

Dizigui 35 English

Hello, my friends. We have entered the fifth chapter on “Loving All Broadly.” We also mentioned that children’s love and kindness can be extended from being filial to their own parents to respecting the parents and relatives of all people. Furthermore, it can be expanded to respecting the effort and contributions of all walks of life. We should also love and care for disadvantaged groups in society. We have just mentioned, “Widows and widowers, orphans and the childless, the sick and disabled are all well cared for.” In fact, the current atmosphere of doing good is increasingly thriving, this is something that we felt very gratifying.

When we are doing good, we not only can improve our sense of compassion but also get to know the neglected issues and areas in society. When we bring our children along to do good deeds, we can definitely foster their sense of kindness. Before we engage in virtuous acts, we must first take good care of our family. If we left our family in chaos while doing good deeds outside, it may create adverse effects. So, we must first cultivate ourselves and then regulate our family. Only after we have properly managed our family can we exert positive influences on the nation and society. We should carefully follow in this order.

Other than respecting the disadvantaged groups, should wicked people be loved? We mentioned earlier about a very serious case that occurred last year: the Ma Jia Jue incident. Due to being laughed at, ridiculed, and despised by his classmates over a long period of time for his poverty, he initiated a murder spree and killed a few of his classmates. During the incident, one of the injured classmates managed to escape this crisis because he had once helped and served Ma a meal. This classmate had thus resolved this crisis! Indeed, one’s kind-heartedness will naturally have good return. No matter how bad the other party is, we can slowly awaken his intrinsic nature as long as we are kind and virtuous. If we were to attack him, it might cause destruction to both sides. As stated in *Dizigui*, “Publicizing others’ wrongs is in itself evil, they will resent more and be driven to act even worse.” Very likely, he will fly into a rage out of humiliation, which is surely not good for both parties. Why do people go astray? Dear friends, what is the reason? There is no proper education at home and in school. The reason one deviates from the right path is because he has not encountered someone who truly loves and cares for him. Those who are wicked must have something pitiful. We must empathize with them.

I met a prison officer in Haikou. He knew that I had not been in Haikou for quite a while, one day when I went back for a few days’ visit, he rushed over to have a meal with us as soon as he learned the news. During the meal, he expressed his wish, “I hope to turn the prison into a school.” I was deeply moved when I heard this. Truly, if a government leader genuinely has the intention to perform good deeds, many people will benefit greatly. I remember when we held the first five-day prison program in Haikou, the Director of the City Education Bureau attended the class in person. I was not sophisticated, so I was rather nervous with the director sitting in the audience seat. The director attended the entire afternoon class. When the class ended, several of our teachers sent the director off. After he had left, I was suddenly so moved that I broke down in tears. Many examples in *Moral Education Stories* depict that every good official could benefit people in his region. They could help people have a very good development in their minds and lives, so that their families would also beget a far-reaching influence. A good social atmosphere would ensue as long as there are good officials. I was deeply moved at the thought of this. The people next to me were frightened to see me crying as they didn’t know why I wept. I told them, “Nothing, nothing, I am fine.”

When I saw this prison official was so sincere, we must give our full support. I said, “As long as you have arranged, we will surely give our support. Even with books, we will completely provide what is needed.” It is true that people will give you a hand as long as you wish to do

good deeds. As the saying goes, “When one has a good intention, Heaven will grant it.” When we face wicked people, we must guide children to first set a good example, then others will be transformed naturally. When children have this attitude, they would always maintain a kind attitude towards people and would not have conflicts with others.

Other than loving human beings, do we need to love and care for animals? We have to love them too because they have spirituality and feelings like us; they would feel pain and sadness. There was a hunter in Tibet who happened to see a Tibetan antelope in the distance when he got up in the morning. What would a hunter subconsciously do when he saw a prey? He quickly raised his gun and aimed at this antelope. There was a scene that surprised him because he had never seen it before. This antelope looked at him and then knelt down before him. He felt it was very strange but he still shot the antelope. The next day when he cut it open, preparing to slice its flesh, he saw a baby antelope in her belly. The hunter suddenly understood why this antelope was kneeling yesterday. She was begging him to spare her child’s life. Being a father himself, this hunter was very moved and ashamed when he saw the antelope protect her child like this. Realizing that all animals have familial affections he put away his gun and stopped hunting ever since.

