

Traditional Chinese Culture: Being Arrogant and Having No Fear Provokes Disaster; Step on Rugged Terrain with Modest Discretion

January 07, 2006 | By Qing Yan

(minghui.org)

Ji Xiaolan was a renowned scholar in the Qing Dynasty. He was also a high-ranking official in the Ministry of Rites. He once served as the chief curator of the country's library. In his biography, *Yueweicaotang Manuscripts*, he recorded the following:

When Ji was young, he knew someone in his village named Ding Yishi. Ding was sturdy and nimble, and had tremendous strength. He was a martial arts expert. He could jump over objects that were 20 or 30 feet tall with ease, as if he was flying. Ji Xiaolan talked about how he had personally witnessed Ding's excellent martial arts skill when Ji was a child. Once Ji stood in the hall facing the front door and Ding Yishi stood next to the front door facing him. By the time Ji turned around to face the rear door, Ding had already moved to stand in front of the rear door. They played this game seven or eight times, and Ji

could never turn his body around fast enough to see Ding making the move. Ding Yishi could jump over the roof of a house easily. From Ji's description, it is clear that Ding was indeed a martial arts expert.

One day Ding Yishi went to the township of Dulin. A friend invited him to drink with him at a restaurant near a bridge over a river. The two of them stood on the shore happily drinking. The friend said to Ding Yishi, "Can you jump across the bridge?" Before the friend even finished speaking, Ding had already jumped across the bridge. His friend then told him to come back. Just as he finished saying it, Ding had jumped back. Unfortunately a section of the riverbank had started to give way, and a crack had opened up in the ground. Ding Yishi didn't see it and just happened to land on the crack. As a result, the riverbank collapsed over a length of about two feet. Ding Yishi fell into the water. He didn't know how to swim. He tried to jump out of the water. But he could only make vertical leaps and couldn't jump to the shore. He jumped four or five times. Finally he had no more strength and drowned.

Ji Xiaolan remarked, "Out of all the major character flaws, there is almost nothing worse than being arrogant and fearless, thinking one has things that he can rely on. People who rely on their wealth are often defeated because of their wealth. People who rely on their power are often defeated because of their power. People who

rely on intelligence are often defeated because of their intelligence. People who rely on their strength are often defeated because of their strength. It is because people who have these things think that they can rely on them that they often take unnecessary risks."

Ji Xiaolan talked about how Tianhou Songyan had bought a staff on Lou Mountain and wrote a poem about it. The poem says, "It accompanies me at night when the moon is bright and during the day when the flowers blossom everywhere, protecting me from falling while walking on flat land. I dare not let go of it while walking on rugged road." It means that one should be modest, respectful, and cautious all the time, no matter what the circumstances. When facing life's difficulties and dangers, one must not think that he is invincible. Ji Xiaolan commented that Tianhou was indeed a person who had gained a lot of insight into life, something very precious and admirable.