

# Confucius Teachings On Building A Happy Life (6)

## - a foundation for Mahayana Buddhism practice

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Hello my friends, good evening to you all. In the last class, we started to learn the texts in *Dizigui* and read the outline one time. Let's turn to page 60. *Dizigui*, outline. We also learned that the Chinese word di zi (弟子) does not mean children only but refers to all students who are willing to learn the sages' teachings. Gui (規) means the norms that help us improve moral character and develop virtues day by day. The first sentence goes, "*Dizigui*, the guidelines for being a good person, are exhorted by the ancient sages." Its text was taken from Confucius' teachings. We also see this line in the very first chapter of *The Analects*.

'Being filial and fraternal are the foremost rules'. This 'foremost' signifies to us what the roots of being a human are. The roots are filial piety and fraternity, which means to respect elders and love our siblings. Fraternity encompasses a very important attitude which is the mind of respect; to respect all elders. One's virtues and wisdom will constantly be revealed and escalated from his filial piety and fraternity. As long as one genuinely practices these two roots, he is bound to succeed in harmonizing his family, governing a country, and bringing peace to the world. Dear friends, do you think that my statement is too much of an exaggeration? Well, 'the most profound Truth takes the simplest form'. Profound truths are in fact very basic and simple.

### **A Story of the Filiality and Fraternity of Ancient Chinese Emperors**

Let's think back on Chinese history, which dynasty enjoyed the longest prosperity throughout a few thousand years? The Zhou dynasty. (\*About 1100-256BC) How long was it? Nearly 800 years. Now let me ask, why could the Zhou dynasty last 800 years? What did it rely on? Filial piety and fraternity. We all know well the fact that the Zhou dynasty lasted 800 years, but not many people understand the cause. We often ask, how come others' descendants are so excellent? Only looking at the result will not help us much. We must find out the cause, we can then gain a very powerful inspiration.

The founders of the Zhou dynasty were King Wen and King Wu. King Wen's grandfather was King Tai. King Tai had three sons, from the eldest to the youngest they were: Taibo, Zhongyong, and Wangji. Wangji was the father of King Wen and King Wen was father to King Wu and Zhou Gong, the Duke of Zhou. When King Wen was born, King Tai was very happy to see this grandson's face bore the features of an emperor, a lord among men. But his father, Wangji, was the youngest out of the three sons of King Tai. Taibo was very empathic. He understood how his father felt. Upon seeing his father's joy when looking at his grandson, he

was able to infer who his father wanted to pass the throne to. He knew that his father wanted King Wen to eventually take the throne.

Taibo was very considerate of his father's feelings. He silently seized the opportunity to go pick herbal medicine for his father, together with his brother Zhongyong, set off deep into the mountains and never returned. Because he wanted his father not to worry who the eldest son was and be able to pass down the throne directly to his younger brother Wangji, subsequently to King Wen.

Dear friends, the siblings in this family were willing to give away everything to each other, even the emperor's throne. What virtues has this action of giving up the throne achieved? Filial piety. Taibo and Zhongyong were able to understand their father's feelings and fulfill his wish. Furthermore, it also demonstrated the fraternity between siblings. If they were willing to even give up the throne, is there anything else that they cannot let go of? Besides demonstrating filial piety and fraternity, what other virtues had they achieved through their actions? Loyalty. They were loyal to all citizens of the entire nation; because of this single sacrifice, it allowed a sage king through their actions to lead the people of the entire nation. This one act of yielding demonstrated true virtues and a genuinely good family tradition. This is why Confucius praised Taibo and Zhongyong as 'the exemplar of the utmost virtues'. Without utmost virtue, a person certainly could not do what they did. Their family spirit includes filial piety as well as fraternity.

In the records of history, King Wen greeted his father, Wangji, in the morning, at noon and in the evening, three times each day. As the ancients said, "Greeting parents in the morning and at night is the duty of children." By greeting his father three times a day, King Wen could firstly observe his complexion and his eating situation. King Wen would be very pleased if his father ate well; if not, he would be very worried. Observing King Wen as such a good role model of filial piety, his sons, King Wu and Zhou Gong, also learned it very well. Therefore, King Wu was very filial to King Wen as well. On one occasion, King Wen fell ill. King Wu took care of him for 12 days without resting, never even loosening his belt or removing his hat. Because of King Wu's great filial piety, his father gradually recovered from his sickness. A Chinese proverb goes, "one will be in high spirit when experiencing happy events." what could bring parents more joy than seeing their children being filial? When people are happy, their immune system is boosted; this has been scientifically proven.

