

# Confucius Teachings On Building A Happy Life (15)

- a foundation for Mahayana Buddhism practice

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## Being Shortchanged Is Indeed a Good Fortune in Disguise

Okay, let's continue with the story of Zheng Jun in the Han dynasty.

My friends, what would you do if you were in his situation? How would you exhort this older brother? Well, Zheng Jun went to become someone's servant. He started from the humblest job and did it for a whole year. He used his own labor to make some money then he gave it all to his brother.

He said to his brother, "By earning money through hard work, we can buy anything that we lack, but we will ruin our entire life if we tarnish our own reputation."

Seeing Zheng Jun became someone's servant for a whole year just for exhorting him, his brother felt very ashamed and started to change his attitude, becoming uncorrupted. Later, Zheng Jun had an outstanding achievement. He even became a high-ranking official, equivalent to that of a prime minister. So, with filial piety and fraternal love, one will surely serve his country with loyalty.

He also often exhorted his monarch. The emperor was very grateful for his assistance; thus he conferred on Zheng Jun the title of "The Minister of a Commoner." The emperor even awarded him a life-long stipend of a minister.

So, my friends, he became a servant in order to exhort his brother, did he suffer great loss? No, he did not. As the saying goes,

The field of good fortune is cultivated with one's mind.

This means that a person who establishes his virtues by practicing Dao would definitely accumulate more and more good fortunes. When the fortune has not manifested, it is because its time has not yet arrived. When the time comes, it would never slip away if it was destined to be his fortune. So, the Chinese said, "Being shortchanged is indeed a good fortune in disguise." This sentence is very meaningful.

## Waiting 17 Years to Introduce a Friend to the Sages' Teachings

What we have just mentioned is about the exhortation among siblings. There is also the last relationship among the five ethical relationships, which is the relationship among friends.

I once followed Uncle Lu to visit a friend of his. I felt very peculiar, it seems that I have encountered many wonderful things in my life. I followed Uncle Lu to visit a friend of his, they have known each other for seventeen years. On that visit, Uncle Lu brought many classics on sages' teachings; some were for his friend's son while some were for his friend and his friend's wife.

During the journey, Uncle Lu told me, "I have known this friend for seventeen years. In the past, seeing his life was like the sun in mid sky, with an immense business and lots of assets, yet I could already tell that he might not be able to retain his wealth in the future." Because, when a person is very rich, once infected with extravagance, what would happen no matter how much money he has? His wealth will completely go down the drain.

Besides being extravagant, he would very likely become arrogant. The bad habit of conceited arrogance will be formed during this process. When a person becomes arrogant, he will become imprudent and would very likely make some wrong judgments. No matter how much money he has, it will soon be squandered. Indeed, his career had later plunged and got him into some debts. When he fell into debt, what happened to all his friends? They all disappeared!

Actually, "Misfortune and fortune lie on each other."

~A concept of Laozi's *Dao De Jing*

When his wealth was gone, what lesson had he learned?

A true friend cannot be bought with money !

When this friend was at his lowest ebb, Uncle Lu traveled for several hours each week to help him solve his financial problems. Not only did he not charge his friend money, he also used his own money to help his friend settle many issues back and forth. During this process, he had built a deeper trust and friendship with his friend.

Waiting for 17 years, when the causes and conditions were in place, he would then be able to introduce the sages' teachings to his friend.

To perfect one's life, it definitely does not matter  
how much money and power he owns  
but how much wisdom he has.

I happened to catch this bus and also realized why Uncle Lu would spend 17 years to help a friend. As ancient sages taught us,

Neither be harsh nor give up on myself.

With this experience, I have aspired to take Uncle Lu as my role model. So, whenever I felt a bit impatient at the time of exhorting and helping others, I would suddenly think of a number: *17 years!* Then I would feel very ashamed and would lift up my sense of righteous duty towards friends to continue to help them.

### **Exhorting Others to Stop Being Messy**

Besides, when we were in Australia, I also witnessed how Uncle Lu skillfully exhorted friends around him. There were eight or nine people staying in the same dorm when we

were in Australia. What do you think would happen with eight or nine men staying in the same dorm? What would happen? With eight or nine men staying together, things like a lot of rubbish on the desk would happen.

I did not do it! Ha ha ha...

The dorm was a bit messy! Uncle Lu did not say a word. After talking to me every day, he would silently clean the rubbish in the bedroom and bathroom. Before going to sleep, he would clean the countertop until not even a drop of water was left. He did this day after day.

