

# **Confucius Teachings On Building A Happy Life (14)**

## **- a foundation for Mahayana Buddhism practice**

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### **Earn Others' Trust Before Exhorting Them**

Hello my friends, good afternoon to you all!

We mentioned this morning that earning others' trust is the prerequisite to exhort them. If such trust is not sufficiently built, the other party may misunderstand you when you exhort him; he may think that you dislike him or slander him. So, there must be trust first.

But, how do we gain the trust of our family members and friends?

Such trust definitely does not come out of thin air. It must be earned through giving others sincere care and help.

There are some people who are very enthusiastic and love to help others, but many of their friends would quickly run away when seeing them, thinking that such people are too annoying and bothersome. Their friends would say, "For heaven's sake, please don't look after me anymore." Is there such kind of people?

After putting in so much effort, they were blamed by others instead.

This is because they did not give their care and help according to others' needs.

We must be able to observe others' needs before lending them a helping hand. In this way, we will naturally be able to gain others' trust and when the timing is appropriate, they would readily accept our advice.

### **Trust Is Earned Through Undertaking Responsibility**

Let's take a look! For instance, in parent-children relationships, a father may have a few children but would particularly trust a certain child. It must be that this child always gave him peace of mind and was most filial to him. This child has already earned the father's trust. It is because he would spare no effort to fulfill his filial duty when his father was in need.

Next, let's take a look at the superior-subordinate relationship. What do the superiors need most? What they need the most is that we help them undertake some responsibilities. When we can carry out the tasks silently and let them rest assured every time, they will certainly trust us very much under our attending to their needs.

This can also apply to the husband-wife relationship. For example, the wife is able to keep the house clean and tidy as well as educate children properly, so that her husband would be free from troubles back at home. Needless to say, the husband will trust his wife very much, and whatever she says would carry much weight.

### **Observe More, Do More, Speak Less**

For a daughter-in-law who just married into her husband's house, when can she exhort her husband or even his family members and friends? Can she start criticising her husband's family on the very first day after she married? Can she do as such? If she were to do so, what would happen? Her husband's family would surely reject her because she has not built an implicit trust. So, we must follow the nature of human relations and must be able to understand others' feelings.

Uncle Lu once told me, when we arrive at a new environment, we must put more effort into observation. What do we observe? Observe what people really need then offer them help. We must listen with all ears, listen to what others need. Sometimes we can also hear some taboos; something that people are not willing to talk about, we should then avoid it. We must be able to get others' needs and taboo through seeing and listening.

We must make more effort to see and listen to others, and we must speak less and give less of our opinions. When we arrive at a new company, should we also observe and listen more but speak less? When you do more but speak less, your supervisors and superiors will trust you, thus take your opinions very seriously. The principle is the same, and it is applicable in all situations.

### **A Great Example of Establishing Trust to Make One's Voice Carry Weight**

As the daughter-in-law, you must also be able to observe what role you should play in different situations. I gained this understanding from my mother. When she married to my father, my aunts and uncles were still in school. At the time she decided to get married, her father strongly discouraged her.

Her father was very sharp! He analyzed to her, "You see, you are marrying an eldest child whose brothers and sisters are still in school. Plus, your future father-in-law is a fisherman. Their income is unstable, it will cause you much burden if you were to marry him." My mother said, "I will still marry him." Why? Because she felt that my father is very filial. Only a filial child will have genuine affection and righteousness.

So, she did not choose the wealthy men she encountered but married a poor guy instead. As a result, she married my father and has indeed gone through many hardships. After she got married, all the money that she made from teaching was used for the family's expenses as well as for my aunts' and uncles' tuitions. My friends, if that was your daughter, would you let her marry him?

We must have a far-sighted vision, must deeply believe that a family with a filial tradition will surely enjoy prosperity and success in the future. As the Chinese say,

Being shortchanged is indeed a good fortune in disguise.

When you are willing to be shortchanged, you will earn others' respect and admiration. My mother's family was considered rich, yet she knew how to dedicate herself to his family in that way after she got married, so, my uncles and aunts have profound admiration for my mother and treat her very well too.

Since a filial person has a sense of responsibility towards his family, our family finances have slowly improved. It was only after over twenty years of marriage into our family that my mother started to voice her opinions. When we have built a certain level of trust, our words will carry much weight.

