



Session 4: Daoist understanding of life and death

- HPPH5015/6015
- 13TH APRIL 2021
- TUESDAY 10AM-1PM
- TEACHING METHOD: FACE TO FACE

Aspects for discussions

- Definition of life and death in Chinese understanding : 生命
- Chinese understanding of life and death : theory of Hun and Po
- Xunzi's understanding on different level of lives
- Daoist understanding on lives' differences
- Daoist understanding of human healthy life
- Daoist understanding on why life should be treasured

Chinese Understanding of Life

- Life in Chinese comprised by two characters: sheng 生 and ming 命

 生: growing

- 命 Ideogram compound:  + 
- 命: Life; Destiny, Fate; Order, Instruction

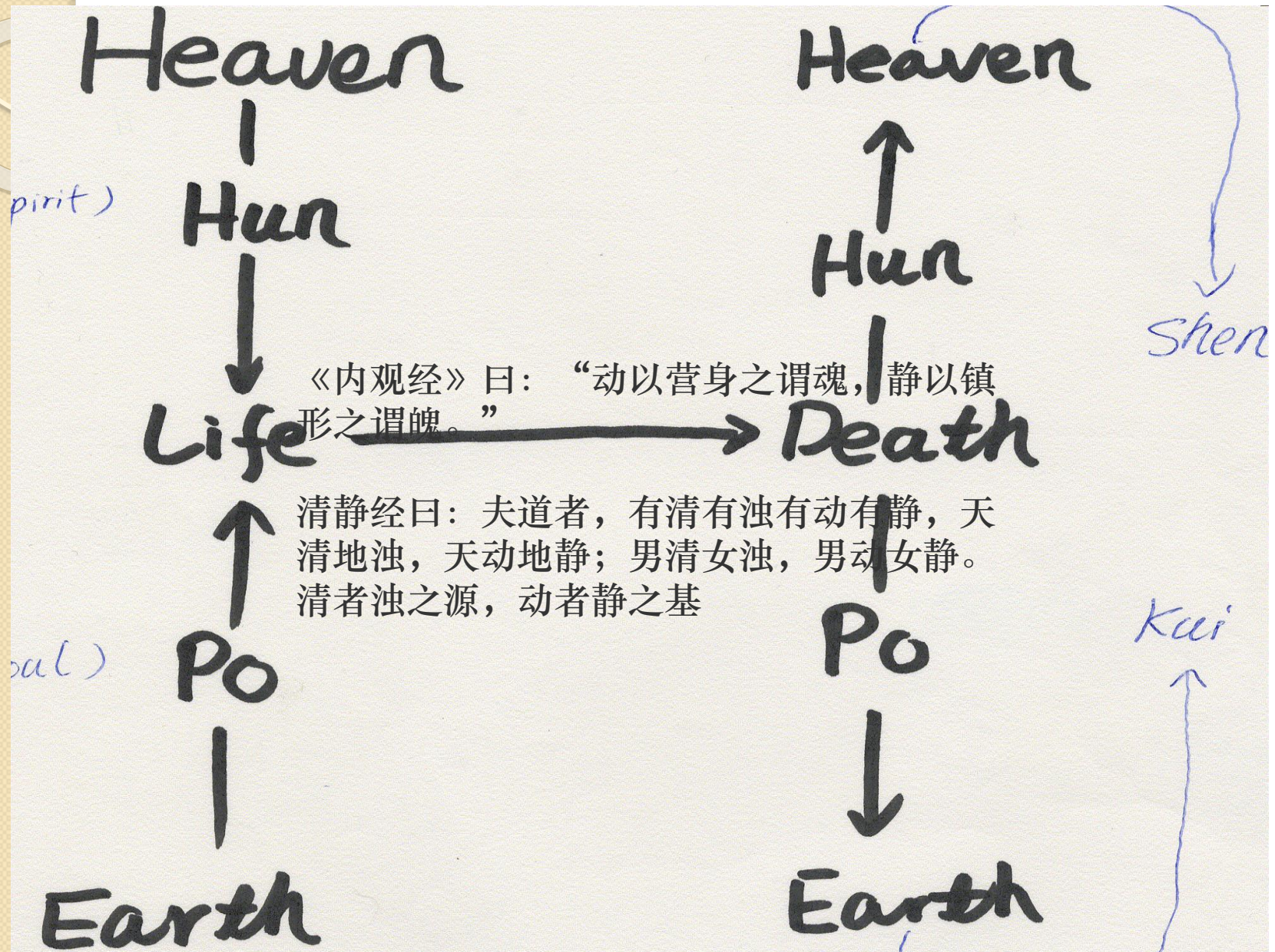
The original writing of sheng 生

Oracle Bone Inscription looks like a new plant  / , to mean 'new plant', and 'the plant  that is growing out of earth , or 'to generate'. Later on, the meaning of sheng as a verb was extended to mean 'to take place', 'to give birth', 'to live', 'to produce', and 'to renew', and as a noun to be used for indicating all things alive that are opposite to death.

