

Confucius Teaching on Building A Happy Life (30)

- a foundation for Mahayana Buddhism practice

Validated by Master Chin Kung

The Speaker: Teacher Tsai Lixu

2/15-2/23 2005

Cleverness Vs. Deception

Hello my friends! We just mentioned that “Cunning words and foul language, such vulgar manners must be prohibited.” If we can manage a good conversation pattern in the family, then the family atmosphere will be great. If we are the person in charge in a group or company, we must always say kind and beneficial words so that all our colleagues will feel very comfortable as if bathing in a spring breeze during conversations. Furthermore, they can mutually encourage and acknowledge each other. We have to initiate and promote such an atmosphere of conversation. If the leader of a group or government always utters offensive words such as scolding people and digging into others’ privacy, though he may feel pleased for a moment, it is really difficult to estimate the long-lasting detriment and influence it will cause in the future. Since children do not have the ability to discern right from wrong, they will think that they can do whatever the leaders do. So, it will be very difficult to clean up the consequences. As the saying goes, “Working in the government sector is very good for cultivation.” Due to their far-reaching influence, their words can either make a nation prosper or ruin it. As leaders, we have to be more cautious with our words and think more carefully. As long as we have this attitude, I believe we can also create a very good social atmosphere with our speech.

“Cunning words” here connotes “deceptive” and “clever.” Why would someone want to be deceptive and clever? Because they want to cover up their erroneous speech and the promises they have failed to keep. If children use cunning words, they may be lying. Are such children smart? If they are not, they would not be able to lie. There was a junior high school student who often compared himself to his classmates. So, he liked to buy expensive things but his mother would not let him do so. One day, he told his mother that he wanted to buy a pair of designer eyeglasses but his mother refused, saying, “You already have a pair, what do you need another one for?” Despite his mother’s refusal, he still went to get the new glasses himself. When he came home, he was wearing the new glasses. He said to his mother, “You should go and pay the money.” Was he smart? All by himself, with no money on him, he could make the other party believe that his mother would come and pay for the glasses. Many parents who have a “highly responsive” child say, “Such a smart kid!” Hearing about people’s “smart kids” frightens me. Children should be simple, loyal, and honest. Where do children today use their cleverness? They use it to lie and get what they want.

For example, a little girl was walking home with her father and they passed by several shaved ice shops along the way. When she reached the first shop, she slowed down her footsteps a little and said to her father, “Why is it so hot out?” Since her father had not gotten her meaning, she then said to her father when they reached the second shop, “It would be great to have some shaved ice right now.” When they reached the final shop, she exclaimed, “This is the last shop!” Where did she use her cleverness? Instead of using it on the sages’ teachings, she used it to achieve her objective. This is “valuing material gain over righteousness.” When children’s thoughts are on personal interest and benefit, every bit of their moral responsibility will gradually diminish as they grow up. When children’s cleverness is used to become a filial child, a good student, and a good citizen, only then have they used it correctly. Is it proper for the adults to laugh when many children try to be clever? No!

When it comes to children lying, there are several possibilities we must carefully observe. We must make a cautious start as soon as they make a mistake. Very likely they lie because they want something. There was a child who came home and asked his father to give him two yuan. His father casually handed a two-yuan bill to him. He said, “Dad, I don’t want a two-yuan bill, I want two one-yuan bills.” Perplexed, his father asked, “It’s two yuan, what difference does it make if it’s one or two bills?” He said to his father, “Dad, I can earn ten points once I take money to the disciplinary office. So, if you give me one two-yuan bill, I can only earn ten points. But if you give me two one-yuan bills, I can tell them that I found it and earn twenty points.” After hearing this, what did his father think? “How is my son so smart?” When he told an education officer about this, the officer had goosebumps all over his body. This father really had no educational sensitivity; he was still thinking that his son was very clever even though the child had blatantly lied. Nowadays some people still think lying is a skill; that is trouble. So, this is one situation.

