

Six Prime Principles for Resolving Conflict and Promoting World Peace

UNESCO Celebration of Vesak

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Date May 2015

Venue UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France

Respected Ambassadors, delegates, guests and friends:

I am greatly honoured and grateful for the invitation to celebrate Vesak with you at UNESCO Headquarters for the third time, and to share our thoughts and experiences on resolving conflict and fostering world peace.

I remember that UNESCO was established in 1945, drawing from lessons learned in World War II. UNESCO's

constitution states that "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed." This sentence encapsulates the root cause of disorder in the world. It conveys an important message—the whole universe is closely related to our thoughts. If our thoughts are kind, the world will be heaven and the Land of Ultimate Bliss. If our thoughts are unkind, devoid of benevolence, honor, civility, wisdom, and trust, then society will be chaotic.

The Buddha taught that "all phenomena are manifested by the mind." A person's attitude and thoughts not only affect the world but the entire universe. Many state leaders and academic experts have now lost confidence in recovering social stability and peace. Such a crisis of confidence is the biggest problem faced by humankind today.

How do we gain confidence? We must be role models by truly teaching and practising the traditional teachings of the sages and show their positive impact. To this end, I have come up with Six Prime Principles as a reference for those dedicated to resolving conflict and realising world





UNESCO was established in 1945 in order to draw from lessons of World War II. UNESCO's constitution states that "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed", which encapsulates the root causes of disorder in the world. Many countries were in ruins after the War. (L) Twenty-six countries signed the Declaration by United Nations in Washington. (R)

peace. The Six Prime Principles are: foster a vow of universal love, set great aspirations, establish the moral foundation, strengthen the learning foundation, cultivate, and attain the utmost achievement.

1. Education is Foremost in Resolving Conflict

After 9/11, the Centre for Peace and Conflicts Studies at the University of Queensland invited me to a conference on conflict resolution. What are the origins of the world's conflicts? The origins lie within

the disharmony of family, where spouses distrust each other and do not get along. At the root level, conflict originates from our minds—the conflict between our innate and our habitual natures. Thus, the resolution of world conflict and the eradication of war requires resolving conflict in the family and within ourselves.

Foster a Vow of Universal Love

Where do we start in resolving conflict? We start with a true dedication to universal love. What does vow for "universal love"



Wise people who devote into resolving conflicts and securing lasting peace in the world should put the following Six Prime Principles into action, namely foster a vow of universal love, set great aspirations, establish the moral foundation, strengthen the learning foundation, cultivate, and attain the utmost achievement.



The ancient form of “Xiao” (filial piety) resembles a child carrying his aged parent on his back. Another ancient form of the character shows the same—a child should be obedient, carry out the parents’ teachings and honoring them. Perfectly fulfilling filial duties is “filial piety”.

mean? It is the divine and unconditional love—the impartial and universal love of Jesus Christ, the mercifulness of Allah, the compassion of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. God so loved the world. As we revere God, we must lead our lives with the love of God in our hearts and bring this love to those around us.

Such divine love is our true nature. The very first sentence taught to children by the ancient Chinese was “Human beings are born with innate goodness and purity.” This is the purity of the true nature, the self-nature or sincerity that is innate to every human. Through sincerity, one will love impartially and unconditionally. This is reflected in the teachings of Jesus Christ: “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,” and the Buddha: “Unconditional love and compassion for all who coexist in this universe of one living entity.”

It is amazing how the Chinese ancestors encapsulated the concept of returning to

our innately pure nature and the teaching of universal love in a Chinese character: 「孝」(xiao), which means to love and honour parents. The Chinese character 「孝」 is composed of two characters: the upper part is derived from “old” 「老」 and the lower part is “young” 「子」. The combination of these two characters symbolises the oneness of generations past and present. There are infinite generations past and infinite generations to come, with infinite sentient beings connected to us as one entity. The universal love arising from this is the greatest love and paramount in loving and honouring parents. In Buddhism, it is the bodhi mind with pure and impartial love for all beings. This is because the whole universe is one living entity, and such oneness is the true nature. How closely interconnected indeed! The Buddha said “Oneself and others are not distinct.” As such, how can we attach conditions to our love or not be loving?

