

# Confucius Teachings On Building A Happy Life (9)

## - a foundation for Mahayana Buddhism practice

Validated by Master Ching Kung  
The Speaker: Teacher Tsai LiXu  
2/15-2/23 2005

### Greet Parents in the Morning and Make Sure They Rest Comfortably at Night

Hello my friends, good afternoon. Let's continue from this morning's class. The next line is 'I should always greet my parents in the morning and make sure they rest comfortably at night'. We mentioned in the previous lesson that King Wen of the Zhou dynasty had implemented this teaching. His filial piety had moved his people to emulate his example. During my lectures, a teacher in the audience once told me that there was 'chaff' in *Dizigui*. Chaff is the remaining husks left after grain processing and is inedible. My friends, what would you do if someone says to you that there is chaff in *Dizigui*? Should we immediately debate with him? Well, a debate might get you nowhere. I humbly and politely asked, "Could you please tell me which phrase in *Dizigui* is chaff in your opinion?" He said, "I should always greet my parents in the morning and make sure they rest comfortably at night."

### Greeting Parents Twice a Day Gives them Comfort and Peace of Mind

I asked again, "Why do you think it is 'chaff'?" He commented, "It is just too much of a hassle to greet parents twice a day." I then told this teacher, if children greet their parents respectfully in the morning, the parents will feel comforted when they see their children looking refreshed because it shows that they have slept well the previous night. Also, greetings from children early in the morning will bring parents immense joy and motivate them to work hard during the day. These are the benefits of greeting parents in the morning. In the evening or after the children come back from school, they greet their parents the second time and say, "Dad, Mom, I am home, how's your day today?" When the parents see their children's good appearance, it gives them peace of mind because it indicates that they had a good day at school without any conflicts with schoolmates. Therefore, children greeting their parents twice a day gives them much relief and comfort.

### Parents Think of Us Constantly

Being children, we only think of our parents twice a day, but how many times do our parents think of us each day? A mother once told me, in the spring and fall when there is a wide temperature gap between day and night, she was really worried about her daughter kicking off her duvet when she was sleeping. She and her husband intentionally used a very thin duvet, so that they would be awakened by the coldness at midnight and check on their daughter's duvet. You see, parents care for their children even when they are sleeping. So, how many times do our parents think of us each day? At all times. Having said this, I also had a similar imprint in my memory. When I was little, I could always feel someone covering me with a duvet at midnight. When I opened my blurry eyes, I could see sometimes it was my father, and sometimes it was my mother. It is during this process that the connection

between parents and children is naturally built up. So I said to this teacher, "As children, especially when we were still little, we could hardly help them in life; with their work or support them financially. So the least we could do was to give our parents less worries and let them have peace of mind. Therefore, greeting parents twice a day is a practice of bringing peace of mind to them."

### **Greeting Parents Regularly Even When We Are Far From Home**

Upon hearing this, this teacher said, "Teacher Tsai, you have learned Chinese culture pretty well." With profound respect and humility, of course, I dared not accept his praise. All of a sudden, he said again, "But Teacher Tsai, you do not even implement it." People who learn sages' teachings fear the most when hearing 'you do not practice what you preach'. I was very nervous and asked, "Why do you think that I have not implemented it?" He replied, "Well, you are so far away from home, how could you possibly greet your parents twice a day? I said to him that the telephone is very convenient nowadays, we can call twice a day. He said, "You have not implemented it yourself." I explained, "If I were to call my parents twice a day, my mother would scold me 'don't you know long distance calls are expensive?'" So, the essence of 'greeting parents twice a day' is to bring peace of mind to them. Since I call at a certain time, such as Saturday evening, my mother would sit at home to wait for my call and knew it was from me as soon as the phone rang. In each weekly call, I would report in detail to my parents about my daily life and work over the week, so that she has a clear idea of how I am doing and would not be worried for me. It is most important that our speech, conduct, and virtues do not cause any worries to our parents. Had we not been able to deal with things properly at work and at home, even if we called our parents three times a day, would they be at ease? So, we should grasp the essence of every single teaching of the sages and seriously apply them in our daily lives. This is about 'greeting our parents twice a day'.

