

Confucius Teachings on Building a Happy Life (13)

- a foundation for Mahayana Buddhism practice

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Say No to the Four Bad Habits

Hello my friends, good morning to you all!

Yesterday we spoke about 'I will make efforts to satisfy what my parents like and what they expect from me, and I will cautiously avoid what they detest.' Yesterday we also mentioned that people must guard against developing many bad habits. We talked about the problems of gambling and lust. And the ancient text lists four bad habits which must not be allowed to grow, they are arrogance, extravagance, lust, and idleness. For the idleness, most importantly parents must help children develop an attitude of diligence and the habit of doing chores from a young age.

Yesterday we also discussed the benefits of doing chores. Firstly, by doing chores, children will know gratitude. Secondly, they will develop the attitude of diligence and gradually accumulate the ability of doing things. The ability to do things should definitely not only be learned after they have grown up, it can be trained at home from childhood.

Thirdly, it enables them to train their willpower. And lastly, their interpersonal relationships will be very good.

Good Habits Will Benefit Interpersonal Relationships

During my teaching career, I taught Natural Science in school. After each class, there would be a lot of equipment to be packed. A few students would naturally stay to help clean up without my asking. My friends, how would you feel when you see such helpful students? Happiness would arise from your heart! And you would definitely give them extra care and support.

So, children who are diligent would easily receive elder's guidance, care, and love. As for interacting with peers, their diligence will also directly impact their interrelationship with their peers. For example, if a child goes to study in a university and is staying in the same dorm with several schoolmates, when he first enters the dorm and sees someone cleaning the living room, he then lends a helping hand immediately; what kind of impression would he have on his roommates? An attitude of being helpful and being considerate towards others! Even though they have just met, he has already made a very good impression on his roommates. It will be very easy for him to integrate into the group.

When entering a new environment, what will happen if a child was not used to helping out at home? For example, he continues to watch TV while others are cleaning the dorm; the others will not have a good impression of him. To make things worse, he would not understand

others' toil and would often misplace stuff or tend to be forgetful. As a result, it will cause others not to be able to find shared items when they need them. At these times, their credibility and impression on the group would get worse and worse; when others' complaints gradually accumulate, they will eventually give vent to their repressed feelings.

It is stated in the chapter of Being Cautious in *Dizigui*,

I will always put my hat and clothes in the proper place instead of carelessly throwing them all over and getting them dirty.

All these good living habits would influence children's social life in the future. Without good habits, not only will they not be helping others, but they will also bring them trouble. So, the habits of both diligence and physical labor will directly affect children's interpersonal relationships.

An Exceptional Student With Exceptionally Poor Living Habits

Why are there many college students being expelled from school? What is the reason? Because of their extremely poor ability to take care of their own daily life, their teachers and classmates were unwilling to interact and live with them.

In Shenzhen, there was a college student who was expelled by his school. Later, a newspaper published a comic which depicted a student wearing a bachelor cap while being fed by his mother. The newspaper commented thus: an exceptional student with exceptionally poor living habits. My friends, do not think this is an exaggeration! Indeed, he was still fed by his mother while he was in the college. Although his mother and he were deadly foes, he would not eat if his mother did not feed him. Such a grown-up still let his parents worry so much for him!

Good Habits Are Essential, Never Spoil Children

But then again, why did this child have such an attitude? As a saying goes, "Had one known that this would happen, how could he possibly act this way from the beginning?" In the beginning when he was around two to three years old, how long did it take the mother to feed him each time? The whole family might have to run around the whole house. It might take one to two hours to feed him; it was indeed a back-breaking task. As we say,

Without norms and standards, it would be impossible to achieve one's virtues.

This implies that parents must help children develop good habits and never ever spoil them. Once he is grown up and has developed his bad habits, you won't be able to turn him around anymore.

During the semester, for example, when this student needed to talk to his teacher, he would go to the teacher's house without considering the time. Sometimes, he would ring the teacher's doorbell around noon time while the teacher was taking a nap. After the teacher let him in, he would ask to borrow the computer. He would eat while working and let the crumbs drop all over, but he never bother to clean it up. The teacher was very afraid of him, so were his classmates.

