

Appendix 3: Pre-BA Assignment Coversheet and Feedback Form (To Be Confirmed)



Pre-BA assignment
feedback form

(to be completed by marker)

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<i>Module title: An introduction to the The Governing Principles of Ancient China 360</i>	

For completion by marker:

Comments:

IMarker's signature:

Date:

Provisional mark:

NB. All marks are provisional until confirmed by the final examination board.

Practice the spirit of filial piety

From ancient times to the present, the culture of filial piety is an eternal theme. The ancients summarized the essence of ancient Chinese political culture as filial piety, friendship, loyalty, faith, righteousness, integrity and shame. Filial piety first reflects its important position and far - reaching influence in the traditional Chinese culture.

During the Spring and Autumn Period, the systematic theoretical system of filial piety culture was gradually formed, which was the product of the Confucianists. In the Confucianism represented by Confucius, the thought of benevolence and righteousness is its core thought, among which the culture of filial piety is particularly prominent. Later, filial piety expanded from family ethics to social ethics and political ethics, and governing the world with filial piety became the guiding principle of governance for the 2000 imperial society for two thousand years. For example, the Han Dynasty was said. The posthumous title of the Han Dynasty emperor is all Xiao, indicating the political pursuit of the imperial court and the respect for filial piety. Advocating filial piety and praising filial piety is one of the most obvious symbols of the Han Dynasty governing the world with filial piety.

¹Confucius said, filial piety is the foundation of virtue. People's body, and even every hair and every piece of skin, are given by their parents, should be careful, dare not to suffer a little hurt. This is the beginning of practicing filial piety. Set up virtue, let good reputation spread to future generations, parents will therefore feel honored, is to achieve the ultimate goal of filial piety. Generally

¹ Confucius and his students, *Xiao jing* 孝經[Classic of Filial Piety] (Xiamen University Press, 2000)p.1

speaking, the filial piety that most people understand is limited to filial piety to their parents, which is actually one - sided. In the era of feudal society, filial piety and loyalty in China were inseparable.

²*An introduction to the The Governing Principles of Ancient China 360* said, if this man is filial to his parents, he will be faithful to the monarch. In the same, if the man has great respect for his brother, then in the future, he will be able to obey the orders of the lead. If this man has no fault in either aspect of loyalty and obedience, and continues to serve the king and the superior leaders with this attitude, he can keep his salary and position and keep the sacrifice of the ancestral hall, which is the filial piety of an official. But governing the country must first govern the family, how to manage the family, naturally is to serve the parents. Filial piety was originally produced within the family, and later, the connotation expanded, not only to serve the parents, but also to be loyal to the monarch. If the relationship between "country" and "home" is good, the world is peaceful, and on the contrary, If the relationship between "country" and "home" is not good, the world will chaos. The highest principle of ensuring the effective rule of the state and the monarch is "loyalty" ; the highest principle of consolidating the

² *Qunshu zhiyao* 360 群書治要 360 [An introduction to the The Governing Principles of Ancient China 360] (Zhongguo Huaqiao chubanshe , 2012)juan 3.

grassroots social order and increasing the harmony between the township Party and the neighbors is filial piety. In the ancient point of view, the essence of loyalty and filial piety is the same. Fundamentally speaking, if a person does not show filial piety to his parents, how can he have awe of the country and society and do things beneficial to the country and the nation? ³*Xiao Jing* said, thus for he who does not love his parents but loves others, we all that perverse virtue. For he who does not respect his parents but respects others, we all that perverse courtesy. So, serving parents is the first step of filial piety.

The most basic thing is to know gratitude, repay kindness. Because every parent began to take very good care of their children since childhood, everything that is good will be left to their children. It can be seen that parents have nothing selfish about their children. ⁴*Buddha's illustration on the unrepayable love of parents* said, if there is a man shouldering his parents on a yoke, it is not enough to pay off the offerings of his parents even if he surrounds sumeru mountain and fret his meat and bones for infinite times. Visible that the graciousness of parents is difficult to return.