Let us say there are fundraising events in school now; we also need to appropriately guide children towards proper concepts. Once, a school launched a poverty relief program. A child wanted to donate money. His mother asked, “How much do you want to donate?” The child thought for a while and said, “Seven yuan and twenty cents.” Was this a big sum? No! But that was all of his savings. He was donating all of it, by himself. With his classmates it was their parents donating the money, perhaps three to five hundred yuan. As a result, how did this child feel? “I only donated seven yuan and twenty cents.” Nobody had noticed his sincerity. As for those who had donated five hundred or one thousand yuan, five hundred earned you a small red flower to wear and one thousand let you light a candle. We may originally intend to do charity, but what have children learned in the process of running such events? The children might develop a sense of vanity. Moreover, they were not taking their own money but that of their parents. Not only did these children seek personal glory, perhaps who else also wished for it? Parents.

One of the parents donated a few thousand yuan right away but refused to wear the small red flower given by the school. She said, “Good deeds should be done voluntarily and aren’t

meant to be used to show off, let alone receive an award.” This mother was also very sensitive. Had she worn the red flower proudly, how could she educate her child to practice virtuous deeds silently? Doing charity is everyone’s duty, so parents and teachers must carefully consider the effects of education; or else it would be bad to infect ourselves with such illusive fame.

Credibility is Not a Game

Secondly, children lie probably because they think it is fun. When they deceive you in the beginning, both you and they may laugh. So what would they think? Lying is fun. You see a lot of shows trick people yet everyone has a good laugh. That is why children also feel that deceiving others is fun. These are all misleading. We are very familiar with one story, “The Boy Who Cried Wolf.” Telling this story to kindergarten children is very effective. You can tell them that this shepherd boy was guarding a flock of sheep but later felt very bored and shouted, “The wolf is coming! The wolf is coming!” All the villagers were very simple and willing to help others, they all came to help him chase the wolf away, but they saw not a single wolf. When he saw the villagers were so busy coming to help, he even laughed at them. Then all the villagers went home. Later, he played the joke a second time and deceived them again; not as many people came this time, but there were still quite a few. When the villagers realized that they had been tricked again, they went home again. What happened the third time? The wolf really came. He screamed, “The wolf has come! The wolf has come!” Did anyone come? No one came. Dear children, what happened when no one came to his rescue? What happened to his sheep? What happened to him? Do not tell the children that they were eaten, let them figure it out for themselves— “How terrifying!” It will make a strong impression. Therefore, if children lie for fun, we must stop them in time so that they will not repeat it again.

Thirdly, children probably lie to parade their ability and also to conceal their faults. Finally, they are also influenced by parents. We must observe them in due course. Parade one’s ability is usually because they want to show off, so they exaggerate when they speak. When you pay attention, you will notice that some eight to ten-year-old children will make comparisons and brag about things their family owns, “We have a computer, we have a digital camera!” The more they speak the more they exaggerate. As teachers we must be prudent and stop them in a timely manner.

During the Song Dynasty (960-1279) there was a famous minister named Sima Guang. Once, he was competing with his sister to see who could peel walnuts faster. He was slow at peeling, so one of their family’s servants said to him, “Soak them in hot water and they will be easier to peel.” Sima Guang did as suggested. His sister, who had just returned after being away for a while saw him peeling so well and said, “Brother, why are you so smart? Who taught you this method?” Sima Guang replied, “I figured it out by myself!” His father happened to walk by. If you were the father, what would you do? Many times, we may forget

this inadvertently. Having lied once, children might repeat it in the future. When their boastful talk goes unnoticed they may become conceited. This will be trouble! So, his father said to him on the spot, “Just be honest with your own ability. Never exaggerate when you didn’t figure it out by yourself.”

