



### 38. Disharmony

**Disharmony:** A small matter will turn out all right.

#### EXPLANATION

Disharmony means mutual opposition. As for the qualities of the hexagram, above is *fire* ☲, luminous, below is *lake* ☱, joyous. Joy arises inside, illumination is used outside; rejoicing in what is not to be rejoiced in, bringing to light what is not to be brought to light, joy and light are not appropriate, so it is called *disharmony*.

This hexagram represents conciliation and adjustment when yin and yang are separated; it follows on the previous hexagram of *concealment of illumination*. *Concealment of illumination* has a meaning of true illumination being obscured; then artificial understanding emerges, discriminating consciousness takes charge of affairs, following what it desires, shedding light on the external without illumining the inward. One's essence is thus disturbed, life is shaken, and one is separated from the Tao. This is where disharmony comes from.

However, though disharmony is disharmony, there is still a way to bring about union. Even though the light of consciousness is focused on externals, if one can empty the mind one can thereby restore light within. Even though desires arise inwardly, if one can fill the belly, one can thereby sweep desires outside. When illumination is restored and desires swept out, the spirit is settled and feelings are forgotten; then the barrier separating yin and yang is penetrated, and disharmony can be reconciled. Therefore "a small matter will turn out all right."

"A small matter" refers to yin. When the human mentality has been doing things for a long time and the mind of Tao has been buried away, the great matter is already gone. Now if you want to achieve unification, it is necessary first to dismiss the human mentality; after that the mind of Tao will arise. Only after the mind of Tao has been restored will a great matter be auspicious. When right in the midst of disharmony, it is sufficient to seek to avoid the human mentality ruining things—how can one dare hope great matters turn out well? This is spoken of in terms of a small matter turning out all right.

- **First yang:** Regret disappears: When you lose the horse, don't chase it—it will return on its own. Seeing an evil person, there is no blame.

#### EXPLANATION

In the beginning of disharmony, when the mind of Tao has just gone and the human mind has just come, if one can firmly maintain rectitude and

not be deluded by the human mentality, the mind of Tao will return of itself; those with regret can thus be freed from regret. This is like "when you lose the horse, don't chase it—it will return on its own." However, one will surely "see an evil person, without blame." The "evil person" is the human mentality; the human mentality has five thieves (joy, anger, happiness, sadness, lust) that can ruin the path. If one does not see the human mentality, one will not know the calamities caused by the five thieves: Seeing the human mind and going along with its desires to gradually introduce guidance, then the five thieves cannot extend their wildness—this is how to avoid injury. This is settling disharmony when it has just arisen.

- **2 yang:** Meeting the master in an alley, there is no blame.

#### EXPLANATION

When yin and yang have gotten out of harmony, aberrant energy is strong and true sane energy is weak—the mind of Tao is not easy to meet. However, if firmness is applied with flexibility, advancing by way of a small path, using the human mind to produce the mind of Tao, this is like "meeting the master in an alley." The formerly blameworthy can then be blameless. This is setting disharmony right when it is in full force.

- **3 yin:** One sees the vehicle dragged back, the ox halted; the person's hair and nose are cut off. There is no beginning, but there is an end.

#### EXPLANATION

When one is foolish and acts arbitrarily, following desires, that is like a vehicle being dragged back, the ox being halted; not enjoying the inward but enjoying the outward, before getting anything from others one loses from oneself—this is like having the nose and hair cut off. People like this damage the inward in their striving for the outward, lose the real by accepting the false. After all when they are at the end of their rope and have nowhere to turn, for the first time they will regret their error; therefore they have no beginning but have an end. But if one cannot regret in the beginning and regrets at the end, that regret will be useless. This is causing disharmony by oneself where there had been no disharmony.

- **4 yang:** Disharmony in solitude; meeting good people, associate sincerely, and though it be trying, there will be no fault.

#### EXPLANATION

Yang being inside yin represents the mind of Tao trapped by the human mentality. The human mind is perilous, the mind of Tao faint; the solitary yang has no resort—this is called "disharmony in solitude." However, though the mind of Tao be faint, if one can study keenly, not be ashamed to lower oneself to ask questions, and associate sincerely with superior



people who embrace the Tao, this will be mutually beneficial; the human mentality will depart day by day, and the mind of Tao will grow day by day. After a long time of this, the human mind will vanish and the mind of Tao will remain. Yin and yang will merge, and the solitary can thereby not be solitary, the faulty can thereby become faultless. This is the higher associating with the lower, thereby able to solve their disharmony.

