

Confucius Teachings On Building A Happy Life (7)

- a foundation for Mahayana Buddhism practice

Validated by Master Ching Kung

The Speaker: Teacher Tsai LiXu

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Why Does a Forty-Year-Old Man Kneel Down?

In the last lesson, we mentioned a 40-year-old man who found great joy after receiving the sages' teachings for five days. He felt deeply about the teachings. On the fourth day, before breakfast was even ready, he said that he wanted to have a chat with me. I instantly felt it was a little bit strange and was quite nervous after sitting down. He walked up to me and said, "In my whole life, I have only kneeled down before my parents and teachers." (*A way to show the highest respect and gratitude) I realized at once what he was going to do and jumped up immediately. You see, it was the sages' teachings that touched his soul, and I had not the slightest merit in this matter. However, this strong, forty-year-old man instantly grabbed my hands, and I did not know what to do. But then, I could clearly see his sincerity. So I calmed myself and accepted his respect.

All of the teachers in our team feel that we shoulder a very heavy responsibility. We hope that more people, after taking our courses, will understand that the greatness of Chinese ancient saints and sages is truly admirable. By learning the sages' teachings, we will surely be able to enjoy harmonious families and social stability in the 21st century. Therefore, my friends, even if you are already in your 40s or 50s, even if your children are already in their 20s, please do not fear. It is never too late. As an old Chinese proverb reads, "Utmost sincerity can move a heart of stone." We only need to ask ourselves if our own virtues and wisdom are sufficient, there is surely no need to fear that others will not change.

Diligence Starts with a Mother's Guidance

Let us look at another topic. Why do children get lazy? What is the root cause? I think you all can analyze very well now. Children do not suddenly become lazy when they are grown up. A Chinese saying goes, "The habits one developed at a young age will dominate one's life like inborn nature." That's why education must begin as early as possible, because it is very hard to correct a bad habit once formed. I remember there was one time when my nephew was little, he happened to see his mother had stopped cleaning the table for something else. He then went over, picked up the rag, and continued her work. Afterwards, my sister walked back. My friends, how would you handle this? My sister said to her son right away, "Xiaowei, you are so young but know well how to be filial to your parents. You even help mommy wipe the tables. Good boy!"

Hearing the encouragement, he redoubled his efforts. You see, encouragement and acknowledgment from us adults can surely help children achieve their potential.

After he finished wiping, his mother said to him, "Xiaowei, if you can wipe clean each one of the table's four corners attentively, then your job will be perfect." My sister not only acknowledged his filial piety but also taught him the method of dealing with matters. As a result, my nephew has developed the good habit of being clean and tidy. At three or four years old, he already had the habit of making his own bed. This gives the impression of tidiness to people. So, it is very important to teach children the right attitude from a young age.

If his mother had shouted at him, "For goodness sake, what are you doing? Go away, don't mess around!" After you pushed him away 2 or 3 times, would he ever help out with housework again? Certainly not. Therefore, parents should seize every opportunity to educate their children. Otherwise, many great opportunities would be missed. Once children are no longer motivated to do household chores, then even getting angry at them would not help the situation. Many parents say to their children, "You just need to study well, don't need to do anything else." Is this a good way of educating children? If a child only does well in his studies but does not do anything else, then will he trust himself to have the ability to accomplish tasks? No! The less trust he has in himself, the less he will be willing to do work. If he does not work, will he have a sense of responsibility? No! You see, these are all closely connected. We must deliberate deeply. Doing housework is very good for a child's physical health. When doing the chores, he will also genuinely feel, "It really is not easy for a mother to manage the family. I am already tired after only mopping the floor in the living room, but my mother still needs to cook for us and do a lot of other things after she gets home from work." His heart will naturally give rise to a sense of gratitude while he is mopping. As a proverb goes, "One must cherish the opportunity of working." Because only when a person truly contributes their own effort and works hard, can he then truly understand the effort of those who work hard and develop a sense of gratitude. Therefore, we must encourage our children to do housework and prevent them from forming a habit of being lazy.

