

# Tang Dynasty Emperor Taizong Educated the Crown Prince via Things Encountered in Daily Life

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(**Clearwisdom.net**) In Chinese, *Taizi* (the crown prince) is also called *Chujun* (king-in-waiting). Raising a good successor to the throne was a very important job, as it affected the long-term health of the country. Emperor Taizong of the Tang Dynasty took it very seriously. Crown prince Li Zhi was a kind and righteous person but lacked courage and determination. Emperor Taizong made careful plans to educate Li Zhi so he would be able to keep his good traits and improve on his weaknesses. Taizong selected a very learned person, Fu Zuo, to be the prince's teacher. He also took a personal interest in educating the prince. He ordered the prince to move to the palace located next to his, so the father and son could see each other from morning until evening and Taizong could supervise and guide his son at all times. Taizong also used an unorthodox method to educate his son. He abandoned the policy of teaching by books, and instead, he tried to teach the prince by sharing his thoughts about things they encountered in their daily lives.

When he saw the prince eating a meal, Taizong said, "Only after a year of hard work by the farmers' efforts of plowing, weeding, and harvesting, do we have food to eat. When you eat a meal, you should think about the difficulties farmers have endured in harvesting the grains. The food you are eating in your meal did not come easily. Make your heart feel empathy towards the farmers and restrain your desires. In that case, Heaven will certainly see that you have the wisdom to be thankful for your good fortune, and it will bestow even more good

fortune on you and allow you to frequently have food to eat."

When he saw the prince riding on horseback, Taizong instructed, "Although the horse is a domestic animal, it also has feelings. You should cherish it. When you are riding, you should think about the labor and hard work that this horse is doing, and restrain yourself from riding too fast. You cannot exhaust all the strength of the horse. Heaven will see that you have the humanity of treating objects with love, and will make you rich and honorable and allow you to always have horses to ride."

When he saw the prince riding on a boat, he instructed, "Water can carry a boat, but it can also capsize it. The common people are like water, and the monarch is like the boat. If the monarch treats the common people with kind acts and virtue, the common people will love the monarch. If the monarch is tyrannical and doesn't show attentiveness for the common people's needs, the people will treat him as an enemy and betray him. Just like water, although it can carry a boat, it can also capsize it. You cannot afford not to be prudent on this matter."

When he saw the prince enjoying the coolness under the shade of a tree, Taizong said, "As a tree grows, it often doesn't grow perfectly straight. A carpenter can use tools to turn it into a log strong and long enough to serve as building material for a palace. A monarch who grows up in a palace cannot know everything and will certainly make mistakes. Only by modestly listening to the advice of the ministers can he correct and straighten himself up and become a worthy emperor."

It was obvious that Emperor Taizong of the Tang Dynasty was not only the father of the crown prince, but also the strict teacher. He used mundane matters that they encountered in their daily lives to teach profound philosophies to the crown prince in expectation that the prince could one day rule the nation. His teachings were lively, easy to

understand, and achieved great effect.

Under the careful guidance of Taizong, the crown prince didn't disappoint his father and turned out to be a fine monarch in his own right. He followed the teachings of his father, heeded the wishes of his people, and remained committed to maintaining a chaste style of governance. In many areas of politics, economics, culture and other aspects, he built upon his father's accomplishments and achieved even greater successes than his father. His accomplishments confirm that Emperor Taizong had chosen and educated a worthy successor. Emperor Taizong was not only an outstanding political leader and strategist, he was also a master in training, teaching and working with virtuous people.

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CATEGORY: Traditional Culture