There was another hunter who was specializing in trapping weasels, clamping them with a hunting gear. One day he found that his hunting gear caught one weasel. When he took a closer look, he only saw the weasel’s skin but her body had been missing. This hunter followed the bloodstains left by the weasel until he came to its den. When he looked into the den, he realized that this weasel had made every effort to take off her skin and run back into the den to breastfeed her babies. Actually, this weasel had already died but her babies were still drinking her milk. Look! The weasel’s mind was still on her children even though her life was at stake. Their maternal love doesn’t lose to us human beings. When this hunter saw the scene, he also gave up hunting since. These stories remind us of Bai Juyi’s poem, “Do not say animal’s life is insignificant, they have flesh, bone, and skin just like you and me; please do not shoot the birds in the tree, the baby birds are waiting in the nest for their mother to return.” Hence, we should also have empathy for animals. We must not break up their families for our preferences—our likes and dislikes.

Not only animals need our care, plants also share the same entity with us. They belong to the life shared entity on this earth. I once saw a child climbing up a tree and kept shaking and breaking its branches. He thought it was fun. But, if children think they can do whatever they want for fun, he may start from hurting plants and then hitting animals. So, from hurting plants and animals, they may hit people as they like when they get older. Therefore, we must be very prudent about this. Regardless of encountering animals or plants, it is children’s heart that is treating them. If they don’t respect these things, will they respect people in the future? When seeing food he doesn’t like, he says, “I don’t want to eat.” If they waste food readily, I guarantee they will hardly respect people as well. As Buddha sutra states, “Once one is truthful, all are truthful.” What is this “one”? It is a person’s intention. One’s behavior will naturally be respectful and sincere if his respect and sincerity have been internalized. When he is insincere, spoiling things, and does whatever he wishes, then his mind has become disrespectful. Can he attune himself to respect them right away when he faces people? That is impossible! Everything we wear and eat is bought by parents’ care and their hard-earned money, we are valuing their efforts when we cherish these things. All these situations do not go beyond one’s state of mind.

So, when I saw that child hurting plants, I did not scold him directly. I waited until the next class to guide him. I said to the children, “Dear children, what will make a person die when he lacks it for even only five minutes?” What is it? Correct! Oxygen. If you lack food, you may survive for eight to ten days. If you don’t drink water for two to three days, it may not be a problem. But, what will happen if you are deprived of oxygen for five minutes? You will die for

sure, probably brain death. May I ask where does oxygen come from? They answered every quickly because they all studied Natural Science. The oxygen comes from the photosynthesis of plants. I said, "Plants are the most crucial things in your life, because you can't survive for even five minutes as long as you live without them. Thus, plants are your life saviors. They give you the most essential thing, what should you give them in return? We must love and care for plants. Plants not only provide us with oxygen, they also help us a lot in many areas." We grab this opportunity to guide them to observe the importance of plants as well as their contributions to our life. Plants have contributed so much to us but they never said, "Please give me three hundred or five hundred dollars." Their contributions to us are selfless, they should deserve our respect even more.

Due to people's disrespect to plants, many problems have arisen now. For example, every time it rains, there will be landslides. This is strange! There were not so many landslides thirty to fifty years ago. Why do so many of them suddenly pop out decades later? Do you notice that there are so many new terms in our era? All these new phenomena arise because people today have committed certain acts. Originally, plants like big trees can grab the soil, but it has loosened due to deforestation. Consequently, heavy rain will cause landslides and debris flow. So, if we think carefully, the so-called natural disasters are actually manmade.

These trees can regulate temperature because of its large shade, the temperature of a city will be more constant if there are more trees. When all the trees are chopped down and the city is exposed to direct sunlight, what will its temperature be? It will be extremely high. People who live in such an environment would suffer physical injuries. Trees constantly regulate the temperature of our environment, the temperature can then be very well controlled because these trees would block the earth from direct sunlight exposure. Moreover, the carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, and dirty air emitted by mankind must be absorbed and transformed by plants. Now that the trees have been cut down, the bad air has been condensed in the air layer. When carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide are excessive, the greenhouse effect will be formed. Since there is no way to discharge the heat of Earth, the temperature will keep increasing, leading to global climate abnormalities such as snowing in tropical areas. Are these phenomena natural disasters? Are they? No, they are not. So, mankind must think meticulously! We coexist with nature, we can live and prosper together if we protect it. On the contrary, if we hurt plants, both humankind and nature would be ruined for sure.

That is why our ancestors expected us to behave in accordance with the virtues of Heaven and Earth. There is a figure which illustrates, "Ten thousand years ago, one animal species had become extinct in every one hundred years. One thousand years ago, there was one animal species disappearing every ten years. One hundred years ago, there was one species disappearing every year. Twenty years ago, there were five hundred species disappearing every year. And five years ago, ten thousand species had become extinct every year." Let's take a look at this figure, it is ghastly astonishing. In just a few decades, myriad of beings on Earth are on the verge of catastrophe, facing a rapid extinction. Who are the culprits? Human beings! When one animal species on Earth becomes extinct, other animals will throw a party and celebrate for seven consecutive days and nights without taking a rest. What species is that? Human beings! (Audience reply) How do you all know?! Indeed, it is time for humans to think deeply.

