

Dizigui 33 English

Integrity Comes From Virtue

Hello, my friends.

We have talked about being prudent in speech and deed the past few days. We must be extra cautious and respectful, paying particular attention when interacting with others. The Chinese have a saying, "Great integrity and personality is often cultivated in a dark room; while the statecraft ability of changing a course of events is gained from an exceedingly cautious attitude." It tells us a truth. From where can we start to nurture very pure integrity? It starts when one is alone! When no one is watching, he still keeps his deeds and words consistent; only then can he cultivate such integrity. Therefore, the details of life are also a great knowledge to learn. As for "the statecraft ability of changing a course of events," from where do we start to lay the foundation? From "having an exceedingly cautious attitude"! From treating every person and thing with respect and cautiousness! Only then can one accomplish a great task in the future. This is because he has been accumulating the prudent attitude little by little.

It is mentioned in Zhu Bolu's Maxims for Managing the Family "Humble yourself to become close to those who are virtuous and experienced, you will be able to rely on them during times of urgency." So, only a person who is very careful in the small details can truly perform important tasks well. If he does not care about details, many minor situations may occur when he really undertakes a major job. Very possibly, he may even lose track. As parents, we must often remind children of small details from their early age. Also, we should pay more attention to our own thoughts in these small matters and further correct them right away. Yesterday we mentioned, "In virtues and learning, in ability and skill, if I am not as good as others, I will encourage myself to be better. As for clothing and attire, or food and drink, if I am not as good as others, I will not feel inferior."

The current social ethos is full of superficial vanity and tends to advocate material comfort. Many people may be very poor, but what clothes do they buy? Very extravagant ones. They wear them to show off to others. Perhaps his wife and children are going hungry at home, but he is still pretending to be wealthy. In fact, this kind of attitude towards life is very hypocritical and fake. It is absolutely not because you have a lot of money in your pocket that a person truly respects you from his heart. Or is it? Definitely not! When one is very courteous to you because of your enormous wealth, who is he being polite to? Money! Wait till you have given him all your money, his attitude towards you may change instantly.

Desires Are Like a Bottomless Abyss

As the saying goes, "The friendship of virtuous men is plain like water, but the friendship of petty-minded men is like sweet honey." Why is the friendship of petty-minded men sweet as honey? Because they have a purpose! They will go to any length to fawn on and flatter you. Many people are caught in this situation, thinking that these people value and respect them so much. In the end, they may fall for the petty man's tricks. Why is the virtuous people's friendship plain like water? Because their association with you is based on virtue. As your friendship grows, though it seems plain, it is true friendship. He will not cling to you every day. Because you are both very clear that each of you has responsibilities as a son, subordinate, husband, or wife. Since everyone has many duties that must be fulfilled, how can they spend all their time with you all day? They would certainly say, "It's already past eight o'clock, Aren't you going home to read Moral Education Stories with your son? You'd better go home." Though it seems plain, it is true friendship. There is mutual care and understanding under the

plain surface. So, it is true that material abundance does not win the respect of others for you. You may even plunge into a bottomless chasm in pursuit of materialism.

It is said, "Desires are like a bottomless abyss." We also mentioned yesterday, "How long will one be happy after she has spent plenty of money on an expensive dress?" Three days. How long will she suffer? She may have to eat instant noodles for the whole month, causing her health to deteriorate. Suppose one is tempted by a luxury sports car and buys it, how long will he be happy? One or two months. And during that period of happiness, his wife will be put on the back shelf. What has that car become? The first wife. Wiping the car every day, he will turn a blind eye to his own wife. The happiness lasts one to two months, but how long do you need to pay back the loan? It may be two to three years. (Five or six years actually) While repaying the loan he may feel pain.

To be honest, when one likes to pursue these kind of name brand and expensive things, what happens when he sees a new model coming out after six months or a year and other people driving a newer model than him? He will feel a bit uncomfortable, get excited, and run out to buy a new one. Oftentimes, he wants to buy the new model before he has finished paying off the loan. He may then become a slave to material things for life. Not only he himself becomes a slave to material things, even his family members may be inflicted. Many people wish to buy a luxurious villa to show their social prestige. Are there such kind of people? Yes. (Audience replies.) Our ancestors remind us that even if your wealth is counted in the millions, how many meals do you eat a day? Three meals a day. Why bother to pursue such superficial things? Millionaires still eat three meals a day. Even if you own a massive mansion, how much space do you need when you lie down to sleep at night? Only six feet.

Virtue Or Talent?

Indeed, people have very few material needs. As the saying goes, "True happiness lies in contentment." When you are content, your life will be very relaxing and simple, which is very good for your physical and mental health. We must realize this! Say you pay a lot of attention to eating really well... Let us think about it: Chinese usually receive many wedding invitations before Lunar New Year, because they often say, "Whether rich or poor, get married for the new year!" Receiving so many invitations, I once went to three wedding banquets in a week. After all that eating for three days, how would you feel? Like you could not bear to eat anymore. All that oily food like meat and fish cannot compare with the joy and ease of eating light tofu and cabbage. Many people pursue a high-end house. Because, during the conversation with others, they are afraid to hear such words, "I have a luxury villa in such and such a place." When he hears it, he will feel upset that others have such a place and he does not. He will then work very hard day and night to make money and finally buys a villa. Well, how long would he stay there in a year? He may go there three to five times a year and every time he would stay for two to three days. But he has to hire one or two servants to help him guard this villa. How long would these servants live there in a year? Since they stay in this villa every day, they are the ones enjoying it. So my friends, who is actually blessed? Who is the one blessed? The employed servants have real blessings while the owner must work very hard to pay the mortgage.

Indeed, we must think carefully, "What kind of life can truly benefit our body and mind?" Do not pursue illusory material enjoyment! "In virtue and learning, in ability and skill, if I am not as good as others, I will encourage myself to be better." A Chinese idiom states, "Possessing both virtues and talents." Virtue is mentioned first while talent is mentioned after it. Therefore, this idiom implies which one, virtue or talent, is more important? "Possessing both virtues and talents." So, virtue is more important than talent. In modern times, there is a calligrapher, Mr. Lin Sanzhi, who is revered as a contemporary sage of calligraphy in cursive script. The

Japanese have great respect for his calligraphy. When Japanese calligraphers come to China, they will go to his house to pay respect for him; they greatly admire his calligraphy and his personal character.

