【中英文對照賞析】

Cultivating Virtue: Avoiding Disaster and Gaining Blessings by Abandoning Greed

戒貪養德 避禍得福（下）

The Huainanzi, an ancient Chinese text from the Han Dynasty, said in Volume 41, "A sage preserves what he has, and does not pursue what he does not have. If one pursues what one does not have, then what one has will disappear. If one cultivates what one has, then what one wants will naturally appear."

The above statements can be interpreted as: A sage preserves his virtue, and does not desire what does not belong to him. Whoever is greedy will in the end lose what he has, because greed and pursuit do not bring blessings. One who breaks the law and takes bribes will lose his blessings. If one cultivates virtue, however, then what he wants will come naturally, because virtue possesses mighty wisdom and can be transformed into blessings.

Three short stories illustrating ancient Chinese beliefs follow. Each shows the importance of letting go of greed and cultivating virtue, which in the long run will avoid disaster and result in blessings.

General Guo Ziyi Maintains Peace by Abandoning Greed and Preserving Modesty

Guo Ziyi (AD 697-781) was a famous general in the Tang Dynasty. Guo Ziyi allowed no guards to stand in front of his gate. Everyone, from noblemen to average people and small businessmen, could enter and leave Guo's residence and nobody stopped them.

Everyone was in the know about Guo's family issues, no matter how small or how large.

For example, someone said, "Their sons were required to carry water and irrigate the field. They looked the same as ordinary servants and slaves." This meant that there was nothing hidden by Guo and his family.

Guo Ziyi's children tried to persuade him to change his ways. Guo refused to accept their suggestion. They wept and said, "You have merits, but you do not respect yourself. All people, regardless rich or poor, are under your protection. We believe even Yi Yin or Huo Guang, high ranking officials in the Han Dynasty, weren't so open and transparent. However, we feel pain because of you."

Guo smiled and said, "It's not what you think. I own 500 horses and there are 1,000 people who are supported by the government. Many people are jealous and want to malign me. If we closed our door tightly, severing connections with the outside world, then as long as one person started to malign me and complain that I was not loyal, it would be easy to find those who want to harm me. Then my entire family would be killed. It would be too late for regret. Now, all doors are open, and no one can malign me. This is why I live this way."

Treacherous court officials sent spies to monitor his family, but all returned with nothing. Finally, his children were convinced, too.

Guo Ziyi played a significant role in the survival of the Tang Dynasty during his 20 years as the general. He had much power, and no official at the court could find anything against him. He had accumulated much merit, and the emperor didn't suspect him of any wrongdoing. Treacherous court officials attempted many times to harm him, but without success.

He was noble and rich when he passed away. His prosperous descendants lived peaceful and joyful lives. This was possible because of his loyalty to the country, his rejection of greed, as well as being modest, humble, and generous.

Greed Drives the World

Human beings are very greedy. When one indulges desires without constraint, one can only sink down and be unable to rise again. Blessings and virtue would bypass him, and disaster would befall him.

On the contrary, if one cultivates one's heart, performs good deeds, abandons greed and does not live in delusion, he accumulates virtue. He would gain naturally without pursuit. This is called being wise.

As the ancients said, "If one is kind, disasters will stay away from him even if blessings have not yet arrived. If one is evil, one will not receive blessings and will have to face disasters."

Abandoning greed and cultivating virtue could really help humans avoid disaster and gain blessings. We should reflect on that and be vigilant.

(The End)

《淮南子》卷四十一中記載，「聖人守其所以有，不求其所未得。求其所未得，則所有者亡矣；修其所有，則所欲者至矣。」

其大意是說，聖人安守自己本具的性德，而不貪求自己未獲得的。貪求自己未獲得的，反而已擁有的會喪失掉（因為貪求則無福，更有甚者會貪贓枉法，將福報折盡）；如果修養自己本具的性德，想得到的就會自然得到（因為性德具有無量的智慧，會轉為福報）。

下面我們就從古籍中摘錄幾個小故事，來進一步談談我們的先人是如何認識戒貪養德、避禍得福的。

郭子儀戒貪 守謙 長保平安

郭子儀（697—781 年）是唐朝著名將領。郭子儀的兒子郭弘廣，在親仁里擴大了家宅，郭子儀不准在門口派人守門，上至貴家的公子，下至百姓，里巷之中做小買賣的人，都可以隨便出入郭的家宅，沒人去制止。

有人說：「王夫人和趙家的寶貝閨女，正在對鏡梳妝。」有人講：「此時，郭公的部下將官都出行了。」還有人講：「她們的兒子們被要求去擔水灌地，一看就和一般的僕人，奴隸一個樣。」郭子儀家中的事，人們都知道。