So, we must deeply accumulate our virtues and restrain our voice. Do not act rashly! Sometimes "Haste will fail one in getting to his destination." When giving others advice, we should not start with too many suggestions. Instead, we should give them suggestions little by little, one at a time. Even if they do not accept it in the beginning, they will slowly build up trust in us when later they realize what we said was right.

## **Emperor Tai Zong's Great Demonstration of Exhorting His Father**

The parent-children, superior-subordinate, and husband-wife relationships need to be established on trust and putting in effort, it's the same with relationships among siblings; the more you take care of your siblings, the more they will trust in you. The last is the relationships among friends. Since friends do not have a blood relation, they must go through a long period of time of being together to build trust. As people often say,

A horse's power will be known after running a long distance,  
while a person's heart will be seen as time passes.

Only then can they put importance on our advice through the trust in us.

Many of the ancient Chinese sages had demonstrated very good examples for us. My friends, think about it! Have you experienced fifty percent success rate on exhorting others? Raise your hand if you have. Not many people! Do you realize that it is not easy to give advice to people today? As the classic states,

Without proper education,  
one's behavior will be deviated from his innate nature.

One reason is that people today do not receive the sages' education, the other reason is that people today are too impetuous. So, when exhorting others, they sometimes did not grasp the correct attitude and method.

Before the Tang Dynasty started, at the time between the Sui and Tang Dynasties, Emperor Tai Zong's father, Li Yuan ([\\*The first emperor of the Tang Dynasty](#)) brought his army to wage wars across the southern & northern states. Of course, his son Li Shi Min ([\\*The personal name of Emperor Tai Zong, the second emperor of the Tang Dynasty, ruling from AD 626-649](#)) was following the troops. One time, Li Yuan decided to lead his army on a route where Li Shi Min predicted that they would be ambushed by the enemy. Lest their troops be annihilated, Li Shi Min kept trying to dissuade his father, Li Yuan, not to take his route. But his father refused to listen to his advice. When they were about to set off on their journey that morning, suddenly they heard someone crying loudly outside of their tent.

Li Yuan felt very strange and thought, "Why is there a big man crying loudly?" Li Yuan walked out of the tent and saw Li Shi Min weeping bitterly on the ground. Li Shi Min said, "Father, if we embark on this journey, our entire troop will surely be annihilated." He cried even louder while saying this.

It is stated in *Dizigui*: followed by crying to help them understand, and I will not hold a grudge against them even if they end up whipping me. Tai Zong, Li Shi Min, had demonstrated to us the phrase "followed by crying to make them understand." Upon seeing this, Li Yuan was very moved by his son's insistence on dissuading him. Finally, they took a detour and managed to escape the danger.

So, my friends, what had a child's filial piety saved? A whole army troop! Had the army not been saved, what would have happened to Chinese history? Dear friends, do you realize that we must be very cautious in life? As the proverb goes,

A miss is as good as a mile.

(\*A millimeter's miss leads to a thousand mile's error)

Let's think back on our lives now: for decades, if we had made a wrong decision at a certain point of our lives, would we be able to get together to learn sages' teaching today without worries? We must be prudent and grateful at all times, because, during this process, so many loved ones have given us very important reminders, guidance, and advice.

This is a case of a son dissuading his father.

### **A Father Awakens His Son's Sense of Shame**

Of course, many cases are parents admonishing their children. This mostly refers to after the children are grown up. It is inappropriate to shout at them when they are a grown up, but we could strictly admonish them with righteous words when they were little. The grown ups are concerned about their *face*; if we were to scold them in front of other people, they would not only reject it but harbor resentment against us.

There was a sixteen-year-old youngster who drove his father to an amusement park. After dropping his father off, he told his father that he would come to pick him up at four o'clock. He then drove to a gas station to refill gasoline. When he reached the gas station, he realised that there was still a few hours to kill. So, he thought he might as well go to the next door cinema to see a movie.

He planned to pick up his car from the gas station then drive to pick up his father after seeing the movie. But what happened next? He forgot the time! When he regained his sense of reality, it was already late by over an hour. He quickly ran to the gas station then drove to the place where he was supposed to meet his father.

Thinking that his father would surely scold him, he thought of a reason to tell his father that the car had broken down and he had gone to repair it. We cannot blame him because, what had he never learned before? He had never learned *Dizigui*.

