

和 (HO)

廿字金丹 以和字居末 意深哉

The Twenty Characters Doctrine, a golden healing remedy, employs the character HO (Harmony) as its last character, one with a deep meaning.

吾嘗反覆推論 和之下連有各字者 曰和順 曰和平 曰和合 曰和樂

I have repeatedly deduced meaning from the character HO. Some Chinese phrases begin with the character HO and literally read, for instance, ‘harmonic smoothness’, ‘harmonic equilibrium’, ‘harmonic togetherness’, ‘harmonic happiness’.

蓋和則順 不和則不順而相逆

Hence, HO manifests smoothness. Without HO, there is not smoothness, but resistance instead.

和則平 不和則不平而相陂

HO manifests equilibrium. Without HO, equilibrium disappears, and unbalance takes its place.

和則合 不和則不合而相離

HO manifests togetherness. Without HO, togetherness vanishes and separation pervades all.

和則樂 不和則不樂而相怨

HO manifests happiness. Without HO, there is not happiness but resentment in its place.

此事有必至者也

This is a straightforward matter of cause and effect.

和之上連有各字者 曰父子和 兄弟和 夫婦和 朋友和 宗族和 鄉黨和 妯娌和

Other Chinese phrases end with the character HO and some examples literally read ‘father and son harmony’, ‘brotherhood harmony’, ‘husband and wife harmony’, ‘friends harmony’, ‘patriarchal clan harmony’, ‘village group harmony’, and ‘family in-laws harmony’.

蓋和則為父子 為兄弟 為夫婦 為朋友 為宗族 為鄉黨 為妯娌

Hence with HO, the relationships between father and son, brother and brother, husband and wife, friend and friend, patriarchal clan, village group, and family in-laws are constituted and

cemented.

不和 則不可謂父子兄弟夫婦朋友宗族鄉黨與妯娌也

Without HO, the relationship between father and son, brothers, husband and wife, friends, patriarchal clan, village group, and family in-laws simply do not exist.

此又理之必然者也

This is another straightforward reason.

細玩和字 從禾從口

Careful scrutiny of the character HO shows it is formed, in turn, of Chinese characters signifying a rice plant and a mouth.

蓋禾至午時開口 此時乃天地中正之氣 不偏不撓

Behold the rice plant: each grain of a rice plant opens up with a mouth-shape exactly at mid-day. This time of day is a period evidencing the most upright spirit between sky and earth. That spirit is unbiased and perseverance.

故曰致中和 天地位焉 萬物育焉

Thus goes a saying that when HO is present, the sky and earth are in their proper position and every living thing grows.

人苟以中正之氣 位天地而育萬物 則大人之能事盡矣

If mankind becomes able to use upright spirit to order and calm the sky and earth, and nurture living things, it would be mankind's ultimate accomplishment.

嘗觀和順之家 其祥瑞有可見於物類者

When visiting a harmonious family, the distinctively harmonious atmosphere can be noticed even by observing their farm animals.

昔陳褒南唐江州人也 十世同居 宗族七百口

Long ago, the family of Chen Bao, who dwelled in Jiang Zhou in Southern Tang Dynasty, had ten generations, in all more than seven hundred people, living together.

設廣席 長幼以次坐而共食之

During meals, old and young were seated in a family seniority order and ate together.

其家畜犬百餘 共一牢食 一犬不至諸犬為之不食 犬知愛其類 非和順之所感乎

His dogs, numbering somewhat more than a hundred, also ate together in their dog pen. However, if one dog failed to appear, the rest of the dogs would not eat. The dogs, showing in this way how they knew to love their kind, plainly were influenced by the harmonious atmosphere of this wonderful family who owned them.

今世之士 以同流合污為和 噫 亦惑矣

Today's people mistakenly suppose that HO merely means conforming themselves to the behavior of others. The superficial definition they implicitly make indeed distorts and confuses the truth of HO.

孔子有言 君子和而不同 小人同而不和

Confucius said, "A properly-behaved person can readily attain HO without necessarily conforming himself with the behavior of others; a misbehaving person can most certainly act with meticulous conformity without approaching HO."

蓋和與同 跡相似而義相反 不可不辨也

Hence, HO and conformity may, at a glance, seem similar; however, one should most carefully note that their meanings are indeed totally distinct and even opposite to each other.

