

Trinity Saint David

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AI Acknowledgement

☐ **I have not used AI in my assignment**

I confirm that I have not used any AI tools in the research and creation of this assignment. I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated materials as my own work. I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used, which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

☒ **I have used AI in my assignment**

During the preparation of my coursework, I used artificial intelligence tools(AI) in a limited, transparent, and ethical way, in line with the University's AI usage policy. Below is a detailed record of when and how I used AI.

I acknowledge the use of the following AI tools during the preparation of my work:

1.ChatGPT (<https://chatgpt.com>)

Date: [10/10/2025-15/10/2025]

Purpose: Searching for relevant literature, summarizing paragraph key points, converting formal language to oral expression, and check my own expression.

Doubao (<https://www.doubao.com>)

Date: [10/10/2025-15/10/2025]

Purpose: Key point summary, translating English resources.

Gamma (<https://gamma.app>)

Date: [14/10/2025]

Purpose: Referencing AI-generated PowerPoint templates for presentation structure design.

Learning Family Reverence from Zengzi

How to practise family reverence in today,
in our situation as a student?





Family reverence (xiao 孝) is the root of virtue, also the beginning of education.

夫孝，德之本也，教之所由生也

“The Chinese Classic of Family Reverence”
(*xiaojing* 孝經)

The Heart of Confucian Virtue

In Confucian culture, family reverence (*xiao* 孝) is the root of all virtue—a natural, warm emotion deep in our hearts. Yet in our modern society, almost everything has changed.

The question remains: How can we practise family reverence today, for example, as students?



To find answers, we turn to Zengzi—Confucius' most devoted disciple, ranked first in practising filial piety by later generations.



Who Was Zengzi?

1

Birth & Origins

Born 505 BCE in Wu City, Lu Country (modern Shandong Province, China)

2

Family Background

Given name: Zeng Shen (曾參).

Father Zengdian (曾點)

Mother's family name was Shangguan(上官氏)

3

Education

Learnt with his father, then became Confucius' student.



The Master's Teaching

At the beginning of the *Classic of Family Reverence* (*Xiao Jing* 孝經), we find this vivid scene:

Confucius asks

'Do you understand what family reverence is and how important it is?'

Zengzi replies

'Sorry Master, I am not a clever student. I don't know that.'

Confucius' Teaching of Family Reverence

Your physical person with its hair and skin are received from your parents. Vigilance in not allowing anything to do injury to your person is where family reverence begins; distinguishing yourself and walking the proper way (*dao*) in the world; raising your name high for posterity and thereby bringing esteem to your father and mother—it is in these things that family reverence finds its consummation.

身體髮膚，受之父母，不敢毀傷，孝之始也。立身行道，揚名於後世，以顯父母，孝之終也。

“The Chinese Classic of Family Reverence” Chapter 1

(*xiaojing* 孝經)

The Three Stages of Family Reverence

This family reverence, then, begins in service to your parents, continues in service to your lord, and culminates in distinguishing yourself in the world.

夫孝始於事親，中於事君，終於立身。

“The Chinese Classic of Family Reverence”
(*xiaojing* 孝經)



1.Beginning

Service to parents



2.Continuation

Service to one's lord



3.Culmination

Distinguishing yourself, bringing
esteem to parents

Stage One: Service to Your Parents



Zengzi's Daily Devotion



Morning Check

Greeted them each morning (*chen xing* 晨省)



Evening Care

Settled parents for the night (*hun ding* 昏定)



Temperature

Adjusted warmth and coolness



Nourishment

Prepared meals with care

From *Xinyu: Shenwei* (《新語·慎微》):



Story: The Bitten Finger

Gathering Wood

Zengzi was collecting firewood in the mountains

Unexpected Guest

A guest arrived at home. His mother had no way to call him

The Signal

She bit her own finger

Heart Connection

Zengzi suddenly felt heart pain, rushed home carrying firewood

'I bit my finger to alert you,' his mother explained. This tale reveals the profound connection between mother and son.

When mother's finger was bitten, the son's heart couldn't help but ache. Returning home with firewood not too late, the bond with Zengzi and his mother was very deep.

