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Chapter 3

Do not exalt the worthy, and the people will not contend for position.

If one overly exalts the worthy, then all will strive to become such, and contention will arise, bringing disorder.

Do not prize goods that are rare in the world, and the people will not risk themselves to become thieves.

If rare treasures are prized, greed will awaken and thieves will appear.

Do not display objects of desire, and people's hearts will not be enticed into turmoil.

If desirable things fill the eyes, hearts will be disturbed and evil thoughts will grow.

Therefore, in governing the state, the sage strives to empty the hearts of the people, keeping them tranquil and free of idle schemes, yet to fill their bellies with food.

Their ambitions are kept gentle, so they are not arrogant or competitive, yet their bones are made strong.

By constantly causing the people to be without cunning knowledge and without vain desires, even those who deem themselves clever will not dare to act rashly.

When one governs through non-action, there is nothing that will not be well governed.

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