³ Confucius and his students, *Xiao jing* 孝經[Classic of Filial Piety] (Xiamen University Press, 2000)p.7

⁴ The Buddhist Scriptures, 父母恩重難報經[Buddha's illustration on the unrepayable love of parents] trans. Kumarajiva(Hongyi fotang yinjingchu, 1999)p.30

Filial piety is also a law that nature tells mankind. For example, we all know the story of the crow. The crow mother worked hard to raise its children, until the crow mother can not earn one's own living because of the age. Its children will go to find food to take care of their mother, just like the crow mother to take care of their children. Animals still know the practice of filial piety, if people do not know filial piety, more pitiful than the animals who know to repay their parents. Because if people do not know how to be filial to their parents, then when he will come to the society to get along with people, they will not respect others. As a result, he was only hated by everyone.

Filial piety is the responsibility of every child, this is an everlasting truth. Venerable Chengde also said that we should start from the four aspects of taking care of our parents' body, mood, ambition and thought. The first is the body of the parents, and the daily life should follow the laws of nature. Even if very rich is very rich also too much pursuit of luxury and waste life, so that they can raise parents, let parents at ease, this is the way of filial piety. But filial piety is not just take care of parents ' diet and daily life. ⁵*Lun Yu*

⁵ Confucius' students, *Lun Yu* 論語 [The Analects of Confucius] (Xiamen University Press, 2000)p.40

said that Zi You once asked Confucius what is the filial piety. Confucius answered, the duty of a good son nowadays means only to be able to support his parents. But you also keep your dogs and horses alive. If there is no feeling of love and respect, where is the difference? So the most important thing to take care of parents is to have respectful and gratitude to parents. In ordinary life, we can not be casual because of the close relationship with them.

Second, in addition to respecting parents, but also to be able to take care of their parents' mood. ⁶*Lun Yu* recorded that Meng Wu Bo once asked Confucius what is the filial piety, and Confucius said, think how anxious your parents are when you are sick, and you will know your duty towards them. Also, if the child is sick, the parents will worry about your disease, which will make the parents very unhappy. Therefore, no matter where we are, we should also take good care of our own body. In addition, ⁷*Di Zi Gui* said, if our bodies are injured, parents will worry; if our moral loss, parents will be ashamed. The real filial piety is to be good at observing the

⁶ Confucius' students, *Lun Yu* 論語[The Analects of Confucius] (Xiamen University Press, 2000)p.40

⁷ Li Yuxiu, *Di Zi Gui* 弟子規[Guidelines for Being a Good Person] (Xiamen University Press, 2000)p.10

hearts of the parents, whether their own words or behavior, should be in line with the etiquette, can not let the parents worry. Therefore, we should continue to improve our self - cultivation, and can not do things that violate morality.

Every parent has expectations for their children and hopes that their children can devote the knowledge they learn to the society and the country in the future to benefit more people. Mencius is an example of this. When Mencius was a child, he lived next to the cemetery. So he played the game of funeral often with his neighbors. His mother did not want him to learn these things, so they moved to the market. But, here, Mencius and his neighbor's children learned how to do business and play the game of slaughtering pigs and sheep. So she moved to school in order to give her son a good environment. Fortunately, officials will come to the temple every month, salute and kneel, treat each other politely, Mencius learned from them. Mencius' mother was satisfied. One day, he was tired of learning, Mencius' mother cut the shuttle on the loom to educate him. As we know, their family was poor, weaving is their only source of income. She said do things to persevere, can not give up halfway. If his mother used the same attitude to weave clothes, she would not do the job well. Mencius listened to his mother and studied hard. Finally, he

became a generation of saints. Now he makes later generations admire him, and respect his mother very much. This is one of the examples of the ambition to take care of their parents.

