



静心学堂丛书

The Mindful Peace Academy Collection

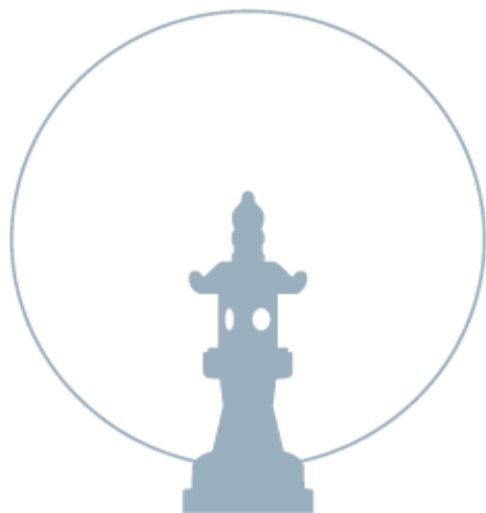
中英双语 Chinese-English Edition

Bringing Buddhist Teachings to Family Education

佛法在家庭教育中
的运用

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我从事教育工作三十多年，但以往对家庭教育涉及不多。近年来，看到不少信众为孩子的教育费心耗神，彼此都很辛苦。问题到底出在哪里？首先和大环境有关。今天这个时代，资讯泛滥，诱惑重重，人心浮躁混乱，所以在孩子的成长过程中，充满了各种不可控的因素。对家长来说，也面临着以往从未有过的复杂局面。

教育孩子，不仅是家庭的大事，还是全社会的大事。因为孩子是世界的未来，他们能否成为身心健康的人，决定了世界能否和谐、安定。但现行教育偏重知识、技能，对孩子应该成为什么样的人，目标并不清晰。可以说，这是一切问题的根本所在。

【静心学堂丛书】

从佛法的角度，怎么认识一个人的成长？怎么做好孩子的教育？我觉得，有以下几个方面。

一、从因缘因果正确看待亲情

珍惜今生相聚的缘分
尊重孩子作为生命个体的自主性
并在当下继续创造善缘
这样的话
往昔的善缘可以增上
恶缘可以改变
陪伴孩子成长的同时
父母也能从中受益

身为父母，要认清家庭关系的因缘因果，建立正确的亲情观。

所谓亲情观，即界定你和孩子是什么关系，找到相处的定位。不少父母把孩子当作自己的一部分，一方面，全身心地投入孩子身上，甚至放弃自己的工作和爱好；另一方面，也把各种希望寄托在孩子身上，让他们根据自己的想法活着。这就使孩子变得很被动，甚至很痛苦。若干年后，这种被动和痛苦往往又会回到父母身上。

中国有句话叫“养儿防老”，养和防，多少带有投入和回报的意味。就像在社会上做任何事，有投入，就期待回报。当父母把所有精力和时间花在孩子身上，

自己的生命将不再独立，还会对孩子形成强大的依赖，盼着他们能出息、孝顺，回报自己这份付出。

在过去的大家庭中，三代、四代同堂，因为有孝道的教育传统、社会的公序良俗、长辈的言传身教，孩子多半会视孝顺为本分，为应尽的义务。但现在已经没有这样的教育和环境，当孩子工作、独立之后，未必能如父母希望的那样承欢膝下。所以就有了相当数量的空巢老人，如果他们没有自己的精神追求和生活目标，把一切感情寄托于孩子身上，眼巴巴地指望孩子的反哺，很容易因此失落、难过，甚至遭受打击。

问题仅仅在孩子吗？曾经有报道说，一对夫妇精心培养孩子，送到国外留学。孩子开始还问父母要钱，后来长达二十多年不和父母联系，哪怕回到家乡也避而不见。她在接受采访时说，以前父母对她管得太多，太不自由，看到父母怕得不得了，好不容易跑出去，再也不想见了。

虽然这个例子有点极端，但在中国，类似的现象不在少数。如果父母把孩子当作自己的一部分，一方面，孩子会活得有压力，好像不是为自己，而是为父

母活着；另一方面，父母也会制造无谓的烦恼，一旦孩子不能遵循自己的想法，符合自己的期待，就会焦虑、失落、痛苦。事实上，这些烦恼都是自己制造的。

所以，建立正确的亲情观特别重要。有些父母认为，儿女是自己生的，就是属于自己的，怎么要求都可以。其实，每个生命都是独立的个体，虽然血脉连接，但并不意味着，谁是谁的一部分。有个对联叫“夫妻是前缘，善缘恶缘无缘不合；儿女是宿债，讨债还债有债方来”，不论成为夫妻，还是父母儿女，一定有深厚的业缘，但未必都是善缘，也可能是恶缘。

生活中可以看到，有的孩子不必父母费心，就能自觉学习，成绩优秀，长大后还百般孝顺；也有的孩子从小就让父母操碎了心，最后却问题重重，甚至杀父弑母。其中的原因很多，也包含前缘，只有成为一家人，才有更多机会来报恩或报怨，讨债或还债。

总之，我们要从缘起看待亲情，而不是从我执出发，以亲情捆绑彼此。基于这个定位，心怀感恩，珍惜今生相聚的缘分，尊重孩子作为生命个体的自主性，并在当下继续创造善缘。这样的话，往昔的善缘可以

增上，恶缘可以改变。陪伴孩子成长的同时，父母也能从中受益。

在这个问题上，西方教育比较重视孩子的独立。一旦成年之后，孩子是孩子，父母是父母，可以陪伴、关爱，但不占有、索取。这点值得借鉴。如果我们在教育孩子的过程中，建立独立、平等、尊重的关系，而不是过分的干涉和依赖，那么，随着孩子的独立，自己依然可以保有独立的人格，就不会因孩子离开空虚失落，百无聊赖。

反之，如果把孩子当作自己的一部分，让孩子产生依赖的同时，也会对孩子产生依赖。这种强关联不仅使彼此被动，也不利于孩子的健康成长。比如全家围着孩子转，有求必应，百依百顺，就会使孩子形成自我中心的串习。以后带着这样的惯性走上社会，不懂得尊重别人，就很容易受挫。

这种过分关注又会导致骄纵。比如上学接送、陪做作业、各种事务大包大揽，结果造成不少精神的巨婴、生活的低能儿。这种现象非常普遍，引起很多教育、心理、社会工作者的关注和反思。在我们的邻国

日本，不少孩子从小就自己背着书包上学，冬天穿短裤，游冷水泳，身心都能得到锻炼。

所以说，真正的爱是要有智慧的。这就必须以正确的亲情观为前提，而不是凭着自己的感觉一味宠溺，或强加于孩子。

二、亲子教育中的孰轻孰重

有句话叫“不能让孩子输在起跑线上”
这让相当一部分父母卷了起来
既然不能输，就得提前跑
结果使起跑线逐步提前
从中学到小学到幼儿园
所学不过是把相关内容提前一点而已
这样的教育能带来什么

在孩子的教育过程中，什么是重要的，什么是次要的？或者说，你希望孩子长大后，具备什么样的能力和素质？我想到了几点。

一是心态，乐观、积极、充满阳光，而不是悲观、消极、冷漠无感。二是品行，善良、大度、有爱心，而不是自私、贪婪、嗔心重，甚至道德败坏。三是健康，注重锻炼，饮食有度，而不是小小年纪就虚弱无力，或营养过剩。四是能力，爱好众多，具有艺术素养，而不是除了功课外一无所知。五是成绩，主要指学业的分数。

如果对这五项排序，你会把什么排第一位，什么排第二位？可能多数父母关心的是成绩，关心考了 90

分还是 100 分，在班级、学校排名多少。也有父母希望孩子实现自己的愿望，自己没机会做到的，想要孩子做到，强迫孩子学钢琴、学画画，结果把兴趣变成压力，引起孩子的逆反。还有父母把孩子当作面子的一部分，只关心孩子有没有给自己长脸。

这些外在因素又会带来比较，使不少父母习惯用“别人家的孩子”为坐标：你看谁谁谁考得多好，能力多强。殊不知，这种对比很容易让孩子产生压力，带来焦虑、自卑等心理问题。如果不能及时发现并疏导，而是继续施压，孩子往往会在不良情绪中越陷越深。近年来，常常可以听到孩子因为焦虑而厌学，引发抑郁、自闭，甚至走上绝路的消息。

事实上，很多悲剧是可以避免的。所以父母在教育孩子的过程中，一定要看清，什么才是对孩子成长真正有益的。就像很多人不关心健康，生活没规律，饮食无节制，直到把身体拖垮，才发现，没有健康就没有一切。而曾经牺牲健康换来的财富、地位，此时却不能再为你换回健康。父母对孩子也是同样，对以上所说的心态、品行、健康、能力、成绩，心中要有

一个排序，知道重点抓什么，而不是问题显现后才懊恼。因为很可能，连补救的机会都没了。

之所以有这些偏差，因为很多父母自己就没受过相关教育，具备相关理念。过去，儒家的教育重点就是学习怎么做人，怎么处世，怎么建立三观，具体在下面还会说到。但现行教育缺乏这些内容，很多人稀里糊涂就长大了，成了父母，自然不知道怎么教育孩子。只能跟着社会潮流，大家追求什么，也去追求什么。