*Dizigui* states, "If I try to cover up my mistakes, I will be doubly wrong." "If I accidentally make a mistake, it is an error," but now he did it on purpose, then "it is an evil act." He thought he was very smart. When he saw his father, he said, "Dad, the car broke down, so I am late." His father said, "Why do you want to lie to me?" He did not give up, "Dad, I am telling the truth." His father continued, "I called the gas station. They told me that your car has been parked there all along."

When his lie was exposed, he felt very ashamed.

His father then said, "I feel very angry, I am not angry at you but myself. The son who I have taught for sixteen years would actually lie to me for the fear of getting my scolding. It indicates that I have failed in the way of my educating children, so I must introspect myself. For the journey home, I will walk back on my own."

It was an eighteen-mile journey and it took an hour to walk only four to five miles. The father had really walked back home step by step. The son was trailing behind his father in his car. The son said that the way home was the most tormenting one he had ever had in his

life, but it was the best lesson he had ever attended in his life. He also said that he has never lied since.

This father had used his virtues and a remorseful heart to awaken his son's sense of shame. This is a case of a father admonishing his son. So, when exhorting people, we must also apply skillful and wise methods other than a sincere and good intention.

### **The Art of Speech Saved a Minister's Head**

Next, in the superior-subordinate relationship, we also have the duty of exhortation. The courtiers have the responsibility to exhort their monarch. Speaking of this, which minister would we surely think of? Yes, Wei Zheng of the Tang Dynasty.

I personally feel that he must have been a very admirable person. Before he started his job of assisting Emperor Tai Zong, he had shown his art of speech and made it clear to the emperor beforehand. He said to Tai Zong, "Your majesty, I do not want to become a loyal minister, I want to become a good minister."

Upon hearing this, the emperor was very puzzled as to why he did not want to be a loyal minister but a good minister instead. Wei Zheng continued, "Because a loyal minister will be beheaded while a good minister will not lose his life."

Tai Zong bursted into laughter upon hearing this. In fact, Emperor Tai Zong was an intelligent person. While he was laughing, he was thinking, "By whom are the loyal ministers killed?" By a tyrant! If I were to kill him, wouldn't I become a tyrant in history? So, Wei Zheng's words had already saved his own life in the first place.

### **An Empress' Wisdom Turns the Emperor's Rage Into Joy**

Very often, Wei Zheng would give Emperor Tai Zong blunt advice whenever the emperor did something wrong. He often reminded Tai Zong,

Water can hold a boat afloat, it can also capsize it.

Likewise, the people can support and help you succeed in your endeavor, but they can also overthrow you when you don't love and cherish them. So, Emperor Tai Zong was able to rigorously remain vigilant when governing his empire.

Once, Wei Zheng gave Tai Zong a very intense admonition. Tai Zong became so furious and walked back to his imperial bedchamber. He was whining while walking, "Really drive me crazy! I must have him killed." Furiously, he arrived his bedchamber. Seeing the emperor being enraged, the empress knew well that there was no one other than Wei Zheng who was capable of stirring his anger like this.

This empress immediately went to change into very dignified and formal attire. Then she walked up to the emperor, knelt down before him and said, "Congratulations, Your Majesty! Congratulations, Your Majesty!" The enraged emperor was now baffled by the empress's behavior. The empress continued, "Your Majesty! Surely a sage monarch has appeared, otherwise there wouldn't be such a minister who dared to say blunt words." The emperor's anger was turned into joy because the empress was implying that he was a sage monarch.

So indeed, a wife can have profound influence on her husband. If the empress had further uttered some smearing words against Wei Zheng at that time, I think the Golden Years of Zhenguan (*\*A glorious era of the Tang Dynasty*) would have been replaced by a different history. So, the prosperity of a family and a dynasty is definitely attributed to many people's contribution and involvement. Understanding this, we must give credit to everyone who has contributed to some of our life accomplishments. As a saying goes, "Only by uniting the will of all people, can a strong fortress be built." Emperor Tai Zong was not only assisted by Wei Zheng but also supported by many virtuous people like the empress.

### **Emperor Tai Zong's Three Mirrors**

After Wei Zheng passed away, Emperor Tai Zong cried bitterly. He said "I have three mirrors." In the past, the mirrors were made of bronze. He said,

Using a bronze mirror, I can see if I have worn my clothes and hat properly.  
Using history as a mirror enables me to know how a country can rise and fall.

If a nation's leader uses history to observe his own governance, he will be able to learn how a country can prosper or decline. He can observe them from the history.

