

# **Traditional Culture: "Upon Hearing the Tao in the Morning, One Can Pass Away in the Evening without Regret"**

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Ma Shen was from Dongping (the current Dongping is in Shandong Province) in the Northern Song Dynasty. He loved studying since his childhood, and won first place on the provincial civil service examination in the fourth year of the Shaosheng Period (i.e. in 1097).

In 11 02 (the first year of Chongning Period), Cheng Yu's Confucius teachings were defamed as evil theories and banned, and his students were all forced to leave. In the meantime, Ma Shen was assigned to be a court official in Luoyang City where Cheng Yu lived, and he was eager to learn from Cheng Yu.

Cheng Yu did not want to get Ma Shen into trouble for learning from him, so he forbade Ma Shen from becoming his student. However, Ma Shen was steadfast in following Cheng Yu and he visited Cheng Yu ten times and brought gifts showing greater respect each time. Yet, Cheng Yu still did not agree to teach him.

In order to show his sincerity, Ma Shen decided to resign from his position. Cheng Yu said to him, "Because of the current situation, I am afraid of getting you into trouble. Since you are able to let go of your position, you do not really need to resign."

Ma Shen said, "If I am able to hear the Tao, I could die without pity now. And I may not need to die as well." This is what the

ancestors meant when they said, "Upon hearing the Tao in the morning, one can pass away in the evening without regret."

Moved by Ma Shen's steadfast heart and sincerity, Cheng Yu agreed to teach him. From then on, Ma Shen went to Cheng Yu's place to learn from him every day, even if it was raining or windy. Some people defamed him with lies, but he did not care at all. Ma Shen gained a lot of wisdom from Cheng Yu about cultivating his virtue.

Life is precious, yet our ancestors said, "Upon hearing the Tao in the morning, one can pass away in the evening without regret." Why would people be so eager to obtain the Tao, steadfastly cultivate the Tao, and treasure it? What is the Tao that people have been seeking for thousands of years?

Mr. Li Hongzhi, founder of Falun Buddha Law, told us:

Buddha Law encompasses everything and leaves out nothing--from particles and molecules to the universe, from the even smaller to the even greater. It is an exposition of the characteristic of the universe, "Zhen-Shan-Ren," expressed at different levels with different layers of meaning. It is also what the Tao School calls the "Tao," or what the Buddha School calls the [Fa](#). ([Lunyu](#) from *Zhuan Falun*)

Historically it has been difficult to seek the Tao or to hear the Tao, let alone to obtain the Tao. But now the true great Law and great Tao, Falun Dafa, is being publicly taught for the first time ever. This is the biggest honor for a life that has been waiting for the Fa for many lifetimes. People who have the good fortune to learn about it should treasure it.