Mr. Lin Sanzhi once said, "One with virtues and talents will cherish talented people; One with talents but without virtues will be jealous of talented people. One with virtues but without talents will know how to use talented people; one with neither virtues nor talents will destroy talented people." So, if we hire an employee, how should we choose? We must select those who possess both virtues and talents. Otherwise, we should at least choose those with virtues but without talents, because when one is virtuous, he will know how to embrace and appreciate the talents of others. He understands, "Upon seeing the good points of others, I should strive to be as good as them." He knows how to cherish talented people. But, if he only possesses talents with no virtues, he will certainly be jealous of others. If he has neither virtues nor talents, he will destroy talented people.

Learning Skills Without Virtues

In the Spring and Autumn Period, there was a prime minister in the state of Qin named Li Si. Since he only possessed talents but no virtues, he would be very jealous when he saw talented people. He was jealous of his junior, Han Feizi. And he even framed Han, which resulted in Han's death. Not only did he incriminate Han Feizi but also the scholars. He suggested to Emperor Qin Shihuang to burn the Confucian classics and bury alive the Confucian scholars. All the saints' and sages' teachings were burned, this offense was too serious! Later, Li Si did not meet with a good end either. Both he and his son were executed by being cut in half in the East Market. This is about someone who only has talents but not virtues; he will be jealous of the talented people. So, when we further children, we must attach greater importance to virtues. If we do not focus our attention on his virtue, then his life will never be happy no matter how highly talented you have cultivated him to be. Because being jealous of others certainly causes pain inside. Furthermore, his jealousy of others will also create many obstacles in his life. Others will be jealous of him as well. We must be cautious in this area.

I know a calligrapher named Li Chuanjun. Teacher Li once served as a calligraphy judge, and he found that the works of some students had been written by their teachers. Are there such situations? If we parents and teachers act like this, we are actually not educating children but are misleading them. This misguidance will make them think that they can be unruly and achieve their goals by hook or by crook. As a result, they have planted a very unwholesome cause in children's mind. Their life may be ruined in the future due to breaking rules and violating laws. Since virtue is the foundation of a person's career in life, it would be dangerous if it is not properly established. It is just like a big tree; if its roots are not firmly rooted, the taller its trunk grows and the bigger the shade becomes, sooner or later, it will be uprooted when a gust of wind blows. There are many cases like this. That is why one's evil karmas are usually created during his pinnacle period. When he is at his apogee, he will commit many wrongdoings if he is unvirtuous. So later, Teacher Li insisted on excluding those students whose teacher had written their papers, so that children who had really written by themselves could receive recognition.

Teacher Li once said to me that he had sought out many calligraphy teachers and had spent a lot of money seeking their advice but had failed to acquire true skills. After going around in search of a good teacher, he became dejected and destitute. Due to his sense of mission to inherit and pass down Chinese art, as a saying describes that "Heaven will not disappoint those who keep trying," he finally met a teacher to whom he is greatly indebted. His teacher not only did not charge him anything, but let him stay in his house and learn with him.

So my friends, if you want your child to acquire true skills, you do not necessarily need to spend huge sums of money. If these artists requested a lot of money as tuition, it actually reveals whether they have virtue or only talents. When a person only possesses talents but not virtue, his talents and level of art will definitely run into bottlenecks and not progress further. Because art is also a manifestation of one's mental state.

Why do many works of art deeply touch people's heart? They are directly related to the benevolence, the state of mind, and the self-cultivation of the artist. So, when this Teacher Li met his calligraphy teacher who taught him many important core methods and skills, his teacher said to him, "If you don't have true virtues, I have harmed you for a lifetime by teaching you these skills." He continued, "Because, after I teach you these skills, you will probably gain both fame and wealth within a short period of time and this moment will be a dangerous time in your life. At this time, if you don't know how to be humble, you will invite a lot of jealousy. Since you also don't know how to restrain yourself to live a frugal and diligent life, you may develop extravagant habits." We have also seen many people in the art world who were once favored and famous, but became dejected in their later years. That is all because of those bad habits of extravagance they had formed. Teacher Li deeply grasped his teacher's words and sincerely followed his teachings by upholding modesty at all times. At only thirty-three years old he had won several big awards, and he often volunteered to offer teaching. I have also invited him to Haikou to instruct us in calligraphy. He came for a whole week without taking any pay, and he even brought a lot of brushes to give to our teachers. So, virtue is vital because it is the foundation of myriad fortunes. Only by having virtue as a foundation can one's fortune be stable.

Who Can We Rely On?

When Laozi was preparing to leave China, he encountered an official who asked him, "I have two sons but I don't know which one I should rely on in the future." Laozi took a handful of money and put it on the table. Laozi then said to the official's two sons, first to the elder one, "You just have to hit your father once and all this money will be yours." The elder son was more simple-minded. He lowered his head and said, "No way! How can I hit my dad?" He would rather die than obey. After that, Laozi turned to the younger son who was clever, smart, and had a quick mind. Most parents would think that such a child is better and may brag about him everywhere, "You see, my younger son is so smart!" Laozi said to him, "You can just hit your dad lightly and this money is yours." The younger son immediately went to hit his father lightly and quickly put the money in his pocket. Laozi said to the father, "Now you know who you should depend on in your old age." Later, this official passed away and it was indeed his elder son taking care of him in his old age. His younger son had gone to other places to do business. When the news of his father's death reached him, he said, "It would take me a while for me to travel back and forth, I wonder how much less money I would make." In the end, he did not even attend his father's funeral.