After doing it for 4-5 consecutive days, suddenly a friend stood up and said, "You all still litter like this?! Can't you see someone is cleaning and tidying the dorm for us every day? Don't you think you have gone too far?"

Everyone lowered their heads as they felt very ashamed. What happened from that day onwards? The dorm became much cleaner! Uncle Lu did not verbally advise them but taught them through his actions. He had successfully let everyone realize that they should maintain the cleanliness of the environment. Indeed, among adults, it is most important to initiate a good example by oneself. Naturally, others would be transformed.

### **First Encounters With the Teachings of the Sages**

I started learning the sages' doctrines when I was about 25 years old. Before that, I was more influenced by the academic elitism.

What does academic elitism bring to our inner hearts? Competition!

When I saw others scoring higher marks, I would feel very bad. I became a small-nosed, small-eyed person; referring to narrow-minded and short-sighted. Now you know why my eyes are not big! Ha ha ha... However, I was deeply touched after learning the sages' teachings.

I remember when I was in high school, I performed poorly in the subject of Chinese language. To what extent? I bet it must be poorer than all of you. Because, in the last year of my middle school, I took the high school entrance examination, a total of seven subjects. My scores were deducted by 88 points in total, and 44 points of them were from Chinese alone. The deduction from Chinese was the same as the score deducted from four other subjects.

I remember there was one multiple-choice question: Lacking youthful vigor as if it was: 1. spring 2. summer 3. autumn 4. winter. The choices were spring, summer, autumn, and winter. I felt this question was an insult to me. But I really did not know the answer. I even sang a song to synchronize each syllable to the four choices, and let the end of the song decide the answer. Yet I still ended up with the wrong answer.

What is the answer? Autumn! (\*Audience replied)

How did you answer it so quickly? It really hurts me! Ha ha ha...

My bad luck did not end after I entered high school. I really could not raise my spirit and enthusiasm for it. Once, my Chinese language teacher called out my name and said, "Tsai Lixu, if you still keep dozing off in my class, I will mark you as an absentee." So, I also failed to pass my Chinese subject in my college entrance-exam.

But during my high school days, twice I felt my brain was emitting light when we were reading two articles. The first article was Zhuge Liang's *The Petition for Northern Expedition*, which mentioned,

I will never cease to devote my loyalty to my country

until death falls upon me.

Originally I was dozing off. All of a sudden, what happened? Suddenly I felt, how shocking are these words! But the light only shined for five seconds, it became overcast again. The second sentence was from Mr. Fan Zhongyan's *The Reminisce of Yue Yang Tower*,

Be the first to worry about world affairs and be the last to enjoy happiness.

As a matter of fact, I did not really understand the meaning, but I felt deeply moved inexplicably. Later I started to learn the sages' teachings and often read *The Moral Stories of the Ancients*, I would be moved to tears uncontrollably. It is really touching! I realize that the saints' and sages' intentions were indeed very benevolent, very vast.

Having an epiphany, we should follow suit.

### **Serve Others With Sincerity, Awaken Their Kindness, and Gain a Mutual Consideration**

When I was studying in the Teacher Training College, I had to take a very early train as the college was situated far-away from my house. When I arrived at the school on the first day, no one was there, only me. It was the end of the summer vacation. When I walked into the classroom, what did I see on all the chairs and desks? All chairs and desks were covered with a layer of dust!

My friends, what would you do?

I suddenly became a movie director, thinking of a scene of how the female classmates would react when they saw the dust. How would they react when they walked in? They would say, "Gross, why is it so dirty?!" We can all anticipate that they would surely have this feeling of discomfort. So, I ran into the school compound to get a rag from the restroom. And I started to wipe all the desks and chairs. I wiped them very quickly. Why? I was afraid to let others see me and think that I was too pretentious. So I finished it as soon as possible. After finishing the wiping, I felt that my day was not wasted because I had rendered my service to benefit others. Later when my classmates came in, they were able to sit very comfortably and peacefully.

When you have a thought of considering others, may I ask, do you have telepathy with them? People tend to attach to the idea that communication only takes place when we face each other talking in person. Actually, that is not the case! With the arising of one thought, we have already communicated with people around us. So that year, everyone in class got along very well with me. When I started giving lectures on traditional Chinese culture, some of them also came to listen at night and I was very happy to see them.

