

Heaven and Earth Landscape Class 2 Readings

One

Ancients who realized primal unity: Heaven realized primal unity and so came to clarity. Earth realized primal unity and so came to tranquility. Gods realized primal unity and so came to spirit. Valleys realized primal unity and so came to fullness. The ten thousand things realized primal unity and so came to life. Lords and emperors realized primal unity and so came to rectify all beneath heaven.

It's their very existence: without clarity heaven cracks open, without tranquility earth bursts forth, without spirit gods cease, without fullness valleys run dry, without life the ten thousand things perish, without high nobility lords and emperors stumble and fall. Nobility is rooted in humility, and high founded on low. This is why true lords and emperors call themselves orphaned, destitute, ill-fated. Isn't this rooted in humility? Isn't it

Two

Counting the world's praise as no praise, refusing to tinkle like delicate jade bells or clatter like ponderous stone chimes?

Three

SACRED WORLD

or flooding or a hurricane, it is seen as a battle with the elements, as an uncomfortable reminder of their strength. The warrior's approach is that, rather than trying to overcome the raw elements of existence, one should respect their power and their order as a guide to human conduct. In the ancient philosophies of both China and Japan, the three principles of heaven, earth, and man expressed this view of how human life and society could be integrated with the order of the natural world. These principles are based on an ancient understanding of natural hierarchy. I have found that, in presenting the discipline of warriorship, the principles of heaven, earth and man are very helpful in describing how the warrior should take his seat in the sacred world. Although politically and socially, our values are quite different from those of Imperial China and Japan, it is still possible to appreciate the basic wisdom contained in these principles of natural order.

Heaven, earth, and man can be seen literally as the sky above, the earth below, and human beings standing or sitting between the two. Unfortunately, the use of "man" here, rather than "human being," may have a limiting connotation for some readers. (By "man, in this case, we simply mean anthropomorphic existence-human existence--not man as opposed to woman.)

Traditionally, heaven is the realm of the gods, the most sacred space. So, symbolically, the principle of heaven represents any lofty ideal or experience of vastness and sacredness. The grandeur and vision of heaven are what inspire human greatness and creativity. Earth, on the other hand, symbolizes practicality and receptivity. It is the ground that supports and promotes life. Earth may seem solid and stubborn, but earth can be penetrated and worked on. Earth can be cultivated. The proper relationship between heaven and earth is what makes the earth principle pliable. You might think of the space of heaven as very dry and conceptual, but warmth and love also come from heaven. Heaven is the source of the rain that falls on the earth, so heaven has a

sympathetic connection with earth. When that connection is made, then the earth begins to yield. It becomes gentle and soft and pliable, so that greenery can grow on it, and man can cultivate it. Then there is the man principle, which is connected with simplicity, or living in harmony with heaven and earth. When human beings combine the freedom of heaven with the practicality of earth, they can live in a good human society with one another. Traditionally it is said that, when human beings live in harmony with the principles of heaven and earth, then the four seasons and the elements of the world will also work together harmoniously. Then there is no fear and human beings begin to join in, as they deserve, in living in this world. They have heaven above and earth below, and they appreciate the trees and the greenery and so on. They begin to appreciate all this.

But if human beings violate their connection, or lose their trust in heaven and earth, then there will be social chaos and natural disasters. In Chinese the character for the ruler, or king, is a vertical line joining three horizontal lines, which represent heaven, earth, and man. This means that the king has the power to join heaven and earth in a good human society. Traditionally, if there was plenty of rainfall, and crops and vegetation flourished, then this indicated that the king was genuine, that he truly joined heaven and earth. But when there was drought and starvation or natural catastrophes, such as flooding and earth quakes, then the power of the king was in doubt. The idea that harmony in nature is linked to harmony in human affairs is not purely an Oriental concept. For example, there are many stories in the Bible, such as the story of King David, that portray the conflict between heaven and earth and the doubt that it raises about the king. If we apply the perspective of heaven, earth, and man to the situation in the world today, we begin to see that there is a connection between the social and the natural, or environmental,