

Confucius Teachings On Building A Happy Life (8)

- a foundation for Mahayana Buddhism practice

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Elaborating DiZiGui in Detali 8

Drops of Water Can Erode a Boulder

Hello my friends, good morning. This morning, did everyone read Dizigui one time? Yes? Good! The ancients say, "A mind that is keen to learn is not far from obtaining wisdom." If we can maintain a keen mind to learn, we will be able to succeed in cultivating our virtues and acquiring knowledge and wisdom. Socrates was a very well-known philosopher in the West. He once said to his students in their first lesson, "I will only teach you one movement today and it is very simple. Swing both of your arms to the front and then to the back. Keep swinging your arms like this for 300 times." After demonstrating, he asked the students to do the same movement every day. All of the students felt that it was very easy and agreed to do it. After one month, he asked his students, "How many of you still swing your arms every day?" Only about 90% of the students raised their hands. After two months went by, only 30% were still doing it. After one year had passed he asked again, and only one person was still doing it. Who was this person? He was Plato, another one of the West's all-time greatest philosophers, second only to Socrates.

From this anecdote, we can learn that the most important factor in acquiring knowledge is perseverance. If we can devote just a little time every day to delve deeply into the sages' teachings, then, like drops of water eroding a boulder, we will surely get achievements. We shall uphold this attitude, for example, memorizing five sentences from *The Analects* or even three lines every day, you probably would be able to recite the whole book if you persevere for a year. We must maintain a persevering attitude towards learning.

At the end of a class, I often exchange ideas with several teachers who were in the audience. I would ask them, "In these past five days, compared to any other time in your life, have you ever been more diligent?" All of them said, "No" and strongly felt that these five days were the most focused they had ever experienced in their lives. I told them, this is a start but it must not be the end. They should always maintain this attitude towards learning.

There was a director of academic affairs who attended the class for five days. After five days, he invited me to speak at his school. He confessed that the volume of notes that he had taken over those five days was more than those he had taken over four years of his undergraduate study. We can see that the human potential to learn is unlimited. But why was he able to maintain such a great learning attitude over these five days? It was because he felt that the sages' wisdom can truly benefit his students. As a result, it ignited his sense of purpose. When people have an aspiration in life, their potential will no doubt be developed.

The Key to Wisdom: Scrutinize Our Mind at All Times

Apart from perseverance, we must also practice what we have learned. Yesterday, we learned that "When my parents call me, I must answer 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." In this passage, the most important concept is that we maintain a respectful mind towards our parents in our every word and action. Likewise, this respect should be not only towards our parents but also towards everybody around us in our life. "When my parents call me", I should go up to them right away. And when talking to parents, "I should make my expression pleasant and soften my voice." Sometimes, when interacting with our parents, even though we did not raise our voice, we actually had felt impatient already. At this moment, we especially need to observe our mind. When we have an impatient attitude, we should immediately correct it. The fundamental starting point of obtaining virtues and wisdom is being able to scrutinize our minds and intentions. If we have wrong thoughts, we should immediately correct them. This way, it will be impossible for our speech and behavior to deviate too far from our innate goodness.

One time, when I went to visit a friend, he happened to be facing a life decision. Transferring from a private university to a public one. He was just reporting this decision to his father, hoping to gain his father's support. When I walked in, he was in the middle of the conversation. So he said to me, "Please take a seat, let me finish speaking to my father first." I sat there and observed a child respectfully reporting his current situation to his father. His pleasant, respectful, and tireless attitude left a deep impression on me. I believe that his children, being raised in such a family, will also be graceful and gentle. Let's think about it, do most young people nowadays ever ask for their parents' advice when they are making a life decision? Do they ever clearly explain their situation to assuage their parents' worries? If parents never know what their children are up to, their worry will be constant. When a person is very humble and respectful to their parents, it will most definitely touch the people around them.