Due to the heart of serving others, naturally we can elicit people around us to get along well with us. As I arrived earlier, I would take the initiative to empty the garbage bin in class every day. Not long after doing this, one day when I was about to throw away the garbage, my classmates came over and said, "You don't need to do it, let us do it."

So, indeed, among friends, we must first make an effort to dedicate our service. Our sincere heart can awaken others' mind of kindness and mutual consideration.

## Serving Parents When They Are Ill or Deceased

We have just talked about the ways to give exhortation in the five ethical relations. We have cited so many examples! The purpose is to nurture everyone's good intentions and conduct as well as the wisdom and patience of interacting with others. I believe that in the days to come, everyone's life would have many good shows to be staged, one after another.

Let us move on to the next phrases,

When my parents are ill, I will taste the medicine first before serving it to them. I will take care of them day and night without leaving their bedside. During the three years of mourning, I will often cry with sorrow. My residence will be different from before, becoming free from meat and wine. I will observe proper rituals for their funerals and conduct memorial services with utmost sincerity. And I will serve my late parents as if they were still alive.

"When my parents are ill, I will taste the medicine first before serving it to them."

This is to teach children that they should first taste the herbal medicine to ensure the right temperature before serving it to parents. This means when parents fall ill, a filial child would stay by their side to take care of them.

This story originated from Emperor Wen of the Han dynasty. We all know about "The thriving reign of Wen-Jing." The reason that both Emperors Wen and Jing were able to govern the country so well, the root lies on their governing the empire with filial piety. In fact, to lead a group, a family, or even a country well is not as complicated as we imagined.

Emperor Wen attended to his ailing mother for the entire three years. His mother was sick for three years, he fed his mother the liquid medicine in person every day. Later, his mother finally recovered her health.

In modern times, have you ever heard of children who stay by the parents' side all the time when the parents are sick? Certainly! There must be! As Laozi\* stated in *Dao De Jing*\* (\*Laozi is the founder of philosophical Taoism in the Spring and Autumn period of China. He is the reputed author of the *Dao De Jing*) that only when a country is in chaos will you be able to identify who the loyal ministers are. Likewise, when people become increasingly unfilial, you will also be able to recognize a truly filial child. Because, a truly filial child will not follow the mighty torrent of his time but stand unwaveringly by principles.

When a filial child can act as such, it is believed that his parents' health would also improve very fast. Earlier, we mentioned "Mengzong's cry moved the bamboo shoots." Due to his utmost sincerity, he was able to move the bamboo shoots to grow. His mother was exceedingly happy after eating them, her illness was then cured. In this respect, we will ask the children, "If your mother is sick now, should you taste her medicine first?"

Of course, if it is a Chinese medicine, they can lick it to see whether the medicine is too hot. What if it is western medicine? Should you taste it first?

When we teach *Dizigui*, after grasping the meaning of every phrase, we must be able to adapt our practice to life situations. Otherwise, when the child were to swallow the medicine, his mother would ask, "Why did you do so?" He would say, "My teacher had taught me to taste the medicine before serving it to my ailing parents."

We would further guide the children when they serve drinking water to their parents, it must neither be too hot nor too cold. We would also guide them to think over how they

should tackle the situations of their parents' sickness or even an emergency. For example, a mother who has high blood pressure suddenly falls sick and faints, what should the child do?

My dear friends, not only do the enterprises talk about crisis management, a family must also acquire this knowledge. If you teach children the ways to tackle some emergency situations while they are young, they will then know how to handle matters calmly in an emergency.

What aspects should we pay attention to? Where are the medicines placed? How do we get those medicines in an emergency? If the medicines are placed disorderly, can we find them in an emergency? We will be in a panic.

Next, what is the number for the emergency call? We can dial 911, 119, or 110 (\*depends on different countries) to ask for help.

Furthermore, there are the telephone numbers of the closest relatives. Parents should let children know all this information so that the children would know how to handle matters when encountering an emergency.

When parents are ill and confined to bed, children should be taught how to take care of them. Parents should teach their children and even give them opportunities to practice. During the process, I am sure they would be more careful with doing work and better understand others' pain and needs. This is about tasting the medicine first when parents are sick. We should further extend the meaning of this teaching by guiding children with the above methods and attitude.