What is Life?

- Life is the aspect of existence that processes, acts, reacts, evaluates, and evolves through growth (reproduction and metabolism).
- The crucial difference between life and non-life (or non-living things) is that life uses energy (Q_i) for physical and conscious development.
- Life is anything that grows and eventually dies, i.e., ceases to proliferate and be cognizant.

Understanding of Life & Death inherited by Daoism



Hun and Po as Yang Qi & Yin Qi

- “魂魄，神灵之名，本从形气而有；形气既殊，魂魄各异。附形之灵为魄，附气之神为魂也。附形之灵者，谓初生之时，耳目心识、手足运动、啼呼为声，此则魄之灵也；附所气之神者，谓精神性识渐有所知，此则附气之神也。”
- Hun Po, names of the spirits who originated from the Qi that are connecting to physical form. The reason why Hun-po in different being are different is because the Qi to form their forms are different. The soul attaching to the physical form is called as Po while the spirit attaching to the Qi is called as Hun.
- (Kong Yingda commentary on Zuozhuan.zhaogong year 25)

Three HUNs and Seven POs

- 人身有三魂，一名胎光，太清阳和之气也；一名爽灵，阴气之变也；一名幽精，阴气之杂也。
- There 3 Huns within a human body, one is names as Taiguang, which is the great clarity and yang harmony Qi; one is named as Shuangling, which the changed form of Yin Qi; the other is named as Youjing, which is the mixture of Yin Qi.
- 第一魂胎光，属之于天，常欲得人清静，欲与生人，延益寿算，绝秽乱之想，久居人身中，则生道备矣；
- The first Hun Taiguang belongs to heaven, and it always want people to be clear and pure, and want to keep the living human individual to prolong life and avoid people to think unclean and chaotic things. Therefore, if Taiguang is living in the human body, this person will live in a long and happy life.
- 第二魂爽灵，属之于五行，常欲人机谋万物，摇役百神，多生祸福灾衰刑害之事；
- The second hum is named as Shuangling, belongs to five phases, and always want a person to calculate and manipulate other beings and labour and control hundreds of spirit, therefore it generate disasters and harm and punishments to the human body.
- 爽灵欲人生机，生机则心劳，心劳则役百神，役百神则气散，气散则太清一气不居，人将丧矣；
- Shuangling want a person to raise opportunities and raising opportunities will labor ones heart. An busy Heart will push the hundred spirits to work, which will result a scatter the Qi and if the Qi within a body is scattered, one great clarity Unity of Qi will unsettled, which will lead one to die.
- 第三魂幽精，属之于地，常欲人好色、嗜欲、秽乱昏暗、耽著睡眠。
- The third hun is named as youling, belongs to Di, and it always want the body to be amorousness, indulgent into desires, unclear even dark thinking and action and always in a condition of sleepy
- 幽精欲人合杂，合杂则厚于色欲，厚于色欲则精华竭，精华竭则名生黑簿鬼录，罪著，死将至矣。夫人重色欲，必昏邪秽乱，不避三光、四明、雷霆、神察，为四司所录，五帝所责，延累九玄七祖、父母长居幽途，荣禄长生不可睹矣。(张君房：云笈七签卷五十四 魂神部一)



Stinking Lung

Remover of Filth

Flying Poison

Thief Swallow

Yin Sparrow

Hidden Arrow

Dead Dog



圖魄魂

生謂之精
氣耗精之
魂魄天下
之鬼神也

魂神曰魂
陰神曰魄
魂之與魄
互為表裏

魂者氣之神有清有濁曰昇
之所以呼喚者神為神魄吸
為陰也魄者精之神有靈
有是耳目之所以運轉皆
為陽助魄為陰也



三魂圖

爽靈

台光

幽精



Life as the Destiny of A Living Being

- Life = Life Span = Fate/Destiny (the time length) of an living creature when it is being alive between its Birth and its Death
- **Shengming生命 belongs to every living being:**
 - Rensheng人生: human life
 - Chusheng畜牲/畜生: life of animals
 - Cao-ben sheng草本生: life of grass and tree