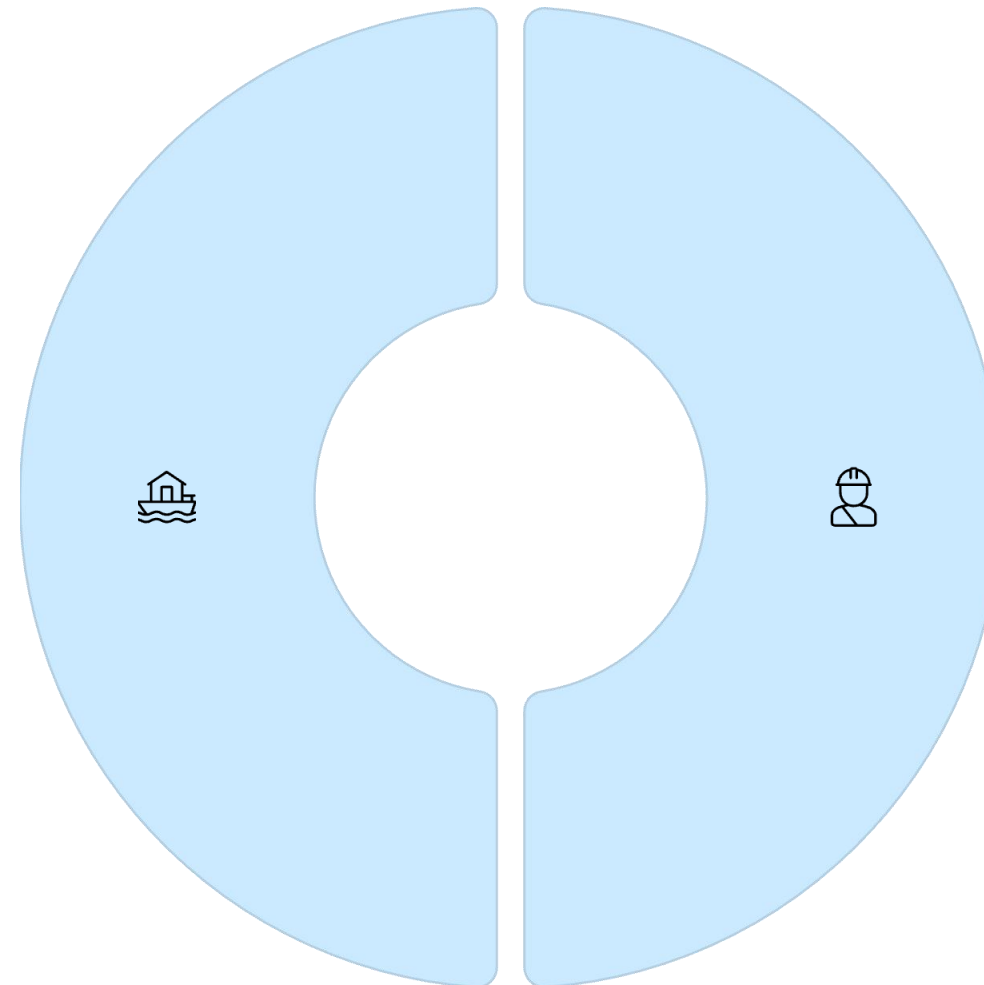


Stage Two: Service to One's Lord

The principles of governing the state were analogous to those of managing the household. Within the family, filial piety and fraternal respect—rooted in blood relations—served as preliminary training for engaging in political life. One could 'transfer filial piety into loyalty' (移孝作忠).

Xing Han (2020):

Family Ethics
Family reverence (*xiao* 孝) and fraternal respect



Political Ethics
Loyalty (*zhong* 忠) to the state



Family reverence is that to serve the emperor.

孝者，所以事君也。

“the Great Learning” 大學

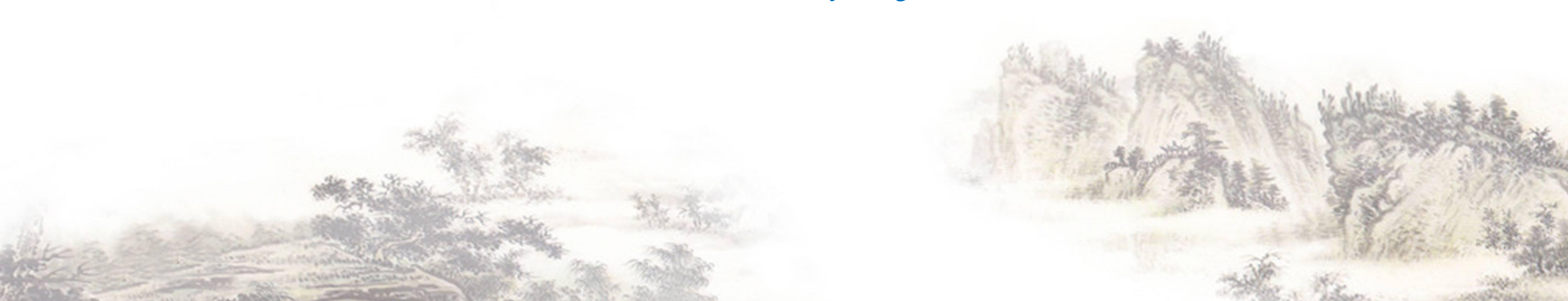


Before serving an emperor, one can know who will be a loyal minister—it is the filial son.

