The Bright Wisdom of Tao

The Four Subjects of Tao Cultivation

Wendy Cheng

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Kuang Ming Saint Tao Temple
Synopsis

Tao is not a religion nor a philosophy. It is not in a deep or superficial knowledge of Tao. Receiving Tao is to recognize the true nature within us and cultivating Tao needs realization and practice, or it is vain. Wisdom is the capitan of all the paramitas (perfect realization/cultivation). It guides us to carry out the right thinking and actions. In the journey of Tao cultivation, Character, Merits & Virtues, Tolerance & Patience, and Etiquette are the four subjects that we're practicing in our daily life. By carrying out the four subjects, the true joy is realized in the present moments of our lives.
Four Subjects of Tao Cultivation

- Character
- Merits & Virtues
- Tolerance & Patience
- Etiquette
Six Paramitas

1. The Perfection of Generosity/Unconditional Love
2. The Perfection of Ethics/Morality/Integrity
3. The Perfection of Patience/Tolerance/Forbearance
4. The Perfection of Joyous/Diligent/Persistent Effort
5. The Perfection of Concentration/Be Mindful/Clarity
6. The Perfection of Wisdom/Rightly understanding the nature of reality

- Wisdom: It’s the captain of all the paramitas (perfection, perfect realization)
Wisdom

- Ability to distinguish inner qualities & know ourselves well.

- Maintain a positive attitude & use good judgment.

- Know when to be generous & when to be firm.
Wisdom vs. Knowledge

- Science is knowledge arising from discovery. Wisdom helps us carry out the right actions.

- Science is the study that organizes knowledge; Wisdom is the foundation for organizing a happy life.
Where does “Wisdom” come from?

- 天命之謂性 What Heaven confers is called our “True Nature”;
- 率性之謂道 Those in accordance with their true nature realize “Tao”;
- 修道之謂教 Cultivating Tao is called “Learning & practicing inner virtues”.

“The Doctrine of Mean”
Wisdom

- **Practice/Action** 實相般若
  - Wisdom & Action arise directly from one’s Conscience (with no outside interference).

- **Self Reflection** 觀照般若
  - Wisdom increases with self-reflection

- **Sutras and Knowledge** 文字般若
  - Wisdom from learning the great books (words of saints and sages)
A wise old Cherokee told his grandson, "My child, there's a battle between two wolves within all of us. One is EVIL. It's anger, jealousy, greed, resentment, inferiority, lies, and ego. The other is GOOD. It's joy, peace, love, hope, humility, kindness, empathy, and truth."

The boy thought about it, and asked, "Grandfather, which wolf wins?"

The old man quietly replied, "The one you feed."
Self Reflection

- We need to be watchful whenever a thought arises in our minds. If our thought is wrong, then our behavior will be wrong, as well. Never think that our bad thoughts are not known to others.

- All thoughts are transmitted throughout the universe and are received by everyone. Therefore, do not cheat yourself and others; do not cheat your own conscience.
Senior Elder Han

- Senior Elder Han applied Tao in his daily life; focused on self-reflection & improvements, and had a simple and economical lifestyle.
- He demanded strict discipline for himself and lived by the spirit of grace, decency, respectfulness, thriftiness and humbleness.
Cultivation

- When a person is born in this world and starts to know things, naturally and gradually he or she will search for a truth to follow. That is “cultivation.” It is not necessarily so that cultivation comes only after receiving Tao.
Recognize our True Nature

- Receiving Tao is telling us that “we are a Buddha”!! Search for our Buddha heart, act according to our conscience; Heaven is unselfish and fair, we should always think of the good.
Cultivation

- Tao cultivation is ongoing, but not in a deep or superficial knowledge of Tao, and not in new or old Tao members.

As long as we can seize good thoughts and keep alert to bad ones, that is Tao cultivation.
Cultivation

- Bitterness and happiness are all created by the human’s heart; therefore, the heart can create either Heaven or Hell.

- One’s mental state is created by one’s thoughts and attitude. If one can grasp this, one can progress on one’s journey.
Pursuing Happiness

- Your true nature, your mind or your body: which would you like to enjoy the most?

- Only spiritual joy will fill you with the joy of Truth. When your heart is filled with the joy of Truth, you will show joy in your behavior.
Happiest Place On Earth
Joy of Love

Piglet: “How do you spell love?”
Pooh: “You don’t spell it, you feel it.”
Four Subjects of Tao Cultivation

Character
Virtue cannot be cultivated overnight. It takes time, step by step. Therefore, a person has to establish virtue and character to be a virtuous person, or he/she will not be respected.
Character

- Get rid of bad habits immediately. Do not wait until tomorrow.

- Each wrong motivation or thought is already a fault, and if you carry it into action, it becomes another fault. Then you have committed two faults.
Character

- The more you learn the more you know and the more humble you should be. The more humble you are, the more you can learn. That’s the heart’s capacity for enlargement.

- What is character? It’s your heart, not your false ego. It is very natural.
How big is our heart?

- Are we able to accept (process) criticism or disagreement? differences?

- Are we able to forgive other’s mistakes?

- Are we able to help or support people who have interest of conflict with us? Or respect them?
Four Subjects of Tao Cultivation

Merits & Virtues
Merits and Virtues

-Merit and virtue are in our heart; in the heart of equality; in the heart of mercy; in the heart of compassion for sentient beings. This is merit and virtue.
Merits & Virtues

- Love & respect for our parents
- Brotherhood Love
- Loyalty
- Faith
- Propriety
- Justice
- Wisdom
- Self-Reflection
Confucius's Belief

- Confucius shared a belief, common in his time, that China had in the past enjoyed almost utopian periods of peace and prosperity under the rule of "sage kings."