有句话叫“不能让孩子输在起跑线上”，这让相当一部分父母卷了起来。既然不能输，就得提前跑，结果使起跑线逐步提前，从中学到小学到幼儿园，甚至到婴儿班。所学的，不过是把相关内容提前一点而已。这样的教育能带来什么？很多时候，只能使孩子从小就背负压力，连应有的童年乐趣都被剥夺。等一路跑到真正应该投入学习的大学阶段，早已疲惫不堪，失去动力了。

孰轻孰重？是作为父母必须认真思考的。这样才能给孩子有效的引导，使他们在正确的时间，站到真

正的起跑线上。尤其是人工智能时代到来后，我们现在所学的很多知识，培养的工作技能，正在快速地被淘汰。未来，可能 80% 的工作将被人工智能替代。在充满变量的未来，孩子如何才能安身立命，处于不败之地？

很多人没有信仰，也缺乏精神追求，工作不仅是生存所需，还是用来打发日子、出人头地、实现价值的途径。可以说，工作就是一切。但要不了多少年，有些我们引以为豪的能力，人工智能秒会，且远远胜出。除非你特别优秀，特别有创造力，无法被人工智能取代，否则，大量普通工作恐怕是朝不保夕的。

所以未来的人可能分两类，一类是有精神追求，不论世事如何变幻，都能自洽、自足、自得其乐；另一类是没有精神生活，面对魔幻的世界，就会迷茫、混乱、找不到方向，根本不知该怎么活。这些人一旦遇到挫折，很可能会抑郁、焦虑，甚至做出危害社会的事。

尼采在一百多年前说过：上帝死了，要重新估量一切的价值。对于今天的人，同样需要重新估量自己，

估量一切。因为我们过去的价值、意义、幸福，全都建立在物质世界，但这个世界已飘摇不定。为什么现代人有了远超以往的生活条件，却如此迷茫、焦虑、缺乏安全感？就因为我们曾经依赖的世界充满着不确定，并以肉眼可见的速度在坍塌、崩解。可以说，“见证历史”已成为常态。

在滚滚而来的时代洪流中，怎么才能站稳脚跟？必须具备拥抱无常的心态，而不是活在自己的设定、期待、执著中。这就需要传承东方文化，尤其是佛法智慧，才能以不变应万变，在积极入世的同时，保有出世的超然。这样的心，将比外在的任何分数、能力更为重要。

三、从生命缘起认识教育关键

你为什么会成为现在这样的人
是精心打造的结果
还是稀里糊涂地
被社会潮流裹挟着走到今天
我们每天的所思、所言、所行
对自己的生命有多少价值
能不能使之得到提升

企业打造优质产品，是需要精心设计的。但我们是否想过，生命也是一个产品？我曾在上海一个叫“厢”的空间，讲过“觉醒的艺术”。其中谈到一个问题：你的生命是普通产品，还是经过设计的艺术品？在此，我也想问问大家：你为什么会成为现在这样的人？是精心打造的结果，还是稀里糊涂地，被社会潮流裹挟着走到今天？我们每天的所思、所言、所行，对自己的生命有多少价值？能不能使之得到提升？

事实上，许多人的存在就是一大堆混乱情绪，再加上一大堆错误想法。一天又一天，一年又一年，只是在碎片化的情绪、想法中忙忙碌碌。为什么会这样？就是因为无明，因为看不清生命和世界的真相。

如果没有佛法智慧，没有善知识引领，我们只能在现有的认知模式中，跟着感觉，走到哪里算哪里。这种存在其实是一种被存在，是被串习推动的结果。

佛法是人生的大智慧，告诉我们，生命是无尽的累积，包括思想的行为、语言的行为、身体的行为。我们每天在想各种问题，说各种话，做各种事，这些思考和言行发生后，不仅会产生社会效应，还会在生命中留下痕迹。之所以产生这些思考和言行，有来自家庭的影响，也有来自教育、工作、社会、亲友的影响。所有这一切的共同作用，使我们成为今天这样的人。

从佛法角度看，生命不是从今生才开始的。我们来到这个世界，也不是一张白纸，而是带着往昔的积累。今生的身语意行为，又会形成当下的生命积累，推动我们继续轮回。生命就像河流，从无尽的过去一直延续到无尽的未来。这种延续可能是不知不觉的，也可能是有意识的。只有接受佛法智慧，了解生命的因缘因果，我们才知道其中有哪些元素，应该发展什么，舍弃什么。

正因为生命来自往昔的延续，所以每个孩子都有不同的天赋。古人说，书到今生读已迟。为什么？如果从现在开始，哪怕几十年中不断积累，和生生世世都在读书的人，还是没有可比性的。包括世间很多神童，比如莫扎特几岁就能作曲，展现超乎寻常的才华，这都不是普通人可以企及的。

除了这些特例，其实每个人都有不同长处。有的人比较感性，有的人比较理性；有的人擅长文科，有的人擅长理科；有的人擅长艺术，有的人擅长研究。所以，发现孩子的天赋和兴趣特别重要。

在这个问题上，父母往往比较主观，只想到“孩子应该有什么兴趣”，却不顾及孩子有哪方面天赋，到底喜欢什么。其实，天赋才是一个人高于他人的起跑线，也是发展的优势所在。当然兴趣也很重要，有句话叫作“兴趣是最好的老师”。有兴趣，学起来就会乐在其中，有源源不断的动力。

发现孩子的天赋和兴趣，为此创造条件并适当引导，就能让学习变成自觉的行为。否则，不管孩子是否喜欢，一厢情愿地要求孩子成为什么样的人，具备

什么样的能力，孩子只能被动地接受灌输，就会疲累、痛苦，甚至因为压力而崩溃。这样的情况下，家长也会很累、很痛苦。

西方教育很重视学生的创造力，在座各位来清迈当陪读父母，应该和这里的国际学校有关。当孩子在自由的学习环境中，心可以很开放，很松弛，创造力才会被激发。在未来的世界，很多知识是不需要学习的，人工智能都会，更需要的是创作。虽然人工智能也会根据指令生成一些“创作”，但那只是拼贴而已。真正的创作，是源于本心，是来自于生命的无限潜能，这是人工智能无法具备的。

四、建立良好的教育生态环境

在今天的大环境下
教育面临了很多前所未有的课题
其中的大部分，父母自己都没经历过
也无法从已有经验中找到借鉴
怎么办？一方面要加强自身学习
足以为孩子提供正向引导
一方面要选择适合孩子成长的小环境
这一点，可能比以往任何时代更为重要

教育是全方位的，我们要了解影响孩子成长的相关因素，建立良好的教育生态环境。其中主要有三方面，首先是父母，其次是社会，第三是学校。

1. 家庭教育

父母是孩子的第一课堂，从某种意义上说，对孩子的影响也最大，是教育的第一责任人。现代社会重视胎教，其实，中国人早在西周时期就发现胎教的重要性，提出了孕期起居、行为、调心等各种注意事项。作为父母，从行为到起心动念都会对胎儿产生影响，所以要时时保有善念，不动嗔心。周文王的母亲

就被奉为胎教典范。

所以要在家中营造一个温馨、良善、正向的环境，这对父母和孩子都很重要。当孩子来到世界时，虽然带着自身的生命信息，但也需要适应当下的环境。最初接触的，就是父母对他每一个动作的回馈。比如孩子一哭，是马上去哄，还是继续观察一下；是每天抱着，还是该走的时候让他走路；是呵护备至，还是让他尽早独立。其中都包含着教育，也是孩子最初的、接近本能的教育。就像动物在接触自然的过程中，父母也会用种种方式，让孩子知道，在什么情况下，应该做什么，不能做什么。

懂事之后，还要接受文化的熏陶。过去，海外华人对这方面很重视。我在澳洲、欧洲见过一些华人家庭，还会沿袭传统习俗。比如父母站着，孩子不能坐着；吃饭时，父母没吃，孩子不能先吃。相比之下，国内反而不太有这些做法。可能海外华人离乡背井，这些习俗会让他们与故土产生精神连接。

更重要的，是父母的观念、待人处事，以及对孩子的要求，无形中，就是对孩子的传帮带。你看重的

是成绩、能力，还是心态、品行；你是有责任感，富有爱心，待人宽厚，还是自私自利，觉得“人不为己，天诛地灭”。这些都在给孩子传递三观，成为孩子成长的风向标。

有人说，孩子就是父母的镜子和复印机，父母身上的优点和缺点，都可能在孩子身上呈现并复刻出来。所以作为父母来说，有没有正确的人生观、世界观、价值观非常重要，这不仅关系到自己的人生，还关系到孩子的人生。相关内容，儒家思想中有很多。但近百年来，国学传统经历了巨大的断层，虽然近年又引起重视，还是没有对整个社会产生影响。这就需要我们有意识地去关注、学习、运用。当我们自己改变了，也会使孩子成长的环境和土壤得到改变。

2. 社会教育

对孩子来说，社会教育主要来自成长环境。关于这个问题，最有名的典故是孟母三迁。孟子少年丧父，和母亲艰难度日。最初，孟子家在墓地附近，经常有

送葬队伍经过，引得孟子和一群孩子模仿送葬游戏。孟母见状，赶紧把家搬到城里。住下后发现，周围都是小商小贩，也不是理想居处。孟母再次搬迁，在学堂附近安家。孟子耳闻目睹，不仅爱上了学习，还学会守秩序、懂礼貌。此后，他果然没有辜负母亲的期望，成为儒家思想的重要代表。在古代，孤儿寡母的生活非常艰难，搬家更是不易。即使在这样的情况下，孟母还是不辞劳苦地三易居处，一方面说明她眼光长远，一方面也说明环境对人的影响确实很大。

