



The Chronicles of Yen Tzu

Ultimate Responsibility

In welcoming a new arrival of eager students, Yen Tzu noticed that the elder of the group, a well-dressed gentleman that had nervously introduced himself as Merchant Wong looked perplexed soon after his arrival at The Academy. 'What is that troubles you,' enquired Yen Tzu.

'It have to admit that my nature is one of getting nervous over future events,' replied Merchant Wong. 'I am uncomfortable at being away from my home and often at a loss as to how I should behave when attending them.'

'You must ask yourself why you behave as you do in order to stop wasting your natural forces,' replied Yen Tzu. 'It is far easier to feel comfortable when we are at home, because we know where everything is. Both our essential and changing needs are supplied far more conveniently than when we are away.'

'The way we presently behave is the only way we can, as our behaviour is determined by our psychic level. We cannot act above that level, for we are that level. But it is possible to raise our level, indeed it is our nature to do so. In understanding that all things behave according to their nature we can learn to see things as they should be. Let me illustrate with a story...

'There was once a scorpion, who, in desiring to cross a river, asked a duck to ferry him over on her back. The duck replied that if it were to do such a foolish thing, the scorpion would undoubtedly kill her with a lethal sting.

'That's nonsense,' the scorpion argued, 'for if I did, what would save me from drowning? You have my most solemn word and sincere promise that I will not repay your kindness with such an act.'

Allowing herself to be persuaded by the scorpion's entreaties, the duck permitted the scorpion to climb on her back. But they were only halfway across the river when she felt the cruel sting of the scorpion's tail. Immediately paralysed with just a few seconds to live, the duck asked why it was that, despite his word and causing his own imminent death, the scorpion had stung her. Just before the scorpion itself fell into the rushing waters, he answered the duck, saying that he had had no choice. He was following a scorpion's true nature.'

'So am I to act like the scorpion?' exclaimed Merchant Wong. 'But that means being ruthless, which is not in my nature.'

'It is not a matter of being ruthless or compassionate,' said Yen Tzu. 'It is a matter of acting as you are. The duck was persuaded to follow a false nature. Its true nature was clearly to not let its archenemy onto its vulnerable back, but it allowed its false nature to dominate.

'In the mineral kingdom, diamonds are diamonds and gold is gold wherever they are placed,' continued the Patriarch, 'yet for each there exists a false copy that serves to confuse seekers. For the true nature of each is disguised and seldom recognised in rough form unless the seeker is both knowledgeable and looking.

'Yet the true form of all precious substances is more recognisable because it has undergone a process to become finer and finer until the refined spirit of the rock radiates its beauty. For, in truth, all matter is dense spirit, and spirit is finer matter. In the animal kingdom a dog is a dog and behaves as such because it's obliged to be what it is whatever the outcome. It is indifferent to whether it is rising or falling in the scale of things, to whether it is multiplying or becoming extinct.

'All mineral, vegetable and animal matter obey the law of their species. For them there is no evil or sin as in our meanings of the words. There is no need for psychological effort, for their species is fixed. Man, however, can be, on occasion, as frightened as a mouse, as loyal as a dog, as brave as a lion, or as lethal as a scorpion.

'Man is the sliding note in the scale. This note is precarious; it is a state of responsibility, an octave in which Man can go up the scale or down. As Man occupies so many parts of a sliding scale, human nature is a mixture of good and evil, compassion and thoughtlessness, assist and sting. When his effort is to be himself, he can slide up the scale; when his effort is not, he can just as well slide down and degenerate.

'We can never know how to act correctly as long as we live with a mind filled with false ideas about ourselves. Following our true nature requires overcoming the wall that our false thinking has constructed to bar our way. The wall must be scaled with personal effort, for that is the test of our sincerity.'



'But after the wall is scaled,' asked Merchant Wong, 'how is the right path to take known?'

'Because there is a growing sense of familiarity and closeness about everything when we are following our true path,' said Yen Tzu. 'And as we gradually come closer to what is our real home, we recognise it.'

'It follows that we will feel uncomfortable when absent from our psychic home, because our true needs are not met. When our true needs are not supplied we seek to fill the void with alternatives. Based on our false beliefs as to what we think will bring us security, they instead leave us feeling as though something is missing. That is why so many people have a feeling of emptiness in their lives, where instead there should be fullness.'

'It requires clearing our minds of whatever has no right to be there, in order to have a clear path home. But it is here we hit a fundamental difficulty. For it is often the weight of our responsibilities that block our way.'

'Paradoxically, the more we become conscious of our responsibilities, the less we are able to recognise the power of wisdom already available to us. We can become so busy meeting with what we consider to be our responsibilities, that we have little time to pursue our true path, by far our most important responsibility. Subsequently, we are forced into the ruts of mediocre thinking, getting by; being average.'





'The question we might well ask ourselves later in life may be: 'Why did we spend so much of our time doing things which proved of little value, yet seemed so important?' But the question each of us will surely have to answer soon after is: 'Why were you not simply yourself?' Suddenly excuses such as: 'Because there was never enough time', will become meaningless. We must not learn too late the pointlessness of stating reasons for why we didn't become what we were intended to become, or why we expressed ourselves through what we allowed others to impress upon us, rather than from our true nature.

'When we do things in a new way, we live differently. We bring no benefits to ourselves until we see something about ourselves that we have not seen before. A person can be told countless times to change their ways, but nothing will happen until they tell themselves the very same thing.

'Unfortunately this usually happens when the pain they are experiencing causes them to exchange their mistaken path for their true one. It seems to take suffering and adversity before many people are led to express their true nature, but it doesn't have to. It is important to know that there is another way to do things: To ultimately accept full responsibility for whatever happens to us in life, either personally or professional. You, Merchant Wong, are responsible for you, for being you, for acting you and for whatever happens to you. That is your ultimate responsibility and indeed your security, and by embracing it you will never again feel uncomfortable over future events.'