When We Can Change Ourselves, We Can Change Others

Besides being respectful to our parents, when my spouse calls me, I must also answer them

right away. When the dialogue between a husband and wife is always courteous and respectful, it is already setting the best example for their children. Do husbands and wives today stay mindful of this point when they speak to each other? People should not become more casual as they get more familiar with each other. The closer we become to somebody, the more respect we should have for them. Courtesy cannot be ignored. We should always be courteous even to the people closest to us. There was a little boy who happened to hear his mom talking on the phone. After she hung up, her son immediately said, "Mommy, were you talking to dad just now?" You see, her son could tell that she must have been talking to her husband from the way she spoke. Why? What attitude did this mother always have when she spoke to her husband? Was it good? Upon hearing this, the mother raised her awareness and was thinking, "Wow, my son can already recognize my bad attitude towards my husband. I need to make some adjustments."

For instance, when she saw her phone light up with her husband's name, she would pick up and say, "What do you want?" Hearing this kind of impolite tone, her son could tell that it was his dad calling. This mother immediately corrected herself. Her husband happened to call her again that day. She very politely answered the call, "Hi, how are you?" Her husband replied, "Sorry, I must have the wrong number" and hung up the phone. Her husband called again and said, "Was that you?" When we correct our own attitude, our entire family dynamics will improve. We must not underestimate the importance of our attitude in speech.

This Chinese New Year, some of our teachers brought the disc collection of The Happy Life Talks I delivered in Hong Kong, 40 lectures in total, back to their hometowns to share with some schoolmates. One of these teachers went to visit a schoolmate as soon as she got back to her hometown of Ningbo. They started to watch... This classmate's husband did not come home for Chinese New Year because he was very busy at work on New Year's Eve and forgot to call her. He was afraid that his wife would yell at him, so he waited two more days. On the second day of the New Year, he thought again that his wife would yell at him for sure. He put off calling her again. On the 5th, he finally called his wife.

The phone rang while she was watching The Happy Life Talks. She answered her husband's call in the middle of the lecture. Her husband was a little bit timid when she picked up the phone. He was scared that his wife would surely yell at him. The husband said, "I'm really sorry, I didn't call you until today." His wife immediately replied, "You have worked hard, even on Chinese New Year you had no free time to come home. All of us are very grateful for your hard work out there." Her husband heard what she said and felt a little strange. Shortly after hanging up, her husband called back again. He said, "Can you just yell at me a little bit, it would make me feel better." The interaction between husband and wife will directly impact the family atmosphere. A good spousal relationship must start from their attitude when speaking to each other.

The Principle of Talking to Others: Praising First and Being Trustworthy

"When my parents give me an order, I must do it promptly." We must not break our promises to our parents. In the same way, we should also keep promises to our spouse and children. When our words have credibility, our children will have great respect for us. As teachers, we should be especially careful to remember what we say inadvertently. We must not lose the trust of our students. When you always follow through on what you say, you will be highly respected by your students. I remember the first year I became a class leader in a primary school. One time, the school was holding an annual sports event. All of the students were lining up in the playground with the teachers' supervision. I happened to be walking back to fetch something from my office, where I bumped into a father who was carrying some drinks to our classroom on the fourth floor.

Why did this parent bring the drinks at the time while all of the students were lining up? Why? He was shy. It was apparent that this parent seldom visited the school, which also meant that he seldom talked to the teachers. Why would parents seldom communicate with the teachers? We, as teachers, should also introspect ourselves. The more we show our care for his child, the more likely the parent will take the initiative to communicate with us. We should often use the Daily Communication Book to praise their children. In this way, a bridge is naturally built between parents and teachers.

This father was not used to talking to teachers and hoped to seize the opportunity to leave the drinks in the classroom anonymously. I happened to have bumped into him when I walked back to fetch something. As soon as he saw me, he took a few steps back, looking nervous. I began to make conversation with him. Whoever we talk to, we must grasp one principle: To praise whoever we see. You can praise their children, you can also praise his strengths. We all like to be praised. When you praise a child, the parents will be joyful and feel respected. On the other hand, if you start off by listing the child's problems one by one, they will definitely feel very uncomfortable. So human relations must not be neglected, we must be considerate in our interactions. I started the conversation by sharing the positive behaviors I observed in his child.

