

Confucius Teachings On Building A Happy Life (11)

- a foundation for Mahayana Buddhism practice

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Hello my friends, good evening to you all.
We have learned this phrase in the morning,
"I will make efforts to satisfy what my parents like and what they expect from me, and I will cautiously avoid what they detest."

We mentioned this morning that parents' liking will be emulated by children. When parents desire a life of great value, children will also set their aspirations in this direction. Conversely, if parents pursue a life of illusive glory, children would be influenced subconsciously as well.

Pursuing True Wealth and Nobility

We often say that life is about pursuing wealth and nobility (**social status*), but what exactly is wealth and nobility?

As parents and elders in the family, we must be very clear in our understanding of the true wealth and nobility.

What is wealth?

If we posed this question to middle school students, what would their answer be? They would say, "Wealth is having lots of money."

Why would they give such a typical answer? Who gave them the influence?

You ask them again, "What is nobility?" What would they say? "

Holding a very high official rank is nobility."

We must give children the proper guidance; having plenty of money definitely does not mean being wealthy. For example, if one was not content with what he had today, he would not be happy and satisfied no matter how much money you gave him. A truly content person will always find inner richness.

As the saying goes, "He who is content will always be happy"

That is why 'being content is the genuine wealth'.

I wonder if there are people around you who are very rich? Do they feel that they have enough money? The more money they have, the more they want to increase their wealth because once a person's desire is unfolded, it would be very difficult for him to pull back. As the saying goes, "Desires are like an abyss." Once you step into it, you will not see its bottom. So, we must not pursue a life of illusive glory but should seek the truth. Being content is genuine wealth. When we guide children in this way, they would then appreciate contentment throughout their lives and would not become the slaves of materialism, neither would they advocate illusive glory.

What is nobility?

Most children would relate it to officials who hold a very high position. In fact, what should one be most concerned about when given such power and status? When one has the opportunity to become a leader to his civilians or employees, he absolutely should not misuse his authority to oppress others or even to seek personal interests. If he acted in such a manner, what would his consequences be when he steps down from office one day? Everyone would scorn him.

So, we must seek the real meaning of nobility. The ancients said, "A well-respected person is noble." When everyone is delighted to see you and shows their inner respect and admiration for you, that is real nobility.

When we have the opportunity to become a leader in a company or in a government office, we must not think of our power but should remember our duties instead. More importantly, as the boss of an enterprise for example, we should constantly think of ways to lead our employees towards a better life. Not only should we lead our employees from the economic aspect, we should also grow with them from spiritual respect. When you have this standpoint, I believe your employees will respect you very much.

A government official is extremely important because every decision he makes has a far-reaching influence. Therefore, those in high positions should be even more rigorously vigilant with their speech and actions because their every word and action would have a significant impact.

When we can be considerate of our subordinates and people at all times, I am sure when you leave your position one day, they would still gratefully remember your virtuous kindness and would love and respect you in the same manner. They would never act like your subordinates only when you are in that position.

Truly Wealthy and Noble Examples of the Past and Present

Is it true that only when one has power and status will he gain the temperament of nobility and be respected by others? Not necessarily! Mencius said, "Those who love others will always be loved by others; those who respect others will always be respected by others."

There is a senior lady in Singapore named Teresa Hsu Chih who is already 106 years old this year. She only eats one or two meals every day; her desire for food is very low.

My friends, is her low desire for food a result of forcing herself to endure it? No! People often say that eating at least three meals is a must. Some people even have up to four or five meals a day.

Have you ever felt that eating meals is actually very time consuming? But, why do we have to eat? We have to eat a lot because we waste a lot of energy. The more afflictions we have, the more food we need to consume; when we have fewer afflictions, the amount of food we need will be less too.

From this point of view, we can infer why Teresa Hsu Chih eats so little, it is actually a natural response because she has very few afflictions. She never seeks personal interests but would always think of ways to help others; as a result, her afflictions decrease and her wisdom increases daily. Naturally, she does not need

much food to sustain her energy.