Using people as a mirror enables me  
to see clearly the pros and cons of things.

If a nation's leader allows virtuous ministers to exhort him, he will be able to know all the pros and cons of his policies, and further rectify them.

The emperor said that he had these three mirrors, but now one of them had broken because of Wei Zheng's demise. From here, we can also deduce that a sage monarch must have greatly cherished and loved his virtuous and talented ministers, only then could he win the trust of these great ministers. Governing a country is like this, so is administering an enterprise now.

### **Management 101: *The Four Books***

My friends, the current business world emphasizes management knowledge. In fact, is such knowledge available in our classics, such as *The Four Books* (*\*The Great Learning, Doctrine of the Mean, The Analects, and Mencius, written before 300 BCE*)? Yes! And its management knowledge is very incisive and clear in both principles and details. Let's contemplate it!

*The Doctrine of the Mean* states, "For governing a country and bringing world peace, there are nine constant laws to be observed." It means that there are nine good methods for governing a country and bringing peace to the world. The first one is

Self-cultivation; the second is  
Honouring the sages.

One must be proactive in seeking knowledge and wisdom. So, I will only explain the first three methods, and you can study the rest in the *Doctrine of the Mean*, which includes:

Being affectionate to one's family members and relatives,  
Respecting the great ministers,  
Being considerate to all officers,  
Treating commoners like your own children,  
Recruiting all classes of artisans,  
Being kind to those from afar, and  
Appeasing feudatories (\*People who hold land under the conditions of the feudal system) of the states.

By applying these nine methods in modern times, your business is bound to flourish.

But first and foremost, we must cultivate our own virtue. Only when we have virtuous conduct can we attract truly good people to work with us. As long as we attract good people, we need not fear being unable to accomplish our task well. *The Great Learning* reminds us. "If one has virtue, he will then have people's hearts."

Nowadays, the rich people may not necessarily be able to find talented people. There are many upstarts now, but they are unable to employ people of outstanding talents. As long as we have virtues...just like the saying goes, 'birds of a feather flock together', our virtue will naturally attract people with noble aspirations.

So, self-cultivation is still the root of success.

### **When We Respect Sages, More Sages Will Come to Assist Us**

Secondly, we must honor the sages. If you respect sages, naturally there will be more sages coming to assist you. Because a genuine virtuous person would not be hired with money. What could he be hired with? Was Kong Ming (\*Also known as Zhuge Liang, 181-234 AD, thrice visited by Liu Bei in his secluded cottage, finally agreed to serve the public and became a well-known politician, strategist, and inventor in Chinese history) hired with money to serve the public?

How did Liu Bei thrice visit Zhuge Liang's secluded cottage?

With his utmost sincerity and respect.

When we can respect the virtuous people, they will be very willing to come out and help. Other than sincerity and respect, we must have a heart of serving the people, only then can we move the virtuous people and have them agree to help out.

We have just mentioned how Emperor Tai Zong valued and cherished Wei Zheng, his attitude surely attracted many more scholars who were willing to devote themselves to him. This is about honoring the sages. If today an employer was not respectful to the virtuous people, was jealous of many of his highly capable subordinates, and was even fond of lust, sooner or later he would fail even if he were at the pinnacle of his career now. So, a person who honors the sages will be free from believing in fawning speech and will stay away from lust.

### **A Filial Leader Saves His Company and Uses *Dizigui* for Staff Training**

Thirdly, we must be affectionate to our parents, family members, and relatives. Being a leader, one must first demonstrate filial piety, then his virtuous conduct can definitely move and transform his employees and people. In China, there is an enterprise that had lost around ¥700-800 million RMB.

Suffering such a huge loss, many companies may not be able to revive their business, but this company still strived to work hard. During the course of their efforts, due to the president of this company inheriting a very good family tradition, he always led his children and his grandchildren to pay respect to his own mother whenever there were important festive occasions. This indicates that he inherited a good family tradition of filial piety.

In addition, he also devoted his efforts to staff training. He treated his employees like his own family and used *Dizigui* to guide himself as well as his employees.

It is very rare that an employer is willing to use *Dizigui* to train his employees! What training would most enterprises give their staff? Train them how to sell the company's products, right? Yet, he uses *Dizigui* to train his employees! It indicates that he wishes the staff of his company to grow spiritually and truly learn the ways of dealing with people and matters. One day, even if the employees left the company, he would feel no guilt for how he had treated them.

