

Chapter 3: The Relationship Between Dao and Human Life

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Dao is principle; principle is the path. All things in creation are born from Dao, and therefore all things possess their own inherent principle. Heaven has its celestial principles, earth has its terrestrial principles, and human beings have the principle of their nature. When heaven loses its principle, the stars stray from their courses. When earth loses its principle, mountains collapse and rivers overflow. When human beings lose their principle, the moral bonds become disordered and perverted. Thus the common proverb says: "With principle, one can travel the whole world; without it, one cannot move a single step." Viewed from this, the relationship between Dao and human life is of the utmost closeness.

Confucius said: "Who can go out without using the door? Why then does no one follow this Dao?" Mencius said: "When the world is drowning, rescue it with Dao." Zisi said: "Dao is that which cannot be separated from for even an instant! That which can be separated from is not Dao!"

From these proofs we see that for a person living in this world, Dao is something one dares not separate from for even a moment. If one goes against Dao and loses principle, seeking temporary ease, in this life one will suffer the punishment of the nation's laws, and after death one will suffer the torments of the underworld judges. Even if one escapes by luck in this life, Heaven's principle is manifest and clear, never erring by the slightest measure — how could one escape the judgment of the netherworld court, and not have it repaid in the next life? I earnestly hope all of you will take heed.

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