

仁 (REN)

仁之為道 博愛是也

The Tao of REN is Benevolence.

大千之中 芸芸者眾生也 而眾生之生生不息者 天德也

Within the universe of all that is, there are many living things, and their continual propagation is due to the virtue of Heaven.

天有好生之德 故四時相推 以成化育

如春之生 夏之長 秋之收 冬之藏 雨露之滋培 寒暑之迭代 莫非天心之仁也

Because Heaven possesses this virtue, a virtue of fondness for life, Heaven provides the cycle of the seasons to cultivate all living things.

The sprouting in spring, growth in summer, reaping in fall, storing up in winter, the nourishment from rain and dew, and the alternating of cold and hot weather; are not these all derived from the REN of Heaven?

惟聖人能則之 推愛己之心以愛人 又推愛人之心以愛物 物我無間 其仁如天矣

Sages, who comprehend and emulate the motive essence of Heaven, love others as themselves. Indeed, they direct this love to all things animate and inanimate. When they become one with all objects, their REN becomes the same as that Heaven.

孟子曰 仁者無不愛也

Mencius said, "A person of REN loves all things."

萬物之發育 皆本乎仁 故木果之核曰仁 如桃仁 杏仁之類 生機洋溢 發育無窮
倘果無仁 則生生之理絕矣

The ability of every living thing to grow is its primary characteristic, REN. Thus, the fruit's pit, in Chinese, is also called a REN, such as a peach's REN or an almond's REN. They all are full of organic life and intense energy.

If a fruit has no REN (by being seedless), it cannot propagate.

嘗考果之一字 乃道家激始激終 內聖外王之心法

I have meditated on the word "Fruit", which is used by Taoists in connection with their principal method of behavior according to the saying: Sagely within and Kingly without.

何也 果之為物

內藏核實 含有化生之機 是其仁也

外極圓融 著有沖和之態 是其智也

及夫時至 由仁而發芽生葉 開花結果 果又生仁 自始至終 生生不息 是其勇也

The reason is that the "Fruit" in every sense bears seeds and organic life within; thus it represents its REN.

The fruit's outer surface with its tactful shape and harmonious gesture represents its intelligence. At the correct time, the REN of the fruit sprouts buds and then grows leaves, blossoms with flowers and then fruit. The fruits produce REN (seeds) within, all over again. This endless cycle of propagation represents its bravery.

智仁勇三者 天下之達德也 所以行之者一也 故道家取以為法

All these three things intelligence, REN and bravery underlie the commonly recognized virtues of this world. Indeed, acting on them with sincerity molds them together as one. Thus, the Taoists use this analogy as the basis of their principal practice.

其言曰 善者果而已 果而勿矜 果而勿伐 果而勿驕 果而勿強

A quote from the Tao Te Ching (Chapter 30):

"The best commanders know how to gather the Fruits of combat.

When the Fruits of combat are collected, don't be arrogant;

When the Fruits of combat are collected, don't be boastful;

When the Fruits of combat are collected, don't be conceited;

When the Fruits of combat are collected, don't flaunt your superiority."

是以道家之流 勤修苦煉 造成內聖之工夫 果之仁也

和光同塵 渾然太極之旋轉 果之智也

道成則入世立功 功成則急流引退 果之勇也

Thus, the Taoists practice tirelessly to achieve the state of "Sagely within and Kingly without" which is as the REN of a fruit. They subdue their shining light and, merging themselves into the world like a revolving Tai Chi (the symbol of Yin-Yang), they emulate the intelligence of a fruit. Once they are enlightened, they try to accomplish things of merit in the world. As soon as they have succeeded, they withdraw themselves from action without any hesitation. Their way emulates the bravery of a fruit in its own cycle.

三者之中 以仁為主 智以行之 勇以達之
其實非有二物也 不過順夫天道之自然而已矣

With these three things, we should be principled with REN, practice our lives with intelligence and achieve with bravery.

In fact, none of them becomes realized except as they are an emulation of the natural course of the Heavenly TAO.

夫天以好生之德 生長萬物 及萬物生長過盛 則皆利己之生 而害他物之生
於是天惡其勝而殺之 實則非天殺之 乃自殺也

Heaven has the virtue of fondness for life so that it nourishes all living things. But when living things grow over-luxuriant, they care only for their own advantage in living and even do harm to other living things. In this state of affairs, Heaven resists their domination and destroys them. Indeed, it is not really Heaven that kills them at all, they kill themselves.