此外，交友也很重要。《论语》说到益者三友，即友直、友谅、友多闻。友直，就是正直而真诚；友谅，就是诚信而包容；友多闻，就是有知识有学问。现代人注重人脉，但关注点只是在对自己的事业是否有帮助，能否给自己提供什么资源。其实，优秀品质才是我们真正可以受益的资源。所以家长要关注，孩子平时爱和什么人来往，是和好吃懒做、游手好闲的混混，还是品行优良、有上进心的益友。包括周围邻居是什么样的人，都不能掉以轻心。因为这种影响是潜移默化的，会使孩子在不知不觉中被同化，所谓近

朱者赤，近墨者黑。

现在的社会环境，对孩子教育是很不利的。比如手机等电子产品，使用门槛越来越低，也让人越来越容易沉迷其中。有些父母只要孩子一吵，就把手机塞给他，自己是因此轻松了，却使孩子两三岁就开始玩游戏，要不了几年就成了重度用户，根本无心学习。据说欧美国家对孩子使用手机有严格控制，小学生甚至中学生都不可以独立掌握手机。手机的危害，还在于网络上什么都有。对心智尚未健全的孩子来说，不仅诱惑重重，还会形成依赖。因为各种愿望都可以在网络、游戏中实现，久而久之，精神就会出现问題，完全沉迷在虚拟世界中，无法从中走出，建立正常、健康的社会关系。

以前的社会，没有那么多诱惑，孩子从小就在自然中玩耍，兴趣爱好相对单纯，也比较健康。但在今天的大环境下，教育面临了很多前所未有的课题。其中的大部分，父母自己都没经历过，也无法从已有经验中找到借鉴。怎么办？一方面要加强自身学习，足以为孩子提供正向引导；一方面要选择适合孩子成长

的小环境，这一点，可能比以往任何时代更为重要。

3. 学校教育

现在很多家长在为孩子能进什么学校煞费苦心，从学区房到找关系，只要能做的，都不惜代价。他们在选择学校时，往往把升学率放在首位。其实，学校能给孩子什么样的引导，能不能让孩子健康成长，才是更重要的。现在各行各业都很卷，其中有公开、正当的竞争，也有不正当的拉踩。很多不良风气已经渗透到学校，使有的孩子从小就开始搞关系，给老师送礼品，或是和同学比爹比妈，攀比接送用车。

你们来到这里，既是为了自己，也是为了给孩子一个宽松、开放、有利成长的环境。但仅仅这样还不够，尤其对中国人来说，本身就有优秀的传统文化。儒家重视做人的教育，佛法强调生命的教育，这恰恰是现行教育中最薄弱的。

基于此，我们正在推动家庭版的安心茶室。家庭和谐是需要以文化为纽带的，否则，每个人都会活在

自己的观念里，以自己的感觉为中心。就像企业要有企业文化，才能形成共同的信念。家庭也是同样，如果缺乏共同的信念，夫妻可能同床异梦，父母和孩子可能互不理解。有人说，天下最远的距离，就是两个人坐在一起，你看你的手机，我看我的手机。大家都和手机连接，却不和眼前的家人连接；最有感情的是手机，而不是血脉相连的家人。这是何其颠倒！

那么，家人之间靠什么连接？在传统家庭中，大家都接受儒释道的教育，就会有共同的精神信念和行为准则。这是很有必要的。所以，我希望有条件的家庭都可以设置一个安心茶室，大家定期聚到一起，包括家人，也包括同学、亲戚、朋友。在一起读读《大学》《中庸》《论语》，也可以读读《静心学堂丛书》，还可以体验禅茶，修习正念和健康养身等项目。这样就能营造良好的生态圈，家庭氛围也会随之改变。通过安心茶室的熏陶，弥补学校教育的不足。

五、传承儒家文化 学会做人做事

我们推崇什么样的价值
追求什么样的人格
立志成为什么样的人
对人生特别重要
有了这些前提
就有了做人的基本
知道应该如何待人处事

我们来到世界，只是有了人的自然属性，必须通过学习，才能成为合格的人。真正意义上的中国人，我觉得应该包含两个层面，一是血统，一是道统。黑眼睛、黑头发、黄皮肤体现了血统的特征。此外，还有文化传承的道统。不少海外华人担心后代成为香蕉人，皮肤是黄的，精神内核却是白的。因为他们从小接受西方教育，从价值观、思维方式、兴趣爱好到生活习惯，全是西方的。虽然有着中国人的形象，却没有相应的精神内涵。

怎么成为表里如一的中国人？必须传承中国传统优秀文化。从佛法角度看，每个生命都有无始以来的业力。有句话叫“三岁看到老”，有人从小聪慧，有

人天生愚笨；有人天性善良，有人生来暴戾。正因为千差万别，所以要通过教育，把善的部分发扬光大，恶的部分加以对治。

西方社会很重视道德和法律，道德可以防范犯罪的思想根源，而法律可以约束人的行为。如果能把不善思想和不良行为管住，这个世界就没什么可担忧的了。所以在西方，始终是两套系统并行的。宗教渗透在生活的方方面面，基督徒从出生、结婚、去世，都要由牧师主持相关仪式，包括总统就职，也要手按《圣经》宣誓。不管你的信仰达到什么程度，多少会被其中的道德观所影响，对行为加以约束。如果只有法律，能管的只是发生的事，破坏已经造成，无法挽回。更何况，法律还有一些无法顾及的灰色地带，这都需要道德，需要内在的自我约束。

中国的传统是偏向人治，儒家思想的重点，正是关于做人处世的道德规范。前几年在中国召开的世界哲学大会，就以“学以成人”为主题。也就是说，做人和掌握任何技能一样，是需要学习的。孟子说：“饱食、暖衣、逸居而无教，则近于禽兽。”如果一个人

吃饱穿暖后，每天放逸度日，没有接受相应教化，其实和动物没有多少区别。当然，孟子也讲到，人人皆可以为尧舜。为什么同样是人，可以是禽兽，也可以是尧舜？区别就在于，是否接受过道德教化。

儒家还以“太上立德，其次立功，其次立言”为三不朽的人生。立德，就是完善自身道德，成为仁人君子；立功，就是建功立业，造福社会；立言，就是以自己的思想影响世界。我曾和岳麓书院国学院朱汉民院长就《如何立心立命》展开对话，在这个问题上，儒家和佛教有着共同的使命和责任。从个人修养来说，是成圣成贤；从社会责任来说，儒家是以正心、诚意、修身、齐家为本，进而治国、平天下，佛教则是从自觉到觉他，从自利到利他。

做到这一点，首先要立志，佛法称为发愿，就是给生命制定一个目标和方向。现在很多人不知道活着为什么，空心病和无意义感几乎成为常态，为什么会这样？就是因为没有崇高的目标和愿望。多数人的目标，不过是上个好大学，找个好工作，赚上几百万，目标都很现实。如果很快实现，接着又没了目标，只

有再次制定，把几百万升级到几千万、几个亿，或是不断地换工作、换房子、换车子。一路顺利的话，会因此踌躇满志，不可一世，以为生活永远这么向上攀升。一旦目标不能实现，就会遭受挫折，产生焦虑、抑郁等不良情绪，觉得我太没用，太不行了。这就是凡夫的常态。

儒家所讲的立志，是树立人生大目标，最著名的有张载的四句教：为天地立心，为生民立命，为往圣继绝学，为万世开太平。为天地立心，是开启和天地同频的心；为生民立命，是帮助更多人安身立命，安顿身心，而不只是为自己活着；为往圣继绝学，是传承文化和圣贤言教；为万世开太平，是造福世界，造福全人类乃至子孙后代。

目标越大，越不会出现暂时的得失成败。我曾经写过一条微博，说到做大事的五大好处。一是不容易失败，因为不容易成功；二是不容易失业，因为短期内做不完；三是不容易执著，因为找不到执著点；四是做不好比较有借口，因为本来就不容易做好；五是不用着急，如果因缘不成熟，一个人干着急也没用。

所以我一直觉得，出家人既没有得意也没有失意。有因缘时多做些弘法利生的事；没有因缘时，自己静修也挺好的，而且非常重要。

我们每天的定课中有四弘誓愿，念起“众生无边誓愿度，烦恼无尽誓愿断，法门无量誓愿学，佛道无上誓愿成”这四句话时，有没有将此作为自己的人生目标？有没有作为自己必须承担的使命？还有阿弥陀佛四十八大愿、药师如来十二大愿，如果具备这样的愿力，从今生今世乃至尽未来际，永远都在前行过程中，不会因此焦虑。

《论语》说：三军可夺帅，匹夫不可夺志。这也充分说明志愿的重要性。如果志愿太小，容易满足，人生就会失去目标。所以儒家讲立志，佛法讲发愿，都是从道德的高度，让我们去做品行完善的人，利益世界的人。

几十年前的人，即使没有这么高的志向，但多数是有责任感的，包括社会责任和家庭责任。但现在的90后、00后，似乎对责任越来越没感觉了。从某种角度看，可能他们更开放，更没有设定。但从另一方