From Ms. Hsu's case, we can understand why Yan Yuan was filled with immense joy when he learned from Confucius. He led a humble and simple life, 'only eating a bowl of rice and drinking a gourd of water', which was unbearable for most people, 'yet he never intended to change the joy of this kind of life'. When a person's spirituality keeps escalating, he would let go of his material needs naturally and gradually.

In addition to eating very little, she also never bought clothes but picked them from trash bins. Since she is a Singaporean, I think the clothes that she recovered from trash bins were still in good condition; perhaps the clothes were no longer in fashion, therefore many people trashed them. She felt pity for those clothes, so she picked them up to wear.

Apart from cherishing things, there is another profound meaning behind her action of wearing those discarded clothes. She alone takes care of many elderly people, bringing them daily necessities, groceries, and clothing. Why does she wear these cheap and simple clothes?

Because those elderly that she visits are those from an underprivileged background. If she wore a very elegant cheongsam while carrying a sack of white rice to the elderly, they would surely feel very pressured and be afraid of dirtying her beautiful dress. When her attire is similar to theirs, it would strengthen their bond of cordiality.

Whenever Ms. Hsu entered those senior citizens' houses, I noticed that they jumped with joy as if seeing their own close-knit family. That is why she was conferred as 'the National Treasure' by the Singaporeans. Not only do Singaporeans respect her, people around the world also hold her in high esteem and invite her to give speeches.

So, I say that Ms. Hsu is truly a wealthy and noble person. This kind of wealth and nobility would be of great meaning and it would lead our life to be a fulfilling one. If what we like is this kind of wealth and nobility, our children would then lead their future lives in this proper direction.

Attaining Inner Peace By Understanding the Principles of Truth

I often ask parents, "What kind of life do you wish your children to have in the future?" Dear friends, what kind of life would you wish your children to have in the future? If you had never deliberated on this matter, then as a leader, to which direction are you guiding your children towards? Would anyone like to share? "Stay safe and be happy!" Good! Let's give this friend a big hand. We wish for safety and happiness, and we pray to Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva every day. However, we should seek it through proper ways in accord with principles because pancakes (*refers to good things, good luck) will not fall upon you from the sky. We wish our children to be happy, but my friends, are you happy? I have encountered many parents who said, "I only wish for my children to be happy and I also do not expect them to earn a lot of money in the future." I said, "Your wish sounds very simple, but in reality, it is rather difficult to fulfill. Because, if you are not happy, how could you guide your children to live a happy life?"

What is true happiness? Have you thought this through, and are you clear about this? "He who is content will always be happy." Great indeed! Let's give this friend a big applause! She has grasped the true meaning of happiness. Indeed! A content person would always show his gratitude when interacting with others. The more he applies such an attitude, the more his friends and relatives would be fond of him.

What else brings true happiness? "Without worries." (*Audience replies) Yes, being free from anxiety and worry is a happiness. Nevertheless, we must have a thorough comprehension of the truth of life before we can be free from worry and anxiety. As a saying goes, "Only when one obtains the principles of the Truth, can he then attain inner peace" and be free from worry and anxiety. What is the reason? The Chinese have a saying, "Your descendants would have their own destined blessings." Whatever is not within your power, you should not worry for them. I am not telling you not to care for your children. What I mean is that you must establish their foundation of virtues while they are still young, meaning before they reach adulthood. They would naturally have their own destined affinities later in life due to upholding virtues. There is no need for you to worry, otherwise both of you would be tired.

I always give this analogy: just like when you teach your son driving, you must first make sure that he has mastered his driving skills before he actually drives a car. Once he has already started driving, you must not sit next to him and keep grabbing hold of the steering wheel. What would happen if you do so? The car would swerve uncontrollably and may end up crashing. So, you must first teach your children the skills of making judgements and decisions in life such as judging people and choosing a life partner. Wait till he has grown up and chose a life partner under the lack of ability to judge people, it would cause both of you to suffer if you try to intervene in their plan at that time. Therefore, we really need to grasp the principles of worldly matters in order to be free from worry and anxiety. This is definitely a great state of mind, we should try our best to pursue it.