So, Laozi had great wisdom as he could infer a child's intention from his behavior. Because, "A person who attaches great importance to profit will surely abandon righteousness." If there is a conflict with his interest, he will not care and will put profit first. Ordinary people may particularly appreciate children who are clever and smart. But often it is the more honest children taking care of the parents in their old age. We have also heard of a mother who gave birth to three children. Two elder children graduated from college, while the youngest child only graduated from high school. Later, which child took care of her? Well, the higher education one has, the more selfish he will become; he was only thinking of himself. We also see many parents sending their children to study abroad, after graduation, they do not come back to take care of their parents in their remaining years. These children usually leave and never return. Some get married there and their parents have to travel overseas to visit

them. When they are going to leave after a period of stay, what will the daughter-in-law take out? The bill for their living expenses (Audience replies.) Truly, his parents' blood would boil. Had they known it would come to this, they would not have given birth to him in the first place. So, if children do not develop virtues, they will really drive their parents mad. They will indeed harm their family and society. Therefore, we must be farsighted when educating children by regarding virtue as the foundation.

How To Deal With Criticism

Let us look at the next phrase, "Becoming angry upon hearing my faults and happy upon hearing praise will cause harmful friends to come and beneficial friends to leave. Becoming fearful upon hearing praise and happy upon hearing my faults will make upright and forgiving people gradually come closer to me." Let us recall when we talked about trustworthiness. At the beginning we said, "When I speak, credibility is foremost." This represents credibility in speech. As for "Cunning words and foul language, such vulgar manners must be prohibited" refers to our attitude when talking. When we talk very rudely, we will not be able to win others' trust. When you can practice the teachings in this part on trustworthiness, you will make people have great trust in you as they are very convinced by you. For example, "When I am unsure of what I am seeing, I will not rashly speak of it. When I am still unsure of what I know, I will not hastily spread it." When you can do this, your friends will certainly think that you are well cultivated and have a sense of propriety. Then, your long-term social credibility will continue to improve.

It is like this phrase we just recited, "Becoming angry upon hearing my faults and happy upon hearing praise..." If we get angry when we hear our faults or become proud when others praise us, can we gain our friends' trust with such an attitude? It will be very difficult. We "will cause harmful friends to come and beneficial friends to leave." Why will harmful friends come? Because they know well that as long as they say a few nice words to you, you will lose your rationality. And then, they will have an opportunity to take advantage. That is why immoral friends will come. Beneficial friends will go away! Why will beneficial friends go away? Because these virtuous people know that as a friend, it is their duty to give frank advice without concealing anything. When you have shortcomings, a virtuous friend will honestly point it out. When you cannot accept it, what will he do? He has to retreat first. Because, if he does not do that and you see him often, you will feel annoyed when you see him. In order not to trouble you, he has to back off for a while. He will wait until you are really willing to accept his kind advice before he comes back to you again. Do people like to listen to nice words or honest words? Nice words (Audience replies.) When is this habit formed? So, the attitude of "becoming fearful upon hearing praise and happy upon hearing my faults" must be rooted from childhood.

When teaching this sentence, the teacher in our center would remind the students, "When others tell you about your shortcomings today, it is as if your face happens to have a black thing stuck on it, and you are able to remove it because someone told you, shouldn't you thank them? Of course you should. When others point out your shortcomings, this is like they are helping you remove the dirt from your face, you surely need to thank them." As a result, we often hear a very beautiful sentence whenever one child points out the other's faults. The children will bow and say, "Thank you for pointing out my mistake." When a child rectified his shortcomings, and we teachers give him encouragement at the right time by saying, "If I correct my faults, the faults will no longer exist," he will be even happier to rectify his shortcomings. Thus, planting this root from an early age will be of great benefit to him throughout his life.

Moved by the Eight Winds

“Becoming fearful upon hearing praise and happy upon hearing my faults...” reminds me of a story from the Song Dynasty (960-1279). At that time, there was a great poet, Su Dongpo. He and Zen Master Fo Yin were good friends and they often learned from each other. One day, Su Dongpo felt that his cultivation realm was very good. So he wrote a poem which reads, “I kowtow to the Buddha, whose light illuminates the cosmos. Unmoved by the Eight Winds, I sit upright on the purplish golden lotus.” Su Dongpo believed his cultivation realm was very good, even the Eight Winds could not affect his pure mind. Dear friends, what are the Eight Winds? Prosperity, decline, suffering, happiness, praise, censure, disgrace, and honor. Prosperity refers to times when your life is smooth sailing. Decline is when you are at a low ebb. Suffering is when one is in pain while happiness is when one is filled with joy. People often keep complaining when they suffer pain, and extreme joy turns into sorrow once they are overjoyed. These states are testing a person’s cultivation. Next is praise, which may cause complacency. Censure: when others criticize us, we feel angry and uncomfortable. There are also disgrace and honor. Disgrace refers to defaming us. And honor means that when we have a very good reputation, we may give rise to arrogance.

So, Su Dongpo thought that these Eight Winds could not affect his mental state and that he could maintain his purity. Thus, he wrote this poem and had his servant bring it to Zen Master Fo Yin. When the master finished reading it, he wrote one word, “fart,” on the paper and gave it to his servant. How was Su Dongpo looking forward to seeing the master’s response? He might have been thinking, “Hurry up and praise me!” In fact, had he been moved by the Eight Winds? Yes! He desired to be praised and to hear some pleasing words. After seeing Zen Master Fo Yin’s reply, he seethed with rage and quickly rushed to the master’s residence. When he reached the master’s gate, the door was closed and two lines were posted on it, “Unmoved by the Eight Winds, one broken wind struck you to cross the river.” (Master Fo Yin lived across the river from him.) When Su Dongpo saw the words, he felt very ashamed and left. So, we need to constantly watch ourselves and see whether we are also affected by the Eight Winds. We must always watch our thoughts and eliminate these bad habits. Only then will we not commit the mistake of “becoming angry upon hearing my faults and happy upon hearing praise.”

The Four Gentlemen

The next phrase states, “Becoming fearful upon hearing praise and happy upon hearing my faults will make upright and forgiving people gradually come closer to me.” We have also seen that when a monarch is very magnanimous and can accept the exhortations of his ministers, these loyal and virtuous ministers will surely point out his shortcomings earnestly so that the state’s policies can truly help the people. Likewise, when our students or children point out our faults, we parents and teachers must humbly accept them as well. Many elders may think, “Will I be inferior when confessing mistakes to children?” In fact, it is just the opposite! When we teachers have really made a mistake, let’s say we have violated the teaching of a certain phrase in Dizigui, and we say to the student right away, “I have made a mistake here, I’ll rectify it. I am learning together with you all.” Usually when a teacher admits wrong, what can be seen in children’s eyes? Their respect for the teacher. So, admitting one’s faults is a virtue. “People are not sages, who can have no fault? When one can rectify his wrongs, nothing is better than this.”