If we wish our children's life to be smooth sailing in the future, we must help them develop good habits. Otherwise, these bad habits would unknowingly become great obstacles in their lives. When we know something is good, we must go to great lengths to make it a habit; whatever is not good, we must make every effort to rectify it.

Of course, we must start from ourselves and lead our children by example. We can also use this phrase 'what my parents like and what they expect from me' for our extended family.

Learning to Refuse Others to Create More Time for Family

We should also try our best to fulfill the wishes of family members and relatives as long as it is within our capability. For example, our wife and children must have hoped that we would spend more time with them. A saying goes,

All the success in the world cannot make up for the failure of a family.

Many people say, "I am so busy at work now, how would I have time to accompany my children?" They would quote the phrase, "One would lose his freedom once he engages in his pursuits." Were these words reasonable? This is called 'looking for excuses'. As long as there is a will, there is a way! Of course, there are many situations that will happen in our interpersonal relations; so we must learn one skill, it is called

the ability to refuse.

Otherwise our time would all be spent on entertaining others or on many matters which are not really related to our families and lives.

Trump Card One: Parents

Is it easy to learn 'to refuse'? My friends, do you think it is easy to reject others?

No, it is not easy!

To refuse others, we can take out 'two powerful weapons'. Most friends would not put you in a difficult situation once you took them out.

The first weapon is our parents.

For example, when your friends ask you to go out for drinks and fun, but you really do not want to go, because you would have to stay up till one or two o'clock past midnight. In addition, what kind of conversation would you engage in? Frivolous conversations and showing off knowledge. You really do not wish to go. At this time, you can use your parents as an excuse. You can tell them, "I have already promised my mother that I will go back to accompany her tonight. I have given my promise one or two weeks ago, I must go home now." Upon hearing your explanation, what would most friends do? They surely would not force you to join them. Perhaps, after you said this, they might stop and think, "I have not visited my parents for quite a while as well." Instead, your refusal has awakened his filial mind.

This is the first powerful weapon.

Trump Card Two: Wife and Children

The second weapon is your wife and children.

When you do not want to go for unnecessary entertainment, you can tell them, "Tonight, I want to tell two moral stories to my children. I have set the time because I am now practicing *Dizigui* with them, making it our family rules. It is stated in *Dizigui* that 'when I speak, credibility is foremost'. My children are still little, I would not want them to lose trust in me, so I must go home." When you take out these two trump cards, basically your friends would not force you.

If these two reasons were still not effective, and they still insisted on dragging you along, what should you do? Life has its gains and losses, if they are this kind of friends, you should make a wise choice: to respect but stay away from them.

Only then can we practice 'I will make efforts to satisfy what my parents like and what they expect from me' when we have more time.

Visit Parents Often, But Don't Give Them Burden

We have also learned earlier that we should greet our parents two times a day. Nowadays, it means we should visit our parents often if we don't live with them. They would be very happy if we do so.

Some young people would also make use of their weekends to visit their parents, but, how does it go when they visit their parents? They would bring their children along. As soon as they entered the house, they would sit on the sofa and start reading the newspaper. While the young couple is sitting on the sofa, the children start playing and running around, and the grandparents are busy in the kitchen cooking. From early morning, the grandparents went shopping then rushed home to cook. Finally all dishes are cooked, the young couple put down the newspapers and say, "Ah, time to eat?" After enjoying the meal, they do not offer to help clean up. They would simply say, "Mom, we have to go now." Making themselves scarce, they then take their children home.

The grandparents would then sit on the sofa, feeling exhausted, sigh deeply and think, "Our life would probably be more relaxed and peaceful if they do not come home!"

We must understand that the purpose of visiting parents is to fulfill our filial duties, so we must be considerate of them. We should first give a call to our parents, telling them that we have gone shopping. At the parent's home, we should take the initiative to cook so as to reduce the burden on our parents. Only then we will be able to fulfill our filial duties.