Growing Our Wisdom Allows Us to Grow Our Happiness

What else is true happiness? Good physical health! (*Audience replied) But, good health is something that cannot be sought forcefully; you must be able to take good care of your diet and emotions in order to keep yourself healthy. The Chinese regard the most fortunate thing in life as "five blessings in a row", one of which is 'having good health'. If one's health is compromised at old age, one may not enjoy true happiness even if one's descendants are filial and virtuous.

Anything else? "Helping others!" Let's give this friend a round of applause! Helping others brings people happiness! This is very important! When we always think of our own well-being, our life would only revolve around personal gains and losses. Helping others will bring us happiness! But can we simply use words to teach our children this principle? We must let them experience it by practicing in person. If you have opportunities to be a volunteer at a hospital, you can bring them along. When you help the patients and receive the heartfelt gratitude from the patients or even their families, your children would be there learning and would feel the grateful

mind of others as well.

There is a teacher who uses *Dizigui* to instruct his students after his learning of traditional Chinese culture. On the International Women's Day, March 8th last year, his students came up to the front and consulted with him, "Teacher, each of us want to buy two stalks of flowers for tomorrow's Women's Day." This teacher felt very puzzled because he is a male. He then asked, "Why do you need to buy two stalks of flowers?" They said, "We have agreed to present one of the flowers to every female teacher in school, and the other to our own mother." The teacher instantly took delight in their meritorious deeds and said, "Very good! I support you all!" You see, before the teacher could think about it, the students were already able to practice what they had learned: to respect teachers and be filial to parents.

On that day, these students were seen holding flowers going around the school and presenting the flowers to the female teachers. One of the boys was grinning from ear to ear when he returned to the classroom, the teacher approached him and asked, "Why are you so happy?" The student replied, "When I presented the flower to a female teacher, she beamed with a smile and thanked me." The teacher asked, "What insight have you gained at that moment?" The student said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." By letting children practice giving, it will enable them to experience true happiness. When we want children to gain happiness by helping others, we must bring them along to feel the joy of giving while they are young. This is the elaboration on 'helping others brings people happiness'.

Any more? How many happinesses have we mentioned? 'He who is content will always be happy', 'Helping others brings people happiness', as well as 'Having good health'. All these are obtained through one's effort and not by coincidence. Anything else? Free from worry and anxiety. (*Audience reply) Why do you all desire to be free from worry and anxiety? To be free from worry and anxiety requires wisdom, so we must keep improving our wisdom. More? Being able to eat, sleep, and defecate well. This is very true! Many people who are overwhelmed with afflictions or those who are seriously ill are unable to fulfill these points. We often say that being able to eat and sleep well is a blessing. It is not easy for people nowadays to have such blessings because too many things have plagued their minds. So, in order to eat and sleep well, we must first reduce our afflictions and grow our wisdom.

Mencius' Three Sources of Happiness in Life

Mencius once talked about the 'three sources of happiness in life': firstly, both parents are alive and all siblings are well; secondly, having no guilt when facing heaven and the people; thirdly, acquiring all talented people in the kingdom to educate them. Regarding the first one, we often say, "Having an elderly at home is like having a treasure in the family." This is genuinely true. Since I was a child, we have lived with my grandparents. Otherwise, it would definitely not be easy for my parents to teach us filial piety. By living together, parents could easily demonstrate how to care for their own parents at all times to their children. Being able to support and attend to our parents is the greatest field of blessing in life. As we repay parents' deep kindness, we will also feel that life is fulfilling and full of joy.

Dear friends, if you are now living with your parents, you must cherish it.

Once, a teacher told me that she often helps her father wash his hair. Upon hearing this, I was so envious of her. I also wish to help my father wash his hair, but I do not have the opportunity to do so because I am often not at home now. You should grab and cherish the opportunities when you have them. 'Siblings are well' refers to their lives and careers being very well developed, without any untoward happening, this makes us happy because siblings are the closest ones who will keep us company for the longest duration in life. When parents are alive, siblings are well, myriad things will prosper under this harmonious atmosphere, that is why it is the first happiness in life.

The second happiness in life is 'having no guilt when facing heaven and the people'. When we have made the best effort to carry out our duties and obligations every day, we would then live a fulfilling life thus eat and sleep well. If we often do shameful deeds and are afraid of letting others know, always trying to cover up in a disguised manner, such a life would absolutely not be a pleasant one.