His father reproached him severely the first time he committed this wrongdoing; this is the correct teaching. Later, Sima Guang was very frank and open all his life. He also once said, “There is nothing I have done in my life which can’t be told to others.” This is the result, we must recognize the cause. What was the reason? It is due to his parents’ proper and timely guidance. The effect was absolutely not by chance. So this is “parading one’s ability.”

Next is “conceal one’s fault with slick words.” Many children will feel a little nervous as soon as they make a mistake, so they will be afraid to let the adults find out. Once, a child broke a clothes hanger. Actually, is it difficult to repair a broken hanger? No, it can be easily fixed. But he did not know it and was very nervous because he was afraid of being punished. He said to the classmate beside him, “Do not tell the teachers.” His teacher who happened to be nearby came over at once, startling the student. As children are still little, they will change their mindsets immediately as long as we give them timely guidance and instructions. The teacher immediately said to him, “‘Doing wrong unintentionally is called making a mistake, while doing wrong intentionally is called committing an evil.’ Breaking a hanger is not serious, but if you don’t tell your teacher, it is really bad. You will not be able to earn the teacher’s trust if you do so. So, we have to admit our faults. ‘If I correct my faults, the faults will no longer exist.’” The teacher continued, “Now you can correct the mistake and also learn to repair a broken item.” This teacher was also very patient and fixed the hanger together with him. If we grasp this opportunity well, children may be able to establish the right attitude. When children cover up their mistakes, we must carefully observe it; we should not let them form a habit or else it will be trouble.

The last reason is being influenced by parents. There is a movie called *Mobile Phone*. This phone showed the number of lies told by an adult in one day. How many were there? There were twenty-five lies a day. Since adults told so many lies in a day, children were affected unknowingly. For instance, a mother answers the phone and even though both the son and husband are at home, she tells the caller, “My husband isn’t around.” Her son would say, “Dad is around. How is he not home?” He would be confused. So, never lie in the presence of children. When they are absent you still should not lie. We have also mentioned one concept before: learning to reject. If you do not learn this skill, people will not know your standard rules of conduct and your principles of life. As long as you refuse when it is necessary, your friends will accord with your principles to associate with you. Why do you need to hide? It is too tiring and will cause others to misunderstand you. They might say, “Why didn’t you keep your promise? Why did you avoid me?” Then, you have made the originally simple matter rather complicated. This is considered “cunning words.” We must pay attention to children’s lies and foul language; such vulgar manners must be prohibited.

Trust is the Foundation

When children are trustworthy in speech and deed, they have already laid the foundation for very good development in society in the future. I have a friend who as a child, upon seeing other people eating popsicles, could not resist the temptation and stole a small sum of his father's money to buy ice cream. His father's eyes were very sharp. He trailed behind him to see what would happen. After buying the ice cream, when he was about to gorge himself on it, he raised his head and who did he see? He saw his father and started trembling. Without saying a word, his father took him home, hung him up, and punished him fiercely once and for all. Please pay attention to "once and for all." Was there a second time in the future? Never! The first lesson made him remember it for life. He was beaten so badly that he shivered whenever he passed by the place where the money was kept and he never again dared to act rashly.

Later when he grew up, he worked in another region, some distance from home. Since he was staying in his employer's house, he helped clean every morning. While cleaning, he suddenly found one or two hundred dollars on the floor. He picked it up and returned it to the boss's wife. After a while, he was surprised to find three to five hundred dollars. He picked it up again and gave it to the boss's wife. He said that he once picked up more than a thousand dollars. When he was working in this company, though his level of education was low, the boss made an exception and let him participate in some advanced job training programs. Many of the courses were only for college graduates, but his boss still let him attend. He had been working there for many years and his performance was very good. Later, he decided to open a shop and bid farewell to his boss. The boss treated him to a farewell dinner. After the meal, he said to his boss, "I have something to ask you. Why did I often find money on the floor of your house?" The boss laughed and said, "Since you were an outsider staying in our house and we didn't know your morals, we intentionally placed the money there." So if a person is immoral, he will very likely lose very good opportunities at certain points in life. Therefore, credibility is as important as one's life. That is why "Cunning words and foul language, such vulgar manners must be prohibited."