Next, let's look at the daily routines. Why would a child lack the structure of daily routine in their life? I once asked my students, "How many of you had breakfast today? Please raise your hand." Many of them, about half the class, had not eaten breakfast. I continued, "Didn't your mother cook breakfast for you?" They replied, "My mother was still sleeping." Their breakfast was a few coins on the table with the word 'breakfast' written on a paper. Dear friends, did the parents who gave the money really care to understand if those few coins were actually exchanged for breakfast? Were they? (audience: No!) How come you all know the answer? What were they exchanged for? Video games or very unhealthy junk food. If a child continues this kind of diet for half a year, a year, their physical health is bound to take a nosedive. A lot of them play video games and don't eat breakfast at all.

How did I know? As teachers, we should be concerned about our students; since I taught a sixth-grade class, I understood children at this age have growth spurts, and noticed that their

stomachs would start to growl at around 10 am every day. I made sure to always keep some biscuits in my desk drawer, so my students all loved me - loved my biscuits. A lot of children would come over for my biscuits. Basically, around 9 to 10 am, their facial complexion would grow paler because they were so hungry. I found out that many of them did not use that money for breakfast, but spent it on other things. As parents, if we want to guide our children to develop a daily routine, we must become a good example for them. We should pay more effort if we want them to have three regular meals. These efforts will have a lifetime influence on your children. It is very important whether it is to set a good model for them or to benefit their health.

Filial Piety Brings Out All Virtues

My friends, do you believe that these bad habits can all be solved as long as they develop one virtue? Which virtue? The Chinese say, 'Of all virtues, filial piety is foremost.' As you delve deeper into the sages' teachings, you will develop a deeper and deeper understanding of this sentence. This saying has two meanings: Firstly, it means that filial piety is foremost among all virtues; secondly, it means all virtues will follow once a filial mind is in place. Will a person with filial piety be selfish? Certainly not! Will a person with filial piety talk back? *Dizigui* states, "When my parents call me, I must answer them right away. When they ask me to do something, I must do it promptly." My friends, we must not belittle *Dizigui*. This chapter of Being Filial to Parents at Home will solve all of the problems that we have with our children. When our children understand that 'Injury to one's body brings parents worry', will they lead a chaotic life? Surely not! Will they become irresponsible if they remember the line of 'Injury to one's virtue brings parents shame'? They will become very diligent once they understand the teaching of 'I will make efforts to satisfy what my parents like and what they expect from me. They will want their parents to be happy and comforted.

Once a child develops a filial mind, he will not only be filial to his parents, but also love and care for his siblings. Because when there is conflict between siblings, who would be the saddest? Parents. *Dizigui* states, "Older siblings should care for younger ones; younger siblings should respect the older ones. Siblings getting along harmoniously is an act of filial piety itself." When a child is truly filial to his parents, he will also show respect to the parents of others. He will naturally extend his filial piety and the sense of respect to all elders. Would he bully other children? Surely not! Because he knows that if other children are hurt, their parents will suffer the most. His empathy will be naturally extended. Therefore, one's benevolence and compassion come from his filial piety, and are the extension of the loving relationship of parents-children. That's why learning this section of 'Being Filial at Home' is especially important.

How Deep Is A Mother's Kindness?

Let's start to learn this section. Before teaching children filial piety, we need to explain to them why, because 'Only by acknowledging the deep kindness of one's parents, can one then reciprocate their kindness'. So, we should guide children to acknowledge their parents' deep kindness. We start from telling children, "Around three thousand years ago there was a saint,

the Buddha. One day, he was walking on the outskirts of town with his students, and they happened to come across a pile of bones. The Buddha grouped them into two piles: One was white and the other was darker. His students were always enthusiastic in learning. They knew that 'when there is a question, note it down right away and ask someone for its true meaning'. They knew that they must learn to question in order to learn well. The Buddha explained to them why one pile was white and one pile was darker. The pile with darker color was women's bones. Why are women's bones darker? Because when a mother is pregnant for 10 months (*Lunar calendar calculation), all of the nutrition that the fetus needs comes from her blood. If the fetus does not get enough calcium, it will be extracted from the mother's bones. So the ten months of pregnancy are very laborious to the mother's body.

