

Let's Talk About the Steps of Cultivating Oneself According to Tao

[FOREWORD]

Do all of you realize that what difference is between before you received Tao and afterward? All of you should understand the following things.

Before receiving Tao, it is true to say that fate's determination will conquer a person.

But after receiving Tao, it can be said that a person's determination will conquer fate.

That is because, before one cultivates himself according to Tao, one has always flowed along with and been influenced by the shifting of the phenomenal world. Therefore one's conduct is always within the sphere of good and evil and within the cycle of karma. This is called "fate's determination will conquer mankind," and mankind must thus live according to the arrangement of fate. However, after one receives Tao, one has the ability to recognize what is right and what is wrong, to distinguish the difference between good and evil, to recognize one's errors and transgressions and then never commit them again, to know what is good for mankind and to practice it bravely, to avoid disasters and veer toward blessings, and also to expel evil habits and reveal one's good nature. Thus one will directly influence and change his environment and he will reach the highest level of cultivation. So the natural result of these changes will allow one to conquer fate.

Everything that happens has its cause and result. So what are cause and result?

Cause is the planting of the seeds of blessings or of disaster.

Result is the harvesting of that which one has sown. The harvest (rewards for good deeds, retribution for bad deeds) can be divided into two kinds. One is called instant repayment (salient), and refers to the rewards or punishments one will collect during his present lifetime.

The other kind is called delayed repayment (latent), and refers to the rewards or punishments one will receive in future lifetimes.

Let's talk the example of planting.

If one plants grains or peanuts, one can reap the harvest in a short period of several months. But to plant peach or apple seeds will take several years to reap a harvest. So it can be said that one really does reap what one sows.

The causes one plants will determine the later results, and it is just a matter of time until the results follow the causes. IF a person plants the seeds of evil during the early part of his life, then he will surely reap the evil results later on, right? <Yes>

Bad causes produce bad results, good causes produce good results.

After one receives Tao, for the rest of his life he should diligently renounce and not commit the ten evils (i.e. Killing, theft, lewdness, boasting, gossiping or stirring up trouble between people, using abusive language, using profanity, greed, anger and rage, and having evil thoughts), obey the five don'ts (don't kill, don't steal, don't be lewd, don't boast, don't drink alcohol or eat meat), and follow the five constant virtues (benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and faith(or honesty)). All of these things are our cultivating practices that will start to change our life, and allow us to avoid disasters and to veer toward blessings (The Turning Point of Life).

But most human beings do not understand these truths. Thus they are plagued by worries, vexations, anger, and idleness which will only in illness, or in being sent to jail for committing crimes. By profiting oneself at the expense of others, one will harvest the due result of committing sins. One will get involved in the result of karma because of anger, greed, infatuation, and the passions of desire.

To be a Saint is not so miraculous a feat as people might think. A Saint is just one who practices mercy and virtue all of the time and guards himself closely against committing sins. Angels have special gifts from God. Although they have a lot of power they always appear, and never produce or display sadness. The holy man always performs deeds that can profit others as well as himself.

When one is wealthy, one should give donations as a kind of virtuous deed, but when a person is poor, he should act according to Tao and see this as a precious opportunity for self-cultivation.

To be wealthy and of high position is built from accumulating good deeds.

To be possessed of long life and to be blessed is built from cultivating virtue.

Although these two deeds are good, they nevertheless will profit only oneself. If we see others suffering in bitter conditions, we will naturally set them free as if we were in the same condition.

If we see others performing good deeds, then we will help them in their achievement as if we were doing it also. So, do you want to be wealthy, of high position, blessed, and long lived? < Of course! >

Ok! If you would like to experience these kinds of things, then Teacher will transmit the secrets of attaining them to all of you right now, alright? <Great>

Mencius said, " There are those who are blessed by God, and those who are celebrated by men. To be benevolent, virtuous, loyal, faithful, and to love to do good deeds without pause - those who act in these ways are blessing by God. Then there are those who are high ranking officials. These people are blessed only by other men. The Saint of ancient times wished their actions and conduct to firstly be blessed by God, and only secondly to be celebrated by men. People of today do good deeds in order to receive rank in a high official or social position instead of wanting to be blessed by God. When they gain high status, they throw away the desire for blessing from God. Thus, we can see that they have become very confused from such conduct."

If you want to be blessed and long-live, then you should purify the mouth. This is also the first step in cultivating oneself according to Tao.