The last point is to take care of parents' thoughts. If parents are very persistent to something when they are old, we can not blame parents, but to gently persuade them. ⁸*Di Zi Gui* said: When parents are negligent, children should try to correct them, because we hope their parents' virtue to be better and better. So in persuasion, children should be patient and soft. The Book of Rites records that child who has a deep love for his parents. When he talked to his parents, he must be pleasant, and graceful, the face is very soft, the voice is also very gentle. The purpose of persuading parents is to enhance their wisdom. This is a natural manifestation of deep love for their parents.

In Chinese history, many stories of filial parents are recorded. Among them, Shun is an example. His family situation is unfortunate. His father was a blind man and mother died on the day of his birth. Later, his father married another wife and had a son. The whole family did not like him, and even nearly killed Shun.

⁸ Li Yuxiu, *Di Zi Gui* 弟子規[Guidelines for Being a Good Person] (Xiamen University Press, 2000)p.10

Not only did he not complain about his family, but every time he reflected on whether he had made any mistake, causing his family to hate him. Soon after, his moral character of requited evil with good was known by Yao who was the emperor of that time. So the emperor asked him to run the country for himself. Finally, after Yao's death, Shun ascended the throne, and administered the country diligently, making the country peace at that time. When he died, future generations regarded him as the monarch of the Holy Ming generation.

The reason why Shun became a generation of Holy Ming monarch was that his filial piety spirit is well implemented. No matter how his family treated him, he would accept and change it, and ask himself to do better. He not only moved his family, but also used this spirit to govern the country, and finally moved the people of the country. So the society was then in a peaceful state. His story also confirms what the ⁹*Xiao Jing* said, Confucius said that he who loves his parents does not dare to do evil unto others, he who respects his parents does not dare to be arrogant to others. Love and respect are exerted to the utmost in serving the parents, and

⁹ Confucius and his students, *Xiao jing* 孝 經[Classic of Filial Piety] (Xiamen University Press, 2000)p.10

this virtue and teaching is extended to the people, the example is shown to the whole world beyond China. That is the xiao of the Son of Heaven. The book Fu on Law said, one person has cause to celebrate, the multitudes rely on that.

Before I learned traditional culture, I did not know the significance of filial piety and its importance. I did not even think about it. In institutional school, students just care about whether their test results improve. Although institutional school organize moral education sometimes, it is also a process and has no practical significance. At the beginning, no one told me how important filial piety is for a person, or even a family. At that time, I was not willing to listen to my parents' advice, and did a lot of things that hurt my parents. In the end, I developed a lot of bad habits. For example, I do not help my parents share the pressure of doing housework and I even started addicted to computer games, so my academic performance began to decline. This has prompted my parents to look for a better education for me. Fortunately, my uncle introduced the home schooling of Loudi to my parents. Therefore, I learned traditional culture and Dharma when I was 14. Slowly, I realized my mistake and began to reflect on it.

To be honest, the world today is influenced by utilitarianism and hedonism, and most people indulge in their own desires every day, while also spending precious time and energy pursuing these false things. Before learning the traditional culture, I was also in such a state, without my own ideals. I do not know why I was learning. But after learning traditional culture, I decided to spend the ideal I would spend my life to pursue, that is to pass on this culture. So that people all over the world can get this cultural treasure. I always believe that filial piety is the fundamental to solving all problems. If I were to achieve this goal, I would have to start by practicing the spirit of filial piety.

In general, filial piety is the root and soul of the Chinese spirit and the basis of the pursuit of a better and happy life. This happiness is associated to filial piety. Because people live in the family, people's happiness cannot be separated from the family and society. We all know that a society is composed of thousands of families. In order to achieve the social condition of long - term peace and stability, we must start from governing the family and practice the spirit of filial piety. However, the real way to repay our parents for their deep gratitude is to turn the love that our parents

give us into great love, love all the living beings, so that this love can warm the whole world. As *Xiao Jing*¹⁰ said, paying respects in the Ancestral Temple causes the spirits and gods to manifest themselves. When xiao and ti arrives, one connects with the divine. This leads to illumination of the whole world, with no place not opening up.

¹⁰ Confucius and his students, *Xiao jing* 孝經[Classic of Filial Piety] (Xiamen University Press, 2000)p.15