Loving and honouring parents is the foundation of the Five Cardinal Relationships. The loving relationship between parent and child is innate to each one of us and is observable in infants. If you look at an infant less than three months old, their expressions and smiles are so innocent! They are just as happy regardless of who interacts with them. The parents in turn, care for their child attentively and unreservedly. This is the loving kindness of being a single integrated entity.

Thus, the ancestors had the wisdom to recognise the loving relationship between parent and child as the fount of all virtues. The compassion of Buddhism, the impartial and universal love of Jesus Christ, and the

mercifulness of Allah, are all expressed from the true nature. The true nature is the origin of religion, culture, and civilisation.

However, the infant learns to distinguish his parents as he grows. Such differentiation is contaminative and results in the loss of a pure mind. This is an example of what Confucius said: “Although human natures are born with the similar nature, acquired habits set us apart.” Maintaining the pure and impartial love requires proper education, which is the starting point of all the teachings of sages and religions and is in line with the Chinese saying “Without education, [human] nature degenerates.” In the *Three Character Classic* (*Sanzi Jing*), an ancient textbook for Chinese children, the first six lines clearly set out the truth of the universe and the objective and importance of education. Such wisdom is truly timeless and universally applicable.

When does education begin? It begins within the womb. If we love our children and wish to educate them well, we should emphasise a proper family education that nurtures proper personal development from childhood. This is the key strength of traditional Chinese education, which has sustained it for thousands of years.

A few years ago, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Southern Queensland told me about a study conducted by several European academic experts before World War II. They researched why Chinese civilisation remains whereas the other three ancient civilisations have not. The research concluded that the main reason was due to the strong emphasis that the Chinese placed on family education.

What does China’s traditional family education teach? Over two thousand years ago, the *Book of Rites* referred to the importance of proper childhood education in its first chapter, which is about developing a fine moral foundation from childhood. Such an education would help a child maintain a pure, wise, and compassionate mind throughout life; be supportive of virtuous matters; and not become angered or resentful in times of adversity.

Foetal education is of foremost importance in childhood education and has been the teaching tradition in China for thousands of years. Three thousand years ago, Tai Ren, the mother of King Wen of the State of Zhou knew the importance of foetal education. Throughout her pregnancy, she maintained the highest moral standards in thought, word, and conduct to foster the upstanding character



Chinese ancestors said, “Teach your children well during infancy”. Likewise, the *Holy Bible* also said, “Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it” . (Proverbs 22:6).



Three thousand years ago, Tai Ren, mother of King Wen of Zhou Dynasty knew the proper way of teaching her child should start from pregnancy. By keeping the highest moral standard during pregnancy, Tai Ren fostered her child, King Wen, with an upstanding character and the king finally became a sage.

of her foetus. With King Wen being generally regarded as a sage king in Chinese history, generations of mothers have followed Tai Ren's example and valued foetal education. Such compassion and true love from a mother is the starting point of China's traditional education.

From the moment of birth, an infant can see and listen, and is already learning. The parents must then show the infant how to behave in accordance with *Guidelines for Being a Good Person (Di Zi Gui)* by their own examples and shield the infant from improper influences. By providing this teaching over one thousand days, the infant will develop a solid foundation that is effective for life—as they say, “The child is the father of the man.”

exists. Both parents go to work and leave the children to learn from television and the internet. Subjected to such negative influences from an early age, children acquire bad habits that are then extremely difficult to correct. Parents and teachers commonly find children difficult to teach. Thus, the Chinese ancestors said “Teach a child while they are young”. The Holy Bible teaches us “Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it” (Proverbs 22:6).