We once designed an activity where we gave every child an egg and told them to carry it for a day. We called it the exercise of Guarding an Egg for a Day. We told them to experience what it is like to guard an egg today. It is only for one day, let's see if you can protect it until the end. In the beginning, the children were very careful with the eggs. But after an hour or two, many of them pretty much had forgotten, we heard the sound of many children saying, "Oh no!" By the time the last class of the day ended, only a small number of eggs survived. The teacher then guided them: You see, you cannot even keep an egg safe for one day. If your mother had been like you, jumping around every day while she carried you in her belly, you surely would have been bruised all over by the time she gave birth to you. See, your mother had to protect you very carefully for ten months. Furthermore, your weight was increasingly heavier and heavier by the day.

When a mother is pregnant, she will also suffer from physiological reactions, for example vomiting and loss of appetite. But when she has no appetite, she will still force herself to swallow the food. Dear children, why is it when she has no appetite, she will still force herself to keep consuming the food? Why? In order to make sure that her body would have enough nutrition for you to grow. Even when it is very uncomfortable, she will still force herself to eat. So, my children, can you be picky with your food? You see, a mother will even force herself to eat to ensure your nutrition, as a child, you should also repay her deep kindness by not being picky. Whatever is nutritious, you should eat it. This way, your body will be strong, and it will make your mother happy. With guidance like this, children truly put themselves in their mother's shoes.

Towards the end of pregnancy, a mother carries a heavy load in her belly, even walking becomes very difficult. We also did exercises to let students feel what it was like by carrying a basketball on their belly. Because many things, we cannot truly have empathy until we feel it ourselves. After that experience, I would further guide them; I once learned the two metal posts of a birthing bed are so thick, but they are always bent out of shape. Children, do you know what force is so strong that it can bend these metal posts? The children then replied, "The force of pain." Because when giving birth, mothers experience great pain and grip these metal posts to brace themselves. Over time, these metal posts have become more and more bent. Research has shown that a mother's pain of giving birth is even more excruciating than that of a

cancer patient. Why do so many cancer patients end up committing suicide? They can't take the pain. A mother has to endure pain that is even worse than that of cancer patients. But after giving birth to her child, what is a mother's first thought, her first sentence? "Is my baby healthy?" A mother's love can make her push all of the pain she just endured to the back of her mind. Such great kindness, we must remember for the rest of our lives.

Following the birth, the nurturing, raising, and educating are even more toilsome. A friend of mine once told me, before her son was born, she often wished to hurry up and give birth; but once he was born, she wished that she could put him back into her womb. So, the effort of raising a child is even greater than that of giving birth. How many nights do parents exhaust themselves for their children? If a baby does not sleep at night, what will the whole family do? Take turns to care for the baby. I was sometimes scheduled on the night shift if my baby nephew did not sleep. But I could never stand holding him for more than 20 minutes, I would feel my arms were about to break. So I would hold my nephew and say, "In the future, if you ever dare to be unfilial to your mother, I will be the first to punish you!" Because how many nights had his mother had to stay up all night to comfort him until he could sleep? How many times when he got sick had his parents taken him to the doctor in the middle of the night? How many days had they worried about what to prepare for his next meal? All of these pressures of life and the responsibility of raising you falls squarely on parents at all times.

So the Buddha told his disciples, our parents' deep kindness is impossible to repay in one lifetime. We should try our best to fulfill the filial duty of being a child. When we were telling these children about the hardships that their parents undergo, many children were so moved that they bursted into tears. We continued, "Now we are very touched by our parents' hard work, but what should we do after shedding tears? If you truly feel and acknowledge the deep kindness of your parents, you should take action to carry out filial behaviors. When you are able to faithfully follow one single teaching of *Dizigui*, you are fulfilling one percent of your filial duty. When you are able to implement every teaching in *Dizigui*, your filial piety is complete." When children have gratitude in their hearts, we should guide them to reciprocate the deep kindness that they have received.