A proverb goes, "Whatever happened in the past should be treated as dead just like yesterday has gone." Since we have not learned *Dizigui* in the past, all the past wrongdoings can be excused. From today onward, we must refrain from any shameful deed, and we must try our best to behave ourselves according to Confucius' teachings. By upholding such an attitude, I believe you will surely be able to earn more people's praise and respect. This is the second happiness in life.

The third happiness is 'acquiring all talented people in the kingdom to educate them'. Is such happiness only enjoyed by the teachers? No! Let's say, today you are so willing to help and care for others because you find true happiness in doing so. It happened that you have a new colleague joining the company. When one arrives in a new environment, one tends to feel more restless and anxious. At this moment, you lend your hand, so that he could get familiar with the new environment and his work. Further, he might be encountering some problems in his family, if you are older, you could also share with him some good concepts on family management. I am sure he would be very touched by your sincere efforts. He may tell others, "My life is going so smoothly, it is all because of the help of this good colleague or supervisor of mine." In the eyes of this friend, you are no different from a teacher. When more people around you appraise you in this way, I believe you would feel that your life is not in vain.

Through History Books in Glory, Let Our Crimson Hearts Shine

In order to 'have nothing to be ashamed of when facing heaven and man', the foremost is 'to fulfill our ethical duties in every position'. What kind of duties do we have in life? In this short-lived life, we should fulfill our obligated duties in a down-to-earth manner.

Wen Tian Xiang (*1236-1283AD, a Chinese poet and politician of the Southern Song dynasty, a popular symbol of patriotism and righteousness in China for his refusal to yield to the Yuan dynasty despite being captured and tortured.) had a very famous quote, "Since time began, to die, who can decline? Through history books in glory, let our crimson hearts shine!" Doesn't the imposing verve of these two sentences correspond with the phrase of 'having no guilt when facing heaven and the people'? My friends, you should have memorized this poem before. What impact has it had on your life?

Every sages' teaching should have been able to promote the perfection of our life; otherwise, it will merely remain a memorized theory.

Shining a Light on Oneself and Those Around Us

I had learned this poem when I was in high school, but I did not have much feeling for it back then because the teacher told us, "This poem must be memorized, it will be tested in the midterm." Death is inevitable, in this evanescent life, how should we make our lives glow with vitality? We should use our sincere heart to shine a light on history. Which history should we shine on? How come your faculty of wisdom is so strong? Yes, we must first shine on our own life history.

We have gone through decades in life, when you look back now, are you satisfied with it or not? Are you gratified or frightened? We are so grown up now, but there are so many things yet to be done. We must first be responsible to ourselves and shine on our own life history. Surely, we have to depend on ourselves to walk the path of our own life.

Whose life history can we also shine on with our sincere heart? Whose? You seem to have not illuminated yourself yet! Shine on whose? The people around us. We must follow the teaching of *The Great Learning* (*One of the Four Books in Confucianism) 'to know the proper order of handling things...'. You must not shine your light to U.S. First! We should first take good care of the people around us, shine on our family first. We say, "Filial piety is foremost among all virtues." We must make a determined effort to practice filial piety with our sincere heart, and let our filial deeds be imprinted on our parents' life-history. Your parents would proudly tell others, "It is truly worthy to have raised this son in my life." When your mother speaks these words, I am sure she is immensely joyful. So, we must illuminate our parents' life history.

Besides, we must also illuminate our children's life-history. When we use the utmost sincerity of parental love to grow with our children, to help them establish the foundation of virtues and the right perspectives of life, one day, when they enter society and compare themselves with the surrounding people, they would feel very fortunate and say, "I have these right perspectives on life, it is all due to the guidance from my good parents." When children can constantly attribute their success to our kindness of upbringing, we have also used our sincerity to write our wisdom and cordial love on their life history.