The true practice of universal love begins with respecting a person's innately pure nature and caring for the younger generation. Those who truly love themselves will know how to love others—this is the core tenet of the traditional teachings of all sages. A younger generation with hearts filled with love is essential for the world

to have a future and for the realisation of world peace. Hence, “it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.”

Set Great Aspirations

The teachings of the sages provide an education that recovers our pure true nature. Thus, religions need to resume teaching and education. The Chinese word for “religion” comprises two characters 「宗教」 (zongjiao). 「宗」 (zong) means vital, important, and revered. 「教」 (jiao) means education, teachings, and civilisation. Together, 宗教 (zongjiao) refers to vital education, important teachings, and revered transformation of humanity. Based on my experiences and dialogue with various religions of the world for over a decade, every religion agrees with the Chinese definition of “religion,” which signifies the true meaning of religion.

Today it is indeed my great honour to be here with faith leaders and officials and delegates from various countries, to celebrate Vesak in commemoration of the Buddha’s great life. The role of Sakyamuni Buddha would be described today as a multicultural social educator. On closer examination, the founder of each religion was like Sakyamuni Buddha, who devoted his life to work as a volunteer social educator. If we wish to learn from the saints and sages, we must not only study in depth the teachings of our own religion, but also understand the teachings of other religions. By respectfully studying the teachings of every religion, we will discover that their teachings are about loving and honouring parents, and being good, respectful, humble, patient; and accommodating. Hence, when religions reemphasize teaching and education, people will be well-taught in morality and virtue and families will become harmonious. If family members can treat each other

To set great aspirations is to learn from the goodness of ancient saints and sages. A Buddhist should follow Sakyamuni Buddha’s example. A Christian and Muslim should act like Jesus and the Prophet Mohammad, respectively.

equally and get along harmoniously, then society will likewise be harmonious. This will, in turn, lead to lasting world peace. Harmony leads to prosperity.

We see that every ethnic group and religion has fine traditions. There is therefore a need for people to continue and promote such invaluable traditions for the benefit of future generations. This is what is meant by to “continue the wisdom of generations past, [and] realise world peace for generations to come.”

Having great aspirations is shown by practising the teachings of the ancient saints and sages, and following their fine examples. To learn from the Buddha, we should act as Sakyamuni Buddha. To learn from Jesus Christ and the Prophet Mohammed, we should act like Jesus and the Prophet. We must practise the love of God, the mercifulness of Allah, and the compassion of the Buddha in our daily lives and promote their attitudes and conduct through our own example. In doing so,

we will be blessed by the saints and sages as well as by our ancestors because our aspirations, words, and deeds are the same as theirs.

The suffering and problems now faced by humankind actually far exceed those in the times of Sakyamuni Buddha, Jesus Christ, and the Prophet Mohammed. Human civilisation borders on destruction. The British historian, Dr Arnold Toynbee, warned in his later years that without tremendous effort, traditional culture would become non-existent within this generation, which would be the most catastrophic loss of humankind. It could be said that UNESCO is the most important organisation in saving the world and humankind.

Confucius once said, “It is man who can teach and promote the Way.” Teaching and promoting the natural path, or the Way, is the duty of each benevolent person. We can save humanity and modern society only through our joint efforts in promulgating those teachings of saints and sages. A person

Moral education explains the relationships between human beings. They are:

There should be love between parents and children

There should be distinct duty between husband and wife

There should be honor between leader and subordinate

There should be seniority between young and old

There should be trustworthiness between friends

Morality teaches about good relationships that are warm, loving, and sincere. Such teachings are the foundation of the five thousand years of Chinese tradition. The Five Cardinal Relationships provide the greatest path. Following the teachings of morality is following the greatest virtue. The teachings of morality and virtue is an education that will help a person who has acquired bad habits return to his or her original true nature.



with universal love and great aspirations will be self-motivated in striving towards this objective regardless of having a faith or not. In realising this objective, UNESCO has no greater duty and this is no time to rest.

