

# **Traditional Culture: Feet Create the Path - No Effort Means No Progress**

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Once upon a time two monks lived in Sichuan Province. One monk was poor, the other rich. One day the poor monk told the rich one, "I want to go to the South Sea." "But how, by what transportation?" the rich monk asked. "All I need are one bottle and one bowl," the poor monk said. The rich monk replied, "For years I have been planning to rent a boat to go there, but I still have not been able to go. What makes you think you can go there?"

A year later the two monks met again after the poor monk returned from the South Sea. He told the rich monk about his trip. The rich monk felt very ashamed.

The famous Qing Dynasty literati Peng Duanshu told the above story in his work "On learning, to my children." His story reveals a principle:

There are no easy or hard things in the world. As long as you are making the effort, the hard things can become easy. If you don't take any action, then the easiest things can be hard. The same is true in learning. If you really study, then even the most challenging subject can become

easy. On the other hand, if you don't want to study, then even the easiest assignment becomes difficult. If one relies on his own intellect and educational background but refuses to study more, then the person will destroy his future. Those who refused to be discouraged by their own average intelligence and capability and continued to learn did obtain success through their own efforts.

I am deeply touched by this story. When dealing with issues, if we don't take action, but focus our effort on looking for "shortcuts" or we postpone our action by saying, "Wait until tomorrow," or "I will do it later," we are no different from the rich monk who waited for years to rent a boat. As the old poem "Tomorrow Song" says, "Tomorrow and tomorrow; how many tomorrows are there anyway? If one always waits for tomorrow to do his work, then he accomplishes nothing in his life time."

When we walk, we take a step at a time. Every step leads us forward. All big things begin from little things. We achieve success through gradual accumulation of effort. If we only want to score big but ignore the little things then we will eventually get nowhere, like the rich monk.