

【水鏡回天錄白話解】

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REFLECTIONS IN THE WATER-MIRROR: TURNING THE TIDE OF DESTINY

LAYMAN YUAN LIAO FAN (CONTINUED)

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以後他也得到兩個兒子，一個叫天賜，一個叫天啓；這兩個兒子是他求來的，可是他沒有求壽，沒有想要活多大年紀，以後他也活了七十四歲，也不算短命！

他這一生是很奇特的，所以他能改造他的命運。這一位居士，他本來能力很強的，關於醫術、數學、琴棋書畫，他都懂，音樂都懂、水利也懂，軍事他也通，所以他都有造詣。他這一生，能自己把自己的命運改造過來，這是值得我們學習的。他這一生，大略是這樣子。那麼他又有著有「四訓」流通於世。「四訓」就是：立命之學、改過之法、積善之方、謙德之效；這四種，在那〈了凡四訓〉裡面說得很好。他這個「四訓」，就是訓誨他兩個兒子的一種家訓；可是講的哲理，都很值得我們學習。

贊曰：

妄信命運	獨坐聽天
登山玩水	其樂無邊
幸遇雲谷	改轍易弦
創造新生	賜子綿綿

Commentary:

He later begot two sons; one was named Tian Ci—Bestowment of Heaven, and the other was Tian Qi—Inspiration of Heaven. These two sons were granted upon his request. But he did not ask for longevity as he did not want to live to an old age. Nevertheless he still lived up to seventy-four years and was not considered to be short-lived.

His entire life was quite unusual. He was able to alter his own destiny. This layman originally had great potential. He was skilled in medicine, mathematics, the fine arts (string instruments, chess, calligraphy and painting), music, irrigation works, military affairs and the like—he simply knew them all. He had achieved a lot. Later he could completely transform his own destiny. This is something we should emulate. This is a rough account of his entire life. He wrote *The Four Teachings* that circulated in the country. The Four Teachings is the study of creating one's own life, the method of correcting one's faults, the way of accruing goodness, and the efficacy of of modesty. These four aspects are well explained in *The Four Teachings of Liao Fan*. These Four Teachings were the family instruction he used to teach his two sons. The philosophical principles in it are worth studying.

A verse in praise says:

**Imprudently believing in fate, he simply sat around
submitting to Heaven's will.
Ascending the mountains and frolicking in the waters,
he enjoyed boundless bliss.
Fortunately he met Master Yun Gu and thus changed
his course of action and made a fresh start.
He created a new life and was bestowed with a
continuous lineage of offspring.**

這個「讚」這麼說的：「妄信命數，獨坐聽天」：他因為迷於命運這個邪說，他自己沒有主宰了，所以就坐在那裏聽天上來下麵包、下牛排——或這是中國是吃豬排，他就等著這個，什麼也不幹了。

「登山玩水」：他到山上、水邊去看一看，「其樂無邊」：他覺得這就很自由自在的，也無所求、無所貪！知足長樂了！他覺得很好的。

「幸遇雲谷」：他幸而遇到雲谷禪師，「改轍易弦」：把他這個命運給改造了。「創造新生」：創造新生命，「賜子綿綿」：他子孫也接續不斷的，壽命也很長的。

又說偈曰：

相士孔公說預言 並無壽考子艱難
仕路無緣隱林下 命運有定莫妄貪
高僧指點因果律 大賢教化善惡篇
四訓流傳醒迷夢 世人榜樣各勉旃

「相士孔公說預言」：有位姓孔的相士給他批命。「並無壽考子艱難」：說他不會活多大年紀——就是說他五十三歲八月十四丑時壽終正寢！所以壽命不是很長的，說他也沒有兒子。

「仕路無緣隱林下」：他做官的緣不多，所以該隱居林下。「命運有定莫妄貪」：他認為命運有定，所以就不貪了。

「高僧指點因果律」：高僧就是當時這雲谷禪師。因果律，就是種善因就結善果，種惡因就結惡果，這不是一定的；這因果的律是活動的，看你怎麼樣做。所以說：「善惡兩條道，修的修、造的造！」

「大賢教化善惡篇」：這「善惡篇」，也就是「功過篇」；那麼也就經過大聖大賢來指點他，教他「改過遷善」。那麼他自己就寫出：你若種善因就結善果，種惡因結惡果。這是當時賢而有德的

Commentary:

Imprudently believing in fate, he simply sat around submitting to Heaven's will. Since he was confused by the incorrect theory of fate, he lost his own self-mastery. Therefore, he simply sat around submitting to the will of Heaven. He sat at a place waiting for Heaven to send him bread and steak, or since he was in China, maybe it was pork chops. He simply waited for all these, doing nothing.