Confucian understanding of life and Human life

- **Fire and water** possess energy [*qi*] but are without life [*sheng*].
- **Grass and trees** have life but no intelligence [*zhi*].
- **Beasts** have intelligence but no sense of duty [*yi*].
- **Man** possesses energy, life, intelligence, and, in addition, a sense of duty. Therefore he is the noblest [*gui*--most valuable, most precious] being on earth. (Xunzi: Wang Zhi)
- Human is the one has not only flesh body, consciousness but also morality and wisdom/intelligence
- Human is the one can joint with Heaven and Earth as an Unified trinity: sage is the one who can stand side by side with the Heaven and Earth and give the universe a meaning of existence

Why Human Life Is a Treasure? 赵台鼎 (Ming Dynasty): 脉望

- Xing belongs to the consciousness, while Ming belongs to form and material existence, 性者属知觉, 命者属形质.
- **Ghosts and Gods** have xing [consciousness] but do not have ming [form and material existence] 鬼神有性无命;
- **Grasses and Tresses** have ming [form and material existence] but don't have xing [consciousness or spirit] 草木有命无性;
- **Animals** have less ming [consciousness/spirit] but have more ming [form and material existence] 禽兽性少命多;
- Only **humankind** is able to possess both ming [form and material existence] and xing [consciousness/spirit] 惟人能全之.

Daoist Understanding of Human Life

- From Daoist perspective, an alive body/life of humans is the unification of the three aspects Xing 形(jing精), Qi气, Shen神:
- **Xing 形**: Physical/ biological form of one's Body. **Xing** and **Ti** are always combined together to refer one's body.
- **Jing 精**: Fine materials of a body that is essential for personal life force, body growing and reproduction.
- **Qi 气**: the energy of Life Force flowing through the physical body
- **Shen神**: the spirit combined by hun魂 and po 魄 soul.

Daoist Understanding of Life

- **Life = 生命** = sheng 生 (alive, birth, generate, produce) + ming 命 (fate, destiny)
- **Life = 性命** = xing 性 (nature, essence) + ming 命 (fate, destiny, essential elements for physical existence)
- **Life = 形气神** = xing 形 (form) + qi 气 (vital energy) + shen 神 (spirit)
- **Life = 精气神** = jing 精 (refined productive part of physical body) + qi 气 (vital energy) + shen 神 (spirit)

Human Life is 形气神 (xing +qi+ shen) or 精气神 (jing +qi +shen)

- **Xing** = form/ structure of human body
 - =material source manifested by Qi
 - =material base of the spirit
- **Jing** generally refers to the refined part of materialized human body
 - it especially refers to the fundamental energy of human life (sperm or semen)
- **Qi** = Life energy and source of being and life
- **Shen**= spirits or consciousness

The Original Meaning of Jing 精

- **Jing** originally is a pictogram of the germ of a grain, its extended meaning are germ of life, life essence, sexual energy, the most refined, quintessential form of anything.
- **Physical manifestation of jing:**
- In Qigong, jing is the most yin form of qi.
- It tends to flow downward, like water, moving toward the genitals and finding expression in fluids related to reproduction: semen, sperm, vaginal lubricants, ova, menstrual blood.
- **Jing is essentially a subtle energy.** Same as Qi is air but it is more than air, the jing is sperm but more than sperm.

The Characteristic of Jing

- **Jing** corresponds to sexual energy and manifests in the body as sexual fluids;
- **Jing** is yin and moves downward, filling the lower dantian丹田 and kidneys.
- **Jing** energy tends to drain outward leaving its energetic gate (the genitals) whether one is sexually stimulated or not, though it will be lost more if sexual relationship is inharmonious.
- **Jing** circulates through the bones, brain and mind. (Kenneth S. Cohen, 1997:39)

The Gender of Jing

- Jing has yin and yang expressions:
- The **Yin** (earthly) aspect of **Jing**, is the **reproductive** and **sexual fluids**.
- The **Yang** aspect of **Jing** is **saliva**.
- Although saliva is physically composed of digestive enzymes and protective antibodies, it is energetically linked to sexuality.
- Kenneth S. Cohen, *The Way of Qigong: the Art and Science of Chinese Energy Healing*, New York: Ballantine Books, 1997, p.37

Jing in Chinese Medicine

- **Jing** is the **energy of growth and development**, slowly increasing during childhood, reaching its **peak** at **age twenty-one** and then decreasing, unless checked or supplemented by qigong training.
- **Diminishing jing** is associated with many of the signs of aging, particularly **osteoporosis**, less responsive immune cells, **loss of libido**, gray hair, **slower reflexes** and poorer memory.
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- Kenneth S. Cohen, *The Way of Qigong: the Art and Science of Chinese Energy Healing*, New York: Ballantine Books, 1997, p.37