Other than parents and children, is there anyone else? Siblings (*Audience replied). Why are the wives always left behind? Siblings! Yes, the affinity between siblings is also very hard to come by. When siblings live in harmony, parents would be most comforted and joyful. I have very good relationships with my two older sisters. When I decided to quit my teaching job to promote the sages' teachings, my second sister said to me, "Do not worry about your living expenses, I will support you with a fixed amount of NT\$10,000 every month; you just persevere with your endeavor with peace of mind."

My sister's sincerity had immediately illuminated my soul. Of course, you don't have to be concerned about whether or not I accepted the money. After listening to what I said, many friends asked, "Teacher Tsai, did you accept it?" Well, it is her intention that matters most! My sister's sincerity has kept me warm throughout my

life, so she has illuminated my life history. Since my sister is so supportive, I must go to great lengths in my work. After I had been imparting the sages' teachings for a year, she was elated, even sitting in the first row on her first day in my class. She said that she was representing our family to come and listen to my lecture. Then she told my mother, "I am so proud and happy to have such a good brother." So, I have also reciprocated her kindness by illuminating her life history with my sincerity.

Next in line should be husbands and wives. Husband and wife share the same room, so they should be the closest. How do we illuminate our spouses' life history? Haven't we talked about it this afternoon? How? Always acknowledge their strengths and give them encouragement, so that they can further develop their potential. We should also wholeheartedly support them, such as giving them peace of mind at work. When your husband chitchats with his friends, he would tell them, "My success in life is all because I have married a good wife." At this time, you would have imprinted gratitude and comradeship on your husband's life history. In contrast, it would not be good if your husband were to say, "I became so unlucky all because of having married this wife." So, we have to be clear of our position and role; we must be able to illuminate the hearts and lives of everyone with our sincerity.

A Teacher's Kind Action Brings Out a Child's Potential

Who else's life history should we illuminate? As the adage goes, "Even being my teacher for only one day, one will be esteemed as my father for life." We must let our teachers truly feel that it is worthwhile to teach students like us. What is most important? To practice conscientiously based on the teachings. In my primary school days, there was a teacher who cared for me very much. Actually, some people around us have a very deep affinity with us, so long as we do our best, we will have very far-reaching influence on their lives.

This teacher happened to be my form teacher ([*homeroom teacher](#)) when I entered fifth grade. She asked my mother, "How should I guide your son?" My mother said, "He really shows no interest in his studies." My friends, can you tell that I used to have no interest in studying? My mother continued, "But he is very sensitive about his reputation." The teacher then said, "I know what to do with him then." On the first day of the new school term, all twelve teachers stood in front of students, and all the fourth-grade students, who were moving to the fifth grade, were standing in the middle of the playground. The teacher started to announce the class placement of all the students one by one and I was placed in the seventh class.

Our form teacher led us into the classroom then said, "Tsai Lixu, bring two classmates to the office and get the brooms." Primary students are in high spirits when being asked by the teachers to help out; so we quickly went to get the brooms. The teacher said again, "Tsai Lixu, go and get the textbooks with five classmates." So, we went to bring the books back. When all the necessary matters had been done, and everyone took their seats. The teacher said, "Let's choose the class monitor now. I nominate Tsai Lixu, you can propose other names." This is real democracy, isn't it? Do you know what was the outcome? As everyone did not know each other well. They only heard my name, so I became the monitor for the first time in primary school. In the eyes of primary students, a monitor is someone who excels in both moral character and studies. My teacher had effortlessly raised my academic

results. I never ranked below the top three from then on.

Once My Teacher, Forever My Teacher

This teacher was especially kind to me, I feel deeply grateful for her preferential treatment and understanding of me. Later, I was shortlisted to enter the teachers' training college and began my teaching profession. I called and invited her for lunch at a vegetarian restaurant in Kaohsiung, Taiwan. After sitting down, we had a great time chatting because I am inheriting her teaching career. She tirelessly shared with me many of her teaching experiences. Seeing us chatting so happily, a waiter came over during our conversation and asked, "May I know who she is?" I told him that she was my former teacher. Hearing this, he was also very touched.