今有人焉 彼謂善 我從而善之 彼謂惡 我從而惡之
隨聲附和 不察可否焉 是同也 而不可謂之和

Suppose that people say that a person is good, and so I follow them and regard that person as good. Or perhaps people say that another person is bad, and I follow them and regard that person as bad.

Simply adopting the opinions of others without investigating whether they are correct or not is mere conformity, it is most certainly not HO.

又有人焉 彼謂善 我於善之中察其惡 彼謂惡 我於惡之中察其善
揆情酌理 得夫好惡之正 而不流於偏焉 是和也 而不可謂之同

On the other hand, by contrast, suppose people say that a person is good, and I observantly detect badness within his goodness. Or, perhaps people say that another person is bad, but I correctly perceive some goodness within his badness.

Detecting such true goodness or badness through judicious investigation, free of bias, is HO; it is nothing in the nature of conformity.

吾今辨道多年 望求真實前輩 指吾過失 即和之意也

I, myself, have studied religion for years and hope that any sincere persons more senior than I, as well as my peers, will point out my mistakes. Such hope is the intention of HO.

何者 目能察秋毫 而不能自觀其睫 力能舉九鼎 而不能自舉其身

Why such intention? Though our eyes be able to count each of the tiny lines on a little bird's feathers, we cannot use our very same sharp eyes to see our own eye lashes. Though our strength allows us to lift the weight of nine heavy Chinese iron pots, we cannot use our same strength to lift our own weight by our bootstraps.

人皆明於觀人 而不能自知其過

Human beings easily detect others' mistakes, but can never see their own mistakes right in front of them.

誠得益友以匡救之 輔助之 使我無太過 亦無不及 非中和之道乎

Sincerely seeking and asking friends to assist or rescue us from our own errors: by acting thus, our behavior will neither err to excess on the one hand nor to want by falling short on the other hand. Is this not the way of the most moderate HO?

今夫庖人治庖 過於鹹則益之水 過於淡則益之鹽

必鹽水配合 得其和焉 而後謂之和羹

詩曰 亦有和羹 既戒既平 是也

Now, think of a chef cooking a delicacy. The chef is either adding water if the broth be too salty, or adding salt if the broth be too tasteless. The water and salt must be in balance in order to achieve harmony, and only then can it be called an 'harmonious' broth.

As the Sutra of Poetry also says: "An harmonious broth is unexaggerated and mild."

樂人治樂 其聲高者抑而下之 其聲低者揚而上之

必高下相合 得其和焉 而後謂之和聲

詩曰 樂于和聲 和聲克諧 是也

A musician adjusts music by either lowering the key when the music is too high, or rising to a higher key when it is too low. The high and low pitches must be in balance in order to achieve harmony, and only then can they be called harmonious sound.

This is also what the Sutra of Poetry says: "Music is that which is regarded as being harmonious sound. Harmonious sound is euphony."

食也者 悅吾口者也 過三寸則不知也 而必求其味之和焉

The love of food is a passion pertaining to the mouth. When food once passes over the tongue, of but three inches in length, the taste of it is forgotten. However, the yearning for harmonious taste itself is ever within us.

樂也者 悅吾耳者也 過一夕則不知也 而必求其音之和焉

Music brings a pleasure pertaining to the ear, but once the night is over, such pleasure is forgotten. However, the yearning for harmonious sound itself is ever within us.

況心為吾身之主 氣為吾身之用 安得不求其和耶

Consider these: the heart is the vital center of our body and air¹ is a necessity for our body. Shouldn't then the heart and the air be so ordered as to be in a state of HO within our bodies?

Note¹: The air which is also noted in chapter 4 MING can be a 'Noble Air' or a 'Fiery Air' constituted by our behavior.

孟子曰 持其志 毋暴其氣

此和之之道也

Mencius said, "Persist in your ambition, but don't lightly expend your Noble Air."

This is the TAO of HO.

雖然和亦未易言也

Of course, HO is not easy to illustrate.

良工塗漆 漆緩則難晞 漆急則不固 均其緩急 使之調和 則美焉

For instance, a painter paints. If the motion of painting is too slow, the paint is too thick and it is difficult for the paint to dry. If the motion of painting is too quick, the paint is insufficient and thin. The opposites of slow and quick painting motion must be in balance so that the paint can be regulated harmoniously and the beauty of it achieved.

冶人鑄劍 太剛則折 太柔則卷 欲無折則加之鉛 欲無卷則加之金

A blacksmith makes a sword. If the sword is too hard, it will be easily broken; if it is too soft, it will be warped. If it be desired not to be broken, lead must be added; not to be warped, metal must be added.