- **5 yin:** Regret vanishes; the ally bites through skin. What fault is there in joy?

#### EXPLANATION

Flexible and receptive, emptying the mind, in between two yangs, one has already clarified the pure yin in oneself, and also understands there is yang in another. Emptying the human mind to seek the Tao, the formerly regretful can be freed from regret. The mind of Tao is the ally of the human mind, which can reform the artificiality of the human mind as easily as biting through skin. If one goes on to tread the path in this way, what fault of disharmony will there be? This is using emptiness to seek fulfillment, thus able to solve disharmony.

- **Top yang:** Disharmony results in isolation; see a pig covered with mire, a wagon carrying devils. First you draw the bow, later you put the bow down. It is not an enemy but a partner. Going on, it is fortunate if you encounter rain.

#### EXPLANATION

At the extreme of disharmony, the mind of Tao has been long buried away, and people don't pay attention to it; this is disharmony resulting in isolation. With the mind of Tao buried away and the human mentality taking charge of affairs, the influence of habit becomes one's nature, and doubts and ruminations come forth by the hundreds; this is being like a pig covered with mire, a wagon full of devils.

If you want to restore the mind of Tao, it is necessary to first understand the human mind. But to understand it, it is important to see it: Seeing it as a pig, as devilish, is truly seeing the human mentality and how injurious it is. Once you can see and understand it clearly, your former use of the human mind without understanding is like first drawing a bow, while your later ability to understand and restore the mind of Tao is like afterward putting the bow down.

Without the human mind, you don't see the mind of Tao; without the mind of Tao, you cannot know the human mind. Using the human mind temporarily to restore the mind of Tao, even though the human mind is the chief of villains, it is also the chief in merit; it is not an enemy, but really a partner. Once the human mind is seen and the mind of Tao is restored, at this point if you empty the human mind and activate the mind of Tao, and go on to solve disharmony, then yin and yang combine harmo-

niously. It is like encountering rain, which washes away the filth of all the pollution of the past, so one is restored to original wholeness and soundness. What can compare to that fortune? This is taking advantage of the time to solve disharmony, inasmuch as disharmony must ultimately be reconciled.

In each of the six lines there is disharmony, and the path of reconciliation is only capable of escaping disharmony between yin and yang, not of balancing yin and yang. Therefore it says a small affair will turn out all right. But if a small affair can turn out well, then a great affair can turn out well. When disharmony is finally reconciled, and yin and yang commune, if you seek from here, a great affair will surely bring good fortune. So practitioners of the Tao should first seek good results in the small affair.



### 38. Disparity

fire above,  
lake below

**Above is fire, below is a lake, disparate. Thus are superior people the same yet different.**

Disparity means disjunction between one and another. Above is *fire* ☲, below is *lake* ☵: the nature of fire is to flame upward, while the nature of water is to flow downward; when the fire is above, it cannot warm the water, and when the water is below it cannot extinguish the fire. Thus though the fire and the lake water are in the same place, their natures are different; this is the image of *disparity*.

What superior people see in this is that practitioners of the Tao should not fail to assimilate to others, yet should not be too much like others either. If they do not assimilate, they will startle and amaze the ignorant and ordinary people, and will be disliked and suspected by others; if they become too similar, however, they will be caught up in their influence and fall into mundane feelings. Therefore they are different in the midst of sameness.

Emulating the way moisture permeates things, they merge with the ordinary world and harmonize their illumination, responding to people harmoniously, able to adapt without restriction, assimilating to everyone. Emulating the way fire lights things up, they clearly distinguish truth and falsity, dealing with people without confusion, inwardly autonomous, having extraordinary self-control.

Outwardly the same yet inwardly not the same, inwardly different yet outwardly not different, they are thus able to be very much like other people while at the same time very much different from other people. Outward sameness means going by worldly laws; inward difference is practicing the principles of the Tao. This is what is meant by the saying "In cultivating practice, one conforms and harmonizes, adapting to each individual situation as it is; nobody can fathom such changes, or see how one acts or lies hidden."