Let's look at the next verse and recite it together once, "When I am unsure of what I am seeing, I will not lightly speak of it. When I am still unsure of what I know, I will not hastily spread it. I must not agree to do something inappropriate, if I do, I will put myself into a dilemma. Whenever I speak, I must say it gracefully with sincerity; neither hasten nor blur. When hearing gossip here and there, I will not get involved if it does not concern me."

"When I am unsure of what I am seeing, I will not lightly speak of it." When we do not know the truth and have only heard one side of the story, we must not spread what we have heard. This cautious attitude is very important. If you are unsure whether it is a rumor, you will become an accomplice when you spread it. A group must regard harmony as the most prized virtue and never stir up trouble. This consensus is very important. Therefore, what is needed

in a group is inclusivity, not attacking and censoring. That is why the ancients were very prudent with their speech. Because when chaos arises, every slander will act like a ladder and slowly escalate turmoil.

It is said, “When the monarch listens to calumny, his ministers get executed.” If the monarch listened to slanderous talk, his ministers suffered for it. “When the father listens to calumny, the son gets segregated from him.” If the father were to listen to the stepmother’s or others’ slander, his son might suffer and the ties of kinship might break up. “When husband and wife listen to calumny, they get divorced; when friends hear calumny, they become estranged.” If friends listened to defamation, they would slowly become alienated; if spouses listened to malicious talk, they might get separated. So, we must be very careful and pay attention to this. It is said, “Those who gossip about others...” Would a true practitioner talk about others’ good and bad points? What he hopes is that people can get along harmoniously. Perhaps when you have some unhappy experiences with someone, he may come and tell you, “The other party actually really praised you last time.” This would cause your anger to subside a little. What will happen when you take a step back? You will feel free and easy. In fact, the resentment that one harbors is an illusion. So long as both parties can adjust, yield, and be considerate of each other, everything will be fine. It would be a problem if someone were to embellish the story.

There was a poem in ancient times alerting us to be careful of calumny, which said, “You, of an imposing seven-foot stature, listen not to the three-inch tongue; there is a sword on the tongue that can kill without spilling blood. For members of a family, a group, and even a country to get along well, we must be able to recognize slander. “When I am unsure of what I am seeing...” If someone is gossiping about someone whom you have a very good relationship with, of course you must not spread these words. What should you do? After all you have heard and cannot turn a blind eye. You can tell this friend, “There is such a rumor floating around now.” Be sincere when you tell him. If he denies it, you can comfort him by saying, “As long as you didn’t do it, time will eventually reveal a person’s heart.” If this rumor is indeed somewhat true, then we must quickly advise him appropriately. You can say, “A person’s reputation is particularly important in a group, so we should quickly restrain ourselves a little.”

Whether we hear slander or gossip about others, we must stop spreading the words right away. An educated and sensible person, even if what he hears is true, if the truth is related to the group’s harmony and a person’s reputation, he will not speak of it. This is so-called “promoting goodness and concealing badness.” When you praise the little positive points of that person and never reveal some of his faults, and from your manner, he is aware that you know it, he will then be able to feel it and think to himself, “I’m praised when I do a little good, but they never blame me when I do wrong.” In this way, he will gradually move in the direction of doing good. This is one standard code of conduct in human relationships.

Do Not Speak Rashly

“When I am unsure of what I am seeing, I will not rashly speak of it.” We must constantly improve our ability to judge the truth, because your good intention may turn into badness if you judge wrong. What are many groups doing now in the name of kindness and charity? Cheating people out of money! If you do not know whether this group is good or bad, that is, “I am unsure of what I am seeing,” and bring a lot of people there to help out and donate money right away, but it turns out they are cheating people, then it will be very difficult for you to explain to these friends. So, we must be prudent by carefully observing the group first. For example, we are now promoting sages’ teachings, many people will also claim the same thing while their actual goal is to make money. He might mention how excellent the sages’ teachings are during the first one to two hours of conversation, but change to his own topic later. After listening, the audience would think, “Great lecture!” Then what? Word would start to spread. The mood of the masses is easily spurred on, when you praise him like that, everyone may mistakenly think that he really speaks very well. They may then buy a lot of things from him, and he will have reached his goal.

