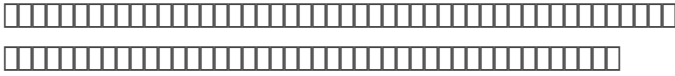


Chapter 30



Translation

One who assists the ruler through Dao
does not use arms to overpower all under Heaven.
Such deeds readily rebound.

Where armies have camped,
thorns and brambles spring up.
After a great war,
years of famine surely follow.

The skilled one achieves the fruit, nothing more —
never daring to seize by force.
achieve the fruit without boasting;
achieve the fruit without vaunting;
achieve the fruit without arrogance;
achieve the fruit only because there is no other way;
achieve the fruit without overpowering.

When things reach full vigor, they grow old:
this is called departing from Dao.
What departs from Dao comes to an early end.

Word Notes

- 棘 — "**thorns and brambles**": Scrubby, thorny bushes that scratch.
- 實 — "**fruit**": The fruit of a tree — sweet and beautiful on the outside, containing a kernel within. The outer sweetness corresponds to harmony; the inner kernel corresponds to humaneness.
- 驕 — "**arrogant**": Haughty, overbearing.

Chapter Explanation

One who assists the ruler through Dao does not rely on military force to overpower all under Heaven. **The consequences of killing through military force readily rebound.** **Where**

armies have encamped, the people die or flee, the land goes uncultivated, and **thorns and brambles spring up wild**. **After a great war**, the grievance-qi of the dead permeates the atmosphere as pestilence, and **there are sure to be years of famine and catastrophe**. Therefore **one who is skilled at governing** carries within himself ceaseless generative humaneness that benefits all under Heaven, while outwardly appearing rounded and concordant, meeting others without contention — **that is all**. **He does not dare to seize dominance through military force**. Though he benefits all under Heaven through humaneness, still he **does not boast**. Though he benefits all under Heaven through humaneness, still he **does not vaunt his achievements**. Though he benefits all under Heaven through humaneness, still he **does not grow arrogant**. The generative humaneness within him, ceaselessly striving and renewing, cannot be halted — yet still he **does not push toward excessive dominance**. For **when the myriad beings reach full vigor, they grow old**. Growing old means **they have departed from Dao**. Having departed from Dao, **they come to an early end**.

Discourse

This single character "fruit" is the method of the heart that runs from beginning to end in the Daoist tradition — the method of **inner sagehood and outer kingship**. Its inner sagehood is **humaneness**. Its outer kingship is **harmony**. Its quality of running from beginning to end is **courage**. Now let us take an actual fruit as illustration. Its outer skin is lustrous in color, sweet and fragrant in smell; to see it delights the eye and gladdens the heart; to eat it pleases the palate and refreshes the spirit. It can be offered to spirits and gods; it can be presented to honored guests. Moreover, it is rounded and smooth — and of all shapes, the round rolls most easily. Is this not harmony? Is this not the great common path of all under Heaven? Is this not what the noble person does when he uses beauty and benefit to benefit all under Heaven? Within it lies hidden the kernel. Mencius said: "Humaneness is the heart of the human being." Is this not inner sagehood? From the kernel sprouts a shoot, grows leaves, flowers, and bears fruit; within the fruit a new kernel forms. From beginning to end, it generates life without ceasing. What extraordinary courage this is!

Now let us take the practitioners of the Daoist tradition as further proof. As a rule, their humaneness is concealed within; outwardly nothing shows. When the people of all under Heaven can be rescued, they rescue them; when they cannot, they let things take their natural course and await the appointed time of Heaven. Not only does this differ from the Confucian learning that exhausts human effort and then unites with Heaven, but it has both life-giving and life-taking aspects, differing also from Buddhism's great compassion and great mercy. When they have attained Dao, they mostly roam playfully through the human world, unconstrained by formalities, using this as a means to relieve people and benefit things. Their blending of light and mingling with the dust resembles the Buddhist approach, but differs from the Confucian way of proceeding step by step, carefully following the rules. Their outer kingship takes harmony as its operative principle. The Confucian tradition also aims at bringing about perfect equilibrium and harmony — likewise taking harmony as its operative principle. But Confucian harmony and Daoist harmony differ slightly. The Daoist, upon first entering the path of cultivation, pushes everything aside, paying no heed to human sentiments, not even sparing the body. "The reason I face great trouble is that I have a body." Yet once the body is perfected, one enters the world and establishes merit. When the work is done, one retires swiftly with the courage of one braving a torrent, leaving no attachments behind. From start to finish, courage is the ruling principle. And this courage is the

same across the sages of all three teachings. Not only the three teachings — the sages of all ten thousand teachings share it. For courage is the Dao of Heaven. Heaven moves ceaselessly in its creative activity, flowing on without rest. This "Dao of Heaven" is not the heaven of the lesser fruits of the human and celestial realms — students of Buddhism should discern this carefully. It is the common ground to which the sages of all teachings return. Therefore all ten thousand teachings are one and the same. If the people of all under Heaven today could awaken together to the principle of this fruit — storing humaneness and virtue within, displaying a rounded and concordant appearance without, and persevering from start to finish with courage — not only could the disasters of war be extinguished, but a world of great De and sincere transformation could be brought into being. The topic of the disasters of war in this chapter is elaborated in the Discourse on the following chapter.

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