Owing to his filial piety as well as his intention to care for and educate his employees, his company, from the loss of ¥700-800 million RMB, is now growing rapidly and is very successful. Indeed, the principles that were imparted by our forefathers will never change throughout time and space.

Why are there many enterprises unable to survive long?

Because they did not return to the fundamental attitude for being a person.

Many enterprises had collapsed but still did not know why.

### **How Can We Gain Benefit from Listening to Sage Stories?**

We have just cited Emperor Tai Zong's ability to accept his subordinates' and ministers' exhortation, which shows his respect to sages. From a sage monarch's speech and behavior, we can certainly learn why he was able to achieve such success! After we know the principle, what should we do with these life attitudes it imparts? What should we do after listening to the story of Emperor Tai Zong and Wei Zheng?

May I ask who plays the leading role in the show of our own lives? Ourselves! So, when we listened to the story,

Who is Emperor Tai Zong? It is myself!

We must have this attitude to emulate his strengths, otherwise, Min Ziqian is Min Ziqian, Tai Zong is still Tai Zong... we have gained nothing from the stories.

There is a teacher who has made rapid progress. One day, she said to the other teachers, "I felt when teacher Tsai was teaching the class, each of his words was scolding me." Do I look like someone who would scold people? Ha ha ha... But her words have already pointed out to us why she has made such rapid progress.

It is because she would remind herself to emulate good people whenever she saw them. What would she do when she hears some bad examples? "When I notice misbehavior of others, I must immediately reflect upon myself." Therefore, she felt that my lectures were all pointing out her faults. This is called *keen learning*. Everyone who has listened to the same lecture would reap different benefits. So, it is very important to have the ability of keen learning. These are the stories from the Tang Dynasty.

## **A Minister Risked His Life to Save Royal Family During the Witchcraft Chaos**

Now let's take a look at the Han Dynasty! During the reign of Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty, it was an era of a great success in the fields of literature, politics, and military. But, in the later years of Emperor Wu, a very unfortunate incident happened. It is called "the witchcraft chaos." Someone had taken some witchcraft items and buried them beneath the prince's and empress' palace with the intention to frame the prince and the empress.

In the end, the prince was pessimistic about the situation and ordered his soldiers to kill the warlocks who had been deceiving and misleading his father, the Emperor Wu.

Because of this act, Emperor Wu thought the prince had planned to plot a rebellion. As a result, the prince and his family were all locked up, and the entire royal family had fallen into total chaos.

At that time, Emperor Wu was in a fit of rage, he ordered to kill all those imprisoned.

The emperor was going to kill his own family!

There was a newborn baby, who was the emperor's great grandson. Later, he was known as Emperor Xuan of Han. At that time, a great minister, Bingji was in charge of this witchcraft trial. He was unwilling to let Emperor Xuan to be executed. Emperor Wu had sent someone to ask for his great grandson. Bingji still upheld righteousness even though he knew that Emperor Wu was enraged.

He said, "We should not kill the innocent, let alone he is the emperor's family member." When the messenger conveyed Bengji's words to Emperor Wu, the emperor suddenly restored his sanity and declared an amnesty for the remaining prisoners. So, Bingji was actually risking his own life to exhort Emperor Wu; because, when the emperor was enraged, he might be implicated and lose his own life. Yet, using *death* to dissuade the emperor, Bingju could finally awaken Emperor Wu.

Later Emperor Xuan succeeded the throne, but Bingji never mentioned this incident again. So, to the past scholars, why did they dare to do such things? For instance, why did they dare to sacrifice their own lives to uphold benevolence and righteousness?

It was definitely not because they wanted to obtain future rewards, but because they wanted to abide by the sages' teachings.

They harbored a heart of serving the people and country at all times. Also, they chose to live up to their own conscience. These were the examples of exhorting their monarchs from the ministers in the Tang and Han Dynasties.

## **The Right and Wrong Ways to Dissuade a Spouse From Smoking**

Next let's see, the husband and wife must also exhort each other. We have just mentioned that the empress had skilfully and wisely exhorted Emperor Tai Zong. Now let's see a friend who wanted to dissuade her husband to quit smoking. How should a wife dissuade her husband?

This woman asked her husband not to smoke. One time, they were having a meal with some friends. One of the friends handed a cigarette to her husband. She snatched the cigarette from her husband. Would she succeed by doing so? This would surely bring about an opposite result.