Ascending the mountains and frolicking in the waters. He climbed up the mountains to take a look and enjoyed himself in the waters. **He enjoyed boundless bliss.** He felt free and at ease, seeking nothing, coveting nothing! Being content with one's lot, one is constantly joyful. In this sense he was doing well.

Fortunately he met Master Yun Gu and thus changed his course of action and made a fresh start. His life was totally transformed.

He created a new life, and was bestowed with a continuous lineage of offspring. His line of descendants was continuous and unbroken. His life was also quite long!

Another verse says:

Physiognomist Master Kong predicted that he would have neither longevity nor sons. Having no affinity for an official career, he lived in the woods in seclusion. Since his fate was predetermined, he was not covetous. An eminent monk instructed him in the law of causation. A virtuous sage taught him to keep a record on good and evil. The Four Teachings was circulated to awaken those in muddled dreams. He serves as an example for the people—every one of us should strive to improve ourselves.

Commentary:

Physiognomist Master Kong predicted that he would have neither longevity nor sons. He would not live to an old age, but would pass away on the 14th day of the 8th month during the period Chou (the period from 1 to 3 a.m.). Therefore, his life would not be very long. Neither would he have a son. **Having no affinity for an official career.** He did not have much affinity for officialdom. Therefore, **he lived in the woods in seclusion.**

Since his fate was predetermined, he was not covetous. He thought that one's fate was predestined. **An eminent monk instructed him in the law of causation.** The eminent monk of that time was Dhyana Master Yun Gu. He taught him about the law of cause and effect, which is, one reaps as one has sown. If one plants good causes one

人這麼指點他、教化他。

「四訓流傳醒迷夢」：他就寫了這〈了凡四訓〉流傳於世，令世界迷於風水、迷於命運的人，都可以作為一個借鏡，不要那麼迷信。迷信風水、迷信命運，這就像袁了凡的前半生，被數綁住，應該活動起來！所以這「四訓」，令世界執著的人，這個迷夢都醒了。

「世人榜樣各勉旃」：所以這個袁了凡先生，也就是這個世界人的一個好榜樣。我們每一個人也都明白這個道理了，要自強不息。所謂「朝為田舍郎，暮登如來堂」，「諸佛本無種，男女當自強」——不要單說「男兒當自強」，現在是男女平權，所以男女當自強，或者人人當自強。

will receive good results; likewise, if one plants evil causes one will receive bad retributions. This is not fixed. The law of cause and effect is not fixed, in that it depends on what you do. There is the path of goodness and the path of evil. Each of us goes his own way—some cultivate goodness and some create evil.

A virtuous sage taught him to keep a record of good and evil. The record of good and evil refers to a record of merits and faults. Through the teaching and guidance of a great sage and worthy one, Yuan “corrected evil doings and reverted to good deeds”. Then he wrote, “If you plant good causes you will receive good results; likewise, if you plant evil causes you will receive bad retributions” as he was taught by a virtuous sage of that time.

The Four Teachings **was circulated to awaken those in muddled dreams.** People confused by *feng shui* and fate hopefully could draw lessons from his experience, and no longer superstitiously believe in *feng shui* and predestination like Yuan Liao Fan who had been bound by his fate during the first half of his life. One should be more proactive instead. His Four Teachings awakened people in the world who were caught up in muddled dreams.

He serves as an example for the people. Yuan Liao Fan was a role model for the people in the world. **Every one of us should strive to improve ourselves.** Since we now understand this principle, we have to make an unremitting effort to improve ourselves. It is said, “One who was once in a farmhouse can later ascend to the Tathagata hall.” “All Buddhas are basically without differences in kind. Both men and women should strive to improve themselves.” Don’t simply say that men should strive to improve themselves. Now men and women have equal rights. Therefore, both men and women should strive for the better, or shall we say, everyone should strive for the better.