Take Care of Your Health so Parents Don't Worry

Let's look at the next phrase,

When my body is injured, my parents will be worried;
if my virtues are compromised, my parents will feel ashamed.

When our health is poor and our body is hurt, parents would be very worried.

We have mentioned yesterday that illness enters through the mouth. We must be very careful with our eating by practicing a healthy diet so that our parents would not have to worry about us. Other than eating, we must also take care of our bodies meticulously in daily life. When the temperature changes greatly during spring and autumn, we must remember to add or remove clothes.

I remember when I was teaching in school, even though a cold wave had started, what clothes were many students still wearing? They were wearing short sleeve shirts to show off their muscles. I would tell the student, "Put your jacket on! If you catch a cold, who will have to take care of you?" He thought about it and said, "My parents." I said, "Right! If you could take care of yourself when you get sick, I would have nothing to say! But, when you get sick, you will make your family members suffer. So, you should have the responsibility of not letting yourself fall sick. When you are sick, your mother has to take leave in order to take you to the doctor then bring you home before going back to work. Not only that, will she be at ease when she is at work? No, she won't. Therefore, we must always be mindful of the outside temperature so that we won't catch a cold.

For instance, when we are exercising or hiking, we would be drenched with sweat; we must also remember to bring our towel and dry clothes when we go for exercise. When we are able to take care of ourselves in these details, our parents will feel more and more at ease with us.

How to Give Parents Peace of Mind and Earn Freedom for Ourselves

Many youngsters would say, "Why do my parents watch over me so much?"

I would respond back, "Why do your parents have to watch over you so much? It must have been that much of your behavior makes them unable to have peace of mind."

If you can really take good care of yourself and your parents are at ease with you, you can then be truly free. If you are unable to take care of yourself in a lot of matters, and your parents do not remind you instead, they have failed to fulfill their parental responsibility!

You must understand your parents' good intention and be more considerate, you can then obtain true freedom and your parents will also have peace of mind. We must lead a disciplined life, do not often stay up late! How many days do you need to restore your lost energy after staying up for one day? It may take several days! We should always pay attention to our diet and living habits so that our body would be well taken care of.

There was a student who had caught a cold. He wrote an entry in his diary, saying, "I have caught a cold. I feel miserable not because of this hard-to-endure sickness but because being unwell is being unfilial."

You see children who have studied *Dizigui* would be different from other children in terms of their abilities in making observations and introspections. The first chapter of *The Classic of Filial Piety*, also gives us an important teaching: one's practice of filial piety must begin from taking good care of one's own body.

"My entire body, even every 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."

If My Virtues Are Compromised, My Parents Will Feel Ashamed

Let's look at the next phrase,

"If my virtues are compromised, my parents will feel ashamed."

When our virtues are compromised, we will bring shame to our parents, to our family members, and even to our country and race.

During the end of the Han dynasty, there was a minister named Dong Zhou. After he gained his power, he exploited it to make chaos. Many people rose up to attack him. Dong Zhou had a very bad ending; his entire family was executed. His mother, over ninety years old, also was killed on the execution ground. So, as children, when our behavior causes such great pain and suffering to our parents, we really have not been good children.

Even though there is no such punishment as 'executing the entire nine clans' now, if something went wrong in our career, such as causing the company to go bankrupt, we might incur troubles to our parents. Parents have endured much hardships for most of their lives, and at that time they might not even be able to save for their retirement fund. Even worse, they might have to appear in court in their senior years. It would be a desolate ending then.

So, as children, we must live a life of sincerity, trustworthiness, and steadiness. We must never be overly ambitious, causing trouble for ourselves and for our parents. This is about 'if my virtues are compromised, my parents will feel ashamed'.

Commemorate My Name so As to Bring Glory to My Parents

On the contrary, if we can keep improving our virtues, using them to benefit society and our nation, we would fulfill this teaching from *The Classic 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!

Is it true that we can only bring glory to our parents only after they pass away?

No! If we are able to contribute to society from a young age, our parents will take pride in us and they will be very comforted for the rest of their lives. Mencius has a very important teaching which states,

"Of all services, which is the greatest? The service to parents is the greatest."

