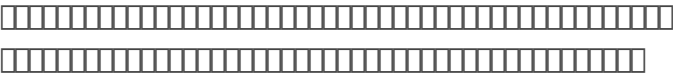


Chapter 22



Translation

The crooked shall be made whole;
the bent shall be made straight.
The hollow shall be filled;
the worn shall be made new.
With little, one gains;
with much, one goes astray.

Therefore the Sage embraces the One
and becomes the pattern for all under Heaven.
Not displaying himself, he is luminous.
Not asserting he is right, he becomes evident.
Not proclaiming his merit, he achieves.
Not praising himself, he endures.
Because he alone does not contend,
no one under Heaven can contend with him.

The ancient saying, "the crooked shall be made whole" —
how could this be empty words?
Truly, wholeness returns to him.

Word Notes

- 曲 — "**crooked**": Bent to one side, partial.
- 窪 — "**hollow**": Sunken low, depressed.
- 迷 — "**goes astray**": Confused, led astray.
- 彰 — "**distinguished**": Made manifest, celebrated.
- 自 — "**proclaiming merit**": Declaring one's own achievements.
- 自 — "**proud**": Given to self-praise.

Chapter Explanation

In all things, what is **crooked** can be made **whole**. What is **bent** can be made **straight**. What is **hollow** can be **filled**. What is **worn** can be made **new**. With **little**, one can **gain**. With **much**, one

becomes **bewildered**. For this reason, **the Sage** holds fast to a single, undivided heart, making no distinctions whatsoever, and serves as **the pattern for all under Heaven**. He does not display **his own brilliance**, and therefore he is truly **luminous**. He does not insist upon **being right** or seek to distinguish himself, and therefore he is truly **distinguished**. He does not proclaim **his own merit**, and therefore he truly **has merit**. He does not boast of **his own strengths**, and therefore he truly **endures**. All of this flows from **non-contention**. Because he **does not contend**, no one under Heaven is able to **contend with him**. The ancients said "**the crooked shall be made whole**" — is this **empty talk**? Truly, without seeking it, wholeness comes of itself and returns to him.

Discourse

This chapter teaches that the crooked, the bent, the hollow, the worn, and the little are what the world does not want. The whole, the straight, the full, the new, and the much are what the world fights to obtain. Yet people do not realize that among all things between Heaven and Earth, fullness and emptiness, waning and waxing, cycle without ceasing. Why contend? Moreover, the crooked and the whole, the bent and the straight, and all the rest — are they not mere projections of worldly delusion?

Therefore the Sage rises above all names and appearances, steps beyond all dualistic opposition, and rests in pure stillness without contention. Since he does not contend with others, even those who might wish to contend with him find no ground upon which to do so. Naturally, his reality and his name arrive together — without contention, he gains all of himself.

Revision #2

Created 2026-03-10 22:34:53 UTC by Phil

Updated 2026-03-13 01:42:17 UTC by Phil