### **Tell Parents When Going Out and See Them in Person When Returning Home**

The next line, "I must tell my parents when going out and must see them in person when returning home." When we are going out, we must tell parents where we are going. Upon returning home, we should also let them know that we are back. These habits are very important. Do not take these small things in daily life lightly! When children can greet their parents twice a day, every single greeting will further strengthen the bond with their parents. When children are taught to inform their parents when they go out or return home, they will come to a realization that each of their actions must never give worries to their parents. A student of mine once went straight to his room to play computer games without telling his parents that he was back. Over an hour later, his mother thought that he had not come home yet. She then called the school office to find out if her son was required by the teacher to stay at school. I happened to answer the call and wondered how could it be possible that he was not home since the school finished over an hour ago. His mother was very nervous and asked, "Should I call the police?" I said, "Not yet, check every corner of your house first." In the end, she found her son playing computer games in his room. You see, not telling parents that we are back can indeed cause them much worry. So, it is important to form a good habit of informing parents upon returning home.

### **Tell Your Spouse When Going Out and Returning Home**

Apart from telling our parents whenever we go out and return home, should we also do the same with other members of our family, such as the spouse? Of course! To people who care about us, we should let them rest assured. We must tell our spouse where we are going because to be considerate is the principle to build good interrelationships with others. However, is there such honesty and sincerity between husbands and wives today? If a husband and a wife could not be frank with each other and always hide many things, they would feel very tired after decades of being together. There is a very important principle for regulating a family, and that is having no secrets among family members. When they are able to interact with sincerity, honesty, and inclusiveness, they are bound to lead a joyful and easy life. So, husbands should always tell their wives where they are going. For example, if you cannot go home for lunch, you must tell your wife beforehand. It would be too late if you called her at twelve noon because she would have already prepared lunch for you. We must not let other people's efforts and care be in vain. We should cherish them and be considerate. We must call our mother or spouse in advance, so that their efforts would not be in vain. If all members in the family can be considerate to one another, the family will then be in harmony and be prosperous in myriad aspects.

### **Tell Your Colleagues When You Must Go Out of the Office**

In addition to practicing such good habits at home, we should also do so at work. For instance, you need to go out and deal with something during working hours, you should tell your colleagues where you are going and for how long. Otherwise, what would happen in case they need to ask something that you are in charge of, yet no one knows where you are? It will cause great worries to everyone. Your leader may also blame you for being imprudent, further decreasing his trust in you. So, we should always remember to tell our colleagues when we have to go out, for how long, and give them our cell number in case of emergency. And we must remember to check if our cell phone is on at this time, because it will also lead to much embarrassment if they cannot get in touch with us.

In conclusion, informing others when we go out and return is to raise our sensitivity to avoid making others worry about us. We should constantly observe if we add burden to others with our speech and actions, and make more effort on this point.

### **Maintain a Daily Routine and Persist with Aspiration**

In the next line, "I should maintain a daily routine and persist with my aspiration." Let's analyze this teaching in the following aspects: our learning as a student, our career when starting work, and our family after marriage. As a proverb goes, "Nothing can be accomplished without norms or standards." In the context of living, it means that we should lead a routine and disciplined life in order to manage our study, career, and family properly. Let's take a look at the children today, do they maintain a routine life? They often become dissolute on Fridays and holidays; indulging themselves in TV, games until midnight. Some of them would dance through the night. What do they do over the weekend? Sleep! They sleep throughout the weekend in order to rejuvenate from the fatigue. It would be fine if they can make up the lost energy; if not, their health would gradually deteriorate. As parents, what should we do upon seeing children doing this? We must not allow them to indulge themselves, it should be rectified as soon as possible. While children are still young, parents must not allow them to stay up late on Friday nights. Once there is a precedent, there will be a second, third, and more.