何者 金性剛 而鉛性柔 均其剛柔 使之調和 則善焉

The reason of the matter is that the nature of metal is hard, and the nature of lead is soft. Once the opposites of softness and hardness are balanced in an harmonious state, the finest results will be achieved.

人之心性 有似於此

The nature of our heart and soul is analogous to the foregoing examples.

徐偃王性軟而國滅

King Xu-Yan had a too-soft-hearted personality and this caused his country to be destroyed.

Xu-Yan, at first as a duke of Zhou Dynasty, treated his people with benevolence. Before long, several small states of Zhou allied with him and, at their urging, he let them name him King. The reigning monarch of Zhou felt such unease about the developments that he sent troops to destroy King Xu-Yan's power. However, King Xu-Yan was so soft-hearted that he gave up the fight for his states, not wanting his people to die in battle.

齊簡公性懦而國亡 過於柔者也

Qi Jian-gong had a cowardly personality and caused his country to fall. These tragedies were due to extreme softness of personality.

Qi Jian-gong was a king of Qi in the Warring Period of Chinese history. In his government, there was a tyrannical administrator named Chen controlling Jian-gong's government. Jian-gong had some chances to regain his power by killing Chen, but he never could summon the courage to do so. Eventually, Chen assassinated Jian-gong and dominated the country of Qi for a period of time.

陽處父性強而被害

Yang Chu-Fu, an administrator of the country of Jin in the Spring and Autumn period (BC 770-476) had such an irascible personality that he always used his words to hurt others, and eventually he himself was killed.

鄭子陽性猛而殺身 過於剛者也

Zheng Zi-yang, an administrator of the country of Zheng in the Spring and Autumn period, had such a cruel personality that he refused mercy to any wrongdoer for even a minor infraction. At one time, a servant ran away from Zheng because he accidentally broke a bow. This servant, who so feared Zheng's punishment, organized a rebellion among the people who resented Zheng, and murdered him.

These outcomes were due to extreme hardness of personality.

皆不和之所致也

All those events happened because HO was lost.

陰陽和而後雨澤降 時序和而後萬物生 苟有偏勝 則為水火未濟而變亂生焉

When Yin-Yang is in the state of HO, the rain falls on time. When the seasons are in a state of HO, all nature blossoms and procreates. The absence of HO is as when fire and water lose their natural balance, whereupon catastrophes happen.

今天下君子道消 小人道長 乃陰盛陽衰 天人紊亂之際

Today, the TAO of the properly-behaved person is at an ebb; the TAO of the improperly-behaved person is at flood tide. Such is the state of Yin (darkness) being strong and Yang (brightness) being weak, and thus a period of catastrophe for Heaven and all humanity.

固無所謂和也 人與人不和而爭訟起 國與國不和而戰鬥開
怨氣薰蒸 演成浩劫 此吾所深為浩歎者也

Therefore, precious little HO is present to our eyes today. Disputes and lawsuits abound because HO is not maintained between people. Wars and conflicts erupt because HO is not maintained between countries.

Every land is full of sorrow, which gradually evolves into calamities on ever-wider scale. This sadness I feel so deeply that it causes me to sigh with gasps of grief.

今欲挽回浩劫 不得不提倡廿字 以調和天地之氣化焉

Hoping to avert even more massive disaster, I know no other nor better way than to promote the Twenty Characters Doctrine to harmonize the atmosphere between Heaven and Earth.

誠使人吾道者 和汝性情 和汝氣質 而身修

I fervently hope and urge that you who practice my TAO endeavor and persist in bringing harmony to your personality and inner essence so that your moral character will be cultivated and purified;

和汝兄弟 和汝妻子 而家齊

That you harmonize with brothers, wives and children so that your household will be in order;

和汝政治 和汝人民 而國治

That you harmonize your politics and your citizenry so that your country will be well administered;

和汝鬼神 和汝物類 而二氣調 三才正

and that all people harmonize in spirit and in every way so that Yin-Yang shall be regulated and Heaven, Earth and mankind be in their proper relation.

和風甘雨 萬象同春 有何天心之不可回 劫運之不可挽哉

And again: Because of harmonious breeze, timely rainfall, everything is and can be full of Spring's spirit. Thus, Heaven's primordial will can be retrieved and mankind's disastrous fate can be averted.

勉之勉之 予日望之

Exert yourself, exert yourself, I continually pray and look forward to seeing this every day!