The filial piety of King Wen and King Wu has been passed down. When one family practices filial piety, the entire country prospers with filial piety. When the people of a country see their respected leader practicing filial piety, they will be very touched and consequently follow suit. This is why *The Great Learning*\* states, (\*One of the Four Books, the Great Learning, the Doctrine of the Mean, the Analects, and the Mencius) "When one family practices benevolence, the country is benevolent, when they practice comity, the whole country is courteous." their leader's practice of comity will inspire all citizens to do the same. Consequently, the number of conflicts will naturally reduce. The above lead by example to allow those below to emulate, its effect will be truly inconceivable.

Other than King Wu inherited his father, King Wen's filial piety, Zhou Gong also inherited the fraternity of his uncles, Taibo and Zhongyong. One time, King Wu fell ill. Zhou Gong went to their ancestral temple, which was called 'Taimiao' back then. He wrote a prayer and swore that he was willing to give up as many years of his life as he could to prolong his elder brother, King Wu's life. We can deeply feel Zhou Gong's fraternity as well as his sincere wishes for his elder brother's health and longevity to allow him to govern and bring peace to the nation. After Zhou Gong finished reading his prayer, his devout sincerity elicited a good response that King Wu's health gradually recovered. And the prayer that he wrote was commemorated in the ancestral temple.

Sometime later, after King Wu had passed away, his son, King Cheng, inherited the throne and was aided by Zhou Gong due to his young age. Before his passing, King Wu had chosen a few teachers for King Cheng, the Supreme Teacher, Taishi, was Jiang Taigong (\*Also known as Jian Ziya, a statesman, and strategist, helped King Wu overthrow the Shang dynasty and establish the Zhou dynasty.) and the Supreme tutor, Taibao, was Zhou Gong. Imagine, if your children had Jiang Taigong and Zhou Gong as teachers, wouldn't that be good? It would be great! So it is our duty to find good teachers for our children to educate them properly. But my friends, do not get nervous and make a hasty decision. As long as you have such genuine intention, you will certainly encounter good opportunities. Today, we and our children have already found a good teacher in the form of *Dizigui*. This sacred classic text will enable us to improve and pass down good family traditions.

Because King Cheng had such good teachers, he was able to govern the country wisely when he grew up. At one point during his reign, rumors spread that Zhou Gong wanted to usurp the throne. Zhou Gong did not wait for his nephew to question him, he voluntarily requested to go to Shandong (\*the easternmost area of the Zhou kingdom). By doing so, he hoped that his nephew could easily deal with the situation and not be influenced by the rumors. One day, King Cheng was out taking a walk. Suddenly he saw some anomalous phenomena in the sky, a thunderclap in broad daylight. Chinese in ancient times were good at reflecting upon themselves. When King Cheng saw this anomaly, what did he think? Is it because I, the Son of Heaven, have done something wrong? Dear friends, is this superstitious? No, it is not. The human mind and nature are connected to each other. If humans' hearts are virtuous, nature will respond with harmonious climates; conversely, if humans' hearts are bad, it increases the frequency of natural disasters. Right now, are humans' hearts good or bad? I don't mean us... Nevertheless, disasters happen only when human hearts are unwholesome. There are so many man-made and natural disasters nowadays; seeing these anomalous phenomena, we should reflect upon ourselves and start to guard our minds to generate good thoughts only.

After King Cheng saw this omen, he went back and reflected upon himself. He was thinking, "Is it because it was improper for me to let my uncle leave?" He then went to the ancestral temple, Taimiao, to repent to his ancestors. The ancients said, "Perform funerals and commemorate our ancestors with utmost sincerity and discretion, the people can then return to their deep-seated

good virtues.” When King Cheng was repenting, he happened to spot the written prayer that Zhou Gong wrote for his elder brother, King Wu. He picked up and read it. Realizing his uncle, with the intention of letting his elder brother live longer, was willing to shorten his own life. King Cheng was so touched that he personally led a team of senior officials to Shandong and invited Zhou Gong to return. You see, the sibling love between Zhou Gong and King Wu was also passed down to the next generation. That’s why the Zhou dynasty enjoyed a history of 800 years due to its tradition of filial piety and fraternity.