## **Indulging in Materialism Will Sabotage One's Aspiration**

We must clearly understand, it is very difficult to get rid of a bad habit once it is formed. As the ancients said, "Indulging in materialism will sabotage one's aspiration." What is worse is that most children today do not have aspiration. When they overindulge themselves, the pleasure will definitely increase their desires and befuddle their minds; as a result, they will be inextricably bogged down in sensuous pleasures. We have seen many reports that some students surf the internet till midnight. What problems are derived? In today's era, we, as elders, must be extremely cautious; because many of the high-tech inventions now may do us great harm before we benefit from them. Students nowadays started using the internet in their early lives, has their ability to seek knowledge and wisdom improved? Have their virtues and wisdom grown? No! Since children have not yet developed enough ability to discern right from wrong, plus parents do not monitor what they read and watch online, they are very likely to befriend some bad internet users. For the reason of having never learned sages' teachings, they lack good judgment and rationality, thus easily be hoaxed by the sweet talk of some bad internet users and go astray. As the ancients said, "In life, one erroneous step may lead to our misery of thousands of years." When a child commits a serious mistake that can hardly be rectified, his parents will regret for the rest of their lives. Therefore, we must be extremely vigilant about this matter.

## **Be Vigilant and Make Sure Children Do Not Form Bad Habits**

There was a college student from Shandong who often played violent online games till midnight. Consequently, he suffered from mental problems and often felt that many people wanted to kill him. He told his teacher about it. The teacher realized that there was something wrong with him, and immediately notified his parents. His parents immediately rushed over and wanted to take him home. But this student had gone out to the street and injured many passersby with a knife even before the parents arrived at the campus; some of the victims were killed on the spot. This is a grave example of ruining one's aspiration because of leading a dissolute life. Just one offense has ruined his entire life.

Dear parents, if we would like our children's learning to be on the right track, we must ensure that they lead a routine life and develop the good habits of studying. Many parents may think that it is very difficult to do so since children today like playing more than studying. It seems that we are inclined to harboring negative thinkings. If we think negatively, a negative result would probably ensue.

## **When We Have Good Habits Our Children Will Follow Our Example**

In my memory, neither my two older sisters nor I watched TV when we were young. TV was very common at that time, but why didn't we watch TV? My parents never said to us, "You must not watch TV." They would always head to their room to read books after dinner. I was still young at that time. When I opened their door and saw them reading, would I dare to sit in the living room and watch TV? Would I dare? Of course I wouldn't dare. Naturally, my sisters and I would go upstairs to read books. I remember in our junior and senior high school years, my mother usually came to our room to remind us to sleep instead of nagging us to study. As a saying goes, "Habits become second nature." So, educating children is indeed not as difficult as we imagined. Most importantly, we must lead by example. When parents maintain a daily routine of studying, children will naturally follow.

## **Maintain a Regular Routine in Our Career**

With career, we should also maintain a regular routine. If we keep changing our jobs, our parents would be the ones who worry the most. Speaking of this, I feel really guilty because I had changed jobs almost ten times during the first two years after my college graduation. Therefore, I repent to you all here. But my friends, please forgive me for that. Why did I change ten jobs? It was because I was exploring occupations that I could dedicate my life to. It sounds quite sad; after studying for over ten years, I still did not know the direction of my life. Fortunately, my father was very supportive. He said, "Go and explore, I will support you so long as it is within my capability." With such a great father, I could go and explore without worries. During that period, I did start a business and had spent a bit of his money. However, my father said, "Well, we can just regard this as your tuition."