Because I have been in touch with the sages' classics those few years, I then presented my teacher with a few books. After taking the books, she said, "Should I address you as 'Senior' from now on?" I responded right away, "Even being my teacher for only one day, one will be esteemed as my father for life." Once my teacher, forever my teacher. After being in this profession for two years, I quit my job and went to China to propagate traditional Chinese culture. I called my teacher again and reported to her about my work in the past one year. My teacher sounded very happy on the phone and expressed her delight and pride to have a student like me. At that moment, I came to realize that there are two types of people who would never be jealous of our success: our parents and our teachers. So, we must devote our lives to contribute to society so that our parents and teachers would feel honored because of us.

Master Chin Kung: A Sincere Teacher Worth Emulating

Next, we are all descendants of Emperors Yan and Huang, we must undertake the responsibility to inherit and pass down the sages' teachings. We must not forsake the thousand-years teachings left by our forefathers. We've got to inherit the teachings and pass them on to the next generations. The several-thousand-year-old culture should not end in the hands of our generation, or else the sin would be hard to calculate. Holding on to such an attitude from the beginning, at the current situation of moral decay having worsened, we hoped to be able to promote traditional Chinese culture and the sages' teachings quickly.

At that time, my father told me that teaching traditional culture is a rather difficult task; not many people succeed in accomplishing it. I told my father, "If there were 10,000 people doing it, and only two of them succeeded, should we do it?" Since two people have succeeded in doing it, it shows that there is a chance of success, right? We need not ask why over 9,000 people failed; we would rather find ways to achieve success than giving excuses for failure. A person who wanted to flinch would find a hundred or even a thousand reasons to do so, and there is no end to it. But what we should find out is how these two people succeeded!

If these two people succeeded because they were from very wealthy families, or because their parents were high ranking officials with great power, then I would not pursue this job because I really did not meet these criteria. If they had neither money nor power but had succeeded, we should find out how they made it and

seriously learn from them. I then quoted my teacher, Professor Shi Chin Kung (*All monks and nuns in China receive a last name of 'Shi', referring to entering the family of Shakyamuni Buddha. Master Chin Kung was awarded many honorary PhDs by universities around the world. So, he is often addressed as Professor Shi Chin Kung), as an example. I said that my teacher had no money and all his relatives were not staying together with him; there was a complete lack of support. But he has successfully carried forward the sages' teachings and was even able to propagate the teachings around the world.

What did he rely on?

My friends, many things are actually very simple and straightforward; it all comes from an utterly sincere heart. Because my teacher has a sincere and respectful heart, when he wrote letters to many famous university professors, every one of them could sense his enthusiasm in learning. And they would reply to his letters, telling him that they would accept him as a student. He had three good teachers in his life; owing to his keen learning attitude, the teachers treated him with exceptionally good care.

Because of sincerity, he has successfully acquired both wisdom and knowledge. Because of his sense of mission, he wishes that more people could benefit from the virtuous teachings since he has benefited from them. Due to his sincere intention, many people were inspired to give him support and care. As a matter of fact, my teacher has truly demonstrated to us the sages' teachings by his living example.

Without Sincerity, Nothing Would Work

Lao Zi* said in *Dao De Jing*, (*An ancient Chinese philosopher, the reputed author of the *Dao De Jing*, the founder of philosophical Daoism.) "The law of Heaven is impartial, it is always on the side of virtuous people." Heaven surely would not say, "This person is closer to me, so I should love him more." Heaven's reward will follow virtuous people. As the saying goes, "Virtuous deeds will reap good results." *The Doctrine of the Mean* (*One of the *Four Books in Confucianism*) also states, "Sincerity should be exercised from the start to the end on everything." What really determines the success or failure of a matter? It all lies in one word, 'sincerity'. "Sincerity should be exercised from the start to the end on everything; without sincerity, nothing would work." These two phrases are very insightful! Works done out of sincerity would not be reduced in their influential nature because of time and space differences.

Fan Zhong Yan (*A prominent scholar and politician in the Song dynasty, known for his famous saying: Be the first to worry about world affairs and the last to enjoy happiness) was very sincere, his attitude towards life has been influencing scholars for hundreds of years. Likewise, my teacher has been devoting his life to pass on the sages' teachings with utmost sincerity, I am sure his sincerity would remain in the heart of all his students. A person with utmost sincerity is similar to deities; such sincerity can invoke blessings and you can prove this in your present life.

