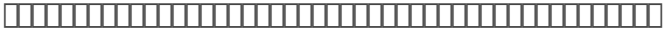


# Chapter 44



## Translation

Fame or the self — which is more dear?

The self or wealth — which carries greater weight?

Getting or losing — which is the real affliction?

Therefore: to love too fiercely is to spend yourself dry.

To hoard without measure is to invite heavy loss.

Know contentment, and disgrace cannot touch you.

Know when to stop, and danger will not find you.

This is the way to last.

## Word Notes

- 卮 — "**expenditure**": Exhaustion, depletion of energy and spirit.

## Chapter Explanation

People mostly love fame. But fame and the self — which is more dear? People mostly covet wealth. But the self and wealth — which counts for more? People mostly take gaining as glory and losing as affliction. Yet they do not realize that one must first lose and only then can one gain. Gain and loss — which is truly the affliction? Therefore, one who excessively loves fame will surely deplete their spirit and energy. One who greedily hoards wealth will surely invite the resentment of many and suffer heavy loss. Only by knowing contentment and not making reckless demands can one avoid disgrace. Only by knowing when to stop and not greedily grasping can one avoid danger. Only then can one long endure.

## Discourse

People in the world jostle and scramble, rushing about in toil and labor, for no purpose other than seeking fame and profit — for no purpose other than chasing great renown and fat advantage. Moreover, it is human nature to rejoice at getting fame and profit and to grieve at losing them. They do not realize that seeking fame invariably exhausts the spirit and injures the body. Seeking profit by wagering one's body to make a fortune is just the same. "Act on profit and you invite much resentment" — getting much profit inevitably brings danger. Getting great fame invites the

jealousy and destruction of others — it is just the same. Fame and profit are both things external to the self. If in seeking fame and profit one damages the self, then which is more dear? Which is the real affliction? Which carries greater weight? Which less?

Furthermore, wherever there is getting, there is losing. Why calculate the two? Getting actually comes from losing — one must first lose before one can gain. Take even a blade of grass or a mustard seed — the very smallest of things — one must still use one's eyes to look at it, bend down, and pick it up by hand before one can obtain it. Though one gains it, one's eyesight and energy have already been spent. Take something worth a single coin — the cheapest of things — one must still spend money before one can buy it. Though one gains it, one's money has already been spent. Even for the smallest and cheapest things, one must inevitably first lose and only then gain. For great and precious things, how much more so.

Therefore, among all affairs between Heaven and Earth, nothing can be gained without cost. What is there to rejoice about in getting? What is there to grieve about in losing? The noble person is at ease and self-content, and thereby breaks free from getting and losing. The petty person is anxious, bitter, and tormented, precisely because of fretting over getting and losing — fretting about not getting, fretting about losing what one has. They do not know that getting does not come from seeking, and that losing cannot be averted by fretting. Only by rising above getting and losing, and fulfilling one's Heaven-given duty as a human being, will it naturally come about that one first parts with things and afterward harvests, gains without seeking to gain, and — what is more — once gained, it is gained forever and never lost through ten thousand ages.

Consider Confucius in his day: he harbored the aspiration of giving peace to the old, being trusted by friends, and cherishing the young — the aspiration of saving all under Heaven for ten thousand generations. He traveled through the states, and in his entire life never achieved his ambitions. Some said he was like a stray dog with no home. Some called him impractical and out of touch. Some said, "How he has declined!" Some asked, "Why is he so restlessly bustling?" His reputation had been lost. He resigned his post as Minister of Justice in Lu and departed; in every state he visited he held no office. He lived his whole life in hardship and poverty — his salary and profit were lost.

Yet precisely because he lost fame and profit, he gained the great name of Model for Teachers of Ten Thousand Generations, the name of one the like of whom has never existed since the birth of humankind. He gained the enduring benefit of sacrificial vessels honored for a thousand autumns, offerings enjoyed in the ancestral temple, and posterity preserving his legacy. Looking back at those rulers of the various states who in their day gained fame and gained profit — they have all, on the contrary, lost everything.

Confucius, of course, had no intention of seeking fame or profit. Yet where there is substance, there will be reputation. Where there is De, there will be emolument. Seeing it this way, one need only pursue substance and cultivate great De — and that is enough. Why insist on seeking fame and profit? Why insist on calculating getting and losing?

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