## **An Opportunity in Disguise**

Later, predestined conditions came together, I had an opportunity to teach first grade for two months as a substitute teacher. Those children were no higher than my waist. With no experience, plus no idea if I was suited for teaching, I was very apprehensive. I said, "Please find someone else, don't ask me; because I've never thought of becoming a teacher." Life can be very interesting; there are often unexpected occurrences awaiting us. At this point, we should calm ourselves down because good opportunities are perhaps approaching us. A week after I rejected, they came to me again and said that they just could not find anyone else but me. At that moment, I was thinking, "I should not reject people to an unreasonable extent." I gritted my teeth and accepted the job. After a few days of teaching, I felt very tired, especially mentally; because the duty of a teacher is to hope and help children improve and stay safe each day. But after a few days' fatigues, I suddenly became very happy and felt that I had found a job that is truly beneficial to society. Hence, I completely settled down and finished the two-month teaching. When I went back home, I immediately started preparing for the exam of a teaching certificate. Everything went very well after I headed along this way.

## **The Importance of Faith and Aspiration**

Of course, there is faith involved. I did not do it for the income but for the sense of mission in education; accordingly, I believed Confucius and Mencius would somehow bless me. Plus, I did not have any girlfriends during those years, I was more focused than many of my classmates who had girlfriends. Once you have aspirations, you will find the solutions to your problems. I studied much harder at that time than my junior and senior high school years. My learning goal at that time was to fully understand every single lesson, instead of taking them home to digest. So my attitude and spirit of learning were exceptionally good at that time. Honestly, aspiration is utterly important to an individual. I successfully obtained my certificate and engaged in teaching profession ever since. As I have found the direction of my life, I am able to 'lead a routine life and persist with my aspiration'. My parents are now able to set their minds at rest.

## **Feeling Parents' Worrying From a Distance**

In the year after I had taught over four months in Haikou, I returned home for Chinese New Year. As soon as I entered the house, I said to my mother, "Mother, your cultivation is pretty good." My mother was a bit stunned and asked, "What are you talking about?" I explained, "Well, I didn't feel worried at all and worked very hard in the past four months. It means that you didn't worry about me and it gave me peace of mind at work." In fact, when our parents worry about us, can we feel it from a distance? Yes, we can. If we cannot, it shows that we have not cared enough for our parents.

In ancient times, a student of Confucius, Zeng Shen, was out in the forest cutting and collecting firewood. A friend of his happened to visit him from afar. His mother thought that it would be very impolite to keep the friend waiting, or even missed to see him. but she had no idea when Zeng Shen would be back. His mother then pricked her own finger with a needle. Zeng Shen immediately felt a sharp pain in his heart and knew there must be something happening at home. He rushed back home. As soon as he saw his mother, he knelt down and asked, "Mother, is everything all right, are you ok?" His mother told him about his friends' visit, she pricked herself with a needle under the moment of not knowing what to do. Dear friends, a mother's mind and that of her child are truly connected. During my days in Haikou, there was one time at midnight when my heart suddenly felt very uncomfortable; with no history of heart problems, I was worried that something must have happened to my mother. But it was already midnight, and it was inappropriate for me to call home at that hour. So, I called her the following day. She told me that the previous night, she had wanted to take a sleeping pill, but mistakenly took a vasodilator instead. That was why she felt very uncomfortable at midnight. You see, we as children can truly sense our parents' feelings.

### **Improperly Educated Children Will Disgrace Their Parents and Ancestors**

We must let parents rest assured with our learning, career, and family. When we get along with our spouse, our parents will then have peace of mind. When we educate our children well, our parents will have peace of mind as well. Mencius said, "There are three unfilial acts, no posterity is the greatest." My friends, what does it mean 'no posterity is the greatest'? Does it mean 'giving birth to a son' as having posterity? This interpretation is too superficial. If a family has produced a prodigal, his grandparents will probably be so disappointed and think that it is better without posterity. So, the deeper implication of 'no posterity' is that children who are not educated properly will disgrace their parents as well as their ancestors; This is the true meaning of 'no posterity'! Therefore, in order to give our parents peace of mind, we must develop our wisdom and form a harmonious relationship with our spouses. When the husband and wife are in harmony, their children should be able to be educated properly.