### **Filial Piety and Fraternity Brings Prosperity**

If a family practices filial piety and fraternity, how long can it last? In Chinese history, Confucius is considered the most virtuous man of all time. His virtues touched and taught his descendants generation after generation. This family tradition remains unfaded after more than 2,000 years. My friends, if you were suddenly told that you were a descendant of Confucius today, would you feel any different after this revelation? You would suddenly think, I must not let Confucius down and become very careful of your speech and actions. So, a tradition of virtues can have a long-lasting influence.

When I was lecturing in Xiamen, I met a teacher. At the end of the 5-day class, we always invite some teachers, usually about ten or more, to share their experiences. One of the teachers said, “Only after this 5-day class did I know that the root of virtues is filial piety.” This concept originated from the first chapter in *The Classic of Filial Piety\**, which states, (\*One of the Thirteen Classics in Confucianism) “Filial piety is the root of all virtues.” He continued to say that he felt a very deep affinity towards this teaching. He came from a village of over 40 families, and every family shared the same surname, Wu. He said that these 40 families produced 109 offspring of his generation, and 108 out of these 109 offspring were college graduates with very good moral qualities. The 109th child had also enrolled in the university but decided to suspend it after 2 years’ study due to some special reasons. We could say that the entire generation had the equivalent qualifications of a college graduate.

He continued to say that he now understood why his generation was so prosperous. It is because all of the elders in their village always told them, “Every time when you get days off from school or work, you must remember to return home to visit your parents.” Each year on Chinese New Year’s Day, they always go to temples with their parents to worship and pray for blessings. They would never do anything else. How many of your children accompanied you to temples on New Year’s Day this year? Please raise your hands. In addition, their tradition is kept strong throughout the entire extended family. Apart from visiting their parents, they would also visit each family in the village to pay their New Year’s call to all of the elders. What did they put into practice? Respect to all elders, a fraternal love. After paying respects to the elders, these youngsters of the same generation would gather together in the village’s primary school and discuss what they had learned from their schools or jobs. They got together to share experiences and learn from each other. What have they demonstrated? The enthusiasm for learning. They have shown filial piety, fraternity, and genuine eagerness to learn. How come the next generation of this village could have such good development? It is surely not a

coincidence. Nor is it a good 'feng shui' of the dragon's lair. The 'feng shui' and the environment of a location will actually change in accordance with people's minds.

That's why Confucius said, "Being filial and fraternal are the foremost rules." What would happen when one genuinely implements filial piety and fraternity? He will be able to put himself in others' shoes. If he is filial to his own parents, he will respect others' parents as well. This concept is taught in *Dizigui*: "Serve the elders of your parents' generation like serving your own parents, and serve the elders of your big brother's generation like serving your own big brother." My friends, due to my past experience as a primary school teacher, I have developed a bad habit and particularly like to give tests. During these few days of classes, I will test you on the previous lessons. In seeking knowledge and wisdom, it is very important to have the proper attitude. Not only should we study and practice what we have learned, but also preview what we are going to learn. So, my friends, I hope that you use these few days to get familiar with the full text of *Dizigui*. This way, when we mention them in class, you will have a stronger affinity and think, "Oh, I know this sentence!" The effect of your learning will surely be exceptional. Some of our classmates could not make it to the morning lecture, we thus provided a prescription in the afternoon. It is very effective! I guarantee that both your virtues and wisdom will ascend to a higher level. This prescription is to read *Dizigui* once every morning and night. In the morning, it is to remind ourselves to implement these teachings today. In the evening, as we read, we reflect on our actions and attitude of the day. We encourage ourselves to keep up with what we have corresponded to the teachings and remind ourselves to rectify what we have not corresponded to. One recitation in the morning and one in the evening. When you read it in the evening, do not wait until right before going to bed, otherwise, you might fall asleep before even starting to read. It would be best to read it as soon as coming home from work, after washing up and before eating dinner. This is a perfect opportunity to evaluate and reflect upon our conduct that day. "Being filial and fraternal are the foremost rules, followed by being cautious and trustworthy."