In fact, we must judge if he was really promoting sages’ teachings. If he does, he would definitely catch its core teaching. What is the core of sage teachings? Where should we start to implement it? From “Being Filial to Parents at Home.” “Filial piety is the foundation of all virtues.” If he talks for two hours without even mentioning “filial piety” or “virtuous deeds” once, and you still praise him, other people may be misled when the word spreads. Only by being rational in our judgement will we not let our wholesome intention turn into badness and prevent people with ill intentions from taking advantage. So, now we have to first judge a group clearly before telling other people about them. In this way bad situations are less likely to occur. This is “When I am unsure of what I am seeing, I will not rashly speak of it.”

Speaking of “When I am unsure of what I am seeing,” I have a friend who has listened to others saying a lot of bad things about his friend. Of course, he did not spread it but clarified with his friend in person. He told his friend about the rumors outside and asked him whether they were true. He directly let that person explain the situation. The way this friend dealt with matters was very rational as he would not simply follow the herd. When people use such rationality to deal with matters, those rumors will have no chance to spread.

“When I am still unsure of what I know, I will not hastily spread it.” When we do not yet thoroughly understand many truths and are not clear about some facts, we should not rashly tell them to others. Since the first impression will dominate one’s thinking, he will be led down the wrong path if we tell someone the wrong thing, which is very bad. Let us say we are now studying the classics and someone asks you, “Which classic should I start with?” You answer, “*Dizigui*.” In this day and age, each person has a different opinion, how can we ensure that our view is correct? The answer can be found in the classics. The Chinese word for “classic” is the same as the word for “longitude.” Why do we call the classics

“longitudes”? We see that the earth has longitudes and latitudes; the longitudes and latitudes are used as a standard for position and will not change. Therefore, it signifies that the classics are eternal truths. As long as you use the classics as the benchmark, you will have confidence that it indeed complies with the truth. So, if someone says the foundation of virtue is something other than “filial piety,” how can you judge his answer? It is wrong.

In this era we have to hold fast to the principle of “Relying on the Dharma and not the people.” Or else we will get confused by what we hear. “Relying on the Dharma and not the people.” In this respect, when we follow the teachings of the *Three Character Classic* for instance, we can immediately get rid of many specious notions. For example, the classic states, “Primordially, people have an inherent good nature; people’s nature is the same but they acquire different habits; without proper education, their behavior will deviate from their innate nature.” It gives the answer: humans have a pure, good innate nature, but they develop bad habits easily if they do not receive a good education. In this way, philosophers will not keep debating about whether people are good or bad by nature because the standard has been laid down here. The classic also states, “The essential method of education is focused learning.” But students now learn four to five subjects simultaneously. Can they learn them well? People today refuse to accept the teachings in the classics and that of the saints and sages. Who do they listen to? People in this age listen to lies instead of advice and approve speciousness but not the truth.

Indeed, I have a deep feeling of this. Let us say a parent comes to discuss with us how to educate his child well. After he has finished explaining the situation, I will surely tell him, “‘Three feet of ice is not formed by one day’s chill.’ You must use patience and love with your child and cooperate with the teacher. After about half a year to a year, your child will gradually be able to observe due decorum.” Oftentimes, a parent hears “six months to a year,” he will furrow his brow and say “Wow! Such a long time.” Before he leaves, he would say, “Thank you, Teacher Tsai. I’ll come to seek your advice again when there is an opportunity.” But he will never come back. Very likely when he sees an ad in the paper that says, “Three-Day Course that Guarantees You to Produce a Genius,” he will make a beeline for the course even though the fee is rather expensive. We can see from here that he does not believe in the truth he was told. People now crave instant success and benefits; they want their child to reach the pinnacle of success instantly. It just so happens to run contrary to wisdom because haste makes waste. We must know how to judge wisely.