"Without sincerity, nothing would work." It means that works done out of insincerity are bound to fail in the future. For example, if you treated your children with insincerity, your family would definitely fail one day. If you were not sincere to your employees, even though you still made some money now, your business would collapse sooner or later. If you observe carefully, only by treating family members and employees with sincerity would one's family and career long prevail. Otherwise,

as a saying goes, "One's wealth would surely not last beyond three generations." Now this saying has to be changed. Have you observed this? Can one's wealth still last for three generations? People have lesser and lesser sense to act as a good person nowadays thus spoil too much of their good fortune. Today, the wealth for most people cannot last even one generation.

Passing on Sages' Wisdom Will Give Peace to Future Generations

We now understand that sincerity can get things done well and we all harbor a heart of sincerity, during this critical era we must inherit and pass on sages' wisdom, and open up a gateway to peace for future generations. Dear friends, did you hear what I just said? You may think it is so far off or your shoulders feel so heavy! In fact, we shall have this understanding and attitude: how could it be possible to have everything go as I wish, I can only require myself to leave no guilt in my heart. As parents now, if we use the sages' teachings to educate our children and harmonize our families, we are already inheriting and passing on traditional Chinese culture. We should also apply the teachings when interacting with our colleagues. When our colleagues feel very happy to be with us, we can then tell them, "I gained my life attitude by learning *The Analects* and *Dizigui*." As long as we do whatever is within our condition and power, the merits will have been completed.

My friends, now let us recite the quote of Wen Tian Xiang once more and see whether we have a different insight. Ready, set, go! "Since time began, to die who can decline? Through history books in glory, let our crimson hearts shine!" You have just recited with majestic momentum! Great! When we make sure that our life is developed towards such values, then whatever we do will make our children greatly admire us. Having you as their role model, I am sure your children's life would also go in the right direction.

When the direction is correct, we can then discuss these small matters one by one. For example, your children are now in primary school, how do you explain this phrase to them, "I will make efforts to fulfill what my parents like and what they expect from me"? How do we explain it? As teachers, we would guide children, "For example, parents hope we have good health, they also hope we will excel in studies" As children, we must go to great lengths to fulfill these expectations." We should practice the teaching of 'making efforts to fulfill what my parents like and what they expect from me'.

Mulberries for Mother

Filial children in ancient times would always try to satisfy their parents' needs. During the Han dynasty, there was a filial son named Tsai Shun. It happens that we share the same surname. Whenever I read stories about people who have the same surname as me, I take pride in them because they are my ancestors. Tsai Shun lived in a turbulent era. His mother liked to eat mulberries. So, he went to pick mulberries with two baskets. Unfortunately, he encountered some bandits on the way home after collecting the berries.

The bandits felt strange and thought why would he pick berries with two baskets and divide them into two groups? They were very curious and asked, "Why

on earth are you taking two baskets to pick mulberries? My friends, why did he carry two baskets? Good! You all know Tsai Shun well! Tsai Shun's mother loved to eat the sweet mulberries, so, he put the darker, more purplish, and ripened berries into one basket, and put the more reddish, not so ripened berries into the other basket. You see, Tsai Shun was really able to practice 'making efforts to fulfill what my parents like and what they expect from me'.

The bandits were very moved after listening to Tsai Shun's explanation. I would ask my students, "Would the bandits be moved?" "They will? But bandits kill people and set fires, how could they be moved? Killing people and setting fires are bad habits that they have developed, but no matter how wicked they are, they still have a good nature in their inner heart. This is because People originally have an inherent good nature', they are just being dominated by bad habits and desires now.

So, when our behavior is virtuous, it can awaken their inherent good nature. My children, if you encountered a wicked person, should you hit or scold him? No! We must learn from Tsai Shun, using our virtuous conduct to transform him. Perhaps, after Tsai Shun finished saying that he wanted to take the mulberries home for his mother, some of the bandits might suddenly think of their own mothers and weep disconsolately." We will continue with Tsai Shun's story in the following lesson. Thank you all for listening.