还精补脑 Reverse the Jing to Repair the Brain in Daoist Yangsheng Practices

- **Jing** is the energy that creates **bone marrow** and the **gray matter of the brain**. The **brain** is the **sea of marrow**
- Reverse the jing to repair the brain is a famous Qigong practice: instead of flowing down toward the genitals, the jing is pushed upward through meditative exercises.
- Although it is unlikely that damaged brain cells can be repaired, there is a wealth of evidence proving that individuals can slow the rate of destruction and are capable of awakening new areas of the brain.
- Kenneth S. Cohen, *The Way of Qigong: the Art and Science of Chinese Energy Healing*, New York: Ballantine Books, 1997, p.37

The Character of Shen

- **Shen** is spiritual and psychic energy, the divine part of one's being and has an essentially luminous nature (Catherine Despeux, in Kenneth S. Cohen, 1997:40)
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- **Shen** is the subtle energy of spirit. It is yang and move upward, like fire.
- **Shen** is stored in the upper dantian, between the eyebrows, and escapes through eyes, unless checked by introspection and meditation.
- **Shen** descends during meditation, the eyes are turned within, illuminating the microcosm.

The Characteristic of Qi

- **Qi** is the omnipresent energy of life, manifests as breath and easily escapes through the nose and mouth unless conserved by practicing quiet, meditative breathing.
- **Qigong** is sometimes described as method of 'inner alchemy' in which fire (yang) flows down and water (yin) flows up, meeting and producing the steam (the **qi**).
- Kenneth S. Cohen, 1997:39

The relationship of Jing Shen and Qi

- **Jing** and **Shen** are types of **Qi** (yin and yang respectively).
- Although
- **Shen** is connected to the mind and spirit,
- **Jing**, which nourishes the brain, is also related to spirit, and
- **Qi** as respirations, affects our mood state.

Three Treasures of Human Life

(Kenneth S. Cohen, 1997: 38)

	Jing 精	Qi 气	Shen 神
Energy	Sexual	Life	Spirit
Organ-Source	Kidneys and lungs	Spleen	Liver and Heart
Element	Water	Earth	Fire
Form	Sexual fluid, saliva	Breath	Light and Spirit
Character	Yin	Yin, Yang , Neutral	Yang
Movement	Down	Down and Up	Up
Reservoir	Lower Dantian	Middle Dantian	Upper Dantian
Circulatory System (TCM)	Bones	Meridians	Extra Meridians
Associated System (WM)	Reproductive Endocrine	Respiratory	Nervous
Gate	Genitals	Nose and Mouth	Eyes
Cultivation Practice	Sexual	Qigong	Meditation

The Meaning of xing ming 性命

- 性则神也, 命则精与气也.
- <玄肤论·性命论> <道教五派丹法精选> 第三集, 中医古籍出版社, 250页)
- Xing性 (nature, essence)= Shen神 (spirit)
- Ming命 (fate destiny)= Jing 精 (Essence=refined part of xing形)+ Qi 气 (vital energy)
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- 性者是元神, 命者是元气, 名曰性命也.
- <重阳授丹阳二十四诀> <道藏> 25册, 807页.
- Xing性 (nature, essence)= Yuan Shen元神 (congenital spirit)
- Ming命 (fate destiny)= Yuan Qi元气 (congenital vital energy)
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- Why ming = jing + qi?
- 精是生命的基础, 气是生命的动力, 所以命是精与气。
- Jing is the base of life and Qi is the force of life, therefore Life= Jing+ Qi

Daoist Understanding of Xing 性

- 荀子：生之所以然者谓之性；凡性者天之就也，不可学，不可事；不可学，不可事而在人者谓之性。
- Xing is something one to be born with, something inherently unchangeable, un-learnable and cannot be waiting upon
- 性者，人身一点余元灵之神也（还真集·性命混融论）《道藏》卷24，103页
- Xing is the bit of congenital spirit left in human body
- .