The *Three Character Classic* states, “A pupil must start his learning from the very basics.” Which book should he start with? “After learning the foundational classics, he can then learn *The Four Books*.” So, you can be assured with confidence. Which book should he start with? The most incisive foundational classic now is *Dizigui*, which was compiled according to the foundational classic guidelines. Then you will not have to worry about saying the wrong thing. After learning this classic, he can learn *The Classic of Filial Piety* and *The Four Books*. Moreover, when children have already firmly comprehended the learning and practice of

Dizigui, will their insights be the same when they study *The Classic of Filial Piety* and *The Four Books*? No! When children read this sentence—Filial piety and fraternity are the root of benevolence—the words of “filial piety” and “fraternity” will no longer be just words for them. What will they be? The student would raise his hand and say, “Teacher, is this ‘filial piety’ referring to ‘Being Filial to Parents at Home’?” For him “filial piety” is not “empty” but is integrated into his life. He knows that his understanding must be consistent with practice when pursuing wisdom, and that practice must accompany with studying. Once this attitude is correct, his direction will not stray. So “When I am unsure of what I am seeing, I will not rashly speak of it.” For us to have the right view, we must gain understanding from the classics, and accumulate our ability to judge from the saints’ and sages’ teachings.

Empty Promises are Forbidden

Next, “I must not agree to do something inappropriate, if I do, I will put myself into a dilemma.” “I must not agree to do something inappropriate.” Are there many empty promises nowadays? Therefore, when a person is elated, he must not casually agree to give things to people very likely he will lose his credibility when he fails to do so. We often see this mistake made by adults: as soon as parents are happy, children can quickly observe it from their speech and facial expression and then ask parents for things. At this time the parents will often say, “Okay, okay!” But they will regret it later. When do we adults easily agree to children? When they do well in their examination. This answer is very good and absolutely true! If children can ask for things whenever they do well in the examination, what is their purpose in studying? Unknowingly, when we promise children we will give them things, we have already nurtured their desire for vanity and have led them astray from their purpose in studying.

Nowadays, what can children get when they perform well in their primary school exam? They can eat ice cream. What can they buy when they do well in their junior high school exam? They can buy a bicycle. What about when they excel in their senior high school exam? They can negotiate and choose what they want. “Do you want an MP3 player or something else?” All their motivation is on these material belongings. Why are many parents forced from their home by their children? Because the children think that parents should satisfy everything they want. Therefore, when this trend of demanding things is formed, children’s desires will grow day by day. “Desires are like a bottomless abyss.” When a child’s desire is unleashed, can it ever be reined in again? “It is easy for a frugal person to become extravagant, but it is difficult for an extravagant person to become frugal.” When children are so used to demanding things, what will happen if you stop giving in to them one day? We have also heard of many junior high school children beating their mother when she refused to give them money. At this time, being parents, no one will come to your rescue. So, light promises are given out of excessive doting.

There was a criminal case involving a youth whose father often gave him a lot of money when he was a child. Consequently, he became accustomed to spending money. Later, he spent ten to twenty thousand yuan a month, which was very lavish. One day, his father could no longer bear it and said, "I can't give you money anymore." He even arranged his son to serve in the army for two years. Did he change his habit when he returned two years later? Very difficult! Indeed, already infected by vanity and extravagance, when the occasion arose he could not resist pretending to be rich. After becoming a soldier, he did not change; old habits die hard. His father drew a line with him and said, "I will stop giving you money!" As a result, this child hired an assassin to murder his parents. At the entrance to their home he said to the assassin, "In a moment, a man who is this tall will come out..." he clearly described the route that the man would take. The assassin asked, "Who is this person?" The son said, "My father." And just like that his father was murdered. Since his mother had the key to the money, he murdered her as well. Therefore, killing parents is no longer rare now. What is its cause? Self-interest becomes a priority while righteousness is neglected. This continuous greed had turned into desire, which dominated his behavior and made it very difficult for him to escape from it. Therefore, we must be careful: "I must not agree to do something inappropriate." We must not keep nurturing children's extravagance.