Great Wisdom From Trivial Matters

But from where should their filial piety start? Let's turn to *Dizigui*, read this line together, "When my parents call me, I must answer them right away. When my parents ask me to do something, I must do it promptly. When my parents instruct me, I must listen respectfully. When my parents reprimand me, I must accept submissively." "When my parents call me, I must answer them right away." This teaching tells us that the attitude of speaking to parents is very important. In fact, from where can we discern a person's virtues and wisdom? From his every word and action. That is why a child's attitude of speaking to his parents will deeply affect him in the long term. When a child has formed a filial and respectful mind, he has set a very solid foundation for his acquisition of virtues and wisdom. When he does not have a filial and respectful mind, what attitude would he develop? Probably arrogance, and most likely disrespect; these attitudes are very likely to destroy his life of pursuing Dao. I am not exaggerating the severity of this matter.

The *Great Learning* has taught us how we can contribute to society and country, "Since ancient times, one who wished to help people throughout the world to awaken to their innate virtues must first govern his own country well; to govern a country well, one must first harmonize his family; to harmonize his family, one must first cultivate himself; to cultivate himself, one must first rectify his mind." You see, only when a child has a sincere and upright mind, can he then cultivate himself and harmonize his family. Nurturing a child's filial piety and respectfulness is to rectify his mind. But then, how do we cultivate a sincere and upright mind? We must battle with our material desires in order to walk on the path of pursuing the Truth, which means we must eradicate our bad habits and desires. Impatience and arrogance are both bad habits. If we eliminate the bad habits from a young age, we are pursuing the Truth by battling with our material desire; our mind will then be sincere and upright. Therefore, great wisdom is always rooted from trivial matters.

Think about it, how do children today respond when we adults call them? "What?" (*Audience replied) Wow, standard answer! If there is a child today who, as soon as you call him, walks over to you and says, "Yes sir, how may I help you?" What would you feel about this child? You would raise respect to him! It is indeed hard to find children with such manners nowadays. So children must be educated. I often say that children should be taught manners from a very young age. We should teach them the etiquette of greeting the elders properly. Some parents responded, "It is already rare for them to smile at an elder, let alone a proper greeting!" My friends, is this attitude correct? You see, we have lowered our standards of educating children. What consequence will this cause? Each generation falls short of the one before. Aren't the consequences manifesting before us now? So we must never lower our standards on educating children no matter how the times have changed. Only when we grasp the principles, can the children learn to the proper level. We should guide our children; when your parents call, you should come right away and ask, "Mom, Dad, how can I help you?" Of course, as elders, we should set a good example for them to follow. When grandparents call us, we should play our role and show the utmost respect. Even if you feel awkward at first, you must force yourself; it will become natural after it becomes a habit. When parents are filial and respectful to their elders, children will naturally pick up the attitude, and it will spread through the entire family.

When my parents call me, I must answer right away. Aside from our parents, who else should we give this kind of respect? To teachers. When my teachers call me, I also must answer right away. Anybody else? When an elder calls me, I must answer right away as well, and when my boss calls, I also must answer right away. Let's say, tomorrow, you go back to your workplace. Your manager calls you, and you walk up to him right away and say, 'Sir, how may I help you?' Your manager would probably be very surprised and ask, "Are you okay today? Do you have a fever?" Do not be bothered; when we initiate change in ourselves, we can change the whole planet. Do not underestimate your own power. We should be flexible and apply the principle to other scenarios. We must integrate our actions and mind to be consistent with each other.

Our mind is the root of all behaviors. All behaviors are the extension of our mind. When a person has a respectful mind, he will respect all people. The opening of the first chapter of *The*

Book of Rites states, "Treat all with respect." In other words, we must be respectful to all people, matters, and objects. My friends, when a person is respectful to his parents, siblings, and elders, what will he do when his parents ask him to do something? He will do his best. When he is respectful to people, he will deal with matters respectfully as well. When he is respectful to all people, will he waste the food that his parents bought with their hard-earned money? Surely not! So, when a child truly respects people, he will naturally give rise to respect towards all matters and objects. My friends, a respectful mind is extremely important.