During our conversation, this parent said, "Teacher, my child respects you a lot because you always eat together with your students." Actually, I did not have lunch with my students. I would teach them a proverb after all the students were seated because local proverbs all contain very deep philosophical life lessons. Such as a Hokkien saying goes, "A tree trunk firmly rooted in the ground will not fear its branches blown by a typhoon." This saying is quite applicable to describe our moral education. When children do not develop firm roots for their virtues, the greater their capabilities are, the more dangerous their lives will be; because the outside world is full of temptations. If they cannot resist temptations, the higher they climb, the harder they will fall. This proverb gives us a very significant life message, this is why I would always teach it to them first.

After I finished teaching this proverb, they started eating and I would go to every table and inspect how they ate their lunch. *Dizigui* teaches "When eating and drinking, do not be picky." I used *Dizigui* to reinforce their self-discipline in daily life. Being picky with food is certainly not allowed. If I saw a student being picky at his food and eating reluctantly, I would immediately ask him, "Would you like teacher to serve you?" They would be very scared, and quickly go to get more vegetables. This would help ensure that they have a balanced diet. Whenever I finished inspecting the whole class and prepared to eat my own lunch, there would always be a few students who had finished eating. So, even one sentence that we said inadvertently, students would see it with their eyes, and remember it in their brain. Only when you practice what you preach, will you be able to truly earn the respect of your students, of your children.

Applying Wisdom to Filial Piety

Next, "When my parents instruct me, I must listen respectfully. When my parents reprimand me, I must accept submissively." We should take some time to have an accurate understanding of the word 'submissively'. Every one of our parents' reprimands, should we blindly follow them? In recent decades, there have been many people who misunderstand traditional Chinese culture. They wrongly think that the concept of obedience in Confucianism means always doing whatever our parents tell us to do. That would be blind filial-piety. Does it make more sense when we explain it like this? Actually, anyone who interprets it like that has probably never even finished reading one of the classic texts cover to cover. The Chinese sages certainly never taught us this way.

There are two conditions when it comes to 'being submissive'.

If what our parents scold us about is righteous, we must remember what they say and implement their advice quickly. In this situation, we should be obedient. However, if what they scold us about and require from us is not morally justifiable, we should not contradict them but take actions by the situation. In that situation, it would only worsen the conflict if we argue back immediately. Therefore, we should take a step back and calmly plan, waiting for a good time to better communicate with them.

Later in *Dizigui*, it teaches, "When my parents do wrong; I will urge them to change, with a pleasant facial expression and a softened voice." That's why in Chinese filial piety, the concept of 'submission' certainly does not mean blindly following all of our parents' requests. We must first discern right from wrong, using wisdom to be filial to our parents. When our parents make a mistake, and we do not urge them to correct it, we are actually putting them into an unrighteous position. This is not the proper attitude that a child should have.

How Respectful One Is, How Great His Learning of Wisdom Will Be

Besides "when my parents instruct me, I must listen respectfully", "when my teachers instruct me, I must listen respectfully" as well. Whether or not one will be able to cultivate great virtue and wisdom, apart from having a good teacher, a more important factor is his attitude to learning. He must have a pious and reverent heart towards his teacher, and he must never obey orders on the surface yet secretly violate them. So, how great one's learning will be can be inferred by how respectful he is: one percent of respect will lead to getting one percent of the benefit, while one hundred percent respect will net the student one hundred percent of the benefits. This is because we very possibly do not fully understand every single thing that our teacher instructs or requests to do.

Let me make an example. Imagine that learning is like a 20-story-tall building; our teacher is on one of the higher levels, probably somewhere past the tenth floor, but we are only on the second or third floor. From our position, can we see the view of the tenth or higher floor? Certainly not. Our teacher is leading us towards a long-term goal. If you say, "I can't see or feel any benefits, why should I do as you instruct"; with this questioning attitude and not following the teachings respectfully, we will not be able to get any benefit.