何以故

萬物受天之氣以生 皆具有好生之德 是即仁也 有仁即能生
故孔子曰 仁者壽

The reason of things is that all living things, which are created by Heaven, also inherit the virtue of fondness for life which is REN. Having REN means capacity of living. Thus, Confucius said, "A person of REN lives a long life."

及至生長過旺 生機發洩於外 而內存之仁失矣 內存之仁失 即天賦之性亡
性亡則死

Ultimately, living things grow into the end of their maturity when their life-force has been expended toward their outside, and thus their concealed REN is exhausted. Once the REN is gone, so also is their inherent essence. When the inherent essence is gone, death ensues.

孔子曰 枉之生也 幸而免
蓋言人而不仁則無生理也

Confucius said, "One who has no REN has no perception of living."

老子曰 物壯則老 是為不道 不道早已

Lao Tzu said (Tao Te Ching, Chapter 30), "Everything that reaches the full bloom of maturity begins to weaken as it heads against the headwind of TAO. Things that head against the TAO die before long."

蓋言物失其仁 則無生氣也

In general, their words declared that things in so losing REN, come finally to death.

且天之好生 原是生萬物 而不祇生一物

故人有好生之心者 天必佑之 人有好殺之心者 天必惡之

Furthermore, the fondness for life from Heaven is primarily meant for nourishing every living thing and not merely oneself.

Thus, one who has the heart to love life is certainly blessed by Heaven. One whose heart desires to kill life is certainly disfavored by Heaven.

何也 生物殺物 天之大權 聖人體天行道 賞罰大公無私 是即代天生殺

倘若不秉公道 殺人以自肥 害人以自利

則天所欲生者 人反無故而殺之

天安得而不惡之乎

The reason is that life and death are the province of the Heaven's authority. Learned arbiters who follow the Tao of Heaven and reward or punish people with absolute impartiality, partake of the function of Heaven.

Some people do not comport themselves with impartiality. They kill people for their own benefit, injure others for their own advantage.

Thus, people who are blessed by Heaven could be killed without any reason.

How can Heaven not be profoundly displeased?

世之人以為天本無聲無臭 不能賞罰人 殊不知天雖不言 卻有無形之賞罰

老子曰 天網恢恢 疏而不漏

Today's people have convinced themselves that Heaven can neither hear nor speak, that Heaven can neither reward nor punish. However, though Heaven does not speak aloud, it dispenses invisible rewards and punishments.

As Lao Tzu said (Tao Te Ching, Chapter 73), "The vast net of Heaven, though it be pierced with holes, allows no one through without justice."

蓋天道本乎自然 凡人事上自然之果報 皆天道之作用也 甚矣不仁之可危也

The essential Tao of Heaven permeates the course of nature. When natural karma events happen to people, they all are the doing of Heaven. Beware, if we have done a thing without REN, we are quite greatly in danger.

夫人之生也 莫不具有仁德 但為氣稟所拘 人慾所蔽 遂隱伏而莫伸

然其本體之仁 有未嘗息者

故見孺子將入於井 則有怵惕惻隱之心 是乃仁之發現也

So, all mankind's life has the inherent virtue of REN. However, such REN may become either constrained by the vicious side of personality or obscured by greedy desire, and thus becomes concealed within us.

Nevertheless, the essence of REN has never vanished.

For example, when we see a child fall into a well, we all experience a feeling of commiseration. This feeling reveals REN within us.

倘能擴而充之 盡其性以盡人與物之性 則可以贊天地之化育 而與天地參矣

If we can magnify our REN to the utmost and thereby inspire other people and even other living things, we join the rhythm of Heaven and Earth to help bring cultivation and nourishment to others.

吾觀物之性善者 莫如麟 不行邪徑 不履生草 螻蟻之屬 不忍踐傷 故古人稱為仁獸 人苟行為不正 性好傷生 則不如麟遠矣 又何可以為人哉

I have been taught that no other animal is as kind as kiren¹, which not only does not walk the road of viciousness but also does not trample the grass, nor step on the tiniest ants lest they be hurt. Thus, ancient Chinese regarded Kirin as an animal of REN.

When people behave viciously and find satisfaction in killing others, they are starkly inferior to the Kirin. How can such people even be called human?

Note¹: Kirin is one of the ancient Chinese imaginary animals, such as the dragon.