Thus, when the elders take the initiative to correct their misdeeds and reform, it will also encourage the entire group to have the courage to admit their mistakes. When we have many friends around us who can proactively give us advice, it is like having a lot more bright eyes helping us see the way in life. Since we only have two eyes, sometimes we cannot see to the

sides or behind when we look in front. When you have the humility to accept other people's exhortations, naturally everyone will help you.

In Chinese culture, plum, orchid, bamboo, and chrysanthemum are regarded as "The Four Gentlemen." They represent the four kinds of virtues of a gentleman. Why does bamboo signify the virtue of a gentleman? Because bamboo is hollow inside, it suggests "to accept righteous advice with an ever humble and broaden mind." So, "Upon seeing the good points of others, I should strive to be as good as them." Similarly, when we see the good points of things, we should emulate them. That is why our ancestors also learned from myriad things other than people. When we see the virtues of myriad things, we should also reflect and correct ourselves. I once said to my students, "What virtue does bamboo possess and what can you learn from it?" I let them observe by themselves. My friends, what can you learn from bamboo? In learning, we have to be keen. An important crux of learning is being perceptive. Only by being perceptive can we deduce many things from one instance, and always cultivate and improve ourselves every time we come into contact with people, matters, and objects. Other than humility, what other virtues does bamboo have? When we look at bamboo's appearance, do we see just one bamboo? What can we see? They grow in a group. Since it is a group, every branch is very straight as if everyone next to you is very upright; I believe you will not become crooked even if you want to. This is the importance of the environment! Even Mencius' mother had to move three times. So, even if we had the good roots and quality as Mencius, we would still need to cultivate in a good environment. Therefore, parents must provide a very conducive learning environment for children.

What Can We Learn From Bamboo?

Let's take a closer look at the bamboo! It grows section by section. It also represents that life cannot always be smooth sailing and there are bound to be some challenges. What must we do when we face challenges? Overcome them with great courage! Bamboo also breaks through obstacles one by one. So, we must have a tenacious attitude to face life. Many of the answers given by the students would take us by surprise. One of the students said, "Teacher, bamboo has the spirit of serving others." I said, "Why do you say so?" He said, "Because bamboo shoots can be eaten, bamboo can be used to build houses, and its leaves can be used to make zongzi (rice tamale). So, its whole body is dedicated to benefitting others." We should feel very ashamed when we hear this. Do we match the spirit of sacrifice like bamboo?

We should treat people, matters, and things around us with a humble and respectful attitude by accepting their righteous advice and learning from them. That will add a great deal of help to our lives. So, "Becoming fearful upon hearing praise and happy upon hearing my faults will make upright and forgiving people gradually come closer to me." When you have this attitude, even plants may love and smile at you. "Becoming fearful upon hearing praise..." Why should we hold on to a vigilant attitude when we hear praise from others? Because our talents and even our achievements are definitely unattainable through individual effort. For instance, as we grew up, we depended on our parents' nurture and education plus many elders' guidance and care, so that we could acquire these abilities. Hence, when we achieve success, we must first remember that these credits are theirs. Keeping this in mind, we will then not overestimate ourselves and become conceited. Correspondingly, the success of our course is attributed to everyone's help. During these few days of our lessons, many friends went to bed very late at night and woke up very early the next day to take care of various affairs and to cook for us. So, to achieve one task is only possible with many people's efforts. We must always thank these people who have dedicated for us. When we have this kind of grateful mind, we will not feel happy but fearful upon hearing compliments. We must quickly make the best effort to do our part well and to repay the dedication of so many people.

Unintentional Mistake, Intentional Evil

Let us look at the next phrase and recite it together, "Doing wrong unintentionally is called making a mistake while doing wrong intentionally is called committing an evil. If I correct my faults, the faults will no longer exist. If I try to cover them up, I will be doubly wrong." "Doing wrong unintentionally is called making a mistake." It is said, "One who is ignorant of his faults is not guilty." When someone commits wrongdoings unintentionally, we must embrace and forgive him. Otherwise, he would feel very bad. As for us, we need to be constantly watchful of ourselves and see if there is anything improper in our speech and deeds. For instance, two or three people walking side by side will make it inconvenient for the pedestrians behind to walk past them. Often when people meet a friend whom they have not seen for quite a while, they become oblivious to everything around them as soon as they start chatting. This is an unintentional fault. Sometimes when you call your friend, he may be about to go out, if you talk to him nonstop, he will not know where to cut you off or tell you that he is going out. As a result, he is held up there. How fast is his heartbeat then? Very rapid! This is also an inadvertent mistake. So, when we call someone, we must first ask, "Are you okay to talk now?" We should always be considerate of others.

When Confucius went to Imperial Ancestral Temple, he would ask about all matters. He would consult the staff in the Imperial Ancestral Temple. Other people were wondering, "Why is the master asking everything in the temple when his knowledge is so extensive?" His students then asked Confucius and the master replied, "Asking is an act of respect for the matter. Furthermore, when we enter a new environment, that place may have its own rules. We must not do as we wish as it may be rude." So, when we go to a new environment, we must first learn about the way of life there. Even the furnishings and decorations, we should not move or change anything without permission. We may think that we are being kind, but such an action may cause trouble for the local staff. We may possibly commit an inadvertent mistake.

Next phrase: "Doing wrong intentionally is called committing an evil." It means that we still do it despite knowing it is wrong. This is called "intentional wrongdoing." It is evil and very unacceptable. Are there many such phenomena now? Many! Why? Why? For example, a "No Smoking" sign is obvious, someone may still smoke openly. What is the reason? He has never studied Dizigui. Standard answer! The education has been lost. He has not learned the principles for life and work; neither the teacher had taught him nor had his parents reminded him. As stated in The Infinite Life Sutra, "The deviation from goodness of the past generations is because they did not learn moral education." We will stop here today. Thank you everyone.