Why do people nowadays find it so hard to succeed in acquiring wisdom? It is because we have made a relatively serious mistake: we often gauge a virtuous man's intention with a petty man's heart. If we interpret the principle in *The Analects* with our own perspective, we are dragging Confucius from the 20th floor down to the 2nd or 3rd floor and even think that some of Confucius' sayings are sometimes wrong. So when we first start learning, we must not have a critical attitude towards teachers. We should be very humble and honestly follow the teachings. When you honestly practice, you will experience a better understanding, and you will gradually realize what the teacher had taught is not false but true as your level of learning advances. This is why 'when my teacher instructs me, I must listen respectfully' as well.

Next, when my leaders instruct me, I must also listen respectfully. Whether we want to have attainment in our learning of wisdom or career, we can only achieve them from a respectful and humble heart. That's why we must learn to bend low before we can walk tall. We should teach our children to be respectful, humble, and to always have a keen attitude towards learning. Arriving in a new environment, we must not complain but first observe, listen, and learn instead. Whatever our supervisors teach, we should honestly follow. After we have gained more knowledge and a deeper understanding of the company, we could then offer some advice at appropriate times. This is a more suitable method of dealing with matters.

A Small Deed Leads to a Big Influence

Okay, we can move on to the next line. Let's read it together. "I should make sure that my parents are warm in the winter and cool in the summer, I will greet my parents in the morning and make sure they rest comfortably at night. I must tell my parents when going out and must see them in person when returning home. I will maintain a daily routine and persist with my aspiration." Some of these characters are in their ancient form with different pronunciation from nowadays. For example, 'gu' is the ancient pronunciation, most of us pronounce it as 'gao' today; both are acceptable.

"We should make sure that our parents are warm in the winter and cool in the summer." There is a real story relating to this. In the Eastern Han dynasty (*25AD-220AD), a nine-year-old child named Huang Xiang who lived with his father alone because his mother passed away when he was very young. His father's health was not very good. Huang Xiang would worry that his father would be too cold in the winter, he always laid in his father's bed to warm up the quilt before inviting his father to go to bed. In the summer, when the weather was too hot, Huang Xiang would use a handmade fan to cool down the bed before inviting his father to sleep. From here, we can clearly see that Huang Xiang was always observing his father's needs in every thought. Do you think that Huang Xiang demonstrated his filial piety with only the actions of warming and cooling his father's bed? When he was always mindful to care for his father's needs, it is believed that he would pay earnest effort on all aspects of his father's life.

Seeing a 9-year-old child embody such a strong example of filial piety, the local officials were very moved. When Huang Xiang reached the legal age to work in government, the local officials recommended him to be the model of filial piety and integrity. Later in his government career, he reached the position of minister. So a person who has a heart of filial piety will also be loyal and faithful to his country and its people. That's why ancients believed, "A loyal official comes from a family with filial children." This is definitely not wrong because one's filial heart can be extended to love the parents and children of all other people.

The Emperor during his time gave Huang Xiang very high praise, "Jiangxia's Huang Xiang (*Jiangxia, an ancient political district, the area of Wuhan) has no parallel in the world." Huang Xiang's exemplary deeds have been passed on for thousands of years. Would this action of the Emperor's high praise have an impact on the people? In effect, the Emperor generated a tide for his citizens to follow the good example of Huang Xiang. Every word spoken and every action performed by the leaders of a country will spur the social atmosphere of their entire nation. Likewise, as parents and teachers, the things that you like and place emphasis on will simultaneously influence your children and students as well. If parents place great emphasis on virtue, children will too. When teachers emphasize virtues it will thus lead students to emulate.

Essence and Form

From Huang Xiang's example, we should learn not only how to care for our parents, but more importantly, we should feel Huang Xiang's intentions. His intentions were the essence, the actions of caring were the behaviors, the form. The essence will always remain the same, unchanged over eras, but the form will change. This is because the entire lifestyles of people differ from era to era. For example, what etiquette was required of commoners when seeing the emperor in the past? The most formal etiquette of kneeling thrice and kowtowing nine times. What is the essence of this etiquette? A sense of reverence. Because the leader of a country deals with a myriad of affairs everyday and always thinks in the best interest of his people, we respect the leader's contribution to people, therefore perform this etiquette.