面，很多人是活在自我感觉中，觉得不需要为了谁，活得高兴就活，活得不高兴可以不活。事实上，这是对生命的放任和不负责。因为没有接受相关的教育，也没有真正思考过人生。

以往的年轻人，多少会受到老一代的影响。我们的父辈和祖辈，会教后代怎么做人，怎么担当责任。但在今天，一些传统观念已和时代风向不同。比如古人常常说到的惜福，在鼓励消费的今天，早已格格不入。过去的中国社会，几乎每个乡村都有受到大家尊重的人。他们有道德，有智慧，有担当，在某种意义上，可谓道德实践的样板。人们即使不懂多少书本道理，也会从他们身上知道应该怎么做人，怎么做事。

但在改革开放后，整个社会迅速从推崇道德转向功利，向往财富和权力，追逐娱乐和声色，甚至觉得：“道德值几个钱？”好在当人们渐渐富起来之后，开始看到新的问题。没有财富、权力的时候，似乎这些可以带来一切。拥有之后却发现，自己并没有因此变得更幸福，更满足。什么才是人生最重要的？什么才是真正值得追求的？什么才是我们安身立命的所

在？尤其经历三年疫情之后，越来越多的人开始反省，开始思考这些问题。

所以说，我们推崇什么样的价值，追求什么样的人格，立志成为什么样的人，对人生特别重要。有了这些前提，就有了做人的基本，知道应该如何待人处事。近年来，儒家所说的“仁义礼智信、温良恭俭让”重新被倡导，但多数人只是知道概念而已，并没有真正探究每个概念的内涵，没有和自己的人格联系起来。

大家都向往美好，但是我们追求的，更多是外在的美好，比如相貌、服装、身份，却没想到，真正的美好来自生命内在。而内在的美好离不开智慧和道德，这就需要认识生命的因缘因果。

从因缘因果的角度看，道德是什么？价值在哪里？其实，道德就是组成人格的材料。我们用不良心理来构建它，还是用良性品质来构建它？如果大家没想过这个问题，可以从另一个角度来思考。想一想，如果一个人善良、诚实、友善、慈悲、温暖，肯定每个人都喜欢；反之，如果一个人心胸狭隘、充满对立、嗔恨心重、嫉妒心强、总是损人利己，肯定没人愿意

和他交朋友。虽然很多人未必意识到道德的作用，但在生活中，我们愿意接近什么样的人，远离什么样的人，也从一个侧面说明，内心对道德还是有一份肯定，对美好还是有一份向往。

那么，如何造就美好的生命？如果生命由二十种元素组成，其中十种是正向的，十种是负面的，我们会如何选择？能不能做得了主？还是会不知不觉地发展那些负面元素？

儒家讲修身、齐家、治国、平天下。其中，修身是基础，也是首要，从某种意义上说，还是最难的。如果没有佛法智慧，不了解生命的因缘因果，就看不到道德的完整价值，怎么修身？我曾和岳麓书院朱汉民院长讨论到这个问题，我说儒家虽然强调道德，但不谈因缘因果，那道德的价值是什么？有人会觉得，我做一个人，带来的好处最多几十年，那么短暂，为什么要辛辛苦苦地做好人？但如果了解生命的因缘因果，就会知道，遵循道德可以让生命更美好，不仅让我们今生受益，还能尽未来际地受益。

学习传统儒家文化，主要是帮助我们学会做人

做事，比如前面讲到的“仁义礼智信，温良恭俭让”。简单地说，仁是培养仁爱之心，义是遵循道德行为，礼是人与人的相处之道，智是正确看待各种问题，信是保有诚信；温是性格温和，良是心地善良，恭是对人恭敬有礼，俭是勤俭惜福，让是谦虚礼让。这些都是自利利他的优良品德，关键是通过修行，让每一项变成自己的人格。

我们提倡的学习方法，是观察修和安住修。首先需要思考：为什么要培养仁义礼智信、温良恭俭让的品德？为什么要有感恩心、随喜心？然后以相应的方法，比如修习《慈经》，让内心对自己和众生生起慈悲，充满关爱。从以自我为中心，转变为以众生为中心，以正向、积极的心看待一切。

六、学习佛法智慧 造就健全人格

只有学习佛法
才能充分了解自己
懂得哪些是不良品行，应该消除
哪些是美好心理，应该发扬
进而通过戒定慧改造自己
让生命变得有价值
否则，我们连自己都看不清楚
更谈不上改变

关于做人做事，我们不仅要学习儒家文化，还要有佛法智慧的高度，否则是不够的。因为心必须通过修行才能改变，不是说一说就可以。那只是知道概念而已，和你的生命是没关系的，也起不了作用。

现在的孩子有很多心理问题，如焦虑、抑郁、孤僻、自私、自我中心等，进而导致厌学、叛逆、不自律、沉迷手机等行为问题。当孩子出现问题时，不少父母往往很焦虑，不接纳：“我的孩子怎么会这样？”其实，这种焦虑和不接纳对孩子没有丝毫帮助，只会让自己更糟糕。

作为父母，应该怎么对待这些状况？不论从心理学还是佛法的角度来说，首先要学会接纳。前面讲到

正确的亲情观，就是让我们知道，孩子是独立的生命个体，带着自己的业力而来，并不是父母的附属品。他和你的关系就这么几十年，然后就要各奔东西，你能做的很有限。怎么把这几十年过好？不论孩子有什么样的表现，都不能太我执，有太多设定，否则就会焦虑不安，也给孩子带来无谓的压力。然后，这种压力又会返回自己身上。在互相施压的过程中，使压力不断升级。

其实我们看看自己，也有很多问题，也不是那么容易改变的，所以不要对孩子有过分期待。先接纳自己的不完美，再接纳孩子的不完美。父母和孩子，只是这一生的因缘相聚。不论过去是什么样的缘分，现在能做的，只是让他向好的方面转变，而不是要符合我们的期待。只有接纳，不对立，我们才能心平气和地面对孩子出现的各种现象，再加以正确引导。

此外，有些心理问题是需要干预的。除了常规的心理治疗，正念禅修也是很好的调整方式，在欧美已有广泛运用。引导孩子培养正念，安住正念，可以有效化解不良心理，让心从疾病模式跳出来。前提是父

母能修习正念并从中受益，做到这一点，你的存在就能在家中营造令人安心的氛围。

进一步，还要引导孩子培养正向心理。如果孩子缺乏感恩心，要让他们明白，自己得到的一切并非理所当然，应该心怀感恩；如果孩子以自我为中心，就要让他们认识到，人在世间生存，离不开大家的付出，只有我为人人，才能人人为我，所以要学习利他的思维方式，友善地对待身边人。事实上，所有负面心理都有相应的正向心行可以对治，关键是及时发现问题，有意识地加以培养。当然，认知和价值观也很重要，要引导孩子立志，知道未来要成为什么样的人。生命是需要方向和榜样的，这样才会不断向目标靠拢。

除了自己的引导，还要在家中营造正向环境，组织孩子或身边人一起学习，在潜移默化中传递做人的道理。比如让周围的孩子在一起举办青春读书会之类的活动，一起读读《静心学堂丛书》，分享读书心得和在生活中的运用。

有了一定基础，还可以增加禅修内容。我们的禅修分两类，一是正念的禅修，一是利他的禅修。正念

禅修可以培养专注和觉察，以此解决心理问题。利他禅修是通过理解他人，同情他人，到接纳自己不愿接纳的事，进而培养感恩、随喜等心行，改变自我为中心的状态。

总之，在教育孩子的过程中，父母要给予孩子正确引导，而不是施加压力：我希望你怎么样，考多少分，得什么名次。更不要和其他孩子攀比，因为每个生命的起点都不一样。

作为父母，首先要改变自己的错误观念，当我们有了正确的三观、健全的人格，家庭环境才会随之改变，才能给孩子正向的滋养和引导。因为多数人的存在和人格是在不知不觉中形成的，只有学习佛法，才能充分了解自己，懂得哪些是不良品行，应该消除；哪些是美好心理，应该发扬。进而通过戒定慧改造自己，让生命变得有价值。这是佛法带给我们的希望，否则是很难的，所谓“江山易改，秉性难移”。因为我们连自己都看不清楚，更谈不上改变。

家庭教育是很大的话题，这次时间仓促，只能针对其中存在的突出问题，提供一些简单思考，还有许多值得深入探讨的空间。以上只是抛砖引玉，期待更多有识之士，能从中国传统文化中吸取养料，立足于佛法智慧的高度，以儒家的做人教育为基础，同时吸收心理学的方便，为家庭和社会培养出健康、优秀的下一代。





**BRINGING BUDDHIST
TEACHINGS
TO FAMILY EDUCATION**

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I have dedicated more than three decades to the field of education, but I have not engaged much in family education. In recent years, I've noticed that many parents are exhausting themselves over their children's education, leading to struggles for both parents and children. Where exactly does the problem stem from? It begins with the social environment. Today, we live in an era flooded with information and endless temptations, leaving many feeling restless and unsettled. This, in turn, creates an environment in which children's development is shaped by a multitude of uncontrollable factors. Meanwhile, parents are confronted with an unprecedented level of complexity.

Educating children is not only a major matter for families but also a crucial concern for society as a whole. Children represent the future of the world, and their physical and mental well-being play a decisive role in shaping a harmonious and stable global community. However, the current education system tends to prioritize knowledge and skills, yet it lacks a clear vision of the kind of individuals children are meant to grow into. This, I believe, is the root cause of many problems.