### **Only Look at Your Spouse's Strengths, Not Their Shortcomings**

But how do we develop a harmonious relationship between husband and wife? The indisputable fact nowadays is a rather high divorce rate. I remember having a meal with some of my friends in Haikou. During the conversation, I realized that three out of four female friends at the same table were divorced. The fourth, whose child was just over one-year-old, was preparing for a divorce. My friends, what should we do in such a situation? I just could not bear to see yet another child having lifetime regrets due to his parents' divorce. So, I tried to find a right opportunity to talk to her about the way of

establishing a harmonious husband-wife relationship, in the hope of turning the turbulence and change her mind of divorce.

While we were eating, I suddenly switched the topic of the conversation. I said, "So long as abiding by one maxim, it is guaranteed that a couple can live to old age in conjugal bliss. We must have confidence when saying it. As a result, this friend instantly showed a great interest with all ears and was waiting for me to continue. I said, "From the day a couple gets married till their old age, they should only look at their spouse's strengths, not their shortcomings." "Only see their strengths, not their shortcomings." After I finished my words, this lady frowned deeply. Have you ever seen a person frown so deeply that it can squeeze a fly to death? Then she said, "Teacher Tsai, it is just too hard!" Dear friends, is it difficult? Is it really that difficult to appreciate the strength of our spouses? I once gave lectures in Zhuhai. As soon as I said 'only look at your spouse's strengths', a lady in the audience called out, "Teacher Tsai, my husband has no strengths at all." I responded, "Wow, I truly admire you. You knew your husband had no strengths at all, but you still had the courage to marry him." You see, people can be very forgetful and easily become irrational.

### **One Thought: What Can I Do for You?**

I ask them to return to the past when they were falling in love with their spouses. Have you ever heard them saying 'I feel extremely miserable'? Impossible! On the contrary, they conduct themselves as in the saying 'Beauty is in the eye of the beholder'? Why? Can you grasp the implication of this saying? It is because they always see the strengths of their beloved ones. In addition, they would always think of 'what can I do for him/her'. When a boy is in love, he would particularly keep an eye on good movies, book fairs, or other activities in order to take her on outings. When at work, he may keep looking at his watch and feel that the time passes by so slowly; because he is anxious to meet his girlfriend at five o'clock. At the time of falling in love, they would only have one thought: what can I do for her/him? This kind of attitude conforms to which word we mentioned yesterday? Love: using the heart to feel the needs of others. When he/she treats you this way, you will certainly feel very joyful. This thought of 'what can I do for her/him' was during the time of being passionately in love, yet their minds have changed after the marriage certificate was stamped; originally it was 'what can I do for her/him', it became 'what should he/she do for me' after the certificate was stamped. Thus, they make endless demands on their spouses. So, there will be more pressure after the marriage. And there will be some conflicts after being together for a while. Gradually, they would no longer be grateful for their spouse's efforts and no longer willing to tolerate and forgive each other. My friends, just one thought brings a huge difference, where does it bring you to? From heaven to hell! So, heaven and hell are not complicated at all, it simply depends on 'one thought' in our mind.

### **The Difference Between Heaven and Hell is a Single Thought**

There was a man who once met an angel, and the angel said to him, "I'll give you a tour of heaven and hell. Which one would you like to visit first?" The man said, "I'd like to see hell first." When arriving at hell, they saw a long table about one meter wide. Two rows of people were sitting at the table opposite each other. In the middle of the table, there were many dishes. As long as they were allowed to start the meal, they thought of only themselves due to their hunger, but they were unable to get food into their mouths and were struggling for it, because their chopsticks were one-meter-long. Subsequently, people of both sides started to