We must be cautious with our speech and actions. We should lead a routine life, not a chaotic and undisciplined one. If we are not even capable of taking care of ourselves, how could we shoulder family responsibility? The Chinese character of 'credibility' is a compound ideograph, it is comprised of two radicals: person and speech. *Dizigui* states, "When I speak, credibility is foremost." Confucius once said, "Those without credibility will have no place in society." If a person has no credibility, it will be very difficult for him to have a place in society. Confucius placed particular emphasis on four types of learning: the first is virtues, the second is the art of speech, the third is administrative talent, and the fourth is literary arts. Why is the art of speech second only to virtues? Because during interpersonal interactions, what medium do we use most frequently? Speech. Confucius said, "One single sentence may bring a country prosperity or decay." By the token, a single sentence may bring a family harmony or endless conflict. As you can see, learning how to speak properly is very important.

Next, "Love all equally, but become close to the benevolent ones." "Love all equally" means to show compassion to all people without discrimination. In today's terms, we call this 'the law of

interpersonal relations'; how to interact with others harmoniously. You see, *Dizigui* is still relevant even today; it places great importance on human relations.

The next line is, "Become close to the benevolent ones." If we can constantly keep close to benevolent people, we will be able to elevate our own virtues and wisdom. The ancients said, "When being in a room full of orchids for a long while, you will no longer notice their fragrance." This means, if we surround ourselves with good people every day, our virtues will naturally be elevated. For the same reason, if we "stay in a fish market for a long while, the putrid odor ceases to be offensive." In other words, if we always associate ourselves with a pack of scoundrels, our speech and conduct will surely become more and more vulgar by the day. Therefore, staying close to benevolent people is very important. Only by choosing the right associates can we then grow our own wisdom. And only when we have wisdom can we make the right decisions in life; our life will then become smoother and smoother. If we fail to make the right decisions, our life journey will become increasingly burdensome.

Lastly, "Having practiced all of the above, I can then expand my horizons to study the literary arts." When we have built a firm foundation of the virtues mentioned above, with spare time, we can then read some good literary writings. In ancient times, writings were for conveying Dao\*. (\*The Truth, The Law of Nature, Tao) Therefore, the ancient Chinese were extremely careful when writing articles. They made sure what they wrote would benefit future generations. How do people today write articles? They write whatever they feel, with no consideration of whether it will cause chaos in the world. They surely are not cautious enough with their own speech and actions. So, when reading literature, it gives us more insurance to read the writings of ancient saints and sages. Because these writings have stood the test for thousands of years and have been proven that they can indeed reveal the wisdom within us. This is the meaning of 'Having practiced all of the above, I can then expand my horizon to study the literary arts'.

### **Giving Children Proper Education is the Most Important**

Let's go on to the body of the scripture, the title of the first chapter: Be Filial to Parents at Home. Dear friends, do you feel like not having enough time in a day? Have you ever felt this way? Yes. So, it is not easy for us to find even two hours a day for reading. We must use our free time efficiently. In other words, we must seize our free time to be productive. We can carry the text of *Dizigui* with us wherever we go. I always carry *A Collection of Ancient Mottos* in my bag, whenever I have a minute, I will take it out and recite a few sentences. By accumulating day by day and month after month, a constant drip of water can erode its way through stone. Don't underestimate the accumulation of studying 10 or 20 minutes every day. *Dizigui* teaches us, "Set a loose schedule but apply tight efforts. When our efforts have reached a certain level, obstacles will be dissolved." Let's take a look at this compound ideographic character for filial piety. On top is the character of 'elder' on the bottom is 'child'. 'Elder' signifies the senior generation, while 'child' refers to the younger generation. The older generation and the younger generation combine together as a unity, this is the meaning of 'filial piety'. Let's take a look, the elder generation should keep in mind to educate the younger generation properly. But do parents nowadays have this attitude? During my career as a

teacher, I often heard parents who were not considered highly educated reveal their wishes. They said, "I only wish that my child does not become a burden to society. This is my greatest responsibility as a parent." They may not have a high degree, but when I heard these words, it always struck me with awe. They understood that to properly educate their children is their most important life duty. Parents should keep in mind to educate their children properly. However, we must find the proper approach to educate children. In China, there is a very important text on the philosophy of education, that is, *Record on the Subject of Education* from *The Book of Rites*. It mentions what education is. Which states, "To educate is to promote one's good elements and save one from his faults." This sentence encapsulates the two main axes of education. In order to educate our children properly, we must be clear about what goodness we should help them to grow and what bad habits we must help them to avoid and correct.