### **Wealth-Dana Begets Wealth**

When a person gets sick, other than needing to cure his illness, what else can we possibly do so that our parents' or our loved one's illness can be cured sooner? This is worthy for us to ponder. A proverb goes, "A doctor can heal a person's illness but not his fate." You see, many wealthy people cannot enjoy a long life either.

So, to seek longevity, one must do it in the proper way based on principles. As long as we seek them with proper ways based on principles, everything can be obtained in this world. As aforementioned, wealth-dana (\*Dana, Sanskrit: giving) is the real cause of wealth gain. The Buddha taught us, "Myriad phenomena are given rise from causes and conditions."

### **Dharma-Dana Begets Wisdom**

Then, how does one elevate his intelligence and wisdom?

According to Buddha's teachings, "One's wisdom is obtained by Dharma-dana (\*To offer sages' teachings or knowledge to others by imparting in person or by giving books, DVDs, etc.)."

I personally had some epiphanies related to this teaching. I remember when I attended a tutoring class before I took the entrance exam for Teacher Training College, I gave myself some expectations at that time; I resolved to fully understand every lesson taught in class immediately. Therefore, I was very focused and sat in the first three rows. Those sitting in front were mostly female classmates, and I was slightly taller, so those sitting behind us could see a classmate's head protruding in front.

Many of the female classmates were poorer in mathematics, physics, and chemistry, they often came to ask me. I often spent some time to help them solve their questions. One

time, a close friend of mine came over, slapped my table and said, "You have taught this classmate for over an hour, do you still want to do your own studying?" He just could not bear to see: how could I spend so much time for others?

I smiled at him and said, "Actually, when I teach her, I gain the most myself." That is because she was learning while I must teach her until she understood; this made a big difference! I had to think more clearly and deeply!

I taught them mathematics, but I seldom did extra exercises because I did not have time. Many of my classmates did a lot of exercises, they even did problems from other tutoring classes. However, in the first year of examination, I scored ninety percent in my mathematics. The full score was 100, I scored 90. In the second year, I took the examination for substitute teacher. I did not study at all, because I did not have time. Yet I scored 88. In the third year, I took the exam again and still scored 88.

This indicates that the Dharma-dana, joyfully sharing my knowledge with others, had elevated my own ability of logical thinking. So, it is indeed that Dharma-dana will result in one's intelligence and wisdom.

Due to such an epiphany, I would often ask my friends a question, "Is the faculty of memory inversely proportional to age?" Yes or no? No?!

Most people would say as we get older, our faculty of memory would decline. The faculty of memory fading with age is a result, what is the cause?

Yes, they are no longer being used! Any other reasons?

Too many afflictions!

Everyday their mind was clouded with afflictions, eventually they could not think of anything. So, why do people suffer from memory decline? Since you don't use your faculty of memory, plus a lot of afflictions, of course your memory will decline day by day. Did Master Li Bing Nan (\*One of the most influential teachers in Master Chin Kung's life) need to flip through books when he gave lectures at the age of 97?

No! He did not need to. (\*Audience replied)

Exactly! So, since I started learning the sages' classics seriously at the age of 25, my memory has always maintained that level. It is indeed true that Dharma-dana will result in our wisdom and intelligence being elevated. And this is something that everyone can practice and obtain.

We must believe in Mencius' teaching,

What kind of man was Shun?

What kind of man am I?

He who exerts himself will also become such as Shun was.

The above elaboration was firstly wealth-dana, secondly Dharma-dana.

### **Fearlessness-Dana Begets Good Health and Longevity**

Lastly, fearlessness-dana will result in good health and longevity.

"Fearlessness" is to free others from fear and terror. Let us cite a most practical living example: the 106-year-old Teresa Hsu Chih of Singapore. She has been helping others to alleviate the pain of their illnesses, even their life sufferings. She always reaches out to help those who need it. She learned to become a nurse when she was in her fifties. Her spirit has

really moved us and earned our great admiration. She is always helping people, resolving their problems, and alleviating their sufferings.

So, what does she get? Good health and longevity. At the advanced age of 106, she still walks very fast and talks very energetically, which belies her age of over 100 years old.

Alright! But the *truth* must be testified by our own practice so that we can beget full confidence.

Before I left for Australia, my 84-year-old grandfather happened to have a stroke. When we rushed him to the hospital at midnight, the doctor said, "We dare not perform an operation on an eighty-year-old elderly. Since all his blood vessels on one side are blocked, which is unlike the regular stroke with only one vessel blocked, you can all prepare for the inevitable."