Establish the Moral Foundation

With vow of universal love and great aspirations, one must next establish the moral foundation. Just like a tall tree that needs deep roots for strong branches and lush dense foliage. With the moral foundation, one will truly be able to “learn to teach and live to be an example.”

The Way is the truth of the universe and human life, and the law of nature. The ancient Chinese said, “One cannot depart from the Way even for a moment.” This means that such truth is omnipresent, just as “God is with us.” In modern society, this is apparent in terms of the Five Cardinal Relationships. Virtue is according with the truth and order. With speech and conduct that accord with the Way, one will naturally

be a person of virtue, a person of the Five Cardinal Constants. Together, the Way and virtue provide the basic principle for being a moral person and the standard for our life and work.

The Five Cardinal Relationships are: the loving relationship between parent and child, loyalty and fairness between leader and subordinate, distinct responsibilities between husband and wife, order between senior and junior, and trust among friends. This is the Way. As parent and child are one entity, parents are loving and compassionate towards children, and the children are dutiful and respectful to their parents. Many difficult issues of modern society arise entirely due to a lack of love. Parents do not know how to love their children. Children do not know about honouring their parents and are unable to love, respect, and support them.

“Loyalty and fairness between leader and subordinate” means that the relationship

倫理教育就是說明人與
人之間之關係例如父子
有親夫婦有別君臣有義
長幼有序朋友有信的良
好人際親愛精誠的關係
教育它是中華五千年傳統
之大根大本五倫是大道
隨順倫常是大德道德教
育就是教人從不善的習性
回歸到自性本善的教育

釋淨空時年八十

between leader and subordinate must accord with honor. The thoughts, words, and deeds of leaders and subordinates must be proper, fair, reasonable, and lawful. A company built on such a proper foundation is bound to last for a long time. A society or nation based on honor will enjoy long-term peace and stability. Renewing and valuing honor is essential for lasting world peace and prosperity.

“Distinct responsibilities between husband and wife.” The husband and wife make up a family with each having a different role. Men are the breadwinners, and the women are responsible for teaching the children. Whether a child will become a sage or a person of noble character depends on the teachings of his mother. Thus, there is a Chinese saying that “Men go out to work, and women look after the home.” This is a division of labour.

Today, both husband and wife are keen to work and overlook the teaching of the next generation. The disadvantages from doing so outweigh any gain. The ancient Chinese sages understood that marriage is not merely a matter between two people, but one that impacts social stability and world peace, and is not to be treated lightly. No one teaches about such truths now. Social disorder stems from husbands and wives being so irreconcilable that divorce becomes the only solution. Marital discord leads to eventual social responsibility and causal liability to the detriment of society.

“Proper order between senior and junior” means that a person in a junior position must defer to someone in a senior

position, and the senior person must be responsible for the proper development of juniors. If young siblings are kind and loving towards each other, their relationship will remain unchanged as they grow older and they will continue to help each other and work together. How happy and blessed would such a family be! Such a society will naturally enjoy long-term peace and stability. The ancient Chinese thus prohibited children from fighting and taught them to be accommodating. From an early age, children had to learn to be patient and accommodating, and subsequently to be humble, considerate, and serve others in society. Such patience, humility, and consideration are no longer taught. Instead, children are taught to compete with each other from an early age. As they grow older, they only know to compete for fame and profit, and even family members will litigate. This leads to social disorder and everyone must live without a sense of security.

Finally, “trust among friends” is about mutual trust between friends, without any deception. A person who is unable to keep his word has no place in society. Our ancestors emphasised trustworthiness. For example, a debtor’s sons and grandchildren would strive to repay his debt, even without a binding legal document. This is the meaning of trust.