As *The Three Character Classic* teaches, "Without proper education, people would deviate from their innate nature." That's why as parents, we must quickly save children from repeating their bad habits. When should we save them? Right now, with no delay! Because learning is like sailing up a river, we will drift away with the current if we do not sail forward.

### **Sage Teachings Prevent Rebellious and Lazy Attitude**

My friends, let us take into consideration; which habits and behaviors of today need to be rectified immediately? My friends, feel free to answer! You should have more experience than me. Ok, talking back to parents (\*Audience reply). People of the past, their words carried weight like a pot needs to be supported by nine 'Ding' (\*鼎, a tripod, ancient Chinese vessel with 3 legs), while children today respond to parents' talk with nine ding\* too. (\*頂, talking back) However, they are different characters with the same sound. This implies that children today are very good at talking back. What else? 'Lazy, rebellious' (\*Audience reply), Anything else? 'Selfish' (\*Audience reply). How come it is all females answering? Those who are fathers say nothing? This is not acceptable; we should care very much about our own children. Anything else? 'Indifference' (\*Audience reply). No sense of responsibility. Right? Let's add one last thing, 'no disciplined daily routine in their life'. These six will suffice.

Sometimes, many friends are very inspired and come up with 'ten big sins'. In Haikou, we opened a Sinology Enlightenment Center; a lot of parents came to discuss with us their problems in educating children. This property, used for our lectures and classes, is very big. From the front door to the office, it is about a 30-second walk. Once, I accompanied a parent walking to my office. As soon as she saw me, she couldn't help but complain unceasingly, "My child is selfish, lazy, and always talks back..." She kept complaining without a draft. I thought she might be getting thirsty, so I quickly said to her, "Please take a seat, let me get you a glass of water." After she sipped some water, I started to ask her, "Your child being selfish is the result, but what is the cause of it?" Dear friends, have you ever seen a child with the word 'selfish' on their forehead since the day they were born?

Being lazy is the effect, what is the cause? Have you ever seen any two-year-old child who is listless? One or two-year-old children are naturally active and lively. How would they become lazy later on? Let's continue to analyze; children being rebellious is the effect, what is the

cause? Some people nowadays say that children being rebellious is normal. Have you heard this? Yes? Who said that? Find them, they are misleading you! Please tell me, 50 years ago, did you ever hear the word 'rebel'? In the literature of China's history, have you ever read the phrase 'rebellious child'? No, never heard of it. In over 4,000 years of Chinese history, there is nothing at all about rebellious children, yet we have managed to create it in the past 2 or 3 decades. Isn't our capability amazing? In over 4,000 years of history, why was there never a rebellious younger generation, but within these few decades, the rebellious children are growing quickly? It is not a coincidence. Do children receive the teachings of ancient sages nowadays? Are they taught the values of filial piety and fraternity? No! Since they do not have the mind of filial piety and respect, of course, their speech and behavior will offend their parents.

I recalled my childhood and wondered if I had ever been rebellious, so I once cautiously asked my mother, "Mom, have I ever been rebellious?" My mom thought for a while and said no. What attitude should we have towards our fathers? Respect and fear. So a father must be very dignified. When we respect and fear our fathers, it is impossible that we become rebellious. But why would a father be able to invoke our respect and fear? Most important is that they practice what they preach. My own father is exceptionally filial; he sets a good example for us. So we were very respectful towards him from a young age, impossible to rebel. Children today being rebellious, we as parents should introspect ourselves. How come our children do not treat us with respect? It could be that we say one thing and do another. Some parents sit and play mahjong while telling their children, "Go study! I'll count to three!" children linger on the TV screen, leave gradually, then hide behind the wall to watch for a long time. The mother gets angry and says, "Last warning! Or I will get the stick!" Only then does the child reluctantly start going upstairs. When they sit down, their body is in front of the desk, but where is their mind? "Still thinking about the TV!" (\*Audience reply) Wow, how did you know? Still wondering about what happened to the leading actor and actress.