Daoist Understanding of Ming 命

- 大凡生于天地之间者皆曰命（礼记，祭法）
- Things to live between heaven and earth all can be called as fate/destiny
- 死生，命也，其有夜旦之常，天也（庄子，大宗师）
- Death and birth are fate. They are as certain as the dawn that comes after the night, established by the decree of heaven.
- 从道受生谓之命（太上老君内观经）
- To be born according to the Dao is called as fate.
- 气者，命也。在天为气，受之于人为命。（刘一明，《百字碑注》《藏外道书》，第8册，438页）
- Qi is equal to the Fate. When it exists in its natural form, it is called as Qi; when it manifested in human form, it is called as fate.
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- 夫所谓命者，气之宗也。凡人之生，须藉乎气；有气则生，无气则死，故人死曰断气，气断则命绝。
- Ming is the ancestor and root of Qi. Every human life need to base on the Qi; one will live by having Qi and will die by without of Qi, therefore die is called as broken of Qi flow, when the flow of Qi is broken one's ming will be finished.

What is meant by death

- gù (故), past
- shì (逝), gone
- sǐ (死) = 一 + 夕 + 巳
- wáng (亡), lost
- yǔn (陨), fall

Gui鬼 and Hun and Po

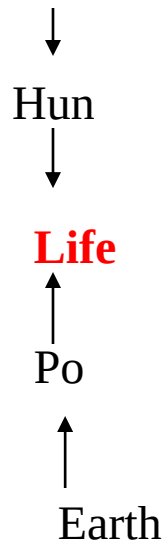
- **Hun** 魂 = spirit, a heavenly spirit coming from Heaven
- **Po** 魄 = soul, an earthly spirit coming from the essence of Earth.
- The combination of a spirit and a soul = birth of a **life**
- The separation of spirit and soul = come of **death**
- **Gui**鬼 is a figure with a mask and a tail ornament = **returned spirit and soul**
- They may be recalled by their descendants through ritual and sacrifices, by music and wine respectively

Returned Spirit and Soul

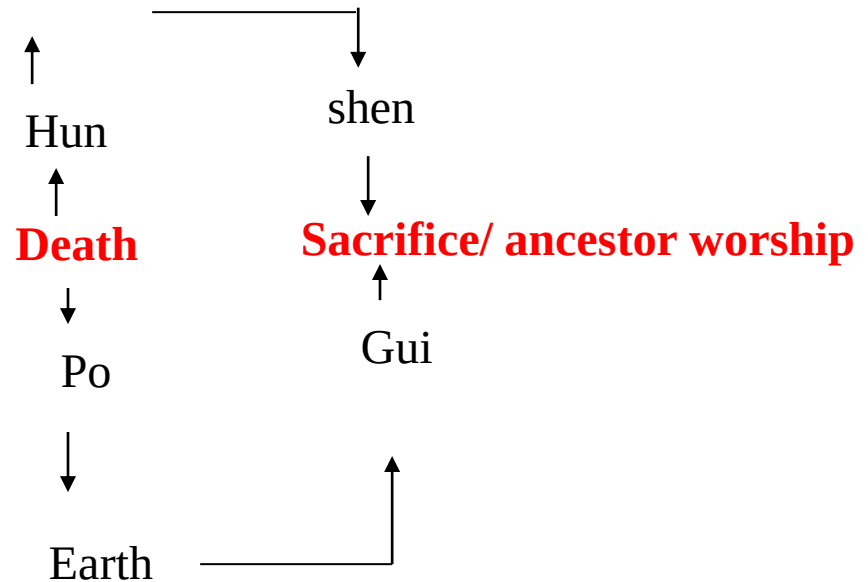
- The spirit and soul that have returned are called gui.
- Literally gui 鬼 meaning 归='returning'.
- Returned spirits or soul take two forms:
 - when they are taken care of properly, they are good and kind, blessing and protecting their descendents
 - Otherwise they would bring harm to the living
- haunting ghosts(恶鬼) and special religious ceremonies

Chinese understanding of life and Death

Heaven



Heaven



Chinese attitude of Death

- **Yang Zhu**杨朱 and **Zhuangzi**庄子: Natural Process
- **Wang Chong**王充: death like light of candle has been put out
- **Confucius**孔子: wei zhi sheng, yan zhi si未知生, 焉知死(don't know life how can you know death);
- ji ru zai 祭如在(worship ghost as if it is present there)
- **Xunzi**荀子: Ritual is for polish human virtue and memory the past

Treasure Life in Lushi Chunqiu

- The sages pondered over all things in the world and found that nothing is treasured more than life.
- Physical organs such as ears, eyes, nose, and mouth, they are merely servants of one's life. Thus, although ears like sound, eyes like colours, nose likes fragrance, and mouth likes flavour, they would be prohibited if they are going to harm one's life. ...
- Regarding to benefit, gaining a world is great enough yet one will not harm one's life to gain it, how could one let other things be prior to one's life? (Chen Qiyou 2002, 75)