illumination, you will also do something that damages illumination. Only if you are heedful of this, study it extensively, inquire into it thoroughly, reflect on it carefully, discern it clearly, comprehend it completely from start to finish, and then put it into practice seriously, can you avoid the fault of going awry. This means to employ illumination it is necessary to first seek illumination.

- **2 yin:** Yellow fire is very auspicious.

EXPLANATION

When you know you are not illumined, and can open your mind and defer to the wise, seeking the illumination of others, this is called yellow fire. Yellow is the color associated with the center: When illumination returns to the center, and you show your own lack and respect what others have,

even if you are ignorant you will gain understanding, and even if you are weak you will become strong, without losing your basic flexibility and receptivity. What is auspicious and leads to good results is the ability to empty and open the mind. This is being unilluminated and seeking the illumination of others.

- **3 yang:** The afternoon light; unless you drum on a jug and sing, there will be the lament of old age, which is unfortunate.

EXPLANATION

If you are only strong and not flexible, and only know to employ illumination and do not know to nurture illumination, then strong illumination is excessive. This is like the light of the afternoon sun: Having reached the peak of its height, it inevitably goes down; having reached the peak of illumination, it inevitably grows dark. So if one cannot drum on a jug and sing, there will be the lament of old age; unbalanced, one will only reap misfortune. This is using illumination and ruining illumination oneself.

- **4 yang:** The coming forth is abrupt, burning, dying, abandoned.

EXPLANATION

If strength is not right, and one is eager to understand outside without being able to understand inside, this is coming forth abruptly. The illumination which comes abruptly seeks in leaps, without due process; it is impulsive and onesided in action, its arbitrary doings bring on misfortune, "burning, dying, abandoned." Though one wants to seek eternal life this way, instead one will suffer the consequences. This is considering oneself illumined when one is not illumined.

- **5 yin:** Weeping and lamenting. Good fortune.

EXPLANATION

Dwelling in outer illumination, those who illumine the external when they should illumine the internal are weak and incapable; it may be that their perception of principle is not true, or that their strength is insufficient—therefore they weep and lament. And yet, weeping and lamenting, not daring to act arbitrarily, keeping to one's place, is also a way of bringing good fortune. This is clearly knowing one is not illumined.

- **Top yang:** The king hereby goes on an expedition; there is good luck, and he crushes the leader. As the captive is not the common followers, there is no blame.

EXPLANATION

Dwelling on top of double illumination, strong and purposefully active, able to illumine the inward and also able to illumine the outward, able to

understand accord and also able to understand reversal, is symbolized as a king thereby going on an expedition, having good luck and crushing the leader of the enemy, the captured not being the common followers. The true mind is like the radiance of the king; the quality of illumination is like going on an expedition. Illumining virtue, virtue is then illumined; this is like having auspicious achievement. Getting rid of the human mentality is like crushing the leader of the enemy. Not forcibly restraining random thoughts is like not taking the common followers captive. Using illumination to the point of illumination crushing the leader, then all acquired conditioning dissolves of itself without being repulsed. Then one is tranquil and imperturbable, yet sensitive and effective, illumined inwardly and outwardly, without a trace of fault of sense. This is illumination that is ultimately good, without anything wrong.

So the path of using illumination requires that one know the active but keep receptivity, having flexibility within firmness. It is important that illumination be right. If you are adamant without flexibility, then you will either fall into abruptness or end up like the setting sun; not only will you be unable to increase illumination, you will on the contrary damage it. Practitioners of the Tao, if they want to use its illumination, must first nurture that illumination.



30. Fire

fire above,
fire below

Light has dual function. Thus do great people illumine the four quarters with continuing light.

Fire refers to the light of the sun. Above and below is *fire* ☲, associated with the sun. The sun goes in at night and comes out in the daytime; this pattern represents inner illumination and outer illumination, one light having a dual function. This is the image of *fire*.

What great people see in this is that if people are incapable of illuminating the inner, they will be incapable of illuminating the outward; first illuminating the inner, then illuminating the outward, as is inner illumination, so also will be outward illumination. Therefore after they have illumined the inward, they then continue the enlightenment to illumine the four quarters.

"Light" is inner illumination, "continuing light" is outward illumination. What does light illumine? It simply illumines the inherent quality of open awareness without obscurity. When one is open and aware, this inner quality or virtue is already illumined, and truthfulness within reaches outside, so that nothing can deceive one, nothing can burden one; one illumines the four quarters and sees everything as clearly as if it were in the palm of one's hand. The "yellow sprouts" of living potential cover the earth, the "golden flowers" of spiritual energy bloom throughout the world. Whichever way one turns, everywhere is the Tao. Thoroughly lucid inside and out, that illumination never ceases. Then one has clarified the quality of illumination and rests in the highest good.

But continuing the enlightenment to illumine the four quarters cannot be accomplished by idleness and inaction; it involves adjustment through effort. Illumination by enlightenment means perception with clarity; if the enlightenment cannot illumine the four quarters, that light is not great, and cannot be considered continuing light. Once one illumines the inward and also illumines the outward, the light must be like the sun climbing into space, illumining all things, such that nothing can block that light. Only then is it true enlightenment, only then is it continuing light. If there is any shortfall of perceptivity, that means the light is blocked to some extent. When the light can illumine everywhere, and nothing can obstruct that perception under any circumstances, so that it reaches everywhere without becoming defective anywhere, then the work of clarifying the quality of illumination is complete.