When the parents do not act as a good role model, will their children be convinced? Of course not. They think, "You tell us to speak politely to you, but you are rude to my grandparents." This feeling will accumulate within them, when will it erupt? When they are as tall as you and their fists as big as yours, will they still listen to you? They will no longer listen to you. So, being rebellious is the result, the root cause is that children have never developed the attitudes of filial piety and respect to their parents. This root cause along with the bad influences of the external environment, such as copying the bad behaviors of classmates and friends, have eventually led them to be more and more rebellious. Therefore, in order to eradicate this rebellious behavior, it is critical to pass down the sages' teachings. Parents must understand how to be a good role model for their children.

### **Finding the Root Cause**

Okay, let's continue to analyze. Where does selfishness emerge from? My friends, starting from today, whenever you encounter situations, you should think, "Today my colleague yelled at me, that is the effect, what is the root cause?" "Today, other people's children being well-behaved is the effect, what is the cause?" "A married couple having a very harmonious relationship is the



effect, what is the cause?" When we understand to look for the root cause in every situation, we will be able to grow our wisdom day by day. When we have diagnosed the root cause of problems, we can quickly find the solutions and quickly turn around a lot of situations and improve the outcome. Let's imagine a scenario; a couple is having dinner with their child, the grandparents are also there. The mother picks up the first bite of food... My friends, who does she give it to? "The child." (\*Audience reply) Standard answer! Let's give her a hand. This standard is a common phenomenon today. But what will the effect be with this act of giving the first bite of food to the child? "Baby, I made this dish especially for you, eat as much as you want." The grandparents seeing this will also be unwilling to be outdone, "Grandson, these dishes are very delicious too." To whom do the grandparents also serve the food? The grandson. In the end, whose bowl is piled high with food? The grandson's. So who becomes number one in the family? The grandson. Isn't this topsy turvy? Yes! As a result, the child will also be topsy turvy. Is this reasonable? Everyone in the family is serving him. A little emperor has been created.

What is the characteristic of little emperors or princesses? Being selfish. Because everybody else is serving them, they learn to only think of themselves. A Chinese proverb reads, "Accompanying an emperor is like being with a tiger." The children of today all have bad tempers. When you always give them what they want, out of ten requests you fulfill nine of them, on the tenth request, what will they do when you say "no"? Throw a big tantrum. And if you have no principles, what will you say as soon as they throw a tantrum? "Okay, okay, I will buy it for you." They will learn that they can always win while their parents will be defeated again and again. My friends, where should educating our children start from? From serving food at the dinner table. It is a small matter but big wisdom. Each of our actions should be a good role model for our children to learn from. Today, if you give the first bite to your parents and say, "Dad, enjoy!" Upon seeing this, will your children say, "Dad, why didn't you think of me first?" No, they won't. When they see their own father practicing filial piety, they will be very touched because the innate nature of every person is originally good. *The Great Learning* states, "Once we know the proper order of matters, we are one step closer to the Dao." If we make sure to follow the proper order in whatever we do, we will establish the Dao. Therefore, when you serve food in the proper order, you are simultaneously teaching your children the Dao of being a child.

When we open the refrigerator and take out some fruits, who should we give it to first? My father always distributes the fruits in the proper order. If, when I was a child, my father had distributed the fruits in the incorrect order, then I would not have been able to stand here in front of you all to teach these classes today. A Chinese proverb says, "The slightest difference leads to a huge error." You may say, "Teacher Tsai, is it that serious? Just giving fruit, is it such a big deal?" Does it have an effect? It really does. My sisters and I always saw my parents serving food to our grandparents first. Very naturally, we learned to emulate the same practice. Actually, I had a very high chance of becoming a prodigal. Can you tell? Because I was the only son as well as the eldest grandson and great-grandson owing to the fact that my grandfather was the oldest son. I remember when I was young, one time we went to sweep my great-grandma's tomb; At that time I was about 3 or 4 years old; when I knelt down and raised my head, I suddenly saw 2

characters. My eyes lit up. I saw my own name engraved on the top spot of the tombstone. Immediately, I raised my head and stuck my chest out. I felt a sense of mission that I had to try the best for my family's future prosperity. The Chinese tradition of placing importance on the eldest son and grandson is not without reason. Because this way, every descendant of the same generation will have someone to look up to as their good role model. The family will then be able to preserve its prosperity. If my parents had spoiled me, my grandparents spoiled me as well, I certainly would not have learned the sages' teachings today. I would probably have been wasting money extravagantly somewhere long ago. So educating our children is very important.