諸位朋友，大家好！我們這幾天課程都談到謹言慎行，都是在很多與人相處的細節當中，我們也要格外謹慎、格外恭敬。

所以我們中國有一句格言提到「青天白日的氣節，自暗室屋漏中培來；旋乾轉坤的經綸，自臨深履薄處得力」。這意思也告訴我們，一個人有非常潔白的氣節都是從哪裡開始培養？從他獨處的時候，從別人沒有看到的地方，他都能夠言行一致，才能培養出這樣的氣節。所以生活的細節也是大學問。「旋乾轉坤」，能夠扭轉乾坤的能力從哪裡開始打根基？從「臨深履薄」，從他面對人、面對每一件事物都能夠恭敬，都能夠謹慎對待，他才能夠往後辦很大的事。因為他這一些謹慎的態度都已經在這點點滴滴當中積累上來。《朱子治家格言》有提到「屈志老成，急則可相依」。所以往往是在這些小細節當中，都能夠非常謹慎的人，他才能真正把重要的大事辦好。假如這一些小地方都不用心，很可能真正接一件重大的事就會有很多小狀況出現，甚至於會

亂了頭緒都有可能。所以我們為人父母在這一些小細節當中，也要從小多多提醒小孩，那我們自己也要多多觀照自己在這些小事當中的起心動念，進而當下去改過、去修正。我們昨天是提到：

【唯德學。唯才藝。不如人。當自礪。若衣服。若飲食。不如人。勿生感。】

現在的社會風氣是比較虛浮，比較崇尚物質享受，很多人可能都家裡很窮，都快沒飯吃了，但是衣服都要買得怎麼樣？很漂亮，因為要穿給別人看，可能老婆孩子在家都餓肚子了，還是要打腫臉充胖子，其實這樣的人生態度太虛偽、太虛假了。

一個人他會打從心裡真正尊重你，絕對不是因為你口袋裡有很多錢，是不是這樣？絕對不是。當你口袋裡有很多錢，他對你很有禮貌，那是對誰？對錢。等你口袋的錢都給他了，那他對你可能態度馬上就轉了。所以說「君子之交淡如水，小人之交甜如蜜」。為什麼小人之交會甜如蜜？因為他是有所目的，所以他就會竭盡所能的巴結你、諂媚你，很多人都在這種情境之下，還以為這些人對他如此的看重，如此的尊敬，到最後可能就中了小人的詭計。為什麼君子之交淡如水？因為君子是以德行與朋友相交往，所以在交往的過程會淡中有真味，決不可能每天跟你膩在一起。因為彼此都很清楚，我們都有為人子的責任，我們都有為人臣的責任，我們都有為人夫、為人婦的職責。所以各自都有很多的本分應該盡心盡力去做，怎麼可能整天跟你耗在一起？一定會說：“都已經八點多了，你不是要回去跟你兒子講德育故事嗎？趕快回家。”所以這個「淡中有真味」，淡中含有彼此互相的關懷，互相的體諒在其中。

所以確確實實物質的豐沛並不能贏得別人對你的尊重，甚至於為了追求物質，可能讓自己陷入一個無底的深淵。所謂欲是深淵。我們昨天也提到，花了大把的錢去買一件昂貴的衣服，快樂多久？三天。痛苦多久？可能那一個月都要吃泡麵，把身體搞砸了。假如看到一台名貴的跑車他就動心了，去買了一台名貴的跑車，快樂多久？快樂一個月，快樂兩個月。而且在那一段快樂過程，你的太太被打入冷宮，那台車變什麼？變大老婆。每天在那裡擦車，都把太太視若無睹，快樂一、二個月，但是那個貸款一付要付多久？可能要兩年，可能要三年，所以那一段時間你可能痛苦在付貸款。而且說實在的，當一個人很喜歡去追求這種名牌，這種昂貴的東西，比方說他開了半年、開了一年，突然又看到有新款出來了，他看到別人又開的款式比他還新，他會怎麼樣？他的心又有點不平，又很心動要再去買新的。所以往往貸款還沒付完，又要有新的支出，又要去買新的款式，可能一生都會變成物質的奴隸。不只自己變物質奴隸，可能連家裡的人都被拖累進來了。

很多人覺得要買一間豪華的別墅，他才顯得自己有身分，有沒有這種人？有，我們老祖宗提醒「萬貫家財」，一天吃幾餐？「日食三餐」，你何苦來哉去追求這些很虛浮的東西？萬貫家財，日食三餐；「廣廈千間」，你房子縱使有一千間，晚上躺的時候躺多少？夜眠才六尺。所以其實人在物質方面的需求其實是非常少的。所謂知足常樂，你知足生活就非常輕鬆、非常簡單，對你的身心都是很好的方式。所以我們也要從中體會到，比方說你常常很注重吃，都要吃得很好。我們可以想一下，比方說在過年以前，我們常常會接到很多的喜帖，所謂有錢沒錢，娶個老婆好過年。結果接到這麼多的喜帖，曾經我也一個禮拜去吃了三次的喜宴，三次，吃到第三天你有什麼感覺？都快吃不下去了，都是這麼樣大魚大肉，這麼多油膩的東西比不上清淡的豆腐、白菜吃得輕鬆愉快。

在很多人他追求很高級的住宅，很可能是怕在與人交談當中不能說，比方說對方有說：“我在某某地方有一個豪華別墅。”當他聽到了，別人有，我沒有，內心就很不是滋味。所以自己就很努力賺錢，日也做，晚也做，終於買了一間別墅。好，那一年去住多久？一年可能去個三次、五次，一次住個二、三天就回來了。但是他還要請一、二個人去幫他守這一間別墅，請的這些人一

年住多久？每天都住在那裡，所以是他在享受這一間別墅。所以諸位朋友，到底誰才是真正有福報的人？誰是有福報的人？請來的傭人有福報，那主人必須辛辛苦苦的賺錢來還這個貸款。所以確實我們要好好的去思考，到底什麼樣的生活才能真正對我們的身心有很好的發展，有很好的一種調節，不要追求虛幻的物質享受。