My father, uncles, and aunts are all very filial, so my grandfather's stroke came as a shock to them, because my grandfather never had any history of heart disease, he was tall and thin and looked healthy. However he had been showing symptoms, it is only that we did not notice. Prior to the stroke, my grandfather had been feeling dizzy. Since he did not have high blood pressure, we thought his dizziness was possibly due to a cold. Therefore, his symptoms were not detected.

Seeing my father and the elders panicking, I told my father at that time that fearlessness-dana can result in good health and longevity. I said, "Father, you have to give me \$50,000 NT now, and it must be my grandpa's money! Because using his money to do fearlessness-dana would render the most direct help to him." Of course, my father trusted me quite well, so he gave me the money.

Then I went to the intensive care unit (ICU) and communicated with my grandfather. I said to him, "There are many destitute and people who are facing hunger now, since we still have financial ability, we should help alleviate their sufferings." My grandfather nodded his head because he could no longer speak. I quickly donated the money to the organizations of international disaster relief to help the needy. As a result, my grandfather was moved to the general ward after being in the ICU for five days.

Indeed, we have to verify the *truth*.

Later, when my grandfather was in the general ward, the doctor said again, "It would be impossible for a person over eighty years old who had a stroke to be able to walk again. You all better be prepared for this."

At that time, I had already quit my job to pursue traditional Chinese culture studies in Australia. I made an agreement with my grandpa, "When I come back next time, you must let me see you walking again."

When I went to Australia, where the Pure Land Learning College ran a program to nurture many teachers to promote the sages' teachings, I brought some money and donated it to them in the name of my grandpa. On the day after I donated the money, I called my mother who said, "Your grandpa could walk today!"

So, with many *truths*, we must use our utmost sincerity to verify them.

The saints and sages would definitely not tell lies. So, "When my parents are ill, I will taste the medicine first before serving it to them." Other than treating his illness, we must help him overcome his obstacles in fate. When a person does more fearlessness-dana, he would have a healthier body.

## Attending to Sick Parents Day and Night, and



## Often Commemorate Them With Sorrow After Their Passing

I will take care of them day and night without leaving their bedsides. This is a behavior shown by the utmost sincerity of a filial child. Of course, if your health is not good, you must not strain yourself. You should take a rest when it is necessary as long as you keep awareness to respond to your parents' needs. You can also sleep at their side and tie a rope to yourself so that your parents can wake you up whenever they need you. We must know how to adapt to our own situation, no need to rigidly follow the example of Emperor Wen staying awake the whole night. There is no need for this.

"In three years after their death, I will often commemorate them with sorrow." This refers to the time after one's parents had passed away.

There is a very important teaching in the *Classic of Filial Piety* which describes filial children's attitude,

Filial children show the most respect in daily life service to their parents  
and bring them the most joy when attending to their needs.

This implies that we should attend to our parents with the attitude of respect and the intention to bring them joy. As the classics state,

One should harbor the most worries in caring for their sick parents,  
express the deepest grief in mourning for their passing,  
and perform the most solemn rites to commemorate them.

When conducting the funeral, we should remember parents' deep kindness with gratitude. We should commemorate parents with very solemn rites and never forget parents' teachings. These are the duties to be fulfilled by a filial child. Therefore, the rites of the funeral should be done with solemnity instead of being noisy and bustling. Some would hire a lot of people to act as the filial children of the deceased to cry in the funeral. Does this carry any meaning? How can that carry any meaning?

The rites are to offer us a reminder to remember the deep kindness of our parents. Ouyang Xiu (\*1007-1072, a renowned litterateur, historian, and politician in the Song Dynasty) had a very good teaching. He said,

Rather than making sumptuous offerings during the commemoration rites,  
it is better to serve parents with meager material support while they're alive.

To take care of parents when they are still alive has greater meaning. If we failed to support our parents when they were alive but spend a lot of money to conduct their funerals, this is really called topsy-turvy!

While our parents are still alive and healthy now, we must cherish them all the more by supporting them devoutly. When our parents leave us one day, we would feel guiltless and comforted. After all, we have fulfilled our filial duties. In the ancient times, there was a famous saying which reads,

A tree wants to remain still but the wind would not stop blowing,  
a child wants to attend to his parents but they are no longer around.

Such regrets must never happen to us!

