

Chapter 68



Translation

The good warrior takes no pride in force.
The good fighter stirs no anger.
The good victor does not contend with the enemy.
The good commander places himself beneath his men.
This is called the De of non-contention.
This is called the power of employing others.
This is called matching Heaven —
the highest since antiquity.

Word Notes

- 敵 — "**enemy / to oppose**": To resist and oppose one another; mutual antagonism.
- 合 — "**to match**": To match and combine with.

Chapter Explanation

The one who is good at being a warrior does not prize martial force. The one who is good at fighting does not give vent to anger. The one who is good at vanquishing the enemy does not use contention and killing. The one who is good at employing others places himself beneath them. This is called **the De of non-contention**. This is called **the power of employing others**. This is called **the ability to match and combine with the Dao of Heaven**. This is **the highest method known since ancient times**.

Discourse

All who possess Dao do not prize martial valor and do not delight in war. Even when they cannot avoid using military force, they are **divinely martial yet do not kill**. They repel the enemy while conversing and laughing. They meet movement with stillness. They meet the weary with ease. They overcome the strong through weakness. They conquer the hard through softness. Take the Marquis of Wu, Zhuge Liang; the Grand Tutor Xie An; Wang Yangming — all of them employed precisely this method. All of them understood the Dao of Heaven.

Otherwise, the petty courage of a common man — how could it bring peace to all under Heaven? A morning's petty wrath — how could it endure? A temperament that is flighty and impetuous — how could it prevail over others? When it comes to Dao, such things are even further off the mark.

As for employing others — one must be humble and respectful, placing oneself beneath them, so that talented people are willing to serve. If one is arrogant and self-satisfied, how would the upright and noble-minded be willing to serve? Those who do serve such a person will invariably be sycophants seeking profit and office. Would employing such people not ruin everything?

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