

## Cleaning

Cleaning is one of the most important traditions of Japanese culture. In Europe rich people had servants to clean and so cleaning is considered to be a low status job. I noticed that some Europeans refuse to clean because it is humiliating for them. They do not mind cooking and making or repairing things but they do not want to clean.

European climate is basically hot and dry in summer and cold and humid in winter. This climate is not very favourable for bacteria so cleaning was not so important for health. That is why the purpose of cleaning in Europe is to make things look nice or to be more pleasant.

Japanese climate is basically hot and wet in summer and cold and dry in winter. This climate is very good for bacteria and small insects to grow in summer, and even in winter viruses and the dead bodies of bacteria and small insects can still cause problems. That is why the purpose of cleaning in Japan was to create a good environment for health. That is why all Japanese including poor people had to clean. The difference in purpose also created a different method of cleaning.

In the spiritual tradition of Japanese culture, cleaning inside oneself is called MISOGI and it is one of the main purposes of meditation. It corresponds to European psychotherapy but with a different theory and methods.

There are many ways of MISOGI but one of them is cleaning the house or dojo by hand. It is very important to clean by hand with a damp cloth. There are several reasons for it.

There is a common idea that Europe developed dualism. Dualism means yes/no, good/bad, plus/minus, positive/negative, etc. Almost all Japanese people think that this dualism can cause conflict inside and outside oneself and they try to find a solution by unification. The typical idea is, « The absolute universe is One. Then two opposing forces created the relative world of dualism. » This shows the typical mistake of most Japanese and Chinese philosophy. This mistake is a very profound mistake which should be pointed out and corrected.

It is true that dualism causes unnecessary conflict and misunderstanding but the solution is not unification. Dualism is based on the Cartesian coordinate system. If you make a straight line and put one point on the line, you call the right side of the point plus and the left side minus. This is the basic mathematical expression of dualism. Then  $+1-1=0$  and  $-(-)1=+1$ . This logic came into our language. Not good means bad. Not bad means good. This is the problem of dualism.

In the real world there are three categories, bad, not bad and not good, and good. That is why not bad does not mean good in the real world. Not good also does not mean bad. You can see that our language is already based on dualism.

There is an idea of hygiene. It means to get rid of things which are bad for health. This idea of hygiene is also based on dualism. They think that they can create a good environment by getting rid of bad things. They use the logic of NOT BAD means GOOD. It is surely important to get rid of bad things but that is not enough. We have to create a good environment.

Life is basically chemistry. It has to be noted that Science first developed with chemistry. It is only after Newton that physics became the basis of modern science. These days chemistry is also based on physics. However real chemistry is independent of physics. It is a big mistake of modern science that everything should be justified by physics. Chemistry is based on IONS. Most life is based on water ions. Water becomes ionised very easily and that is why water is the basis of life.

$2\text{H}_2\text{O}$  becomes  $\text{H}_3\text{O}^+$  and  $\text{OH}^-$ . When there are a lot of water ions in the air, it promotes good health. So the basic way of creating a good environment is to create more water ions.

Correct humidity is important for forming water ions. If the air is too dry, there are less water ions. If the air is too humid, water particles in the air make a big ball and so there is less surface area in contact with the air, resulting in less ions. The best humidity is between 50 and 70 percent.

The second factor is the material inside the house. The materials which let water come in and go out are wood and plaster. These two materials were used for houses all over the world. When humidity is high, they absorb water and when the air is dry, they give water to the air. When wood or plaster give water to air, they also create water ions. That is why wood and plaster are very good for health. Plastic often gives a chemical vapour which is

bad for health. Metal gives almost no chemical vapour so metal is not bad but not good either.

The third factor is wind. When there is enough humidity in the air, wind can break the balls of water particles and thus create ions. This is why wind is agreeable when the humidity is high.

The fourth factor is cleaning with a damp cloth by hand. The friction of a damp cloth on the surface of any material creates ions. It is important that the cloth is not too wet. You have to squeeze the cloth very strongly to get any extra water out of it. Then it is important to wipe the surface with enough force to break the water balls. The normal European way of using a wet cloth on a long stick to clean the floor is useless because the cloth is too wet and there is not enough friction. Very often you have to use a chemical product to get rid of dirt and that chemical product is often bad for health. That is why you have to use only water and wipe vigorously with your hands. You also have to use both hands to get rid of extra water in the cloth. This is the traditional Japanese way and it is quite correct scientifically.

It is true that the European climate is so nice that this Japanese way of cleaning is not absolutely necessary. Still it is always better to create a good environment for health. Cleaning by hand also gives an opportunity for meditation. This is MISOGI by cleaning.

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