



武当纯阳派  
Wu Dang Chun Yang Pai



# The Ten Trials of Patriarch Lü

## 十 试 吕 祖

*Lü Dong Bin's ten trials before he reached the Dao;  
Can you achieve it?*

*-The first trial-*

Dong Bin regarded himself as an outsider. When he returned from afar, his neglected family members had all died of illness. Lü Dong Bin had no deep regrets, but sincerely prepared the burial tools, nothing more. In that moment all the dead resurrected in good health.

Dong Bin considered his family members dead and did not move an inch or make the slightest sound. Could it be possible that there were no human sentiments and feelings? This is not so.

Dong Bin had already awakened to the Great Dao. Life and death are nothing but an illusion. Life and death are bound by fate, and a man of character regards death as if returning. The souls of relatives have their own road to follow. Could it be possible that if one's predestined relationship has already come to an end, one can only apply one's utmost propriety for the burial? What else could there be grudged upon? But the matters before birth, living and the course of life, dying and peaceful dying are not worth being dreaded.

Being alive one is able to cultivate benevolence, being dead one is able to act as benevolent immortal. Therefore Dong Bin thoroughly observed the ways of the world, and came to the understanding that it is purely an illusion. This is why he was able to keep a clear mind in the face of disaster and through solemnity and reverence increasing his own strength.

All living creatures struggle to sever from love and affection, struggle to part from the physical body, unable to bear suffering. Life is bitter, death is bitter, it is not worth it! One must study Dong Bin, placing life and death outside of one's sphere of consideration, but seeking a clear conscience, that is all.

*-The second trial-*

Dong Bin sold merchandise on the market. After successful negotiations for the price, the buyer turned against him, only willing to expend half the price. Dong Bin did not quarrel about anything. Seeking to sell his product, Dong Bin did not disturb his heart over gain and loss. In regards to ordinary people encountering this, it is undeniable that they would have a red face and glowing ears, absolutely unwilling to give up, even leading to a murder and homicide case.

This trial's purpose lies in urging people not to suffer from loss and suffer from gain. One must lay down one's heart-mind.

Problems of trustworthiness constantly occur on the market about the loaning and borrowing of commodities. And of course there is the principle of not lending money and goods disorderly:

Whenever disputes takes place, view things blandly a little bit in that case, suffer losses and pay the damage, Do not take it to heart, as it may lead to illness and suicide, it is truly not worth it!

*-The third trial-*

Dong Bin set out at on New Year's Day, encountering a beggar leaning on the door asking for alms. Thereupon Dong Bin promptly bestowed money and goods on him, and yet the beggar demanded tirelessly, even adding vicious slander to his abuse. Dong Bin over and over smiled and apologized.

In this trial people giving alms have to suffer from humiliating sentiments.

If one donates money for the benefit of others and still must receive a scolding, then earlier on it was already impossible for them to endure. This enables one to see one's attainments of the Dao fall way short compared to Dong Bin, not passing the test of this branch of study.

*-The fourth trial-*

Dong Bin was herding sheep in the mountains, when he crossed paths with a hungry tiger, who started chasing after his flock of sheep. Dong Bin used his own body to block off the tiger's way, only then did he let go and depart.

This trial tests people whether they have a sacrificial spirit or not to save the lives of sheep in exchange for giving up their own body. I fear that ordinary people are unable to achieve this. However one should not extinguish life, instead rescue animals' lives, eat a vegetarian diet and cultivate one's conduct. Consequently one will be also capable of moving a starving tiger not to eat flesh.

*-Fifth Trial-*

Dong Bin dwelled in the mountains, studying books in his thatched hut. A woman, her beauty surpassing the world and her gorgeous rays illuminating people, claimed to be lost on her way home, thereby resting for a while. Afterwards she was teasing and stirring things up in a hundred ways. The woman's beauty was seducing, yet Dong Bin did not move at all!

Since people of the world are without charms, they have at once tried every means to lure pretty women, let alone when a woman's beauty voluntarily shows itself before them.

How could one keep control of oneself?

One must become a traveller to the heavens, and one will not lose one's countenance in front of a female immortal. One must refine this skill of stable tranquillity!

Common people keep on falling into the pit of lust, not even a few crawl back out of it. Still thinking about climbing to heaven, I consider it meaningless to even ponder about!