『唯德學，唯才藝；不如人，當自礪』。中國有一句成語叫「德才兼備」。德在前，才在後，所以這一句成語也告訴我們，德跟才孰為重？德才兼備，所以德更比才重要，還比才重要。在近代有一位書法家被尊為當代的草聖，叫林散之先生，日本人對他的書法非常尊重，日本書法家到中國來，都會到他的家去給他行一個禮，非常佩服他的書法，也佩服他的為人。林散之先生曾經就說過：“有德有才會愛才，無德有才會嫉才（會嫉妒人家），有德無才會用才，無德又無才會毀才。”所以我們假如要請員工要怎麼挑？要挑有德有才，不然最起碼也要挑有德無才。因為他有德行，懂得包容，他會去欣賞別人的才華，他知道「見人善，即思齊」，他就懂得去珍惜這樣的人才。

但是假如無德而只有才華，那必然會嫉妒他人；假如連才都沒有，那就會毀才。所以在春秋戰國，在秦國有一個宰相叫李斯，他是無德有才，所以看到有才華的人他很嫉妒，所以他嫉妒他的師弟韓非子，還陷害韓非子致死。不止陷害韓非子，還陷害讀書人，所以建議秦始皇焚書坑儒，把歷代很多聖賢的教誨一併都燒了，這個罪業太大了。後來李斯也沒有好下場，跟他的孩子都受到腰斬東市的刑法致死。這是無德有才會嫉才。所以我們培養孩子絕對要先重德行才行，假如不重德行，我們把孩子的才華培養得再高，他的人生絕對不會幸福。因為嫉妒別人，內心一定很痛苦，而且嫉妒別人也會形成他人生很多的障礙，別人也會同樣嫉妒他，所以這是我們必須謹慎的地方。

我認識一位書法家，他叫李傳軍，這個李老師他就曾經去擔任書法的評審，結果發現這些學生的作品肯定是老師代筆的，這個現象有沒有？那我們父母跟老師假如做出這樣的行為，事實上並不是在教育孩子，而是在誤導小孩。這也是誤導小孩，讓他覺得只要能夠達到目的都可以不守規矩，不擇手段。那這已經在孩子的心靈當中種下很不好的惡因，往後就可能因為違犯規則、違犯法律而觸犯法網，人生都有可能因此而毀了。所以這個「德」才是一個人一生事業的根基，不扎好很危險。就好像一棵大樹，你根不扎好，它的樹幹長得愈高，樹蔭長得愈大，遲早有一陣風吹過來就會連根拔起來，這樣的情況可多的。所以一個人的罪業都是盛時所造，等到他飛黃騰達，沒有德行就會幹出很多錯誤的事情。所以後來李老師就堅持要把這一些老師代筆的要剔除在外，讓這些真正自己寫的孩子能夠受到肯定。

這一位李老師也曾經跟我說過，他說他曾經去找過非常多的書法老師，也花了很多錢向他們求教，結果都沒有學到真本事，都沒有，繞了一大圈，他已經是窮困潦倒都沒什麼錢了。結果因為他有這一分要傳承中國藝術的使命感，所以皇天不負苦心人，最後遇到了他的書法恩師。結果他的書法老師不只沒收他錢，還讓他住在家裡跟著他學習。所以諸位朋友，您要讓你的孩子學到真本事，絕對不見得一定是花大把大把的鈔票，假如這些藝術家都要要你這麼多的錢，其實已經透露出來他是德多還是只有才華？當一個人無德有才華，他的才華、他的藝術境界絕對會遇到瓶頸而上不去，因為藝術也是一個人心性的一種展現。為什麼很多藝術作品能夠感人至深，這些都跟他的心境、他的仁慈、他的這些修養有直接的關係。

所以當這一位李老師他遇到他的書法老師，就把很多非常重要的心法技巧都教給他，當他的老師教完他，就對他說：“假如你沒有真正的德行，我把這些才能教給你，我是害了你一輩子。”他老師接著說：“因為這一些才華教給你，你很可能在短時間之內就會名利雙收，而這個時候將是

你人生危險的情況出現了。這個時候你又不知謙卑，就會招來很多的嫉妒；你又不知節約自己、勤儉自己的生活，可能就會養成揮霍的習慣。”所以我們也看到很多藝術界的人，也都是曾經紅極一時，結果很多晚年也是非常潦倒，那都是養成了這些奢華的習性。所以李老師對他老師這段話非常的深刻的領受，所以都謹遵老師的教誨處處謙卑。他才三十三歲，已經得到好幾次的大獎，而且也常常義務教學。我曾經也請他到海口幫我們指導寫書法，整整去了一個禮拜，他是分毫不取，甚至於還拿了大把的筆去送給我們海口的這些老師。所以德重要，德行是萬福的根基，而這個福才能立得安穩。

老子當初要離開的時候剛好遇到一個官員，這個官員就問老子，他說：“我有兩個兒子，我不知道以後應該靠哪一個？”那老子就拿了一把錢放在桌上。然後就對他兩個兒子說，先對他的大兒子：“你只要打你爸爸一下，這些錢都是你的。”這大兒子比較憨，他就低下頭說：“不行，怎麼可以打父親。”他寧死不從。那接著老子又對他的小兒子，這個小兒子聰明伶俐，腦筋轉得特別快。所以一般的父母會覺得哪一個孩子比較好？可能到處都誇：“你看我這個小兒子多聰明。”結果老子就跟他說：“你只要輕輕打一下，這些錢都是你的。”小兒子馬上過去打一下，趕快把錢收到口袋裡面去。老子就對他父親說：“現在你知道晚年應該靠誰了。”

後來這一位官員去世了，確實是他的大兒子在晚年照顧他，他的小兒子到其他地方去做生意。結果他父親的死訊傳到了這個小兒子的耳裡面，小兒子說：“我這個來回又要一段時間，不知道又要少賺多少錢。”後來連他父親的喪禮都沒有參加。所以老子他很有智慧，可以從小孩的行為當中推出他的存心，因為「重利者必輕義」，只要跟他的利益有衝突的，他一定會先不關心，一定把利擺在第一位。所以一般的人他對小孩可能都覺得那個聰明伶俐的特別欣賞，但是往往晚年都是那些比較老實的孩子在照顧。