Adapting the Teachings to Different Situations

However, as a parent, should you adapt the teaching as "When my child calls me, I must answer right away"? Don't you tell me, "Didn't teacher Tsai say that we should be respectful to everyone?" So after you go back home today, your son calls you and you instantly run up to him "Yes son, what can I do for you?" You are learning *Dizigui* rigidly if you do so. To children, we are their elders, they are younger; we should teach them to be respectful to us and give them opportunities to practice. So if your child says to you, "Dad, come here." Should you go over to them? No, you must not. You should say to him, "Why don't you come over to me?" When he comes over, you then say, "Come, let's learn *Dizigui* together." You should not reproach him right away but give him a systematic guidance instead. This way, he will naturally start to emulate the good conducts that he learns from the stories of sages. We must know how to apply these teachings when we are in different positions.

There was a mother whose son knocked on her bedroom door one day, when her mother-in-law walked up to him and asked him to have a snack. This boy immediately replied to his grandma, "Don't bother me!" What should we do? See, the child is being disrespectful to his grandmother. Therefore, morality education is very important, it must be cautious right from the start. You should quickly take care of it when you notice it, otherwise it will be very hard to change once he has formed it into habit. The mother was highly alert, so she opened the door immediately and said to her son, "Apologize to grandma!" She corrected the arrogance and disrespect in her son's speech. But this child was very stubborn, he would rather die than apologize. Her mother-in-law said, "Aw, it's so hot today, no need to apologize, it's okay!" What should the mother do in this situation? This situation is truly testing the wisdom of a parent.

Seeing that her son was unwilling to apologize, the mother immediately said, "Mom, (mother in law), it is all my fault. I did not teach my son properly. I apologize." As soon as she finished her sentence, her son started to tear up and cry. What does this child's tear represent? It shows that he has the sense of shame. Following this, the mother said to her son, "Look, you were so disrespectful to your grandma, grandma still thought of you in every aspect, did not want you to suffer from the heat. Didn't you see that grandma's heart is always being considerate of you?" This daughter-in-law was speaking on behalf of the grandma, the grandma was very touched and walked away. The relationship between these in-laws was greatly improved because of this event. This grandma felt that the daughter-in-law knew her heart.

After the grandma left, this daughter-in-law said to her son, "Tonight, you should write a diary entry and reflect on what you did wrong." That night, he wrote in his diary entry, "I have two of 'me'; one is a good me and the other is bad. They are always playing tug of war." Dear friends, if a person has so many struggles at such a young age, he will surely have more inner conflicts when he grows up. However, if he cultivates a strong foundation of filial piety from a young age, his life will not be plagued with these contradictions. In his life, he will not do things out of disrespect or losing temper that leads to his regrets. So when children make a mistake, we should be very alert and swiftly take action to correct them. "When my parents call me, I must answer them right away" is respect. "When my parents ask me to do something, I must do it promptly" is also respect. "When my parents instruct me, I must listen respectfully." "When my parents reprimand me, I must accept submissively." All these teachings represent the respectful heart towards parents.

Opening the Door to a New Life

In fact, when a person can truly deeply feel his parents' profound kindness, his heart will naturally be gentle and respectful. I remember, on my big sister's wedding day, I was responsible for opening the door to welcome the groom since I am the only son. There were several rituals that he and my sister needed to follow. These rituals have their meaning and purpose. One ritual left an especially deep impression on me. This was the final ritual where my new brother-in-law brought my sister to kneel down in front of my parents and bid them farewell. I stood at the side watching. As soon as the newlyweds knelt down in front of them, my father immediately bursted into tears. Seeing the teardrops from my father's eyes, I also started to cry in an instant. At that moment, I could feel the emotions of a father. A father had taken care of his daughter for over 20 years, there were countless times and things that he had been worrying about. In his every thought, he was wishing that she has good health, the best education, and to find a good husband to live a happy life together. The tears from my father's eyes were also in part expressing his relief; his daughter has finally found a suitable man to become her husband today. It was also the tears of comfort and being touched.

