



Appendix 1 : Undergraduate Assignment Coversheet and Feedback Form



Undergraduate assignment feedback form

(to be completed by marker)

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<i>Module Code: SICH4001</i>	<i>Student number: 1903358</i>
<i>Module title: Introduction to Traditional Chinese Morality and Ethics in Education I</i>	
<i>For completion by marker:</i> <i>Comments:</i>	
<i>Marker's signature:</i>	<i>Date:</i>
<i>Provisional mark:</i> NB. All marks are provisional until confirmed by the final examination board.	

English Oral Presentation

Good afternoon Respected Provost, good morning, Miss. Deng and Mr. Zhang.

Today, I am going to share with you an excerpt, relating to the contents of “How to speak”, selected from the book *Chang Li Ju Yao Jiang Ji* 常禮舉要講記.

Let's look at the table of contents at the beginning:

The first part is the introduction, and then we will enter the main part. Then there are my self-reflections. And finally, it is the conclusion.

So, at the beginning, let's first enter the introduction:

The excerpt that I would like to report today is below:

"Mouth can be the cause of misfortune and good fortune, and we do have to think about it before we speak."

“口為禍福之門，話要經一番考慮再說。”¹

The paragraph that I chose originally comes from *Chang Li Ju Yao Jiang Ji*《常禮舉要講記》. Later, I will explain why our mouth can cause misfortune and bring good fortune to ourselves, what should we think or pay attention to when we speak, and finally I will share the method of controlling our mouth and my experience of practice.

There is a renowned Proverb in China saying that:

"Sickness comes from the mouth, and disaster comes from the mouth."

病從口入，禍從口出。²

There is also a part of poem from *the Book of Songs* 詩經 saying that:

"Baigui 白珪, a kind of jade, its dirt still can be grinded, but if our words are defiled, it is impossible to redeem."

白圭之玷，尚可磨也。斯言之玷，不可為也。³

Therefore, knowing how to speak and knowing the etiquette that needs to be paid attention to when speaking are also the

¹ Xu Xingmin 徐醒民: *Chang Li Ju Yao Jiang Ji* 常禮舉要講記 (Beijing: Tuanjie chubanshe, 2013) P4

² Song宋, Li Fang李昉, Li Mu李穆, Xu xuan徐鉉: *Tai Ping Yu Lan* 太平御覽 (*Si Bu Cong Kan San Bian Ben* 四部叢刊三編本) Fifty-seven vol. Renshi Eight人事部八, Mouth

³ Han漢, Mao Heng毛亨, Zheng Xuan鄭玄; Tang唐 Kong Yingda孔穎達, Lu Deming陸德明: *Mao Shi Zhu Shu* 毛詩註疏 (Shanghai: Guji Press, 2013) 18 vol. P1702

manifestations of a one's self-cultivation.

Then, let's enter the main part:

"Mouth can be the cause of misfortune and good fortune."

Xu Xingmin 徐醒民 mentioned that this paragraph seems very simple, but it is not easy to be aware of in daily life, or even to practice in many ways.

A person's good fortune and misfortune are mostly related to one's mouth. If we don't speak carefully, we may easily offend others and bring unexpected disasters to ourselves. However, if we know the etiquette of speaking and can speak in a proper and respectable way, it can also make others happy and comfortable. So, it really depends on us.

If we always speak too much, like often talking about some useless nonsenses and boring gossips, it will cause negative impact on our physical health, mind, and the people who live around us.

Let's talk about the harm that too much speaking will bring from three aspects: physical, mental, and the relationship between people and us.

First of all, let's talk from the physical:

Taoists have mentioned that, our body has three elements: spirit 精, Qi 氣, and Shen 神. The way of keeping us in good health is to focus on the preservation of the three elements. And if we are used to speak too much, we will leak out our three elements. If things go on like this, it will damage our physical health, and it will be easy for us to get sick and have poor constitution.

Therefore, through observation, we can find that those people who usually keep speaking too much and even all day long are very thin and often have problems with their physical health.

Therefore, in our daily life, we need to speak as little as possible, in order to prevent our three elements from leaking out.

Then, let's talk about the damage on mind:

If we always speak a lot by our own wills regardless of any other circumstances, it shows that our mind must be very impetuous and unstable. And the unstable mind will affect our behaviour and emotion in life. Thus, there are many things that we can't be calm to do it well, whatever studying or working, so that it will be easy to lead a mess in our life.

And more seriously, if we continue to develop in this way, it will be detrimental to our own future, and our destiny will also become

bumpier. For example, due to our bad attitude and ability of studying and working, we cannot learn well and work well, which will influence our future career to a large extent. So, once we realise the problems we already have in the daily life, we do need to remind ourselves. In addition, we should be vigilant for our problems and be ready to get rid of them, otherwise, our future and destiny will correspondingly not be optimistic, which is too serious and irreversible.

Therefore, being a true traditional Chinese culture practitioner and Buddhist, we should find our inner peace in our daily lives as we speak less and thought less. Always putting our mind at stable state, it won't cause much physical or mental harm.

And let's see what speaking too much will cause for the relationship between us and the people around us.

I still remember, in the Fuzhou moral training class, we always learned "being considerate of others, and always greeting others with a smile" 念念為他人著想，常常以微笑迎人. It's the same thing when we speak; we should keep others in mind at all times. Because when we speak, we are nothing more than expressing our own thoughts from the mind. It can be easy to see whether we are well-educated and respectable

from our speech.

Well-educated people will think about the circumstances before they speak, when the words are still on their lips. For example, they may think: "Are the words I say appropriate for the situation? Will it offend and harm others? Is it necessary to speak at the moment?" Only when we speak in this way can please others.

