



Undergraduate assignment feedback form
(to be completed by marker)

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<i>Module Code:</i> <i>SICH3009</i> <i>Module title:</i> <i>An Introduction to The Classic of Family Reverence</i>	<i>Student number: 2503067</i>
<i>For completion by marker:</i> <i>Comments:</i>	
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Five Essentials for Caring for Parents

Dear teachers and students, hello everyone. The topic I'm going to talk about today is the five things that should be done when taking care of your parents.

The presentation will be divided into two parts. First, I will explain the five essentials and then give a summary.

“Filial children in serving parents in their daily lives show them real respect (jing), intending to their needs and wants strive to bring them enjoyment (le), in caring for them in sickness reveal their apprehension, in mourning for them express their grief, and in sacrificing to them show true veneration. With these five dispositions firmly in place, they are truly able to serve their parents.”

This quote, as you can see, originates from Chapter Ten of The Chinese Classic of family reverence, is the overall principle of achieving consummate family reverence.

And now I'll specify each of the five events shown in the principle.

First, in one's general conduct to parents, children manifest the utmost reverence, and this inner sense of respect should be reflected in every detail of daily life. The first four lines of the “Guidelines for being a good person” embodies the practice of true respect. When parents call us, we should respond without any delay, take the matters they assign seriously and will not shirk or procrastinate. Listen to our parents “teachings with respect and for parents” scolding, we need to accept the

changes. This respectful attitude towards parents becomes internalized and will also be the same level of respect towards others.

Secondly, in a children's care for their parents, the goal is to give them the utmost pleasure. We should serve our parents with a joyful and positive attitude. Even when life is poor, like by eating coarse grains like beans and drinking plain water, one should do everything possible to please one's parents. This is what is meant by being filial. It has broken the misconception that family reverence means only providing material support for parents. Instead, it emphasizes that family reverence should make parents feel happy and joyful, rather than merely achieving external material abundance.

In the moral education stories, there is one titled “老萊斑衣”. It tells that when Lao Lai Zi was in his seventies, he never mentioned being old. He often wore colourful and intricately patterned clothes, imitated the expressions and behaviours of infants, sang and danced beside his parents, to amuse and to please them. When I read about his story, I will think of my mother. When my mother took care of her father who's bedridden and in poor spirits and appetite. The first thing my mother do in the morning was to greet my grandfather, always with the most energetic spirit, talking like a big loudspeaker: Father, good morning. When eating, she often treats her father the way she used to treat me when I was a child so he can eat well. During exercise, she would do funny actions to make my grandfather happy. Even when he felt embarrassed when undergoing gatism, my mother would say: great! That means the intestines are healthy. Things like that. So, whenever she's in front of my grandfather, she always makes him feel warm

and positive, just like a sun. Making my grandfather laugh heartily and get him out of the gloom of illness.

Thirdly, when the parents are ill, the children feel the greatest anxiety.

and try every possible way to alleviate their illness. But not only should we take good care of our parents when they are ill, it's necessary for us to take proper care of them in our daily lives to prevent them from suffering by diseases.

In traditional Chinese medicine, there is a core theory: Preventing disease before it occurs. “The sages did not treat those already ill, but treated those not yet ill, they did not put in order what was already in disorder but put in order what was not yet in disorder,” then this means just the same. Now, when drugs are employed for therapy only after a disease has become fully developed, when [attempts at] restoring order are initiated only after disorder has fully developed, this is as if a well were dug when one is thirsty, and as if weapons were cast when the fight is on. Would this not be too late, too?”

This is a vivid metaphor on this page, saying that one digs a well when thirsty and makes weapons when at war, to illustrate the passivity of post-event treatment, thereby emphasizing the necessity of taking preventive measures through health care before the onset of disease. So as children, we should master the correct concept of health preservation before our parents fall ill, following the principles of “harmony with the elements of nature, regular diet and sleep, and avoiding excessive exertion.” This way, our parents can have fewer illness or even no illness at all.

But if our parents do fall ill, we should make correct judgments and take the most appropriate treatment methods for them as quick as possible to help them recover. Nowadays, many people lack correct medical concepts. So, when they rush to seek treatment everywhere when they are seriously ill, they may experience very bad consequences.

Fourthly, in mourning for them (dead), the children exhibit every demonstration of grief and take charge of the funeral arrangements. Of course, for those of us who have heard about Buddhism, we know that people do not truly die, and within eight to twelve hours after their last breath, the soul will leave the body. The matter of life and death is of great significance where our final thought will lead us to the next life. Therefore, we must protect the state of our parents during their final moments.

Finally, in sacrificing to them, the children display the utmost solemnity to express the remembrance and gratitude towards one's parents. From the Book of Rites - Sacrifice Ethics: “The purpose of sacrifice is to continue the support and show filial piety towards one's parents.” It is by sacrifice that our thank for our parents’ upbringing is followed up and reverence to them perpetuated. When parents are alive, children do their best to show family reverence. And after parents pass away, one expresses their remembrance and reverence through the strictness of the sacrifice, with this family reverence remains unchanged.

When all five events are fulfilled, then one can serve one's parents well. And it is not considered being able to do so when lacking any one of them.

To summarize, the “Five Essentials for Caring for Parents” may seem like five separate actions, but they all revolve around “giving one's full attention to parents to be filial” - using sincerity, care, concern, sorrow, and solemnity to consistently care for and remember one's parents throughout their lives.

This sincerity first requires one to put aside oneself and bring the parents back into one's heart, but we often focus on our own needs - we want love, attention, and understanding - and rarely considered placing our parents in our hearts and care for their true thoughts.

In my own case, I once saw many small items on my mother's bed for massage and exercise. And my first reaction was, “Shouldn't these be placed off the bed, so she won't feel uncomfortable when she lies down?” Later, when I was treating my mother, I finally understood that my mother uses these things frequently because she was often uncomfortable in her waist and legs. In fact, mother was afraid that her body might have problems and that she would be unable to take care of herself while still burdening her children. But when I slept beside my mother, I only thought about my own feeling like “I'm uncomfortable when turning over with so many things on the bed” . And never considered from my mother's perspective, why she did it her way. Later, I came to understand that one needs to first let go of one's own perspective so they can stand in the parents' shoes to understand their needs. Only in this way, I can truly see the reason behind the massage items on the bed and be able to understand her intentions to better fulfil the five duties of a filial child.

And that ends my presentation. You can have a look on my reference list. I would greatly appreciate any feedback and corrections you may have. Thank you for listening.