If we use cancer as an analogy, human beings are the cancer cells on Earth. Don't cancer cells expand rapidly to compress other internal organs? They think they are becoming stronger and bigger until the patient suddenly collapses one day. What is the fate of cancer cells? Death! Even though they continue to grow, the whole human body will die in the end. So do the cancer cells. The same applies to human beings, they have plundered the living space of so many animals and plants, seemingly growing bigger, right? When the whole planet is

ruined and cannot survive anymore, human beings will also cease to exist. So, we should not be shortsighted, focusing on only immediate effects. From caring for people, we must further extend our respect to all beings and all things. When we know how to respect myriad of things, we are imparting children to respect all lives and nurture children's sense of compassion. When our next generations are benevolent, who will benefit the most? Of course, their parents and families will enjoy the greatest benefits. So, people have to be sensible, or else they may do a lot of things to cause them regret for life. That is why we must "Love All Beings Broadly."

Let's look at the classic texts and recite one phrase first, "All who are human, I must love. We are all sheltered by the same sky and we all live on the same planet Earth." "All who are human, I must love. We are all sheltered by the same sky and we all live on the same planet Earth." Since we all live on the same planet Earth, and are sheltered by the same sky, we should share weal and woe together. A teacher said to me, "Being able to love all things is earnestly practicing filial piety and fraternity." He continued, "Heaven and Earth can be likened to one's father and mother. Everyone is a child of the Earth since we are nurtured by it. If there is no Earth today, what shall we eat? We are supported by the Earth, so we must bear in mind its kindness as if it is our mother. Therefore, all things that are nurtured by this "mother" are brothers and sisters. We should not kill animals as this is unfilial and un-fraternal attitude." This teacher has broadened his mind greatly. It is true that the Earth is similar to a mother. When we humans do not know how to respect animals, the atmosphere of the entire Earth family will become very chaotic. You see, so many animals are becoming extinct now. When these animals see human beings, they will quickly run away. I heard that they ran particularly fast when they saw the Chinese; we need to reflect on this. The Chinese eat anything that flies above the skies, crawls on the ground, and swims in the water. We have to control our gastronomic desire. Otherwise, no idea how many more creatures will be slain. A lot of animals were eaten by people and become extinct. "We are all sheltered by the same sky, and we all live on the same planet Earth!"

Let's look at the next phrase, "People with high conduct naturally have high reputations; what people value is their virtues, not their good looks. People with great talents naturally have great fame; what convinces people is their capability, not their big talk." "People with high conduct naturally have high reputations; what people value is their virtues, not their good looks." A virtuous person's reputation will naturally spread far and wide. Is it spread by talking about his own virtues in a publicity car? Absolutely not! The wind of virtue will naturally blow out. As Confucius mentioned in *The Analects*, "The virtue of a gentleman is like wind, while the virtue of people is like grass. When the wind blows over, the grass will bend." "People" here refers to civilians. "Bend" refers to the grass bowing down. It implies that the ordinary people would be edified when the wind of a virtuous leader blows over. They will follow suit to learn and emulate the leader. Of course, the most important thing is that this virtuous person must have true virtue and wisdom. Then, there will be the effect of "Though peaches and plums do not speak, a path to pick the fruit naturally forms." Likewise, Confucius' teaching career developed rapidly as many scholars from various countries went to learn from him.

My friends, what was Confucius thinking all the time? And what do we constantly think about? Since all manifestations arise from the mind, whatever we think would surely be reflected in our dealing with daily affairs. When we can understand the big distance between our thinking and that of the saints and sages, we will know how to catch up. "Even if I am far behind them, I am getting closer gradually." My friends, what do we usually think about? Are you thinking of the stock market's ups and downs? Or are you worrying about how your son performs in his math exam this time?