*-Sixth Trial-*

When Dong Bin returned after a day's journey, he discovered that his entire estate had been completely robbed. Dong Bin did not show a trace of anger, instead he personally ploughed the fields for self-sufficiency. All of a sudden when his hoe struck the ground, he caught sight of gold bars numbering ten. He swiftly buried them, obtaining nothing at all.

Covetous thoughts promptly arrive in company of evil spirits and demons. Lusting for money and women act as people's common faults. Patriarch Lü discarded the gold and he did not look displeased. In his heart there was no melancholy after the hoe struck and he discovered gold, Without covetous thoughts or delight in his heart-mind he resigned himself that it simply must be one's physical labour that yields all gain; this is the reason for not taking it. Common people are fond of seeking little advantages, they should be ashamed. Cultivators of the Dao give up their greed, therefore they are not moved by lust or women, only then can one join the ranks of immortals and Buddhas. All living creatures! How many points did you score in this test?

*-Seventh Trial-*

Dong Bin came across a salesman of copper ware and bought some items. After returning home he inspected them; all of them were golden. He promptly re-visited the salesman, and returned them to him. This trial is about avarice.

Purchasing brass that turns into gold, common people surely would be wild with joy, thanking heaven and earth. However grateful are only fools, how could there be a rationale for returning it?

Obtaining wealth unjustly, a man of noble character must be sure to keep in mind this trial.

*-Eight Trial-*

Once there was an insane Daoist, who sold medicine on the streets, claiming that taking it would lead to immediate death, but in the next lifetime one would be able to achieve the Dao. As Dong Bin bought some medicine, the Daoist said:

“Hastily prepare your funeral affairs.”

Dong Bin dauntlessly ingested the medicine; he was safe, sound and in good health.”

Could it be possible that Dong Bin became bewildered, fearless of death? This is not so.

Dong Bin sought the Dao eagerly, regarding death like life. His heart-mind was aware of the Daoist's crazy talk which must have been of Heaven's design. The reason is a trial of bravery.

Moreover a proverb says: Once the heart of the human dies, immediately the heart of the Dao is born. One must instantly eradicate one's poisonous thoughts of greed, anger and idiocy, thus preventing the physical body from becoming sickly.

*-Ninth Trial-*

One day, the river water turned into a disastrous flood. Dong Bin and a group waded across together up to the centre of the stream. Wind and waves were surging and gushing. Everyone in the crowd was terrified and cried fearfully, whereas Dong Bin sat up straight and did not move. This trial is about people's resolve.

To cultivate the Dao it is necessary to have a cool and calm mind and resolute faith. When encountering attacks of fierce winds and violent rainstorms, as long as the heart's affections and inclinations remain unstirred, one will be capable of endurance whilst remaining safe. Otherwise tread one careless footstep and the terrifying waves will immediately flush you away! Common people, be cautious of this.

*-Tenth Trial-*

Dong Bin sat alone in his room, when he suddenly saw countless ghosts and demons of strange shapes and characters, striking the one who has strivings, killing the one who has desires, Dong Bin was not the slightest fearful. All of a sudden he heard a yelling shout in the air, all ghosts and spirits vanished. One person clapped hands laughing out loud, it was his master Han Zhong Li.

The master said:

“My ten trials, none of them moved my disciple at all, you surely achieved the Dao!

This trial is about not committing deeds that trouble your conscience. Do not be afraid about ghost knocking on your door. When Dong Bin, upright-hearted and guileless, caught sight of the ghosts and demons who came to encroach on him, he resigned himself to it like having a debt of “bitterness” for wrongdoings. If you want my life, do not hesitate to take it, as I, in this generation, with this heart-mind, have nothing else to yearn for anymore. Upright qi, vast and expansive, fearless of ghosts and spirits!

Common people confronted with ghosts and spirits, resemble having a shameful heart-mind. A frightened heart-mind means the Way and Virtue are not consummate and meritorious actions are insufficient. It is appropriate to intensify the efforts to accumulate merit to repay and cast away the debt of wrongdoings. Consequently ghosts and spirits will act as friends, immortals and Buddhas will act as companions. The three realms and the ten directions give me free reign to roam about.

Lü Yan,

Style Name Dong Bin,

Tang Dynasty, Pu Prefecture,

Yong Le County Native,

Daoist Name Chun Yang Zi.