未有君,而忠臣可知者,孝子之謂也。

“Zengzi Establishes Filial Piety of Dai De’s Records of Ritual”

dadai lijì zengzi lixiao 大戴禮記・曾子立孝



Stage Three: Distinguishing Yourself



Daily Self-Reflection

I examine myself three times daily'

吾日三省吾身

- Whether, in transacting business for others, I may have been not faithful; I loyal in serving others?
- whether, in intercourse with friends, I may have been not sincere;
- Whether I may have not mastered and practiced the instructions of my teacher."

"the *Analects*" 1.4

Zeng-zi said,

'The body is that which has been transmitted to us by our parents; dare any one allow himself to be irreverent in the employment of their legacy? If a man in his own house and privacy be not grave, he is not filial; if in serving his ruler, he be not loyal, he is not filial; if in discharging the duties of office, he be not reverent, he is not filial; if with friends he be not sincere, he is not filial; if on the field of battle he be not brave, he is not filial. If he fail in these five things, the evil (of the disgrace) will reach his parents; dare he but reverently attend to them?'

“Meaning of Sacrifices of The Classic of Rites”

曾子曰：

身也者，父母之遺體也。行父母之遺體，敢不敬乎？
居處不莊，非孝也；事君不忠，非孝也；
蒞官不敬，非孝也；朋友不信，非孝也；
戰陳無勇，非孝也；五者不遂，災及於親，敢不敬乎？

《禮記·祭義 26》



Zengzi's Conception

From *the Book of Rites: Sacrificial Rites* (*Iji Jili* 禮記 · 祭禮):

Dignified Conduct

Not conducting oneself with dignity is unfilial

Loyal Service

Not serving one's lord with loyalty is unfilial

Respectful Office

Not holding office with respect is unfilial

Trustworthy Friendship

Not being trustworthy with friends is unfilial

Courageous Battle

Not showing courage in battle is unfilial

**How Can We Follow
Zengzi Today?**

Understanding Parental Love



Education

The care from parents is unique—sustaining life and forming character



Development

Without proper introduction to social life, one remains a 'petty person', incapable of a fully satisfying life



Expressions of Love

Parental care is love, not an investment expecting future returns

Philip J. Ivanhoe (2007):

The Only Reasonable Response

'The only reasonable response to those who have provided one with good parental care throughout the most vulnerable years of one's life is a special form of gratitude, reverence, and love.'

Philip J. Ivanhoe (2007)



Practical Steps for Students Today



Keep Them in Mind

Always think about your parents and the nature of their love



Act Within Your Ability

Do what you can and should do for them



Bring Them Joy

Do what makes them happy



Follow the Rites

Learn from *li* (禮), such as the *Guidelines for Learners*

Always remember your ancestors,
diligently cultivate your virtue.

無念爾祖,聿脩厥德。

“Major Odes of The Book of Poetry”
shijing daya 詩經・大雅

Remember 念

Always keep family reverence in heart

Cultivate 修

Work hard to cultivate your virtues



英文口试稿 (从曾子的故事和思想, 学习我们该如何行孝)

朱金澍

15/10/2025

开场

Good afternoon everyone! In the context of Confucian culture, family reverence (xiao 孝) plays a vital role, it is the root of virtue also a natural and warm emotion deep in our hearts. But in our modern society, almost everything changed, how can we practise the family reverence in today, in our situation as a student? This is also an important question for me. In order to get some enlightenments, I have found a few stories and concepts from Zengzi - a famous disciple of Confucius who ranked at the first place of practising family reverence by the evaluations of later generations.

At first, let us get some simple information about Zengzi(PPT introduction about Zengzi). Zengzi's given name is Zeng shen (zeng shen 曾参), Zeng is his family name and Zi is a Chinese traditional suffix of honorific for respectable person. He born in 505 before common era¹ in Wu city of Lu country where in today's Shandong province in China. His father Zengdian (曾點) was one of Confucius' disciples. When Zengzi was young, he learned with his father, afterwards, he also became a student of Confucius.

