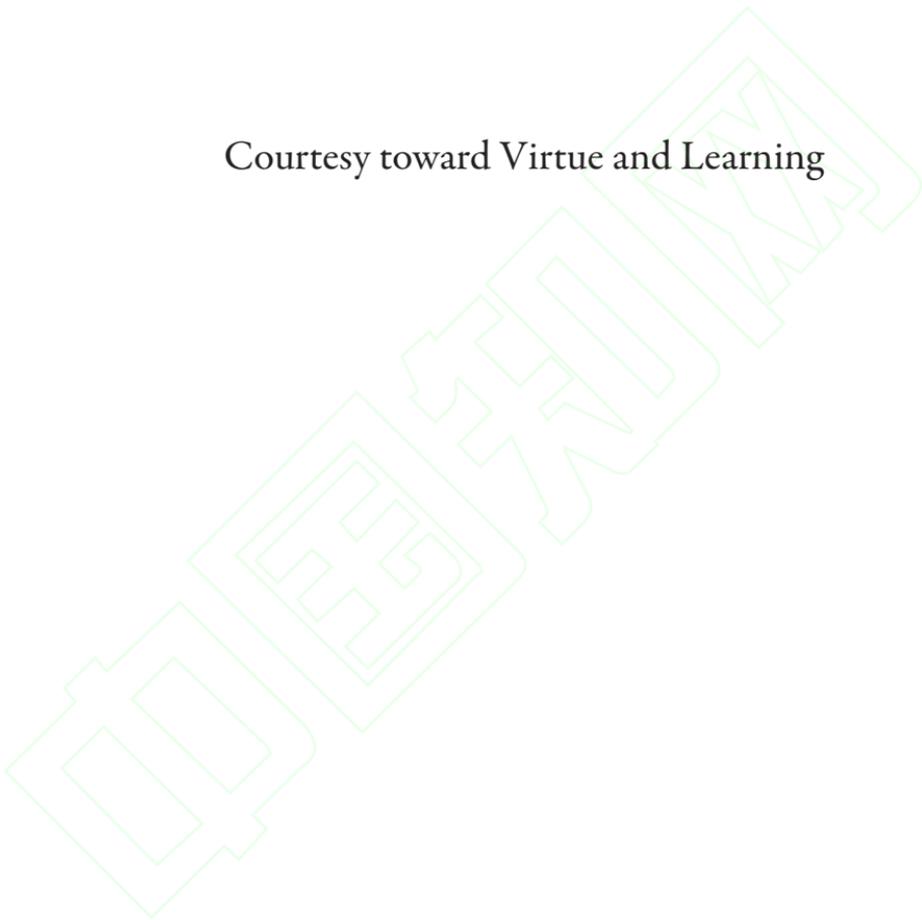


TALE 46

Courtesy toward Virtue and Learning



Men of learning tend to look down upon a ruler while an unworthy ruler also looks down upon men of learning. As they look down upon each other day in and day out, how can they be expected to get on with each other? They are like the Confucianists and Moists who denounce each other and the clothes of Qi and Jing which are vastly different.

An enlightened ruler is different. Men of learning may look down upon him, but he is more courteous to them. How could men of learning not follow him? A ruler who is followed by men of learning will be followed by people of the world. An emperor is a person obeyed by people of the world. A king is a person followed by people of the world.

A man who has mastered the True Way does not become arrogant even when he has attained the lofty position of a king, does not indulge himself or show off even when he is the richest man in the world, is not disappointed and disheartened when he is a lowly commoner and can only afford to wear cotton clothes, and does not worry and become frightened when he is poor and has no food and clothing.

He is sincere and magnanimous because he has mastered the True Way; he understands the causes of things and never has doubts for anything; he is alone by himself, ad-



heres firmly to his belief and never changes it; he follows the way of heaven and changes with Yin and Yang; he understands the logic of things and is steadfast in his determination; he is honest, tolerant and totally free from fraud; he has lofty and boundless ambitions; he is profound and fathomless in thought; he is resolute and firm and high in moral integrity; he does things carefully and is never self-opinionated; he is upright and considers it a shame to use tricks; he is broadminded and attaches no importance to vulgar praise or condemnation.

He looks upon heaven as the highest principle, virtue as the guide to his conduct, and the True Way as his belief. He changes with the multitude of things and never comes to an end; his vital energy fills heaven and earth and is never exhausted; and his spirit permeates the universe and knows no bounds. Nobody knows where the True Way begins, where it ends, where the gateway leading to it is, where it originates and where its source is.

It can be boundlessly large and infinitely small. It is more precious than anything. Even the Five Emperors could not befriend with a man of virtue and learning who has attained this state of accomplishment. Even the Three Kings could not make him their teacher. He might become their friend or teacher if they effaced their imperial airs.