有一天，郭子儀的子弟們，聚在一起向郭子儀苦苦勸諫，郭公總是不答應，於是他們接著都哭起來，說：「大人的功業已在，卻不自加尊重。人無貴賤，都得到您的庇蔭。我們認為就是伊尹、霍光，也難以做到像您這樣公開、透明。但卻苦了我們。」郭公笑笑說：「這不是你們所能知道的，我享有官馬五百匹，吃官糧的一千人，現在，許多人都妒嫉我，想誣陷我，假使我們高牆閉戶，內外不通，只要有一人埋怨興起，誣我不臣，再有那害我而邀功的人幫忙，那麼我家將九族抄斬，追悔莫及呀！現在我家空空曠曠，四門洞開，即便有人陷害我，說壞話，他也說不出甚麼來，所以我就這樣做。」

奸佞們數次派暗探去他家察看，都無功而返。後來，他的孩子們都信服了。

郭子儀對於國家的存亡，具有舉足輕重的作用，達二十年之久。他又校刊《中書令考》二十四年。權傾天下，而滿朝不猜忌他；功勞蓋世，而君主不懷疑他；奸佞們多次想加害於他，卻總是不能得逞。他富貴壽終，子孫繁衍，安居樂業。這都是他誠心為國，不妄貪取，謙虛謹慎，寬厚愛民的結果。

結語

人有很多貪慾，放大慾望而不加節制，只會使其深陷泥淖而無法自拔，福德就會遠離，災禍隨之而降。修心養性，重德行善，戒除貪慾妄想，會種下福德，反而能無所求而自得，這是大智慧。這也映照了一句古語，「人為善，福雖未至，禍已遠離。人為惡，禍雖未至，福已遠離。」看來戒貪養德真的可以避禍得福，這值得深思警醒啊。（完）

（轉自明慧網）

Prisoners Live Up to Their Promise and Receive Pardons

不需看管的囚犯

Wang Jia served as a military aide to the official in charge of the Qi Prefecture, today's Shandong Province, during the late years of the Northern and Southern Dynasties and the Sui Dynasty

Wang, who was not known for accomplishing anything of note, was assigned to escort over 70 prisoners to the capital city.

Prisoners had to wear heavy wooden planks fixed around their necks, with their wrists cuffed to the planks in front of their chins.

When the prisoners, escorted by guards under Wang's command, reached Xingyang (now Henan Province), Wang felt sympathy for them because of the hardship they had to endure and stopped to talk to them.

"You have broken the law and are now paying the price, which causes you harm. The guards escorting you also have to put up with the ordeal of this long trip. Don't you all feel guilty?" he asked.

The prisoners expressed their remorse and shame.

"Although you all broke the law, the wooden plank shackles inflict a lot of pain. I am going to have them removed so that you can continue unhindered. We will regroup at the capital. Will you all show up on time?" he asked.

The prisoners knelt down, thanked him, and said that they would not dare miss the deadline. Wang told the guards to remove all the shackles and then told the guards that they had fulfilled their duty and could go home.

He set the date to meet the prisoners in the capital.

"If you don't show up by then, I will be given the death penalty," he added and then left.

The prisoners were greatly moved. All of them arrived at the appointed time and place in the capital. Not a single prisoner attempted to escape.

When the emperor learned about this, he was surprised and reflected on it for some time. He then issued an order that all the prisoners be brought into the imperial palace, and he also asked their wives and children to be present.During a banquet, the emperor pardoned all prisoners for living up to their word and for having understood the risk Wang had taken.

The emperor said, "Endless litigation ensues when officials lack compassion, and ordinary people become treacherous and vindictive. If officials are as considerate as Wang Jia, and the public is as trustworthy and grateful as these former prisoners, there is no need for punishment."

南北朝到隋朝時期的王伽，擔任齊州參軍（職務名）。

最初默默無聞，後來被派去押送被流放的犯人李參等七十多人到京城。

當時的制度，被流放的犯人要戴上沉重的枷鎖押送。走到滎陽地區，王伽憐憫囚犯的辛苦，對囚犯說：「你們既然犯了國法刑律，損害了你們自己，被法辦。現在又勞累小卒押送。豈獨不愧於心哉？」

囚犯們表達了他們的悔恨和羞愧。

王伽說：「你們雖犯律法，枷鎖也是很大的苦楚。我打算解下你們的枷鎖，讓你們自由離開，走到京城再讓你們集合。你們能做到不違期嗎？」

囚犯們跪下，向他道謝，並表示他們絕對不敢錯過最後期限。

王伽於是打開全部枷鎖，停止派小卒押送，與囚犯約定日期，某日當至京師。如「到時你們不到，我當為你們受死。」說完不再押送、看管這些囚犯，然後就離去了。

被流放的囚犯感動、喜悅，所有人都準時到達了京城的指定地點。沒有一個囚犯試圖逃跑。

皇帝得知此事後，感到驚訝，沉思了許久。皇上於是把被流放的囚犯全部召來，並讓他們攜帶妻子進入皇宮，在皇宮的殿庭賜宴給他們吃，赦免、釋放了這些守信用、知好歹的囚犯。

皇上感歎地說：「官吏無慈愛之心，平民懷著奸詐之意，所以獄訟不斷。……如果官吏都像王伽一樣體卹民情，百姓能像這些前囚犯一樣誠實感恩，刑罰就不需要用了。」

（轉自明慧網）

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