China’s traditional lifestyle enabled every person and family to be healthy and happy, with society enjoying lasting peace and stability. This has been recognised by both British philosopher Bertrand Russell and Dr Toynbee. In his later years, Dr Toynbee considered how to ensure that

another world war would never happen again, and how the whole world could live in peace and harmony, with inclusiveness, mutual respect, and love. He deeply hoped that China's traditional culture would become mainstream worldwide in the twenty-first century. Dr Toynbee said that China's traditional culture is a unique culture of inclusion, humility, and being considerate of others.

Throughout its history of thousands of years, China's domestic and foreign policies have emphasised fair and equitable treatment, living in harmony, being altruistic, kind, sincere, and living frugally. Thus, Dr Toynbee assured people at the time that China's traditional culture is an important cultural heritage that brings lasting world peace, stability, and harmony, and belongs to all humanity and the whole world.

The Five Cardinal Relationships represents the Tao, or natural order. They are timeless, universally applicable, and inviolable. Virtue involves following the Five Cardinal Relationships in our interactions in daily life and work: that is, living with morality and by the natural order. Virtue encompasses: (1) the Five Virtues, namely benevolence, honor, courtesy, wisdom, and trust; (2) the Four Anchors, namely courtesy, honor, integrity, and shame; and (3) the Eight Virtues, namely filial piety, sibling love, loyalty, trust, benevolence, love, harmony, and peace.

Benevolence involves being considerate and loving others as oneself. This then extends to loving all living beings and the material environment. With a heart of benevolence, one will live and work

morally and reasonably. Such a person will handle matters appropriately and with courtesy. By observing life in this manner, it is much like observing precepts, which leads to helping one attains meditative concentration, which leads to wisdom. Thus, one who lives with honor and courtesy is bound to be wise. With wisdom, one will respect the sages and practise their teachings, which inspire firm belief. Such fine moral characters are derived from the intimate love between parent and child. Thus, moral conduct is centred on such a love for all as one.

The Four Anchors were first promulgated during the Spring and Autumn Period (770 - 476 BC) by Guan Zhong, who said "Courtesy, honor, integrity, and shame are the four pillars of a nation." Leaders must educate the population about civility, honor, integrity, and shame. These four qualities are like four pillars that support the long-term peace and stability of the country. Integrity means no corruption. Shame refers to a sense of shame that deters us from immoral conduct. Ancient Chinese society highly emphasised the Four Anchors, which enabled people to live and work in peace, and enjoy stable prosperity over thousands of years. This is what we hope for today.

The aspects of virtue are summarised as: filial piety, sibling love (or fraternal love), loyalty, trust, courtesy, honor, integrity, shame, benevolence, love, harmony, and peace. These principles provide the essential foundation for learning the teachings of the saints and sages. By practising those principles, one will become a saint or sage in religious studies,



贊圖流九教三元混

佛教見性道教保命
 儒教明倫綱常是正
 農流務本墨流備世
 名流責實法流輔制
 縱橫應對小說諮詢
 陰陽順天醫流原人
 雜流兼通述而不作
 博者難精精者未博
 日月三光金玉五穀
 心身皮膚鼻口耳目
 為善殊塗咸歸于治
 曲士偏執黨同排異
 毋患多岐各有所施
 要在圓融一以貫之
 三教一體九流一源
 百家一理萬法一門

The Stele of the Unity of Faiths and Schools of Thoughts. It was erected in 1565 by a scientist and musician Zhu Zaiyu, member of the royal family. It depicts three people in one body, showing that all faiths are manifestations of the One Entity. The three are Sakayamuni Buddha at the center, Lao Tzu is on the right and Confucius on the left.

or a person of noble character in academic studies.

2. Education is Foremost in Promoting World Peace

At the Shaolin Monastery in China, there is an ancient monument titled “In praise of the Three Doctrines and Nine Schools of Thought.” It is inscribed with the words of Emperor Suzong of the Tang dynasty (711-762 AD): “The Three Doctrines [the teachings of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism] are one entity. The Nine Schools of Thought arise from the same origin. There are many approaches to the one truth, and many paths to the same door.” This concept of multiculturalism is the intercultural harmony that UNESCO has long advocated and what was promoted by Chinese President Xi here last year—“Civilisations are enriched through dialogue and learning from each other.”