At the beginning of *the Chinese Classic of Family Reverence (xiao jing 孝經)*, - (PPT 仲尼居曾子侍)-Confucius was at leisure in his home, and Zengzi was attending him. Then Confucius asked Zengzi that do you understand what is and how important of family reverence (xiao 孝)? Zengzi answered: 'Sorry Master, I am not a clever student, I don't know that. Could you please teach me that?' Then, Confucius taught Zengzi:

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our body — our hair and skin — all come from our parents.
So, taking good care of ourselves is where family reverence begins.
And when we live rightly, through the proper path, and make our parents proud of us, that is where family reverence reaches its highest form.

(PPT 孝經原文)

¹ 按《史記·仲尼弟子列傳》曾參，少孔子 46 歲推算。

Then Confucius concludes: 'The family reverence, begins in service to your parents, continues in service to your lord, and culminates in distinguishing yourself in the world.' That is the three stages of family reverence

Now, we learned from Confucius. How did Zengzi follow that?

Stage 1

According from

(PPT 《新語·慎微》)

Zengzi practiced his family reverence through small, daily actions. Every night, he made sure his parents were comfortable before he went to bed. Every morning, he greeted them and checked how they were feeling. He adjusted the warmth of their room, made sure their bedding felt right, and prepared meals with great care.

Through these small acts, done with a sincere heart, Zengzi became known as a model of family reverence.

(PPT) 嚙齒心痛(二十四孝)

Another famous story about Zengzi comes from The Twenty-Four Filial Exemplars (二十四孝).

Zengzi was collecting firewood in the mountains. At home, an unexpected guest arrived, and his mother wanted him to return. Having no other way, she bit her finger — and far away, Zengzi suddenly felt pain in his heart.

He rushed back to home.

His mother said, "A guest came, and I bit my finger to call you back." This story shows the deep emotional bond between Zengzi and his mother — a deep connection beyond words.

Next comes to the second step:

Service to one's lord

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In ancient Chinese society, the concepts of family and country were deeply connected. People believed that the way to govern a country was very similar to the way to manage a family.

Professor Xing Han explains this beautifully —

(PPT)

he says that family reverence and brotherly respect within the family were like the first lessons, this training grounds for one's future career in society and government. Because the same heart that serves one's parents with love and care can also serve one's ruler, one's country, and society with loyalty and dedication.

We can also see that concept in

In the Highest Learning(*da xue* 大學) it says :

Family reverence, is the way to serve the emperor.

孝者，所以事君也。

Although we cannot find out records about what Zengzi did to serve the emperor, but we can see that his concepts in the *dadai lijì*:

Before serving an emperor, one can know who will be a loyal minister—it is the filial son.

Then is the third step of to achieve family reverence

From the *Analects (lunyu 論語)* (PPT,

Zengzi said:‘吾日三省吾身：為人謀而不忠乎？與朋友交而不信乎？傳不習乎？’

Analects 1.4

We can see that Zengzi reflect himself three everyday, is the way he treat people and acting properly?make sure he is always cultivating his virtue.

In the *lijì* zengzi said:

(PPT

《禮記·祭禮 26》

we must treat our body , and our whole life, which passed down to us by our parents with respect.

Family reverence is not only about serving our parents at home.It also means being loyal when we serve our ruler,being respectful in our work,being sincere with our friends, and being brave in facing to country's danger.

If we fail in these things, we bring shame not only to ourselves,but also to our parents.

So, Zengzi reminded us — in every role we play,we are still carrying the legacy of our parents, and we must live in a way that honors them.

Such stories and recordings showed us how Zengzi practising family reverence outside.

结语

So how can we follow Zengzi's manner and imitate his heart?

According to Philip J. Ivanhoe (2007)

"The only reasonable response to those who have provided one with good parental care throughout the most vulnerable years of one's life is a special form of gratitude, reverence, and love."

From the conclusion and enlightenment from Philip J. Ivanhoe and example from Zengzi's stories and words, "The only appropriate response is to keep in mind the nature of their love and, in the warmth of this light, to cultivate reciprocal /rɪ'sɪprək(ə)l/feelings for them."

For specific practise, we can also follow and learn a lot from li, such as the Guidelines for Learners.

It is hard to say which action means family reverence, because without a sincere and respect also grateful heart, every thing could not be really seemed as family reverence.

So, keep our heart soft, always think about our parents, do something what we can and should do for them and do what we should do to make them happy.

(PPT 無念爾祖, 聿脩厥德 收尾)

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