1. To Purify One's Mouth

Today each of you has received Tao. After receiving Tao, one must go further and cultivate himself according to Tao. Such cultivation has several steps: to purify one's mouth, to ferry or guide people to the Way of Heaven, to be a preacher, to establish or set up a sanctuary, to spread Tao in the places of the world where Tao has not yet been disseminated, to work and serve people in the sanctuary, to give the three kinds of donations (wealth, teaching talents, and anything one can give or do to help others build up their confidence in Tao).

These seven steps are the fastest shortcut to become a Saint, and also the method of accumulating merits and virtues. First let's talk about purify one's mouth.

Some people say, if one has a good heart that's enough, why must one additionally be a vegetarian?

Actually, to be a vegetarian is really not a problem of having a good heart or not. Having a purified mouth really has to do with transcending Karma, being healthy, and achieving Tao (to someday return to Heaven).

There's nothing in the world that is dirtier than eating meat, and nothing crueller than killing sentient beings. The best way to seek blessings is to purify oneself by observe the rules of abstinence (abstaining from all kinds of bad habits) and giving donations. The best way to seek longevity is not to kill, and also to set caged creatures free.

The best way to seek wisdom is to learn widely and to listen broadly. The best way to seek peace is through introspection. One should be careful to realize that he is capable of eating vegetables as well as meat using the same mouth, and of hurting or helping people with the same hand. One should notice that carnivores are often ferocious, while herbivore are gentle and placid.

Also, to be a vegetarian can help heal disease of the body, can help prevent physical diseases, and can help expel mental disease. In many countries, vegetarianism is promoted. Thus vegetarianism is not out of mode or backward.

2. To Ferry or Guide People to the Way of Heaven

To ferry people is a work of charity; it is the conduct of a sage or a Saint, and the heart of a Bodhisattva (i.e. a holy spirit who may enter Heaven, but declines to do so until the very last sentient being has been saved).

The one who can save people from a deep hole (extreme difficulties) is called a living Bodhisattva.

One who can escape from the big cage (Karma) is called a great hero. To ferry people is the work every cultivator should perform. Thus to ferry people is like being a like guard saving people from drowning in the bitter sea (the phenomenal world), it is also climbing the ladder toward the completion of the will of Tao.

3. To Be a Preacher

To study Truth is the noblest wish of a human being. To disseminate Truth is the holiest responsibility of a human being. Thus a preacher is the salesman of a Heaven, mankind's protector, the pastor of Good News, an oasis in the desert, the guiding light through the maze of life, and a cook to give others nourishment for their souls.

The advantages of being a preacher can improve one's personality, enhance one's good qualities, improve one's eloquence, profit mankind, help people to do good deeds in daily life and business, and can change malicious words into kind words.

4. To Set Up a Sanctuary

The sanctuary is the place where Heaven is first introduced (Heaven's Office), the "business office" of the three levels worlds (the world of Principle, the world of Spirit, and the phenomenal world), the place where one can cultivate oneself and achieve the goal of Tao, the "gas station: of Heaven merit, the "rescue mission" for human being's souls, the "great school" in which to cultivate virtue, a sanctuary from natural disaster and human calamities, God's realm of true happiness, and the tranquil land where one can cast away all misleading thoughts.

5. To Be a Pioneer for Tao

One who disseminates Tao is the missionary of God, and is the farmer who sows the seeds of Truth.

A kind-hearted doctor can save people in a backwards land; a good farmer can turn a barren field into a bountiful one. A person of virtue can spread the Good News to every corner of the earth.

Of these seven steps, to be a pioneer for Tao is the deed of greatest merit. Thus to be a pioneer is a great, rare, and commendable work.

6. To Serve in the Sanctuary

Within these seven steps, to serve in the sanctuary is the simplest kind of work. We all know that to serve people is really the most glorious of deeds.

To work for Tao is a kind of moral job; to serve seven Truth is the most worthwhile, so to serve is the best way of seeking happiness.

7. To Give the Three Kinds of Donation

They are: the donation of wealth, teaching talent, and anything one can do or give to help others build their confidence in Tao. To offer one's teaching talents is to be a preacher at any appropriate time.

The donation of anything one can do is to help people by disseminating Tao and to ferry people back to the way of Heaven. The other method of donation is the offering of financial.

[FUTURE GOALS]

From now on, do not boast about yourself; this is benevolence. Do not deceive or conceal the Truth from yourself; this is wisdom. Don't find excuse for yourself; this is courage.

If one has an ulcerated wound, cut it away, then new flesh will grow in its place. Likewise if one has bad habits, one should renounce them, then good conduct will automatically appear. Only those who can bravely face and overcome the difficulties will acquire the experiences and ability from these difficulties. Only those who can pass the harsh tests given by the God can take the tasks assigned by the God.

After today, these things will be your motto.