When I visited the centenarian Japanese Venerable Master Koryu Nakamura, he told me that the founders of each of the world’s religions are incarnations of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva (the Bodhisattva of Mercy and Compassion). This means that the sage teachings of the world’s ethnic groups are not just members of one family, but parts of a single entity. Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva is therefore painted with thirty-two aspects in Chinese paintings to reflect the idea “one humanity, many faiths.” The Universal Door Chapter of the *Lotus Sutra* states, “Manifesting the appropriate image to help those in need of wisdom.” The sage teachings of the world’s traditional cultures are fundamentally one and the same. Thus, there have been effective precedents

of intercultural and interfaith harmony in China since ancient times. Such experiences remain relevant references for society today. The world’s religions are one family and all of humanity is one living entity. Education remains the priority in truly realising the oneness of harmonious coexistence.

What is the teaching content? The teachings of the saints and sages. For example, the *Governing Principles of Ancient China (Qunshu Zhiyao)* compiled by Emperor Taizong of the Tang dynasty provides fine teaching material that helps to solve the problems of society today. This book is the collected wisdom, ideals, methods, outcomes, and experiences throughout generations since the period of the Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors in ancient China. It offers guidance in terms of personal moral cultivation, managing a family household, governing a country and world peace, which involves fair and equitable treatment and living in harmony. The world’s diverse ethnic groups, cultures, ideologies, and lifestyles can work together, coexist harmoniously and unite as one.

Strengthen the Learning Foundation

Studying the *Governing Principles of Ancient China* requires a firm learning foundation. The “learning foundation” refers to the teachings of self cultivation, managing the family household, governing the country, and realising world peace. Such teachings are based on the Chinese characters and Classical Chinese. Chinese characters are symbols of wisdom, and the Chinese language is the only ideographical language in use today. Classical Chinese provides a standard way of writing that

does not evolve over time. If you are able to read Classical Chinese, you will have access to a treasure-trove of wisdom.

The ancient Chinese were well aware of language having many dialects and that the language itself would also evolve over time. Thus, they distinguished between the oral and written forms of language, thereby developing Classical Chinese, which transcended time and space, and imparted wisdom throughout the world for all time. Classical Chinese was highly regarded by both Bertrand Russell and Dr Toynbee. They hoped that the Chinese characters and Classical Chinese would become one of the worldwide medium for international communication, a means of uniting the world that would naturally bring about peace and harmony.

Chinese characters and Classical Chinese remain the best means of imparting culture throughout generations and could be used to convey the traditional cultures of every ethnic group. Thus, we consider that Chinese characters and Classical Chinese are the greatest invention of human history, enabling the continuation and accumulation of wisdom and civilisation.

As the most prosperous and golden age in Chinese history, the success of the Tang dynasty was brought about through use of *Governing Principles of Ancient China*. Over a thousand years later, this book has become the favourite of Chinese President Xi, which shows that it is most worthwhile to learn Chinese characters and Classical Chinese today.

Qunshu Zhiyao was a compilation of the essential passages that have been collected from the royal library of more than 89,000 scrolls in the Seventh century. The compilation has 500,000 characters, which guided Emperor Tai Zong of Tang dynasty to realize the golden age of peace and prosperity in China. The emperor said that, by carefully reading the compilation, one would be wise enough to solve all kinds of problems.



Restoring the teaching of traditional culture is now imperative for training teachers with a strong moral and learning foundation, and for enabling the age old teachings of Sinology to truly benefit the world.

Chinese characters and Classical Chinese are not difficult to learn. It just takes diligent non-native students one year to read Classical Chinese, and three years to write Classical Chinese. This is the common experience of non-Chinese students currently undertaking research on Chinese history and culture. Why would people from different cultural backgrounds learn Chinese characters? Each Chinese character includes philosophy and art. Through in-depth study, one will discover each Chinese character encompasses great wisdom that is

common to all the traditional cultures of the world's ethnic groups.