There was a child who was unhappy with the food he was served and angrily refused to eat. What would the typical mother do? She would come over and persuade her child several times, and she might even say, "If you finish your meal, I will bring you to eat at McDonald's on Saturday." As a result, the child who initially refused to eat even a bite, quickly swallowed the food. Because when we do not have principles, children will clearly know our bottom line. The son knows that the adults will submit and agree to him as long as he uses certain emotions. This will cause trouble. So, when this child refused to eat, his father did not say anything, just continued to eat. His mother was about to persuade the son, but her husband, who was highly sensitive to education, immediately made eye contact with her as if to say, "You back off, let me handle this." Of course, both of them said nothing; the spouses had a tacit understanding.

What is the principle of educating children? Spouses must act consistently. Otherwise, the child will surely hide behind the one who has no principles. After the meal, their son still refused to eat; the father said, "Let's take all the food away." The son might still be having a tantrum but his parents just let him be. As he did not have dinner, he felt so hungry at midnight that he could not fall asleep. What did he do then? He got up to raid the fridge and ate the food cold. Would he dare to threaten and make requests next time? No! From the previous few lectures, have we deeply understood that making a cautious start in education is particularly important? Not only is it important for children, but also for all adult interactions. For instance, you must let employees understand the company's principles in the very beginning. Likewise, we must "teach the daughter-in-law at her first arrival, and start to teach children from the time they are infants." When the daughter-in-law just enters her in-law's

house, she must not behave in a spoiled manner but learn the family traditions so that everyone can cooperate well.

So, making promises readily usually comes from spoiling children and from not having principles. When parents make promises based on how they feel—they decide not to follow through on their promises when their mood changes—their child will lose trust in them. Let us say while you are playing mahjong, you say to your child, “Okay, pipe down, I’ll buy something for you.” When will he ask for things in the future? When you are playing mahjong or when you are busy, he knows he will be able to get whatever he asks for. This is troublesome! Therefore, parents must “not make promises readily.” They must also further teach their children to do likewise.

There was a little child who gave his classmate a pencil. Being very happy, his classmate sharpened the pencil and started to write with it. The next day, this child asked the classmate who had received the pencil, “Will you play with me today?” His classmate who was very simple-minded said, “I won’t play with you today.” “Then give me the pencil back.” Children are very pure; his classmate then returned the pencil to him. But he said, “I want the unsharpened one.” So his classmate took an unsharpened pencil and gave it to him. He said, “Not this pencil, I want the one I gave you.” When the teacher saw this, he quickly went over and seized the opportunity to teach the child. The teacher said to him, “When I speak, credibility is foremost.’ Since you’ve already given the pencil to him, it doesn’t belong to you anymore. You have no right to take it back from him. Before giving things to your friend, you have to first weigh whether you’re really willing to give it away. Or, say you want to give something away today, before you make a promise to the other person, you must think whether you have the ability to fulfill it or not. If you do not have the ability yet you make a promise to others, you will lose their trust in the end. Other than measuring your own ability, you must also consider if your promise to your classmate conforms with school policy. Perhaps the school rules prohibit such things, but you still promise your classmate; this is not right. Thus, you must consider from the aspects of abiding by the school rules and country laws. Only when our behavior is proper and we are able to keep our word, can we then promise our classmates.” So this attitude of “not making promises lightly” also requires us to guide students. That is all for this class. Thank you all.