fight. They yelled and fought with each other, causing all the dishes to eventually fall all over the floor. Where do they live? Hell! A place where people blame and yell at each other. Having seen it, the man felt very uncomfortable and said, "I can't bear to see this anymore, I would like to see heaven please." So, the angel took him to visit heaven. Surprisingly, there was also a long table and each person was also holding a pair of one-meter-long chopsticks, and the dishes served were the same as well. The man felt very puzzled but quietly observed. When the order of 'you may start' was given, each of them politely fed food to the other person's mouth instead of their own. One of them was very popular; three people sent food to his mouth at the same time. He said, "Wait a minute, I am about to choke." You see, when everyone was thoughtful of others, they not only had enough food to fill their stomach but they were also very happy. This story clearly reveals that heaven and hell only lies on one thought of our own.

### **Thinking of Others Leads You to Heaven**

Once, I gave talks in a rural town of Haikou. It was a very interesting experience because I needed an interpreter due to the local people only speaking Hainanese. I could not understand their dialect. The mayor and vice mayor both participated; officers like this, leading by example to learn sages' teachings, are quite remarkable. After listening to what I said, the mayor then translated to the audience. Even my jokes were making a circle before the audience burst into laughter. That day I happened to share with them this story of heaven and hell. In the evening at about seven o'clock, I had another lecture at a primary school. Before the lecture, the mayor and vice mayor took us out for dinner; both of them kept filling our bowls with food. My colleague, Ms. Li, immediately said, "Well, we are now in heaven!" You see, when we have learned how to interact with others, deal with matters, further apply them to our daily lives, the experiences of our interrelationships with others will be certainly full of joy.

My friends, I believe that you are having enjoyable meals during these days, because we always hear people politely say, "Please take your time and enjoy your meal." When others treat us with courtesy, we will certainly feel comfortable. My friends, do not underestimate this action! Think about it, what would happen when a child can be considerate of how his behavior affects others? For instance, when having meals with your colleagues, if you left the table without saying anything after finishing your meal, what kind of impression would you leave to others? The person who sat next to you might think, "Did I offend her?" Another colleague might also comment, "Did she have a row with her boyfriend yesterday?" So, courtesy is the beautiful distance among people. When we finish our meals, if we can think of others and say, 'please take your time and enjoy, I'll excuse myself first', we will certainly form a harmonious relationship with others. From the details of our daily life, we can help our children understand how to interact with others courteously at all times.

### **The Importance of a Simple Greeting Between Spouses**

The main point of telling this story is to emphasize the importance of our mentality when interacting with our spouses. When we can recognize and appreciate the strengths of our spouses, they will also feel that they should be better themselves day by day. I have not married, interestingly, I heard that the most popular topic of my lectures is the husband-wife relationship. Well, we do not necessarily gain experience by undergoing it in person. We can learn a great deal from others. I once stayed at a teacher, Ms. Yang's house, for half a year



and have observed some secrets of her harmonious relationship with her husband. I remember whenever Ms Yang or her husband came home, they would habitually say, "I am home." The one in the house, no matter what he/she was doing, would instantly stop, come to the door, and greet the other with, "Ah, you are home." Please do not overlook this seemingly trivial greeting! When such a greeting is absent, the distance between people will gradually become greater. Many people are so obsessed with what they are doing, showing no expression at all when someone in the family enters the house. The opposite of love is not hatred but indifference. Indifference is more lethal than hatred. When we have hatred emotion, there is still a communication of our feelings after throwing a tantrum or scolding, right? But, if one party is indifferent to the efforts of the other party, such an attitude would make others feel despair.

