



Undergraduate assignment feedback form
(to be completed by marker)

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Stay Humble in High Positions

Hello everyone, I'm delighted to have the opportunity to present this presentation.

I'd like to take this opportunity to talk about when one is in a high position, they should not be arrogant, so that they can remain safe without being endangered.

My presentation is divided into three main sections: Section 1 is going to discuss an explanation of the classic sentence; Section 2 will cover examples from stories; Section 3 will focus on self-reflection and aspirations. I shall report to you in this order.

First let's begin with an explanation of the sentence: "When the hereditary lords are not arrogant, though of lofty status they are not in jeopardy of being toppled." According to the annotation on the Classic of Filial Piety, in other words, the feudal lords, rulers of the various states, hold a position of honor above others, which may be deemed lofty; yet by avoiding arrogance, they avert peril.

For instance, Sun Shuao of ancient times served as a paragon, remaining ever receptive to counsel no matter what his station was. When he was appointed Chancellor of Chu State, amid the congratulations of his peers, an elder clad in mourning

attire approached. Far from deeming this an ill omen, Sun discerned the man's wide wisdom and respectfully sought his counsel. The elder cautioned him: "Arrogance in high office will drive the people away; abuse of power will earn the sovereign's displeasure; greed for pay will invite calamity."

The original words of this elder's teaching are shown on the PPT.

Sun Shuao immediately accepted this counsel and further inquired about the wisdom of governance. As a result, precisely because of his humility, filial piety, and virtue, he later achieved remarkable political accomplishments. Thus, it is evident that those in positions of authority who remain humble and receptive to guidance can preserve both their own standing and the stability of the state.

Equally, our mentor, Venerable Master Chin Kung, has always treated others with humility, never forgetting his own parents and teachers. He always stressed that his present achievements are inseparable from the guidance of his parents and teachers. Thus, it is proof that everyone can benefit from the virtue of humility.

Those in power should cultivate humility to govern well and preserve their honor. At the same time, Ordinary people, too,

should embrace this virtue; by listening respectfully to the guidance of parents, teachers, and other mentors, they can avoid detours and build their moral character.

Okay, now, we can move on to the second part: Story Examples.

An Inspiration to Give Rise to the Bodhi Mind says that therefore, a bodhisattva views an ant as if it were one's parent from past lives, and as if it were a Buddha in the future and always thinks to benefit it and repay its kindness.

This reminds me of a story on the Commentary on the Classic of Filial Piety: During the Cultural Revolution, Venerable Master Benhuan had to raise ducks, but he still taught them the Dharma. After the Revolution, when he returned to his monastery, many students in their twenties came to ask to become monks. Some people with specific ability saw students' appearance in their previous life—as ducks. This story tells us a truth: every life matters, whether animal or human, young or old.

Bringing it back to daily practice, to be humble towards others begins with respectfully heeding the teachings of one's parents and teachers. Venerable Master Chin Kung said: “When parents instruct, one must listen with reverence. If one

disregards parental guidance, how can one heed others' counsel?"

Without sufficient reverence and humility towards parents, one struggles to accept others' guidance, let alone learn from insects, birds, and beasts.

On a personal note, I reflect on my own habit of dismissing my parents' reminders with an impatient 'I know,' implying 'I already understand' or 'I'm not a child.' For example, several months ago, when my mother accompanied me to class, she reminded me before the lesson: 'Greet the teachers and uncles and aunts when you see them.' At the time, I found this reminder utterly superfluous, failing to realize that my mother was reminding me to maintain a constant sense of reverence.

Such instances abound in life, reminding me of the tale of the Chu man: A man from Chu sought to master the art of steering a vessel. At first, he followed his master's every command. Later, when his practice runs in shallow waters proved consistently successful, he deemed himself fully trained. Having dismissed his teacher, he ventured into the great river. No sooner had he entered the deep waters than he encountered a mighty wave. Panic seized him; his oar slipped from his grasp, and the rudder spun out of control. What he thought he had "mastered" was merely the superficial techniques for shallow

waters. The true essence of navigation was staying calm through storms and knowing how to judge currents — lessons his master never taught, and he didn't have the patience to learn.

In other words, I often dismiss my parents' advice as “old hat”, using excuses like “I'm grown up now” or “it's simple”, just as the Chu man mistook shallow-water skills for the entirety of navigation. — my “I know” merely grasped superficial truths. What I dismissed as “a few words” held decades of parental wisdom distilled; just as the Chu man failed to grasp that the master's unspoken lessons were vital, I too missed the unspoken care and understanding within my parents' words. Those were the teachings meant to be taken to heart.

Furthermore, Master Chin Kung repeatedly emphasized: “Be honest, obedient, and diligent. Those who willingly heed guidance are the most blessed.” To further illustrate this virtue, here are more timeless teachings on humility, such as “Pride brings loss, and humility receives increase”; “It is the way of heaven to diminish the full and augment the humble. It is the way of earth to overthrow the full and replenish the humble. Spiritual Beings inflict calamity on the full and bless the humble. It is the way of men to hate the full and love the humble.”; and “The superior man has a dignified ease without pride. The mean

man has pride without a dignified ease.”; “The third is shrinking from taking precedence of others.” and so on.

In the same vein, even the profoundly wise Buddha, when his student praised his greatness, Buddha countered: “You do not understand my past, present, or future. How can you say I am the greatest?”

Whether it be the Buddha, whose wisdom is complete, or those of power and position, they remain ever humble. So, what does this mean for me? I’m just an average person, so I should avoid being self-important. I should always maintain an attitude of receptivity, beginning by taking my parents' teaching seriously. Practically speaking, through studying the Classic of Filial Piety and other books, I shall correct my own conduct, restoring the reverence and humility inherent in my nature, thereby cultivating patient and respectful demeanor towards others. In daily life, I shall take the following as a daily anchor: “All Others Are Bodhisattvas; I Alone Am a Mortal,” and continue my learning...

With that, this concludes my presentation. The materials displayed on this PPT are my references.

Thank you for listening. I welcome your guidance. Should any part be inadequate or unclear, I earnestly request correction

from teachers, elders, and seniors. My sincere gratitude to all.