

Qingjing Jing

The Classic of Purity and Stillness

Lord Lao said: “The great Dao has no form, yet it gives birth to Heaven and Earth. The great Dao has no desires, yet it moves the sun and moon along their orbits. The great Dao has no name, yet it constantly nurtures the myriad phenomena. I do not know its name, and yet I attempt to speak of it as the Dao.”

The Dao has pure and impure; it has action and it has stillness. Heaven is pure and Earth is impure; Heaven acts and the Earth is still. Masculine is pure and feminine is impure; masculine acts and the feminine is still. Descending from the origin and flowing to the tips, the myriad phenomena are born. Purity is the source of impurity, and stillness is the basis of movement. If people can be constantly pure and still, then Heaven and Earth will certainly revert to them!

The human spirit is fond of purity, but the mind disturbs it; the human mind is fond of stillness, but desires lead it along. If the mind can be constant without desires, then the mind will become still; when the mind has settled, then the spirit will be pure. Naturally the Six Desires will not be born and the Three Poisons will perish. Those who cannot accomplish this have minds not yet settled, and are not yet rid of desires.

For one who has dispatched with desires, when he observes his mind, there is no mind. When he observes his outer form, there is no such form. When he observes external phenomena, there are no such things. He realizes that these three are fundamentally empty, and he only sees emptiness. He observes that this emptiness is also empty, yet the emptiness has nothing which is empty. Since the emptiness is empty, that which is not empty is also empty. Since what is not empty is empty, there is clarity and constant tranquility. Since this tranquility has nothing which is tranquil, what can give birth to desires? Since desires are not born, this is itself true stillness, true constant response to phenomena, true constant attainment and abiding. With constant response and constant stillness, this is indeed constant purity and stillness!

With such purity and stillness, one gradually enters the true Dao. Because one has entered the true Dao, it is deemed “attaining the Dao.” Although it is called “attaining the Dao,” in fact there is nothing acquired. For the purpose of transforming living beings, it is called “attaining the Dao.” Those who can awaken to

it are then able to transmit the sagely Dao.

Lord Lao said: “High warriors do not fight, while low warriors are fond of fighting. High virtue is without ‘virtue,’ while low virtue grasps after virtue. Those who grasp at such things do not understand the virtue of the Dao.”

Therefore it is impossible for living beings to attain the true Dao with deluded minds. Since they have deluded minds, their spirits are frightened; because their spirits are frightened, they are attached to the myriad phenomena. Because they are attached to the myriad phenomena, they give birth to greedy seeking; due to the birth of this greedy seeking, they they encounter confusion and anger. With these afflictions and delusions, they concern themselves with the pains of the body and mind. Since they easily encounter impurity and disgrace, they wander aimlessly in birth and death, constantly submerged in the sea of suffering, and perpetually missing the true Dao.

If one awakens to the constant true Dao, he will attain it. One who attains and awakens to the Dao has constant purity and stillness indeed!