We must be mindful of our intention when exhorting others. It is definitely not a controlling like “just listening to me no matter what...” That would certainly lead to an opposite effect. Our intention must be for the benefit of the other party, and we must catch the right timing. What would happen to her husband's *face* when she snatched his cigarette like that? He would lose his *face* completely. So we must contemplate on our attitude and method.

Another woman did not use such a method to dissuade her husband from smoking. She said to her husband, "My dear, our children are still so little and so adorable, your health is our lifelong support."

Not only men's sweet talk is effective, women's sweet talk will also be very effective.

A husband would suddenly feel that he is very important! This lady used her soft words to dissuade her husband. She not only advised her husband stop smoking but also let him know its method. She bought a lot of toasted melon seeds and said to her husband, "Whenever you feel like smoking, you can quickly nibble some melon seeds." After nibbling the melon seeds for a while, her husband went back to smoking when he encountered some challenging conditions.

So, the first attempt failed. On the second attempt, she used chocolate at all costs. She let her husband eat chocolate whenever he wanted to smoke. The second attempt lasted for a while and was rather effective.

One day, one of her husband's friends came to visit them. As soon as sitting down, this friend handed a cigarette to her husband. What would you do at this moment if you were his wife? At that critical moment, the wife quickly came over. She “makes her expression pleasant and softens her voice.” Then she told her husband's friend, "Ah, you must forgive me! I have been helping my husband to quit smoking. I bought him melon seeds at first, but that method failed after a while. Now I am buying a lot of chocolates for him. I have spent so much money, I don't know how much time and effort I would have to spend if it fails again. So, please, please!"

If you were her husband's friend, would you still give him the cigarette? She used soft words to dissuade this friend. What about her husband's *face*? It was also saved! So indeed, other than having good intentions, we should be sophisticated in interpersonal relations, using good methods to exhort others. We must not fly into a rage out of humiliation when others refuse to listen. Such an attitude of acting on impulse will lead us to have more and more regrets and complaints in life. So, exhorting others also requires us to observe the timing and method at all times.

## **A Minister Saves a Nation and a Duke's Relationship With His Mother**

During the Zhou Dynasty, there was a monarch called Duke Zhuang of Zheng. He happened to have conflicts with his younger brother because his mother was fonder of his brother and even rendered his brother with a lot of power. As a result, his younger brother rose to oppose him. So, Duke Zhuang was enraged at his mother. In a fit of rage, he said, "I will never see my mother again until we are both in “the yellow spring (\*referring to after death).”

What does that mean? It means that he never wanted to see his mother again in this lifetime. After he said these words, what happened? What do you think he would feel? Would he feel very happy? Actually, when a person has said angry words, he will be very regretful because he won't be able to retract his words. Moreover, he was the monarch of a

nation. A monarch's words were unshakable. As a result, he really never saw his mother again.

We must always remember that the relations among people, especially between beloved family members, must be properly managed. As the saying goes,

Don't estrange yourself from your loved ones due to a minor grudge;  
don't forget their past kindness because of a new enmity.

Do not drift apart from our closest loved ones only because of a very small animus. Do not forget decades' kindness that our loved ones have bestowed upon us simply because of a new friction.

To do so is to greatly drain our own fortune.

It really harms ourselves and it also hurts other people's hearts. We must not be so silly, must not always do things that harm others and do no good to ourselves. Actually, anything that hurts others is guaranteed to not benefit ourselves. This is the truth!

One of Duke Zhuang's ministers, Ying Kaoshu, a filial child, saw the situation. My friends, when a filial child saw the monarch treating his mother in such a manner, what would he do? Yes, exhort him! Because a filial child would surely be able to understand a mother's toil. When others' mother could not be attended by her own children, how would a filial child feel? He would feel terribly sad and would develop a deep empathy for this mother. In the *Classic of Filial Piety*, it states,

The teaching of filial piety is a tribute of reverence  
to all the parents under heaven.

A truly filial person would respect all parents on earth. And I think Ying Kaoshu had not only considered the well-being of Duke Zhuang's mother but had also thought of a more far-reaching influence; which was, when even a monarch was not filial to his own mother, what more serious matter would happen?

Yes, children of the whole nation would say, "Even our monarch is not filial to his own mother, why should I be?" The value and the vibe of the entire nation would very likely turn bad in an instant. So, as a subordinate, he thought it was his duty to exhort Duke Zhuang quickly. But, his exhortation must be very convincing to Duke Zhuang.