However, if we met our president or prime minister nowadays, is it appropriate to perform the ancient etiquette? The leaders of our country would wonder, "Who taught them to do this?" This form of etiquette is no longer suitable today. But will the essence itself change? It will not. Many people say that times are different now and everything needs to be changed; we must know it is the form which is changing but not the essence.

If we envision Chinese traditional culture as a 5,000-year-old tree; the essence and principles are like the tree trunk which has stood firm and tall unwaveringly for four or five thousand years, but it will sprout new branches, new leaves every year. These new branches and leaves will differ based on the conditions of the sunlight, air, and water source of each year. These branches and leaves will surely be suited to the climate of their time. Similarly, whenever we learn the classic texts, we should grasp their essence. This way, we will be very capable of grasping the core teachings. From this line 'I should make sure that my parents are warm in the winter and cool in the summer', we can feel that Huang Xiang was in constant awareness of his father's needs.

Which Aspects of Our Parents' Lives Need Our Constant Care?

Which aspects of our parents' life need our constant care? Let's take a look and categorize it; Care for our parents' physical health, mental health, and aspiration. This 'aspiration' can also be described as wishes. Firstly, caring for our parents' physical health means that we should look after their basic needs in daily life, such as their clothing, food, and living conditions. If we live together with our parents or are close to where they live, we can bring them some fresh vegetables, fruit, or some groceries.

I remember when I was little, I would see my mother visit her parents about once every two or three weeks. I was a typical clingy follower, and always accompanied my mother on her visits. Not only did I learn my mother's filial piety firsthand but enjoyed my grandparents'

love. They were always very happy to see me and fed me with a lot of good food. As soon as I finished a soft drink, they would bring me another one right away. Sometimes, I would gulp down two or three bottles in one sitting. While I drank, I could deeply feel the love that my grandparents had for me.

In fact, by letting children frequently spend time with their grandparents on both sides, it enables them to experience the happiness of these natural family bonds. This is very important. These frequent visits allowed us to observe if their rice is almost gone, oil is almost used up, we can then take the initiative to bring them some. They are sure to feel gratified and warm inside.

Another aspect is that as people get old, their physical health begins to decline. So we should often communicate the knowledge of how to maintain good health to our parents, so as to enable them to make healthy decisions and judgments. Many of the older generation often remind each other to eat a simple diet to prevent them from developing high blood pressure or getting cancer, because the lighter the diet, the less burden will be placed on the body. But you must communicate with them gently and explain to them gradually why a lighter diet is healthier. Otherwise, with the fear of poverty in their past deeply ingrained, many of the older generation believe that a diet not heavy in fish and meat is insufficient in nutrients.

Nowadays, people advocate whole grains and believe it is more nutritious compared to white rice which is basically carbohydrates. However, if you offer more nutritious foods like brown rice or sweet potatoes to your parents, they might say, "Life is better now, why do you still want me to eat these? I want white rice!" Their beliefs cannot be changed instantly, we must communicate very patiently with a systematic guidance.

Haste Makes Waste

When introducing the right concepts to our parents and family for their physical health, it will definitely not be easy, neither can it be achieved instantly. Confucius said, "Haste makes waste." We must not act in haste or try to force our ideas upon them, "Just eat it! Don't talk so much!" Using this method, no matter towards parents or family members, would it give them a good feeling? No, it would not. When a person has negative feelings in their heart, no matter how nutritious the food they eat, they will not be able to digest it properly.

After learning from our course, a lady understood that a diet should be high in vegetables but low in meat and animal products; this will significantly benefit the body's physical health. She was very happy at the end of the class. When getting back home, she told her husband, "Starting today, I will not cook any meat for you again. I am doing this for your good health. You should be grateful." Well, she applied what she learned on the very same day. Was she daring

and resolute? Yes, very daring and resolute. But she was unduly hasty. It would have the opposite effect than what she had intended. A week or two later, she came back to our center to look for me. Her countenance did not look good. She told me, "My husband is so unteachable! I stopped cooking meat for him in the hope to improve his health, but he refused to accept it!" She went on grumbling about her husband.

