

December 8<sup>th</sup>

## Taoism for the Millennials

Danielle Silva

I am a millennial, part of the so-called Generation Y or Global Generation. The implications that come with that title are many; the most important ones are related to time and control. We are known to be impatient, anxious and control freaks. Because of our early exposure to technology, we want everything right away. We want videos to load fast, we want concise responses to our questions, we think we know everything because of our holy teacher, Google. If anything, technology made us smarter but reckless.

Millennials like me also have a different idea of control. I can control my whole existence from my smartphone and my tablet. So when I am faced with something that is beyond my power I get static and anxious to get it over with. What do you mean I can't control it? What do you mean I can't have it right now?

Lao Tzu's *Tao Te Ching* was one of the hardest books I have ever read. The philosophy it presents is so unusual that it was hard for me to understand. Chapter 29, for instance, speaks of acceptance and release in a way that was never presented to me before:

...There is a time for being ahead  
A time for being behind;  
A time for being in motion,  
A time for being at rest;  
A time for being vigorous,  
A time for being exhausted;  
A time for being safe,  
A time for being in danger.  
The Master sees things as they are,  
Without trying to control them.  
She lets them go their own way,  
And resides at the center of the circle.

To let go is hard. It means giving up on trying to control things that are beyond me. It is admitting that I am not omnipresent or omniscient. It is much more than that really. It is trying to fight the absurd (existentialistically speaking) that my generation's idealism is all backwards.

I am not saying that the Tao is the correct way to live, if there is such a thing, but the "millennial" way is certainly not the right one either. I never had the strength or security to

let go. Neither have I ever been patient or accepted things as they come. I agree that there really is a time to worry and a time when worrying will lead to nothing. But I multitask. I can read, tweet, do homework and contemplate humanity's existence all while listening to my favorite music album. Time is pressing upon me, and I can feel it.

I still can't quite absorb the Tao completely. Maybe it has to do with the fact that I was always taught that change was happening and I should be an active part of it. Or maybe it is the fact that, personally, I can't just let go of things. I don't think I will ever be able to master the Tao. So what I did, in order to exercise the acceptance that the Tao presents, was internalize it "softly." I still want change and control, but I don't rush it or crave it. What I did was adapt the Tao to fit my millennial superfluous and impatient way to deal with life. Because this is something that I have learned being a millennial, to make things fit my reality and adapt myself to it.