我們也曾經聽說，一位母親生了三個孩子，老大、老二都大學畢業，老三高中畢業。後來的結果往往都是第幾的兒子照顧她？反而書讀愈多愈自私，只為自己著想。我們也看到很多的父母把孩子栽培到國外去念書，念到最後也沒有回來照顧父母終老，往往一去不回來了。有的在那裡娶了太太，父母還要打老遠去探望，甚至於住了一段時間要離開了，這個媳婦還會拿出什麼？那真是父母可能會吐血，早知今日，何必當初，不如不要生好了。所以孩子不長德行，真正會氣死父母，真正會貽害家庭、貽害社會。所以我們教育孩子要高瞻遠矚，要以德為本。我們接著看下一句經文：

【聞過怒。聞譽樂。損友來。益友卻。聞譽恐。聞過欣，直諫士。漸相親。】

在我們講「信」這個部分內容，我們可以回想一下，一開始是「凡出言，信為先」，代表言語的信用。「奸巧語，穢污詞」，這一些教誨都提到我們講話的態度，當我們的講話態度很粗魯，就會沒有辦法贏得別人的信任。所以「信」這部分內容，當你去做到的時候，你就會給人家很高的信服感，對你很服氣。比方說「見未真，勿輕言；知未的，勿輕傳」，所以你都能夠做得到，你的朋友一定會覺得你很有修養、很有分寸，你長期社會信用都會不斷的提升。

像我們剛剛念到的這一句『聞過怒，聞譽樂』，假如我們是聽到過失很生氣，別人稱讚我們，我們就洋洋得意，假如我們是這種態度，能不能贏得朋友的信任？就很困難，就會造成『損友來，益友卻』。為什麼損友要來？因為他很清楚，只要給你幾句美言，你就會神魂顛倒，到時候他就有機可乘了，所以損友就來，益友就退了。益友為什麼會退？因為這一些有德行的人，他很清楚他做朋友的本分一定要直言不諱。你有缺點，他一定會很正直幫你提出來。當你不能接受的時候，他只好先怎麼樣？先避開。因為他假如不避開，你常常看到他，也會讓你生煩惱，所以

他為了不讓你生煩惱，他只好先離開一段時間。等你真正肯接受了，肯接納他的雅言、他的規勸，他才會再回到你的身邊來。

那人喜歡聽好話還是喜歡聽正直的話？聽好話。那這個習慣從什麼時候開始？所以這種「聞譽恐，聞過欣」的態度必然要從小扎起。所以我們中心老師在教這一句的時候都會提醒小朋友，“今天別人把你的缺點講出來，就好像你的臉上剛好有一個黑黑的東西黏在上面，這個時候別人告訴你，讓你可以把這個污點污垢去掉，那你應不應該感謝他？那當然應該。那當別人指出你的缺點，就好像去除你臉上的污垢一樣，那你當然需要跟他道謝。”所以這些小朋友跟小朋友之間，只要同學把他指出缺點，我們接下來就會聽到一句很優美的話，他會一個鞠躬，跟同學講：“謝謝你，指出我的缺點。”當這個孩子對於他的缺點又有所改變，我們老師又適時的鼓勵他，「過能改，歸於無」，那他就更歡喜去好好把他這一些缺點修正過來。所以從小扎了這個根對他終身都很大的益處。

「聞過怒，聞譽樂」，就想到一個宋朝的故事。宋朝有一位大文豪蘇東坡，他跟佛印禪師是好朋友，常常兩個人都會互相切磋學問。有一天剛好蘇東坡覺得他的境界很好，就寫了一首詩，詩上寫到「稽首天外天，毫光照大千；八風吹不動，端坐紫金蓮」。他覺得他現在的境界很好，連八風都不能影響他的清淨心。諸位朋友，哪八風？這個八風就是很多我們人生境界的考驗：利、衰、苦、樂、稱、譏、毀、譽。這個利就是你很順勢的時候、很順暢的時候，衰是衰敗下來，然後苦，受苦的時候，或者很歡喜的時候、很樂的時候；往往人一苦就會怨聲載道，人一樂就有可能樂極生悲，所以這一些境界都在考驗一個人的修養。接下來是稱讚，可能就洋洋得意。譏，別人對我們譏毀，我們就很生氣、很不舒服。還有毀譽，毀是詆毀，是毀謗我們；譽，當我們有很好的名譽可能又會起了貢高我慢。所以蘇東坡覺得這八風都不能影響他的心境，他都可以保持清淨，所以寫了這一首詩要送給佛印禪師。

結果佛印禪師看完，就在信上寫了一個字，寫了一個「屁」字，就讓他拿回去。結果蘇東坡可能原來期待佛印怎麼回答他？他可能想說：“趕快稱讚我一下。”其實八風動了沒有？動了。想要人家稱讚、想聽好話。結果看了之後，他很生氣，非常生氣，就趕快趕到佛印住的地方，結果一到他的門口，門是關的，寫了兩行字，“說八風吹不動，一屁打過江來了。”所以蘇東坡一看很慚愧，就離開了。所以我們要時時觀照自己是不是也八風吹不動，時時從起心動念把我們這一些不好的習性去掉，才不會犯「聞過怒，聞譽樂」的這種錯誤。

下一句是『聞譽恐，聞過欣；直諒士，漸相親』。我們也看到當一個君主他非常寬宏大量，能接納眾臣對他的進諫，假如他有這樣的雅量必然能夠讓這一些忠臣、這一些賢臣都能用心的指出他的缺點，以便讓他的政策都能夠真實對人民有所幫助。相同的，我們為人父母、為人老師，當學生或者孩子指出我們的缺點，我們也要虛心接受。當你跟孩子承認錯誤，很多長輩心裡會想：“這樣我會不會好像矮了一截？”其實恰恰相反，當我們老師真正有錯誤，比方說犯了《弟子規》哪一句，我們馬上跟學生說：“老師這裡錯了，老師要改過，老師跟你們一起學習。”往往老師認錯的時候，在孩子的眼中能看到什麼？看到對老師的尊敬。所以當一個人認錯那是德行，「人非聖賢，孰能無過，過而能改，善莫大焉」。所以當長者主動修正、主動改過，也會帶動起整個團體都有勇於認錯的這種風氣。

