

廉 (LIAN)

廉字有二義 如貨物之售 價錢不貴 名曰價廉 金錢之得 非義不取 名曰廉潔

The character of LIAN has two meanings. The first has to do with purchasing goods that the price is low, which has the meaning of INEXPENSIVE. The second has to do with receiving money, which should be honestly obtained. This is INTEGRITY.

故 廉為崇儉之本 不廉則奢 而儉德從此失焉
廉為立節之原 不廉則貪 而節操從此喪焉
廉為正心之由 不廉則亂 而心術從此壞焉
廉為公德之根 不廉則私 而公道從此破焉

Therefore,

LIAN is the source of being frugal. Without LIAN, there is extravagance, leading to the loss of the virtue of frugality

LIAN is the source of moderation. Without LIAN, there is greed, leading to the disappearance of moderation.

LIAN is the source of righteousness. Without LIAN, there is disorder, leading to the ruining of the good intentions in the heart.

LIAN is the source of impartiality. Without LIAN, there is bias, leading to the corruption of impartial justice.

楊震守四知之戒 伊尹慎一介之取 皆廉潔之心有以致之

Yang Chen observed the precept of 'Four Knowings'¹. Ye Wun² was cautious about taking even a small amount of money. Their actions were the result of having LIAN in their hearts.

Note¹: Yang Chen, who was a government official, was tempted by his friend to accept a bribe. His friend tried to persuade Chen and said that nobody would know what they were doing. Chen spurned the offer and said, Heaven knows and Earth knows; you know and I know. So, how could you say that nobody would know?!

Note²: Ye Wun was one of the greatest government administrators in Chinese History.

故人之存心 不可不以廉為之本 人之作事 不可不以廉為之根
倘廉字不守 則節儉公正四字亦隨之而亡矣

Therefore, the intentions that mankind bears in its heart must be based on LIAN. The affairs that mankind deal with must be rooted in LIAN.

If LIAN is not observed, moderation, frugality, impartiality and righteousness vanish.

近來世風不古 人心日壞 寡廉鮮恥者 比比皆是 而守廉尚公者 百無一焉
此天德聖教之立 特以廉字為準則也

Life today is no longer the same as the ancients' thrifty and simple time; mankind's heart is degenerating every day. LIAN-less and shameless actions are seen everywhere; not even one out of a hundred people observes LIAN and discerns impartially.

This is a reason why the Tien De Religion is established with this character LIAN as one of the tenets.

願我乾坤諸子 勉而行之 互相勸導 倘合全世界之人皆以廉相尚 則天下之安
國家之治 可操左券矣

I hope that all who believe this religion exert themselves, to correct and guide each other. If everyone in the world takes LIAN as a guide, the triumphs to have the well-being of the world and good governance of each of its countries will be within our grasp.