

## ***X. Let's Talk About the Cultivation of Both Fate and Soul***

### **[FOREWORD]**

All of you have cultivated yourselves for a long time, so do you know what the advantages are to cultivate according to Tao, and why you should cultivate according to Tao? The intension for a person according to Tao is to cultivate himself virtue, to transcend worldliness, and to attain holiness. Thus it is necessary to cultivate both fate and soul.

#### 1. Fate

A. Soul and fate have different characters. First, we will talk about fate. When a person is born into this world, inevitably fate arranges his life. The composition of fate is the driving power of karma, it is also the burden of one's previous lives' deeds, and the condition for the performance of the five virtues (i.e. benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and honesty (or faith)).

All these in turn will produce good fortune or bad, blessings or disasters, wealth or poverty, eminence or obscurity. If a person practices the five virtues, then fate will produce for him good fortune, wealth, nobleness, longevity, and eminence.

If a person acts contrary to the five virtues, then fate will produce for him bad luck, poverty, baseness, short-life, and obscurity.

B. There are two kinds of fate.

1. First, there is invisible fate. Its sources are less obvious and therefore we cannot see them. Nevertheless, invisible fate, such as disasters or illness, always exist. Someone might ask, what did I do in my previous lives that makes me suffer so many troubles (or distresses) in this lifetime? Such a question shows the karmic reaction of how a person's past lives influence his present life. Thus if a person wants to know what he has done in his previous lives, he can find the answer in the things that fate delivers to him in this birth. If a person wants to know his future, then he can find the answer in the actions and deeds he has performed in this life.

2. Fate can also be of the visible sort. Two people might have a verbal conflict and then try to kill each other, or have unharmonious opinions and fight with each other.

A person will be imprisoned for committing crimes, and another will be praised for doing good deeds. All these are the immediate repayments for the things a person has done. The sources of such fate are very clear, thus we may see them easily.

C. To be a cultivator of Tao, one should know about fate, set up his fate's goal and then accomplish the goal of his fate. If a person wants an unregrettable fate (or life), then he first of all must cultivate himself, because everyone has his own fate and so there is no need to envy others. When a person encounters difficulties, he should cope with them with a peaceful mind. If a person has thoughts of hatred, then he will surely make complaints against Heaven and blame others for his misfortune. However, the one who knows about fate would not make complaints against Heaven because to make complaints against is to be without courage. The one who knows about himself will not make complaints against others, because to make complaints against others is to be destitute of mind. Therefore, since a person knows about fate, then he should set up his fate's goal.

D. The meaning of setting up one's fate's goal is as Mencius said, "There is no distinction between longevity and a short life, and a person should cultivate himself no matter if he will be long or short lived. This is called setting up one's fate's goal. Thus, if God bestows fewer blessings on me, I should face this condition by increasing my virtues. If God makes my body exhausted, I should release my mind to balance this condition. If God sends down misfortune upon me, I should pacify my life to get through this condition. If God sets me in a bitter (or tough) environment, I should make my thoughts happy in order to cope with this condition" God always decides mankind's good fortune or bad, disasters or blessings. And mankind always decides for himself to be famous or infamous. Everyone can decide to establish his goal of fate and perform according to Tao. Thus, the one who wants to establish his fate's goal must get rid of bad fate and then create good fate. The last step is to accomplish the goal of his fate.

## 2. Soul

- A. A virtuous gentleman of ancient times once said, “To accomplish one’s fate’s goal, one should cultivate one’s soul.”

Therefore, the work of cultivation one’s soul is to accomplish one’s fate’s goal. In order to accomplish one’s fate’s goal, one must cultivate both his blessings and wisdom. This is the meaning of accomplishing one’s fate’s goal. Blessings are the virtues of merit and happiness. There is a folk saying which says, “Although God can decide about human blessings and longevity, we should still do good deeds whether or not our good works are known by others; though fate can decide human prosperity, we can still obtain blessings through our own work and effort.”

A person’s meritorious virtue has the power to allow one to someday go back to Heaven, and one’s unpublicized good deeds (or virtues) have the power to change one’s predestined life. To do publicized good deeds is called “doing Yang good deeds” (i.e. visible good deeds). And to do unpublicized good deeds is call “doing Yin good deeds” (i.e. invisible good deeds). The repayment of Yang good deeds is to gain fame, but the repayment of Yin good deeds will be given by God (i.e. blessings).

Wisdom is the ability to realize one’s own mission in life and to awaken from the phenomenal world. Buddha emphasized “Real self and real enlightenment.” If a person enlightens himself, he can then free himself from the entanglement of karma. But when a person gets confused about his fate’s goal, then his life is arranged by fate.

- B. When a person’s life is suffused with blessings, he will produce righteous karma (i.e. pure and clean karma), righteous fate for his life, righteous words in his speaking, righteous progress in goodness, and elimination of evil. If a person is possessed of great wisdom, he will produce righteous viewpoints in his life, righteous composedness within the phenomenal world, righteous thoughts in his mind, and righteous thinking about life. Thus when a person has a righteous mind, he will become a Buddha, but when a person has an evil mind, he will become a devil. When a person is lenient, her will be a Bodhisattva. Sin is like a voracious devil. But to be a Bodhisattva one must cultivate both blessings and wisdom. A cultivator will shun the course of calamity and veer toward the course of good fortune. These are also the good points of cultivating oneself according to Tao and the goals of cultivating both blessings and wisdom.

## **[FUTURE GOALS]**

To pursue an object with determination is the root of establishing respectable achievement. To be free of desires is the basis of being a Saint.

One's will should flow eternally; even the highest mountain and the broadest ocean cannot restrain it. One's will should be able to penetrate everything, and there will be no army which can defend against it. From now on, you should always keep faith about Tao, accomplish the "great business," strengthen your volition, and complete your great wills.