### **Kind Words Said to An Apple a Day Keeps Its Wrinkles Away**

I remember there was one time that I gave lessons to a group of children, some parents also accompanied their children in the class. A child sat in between his parents. In that class, I told children that one wholesome thought of ours can make water form beautiful crystals. When we say 'thank you', 'I love you' to water, its crystals will become very beautiful. But if we say 'I dislike you, I hate you', the water crystals will become very ugly. Later on, we did an experiment with apples. We placed one apple next to the front door of the classroom and another next to the back door. We praised the one at the front door but scolded the one at the back door. What does the truth rely on? Verification! It relies on in person verification. A week later, the apple placed next to the front door looked smoother whereas the one next to the back door already had a few wrinkles. A friend of mine said, "Come, you can have the apple that has listened to the scolding." Would you eat it? Does it mean that you swallow all that bad language after you have eaten the apple?

### **Praised Rice Is Tasty Rice**

We did another experiment with three bowls of cooked rice. We showed gratitude to the first bowl of rice by saying 'it is because of you that our bodies are nourished.' To the second bowl of rice, we scolded it by saying 'why do you taste so bad'. To the third bowl of rice, we completely ignored it without saying anything. One week later, the first bowl of rice was slightly fermented and smelled good. The second bowl of rice had turned black and gave off a bad smell. What about the third bowl of rice? It smelled much worse than the second bowl. Why is it so? Indifference! We had been indifferent to it. My friends, do you think cold war is more destructive or hot war? Well, hot war is less likely to cause cancer in a person, but cold war is very likely to cause deadly disease because both involved will feel tired and miserable.

### **Gratefully Acknowledge What Others Have Done for Us**

When I talked to this point, the child's father immediately looked at his wife and stretched his arm to pat her shoulder. I had no idea what he was saying, yet I could tell from his expression that he implied something like 'Look, teacher Tsai is talking about you. On the podium, I was in a cold sweat for him. Then I saw his wife had turned to him and gave him a ferocious glare. I was thinking, "Oh my, this man is truly insensitive, lacking nerve." He has not even deliberated why his wife is giving him the silent treatment. In fact, it is not that difficult to get along with women. I was thinking, it must be that his wife had done so much

for him, but he had not given her a single acknowledgement or praise; so his wife was often sulking. With prolonged sulking, the cold war between them became increasingly serious. Therefore, men must keep this phrase in mind, "Saying nice words can make someone willing to slave for you." So, husbands should acknowledge their wives' efforts more often. For example, when having meals at home, a husband should praise his wife's cooking, "The dishes are so delicious, the rice smells so good. How did you cook them?" Hearing the praise, your wife might even say, "I'll cook one more dish for you." In another scenario, the husband, when almost finishing the meal, commented, "How come the dishes taste so awful?" Your wife may strike for three days. So, we should always gratefully acknowledge what others have done for us.

### **Nothing Wrong With Adding a Little Humor**

Once, Ms. Yang's husband got back home, she greeted him at the entrance and said, "Ah! You are back." She saw her husband was holding quite a few bags of things. She immediately helped him take the bags and said, "It's already great to have you visit, there is no need to bring so many gifts for me." You see, the way of getting along with your spouse and family, some sense of humor is very important. A wife also must remember, whatever your husband brings home, you must not pick on it. He might have spent a long time to choose those items. It is bad enough for not helping him to bring the items into the house, let alone criticizing him to buy something useless. He would feel his enthusiasm doused by a bucket of cold water.

### **Praising One's Spouse Will Bring out Their Best**

Ms. Yang's husband is very good at cooking and brewing tea. Based on my observation, I think his acquired skills are probably attributed by Ms. Yang's praises. Whenever Ms Yang drank the tea brewed by her husband, she would say, "How could someone brew tea as aromatic as this?" When eating fruits served by her husband, she would say, "This orange is so nicely cut, it tastes so sweet." You see, the more we acknowledge and appreciate other people's efforts, the more worthy they will feel, thus the more they are willing to help us. If today your husband seized a whim to help you wash the dishes, what should you do? If you found out that he had not washed them clean, you must restrain your negative emotion. For instance, among the six dishes he had washed, perhaps one of them was rather clean. You can take out the

particular dish and say to him, "Wow, this dish has been washed very clean. The first time when I washed dishes, I did not wash them as clean as you did." Will he wash dishes for you next time? Surely he will, because he has received your acknowledgement. With a bit more inclusiveness and acknowledgement, a husband and his wife will get along very well.

