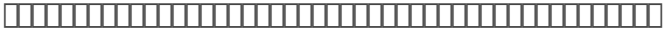


Chapter 43



Translation

The softest thing under Heaven
rides sovereign through the hardest under Heaven.
What has no substance passes through where there is no opening.
From this I know the value of nonaction.

The teaching that needs no words,
the gain that comes through not-doing —
few things under Heaven can touch them.

Word Notes

- 𠄎 — "**gallop through**": To drive and command; to move at will.

Chapter Explanation

The softest thing under Heaven can drive and command the hardest thing under Heaven. That which has nothing at all can enter where there is no gap. From this one knows the benefit of nonaction. The teaching without words, the benefit of nonaction — few under Heaven can match them.

Discourse

The hardest things under Heaven can all be shattered. The most substantial things can all decay. Moreover, what is hard is necessarily heavy and cannot set all things in motion. What is substantial is necessarily solid and cannot accommodate all things. Only the softest thing can not only set all things in motion but overcome anything whatsoever. Only that which has no substance at all can not only accommodate all things but be present everywhere without exception. From this one can see that the benefits of softness, weakness, emptiness, and nonbeing are exceedingly great. One need only learn to be soft, weak, empty, and without substance — and that is enough.

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