是以孫叔敖有埋蛇之仁德 卒膺宰相之榮

For instance, Sun Suk-oh (Spring and Autumn period BC 770-476) had such REN virtue of burying a snake¹ that he eventually was prominently appointed as a prime minister.

Note¹: When Suk-oh was a young child, he saw a two-headed snake on a road. He had heard that whoever saw this snake would thereupon soon die. He then killed and buried the snake to prevent other people from seeing it. Because of his benevolent motives, he ultimately was made a prominent governmental official.

宋公序有救螳之仁慈 卒中狀元之選

Seon Kung-Dzoey (Song Dynasty AD 960-1279) was so full of kindness that he rescued ants¹. He was eventually selected as the number one scholar in the government's highest imperial examination.

Note¹: Once a fortune teller predicted to Kung-Dzoey that his future accomplishments would be quite good but not better than those of his younger brother. Ten years later, the same fortune teller met with Kung-Dzoey again and this time was intrigued by his altered facial profile, his visage. Kung-Dzoey suggested that the change in his visage was because he rescued a colony of ants during an inundation. The fortune teller affirmed the merit of Kung-Dzoey's act of kindness and predicted now that his future accomplishments would be better than those of his younger brother. The next year Kung-Dzoey was selected as the number one scholar and his younger brother was second.

後漢楊寶推恩救雀 其子孫四代三公

In the Later Han Dynasty (AD 947-950), Yong Bo extended his kindness to rescue a bird¹. A descendent of his in each of his next four generations was appointed to the nobility.

Note¹: When Bo was nine years old, he saw a yellow bird that had been attacked by a larger bird and had fallen on the ground. Then, the injured yellow bird had been further attacked by ants. Bo rescued the yellow bird and brought it home to nurse it back to health. After three months, one night, when the yellow bird was healthy enough to fly away, Bo dreamed about a person with yellow clothes. The yellow-clothes dream-person thanked Bo with great gratitude and promised to repay his kindness.

其他以施仁而得善果者 史書所載 不一而足 天之報施仁人 顧如是乎

Other instances are recorded in history wherein people who bestowed REN on others were repaid with the fruits of kindness. Those occurrences differ from one to another but nevertheless all sufficiently demonstrate that the reward from Heaven to the people manifesting REN is most benevolent.

方今天下之士 競言利而不言仁 馴致妖氛迭起 浩劫時行 民不聊生 至如此極

Nowadays, people's center of interest all too often is designed to upstage others for personal gain instead of exhibiting REN. Their ways gradually tend to create a climate of viciousness and even trigger periodic crises. Life becomes more difficult and reaches extremes of desperation.

我天德聖教 欲起而挽回之 特示人以仁字之用

蓋仁為性之所出 義為理之所生

性賅乎理 而義即統於仁也

Tien De Religion endeavors to forestall such calamity and most especially to show the salutary effect of the character REN on all people.

Basically, REN is derived from the essence of the mind. The righteousness motive is generated from a sense of reasoning awareness.

The essence of the mind is completed with the sense of reasoning awareness. Thus, righteousness is governed by REN.

吾願在教諸子 以仁存心 曲體天地好生之德

以仁接物 悉合聖神救世之心

I hope that all people who believe in this Religion can bear REN in their hearts in order with propriety to actualize Heaven and Earth's virtue of fondness for life. All people should comport themselves with REN in dealing with life's issues to conform to the salvation motive of Saints and Sages.

己溺己饑 無分乎種族民物 無善無惡 悉寓以愷悌慈祥

In the midst of drowning and starvation, we consider ourselves as one with all who suffer without any difference between races or between people of different customs. Without discriminating whether others be good or bad, we must always bear them affection, harmony and kindness.

浩浩乎 正氣塞乎兩間 戾氣消於宇宙 風同道一 萬眾歸仁
斯堯舜禹湯文武之郅治 不難再見於今日矣 豔乎爍哉

Thus, the extent of overwhelmingly noble spirit will occupy all the empty spaces between Heaven and Earth and banish the wicked spirits from the universe. When everyone has the same noble orientation of mind and heart, and the same ambition to live the way of REN, the ancient flourishing governments of the emperors of Yao, Shun, Yu, Tang, Wen and Wu¹ won't be difficult to find in our time. What could be more wonderful and splendid!

Note¹: All those were profoundly noble Chinese emperors and their governance set a high standard through history for all Chinese dynasties.