Serving one's parents is the most important matter in life.

"Of all guarding, which is the greatest?

The guarding of one's body and reputation is the greatest."

We must guard our physical body as well as our reputation; never doing things that violate the morals and the law, so as to cause embarrassment to our parents. When our deeds are immoral, our parents will be ashamed, our family members will also feel ashamed, even our next generation may also be ashamed.

The internet is now so advanced, the interaction among people has become very frequent. If we have no judgment and are irrational, we are very likely to commit deeds that we

would regret for our entire lives. So it is very important to guard our physical body and our reputation.

Setting Aspirations When Young Sets One on the Right Track

In today's society, the 'one night stand' has become very common; this will not only bring oneself shame but will make one's children hang their heads. So, we must be prudent with our speech and deeds and never invite humiliation to ourselves.

Actually, why do people commit such wrongdoings?

For men, it could be overindulgence in sensual pleasures. This is all because they have not set an aspiration since young. Their life is only centered around enjoyment to squander their time. So, by letting children set their aspiration, they would then not be affected by these social corruptions.

Why do women also commit such wrongdoings? For many of them, it is due to their sense of vanity. Once you are wild about vanity, you will be fond of sweet talk. As many men with ill intentions use enticing speech, these women would then very likely take the wrong steps.

We must introspect ourselves so as to avoid such wrongdoings. We must also teach children not to have a sense of vanity from young but lead them to set aspirations instead.

When they improve their morality everyday and lead a fulfilling life, they will not commit such wrongdoings that cause a thousand-year regret. This is about

if my virtues are compromised, my parents will feel ashamed.

When Parents Do Not Love Me, My Filial Piety Is Then Sacred

When my parents love me, it is not difficult to be filial;
when parents do not love me, my filial piety is then sacred.

When we get along well with our parents, we do our best to attend to their needs. However, parents may sometimes have a bad temper, we must tolerate and forgive them at this time, because everyone's emotions will have ups and downs.

When interacting with people, we must remember one principle:

whether others are right or wrong, we must request ourselves to do right.

If today our parents treat us with bad emotions, and we also treat them back with the same attitude; then our parents are wrong, we are also wrong indeed. If we are wrong, do we still have the right to criticize others' wrongs? No, we no longer have the right!

Whether it is our parents, close relatives, or friends, even if they treated us with the wrong attitude, we should still use the right attitude to interact with them. Otherwise, we have lowered ourselves to their level and have no right to criticize their wrongdoings at all. This is a rational attitude: whether others are right or wrong, I must first do right.

Owing to such a life attitude, many Chinese sages were able to maintain their utterly sincere filiality under their parents' unreasonable and hateful treatment. Moreover, they were

able to transform their family's atmosphere because of their sincere filiality, thereby bringing harmony and happiness to the family.

Utmost Sincerity Can Move a Heart of Stone

During the Zhou dynasty, there was a filial child named Min Ziqian. His mother died quite early and his father remarried. His stepmother treated him badly because she gave birth to two sons later. In the winter she would make warm coats made with cotton for her own two sons but used reed flowers to make clothes for Min Ziquan. The coat made from reed flowers looked very big and fluffy, but could not keep him warm.

One day, his father asked him to drive the horse carriage. With the winter wind gust blowing, Min Ziqian trembled as he maneuvered the carriage. Seeing Min Ziqian trembling despite wearing a thick coat, his father thought his behavior might harm his step-mother's reputation. People might think that his step-mother was mistreating him. His father was very angry and took a riding crop to whip Min Ziqian. As a result, his coat was torn open and reed flowers flew out. His father was very angry and thought,

"How could the step-mother abuse my son?"

Furiously, his father wanted to divorce her when they got home.

Under that urgent situation, Min Ziqian immediately knelt down and pleaded with his father, "Dad...Please do not let mother go! Because, with a mother around, only one child will suffer from chill; yet a mother's absence will leave three children with no one to depend on."