- Confucius held that these wise kings possessed de, meaning "virtue" or a sort of charisma that comes from being a good person and that makes others want to follow one.

- Consequently, the sage kings were able to govern primarily through the power of setting a good ethical example, rather than through military force or criminal penalties.
Merits and Virtues

- We should strive to be the mainstay of the world. We should perform real generosity.
  - **Body generosity:** be supportive & helpful.
  - **Heart generosity:** be sincere, humble, respectful, joyful.
  - **Word generosity:** say positive & good words; telling truth.
  - **Facial generosity:** a smile & affirmative expression.
Merits & Virtues

- Help someone less fortunate. It brings out our true spirit.
- Showing loving kindness to all creatures is the key.
- Monitor what we hear, what we read, and what we say.
Four Subjects of Tao Cultivation

Tolerance & Patience
Tolerance & Patience

- If you are about to lose your temper, nobody will be able to stop you but yourself. You must be able to tell yourself, “I can’t lose my temper now! If I do, the bad energy of this world will increase.”
Cultivation needs patience and tolerance. If our patience and tolerance are not enough, we have to continue learning and practicing more. We constantly face trials created by Heaven; we need to study Tao continuously so that we can understand Heaven’s intention.
Tolerance & Patience

• To forgive by *practicing* forgiveness.

• Be patient with our parents, family and the closest love ones.

• When we have disagreements, keep an open minded heart; work out the differences.

• Don’t punish ourselves for other’s mistakes.
Good Affinities

- For all the people we meet as well as the things and affairs we encounter, they are a result of our karma and affinities.
- As long as we face them with a sincere heart and cherish them, then these are all Tao.
Process Our “It”

“It” – thing that bothers us.

- Recognize It
- Accept It
- Analyze It
- Take Positive Action to It
- Let it go (change our attitude)
Group Discussion

- Please write down 1 issue that irritated you the most.
- Please do not write your name.
- Fold the paper.
- Please give your “wise” advice to your team members.
“We are one family. As a cultivator, we need to have the hearts of a Bodhisattva. We also need to have the tolerance of Maitreya Buddha.”
Four Subjects of Tao Cultivation

Etiquette
Etiquette

- It evolves within cultures & nations
- **Eastern:**
  - Bow when greeting someone.
  - Try any food that is given to you.
- **Western:**
  - The handshake is the common greeting
  - Engage in small talk
  - Eating is usually done in silence
Common Etiquette

- Table Manner
- Leaving & Arriving on time
- Thank You & Please
- Proper dress codes
- Listen & pay respect (do not interrupt)
- Do not stand with your hands in your pocket.
- Do not chew gums in the proper occasions.
Confucius’s Teaching

- Confucius stressed three institutions that both express and help cultivate the virtues: **rituals, education, and the family**. Rituals can include everything from funeral ceremonies to pay our respect to the spirits of ancestors to the proper way to dress, eat dinner, or treat a guest.

- Confucius believed that performing rituals with a spirit of reverence was not only a sign of virtue, but could also help cultivate the virtues in oneself.
Confucius’ Ritual
Etiquette

- Every family has its own rules; each country has its own rules; even the temple has its own rules. We have to adjust ourselves to comply with the rules.

- The greater the number of people who do not follow the rules, the more discipline is required. We have to follow the rules of the temple when coming to the temple.
Temple Etiquette

- Pay respect to Holy Spirits, Tao seniors, Tao friends.
- Gentlemen & Ladies are separated.
  - Gentlemen – left side of altar
  - Ladies – right side of altar
- Bow when greeting someone
- Do not cross legs & cross arms
- Dress properly (with collar; no sandal)
Temple Etiquette

- Arrival & Departure ritual
  - Make three bows to the holy spirits.
  - Make one bow to the transmitting master(s) – if they’re present.

- Proper name calling:
  - Transmitting Master________ (last name)
  - Lecturer_______ (last name)
Etiquette - Rituals

- Arrival & Departure Ritual
- Daily (morning & evening) Ritual
- (1st & 15th) Ritual (Lunar Calendar)
- Four seasons (March 15, June 15, Sept. 15, Nov. 15) Rituals (Lunar Calendar)
- Tao Receiving Ritual
- Offering ritual
What kind of heart should a good person possess?

A heart of mercy, love, patience, faith, honesty, truth, gratitude, grace, contentment, and joy.

From our Holy Teacher
With a beautiful heart, every creature sees beauty; with a pure and innocent heart, we are not troubled by faults, flaws or defects. If we perceive that nothing is imperfect, our mind is broader.

From the Holy Teacher...
Things we run into...
“When joy, anger, sorrow and pleasure have not yet arisen, it is called chung (equilibrium, centrality, true self). When they arise to their appropriate levels, it is called "harmony."
Recognize Our Own Wisdom

- Knowing words of wisdom does not itself mean being a wise person.

- Taking action on words of wisdom in our daily life is to recognize our own true wisdom.
Conclusion

- Watch our words; speak encouraging and positive words to others.
- Manage our emotions; change our attitude with a change in perspective.
- Don’t keep thinking negatively; throw away mental trash. Count our blessings daily, and give thanks.
Group Discussion...

- Please share what you have learned in today's class...
Life is a school

Let’s Have a Happy + Harmonious Life!