I then poured her a cup of water. As she was drinking the water, I told her, if your husband had an affair, you must be responsible for it. She was startled. I continued: If your husband becomes afflicted with high blood pressure, you are responsible. If your children get to see their father less often, and their relationship is affected by it, you are responsible as well. The more I said, the more confused she became. How could this be? I then asked, "Today, you did not cook any meat for your husband, may I ask, did he eat any meat or not?" She answered, "Yes! He went to a restaurant to get some." I replied, "Right! If he went out to eat, perhaps a bar, and met another woman, wouldn't it be possible to give rise to some complications? So if he had an affair, you would be responsible.

Furthermore, food served in restaurants is usually oily and salty. Maybe after three years, his blood pressure would increase to a dangerous level. You would be responsible for it as well. If your husband eats out every night and fails to have proper communication with his children to show his care, causing their relationship to be strained, you would also be responsible for it." By this point, she felt grievance. I said, "When you first took this action, what was your original intention? It was to improve your husband's and your family's health. Please tell me, have you achieved what you intended to?"

Oftentimes, we have correct intentions, yet act on impulse halfway while forgetting our intentions. I told her, it takes time for a person to accept a new concept, we need to influence them without the sign of doing it. For example, in the first week you can cook three meat dishes and then reduce it to two in the following week. Next month, you reduce it to one dish only. If you gradually reduce the number of meat dishes, your husband will not notice the change. But of course, after you take away all the meat, you must make sure the dishes are still delicious. So, you need to learn from others how to make vegetarian dishes that taste even better than meat dishes. When your husband is having the dishes, he will wonder, "What's in this dish? How come it tastes so good?" You can introduce these dishes to him and explain the benefit of them. He will then be much more willing to eat vegetarian food.

In addition, you should communicate with him the correct concepts little by little. You can fully use the feminine amiability and tell him that his health is your lifelong happiness and it is too important. How do we eat healthy? You can introduce the concepts of the well-written book by Chiu-Nan Lai PhD or other experts to him; little by little, you instill in him one or two sentences at a time. It will be much easier for him to accept it in this way. I suggested to her to bring her husband to the class sometimes and have lunch together with our teachers. When he sees so many people are vegetarian, he will no longer feel that the vegetarian diet is strange. While he

is eating, teachers at our center would ask him, "Isn't vegetarian food great?" He would say, "Not bad, not bad." Gradually, her husband fit into this group and became a vegetarian naturally a few months later.

So, we must not act in haste when looking after our parents or family members. Of course, you must have enough knowledge and wisdom before you can look after others; as it is said, "Knowledge is power." People obtain good knowledge in some particular areas often through the needs in their lives. For example, if our mother encounters a health problem, we then hurry to study health related knowledge. However, we should not wait until a problem occurs to study it, it would be much harder that way. We should acquire the knowledge now and gradually bring the right health concepts to our family members. This is about 'taking care of parents physically'.

Be Good at Understanding Parents' Feelings and Needs.

Next, taking care of our parents mentally, to let them feel joy and at ease at all times. The prerequisite is that we must let them rest assured with whatever we do. If we do not have good virtues, would our parents be happy even if we offer them very delicious food everyday? No, they won't. Probably they would be on tenterhook while eating. Chinese parents are more reserved, they usually do not reveal what they think through their words. Therefore, we must be good at understanding our parents' feelings and needs.

The Analects states, "A virtuous man should have nine contemplations." Which nine? The first one is contemplating on what he sees. The second is contemplating on what he hears. We must be able to feel what our parents need from what they said. For example, you haven't called your parents for a while, and your mother calls you. It is already too improper to let your parents call you. When your parents call to ask about your working situations, you should have known that she misses you or her grandchildren. After understanding her mind, you should go visit them before they ask. In fact, once people reach sixty, aging will become more and more obvious. What would we feel when we have not seen our parents for a few months? "Wow, how come they are so much older?" We must cherish the opportunity to be with our parents. We should feel and often care for their needs. This is about taking care of parents mentally.