If your parents have passed away, can you still fulfill your filial duties? Of course you can! As long as you try your best to:

Establish your virtues, practice Dao,  
and let posterity commemorate your name.

You can then “bring glory to your parents.” In addition, if we also spare no efforts to educate our children properly so that our family lineage will get better and better, this can also bring comfort to the spirits of our departed parents. As to conducting the funeral and commemoration rites with solemnity, we should do it according to our parents’ wishes.

During the rituals, everyone in the family can recall parents’ contributions to the entire family clan throughout their lives. We can also convey our parents’ expectations of our family through the rites.

“In three years after their death...” This three years was an etiquette in the ancient times. Children needed to mourn for three years. “I will often cry with sorrow.” Many people derived the meaning literally and said that crying for three years would be too tiring. So, to interpret the meaning literally, the saints and sages would feel unjustly treated.

“I will often cry with sorrow” is the natural emotion from a filial child. Since a filial child has been imprinting his parents’ deep kindness in mind for decades, it would be unbearable for him when his parents passed away. Whenever he thinks of his parents again, he couldn’t help but cry streams of tears. That is why he “often cries with sorrow.”

Because of this yearning sentimentality, his residence will thus be free from meat and wine during this period of mourning. So, rituals actually arise from a person’s inner heart and are performed naturally. When one’s parents have passed away, will he still indulge himself in sensual pleasures? Impossible! That is why after his parents’ demise, “his residence will be different from before,” he will be naturally not interested in an extravagant life of consuming meat and wine, therefore his residence will be “free from meat and wine.”

### **Observing Proper Funeral Rituals and Memorial Services, Serving Late Parents As if They Were Still Alive**

“I will observe proper rituals for their funerals and conduct memorial services with utmost sincerity.” We should fix a day every year to commemorate our departed parents.

This is an excellent virtue of the Chinese people! And that was how the ancestral hall came about. It is mentioned in *Zhu Bolu’s Maxims for Family Management*,

Our ancestors may be far from us,  
sincerity must not be absent  
when conducting the memorial service.

It is also stated in *The Analects*,

When people are careful in conducting funerals  
and worship their long gone ancestors with sincerity,  
people’s virtues will resume their deep-seated good nature.

As long as people can often attribute their life to their parents and ancestors and always harbor a mind of gratitude, people will then have deep-seated virtues. Every time we perform memorial services, sincerity is all important. It needs not been done in a very complicated way, but we must persevere with it so that our children can learn through the ceremony.

There is a father who used to serve his parents with filial obedience. After his parents passed away, he would regularly go to the cemetery to pay respect to his parents. His two sons have been watching and remembering his filial deeds all along. One day, his sons' kindergarten gave each of them a candy—very delicious candies. His sons did not eat the candies right away but brought them home for their father.

The father was deeply moved. One of the sons said, "Daddy, when grandpa and grandma were around, you would always let them eat first. Even after they have passed away, you would still make food offerings to them regularly. Today, our kindergarten gave us two candies and we also want our daddy to eat first."

This is "People below emulate the conducts of the people above."

Next, "I will serve my late parents as if they were still alive." The attitude of serving our departed parents should not differ from when they were alive. Parents' expectations and teachings to us will never be changed just because they have departed. Instead, we should work even harder to realize their wishes so that we would not forsake their deep kindness of raising us.

There is a little child whose maternal grandmother happened to have passed away. His uncle was carrying his grandma's ashes while they were all sitting in the hearse. As the hearse drove along a bumpier road, his uncle immediately requested the driver to slow down a bit as his mother was not used to travel in a high-speed car. This child was deeply moved by his uncle's filial act. When he returned to school, he asked his teacher if his uncle was treating his departed mother as if she was still alive.

So, my friends, do not belittle children, they are actually very insightful.

### **Teamwork Makes the Dream Work**

Okay, we have finished expounding the chapter on Being Filial to Parents at Home. There are many filial practices which we can teach children to apply in daily life. Let us think about it: what are the important methods to teach children filial piety? Let us grasp the guiding principles! What is the most important?

To lead by example! (\*Audience replied)

Standard answer! Please give yourself a big applause!

Leading by example is too important!

Secondly, teachers and parents must have mutual cooperation when teaching filial piety. When teachers teach children to be filial to their parents and the parents cooperate at home, children will quickly observe due decorum.