He let his father understand if the mother stayed, he would be the only one suffering from the winter chill, yet he and two younger brothers would all endure cold and hunger if the mother left. Upon hearing Min Ziqian's sincere plea, his father was deeply moved and his anger diminished. His stepmother felt very much ashamed. Such a young child could be so considerate of her and her two sons, but an adult like her was so mean to a little child.

Min Ziqian's filial piety and virtuous deeds had transformed his stepmother, and his family lived happily and harmoniously ever after.

My friends, had Min Ziqian not used his forgiveness, inclusiveness, and utmost sincere filiality to treat his stepmother, what would have happened to the family later? The family would have disintegrated. So, when encountering matters, we must never be emotional and act rashly; if we were to repay a grudge with a grudge, the result would surely be undesirable.

We must believe that 'utmost sincerity can move a heart of stone'.

Only by using an utterly sincere and filial heart can we stage one good show after another in life.

There was another filial child named Wang Xiang. There is a very famous story of his called, Wang Xiang Split the Ice.

When the weather was biting cold, his stepmother asked him to catch fish for her; catching fish for her to eat. Was there any fish to catch in a land full of ice and snow? Was there any? No! There was not! What would have happened if Wang Xiang had refused to go? He might have been beaten or his stepmother might not even let him enter the house.

When being treated in such a manner, he did not complain at all but went on heading to the icy ground where he wept alone. Because of his utmost sincerity, heaven and the Earth were moved. The earth split open and two fishes jumped out from the crack. He then took the fish home to serve his stepmother.

Of course, his stepmother's unreasonable request was definitely not just this one. His stepmother also made things difficult for Wang Xiang on many occasions. But Wang Xiang did not regress his practice of being filial because of that.

Once, it looked like it was about to rain, his stepmother told him, "It is windy and going to rain outside now, if the fruits drop from the trees, I will punish you." Wang Xiang ran out, hugged the fruit trees in tears, and prayed that the fruit would not drop. His sincerity had also moved the trees!

Scientists have proved that plants and minerals would respond to people's minds. As a result, only a few fruits dropped.

Brothers Awaken Their Mother's Innate Nature and Bring Abundant Fortune

Many dangerous predicaments had turned safe because of Wang Xiang's filial mind.

My friends, is it easy to move and transform a person? Not easy!

We must have great patience.

Wang Xiang's filial endurance for his stepmother did not end at his childhood. Even after he grew up and got married, his stepmother not only mistreated him but also his wife. However, Wang Xiang's virtues had moved his brother, Wang Lan. Wang Lan was his half-brother, who had great respect for him because of his virtuous deeds. Every time his stepmother abused him and his wife, Wang Lan would bring his wife along to help Wang Xiang.

Later, Wang Xiang's virtues got better and better, his reputation thus spread far. His stepmother became jealous and unhappy. Unexpectedly, she took a poisonous wine and gave it to Wang Xiang to drink. Wang Lan knew about his mother's plan beforehand. At the urgent moment, he snatched the glass of wine from Wang Xiang and wanted to drink it for his brother.

My friends, what had Wang Lan used to dissuade his mother?

He was using death to dissuade his mother.

His mother quickly grabbed the wine and tipped it over on the spot. She felt very ashamed because her son was willing to sacrifice his own life to protect his brother, yet, she did not know when to stop? Wang Lan's act had awakened his mother's innate nature, and both brothers' utmost sincerity had transformed the family atmosphere.

There happened to be a minister, Lu Qian who had a precious sword. He presented the sword to Wang Xiang, saying that those who owned it would be able to shelter their descendants, thereby ensuring their success.

When Wang Xiang received this sword, what was his first thought?

Instead of keeping it, he immediately gave it to his half-brother, wishing his brother to have prosperous descendants in the future.

Indeed, the two brothers were so virtuous, their posterity would surely receive excellent moral education. *The Book of Changes (*I Ching)* states,

"A family that accumulates goodness will surely be blessed with abundant fortune."

Both brothers' posterity had been dukes and high-ranking officials for nine consecutive generations, and they had contributed their service to society and country. So, we must use our utmost sincerity to transform our family's imperfections.

This is in regard to 'when parents do not love me, my filial piety is then sacred'.