From the perspective of Buddhist teachings, how do we understand a person's growth? How can we effectively educate our children? I believe there are several vital aspects to consider.

I

UNDERSTANDING FAMILY BONDS THROUGH CAUSES, CONDITIONS AND CAUSALITY

As parents, we must recognize the causes, conditions and causality within family relationships and establish a correct view of familial bonds.

The view of familial bonds refers to defining the parent-child relationship and identifying an appropriate way to engage with your children. Many parents treat their children as an extension of themselves. On one hand, they devote themselves fully to their children, even to the point of giving up their own careers and hobbies. On the

other hand, they place all their hopes on their children, expecting them to live according to their own ideas. As a result, children may feel passive, sometimes to the point of suffering. Years later, these feelings often come back to the parents themselves.

There is a Chinese saying: “Raising children to ensure support in old age.” The ideas of “raising” and “ensuring support” inherently carry a sense of investment and return. As in many aspects of society, where there is investment, there is an expectation of reciprocation. When parents pour all their time and energy into their children, they risk losing their independence, and becoming heavily reliant on their children. They hope their children will become successful and filial to repay their efforts.

In the past, large families with three or four generations lived under one roof. Children generally viewed filial piety as a duty and an obligation they must fulfill because they were instilled with a strong sense of filial piety through traditional teachings, societal norms, the

guidance of elders and their role modeling. Today, however, with the absence of such teaching and environment, once children start working and become independent, they may not meet their parents' expectations of providing care and maintaining a close connection. As a result, there are now a considerable number of empty-nest elderly.

If these elders lack their own spiritual pursuits or life goals, they tend to rely entirely on their children for emotional fulfillment, eagerly expecting their reciprocation. If their expectations are unmet, they are likely to feel disappointed, sad, or even deeply hurt.

Is it fair to place all the blame on the children? Once, it was reported that a couple poured their efforts into raising their daughter, even financing her education abroad. At first, she sought their financial support, but later, she severed ties for more than two decades, avoiding to see them entirely—even when she returned to her hometown. In an interview, she shared that her parents

used to control her too much, leaving her no freedom. She became so afraid of them that, after finally breaking free from their control, she resolved never to see them again.

While this example might be extreme, it mirrors many similar phenomena commonly seen in China. If parents treat their children as extensions of themselves, the children will live under pressure, feeling like they are living for their parents rather than for themselves. Meanwhile, parents will create unnecessary afflictions for themselves. When their children fail to follow their ideas or meet their expectations, they will feel anxious, disappointed, and miserable. In fact, these afflictions are made by themselves.

Therefore, it is particularly important to establish a correct understanding of family bonds. Some parents believe that since they gave birth to their children, they can impose any demands, as if the children belong to them. In reality, each life is an independent individual.

Although they are connected by blood, it does not mean one is part of the other. As a couplet puts it, “Husband and wife are bound by past karmic ties—whether good or bad, no bond arises without karmic ties. Children represent debts from past lives—whether to collect or repay, they come because of karmic ties.” Whether between spouses or parents and child, such relationships often have deep karmic ties, but they are not always wholesome—they can also be unwholesome.

In life, we can see that some children, with little parental intervention, study diligently, achieve top grades, and become exceptionally filial when they grow up. By contrast, some children cause their parents endless worries from a young age and may even face serious issues later in life, including unimaginable acts like patricide and matricide. Such differences arise from a range of factors, including the influence of past karmic ties. Only by becoming a family do they have more opportunities to repay kindness or seek revenge, to collect debts or repay them.

In summary, we should view family bonds through the lens of dependent origination rather than self-attachment, which binds each other with possessive affection. By embracing this mindset, we become grateful, cherish the karmic ties that connect us in this life, respect each child's individuality, and continue to foster wholesome karmic conditions in the present. By doing so, we not only reinforce past wholesome karma but also transform unwholesome karma. As parents accompany their children's growth, they can benefit in the process as well.

In this regard, Western education places greater emphasis on children's independence. Once children come of age, they become independent individuals, like their parents. However, they can still care for and accompany each other, free from possession or excessive demands. This practice is worth adopting. If parents build relationships rooted in independence, mutual respect, and equality—rather than excessive control and dependency—they can still maintain their own independence even as children

grow independent. This way, they won't feel empty, lost, or bored when their children move on in life.

If, instead, they view children as extensions of themselves, they foster a relationship of mutual dependency. Such an overdependence traps both parties in passivity and stunts the child's healthy growth. If a family orbits entirely around the child, catering to every whim and overindulging their needs, this inadvertently encourages self-centered behavior. Upon entering society, such a mindset, coupled with a lack of respect for others, often lead to setbacks.

This excessive attention also leads to overindulgence. For example, some parents assist with their homework and manage all their affairs. As a result, many grow up into adults lacking emotional maturity and practical competence. This widespread issue has drawn attention from educators, psychologists, and social workers. In contrast, in our neighboring country, Japan, children from a young age are encouraged to carry their own school bags, wear

shorts during winter, and swim in cold water, fostering both physical and mental resilience.

Therefore, true love must be rooted in wisdom. It requires a correct understanding of family bonds as the foundation, rather than blindly indulging or imposing on the children based on personal feelings.

II

WEIGHING PARENTING PRIORITIES

When it comes to educating children, what is the most important, and what comes second? In other words, what qualities and abilities do you expect your children to grow into? I have a few thoughts on this.

First is their mindset: to be optimistic, positive, and filled with light, rather than falling into pessimism, negativity, or apathy. Second is their character: to be kind, generous, and loving, steering clear of selfishness, greed, aversion, or moral decline. Third is their health: prioritizing exercise and balanced nutrition, rather than allowing them to become frail or overnourished at a young age. Fourth

is their abilities: developing diverse interests and artistic literacy, rather than limiting them to schoolwork alone. Fifth is their academic performance, primarily reflected in their grades.

Among these five aspects, which would you place first, and which second? For most parents, grades are their top priority—they pay close attention to whether their children score 90 or 100 and how they rank in class or school. Some parents project their unfulfilled dreams onto their children, pushing them into pursuits like piano or painting until these hobbies become pressures, triggering rebellion. Others see their children as extensions of their personal image, only caring if the children bring them honor.

Under external influences, many parents fall into the habit of comparing their children with others, saying things like, “Look at so-and-so; they do so well and are so capable.” They may not realize that such comparisons can easily burden children with pressure, causing anxiety,

low self-esteem, and other psychological issues. If these problems are not identified and addressed in time, the ongoing stress can lead children to spiral into deeper negative emotions. In recent years, we have frequently heard that children become so anxious that they lose interest in study, leading to depression, social isolation, or even tragic outcomes.

Many tragedies, in fact, can be prevented. This is why parents must understand what genuinely benefits their children's growth. It's much like those who neglect their health by leading irregular lives and eating without restraint. Only when their bodies are on the verge of collapse do they realize that without health, everything else is meaningless. By then, wealth and status gained at the expense of health cannot reverse the damage. Likewise, parents should prioritize the five aspects of their children's development—mindset, character, health, abilities, and academic performance—focusing on what truly matters, rather than regretting missed opportunities once issues arise. By then, it is too late to make meaningful changes.

The root of these misconceptions lies in the fact that many parents themselves have not received relevant education or developed the necessary mindsets. In the past, Confucian teachings emphasized learning how to be a virtuous person, how to conduct oneself in society, and how to establish the “three views” (worldview, life perspective, and values), which we will delve into later. The current education system, however, neglects these aspects, leaving many to grow up unprepared. When they become parents, they naturally do not know how to properly educate their children, often resorting to following trends or pursuing whatever is popular.

The saying, “Don’t let your children lose at the starting line,” has driven many parents into a frenzy of competition. Determined not to fall behind, they keep shifting the starting line earlier—from middle school to primary school, to kindergarten, and even to baby classes. Yet, what their children learn is merely the same material, just at an earlier age. What does this kind of education achieve? Often, it only places undue pressure on children,

depriving them of the joy of childhood. By the time they reach university—when they should truly invest in their studies—they are already burned out and disengaged.

Parents must carefully reflect on what truly matters in education. Only then can they provide proper guidance, ensuring their children start at the right place and at the right time. Especially with the emergence of artificial intelligence, much of today's knowledge and skill sets are becoming obsolete at an alarming rate. With estimates suggesting that AI could replace up to 80% of jobs in the future, how can children equip themselves to thrive and maintain a firm footing in such an unpredictable world?

In the absence of faith or spiritual pursuits, many see work as the centerpiece of life—a means to survive, pass the time, achieve success, and realize their values. However, it won't be long before we see the skills we take pride in are mastered by AI in moments, far surpassing human capabilities. Unless we are exceptionally outstanding and creative—irreplaceable by artificial intelligence—Many

ordinary jobs may not remain secure for long.

Therefore, future generations may fall into two categories. The first group includes those with spiritual pursuits, who, regardless of the changes in the world, can find contentment, self-sufficiency, and inner joy. The second group lacks a spiritual anchor. Confronting a surreal world, they are likely to feel lost, confused, and directionless, unsure of how to navigate life. When faced with setbacks, they may succumb to depression, anxiety, or even resort to destructive actions against society.