There are six methods of forming Chinese characters.

1. Pictogram

For example, the earliest forms of the characters for mountain 「山」 (U shan) and water 「水」 (J shui) resemble their respective shapes. The character for tree 「木」 (M mu) looks just like a tree.

2. Ideogram

If we add a horizontal line to the lower part of 木 (mu), it becomes 本 (B ben) meaning root or foundation. If we add a horizontal line to the upper part of 木 (mu), it becomes 「末」 (M mo), meaning the latter or final part.



There are six principles by which Chinese characters are formed, namely pictograms, indicators, associative compounds, pictophonetic characters, derivative characters and phonetic loan characters.

3. Associative Compound

Associative compounds are formed from a combination of characters, which collectively express a different meaning. For example, if we put two of the tree character 木 together, it becomes 林 (lín) meaning grove, and three of the tree character 木 together, it become 森 (sēn) meaning forest, a wooded area larger than a grove.

4. Picto-phonetic

Picto-phonetic characters are a combination of two characters, one relating to its meaning and the other relating to its pronunciation. For example, the character 「江」 (jiāng) for river is a combination of the character for water 「水」 (shuǐ expressed as 氵), which relates to its form, and the character 「工」 (gōng), which relates to its sound.

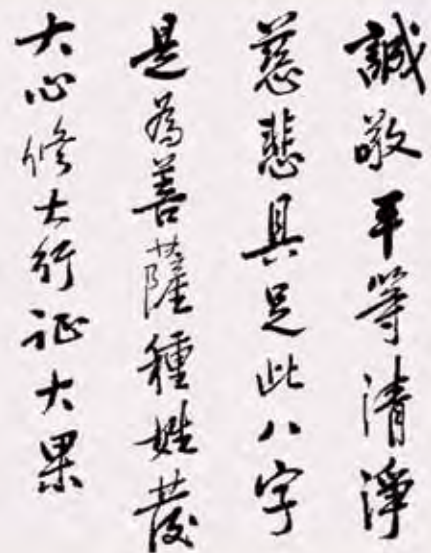
There are two further methods known as “derived characters” and “borrowed characters,” which appear as different characters but are originally related in terms of sound or meaning. Learning Chinese characters is thus relatable and infinitely interesting for all.

Cultivation

Equipped with a moral learning foundation, one then commits to promoting the teachings of the saints and sages. There is no service higher than teaching. All the religious saints and sages, without exception, devoted their lives to teaching. Thus, those who are interested in realising world peace should aspire to dedicating their lives to imparting the teachings of the saints and sages.

How do we achieve UNESCO's statement “in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed”? The ancient Chinese have already provided the answer: “Education is essential in building a country and guiding its people.” The same principle applies for world peace, the heaven referred to by various religions, and the lands of the Buddhas. If we properly teach and practise traditional culture, the whole world will be able to unite, eradicating war forever and realising lasting peace and prosperity.

Interfaith unity is the only path to world peace in today's society. To achieve interfaith harmony, religions must return to teaching and education, which requires providing a thorough understanding of the sacred teachings. People will then not



誠敬平等清淨
慈悲具足此八字
是為善薩種子
大心修持行證大果

Sincerity, respect, equality, tranquility, purity, mercy, and compassion are the seeds of true nature planted by Bodhisattvas. From these qualities they make the ultimate vows to cultivate and eventually reach the ultimate attainment.

mistake religion for superstition. With proper understanding of the religious teachings, devout followers will not be misled, be opposed to each other, or follow a wrong path.

With a genuine aspiration to follow in the footsteps of the saints and sages, we will gain blessings and will have positive opportunities to receive a fine education enabling us to help others. Not only must we exemplify the teachings of the saints and sages and the spirit of traditional culture, we must also be able to teach the profound principles.

