

POSITIVE THINKING—1.

Mud and Stars

There is an old song that begins like this: “*Two men looked out of prison bars. One saw mud, the other saw stars.*”. This *about* sums up what positive thinking is! The positive thinker sees stars (—or rose flowers, according to another version of the saying—) through his doors or windows. The negative thinker sees only mud.

In our journey of life through this mysterious world of ours, we must incessantly train our minds and eyes to see the stars (or the roses). We should avoid the mud.

“*But the mud is there! You cannot just wish it away!*”, I can hear you protesting. Yes, my dear reader, the mud is very much there. It is a reality of life. You cannot simply ignore it. But the point is: do not concentrate on the mud. Try to look more often at the stars.

Human life has its ups and downs, its highs and ebbs, its sorrows and joys, its pleasures and pains, its roses and mud. We cannot escape this fundamental duality of nature. But we can and should do one thing. We should not brood over the negative things. We should dwell upon on the positive things.

Anyway, what do we achieve by worrying??? It is said that worry is the most unproductive (nay, *destructive!*) of human emotions. Worry makes a good situation bad, and a bad situation worse! Worry destroys your mental poise. It drains your positive energy. It makes you sink into a bottomless pit of misery.

And, remember, what you worry about and fear now may perhaps never happen. Or, indeed, the

“mud” may turn out to be fertile soil and may help blossom some beautiful roses.

There is a delightful *Taoist* story. A poor Chinese farmer had a horse which helped him earn his livelihood. One day the horse ran away. His neighbors came and expressed their sympathy. But the farmer simply said: : “*Maybe good, maybe bad*”. After a few days, the horse returned, but not alone. It bought some wild horses with it. The farmer trained and domesticated these wild horses and he became somewhat prosperous. Friends came to congratulate him. But he said: “*Maybe good, maybe bad*”. Then one day, his youthful son fell from a horse and broke his leg. The neighbors came to commiserate. The farmer said: “*Maybe good, maybe bad*”.

Soon, a war broke out and there was compulsory recruitment of all young men in the army. But our farmer’s son was exempted because he had a broken leg. Many able bodied young men died in the war. Our farmer, with deep belief in Taoism , simply said “*Maybe good, maybe bad*”.

Dear friends, life is neither good nor bad. ***It just is.*** You can see the mud or you can see the stars or roses. Let us train our minds to focus on the stars and roses, on beauties of life. Let us count our blessings.

A philosopher once said: If you have air to breathe, water to drink and some food to eat, and if you have a moderately healthy body, you have no right to be sorry at all, *no right to be sorry at all*”.

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* Contribution for this column invited from our readers. e-mail your contribution to : ethics.asia@gamil.com