One day, Ying Kaoshu presented a precious gift to Duke Zhuang. The etiquette at that time required the monarch to return his minister's gift by inviting him for a meal. Ying Kaoshu was expecting to be invited by the Duke and had deduced a scheme of how to exhort him. Finally, the duke invited him over.

During the meal, Ying Kaoshu sat there and put a lot of good dishes on one side of the table. Seeing this, Duke Zhuang was getting curious and said, "Why are you not eating the food?"

Ying Kaoshu replied, "Since childhood, I would first let my mother eat all the delicious food before I ate them. And my mother has never eaten the food treated by a Duke, so I want to take them home. After my mother has eaten, I will then eat the leftovers."

Upon hearing this, Duke Zhuang was deeply moved by his filial act and said, "Alas! You still have your mother to show your filial piety, but I no longer have my mother to show my filial piety."

Ying Kaoshu's few words had awakened Duke Zhuang's filial heart. Ying Kaoshu then said, "Your Majesty, you can definitely fulfill your filial piety to your mother right now, because I have found a place which has a cave leading to the underground and that ground is called *the yellow spring*. You just need to arrange a time to meet your mother there. Then you can bring her back to our homeland and everything will be perfectly accomplished."

So, Duke Zhuang met his mother at *the yellow spring* and brought her home in a solemn and grand ceremony. We can imagine that when his mother was walking on the avenue of the national capital, how would the people feel? They were jubilant! You see, Ying Kaoshu's exhortation had brought a significant influence. This is about the exhortation between a monarch and his ministers. We have also just talked about the exhortation between a husband and a wife.

### **Siblings Exhortation: The Thunder of Silence and Genuine Sincere Care**

Next, let's look at the exhortation among siblings. It is also very difficult to persuade siblings because of the smaller age gaps among them. To have siblings deeply respect you, they must greatly admire your virtues. Otherwise, when you exhort them, they would say,

You are similar to me, just like the pot calling the kettle black.  
How are you qualified to speak about me?

If our siblings said this to us, what should we do?

At this moment, "Silence is more expressive than a lot of words." Sometimes silence is like myriad thunders. When you keep quiet, your sibling may utter more harsh words. But the more they utter the more they will feel timorous. After all, you are trying to persuade them out of good intentions.

During the Ming Dynasty, there was a scholar named Chen Shi En. His younger brother was an idle person and would always come home late at midnight. Chen Shi En's older brother was enraged at his younger brother's behavior and would scold or even punish him every time he saw him. His brother was already a grown up, would it work to scold him like that? The more you scold him, the more he would not come home; you will get an opposite effect!

In whatever we do, we must observe the result.

If the result is undesirable, we must immediately rectify our method and attitude.

Chen Shi En said to his older brother, "Please let me give it a try!" From that day onwards, Chen Shi En would stand at the front door to wait for his brother to come home. When he looked at the clock, it was already past ten, past eleven... It was very critical at this moment! What should you do if you were him? Stay calm! Suppose you could not contain your emotion, thinking "why was he still not home...?" What might happen as soon as you saw your brother? You might throw a quick temper! So, as we have just mentioned, what is very important when exhorting others? Patience.

Waiting until eleven, twelve o'clock, he finally saw his brother. Not waiting for his brother walking to the door, he ran to him, held his brother's hand and said, "Brother, it is so cold outside, are you cold?" He then held his brother's hand and said to him while walking to the house, "You must be hungry, let me have your sister-in-law cook a bowl of noodles for you."

After leading his brother to the house, he then locked the door in person. He insisted to do so for several days. Later, his brother came home earlier and earlier. Of course, when his brother started to live a more disciplined life, he must further teach him sages' teachings, because his brother must have correct life values, then he can manage his life well. Most importantly is that Chen Shi En used his genuine sincerity and care. He did not use his preaching with words. What did he use instead? Preaching by actions. He had earned his sibling's love! This is the exhortation between siblings.

In the Han Dynasty, there was a scholar named Zheng Jun. His older brother was a county mayor. He saw that his brother often accepted other people's bribes. He was very anxious and thought that his brother's misdeeds would eventually be exposed. How would you exhort him? He is your older brother.

My friends, please contemplate on this and see if you can come up with the same way as Zheng Jun had? Let's talk about it next class. Thank you all!