But do a parent's care, worry, and love for their children disappear as soon as they get married? No. Their love and care for their children will last a lifetime. A saying goes, "A 100-year-old mother will still worry about her 80-year-old child." Even a mother who has lived 100 years, in her eyes, an 80-year-old son is still her child. When I felt in my heart the toil that a father has been through, I said to myself, "I can never repay my parents' deep kindness in this life. I shall never say a word that is rebellious or disrespectful to them." Due to this epiphany, I naturally give rise to a sense of respect and joy whenever I see my parents. It is very important that we shall always keep in mind the deep kindness of our parents. Naturally, "Sincerity from within will be manifested externally." Our respect will be shown in our words and actions.

Remembering to Keep Your Promise

"When my parents ask us to do something, I must do it promptly." When we promise something to our parents, we must not be lazy, we must take action swiftly. This line is very effective to use

on our children. "Didn't you say you are going to take a shower? Well, hurry up then!" "When my parents ask me to do something, I must do it promptly." When you and your children share the common language of *Dizigui* and follow Confucius' teachings together, you can then communicate with them effectively. But we must introspect ourselves, we have grown up as adults, do we act promptly when our parents ask us to do something? To whom do we most easily break our promises among our closest family and friends? To our dearest parents, or our dearest husband or wife. The people closest to us are the most important and bestow the most kindness upon us. However, we are most likely to break our promises to them. Why is that? Because breaking promises to a client will make you lose money, breaking a promise to parents is easily forgiven with an excuse. "I have been so busy lately, I am really sorry." We must reflect upon this. We should be more trustworthy towards our parents. This is the correct attitude. Of course, we should keep our promises not only to our parents but to others as well. After this class, we should think hard, "Is there anything that I have promised my parents in the past, but not yet done?" If there is, we must quickly do it.

When we were in Shenzhen, a teacher in the audience recalled, "I went home a few days ago and saw that my dad was using a worn out shaver. So I said to him, 'Dad, it is so worn out, don't use it anymore. I'll buy you a new one.' I immediately threw his old shaver into the trash." She completely forgot about her promise. And her father had been very angry at her for a few days. She suddenly remembered her promise to her father after the class. Immediately, she called her father to apologize and ordered a new shaver for him. Interestingly, another teacher in the audience also recalled that she had not bought a shaver for her father that she had promised as well. You see, people indeed need reminders sometimes. With good friends by our side, plus reading the classic texts left by the sages, we will be able to identify our shortcomings.

What made bamboo sprouts grow in a land of snow and ice?

In ancient China, many filial children could feel their parents' needs and they would take action before their parents asked them to do so. During the Three Kingdoms Era*, there was a filial son named Meng Zong. (*From 220-280CE, started from the end of the Han 漢 dynasty, followed by the Jin 晉 dynasty; China was divided by the state of Wei, Shu, and Wu.) You probably have heard the story of Meng Zong's Tears Brought Bamboo Shoots from the Frozen Earth. He saw that his mother had lost her appetite for a long time due to illness. One day, she suddenly wanted to eat bamboo shoot soup, but it was not in season. Understanding the mother had not had an appetite for a long time and her digestion had been weakened, how would she feel if she could not get it when she suddenly wanted to eat something? Very uncomfortable. So he walked to the bamboo grove and started to cry; he did not know what to do. With this sincere heart of filial piety, what effect did it have when his tears fell to the ground? It moved the bamboo shoots to sprout. Would our tears have the same effect if we cried? It was winter, bamboo shoots normally do not grow, but his filial heart was able to make the bamboo shoots, a plant, to grow right away.

A Japanese doctor, Masaru Emoto, has already proven in his experiments that human thoughts can influence minerals, influence water. When a person has good thoughts, the crystal of water

will become beautiful. When people have good thoughts, even the dirty water in a lake can become pure and clean. Nature is constantly interacting with human minds. That's why so many stories of filial children in ancient times were able to move the bamboo, the animals, and even the fiercest tiger. What did they rely on? Their hearts of filial piety. Such a great practice had been demonstrated by our ancestors for thousands of years. Such a good practice, should we continue with it? Yes, we should. As long as we can emulate their hearts of filial piety, we will surely be able to demonstrate touching examples one after another in our own lives. Meng Zong's mother recovered from her illness after eating the bamboo shoot soup. This proves that a truly filial child is able to bring comfort and good health to his parents. Therefore, "When my parents ask me to do something, I must do it promptly."