Below, I have set out a summary of education being foremost in terms of ten aspects.

1. Education is foremost for planning a life for oneself and setting goal(s) in life.
2. Education is foremost for establishing a career and managing a family.

3. Education is foremost for building a country and guiding its people.
4. Education is foremost for a land of courtesy and honor.
5. Education is foremost for social stability and harmony.
6. Education is foremost for national prosperity and security for its people.
7. Education is foremost for an era of prosperity and universal peace.
8. Education is foremost for long term peace and stability.
9. Education is foremost in all the lands of the Buddhas.
10. Education is foremost in the Land of Ultimate Bliss.

Whether for personal happiness, national long term peace and stability, religious missionary work, or managing a group or governing a country, education must be the foremost priority. Education is vitally important!



Unfortunately in today's society, education is neither provided by teachers nor by a country's leaders but by the media. The media has become a decisive influence on the general social atmosphere. Television and the internet appear to teach us harmful behaviours—to harm, steal or take advantage, commit sexual misconduct, and deceive. It is no accident that people become misguided and modern society is disordered with constantly escalating conflicts.

The media itself is neither positive nor negative, it just depends on how we use it. We hope that every community can have a television channel dedicated to broadcasting the teachings of the saints and sages to every home. People can easily be taught, and with the proper education, they will soon change their ways.

We also hope that the teachings of each ethnic group passed down throughout generations can be recorded in Chinese characters and Classical Chinese for the benefit of future generations.

Attaining the Utmost Achievement

The aim of religious teachings and the teachings of China's traditional culture is to develop saints, sages, and people of noble character. With more such people, peace and prosperity will be naturally achieved. Thus, truly learning the teachings will not only save ourselves and our family, but also society and the world. It will benefit countries throughout the world and the infinite living beings throughout the universe. Hence, it is the utmost achievement.

One must attain the utmost achievement to truly love oneself and other living beings. Is it difficult to do so? It is not difficult with firm belief. This is because the Buddha often taught that "All beings are Buddhas in nature." The Chinese also have a saying, "Every person can be Yao Shun [one of the most respected sage kings]." This is the same as "Human beings are born with innate goodness and purity." With belief, aspiration and practice, everyone can achieve.

To nurture saints, sages and people of noble character, we must follow the proper teaching methods, namely the traditional method of following precepts, gaining meditative concentration, and attaining wisdom. This method is based on the principle that precepts enables one to attain meditative concentration, which in turn enables the initiation of wisdom. The path to success is "to specialise in one subject over a long period of time, and to realise the meaning of a book by reading it a thousand times."

Once we have mastered the Chinese characters and Classical Chinese, we can then specialise in *Governing Principles of Ancient China* or religious texts. As the *Governing Principles of Ancient China* is voluminous and people today have little time to study, Malaysia's Academy of Han Studies has compiled a selection of 360 excerpts—the *Governing Principles of Ancient China 360*, which has been widely welcomed. I suggest that each religion also compiles a "360" of the essence of its teachings to facilitate learning for everyone.

A truly comprehensive understanding of the texts will inspire wisdom. "To realise the meaning of a book by reading it a thousand times" helps modern society to resolve all personal, family, social, ethnic, and national conflicts.

At this critical juncture in history, we propose the Six Prime Principles: namely, foster a vow of universal love, set great aspirations, establish the moral foundation, strengthen the learning foundation, cultivation, and attain, the utmost achievement. May there be love throughout the universe and goodwill on earth. We believe that if more people practise the Six Prime Principles, we will not only resolve conflict but also realise a paradise of world peace and harmony in the near future.

May you enjoy auspiciousness, happiness and peace.

May UNESCO enjoy success in its directive in realising world peace.

May all the countries in the world enjoy prosperity, peace and harmony.

Thank you.

愛心遍法界
善意滿人間



Love permeates all the
Dharma realms.

Goodwill fills the entire
universe.

