

IX. Let's Talk About the Inner Work of Cultivation and the Outer Work of Guiding and Helping Others to Cultivate Themselves.

[FOREWORD]

Cultivation according to Tao includes the inner work of cultivation, i.e. the work of pacifying one's mind. It also includes the outer work of guiding and helping others to cultivate themselves, i.e. to perform good deeds. The following is more detailed discussion of these points.

1. The Work of Pacifying One's Mind.

- A. When a person's mind is peaceful and without any kind of desire, then it is able to accommodate Truth. When a person's mind is pure, then he has the ability to adapt himself to the changing tides of all things.
- B. If a person is without durable wisdom, then he will not be able to awaken to Tao. If a person is without firm realization of Tao, then he will not be able to cultivate himself. If a person has a wavering belief of Tao, then he will not be able to do the work of Tao. If a person is without a composed mind, then he will not be able to keep Tao within himself. If a person has an alternating disposition, then he will not be able to accomplish Tao.
- C. Material desires are the origin of the disasters which damage one's body; are the jail that can confine one's mind, and are the axe that can injure one's nature. Hence, when a person's material desires are all washed away, then Truth will spread over him and penetrate his heart. Therefore, if a person is able to purify and pacify himself, Truth will reappear and reveal itself to him.
These are some of the things a person can do to purify himself: cleanse his mind and his thoughts, discard his temper and flaws, expel his anxiety and worries, have a clear and clever mind. These are some things a person can do to pacify himself: get rid of all the things in his mind, not become enraged, cease the discord in his mind, stay away from other's slanderous talk, not allow the burden of family to disturb himself, not be covetous, and have no greedy desires.

D. The work of governing one's mind is really to pacify it. The work of governing people is to work with constant sincerity. The work of taking charge of business is to specialize in the rules. The work of controlling one's body is to cultivate oneself industriously. If a person can realize this kind of rationale, then he will naturally pacify his mind.

2. The Way to Perform Good Deeds.

1. The greatest happiness for a person is to enjoy doing good deeds, and the most auspicious thing for a person is to be content with what he has. Thus, if a family accumulates good deeds, then these will bring them more blessings. But if a family accumulates sins and vices, then these will bring them more disasters. If a person does very few good deeds or has few vices, then he will get what he deserves almost immediately. If a person does a great deal of good deeds or has many vices, then he will get his reward or punishment later on in the future. If a person does good deeds, then blessings will come down upon him and disasters will go far away from him.

Lau Tau said, “ A good man always says good words, sees things with a good point of view, does good deeds, and since he has performed these three things God will certainly bless him in three year's time. A bad man always says bad words, sees things with a bad viewpoint, does bad deeds and since he has done these three things God will certainly bring down disasters upon him in three year's time.” So as for the good man that God always blesses, the people will always respect him, happiness and wealth will always accompany him, all the evil things will be far removed from him, and he will accomplish everything he sets out to do; these are the repayment of blessings that a good man will receive. So, each of you think for a while whether you want to be a good person or a bad person. < Everyone answers, “We want to be good.”> Since all of you want to be good people, then you should accumulate good deeds and virtues, be loyal to your parents, be kind and genial to your friends, make yourselves righteous and also guide and help others to cultivate themselves, pity and help others when they encounter disasters, and be happy for others when they have accomplished good deeds. As all of you know, all of the Saints perform these sorts of things: rescuing others when they are in danger, having the courage to do what is right regardless of the consequences, being merciful, compassionate, happy, and willing to part with phenomenal things.

One should be merciful so he can donate all kinds of happiness to the sentient beings. One should be compassionate so he can dispel all kinds of bitterness from the sentient beings. One should be happy so he can create good affinity with sentient beings. One should be willing to part with phenomenal beings so he will not get absorbed in the concepts of ego, others, the sentient beings, and longevity. Thus one will be able to make donations and save all the sentient beings without distinction. So if a person wants to be merciful, compassionate, happy, and willing to part with phenomenal things, he has to give these three kinds of donations; the donation of wealth, the donation of teaching, and the donation of helping others to build confidence for cultivation. The donation of wealth can help others gain happiness through nourishing life. The donation of teaching can help others attain the advantages of becoming wise. The donation of helping others to build confidence for cultivation can help others part from distress and misery.

2. There are four kinds of advantages in the donation of wealth:

- ❶ It can dissolve the hatred involved with others from a person's previous life.
- ❷ It can allow a person to perform good deeds.
- ❸ It can benefit the world.
- ❹ It can cause many blessings to accumulate.

A hospital is like an execution ground for people who have committed sins; in other words it is the manifestation of hell on earth. On the other hand, a sanctuary is a wonderful place for cultivation for people who want to dissolve their sins; i.e. it is the manifestation of Heaven on earth.

Sakyamuni Buddha said there are three kinds of things in the world: the first is that which can be taken away from a person, but a person cannot take with him after death, i.e. jewellery, money, and wealth. The second is that which no one can take away from a person, but also a person cannot take with him after death, i.e. intelligence and talents. The third kind is that which no one can take away from a person, and a person can take away with him after death, i.e. the accumulation of blessings.

3. If a person has a lot of wealth, but never uses it to help, then he possesses that wealth in vain. Thus a person should use his wealth to help people. If he does not, then wealth can only make him more rotten. Therefore, a sage with wealth will reduce his courage for cultivation, and a dull or ignorant person with lots of wealth will only beget more sins. It is a kind of blessings for a person to be wealthy and also generous. It is a kind of nobleness for a person to be poor but generous. It is a kind of benevolence for a person to be thrifty but generous.
4. Filial piety is the most important of all good deeds. Perhaps a person would accumulate wealth for his offspring, but the offspring will not necessarily be benefited by it. But a person could accumulate good deeds for his offspring, and then they could be endlessly benefited by these good deeds.

[FUTURE GOALS]

Modesty is the rule for one's personality. To anchor oneself happily in Tao is the basis of enjoying peace and stability, both physically and spiritually.