When My Parents Do Wrong, I Will Urge Them to Change

We will continue with the next phrase. Let's read it together,

When my parents do wrong, I will urge them to change.
I will make my expression pleasant and soften my voice.
If they do not accept my advice,
I will wait until they are in a happier mood to dissuade them again;
I will help them understand by crying,
and I will not hold a grudge against them if they end up whipping me.

This is in regard to the situations when parents have faults, we have the responsibility to persuade them; we can also extend its meaning to include dissuading all relatives and friends at the time when they have faults.

This is 'when my parents do wrong, I will urge them to change. I will make my expression pleasant and soften my voice. If they do not accept my advice, I will wait until they are in a happier mood to try to dissuade them again; I will help them to understand by crying, and I will not hold a grudge if they end up whipping me.'

This phrase is actually very incisive; not only does it tell us that it is our duty to give advice to our close ones, it even points out to us the method, attitude, and timing of exhorting.

Exhorting Others Takes Real Skill

Let's take a look! When exhorting others, we should
firstly pay attention to our intention,
secondly timing,
thirdly attitude and method,
and the fourth, we also have to be very patient.

It is indeed not easy to exhort someone, it requires good cultivation.

Have you ever encountered someone who immediately rectified his faults after your exhortation? Is there really this kind of person? If there is, you must introduce him to me because he could be a reincarnation of Yan Yuan ([*The most praised student by Confucius for his great virtue](#)).

What had Yan Yuan accomplished?

Never made the same mistake twice!

If there is still such a person now, you must urge him to come out and promote Chinese culture. Generally speaking, many adults' behavior was not formed in one or two days. As the adage goes,

"Three feet of ice was not formed by one day's chill."

Since it was frozen for so long, you must patiently use your fire to heat it up before it can melt away.

First Observe Our Intention Before We Exhort Others

So, we must first observe our intention before we exhort our relatives or friends, ensuring that our every thought is for their best interests. It must not be a form of controlling: you must listen to me, it is not okay if you don't.

If we use a controlling or domineering attitude, we might see the opposite result. We had experienced some incidents whereby people got into a quarrel when exhorting others or even made another party fly into a rage out of humiliation. In such cases, we have lost our initial purpose of exhorting others.

So, we must always remember our original intention of hoping the other party would change for the better. When our intention is firm, we would naturally adjust and rectify our attitude and method.

When I was teaching in school, many of the students liked to come to me and tell on their classmates. I would ask them,

"When you tattle on your classmates, what is your intention?

Are you gloating over others' misfortune?

Or do you really want your classmate to change for the better?"

By asking these questions, it would enable the student to reflect on his intention. I would then tell the student,

"If you really want your classmate to turn over a new leaf, you can advise him directly instead of letting a teacher do it."

Of course, the premise is to establish students' good attitudes in dealing with interpersonal relationships and tackling matters. For example, everyone in class has learned *Dizigui*. There is a phrase in this book which states,

If I am uneasy about compliments yet appreciative of criticism, upright and virtuous people will gradually come close to me.

Such a person will feel fearful and uneasy when hearing others' compliments and are grateful when others point out his shortcomings. When the whole class has such an attitude, they will appreciate and help each other to build up their moral character. We would see one student bowing to another and saying, "Thank you for pointing out my shortcomings."

When children know how to exhort others and also appreciate others' exhortation, such an attitude would be of tremendous help to their lives.

So, when exhorting others, we must first pay attention to our intention.

Praise Others' Goodness in Public, Exhort Others' Faults in Private

Second is the right timing. When is the proper timing to better exhort others?

As an adage goes,

"We should praise others' goodness in public yet exhort others' faults in private."

When praising others' virtues and good deeds, we can do it in public; because it can enable other people to practice 'when I see the good points of others, I should strive to follow their example'. When you acknowledge one's good deeds, he will also be encouraged to work even harder.

But when dissuading others from doing faults, we must do it in private, in the absence of other people. Why? Why must we do it when there are no other people around?

What is the most important to an adult? Our face (*referring to reputation)!