Nowadays when parents take fruits out from the refrigerator, do they give it to the grandparents first? I heard that some mothers would buy some very expensive fruits and hide it away. How come some of you started laughing? Is it because your heart resonated with it? They hide it! As soon as the grandparents go to bed... What do they do? Quickly take it out, "Son, come here quick, mommy bought this fruit especially for you." The son happily eats the fruit. He also thoroughly learns his mother's way. Opposed to your expectation, who will he buy fruit for once he earns money in the future? His son. Some people respond without hesitation, "He will buy it for his wife." If we use likes and dislikes to educate our children, they will learn likes and dislikes rather than gratitude and righteousness. That's why we must follow the Dao, and demonstrate filial piety to bring out the innate goodness of our children. We have now found the root cause of this 'selfishness'. We must firstly work on filial piety and being considerate of others. As parents, we must set a good example.

### **It is Never Too Late to Learn**

Dear friends, if your child is already a teenager, is it too late to correct them? We must have faith in the opening line of the *Three Character Classic*, "People originally have an inherently good nature." In fact, it is not that other people cannot be changed, it is that we have been defeated by ourselves. When we have no faith, many things will not be able to be accomplished. Our classes in China are attended by audience members from all social statuses and all ages. There were many middle schoolers attending as well. One middle-schooler attended the classes for five days. She made great improvements every day when she went home. Her aunt was very puzzled and thought, "How come a teenager could change so much after attending these classes?" On the fifth day, her aunt went to the place where we held classes to look for us. Unfortunately, we had left for the day.

She asked the staff of the hotel for our phone number and got in contact with us. She said, "My niece has made such big improvements every day after coming back from your class. No matter if it is towards her parents or others, her attitude has become very good." She could feel that Chinese traditional culture indeed has great power. She said, "Can I hand my two-year-old and four-year-old children to you to teach?" You see, parents today, when they encounter a good chance, they do not think of teaching by themselves but just push to the teachers. We told her, "Our teachers are all from Haikou and Shenzhen, it is too far." She continued, "It's ok, I can send them to you from Beijing to Shenzhen." This case proves to us that even a teenager can make very big improvements.

There is another example of a forty-year-old man. When I was lecturing in Tianmu Mountain in Hangzhou, he was sent by the sponsor to be my bodyguard. Because the audience numbered 4 or 5 hundred, he helped manage the crowd. For example, if I need to take a break, he would tell the audience, "It's the teacher's break time, it's not a good time to talk now." He dealt with situations like this for me. He had also learned martial arts and had been an armed policeman for over ten years. On the third day of the classes, he escorted us to lunch after the class ended. On the way to the restaurant, he kept saying, "Great! Great! It's really too great!" None of us understood what he was talking about, but we could feel that he was genuinely joyful. When we arrived at the restaurant, he said to me, "Teacher Tsai, my feeling at this moment can only be described with the language of a three-year-old. That is, it is too great!" He continued, "I have lived for 40 years and finally know what I have done wrong in life!"

Upon hearing what he said, we felt very sorry and sad for him. A strong forty-year-old man, it is not that he was unwilling to learn... What is it? It is that nobody had ever taught him. You see, he had such a great attitude, as happy as a newborn baby right after he had learned. He said he knew now why his wife divorced him, why his children would not communicate with him, and why his colleagues kept a distance from him and were afraid of him. He finally found the root cause of all these problems. He told me that as soon as he got home, the first thing he would do would be to call his ex-wife and have a proper discussion. "We are not sages, who among us has never made mistakes? When we can rectify our mistakes, there is no greater goodness than this." During breakfast on the fourth day, he said, "Teacher Tsai, please sit here for a while, I would like to chat with you." I could feel that the atmosphere was a little bit strange. Okay. Let's stop here for today. In the next class, I will continue the story. Thank you everybody for listening.