Confucius mentioned in *The Analects* that he had been worrying about four things every day. He said, "Not cultivating virtue, not imparting what I have learned, not following

righteousness after having learned, and not rectifying one's faults, these are my worries.” Confucius cultivated his virtues enthusiastically every day, he was worried about himself letting one day pass by in vain. So, he would not let himself not cultivate virtue and impart what he had learned. He resolved to impart the truths that he had comprehended so that more people could benefit from it and their wisdom could be developed. As long as he knew that a matter is right, he would proactively undertake the task. He would always think about what shortcomings needed to be corrected, and he would quickly rectify them and never slack off. Since Confucius bore these in mind, his virtues as well as his contributions to the people naturally became greater and greater. And he naturally won the respect and love of all people. So, “People with high conduct naturally have high reputations; what people value is their virtues, not their good looks.” It is definitely not because he looks handsome, as appearance can never make people admire him from the bottom of their hearts. That is impossible!

Next phrase: “People with great talents naturally have great fame; what convinces people is their capability, not their big talk.” The reputation of a truly talented person will naturally spread far and wide. “What convinces people is their capability, not their big talk.” A person's talents definitely do not come from boasting and flaunting but from the admiration of the bottom of people's heart. And this “talent” is certainly built on one foundation. What foundation is it? Virtue! Will people admire someone who only has talents but has no virtue? Of course not! That is why “people with high conduct” is mentioned before this phrase. One must have virtues. Since he is virtuous, his talents are acquired for the sole purpose of benefitting his family and society. Therefore, his talents will surely earn people's admiration and benefit others. Everyone will be convinced by him. His talent is absolutely not developed for his own interests as this will make it impossible for him to earn others' respect.

Often we will be envious when we see others with excellent talent. Even children will act the same way, “Wow! Why is he so talented! How can his writing be so good! How can he sing so well!” Being able to have good writing is a result, what is the cause? We must further guide children to not just envy others but see the cause behind their talent; it is absolutely not achieved overnight. “With hard work and perseverance, an iron pestle can be ground into an embroidery needle.” No talented skill ever falls from the sky. We must help children establish such a right attitude: persistence is no doubt at all the foundation of success.

When we see the *Dizigui* calligraphy was so well written by Teacher Yang, we are very envious of her skill to write so well. How long has Teacher Yang been writing calligraphy? Forty one years. She started writing calligraphy at the tender age of five. Teacher Yang said that they used to practice calligraphy with a stack of paper every day. That was how she accumulated and trained her skill bit by bit until she can now write freely as she wishes. Indeed, one must have motive, dedication, and perseverance on top of the intention to serve others, he can then increasingly improve his talents and make breakthroughs. Teacher Yang is writing copybooks to be published and posted online. The following words are printed on all her works, “Reproduction is welcomed, and it will create infinite merits.”

Teacher Yang has such a good family! Her father was a calligrapher. He only started learning calligraphy at the age of twenty-seven. He had set an excellent example for her that it is never too late as long as one is willing to learn. Dear friends, having heard this, are you encouraged to practice calligraphy? Her father is her role model and her good family had achieved her talent. As a saying goes, “Take from society, give back to society.” We must not let this life be in vain! This is about “People with great talents naturally have great fame. What convinces people is their capability, not their big talk.”

Let's look at the next phrase and recite it together, “If I have talents, I won't be selfish with them. If other people have talents, I won't lightly denigrate them. I will neither fawn on the

rich nor despise the poor; and neither will I ignore the old nor favor the new. If people don't have time, don't bother them with matters. If people are restless, don't bother them with words." Let's see the first sentence: "If I have talents, I won't be selfish with them." When we have talents and abilities, don't be selfish to lend a helping hand. I have a very deep feeling for this. I remember when I studied at the prep school for teacher training college, I always tried my very best to help my classmates who came to ask me questions. When a person helps others with his abilities, he is already practicing three kinds of dana (Skt., giving). We know that our prayers will be granted as long as we seek them based on the principles of *truth*. Worldly people desire wealth but they do not know what seed to sow to reap it. They also want to be intelligent and wise, but what is the cause? Dharma-dana* is the cause. (*The giving of sages' wisdom.) People in the world hope to enjoy good health and long life, but what cause should they plant in the first place? Fearlessness dana. By constantly reducing and caring for the sufferings of all beings is to practice heavenly virtues of cherishing lives, one will naturally reap the fruits of excellent health and longevity.

When a person using his labor and time teaches and shares his experiences with others, he is practicing the first dana: inner wealth dana. And in the process of guiding others, one has cultivated the second dana: Dharma dana, his intelligence and wisdom will gradually grow. These methods you told him, he can use them in his work and family in the future, this will prevent him from getting flustered due to not learning some good approaches. If he is incapable, he may often worry that he cannot make a good income, making his wife and children constantly feel insecure and apprehensive. When we tell him these principles of dealing with matters and self-conducting, he will then be able to stabilize his family as he has grown accordingly. This belongs to the third dana: fearlessness dana.