Over a century ago, Nietzsche declared, “God is dead, and we must re-evaluate all values.” In much the same way, people today must reassess their understanding of themselves and the world. Our traditional notions of value, meaning, and happiness were rooted in the material world, but this foundation is now faltering. Why, despite enjoying far better living conditions than previous generations, are modern people still plagued by confusion, anxiety, and insecurity? This is because the world

we once trusted is now rife with uncertainty, unraveling at a visible pace. In a sense, “witnessing history” has become an everyday reality.

In the relentless torrent of our times, how can we stand firm? The answer lies in embracing impermanence and releasing our grip on personal assumptions, expectations, and attachments. This calls for inheriting Eastern culture, especially the wisdom of Buddhism, which equips us with the ability to remain grounded amid change, embodying a supermundane mind while actively engaging in the world. Such a mindset is more crucial than any external achievement, such as scores or abilities.

III

UNDERSTANDING THE KEY TO EDUCATION WITH DEPENDENT ORIGINATION

Creating high-quality products in a company requires meticulous design. But have we ever considered that life itself is also a product? During a talk I gave in Shanghai at a venue called “Xiāng,” on the *Art of Awakening*, I posed this question: Is your life an ordinary product or a carefully crafted work of art? Now, I ask you again: What has shaped who you are today? Is it the result of careful cultivation, or have you been swept along by societal currents? Do your daily thoughts, words, and actions add meaningful value to your life, lifting it to greater heights?

In reality, many lives are just a tangle of emotions and misguided thoughts. Day after day, year after year, they become occupied by these fragmented emotions and ideas. Why does this happen? It stems from ignorance—a failure to see the true nature of life and the world. Without the wisdom of Buddhism or the mentorship of enlightened teachers, we are left to navigate life within the limits of our current cognitive patterns, simply following our feelings wherever they lead. Such an existence is passive, dictated by habitual patterns ingrained in our minds.

Buddhism offers profound wisdom about life. It teaches us that life is an endless accumulation, built through the actions of our minds, words, and bodies. Each day, we generate countless thoughts, utter many words, and engage in various activities, all of which not only impact the world around us but also leave an imprint on our lives. These actions are rooted in the family, education, work, social environment, and relationships. Together, they mold us into who we are today.

According to Buddhism, life does not begin with this lifetime. We are not born as blank slates but as the sum of our accumulated past. Our actions—whether through body, speech, or mind—continue to shape our present and perpetuate the cycle of rebirth. Life flows like a river, stretching from an infinite past toward an endless future. This journey can either be unconscious or deliberate. Only by embracing Buddhist wisdom and understanding the causes, conditions and causality of life can we discern which qualities to nurture and what to relinquish.

Since life carries forward the accumulations of the past, each child is born with unique talents. As the ancients remarked, “Beginning one’s studies in this lifetime is already too late.” This suggests that even decades of learning in a single lifetime cannot rival the abilities of someone who has honed their skills over many lifetimes. Prodigies like Mozart demonstrated extraordinary talent in composition from a young age, far surpassing ordinary people.

Aside from exceptional cases, everyone has their own unique strengths. Some lean toward emotional expression, while others favor rational thinking; some excel in the humanities, while others in the sciences; some are gifted in the arts, while others in research. Recognizing a child's talents and interests is therefore vital.

Parents often approach this with a subjective perspective, focusing more on "what interests their children should pursue," rather than understanding their inherent talents and genuine preferences. However, talent is what truly sets a person apart, offering a head start and a distinct advantage in their development. That said, interest plays an essential role as well. As the saying goes, "Interest is the best teacher." When fueled by interest, learning becomes both enjoyable and self-sustaining, driven by continuous motivation.

Discovering children's talents and interests, creating supportive conditions, and offering proper guidance can transform learning into a self-driven activity. However, if

parents impose their expectations on their children—dictating who they should become or what abilities they should have—without considering their preferences, they are forced into passive compliance, leading to burnout, emotional distress, and even collapse under pressure. This dynamic also leaves parents feeling exhausted and unhappy.

Western education places great emphasis on fostering creativity in students. I suppose many of you came to Chiang Mai to accompany your children during their study because of the international schools here. Learning in an open environment enables a receptive and relaxed mind, allowing children to unlock their creative potential. In the future, as artificial intelligence takes over many knowledge-based tasks, creativity will become vital. While AI can produce “creations” based on instructions, these are merely recombinations of existing elements. True creation arises from our original mind and the boundless potential of life—qualities beyond the reach of AI.

IV

ESTABLISHING A HEALTHY EDUCATIONAL ECOSYSTEM

Education is holistic and multifaceted. To support the children's growth, we must understand the factors that shape their development and create a nurturing educational ecosystem. This involves three key elements as follows: parents, society, and schools.

1. Family Education

Parents create the first classroom for their children and, in many ways, have the most profound influence as their primary educators. While prenatal education is highly

valued in modern times, its significance was recognized as early as the Western Zhou period in ancient China. Guidelines for behavior, lifestyle, and mental well-being during pregnancy highlighted how a parent's thoughts and emotions can affect the unborn child. Therefore, it is essential for parents to stay kind and calm. A well-known example is the mother of King Wen of the Zhou Dynasty, celebrated for her dedication to prenatal care.

As such, creating a warm, kind, and positive environment at home is crucial for both parents and children. Although children are born with their own traits, they must adapt to their surroundings. Their earliest experiences come from their parents' responses to every action they make. How parents react—whether to soothe a crying baby immediately or observe for a while, to carry them often or encourage them to walk independently—becomes their earliest and nearly instinctive lessons. Just as animals learn from interacting with nature, animal parents guide their young with various methods, teaching them what to do and what to avoid in different situations.

Once children become aware, they must also be nurtured by cultural influences. In the past, overseas Chinese families placed great emphasis on preserving traditions. For example, I have seen Chinese families in Australia and Europe still upholding traditional customs—children cannot sit while their parents stand, or they must wait for their parents to begin eating before starting themselves. In contrast, such practices are now less common in China. Perhaps for overseas Chinese, being far from their homeland, these customs serve as a spiritual connection to their roots.

Even more significant are the values, attitudes, and expectations that parents subtly instill in their children. Do you emphasize grades and abilities, or do you value mindset and character? Are you responsible and compassionate, or do you believe in “every man for himself”? Such values silently shape the principles by which children live and grow.

Children are often described as mirrors and photocopiers

of their parents, reflecting their virtues and flaws alike. As such, it is vital for parents to develop a sound worldview, life perspective, and values, as these not only shape their own lives but also those of their children. While Confucian teachings provide valuable insights into this, the past century has disrupted traditional Chinese education. While its revival is gaining traction, it has yet to reach society as a whole. Thus, it requires parents themselves to consciously learn, practice, and embody these principles. By transforming ourselves, we also reshape the environment in which our children grow.

2. Social Education

Children's social education is deeply influenced by their environment, and the most famous story of Mencius' mother moving three times is a timeless example. After Mencius' father passed away, his mother struggled to raise him alone. Initially, they lived near a cemetery, where funeral processions frequently passed by. As a result, Mencius and other children began imitating funeral

rites in their play, prompting his mother to relocate to the city. Soon, she realized that their home was not ideal, as it was surrounded by small traders and peddlers. Finally, she settled near a school, where the intellectual environment inspired Mencius to embrace learning, conduct himself, and practice good manners. Later, he truly lived up to his mother's expectations and became one of the foundational thinkers in Confucianism. In ancient times, life was very challenging for a widow raising a child, and moving homes was no small feat. Despite the hardships, Mencius' mother tirelessly moved three times, demonstrating her foresight and the significant impact of the environment on personal development.

Moreover, choosing friends is also crucial. The *Analects of Confucius* highlights three qualities of beneficial friends: those who are upright, sincere, and knowledgeable. In modern society, people often value networking for career benefits and resources they can gain. However, a friend's virtues are the true treasure we can benefit from. Parents should be mindful of their children's

companions—are they lazy, idle, and aimless trouble-makers or virtuous and motivated friends? Even the nature of neighbors matters, as their subtle yet lasting influence can shape a child over time. The saying, “Proximity to good makes one good; proximity to bad makes one bad,” underscores the power of association.

The modern social environment is quite unfavorable for children’s education. Smartphones, for instance, have become increasingly accessible and addictive. Some parents, whenever their children start crying, just hand them phones. They feel at ease in the moment, but the children start to play games at the age of two or three. In just a few years, they’ll become heavy users, with no interest in learning at all. It is sad that in some Western countries, stricter controls are in place, prohibiting elementary and even middle school students from using phones independently. Smartphones also pose an additional threat through unfiltered internet content. For impressionable young minds, the internet offers a myriad of temptations that can lead to dependency. Since all kinds of desires can

be fulfilled online or through games, over time, this can lead to mental health issues. The children become completely immersed in the virtual world, unable to break free and establish normal, healthy social relationships.

In the past, children grew up amid fewer temptations, spending time in nature and fostering uncomplicated, healthy interests. Today, however, the environment presents unprecedented challenges that previous generations never faced, leaving many parents without a clear roadmap for guidance. To navigate these challenges, parents must focus on two key aspects: improving their own learning to provide positive guidance for their children, and carefully choosing an environment that supports their children's development. In today's world, the latter has become more important than ever.