A Touching Story of Nurturing Parents' Aspiration

Next, living up to parents' aspiration, which means fulfilling parents' expectations of us. *The Classic of Filial Piety* states, "My entire body, even each hair and bit of skin, has been received from my parents. I do not dare to damage it! This is the beginning practice of filial piety." So, taking good care of my own body is the priority work of filial piety. "Establish my virtues, practice Dao, and have posterity commemorate my name, so as to bring glory to my parents; this is the

ultimate practice of filial piety!"

If we contribute to family and society with our own virtues, who will be the most happy and content? Our parents and our teachers. This is about living up to parents' aspiration. Indeed, each of us has good nature and hopes to do something for society. However, many parents wholeheartedly educate their children and feel their strength is weaker than their will even though they want to contribute to society. That's why they feel very comforted when their children can make a greater contribution to society.

There is a teacher in our Haiko center, who has learned *Dizigui* for three months and has been consistently reading it every morning and evening. Three months later, she came to me and said, "Teacher Tsai, such great wisdom should not only benefit just me and my children, we should let more people hear this sages' teachings. She decided to go back to her hometown to promote *Dizigui*. As a saying goes, "He who harbors good aspirations is blessed by heavenly beings." So, we must courageously undertake a responsibility and make efforts to contribute to society.

When she took the first step, there was no need for her to worry that she could not stand firm because she would attract help from others. Such a good thing, we would like to offer as much help as possible to prevent things from going wrong. As soon as she revealed her aspiration, many teachers in our center immediately shared their experiences with her. And I also gave her a set of *A Collection of Moral Stories*, which includes over 700 stories of ancient Chinese sages. She was very joyful and started to plan the teachings in her hometown.

Before she set off, we happened to be teaching the chapter of 'Be Fraternal When Going Out', in which a line goes, "Serve the elders of your parents' generation like serving your parents, serve the elders of your older brothers' generation like serving your older brothers." This lady works at an airport and had never received any formal training for being a teacher, but she spent much time to figure out how to teach due to her good intentions and enthusiasm towards education. Realizing that many understandings and feelings can only be obtained through actual actions, she bought a basketful of lychees, returned to her hometown, and prepared to teach the children this teaching, "Serve the elders of your parents' generation like serving your parents, serve the elders of your older brothers' generation like serving your older brothers." She said to her students, "We have understood parents' toil after learning 'Be Filial at Home'. So, we must respect our own parents. Similarly, other people's parents also work very hard to contribute to society, we must respect them too. In fact, not only others' parents, all elders who had sacrificed their youth to society must be respected as well. That's why the sages taught us, "Serve the elders of your parents' generation like serving your parents, serve the elders of your older brothers' generation like serving your older brothers."

After giving the class, she told her students, "Let's bring these lychees to the elders in our village now." When you give them the lychees, you should greet them properly. The children

were very happy with doing it. They joyfully went from one household to another, and the whole village came alive. What kind of atmosphere did they create? An atmosphere of respecting the old and loving the young. I believe that every elder in the village must have been truly delighted when they received the lychees. The joy found in the elders would have left the children a deep positive impression. Consequently, the children will be happy to show respect to others in the future. A few days after the event, her father called her and said, "Daughter, many elders in the village called us and praised that there had never been a married daughter like you who loves the home village so much." You see, she was married and no longer lived in the village, but she still cared for her home village. That was why the elders were so touched.

Dear friends, how did her father feel at that moment? He must be very proud of her daughter. This is one example of nurturing our parents' aspiration. Her father continued, "Daughter, I am so happy for you that you have found the value of your life." My friends, for how long will this daughter's action bring her father the feeling of happiness? One or two days? How long? His comfort will last for the rest of his life. The joy she brought to her father is entirely different from the joy of her father receiving lovely food from his daughter. Since we have learned the teachings of 'I will greet my parents in the morning and make sure they rest comfortably at night', we should become more sensitive to our parents' needs and extend our care to every little bit of their daily lives, not only should we take care of them physically and mentally but live up to their aspiration as well. This is all for today. Thank you very much for listening.