Therefore, when a person practices Dharma dana, he has simultaneously practiced three kinds of dana in reality. Moreover, Dharma dana is solving a person's problem from the root. We have previously mentioned that we should "help an urgent situation, not the poor." You can help one for a while but if he does not change his thinking, perhaps the more you help him, the more dependent he will become, and side effects may follow later. So, the most fundamental way to help a person is to let him receive proper education. Rectifying from his thinking! Only then can his life problems be solved from the root. So, we must tell children, "If I have talents, I won't be selfish with them." As the Chinese often say, "With broad-mindedness, can we have vast fortune."

There is a teacher who has been helping her parents do housework since childhood. Her younger brothers and sisters were also taken care of by her. It looks like she worked hard! But later, when she studied in primary, middle, and high school, as well as college, opportunities to be a leader often came to her even though she didn't seek them. For instance, positions like President of Student Council were thrown to her when she was in college. The training from her childhood had made her highly organized and efficient. She never wanted to become famous but fame would appear before her. Therefore, when children are willing to accept a lot of work and training, their endeavor would not be in vain but their abilities will be strengthened instead. Once, teachers in our center were making dumplings together. One of the teachers was very surprised by this Teacher Tsui. Teacher Tsui made five to six dumplings while she only made one. Teacher Tsui has been doing a lot of work since a young age, her work efficiency is superb. Thus, people should never be afraid of giving and enduring hardship because in the end, who will benefit the most? Oneself. So, "If I have talents, I will not be selfish with them."

"If other people have talents, I will not lightly denigrate them." When we see that someone is very talented and capable, we must never despise or slander him as this is very bad on us. When jealousy arises in a person, his virtue will go downhill; his kindness will be

controlled by it and he may feel unhappy and depressed. Why don't you broaden your mind to cultivate the teaching of "Praising others' good deeds is a good deed in itself; people will be encouraged to do even better when they hear about it"? In the past, scholars upheld the attitude of "Heroes cherish heroes," because it was rare to encounter virtuous people coming out to benefit society. Moreover, it is not easy to achieve something. Is it easy to accomplish good deeds? Not easy! We should gladly help others attain their aims. In other words, we must try our best to assist others to achieve their virtuous act.

When we are in a group, it is very likely that we have to deal with public affairs. If things are not done well, it will most likely affect not just one person or one family but lots of people. When we have the opportunity to serve others, we must never give rise to jealousy because it will not only hinder ourselves but may also mess up public affairs. We should hold on to not seeking any credit, only hoping to make no mistakes. In a group, we must be able to rejoice others' kind acts and help others accomplish them. When we help them with this kind of broad mindedness, then our merits will be no different from theirs.

Next phrase, "I will neither fawn on the rich nor despise the poor." To the rich people, we do not need to flatter them; to the poor, we should not be arrogant and look down on them. Zilu once asked Confucius, "What do you think of someone who is poor but does not flatter, and someone who is rich but is not arrogant?" He asked the master whether such people are considered well-cultivated? The master replied, "Yes, but they should further improve their cultivation by remaining joyful when they are poor and taking delight in etiquette when they are rich." Despite being poor, he does not flatter the rich because he knows well why he is poor now. He knows that he should seriously cultivate the seed of wealth: wealth *dana*. Naturally, he can create his own destiny later. A scholar understands the *truth*, so he can remain joyful despite living in poverty and happily be a virtuous person. "To be rich but love propriety" implies that he remains humble, respectful, and courteous even when he is affluent. He will not completely change his previous attitude to people just because he has become wealthy. Since he loves etiquette, he certainly knows how to help the poor and suffering ones. Therefore, whether we are rich or poor, we can practically live with peace of mind due to understanding the principles.

There is a sentence in *Zhu Bolt's Maxims for Managing the Family* which states, "People who fawn over the rich are most shameful." How would others feel about them? Very uncomfortable! What a shame! "People who display an arrogant manner when they see the poor are most ignoble." When seeing the poor, those who put on a pompous look and oppress the poor are most despicable. Even though he is rich, his behavior is very low instead of noble.

Interestingly, when I let my students read this article, they read all the other sentences with a regular tone but would become very enthusiastic when reading these two sentences. "People who fawn over the rich are most shameful." "People who display an arrogant manner when they see the poor are most ignoble." Since they read it so loudly, I believe these two sentences would leave a deep impression in their mind. They should be able to abide by this teaching when they deal with people and matters in the future; they would neither despise the poor nor flatter the rich. Honestly, the rich may not accept your flattering words. On the contrary, he would look down on you if he is an insightful person. We will stop here for today. Thank you!