3. School Education

Many parents go to great lengths to secure spots for their children in good schools, from buying property in school

districts to leveraging personal connections, sparing no cost or effort. When choosing a school, they often prioritize the admission rate. However, what truly matters is whether the school offers constructive guidance and supports a child's healthy development. Nowadays, competition is fierce across all fields—some with open, fair practices, while others breed unfair ones. Many unhealthy trends have already infiltrated schools, leading some children to engage in networking with ulterior motives, such as, currying favor with teachers through gifts, or comparing family wealth and status, including the cars used for drop-offs and pickups.

You have come here not only for your own benefit but also to provide your children with a relaxed, open, and nurturing environment. However, this alone is not enough, especially for Chinese people who are rooted in a rich traditional culture. Confucianism emphasizes the cultivation of character, while Buddhism focuses on the education of life—these are precisely what modern education lacks the most.

In light of this, we are introducing the family-version Dhyana Tea Space. Family harmony must be rooted in a shared cultural bond; otherwise, each member may live in their own perceptions, centered around their own feelings. Just as businesses require a corporate culture to foster shared beliefs, families need shared values to stay connected. Without them, couples may drift apart despite sharing the same bed, and parents and children may fail to understand each other. Just as a saying goes, the greatest distance between two people is when they sit side by side, each absorbed in their phones. Everyone is connected to their phones, not to the family members right in front of them. They share the deepest affections with their phones, not with the family bound by blood. How absurd!

So, what connects family members? In traditional families, we all receive the teachings of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism, sharing the spiritual beliefs and moral guidelines. This remains essential today. I propose families can create Dhyana Tea Spaces where members,

friends and relatives, can gather regularly to read classics like the *Great Learning*, the *Doctrine of the Mean*, and the *Analects*, or the Mindful Peace Academy Collection. They can also enjoy Dhyana tea, practice mindfulness, and engage in wellness activities. Such practices enrich the family culture, create a positive atmosphere, and fill the gaps left by conventional schooling.

V

INHERITING CONFUCIAN CULTURE: LEARNING HOW TO CONDUCT ONESELF AND HANDLE MATTERS

We come into this world with only our innate human qualities; it is through education that we grow into qualified individuals. An authentic Chinese identity, in my opinion, embodies two aspects: genetic inheritance and cultural inheritance. Black eyes, black hair, and yellow skin symbolize our genetic lineage, while traditional values are the cultural inheritance. Many overseas Chinese worry that their children may become “bananas”—yellow on the outside but white on the inside. Raised in Western educational systems from a young age, these

children often adopt Western values, thinking, hobbies and habits. Despite their Chinese appearance, they may lack the inner essence of Chinese culture.

How can we truly embody an authentic Chinese identity, both inside and out? We must inherit the excellent traditions of Chinese culture. From a Buddhist perspective, every life carries karma accumulated over countless lifetimes. As the saying goes, “A child’s future can be seen at the age of three.” It implies some people are born wise, others foolish; some are inherently kind, while others are naturally violent. Given these vast differences, education becomes essential to nurture the good and correct the bad.

Western societies place equal emphasis on morality and law. Morality helps to address the root causes of criminal intentions, while law serves to regulate actions. When immoral thoughts and behaviors are curbed, there would be little to worry about in this world. Thus, these two systems have always been running in parallel in the West.

In these societies, religion is deeply embedded in daily life. Christians are guided by clergy from birth through marriage to death, and even presidential inaugurations involve swearing an oath on the Bible. In this context, regardless of the depth of your faith, the moral principles of religion will influence and restrain your actions. Without morality, laws can only react to events after they occur, often too late to prevent harm. Moreover, there are gray areas beyond the reach of law, where morality and self-restraint become essential.

China's cultural tradition leans towards the concept of "rule by man," with Confucian thought focusing on moral norms for personal conduct and social interactions. Reflecting this, the World Congress of Philosophy, held in China a few years ago, adopted the theme "Learning to Become Human." It underscores that becoming a virtuous person, much like mastering any skill, requires learning. Mencius said, "If one is fed and clothed but not taught, they live an idle life, no different from animals." This suggests that if a person, after having enough food

and clothing, spends each day in indulgence without receiving proper education, they are not much different from an animal. However, he also affirmed that, “Everyone can become a sage like Yao or Shun.” The key difference lies in whether one has received a moral education.

Confucianism also highlights the “three great accomplishments” as the hallmarks of a meaningful life: the highest is to set a moral example, the second is to perform great deeds, and the third is to advocate noble ideas. Setting a moral example entails perfecting one’s morality and becoming a virtuous person; performing great deeds involves achieving significant success and contributing to society; and advocating noble ideas is about inspiring the world with one’s thoughts. In a discussion with Professor Zhu Hanmin, Dean of the Confucian Academy at Yuelu Academy, on “How to Set Spiritual Values and Life Purpose,” we found that Confucianism and Buddhism align in their missions. In terms of self-cultivation, both emphasize becoming sages or exemplary individuals; in terms of social responsibility, Confucianism focuses on

rectifying the mind, sincerity, self-cultivation, family regulation, and ultimately governing the country and achieving world peace, while Buddhism emphasizes the journey from self-enlightenment to enlightening others, and from benefiting oneself to benefiting all beings.

To achieve this, we must first set an aspiration, which Buddhism refers to as making a vow—giving life a goal and direction. Today, many live without a clear sense of purpose, plagued by “hollow heart disease” or sense of meaninglessness, which have nearly become the norm. Why is this? The root cause is the absence of noble goals and aspiration. For most, their goals are purely pragmatic: gaining admission to a good university, landing a well-paying job, or earning millions. Once these are achieved, they continually raise the bar—seeking tens or hundreds of millions in wealth or upgrading their careers, homes, and cars. When things go well, they feel proud and unbeatable, imagining an endless upward trajectory. Yet if goals are not met, they experience such unhealthy emotions as setbacks, anxiety, depression. This is the common state

of ordinary people.

The Confucian idea of setting aspirations focuses on defining profound life goals, epitomized by Zhang Zai's Four Sentences: "To ordain conscience for Heaven and Earth"—Cultivating a mind that resonate with the moral order of the universe; "To secure life and fortune for the people"—Assisting others in finding peace and purpose in life, rather than merely living for oneself; "To continue the lost teachings of the sages"—Preserving and passing down the wisdom and culture of past sages; "To establish peace for all future generations"—Working toward the betterment of the world, humanity, and the generations to come.

The bigger the goal, the less one is affected by temporary successes or failures. In a Weibo post, I outlined five advantages of pursuing ambitious goals. First, it is hard to fail because success is equally hard to achieve. Second, it is hard to become unemployed because the work is enduring. Third, it's hard to become attached because

there's no specific point to cling to. Fourth, it is easier to find excuses for not doing well because it is inherently difficult to succeed. Finally, there is no need to hurry; without the right conditions, rushing is futile as progress unfolds naturally with causality. Therefore, I always feel that monks suffer from neither success nor failure. This balance is exemplified in monastic life: when conditions allow, they dedicate themselves to spreading the Dharma and benefiting others; when conditions do not, they engage in self-cultivation, which is equally vital.

In our daily practice, we recite the Four Great Vows: “Sentient beings are countless, I vow to save them all; afflictions are endless, I vow to end them all; teachings are infinite, I vow to learn them all; the Buddha’s way is unsurpassed, I vow to attain it.” Do we take these as our life’s goals and unshirkable responsibilities? Similarly, there are the Forty-eight Great Vows of Amitabha Buddha and the Twelve Great Vows of the Medicine Buddha. If we embrace these vows as our aspirations, we commit to a path of continuous progress—not only in this life

but across all future lives—shielding ourselves from the anxieties.

The *Analects* say, “The commander of a large army can be captured, but the will of an ordinary man cannot be taken away.” This underscores the importance of aspirations. Small aspirations are easily fulfilled, often leaving one without a clear direction. Therefore, Confucianism advocates setting grand aspirations, and Buddhism promotes making vows. Both are grounded in high moral standards, encouraging us to become virtuous individuals who aspire to benefit the world.

Decades ago, people often had a sense of responsibility to family and society, even without lofty aspirations. However, younger generations born in the 1990s and 2000s seem increasingly detached from this sense of responsibility. On the one hand, they may be more open-minded and less constrained. But, on the other hand, many live in a self-centered world, believing they don’t need to live for anyone else—if they’re happy, they live; if they’re not

happy, they don't have to. In fact, this is an irresponsible and neglectful attitude toward life, stemming from a lack of proper education and failure to truly reflect on life itself.

In the past, younger generations were often influenced by their elders. Our parents and grandparents taught us how to become a virtuous person and take on responsibilities. Today, however, many traditional virtues seem at odds with modern trends. For example, the ancient virtue of frugality seems out of place in today's society that encourages consumption. In traditional Chinese society, almost every village had respected figures known for their morality, wisdom, and sense of responsibility. They served as living examples of ethical behavior. Even if people don't grasp many teachings from books, they can still learn how to conduct themselves and handle matters by observing these role models.

However, after the economic reforms, society underwent a rapid shift, moving from valuing morality to longing

for wealth and power, and chasing entertainment and sensual pleasures, even questioning, “What is morality worth?” Fortunately, as people gradually accumulated wealth, they became aware of new problems. Without wealth and power, these seemed like the keys to everything. Yet, once attained, they realized that these did not bring greater happiness or fulfillment. What, then, is the most important in life? What is truly worth pursuing? Where can we find security and life purpose? More people are reflecting on and pondering these questions, especially after three years of the pandemic.