So, in our kindergarten in Shenzhen, the parents would attend the class on "family education" once a week. They would learn *Dizigui* phrase by phrase. So, both the parents and teachers coordinated very well. The children's behavior changed very quickly because parents and teachers have the greatest influence on the children when they are young.

You see, when children are little, what words would they utter most? "My dad said" or "my mom said."

After they start kindergarten, what would they say? “My teacher said.”

So, we must make good use of such good opportunities; both parents and teachers must cooperate.

Next, both husband and wife must cooperate!

It is alright if the school teachers do not teach children much of filial piety because they may not necessarily understand the importance of filial piety. Of course, when the teacher does not understand, what should you do? You should bring *Dizigui* to talk to the teachers. Since people of the society are interactive, we must not underestimate our own power.

In Haikow, many of the sages’ teachings in schools are driven by the parents. When teachers have not taught the students, parents must educate them immediately. In such a situation, the husband and wife can cooperate. Because, as a mother, if you were to say to your son, “Son, your Mom suffered great pains when giving birth to you, you must be filial to me.” Would you be able to speak out? You would feel odd since one should not go blowing his own trumpet, right?

At this time, the father can educate his son to be filial to his mother. He can say, “Son, you can be unfilial to me, but you must be filial to you mother. Why? Because she suffered a lot during pregnancy; she vomited every day.”

You can tell your son all the hardships his mother underwent in an effusive way. When you say it in a sincere manner, your son may burst into tears halfway through listening. As long as he knows his mother’s deep favor, he will then repay her profound kindness.

You must not say, “Teacher Tsai, I don’t know that part, I was busy with something else when you spoke of that.” If it is so, you are not qualified as a good husband! You should spend more time with your wife! If the husband could do this to his children, his children would then know how to observe and cherish their mother’s deep kindness.

On the other hand, on behalf of whom should a wife speak? She should speak on behalf of her husband. She must tell her children how hard their father has been working to earn a living for the family. When you enable them to understand the daily hard work of their father, they would then naturally develop filial respect for their father.

Have you ever helped your husband by praising him in front of your children?

You must!

Only then would your children understand the toils of their parents. Some women not only did not give their husbands the credit, they would sometimes criticize their own husband in front of the children, “This father of yours...such such...” Such kind of speech is violating the “combatants taboo.” What negative influence would such kind of speech lead to? The children’s respect for their father would gradually diminish.

Today, no matter how bad your husband is, you must “conceal his faults and promote his goodness.” If you selectively pick your husband’s shortcomings, your child would have no respect for his father. When the children are not respectful of their father, can the father feel it? Your husband would say, “My wife looks down on me, so do my children. Good, let me show you more of my bad behavior.” You may have pushed him out of the family subconsciously.

People all have positive and negative points. At this time, if you could often tell your children about their father’s strengths, the children would say to their father, “Dad, you are great here and there...” Upon seeing his children look up to him, the father would cherish himself more and strive to be even better. In order not to disappoint his children’s support, he would naturally be encouraged and develop his goodness.

So, husband and wife must coordinate with each other to teach children filial piety.

### **The Principles Must Be Consistent in the Family**

Moreover, the principles of education in the family must be consistent, which means a consensus must be reached. If husband and wife stick to different principles in educating children, whose words should the children listen to? If the grandparents were added into the group, wouldn't the family become a carriage with horses in different directions?

At this time, whose words would the children listen to?

They would certainly choose the one who has always been protecting them.

It would be difficult to educate the children then. So indeed, the husband and wife must communicate more often.

There was a mother who quietly taught her son *Dizigui*. She did not request her parents-in-law or her husband to do anything, she did not request them, but taught her children in person little by little.

One time, her son went to his grandfather's room and asked, "Grandpa, can I open this and take a look?" His grandfather suddenly felt that the boy was so little but had such a good manner. So he asked his grandchild, "Who taught you this?" The boy replied, "My mom taught me that 'Even though a matter might be small with little consequences, I must not do it.'"

The grandfather was very delighted upon hearing this, he went to tell his son immediately, "My daughter-in-law has been educating her children very attentively, you must cooperate with her nicely." So, her father-in-law even spoke for her!

Every morning, her family would play the audio book of *Dizigui* as their alarm clock. The ancients said,

God helps those who help themselves.

When we sincerely dedicate our efforts, naturally and slowly we would achieve a consensus with the people around us.

Alright, we will stop here today. Thank you for listening!