### **The Four All-Embracing Methods:**

#### **Method One - Giving**

To interact with others, as long as we abide to one very effective way, called the Four All-Embracing Approaches, we will surely get along with others very well. This is the law of interpersonal relationship. The first approach is 'giving'\*. (\*Sanskrit: dana) In modern terminology, it means often offering others treats or giving gifts. If husband and wife often

give gifts to each other, they will feel 'my other half always thinks of me no matter where he/she goes'. When a husband goes on a business trip, he can forget anything but should never forget a little gift for his wife. But of course, buying one pearl is certainly not advisable; it will be too much of a burden financially. As a proverb goes, "The gift itself may be small, but the good intention is profound." If it is your wife's birthday or the wedding anniversary, you should take her out to eat and tell her, "You've been working hard to cook for the whole family. Let's eat out today." Your thoughtfulness will make her feel that all her efforts are worthwhile.

### **Method Two - Loving Words**

The second approach is 'loving words'. As we just mentioned, it refers to 'often giving the words of acknowledgement and comfort to others'. Of course, 'loving words' are not necessarily the words that are pleasant to the ears because love is genuinely caring for others. As a wife, she must be able to assist her husband as well as educate her children. When noticing some faults of her husband, a wife should give him some advice. Of course she must pay attention to her attitude and the approach she applies. What kind of attitude should she use? Does *Dizigui* teach us how to deal with this situation? Can *Dizigui* help us solve the spousal problems? Yes, it can, for example: "When we encourage each other to practice goodness, the virtues of both will be established." "When I see the good points of others, I should strive to follow their example." In addition, when we see only the strengths of others they would be very happy. Furthermore, "I must repay the kindness of others and let go of the injustice that others inflicted on me." When we bear in mind our spouses' efforts, the relationship will naturally be harmonious. Our teeth might even bite our own tongue sometimes, how could spousal frictions possibly not exist? Yet we should not bear the faults of our spouses in mind, simply 'let go of the injustice that they inflicted on me'. My friends, we must not belittle *Dizigui*. It can indeed help us solve all sorts of problems in life. So, 'loving words' includes giving advice to others.

### **Method Three - Beneficial Actions**

The third approach is 'beneficial actions'. People tend to be forgetful, we should always help them remember important matters. They will realize how lucky they are to have your reminder, otherwise they may have to spend much more time or even money to make it up. This is about thinking of how to give others convenience and benefits at all times and all places'. For example, your husband worked late today, you should be considerate and leave a light on for him, so he will not walk in the dark. Then leave a note on the table, "I have cooked a bowl of noodles. Thanks for working hard! Sleep well after eating." This is also a 'beneficial action', it enables him to feel that someone is always accompanying him no matter how hard he has to work.

### **Method Four - Comradeship**

The last approach is 'comradeship'. What is the shared career of husband and wife? It is their family; to regulate family well and to educate their children properly. So, both husband and wife should often communicate on their children's education. Regarding this issue, many parents in fact think that they still need to overcome it. When we want to share some proper concepts to our spouses, we must not be domineering in attitude. When you go home today, please do not say to your spouse, "From today onwards, you must listen to me on how to

educate our children." Should you do this? No! You should not. You must not say, "I have attended Teacher Tsai's classes, so you must listen to me from now on. If you do so, I will not dare to come here again because I might come across someone in the street asking me, "Are you Teacher Tsai?" I would definitely say, "No, I am not!" because I could feel the combative clouds over him. So, in order to realize 'comradeship', a common understanding and concepts should be established. Through watching the videos on *Dizigui* together, we can gradually establish the unanimity with our spouses. This is all for today. Thank you for listening.