Thus, the values we uphold, the character we pursue, and the kind of person we aspire to become are fundamental to our lives, shaping how we conduct ourselves and interact with others. In recent years, there has been a revival of interest in Confucian virtues: “benevolence, righteousness, ritual propriety, wisdom, trustworthiness; gentleness, kindness, respectfulness, frugality, and forbearance.” Yet, for many, these virtues remain abstract concepts; they fail to delve into their deeper meanings or

integrate them into their personal character.

Everyone aspires to beauty, but we often pursue external forms of beauty—such as appearance, clothing, and status—without realizing that true beauty comes from within. Inner beauty cannot be separated from wisdom and morality, which require an understanding of the causes, conditions and causality of life.

From this perspective, what is morality, and where does its value lie? In fact, morality serves as the substance from which our character is formed. Will we construct it with virtues or flaws? If you haven't thought about this, consider it this way: a kind, honest, friendly, compassionate, and warm-hearted person is universally liked and welcomed. Conversely, no one wants to befriend someone who is narrow-minded, confrontational, angry, jealous, or selfish. Although many people may not fully realize the role of morality, the choices we make about whom to associate with or distance ourselves from in daily life reflect our recognition of morality and our longing for a

beautiful life.

How to build a beautiful life? If life consists of twenty elements—ten positive and ten negative—how would we choose? Are we in control of this choice, or do harmful elements grow unnoticed?

Confucianism teaches self-cultivation, family regulation, governance of the state, and bringing peace to the world. Of these, self-cultivation is the foundation and, in many ways, the most difficult to achieve. Without the wisdom of Buddhism and an understanding of life's causes, conditions and causality, how can we fully grasp the value of morality and practice self-cultivation? In a discussion with Professor Zhu Hanmin, Dean of Yuelu Academy, I pointed out that while Confucianism emphasizes morality, it lacks the concept of causes, conditions and causality. So, what is the value of morality? Some people may think, "Being a good person only brings benefits for a few decades—such a short time. Why should I go through so much effort to be good?" However, if we understand the

causes, conditions, and causality of life, we'll realize that following morality benefits not only this lifetime but also countless lifetimes to come.

Learning traditional Confucian culture primarily teaches us how to conduct ourselves and handle matters. This is embodied in the virtues of “benevolence, righteousness, ritual propriety, wisdom, trustworthiness; gentleness, kindness, respectfulness, frugality, and forbearance,” mentioned earlier. Simply put, benevolence is cultivating a loving heart; righteousness is following moral behavior; ritual propriety is engaging with others appropriately; wisdom is perceiving everything as it is; trustworthiness is consistently practicing honesty; gentleness refers to a mild temperament; kindness involves a warm and good heart; respectfulness is being courteous and polite; frugality means being diligent and valuing resources; forbearance reflects modesty and thoughtfulness. These are all excellent virtues that benefit oneself and others. The key lies in internalizing them through consistent practice.

The learning approach we advocate is “Contemplative and Abiding Meditations.” First, we need to reflect: why should we pursue these virtues? Why should we cultivate gratitude and rejoice in others’ virtues? Following this reflection, practices such as *Metta Sutta* meditation can help us develop loving-kindness and compassion for ourselves and all beings. Through such practices, we shift from a self-centered perspective to one that embraces all sentient beings, fostering a positive and proactive state of mind.

VI

LEARNING BUDDHIST WISDOM TO CULTIVATE A HEALTHY CHARACTER

When it comes to how we conduct ourselves and handle matters, it is not enough to study Confucian culture alone; we also need the profound wisdom of Buddhism. This is because the mind must truly change through practice; it cannot be transformed just by talking about it. Merely understanding concepts does not integrate them into life or make any difference.

Children today often face psychological issues such as anxiety, depression, reclusiveness, selfishness, and

self-centeredness, which can lead to behavioral problems like school aversion, rebellion, poor self-discipline, and smartphone addiction. When a child exhibits these problems, many parents become anxious and resistant, thinking, “How could my child be like this?” In reality, this anxiety and denial only exacerbate the problem, offering no help to the child.

As parents, how should we handle these situations? Whether from a psychological or Buddhist perspective, the first step is acceptance. Earlier, we explored the proper understanding of family bonds, which reminds us that a child is an independent being, born with their own karma, and not an extension of their parents. The parent-child relationship spans only a few decades before both individuals follow separate paths, so what we can do is limited. How can we make these years meaningful? No matter how a child behaves, we should not become overly attached to our own desires or impose too many preconceptions. If we do, we will become anxious and restless, imposing unnecessary pressure on the child, which will

eventually reflect back on us. As this cycle of mutual pressure builds, the stress escalates.

In fact, when we examine ourselves, we too have many flaws that are not easily changed. Therefore, we should not place unreasonable expectations on our children. The first step is to accept our own imperfections, and then, extend that acceptance to theirs. Parents and children are brought together by causes and conditions in this life. Regardless of the past karmic connection, what we can do now is focus on guiding them toward positive change rather than pushing them to conform to our expectations. Only by accepting them fully without opposition can we approach their behaviors calmly and guide them properly.

Moreover, some psychological issues do require intervention. In addition to traditional psychological therapy, mindfulness meditation has proven to be an effective tool for adjustment and has been widely embraced in the West. Guiding children to develop mindfulness and abide in it can help them address negative mentality, enabling the

mind to break free from unhealthy patterns. However, this requires parents to first practice mindfulness themselves and experience its benefits. When parents embody mindfulness, their presence can foster a calming atmosphere in the home.

Additionally, parents should guide their children to develop a positive mindset. If a child lacks gratitude, help them understand that everything they receive is not to be taken for granted, and they should feel grateful. If they are self-centered, help them realize that survival in this world relies on the contributions of others, and only by serving others can we expect the same in return. Therefore, they should adopt an altruistic mindset and treat those around them with kindness. In fact, every negative mindset can be countered by its positive counterpart, and the key is to identify the problems promptly, consciously cultivating the positive traits. Equally crucial are cognition and values—parents should guide their children in setting life goals and understanding what kind of person they aspire to become. Life needs

direction and role models so that they can continuously progress toward their goals.

Beyond personal guidance, it's essential to create a positive environment at home by organizing group learning activities with your children or those around you, subtly instilling the principles of good character. For instance, you could organize youth book clubs, where they read books such as the Mindful Peace Academy Collection, share their insights, and discuss how they apply these learnings in daily life.

Once a foundation has been built, meditation can be incorporated into practice. Our approach to meditation consists of two types: mindfulness meditation and altruistic meditation. Mindfulness meditation enhances concentration and awareness, helping to resolve mental issues. Altruistic meditation involves understanding others, empathizing with them, and accepting what we are unwilling to accept. At the same time, it helps us cultivate gratitude and rejoice in others' virtues, thereby

transforming a self-centered mindset.

In summary, parents should offer proper guidance rather than imposing pressure with demands such as “I want you to do this,” “Get this score,” or “Achieve this ranking.” They should also refrain from comparing their children to others, as every child begins their journey from a unique starting point.

As parents, the first step is to change our misconceptions. With the correct worldview, outlook on life, values, and a wholesome character, the family environment will naturally transform. Only then can we provide positive guidance and nourishment for our children. Since most of our character and behaviors are formed unconsciously, only through learning Buddhism can we fully understand ourselves, identify negative traits to eliminate, and positive ones to develop. By practicing precepts, concentration, and wisdom, we can transform ourselves, making our lives meaningful. Buddhism offers us the hope for this transformation; without it, change is very difficult. As the

saying goes, “Rivers and mountains are easier to change than one’s character.” If we can’t even see ourselves clearly, how can we talk about change?

Family education is a vast topic, and due to time constraints, I can only address some prominent issues with a few preliminary thoughts. There remains much room for deeper exploration. What I shared today is merely a modest contribution, intended to inspire greater insights. I hope that more insightful individuals will draw nourishment from the richness of traditional Chinese culture, grounded in the wisdom of Buddhism, rooted in Confucian teachings on personal conduct, and supplemented by psychological insights, to nurture a healthy and outstanding next generation for both families and society.

国际静心协会、静心学堂简介

国际静心协会（简称 MPI）是 2021 年成立于瑞士苏黎世的非盈利组织，旨在向全球传播佛法智慧和禅意生活。

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Mindful Peace International (MPI), established in 2021 in Zurich, Switzerland, is a non-profit organization dedicated to spreading Buddhist wisdom and promoting a Chan-inspired life globally.

The Mindful Peace Academy serves as the core public welfare brand under Mindful Peace International. We are dedicated to passing on education about life awakening and offering modern individuals ways towards physical and mental well-being, thereby helping them ground themselves and discover their life's mission. The curriculum we promote at the Mindful Peace Academy has been authenticated through forty years of study and practice by Master Jiqun, an eminent elder of Han Buddhism. It represents an exploration of contemporary Buddhist education, encompassing teachings on the Chan-inspired Life, the Wisdom for Living, and the Path to Awakening. Moreover, we are committed to creating Chan-inspired spaces and fostering mutually enriching environments worldwide to safeguard the public's learning journey.

The *Mindful Peace Academy Collection* showcases a selection of courses on the Chan-inspired Life and the Wisdom for Living. We sincerely hope that through these courses, more individuals will engage with life awakening education and share in the blessings that Eastern wisdom brings to humanity.

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