Conversely, if we don't follow this principle, and we just open the mouth by our own wills and selfish thinking, it will really hurt others and break their hearts. Sometimes, those hurts are invisible, which can cause the bad karma of saying.

Moreover, the so-called "misfortune" means, if we don't pay much attention to our words when speaking, we will easily offend and harm others, and coincidentally, that person happens to be very narrow-minded, then we will easily be retaliated against. In addition, even if there is no actual retaliation, karma still cannot be avoided, which needs to be very cautious.

Here, I remember a renowned historical story⁴ :

During the Tang Dynasty, there was a reputable general named Guo

⁴ Song宋, Sima Guang司馬光: *Zi Zhi Tong Jian*資治通鑑 (*Si Bu Cong Kan Chu Bian*四部叢刊初編, *Jing Shanghai Han Fen Lou Cang Song Kan Ben*景上海涵芬樓藏宋刊本) Two hundred and twenty-six vol.

Ziyi 郭子儀. At that time, he was in the high authority and was very honourable in the country.

During his illness, a person named Lu Qi 盧杞 often visited him. Lu Qi, according to historical records, was described as extremely ugly from appearance. According to Guo Ziyi's usual habit of hospitality, his concubines and maids stayed with him when he received guests. However, as long as he knew that Lu Qi would come, he would particularly dismiss all the concubines and maids from him and came alone to receive this special guest. Afterwards, his relatives would be very puzzled and asked Guo why this was the case. But Guo Ziyi told them: "Don't just focus on Lu Qi's ugly appearance, in fact, he is very sinister and evil in heart. My concubines and maids don't know the etiquette and are not cautious enough. They will murmur and laugh at him if they see his ugly face. Once he succeeds, and reaches the high authority, he must use the cruel artifices to retaliate against the people who used to ridicule and humiliate him. At that time, I may not even be able to protect my family and offspring."

Later, what Guo Ziyi predicted really happened and became the truth. However, only Guo Ziyi, because of his cautiousness, saved and preserved his whole family.

So, I think, this story really gives us a lot of inspiration and

enlightenment.

Now, let's move on the self-reflections and my realizations:

Through studying this paragraph, I have learned the importance of controlling my mouth. And I really need to repent of the mistakes that I made in the past. I remember, when I studied in the Loudi school, I was used to talk gossips and nonsenses and make jokes with others. For me, I just thought it was interesting, but for others, they would think that I slandered and offended them, which made them really uncomfortable. On several occasions, I had conflicts with others, both physically and verbally. Although those bad results were not big enough, it can prove the harmfulness of speaking wildly. In fact, it is very important for me to always keep others in mind.

And I also find that when my mind was rough and impetuous, I would often be very inattentive and casual of what I say, and I just realise and regret it only after the speaking, which was too late for compensation. However, on the contrary, when my mind is in a very stable, peace and calm state, I can clearly feel what I want to say or what I am ready to say at the moment. So, I can be timely to remind myself, which can help me effectively avoid making many mistakes.

And I find that, in our daily life, if we practise speaking less and

listening more, it also can help us to find our inner peace.

Currently, my adjustment for removing my habit of speaking a lot is to chant more Amitabha Buddha's name and read meaningful books in the daily life. I can strongly feel that, chanting Amitabha Buddha's name can help me to calm down and stop wandering, and reading can enrich myself and doesn't let me be so idle. I find that, once I was boring and idle, I would keep finding people to talk nonsenses and make jokes, which is adverse for my self-cultivation.

After the course, my aim is;

Firstly, making effort to practise speaking less in life, and persevere in chanting Amitabha Buddha's name and reading meaningful books.

Secondly, every time keeping others in mind when I want to speak. using the kind and warm words instead of unkind and impolite words towards others.

Those are my self-reflections and realisations from the class.

I believe, practise can help us to make progress.

Finally, let's look at the Conclusion:

Liu Xiang 刘向, a scholar in Han Dynasty, said in his book that:

"If we say the improper words, it will correspondingly be adverse for

ourselves.”

出言不当，反自伤也。⁵

And Chu Guangxi 儲光羲, in Tang Dynasty, also wrote in his poem that:

“The kind and warm word is just like the precious gold.”

惠言若黃金。⁶

Through the learning, I also realised that, knowing how to speak is one of the most basic etiquette in life. If we don't even know how to speak, or, if we cannot speak well, it will cause a lot of trouble for ourselves and the people around us. However, if we know how to speak well, it will make others happy and satisfied. Therefore, the mouth is not only an invisible weapon that can hurt people, but also a useful tool that can help and warm people.

Miss Li usually said in the class that: "Etiquette can help us to keep suitable distance between people and us." 禮是人與人之間最溫暖的距離.

Thank you all! My presentation has come to an end. Any feedback and suggestions will be appreciated. Thank you for listening!

⁵ Han, Liu Xiang 劉向: *Shuo Yuan* 說苑 (*Si Bu Cong Kan Chu Bian* 四部叢刊初編, Jing Ping Hu Ge Shi Chuan Pu Tang Cang Ming Chao Ben 景平湖葛氏傳樸堂藏明鈔本), *Shuo Yuan-Tan Cong* 說苑·談叢

⁶ Qing, *Quan Tang Shi* 全唐詩 (*Qing Zao Tang Si Ku Quan Shu Hui Yao Ben* 摘藻堂四庫全書薈要本, *Yu Ding Quan Tang Shi* 御定全唐詩), One hundred and thirty-six vols

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(6)Xu Xingmin 徐醒民: *Chang Li Ju Yao Jiang Ji*常禮舉要講記 (Beijing: Tuanjie Press, 2013)