Dealing With Parents' Anger

The next sentence, "When my parents instruct me, I must listen respectfully." When our parents scold us, we must not answer back. We must listen respectfully and surely must not talk back. For example, when your father scolds you, but only two out of ten things are true; you feel that eight of them are his misunderstanding. Should you immediately argue back? Should you? No! When he is scolding you, he is very angry. At that time, you only need to be in agreement and say, "Yes, yes." Seeing you calmly agreeing with him, he will gradually calm down himself. After he has finished scolding you and calmed down, he will probably think about it and realize, "Maybe I had overdone it." At that point, he would probably prepare some fruit and say, "Come, eat some fruit." At this point, you should also naturally go over to him as if nothing has happened. We must not say to him, "What do you want, Dad? To make it up to me?" Do not be so stubborn. We should be more adaptable and take advantage of this opportunity.

When you can calmly accept your parents' scolding, accept it with a calm mind even if they misunderstand you, you will then earn their respect and approval more and more. When you have earned your parents' respect, it will be very easy to communicate with them. They will slowly start to think, "Whom can I trust most?" "It is my own son, my own daughter." So "When my parents instruct me, I must listen respectfully." If your dad suffers from heart disease, you should deal with the situation differently. If he is already so angry that he may have a heart attack, should you still stand there and recall the teachings in *Dizigui*? No, we must be flexible with what we have learned. When you keep parents' best interests in your heart at all times, you will know how to defuse the situation at the time when they are angry.

"When my parents reprimand me, I must accept submissively." When your parents punish you, or even smack you, you should accept the punishment and think long and hard about why they are so angry and what I have done wrong. One time, one of Confucius' students, Zengzi, did something wrong. His father was very angry and picked up a wooden stick to hit him. Zengzi had learned the teaching, he did not run away but let his father hit him. His father ended up hitting him too hard, and Zengzi fell unconscious. When Confucius heard about this incident, he said to all his students, "In acting like this, Zengzi was not filial." Why? Confucius explained: When parents are angry, they cannot control their emotions. If his hand had slipped and he happened to hit his son's head, who would have been the saddest if the son ended up dying?

The parents. So Confucius said, "Take light punishments (*small sticks) from parents, but walk away from the heavy ones (*big sticks)." If you see parents pick up a big stick that might kill you, you should quickly run away. We should not put parents to an unrighteous situation. My friends, we must be flexible when learning the sages' teachings.

So "When my parents instruct me, I must listen respectfully. When my parents reprimand me, I must accept submissively." I would ask my students, "What would you think of every time you had been scolded by your parents?" In most cases, what was my students' answer? "So unlucky!" "So unlucky that I was caught by my parents. I must not let them catch me again!" This attitude is certainly not right. At this point, as teachers we should speak for the parents and correct their attitude. I would tell my students, "When your parents punish you and become angry, in fact, their bodies are already suffering harm at that time." Do you know how long it takes for the body to recover after being angry? About 3 days. Since it is so bad for one's health, does anybody actually like to scold people? Your parents want you to remember the lesson and hope you will never repeat the same mistake, that is why they scolded you despite the bodily harm. They would rather harm their own health than to let you pick up bad habits. You must be able to feel your parents' intention of enhancing your wisdom and virtues in order to not let you degenerate. You must not forsake their selfless love and care.

The ways our parents show their love, sometimes they are soft and gentle, sometimes they are very stern; either way is showing the same love to you. You must understand and feel it. To show gratitude to parents' teaching, we must make sure that their scolding and bodily harm are not in vain. We must remember parents' scolding, learn the lesson, and correct our mistakes. We must learn from Confucius' student, Yan Hui, never make the same mistake twice. Every time we are scolded by our parents, we must remember what we have done wrong and make sure to never do things that will cause them to be angry or sad again. If children have this type of attitude, they will not feel unlucky and the main thing they remember is not to make the same mistake twice. Today's class, we will end it here. Thank you everybody.