Isn't 'face' expensive? Is it? How much is a half kilogram for 'face'?

Nevertheless, in order for a person to succeed in acquiring virtues and wisdom, there is one thing which they must sell out. They must sell out their 'face'. Later, if any of you wants to sell yours, I will buy it from you.

But in interpersonal relations, we must take care of others' 'face'. That is why we must dissuade others from doing misdeeds in private.

When you act in such a manner, the other party will also feel that you are very considerate of him. If you were to speak of his faults in public, conflict and debate might occur on the spot. So, exhorting others' faults in private, this is catching the timing correctly.

Wait For the Right Timing Before Exhorting Others

It is stated in *The Analects*, "In failing to exhort someone who is open to advice..." When the timing is right for you to exhort someone, yet you do not do so, you have failed to fulfill your duty. The complete quote is,

"In failing to exhort someone who is open to advice, we have failed in our duty."

We have failed in our duty, failed in our duty of being a child or being a friend...etc.

"Speaking to someone who is not open to what you have to say..."

When the timing was still not right, but you were too hasty and gave him an inappropriate

exhortation, this is 'a slip of the tongue'. You would probably give a wrong remark and turn your good intention into a bad deed. So, among the five ethical relationships (*The relationships of superior-subordinate, parent-children, husband-wife, among siblings, and among friends), we must fulfill this duty on each of them.

Parents and children should give advice to each other, superiors and subordinates should also give advice to each other. As long as you accepted the job from a company, you then have the responsibility to assist the company and your leaders. So, superiors and subordinates should also give advice to each other. What about a husband and wife? Of course they have to! To assist the other spouse and educate children is the duty of both spouses. Furthermore, siblings should give advice to each other as well. Lastly, friends should do the same. These are all the natural duties of being a human.

We must elevate our wisdom of exhorting others, we can then help our relatives and friends lead a better life through our words of wisdom. The text of *Dizigui* states,

"If they do not accept my advice,

I will wait until they are in a happier mood to exhort them again."

This word 'happier' is very insightful; when others refuse my advice, when should I exhort them again? When? Yes, when they are in a happier mood. We must closely observe their speech and their facial expression. What kind of attitude and method should we use?

I will make my expression pleasant and soften my voice.

This is the attitude. We must keep ourselves calm because our emotion will affect them directly. When we do not get emotional, he will also not get emotional. So, we must firstly 'make

my expression pleasant and soften my voice', and then catch the right timing to give them advice. Next, 'I will wait until they are in a happier mood to exhort them again'; what does this 'again' mean? Correct! Again and again. It implies that we must be very patient.

Where does this patience come from?

Yes, patience arises from the heart of filial piety, fraternal love, and loyalty.

We will eventually accomplish our goal through this mentality.

Establish Trust Before Exhorting Others, When Unsuccessful, It is Our Fault Only

If today, we failed to persuade others successfully, we must understand that the problem lies in us, not in them. When we can always introspect ourselves, our wisdom of exhorting others will keep growing, others will naturally feel our true sincerity. We can definitely transform them. So, we must hold on to one attitude: if others did not accept my exhortation, it is because my cultivation and virtues are still lacking, so their transformation has not yet occurred.

There is also one preliminary work when it comes to exhorting others that we need to consider. Confucius said in *The Analects*,

A virtuous man would first establish the trust of others before he would exhort them.

A virtuous man has a precondition before he exhorts others; only when he has earned the trust of others would he give his exhortation.

"Without trust, the other party would think that we have intended to slander him."

If the other party does not have trust in me, yet I rush to give advice, they might think that I was trying to defame him intentionally. So today, if we want to give advice to others, we must first gain their implicit trust. Only when our parents, leaders, spouses, friends, or siblings have full trust in us, can our exhortation then be effective. How can we earn others' trust? We all wish our family and friends would trust us implicitly, but can we gain such a trust by seeking from praying? No! It can absolutely not be gained by praying! Very often, we are very envious of those who are popular and are trusted by many people.

Well, we only circle around the effect but never ponder the cause. So, next class, we will learn about how a person can earn the trust of others. Thank you all!