當我們身邊有非常多朋友能夠主動給我們一些規勸，那你的人生就好比多了好多雙明亮的眼睛幫你看路。因為我們才兩顆眼睛，有時候看前面又看不到旁邊，又看不到後面。當你有接納別人諫言的這種虛心，自然就有眾人給你幫忙。所以我們說梅蘭竹菊是四君子，表的是君子的德行。那竹子為什麼表君子的德行？因為竹子它的心是空的，常使虛懷納雅言。所以我們「見人

善，即思齊」。那見物善？即思齊。所以我們的老祖宗不只跟人學習，還跟萬物學習。當看到萬物之德也回光返照修正自己。

我也曾經就跟學生說：“這個竹子有什麼德行，你可以向它學習什麼？”讓他們自己去觀察。諸位朋友，你可以從竹子身上學到什麼？這學習要善學，而且學習當中有一個很重要的樞紐，人要有悟性，有悟性才能舉一反三，就能時時接觸一切人事物都在修養自己，都在提升自己。除了虛心以外，還有什麼？我們看竹子的外貌，有沒有看到一根竹子的？都是什麼？一群竹子。因為有一群竹子，所以每一枝都很直立，就好像你身旁統統都是正直的人，那相信你要歪也歪不起來。所以這是一個環境的重要性。所以連孟母都要三遷，縱使有孟子這樣的根機，這樣好的素質也都需要後天好的環境來培養。所以我們父母也要給孩子提供很好的學習環境。

我們進一步看這個竹子，它都是一節一節長上去，所以也代表人生不可能一帆風順，必然都會遇到一些挑戰。所以當面臨挑戰的時候，一定要怎麼樣？勇往直前去突破。竹子也是突破一節一節的關卡。所以也是要有堅忍的態度去面對人生。學生很多時候講出來的答案會讓我們很驚訝，有一位學生就說：“老師，竹子有為人民服務的精神。”我說：“為什麼這麼講？”他說：“因為竹筍可以吃，竹子可以建房子，竹葉可以拿來包粽子。所以它是所有的全身統統都奉獻出來。”我們聽到這裡也要覺得很慚愧，我們有沒有比得上竹子這種犧牲奉獻的精神？所以我們可以對於我們身旁的人、事、物都有一種謙恭的態度，都去接受他們的雅言，都去向他們學習，那將我們的人生會增加很多的助力。所以「聞譽恐，聞過欣，直諒士，漸相親」，當你有這個態度，可能草木都會有情，都會向你微笑。

「聞譽恐」，為什麼聽到別人的稱讚，我們要抱著戰戰兢兢的態度？因為我們的才華，甚至於我們的成就，絕對不是個人的能力所能達到的。比方說我們的整個成長都是父母的養育、教育，還有很多長者給我們指導、給我們關懷，我們才能形成這樣的能力。所以當我們有所成就的時候，首先一定要想到這些功勞都是他們的，這樣我們才不會自視甚高。而且比方說我們一個課程的成就，都是眾人的協助幫忙。我們這幾天的課程，很多的朋友可能晚上很晚才睡，隔天很早又要起來打理事務，又要起來煮飯給我們吃，所以一件事的成就都是眾人的付出才能得到。所以我們也要處處感謝這一些付出的人。當我們有這樣的存心，那聞譽就不會樂，會覺得誠惶誠恐，要趕快盡心盡力把自己那一分角色做好，以回饋這麼多人的付出。我們看下一句經文，我們先把它念一遍：

【無心非。名為錯。有心非。名為惡。過能改。歸於無。尚揜飾。增一辜。】

『無心非，名為錯』，所謂「不知者無罪」。所以當別人犯錯，他不是有心的，我們絕對要包容、要寬恕，不然他也會很難受。那對我們來講，我們也要時時觀照自己，我們的言語行為有沒有不當之處。比方說走路的時候，兩三個人排在一起，讓後面的行人就不方便通過。因為人往往，比方說遇到久不見的朋友，一聊起天來都忘記旁邊的世界。所以這就是無心之非。有時候我們打電話給朋友，他可能正要出門，我們一打過去就霹靂啪啦，連個逗點都沒有，他又不知道從哪裡切話把你拒絕，或者是告訴你他要出門，結果他就一直撐在那裡。那時候他的心跳怎麼樣？特別快！這也是無心之非。所以我們打電話過去一定要先問：“請問你現在方便嗎？”要處處替對方著想。

那孔夫子當初到太廟去，也是「入太廟每事問」。遇到很多事，他都會去請教太廟裡面負責的一些工作人員。其他的人就會覺得很納悶，“夫子的學問這麼好，怎麼到太廟去什麼都問？”結果他的學生就問夫子，夫子就回答：“每事問是代表對這一件事的尊重，而且我們到一個新的環境去，可能這個環境都有它的規矩在，我們不能順著自己的意思去做，不然可能就有失禮之

處。”所以我們到一個新的環境，也要先了解這個環境的很多生活作息，甚至於東西的擺設，我們也不能擅自去更動、去改變。可能我們是覺得好心，但是這麼一個動作，可能會造成當地工作人員的一個麻煩，所以這就有可能犯了「無心非，名為錯」。

那下一句是『有心非，名為惡』。這意思就是明明知道是錯的還是照做，叫做「明知故犯」，那這就是惡，這就很不可取。那這樣的現象現在多不多？多！為什麼？比方說明明就寫著「禁止吸煙」，他還大口大口在那裡抽，原因在哪？沒有念《弟子規》，標準答案。失教了，做人做事的道理沒有好好的學習，沒有老師去教，也沒有父母去提醒，所以就是「先人不善，不識道德」。那我們這一節課先上到這邊，謝謝大家。