



Pre-BA assignment feedback form

(to be completed by marker)

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Reflective Workbook

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I am honored to have the opportunity to study in Pre-BA in Academy of Sinology. Time goes by so quickly, and the first course will end. I am very grateful for teachers' teachings. Looking back on this more than a month of learning, I see many role models that I want to learn, and I am very ashamed for that I did not cherish it very well. The following are some my reflections and conclusions of this period of time.

1. Role models

In the university, elder brothers and sisters' actions left a deep impression on me.

The first is the care and tolerance for younger ones. For example, when we played volleyball, elder brothers and sisters would observe who played less, and then would let them play. In addition, when I was not very familiar with everyone and was a little afraid, elder brothers and sisters would encourage me to take the first step to play with them. However, when I received a ball by accident, they would say 'wonderful, wonderful' to encourage me and give me affirmation and praise, which all made me can slowly integrate into this group, increased my confidence, did better and better and I felt very warm. Today, I can already play volleyball with everyone happily.

The second is the sufferance and enthusiasm. When we, Pre-BA students, were preparing for assignments, we have a lot of questions to ask elder brothers and sisters and they always answer very patiently. Whenever we need their help, they always come to help us at the first time. I really feel very grateful.

The Third is the diligence. Elder sisters always got up early to do work. Although sometimes they felt tired, they would still persist.

The fourth is the sense of responsibility. They will achieve tasks the teacher assigns very well and will make the teacher feel at ease.

The Venerable Chengde said, 'Criticism creates estrangement and encourage can

stimulate potential.’ I realised it from elder brothers and sisters’ actions and also feel the teaching of the Venerable is that ‘Kindness is caused by nature, not by request.’, because of the good behaviours of elder brothers and sisters, my gratitude arises naturally and want to follow the example of elder ones. I also reflected that as an elder sister in the previous school, I did not do very well, especially in terms of encouraging others, and I was easy to be jealous.

Let me give you an example. At my previous school, there was a fellow student, younger than me, who was very good to me and followed me as an example, and our relationship was very good, but after learning English, we gradually became alienated, which was because we all did our own things, communicate less than before, and I rarely care about her. And she had some difficulties in English at that time. Add to this something that her family members questioned her choice that is learning the ancient Chinese culture and they even scolded and provoked her, and her mental and physical health began to become very bad. When she was in the most pain, I did not care about her in time, and I was still immersed in my own world to do my own thing. When she was so depressed, I even would look at her fault and did not understand her. Even though I treat her like this, she still treats me sincerely. Whenever I think of her kindness to me, I always feel guilty and sometimes I do not know how to face her. I could feel that there are still some barriers between us. I reflected on it and felt that there was still her fault in my heart, so I still could not communicate with her sincerely. *Liuzu tangjing* 六祖壇經 said, ‘If you are a really stylite, you do not care about other’s faults’¹, but she is kind to me. In the coming days, I will not do this anymore. I need to learn from these elder brothers and sisters, to encourage her and other people I met with in my life, to give them confidence, and to let them feel love.

In the course ‘Zhang you xu 长有序, you yu peng 友与朋’, Venerable Chengde said, ‘When seeing friends doing good deeds, we should rejoice and praise from the heart. When seeing friends’ fault, we should advise each other. When friends are in

¹ This is my own translation. The original text is, ‘若真修道人, 不見世間過.’

misery, we do not abandon each other, and we should do our best to help our friends tied over the difficulties.’ I thought about myself and this thing, and I also reflected that when fellow students do well, I would be jealous and this envy is very serious, I need to work hard to deal with it.

Mencius said, ‘When any one told Tsze-lu that he had a fault, he rejoiced. When Yu heard good words, he bowed to the speaker. The great Shun had a still greater delight in what was good. He regarded virtue as the common property of himself and others, giving up his own way to follow that of others, and delighting to learn from others to practise what was good. From the time when he ploughed and sowed, exercised the potter’s art, and was a fisherman, to the time when he became emperor, he was continually learning from others. To take example from others to practise virtue, is to help them in the same practice. Therefore, there is no attribute of the superior man greater than his helping men to practise virtue.’²

On Monday, during Six-Harmony learning, the provost explained it, and he said, ‘When other people do well, we highly praise. When seeing others’ faults, we tolerate and not talk to others. Where other people do well, we follow him and make him, and this is also the virtue of Shun. However, to be able to do this, love and respect is fundamental.’ How to love others? The provost answered: ‘Empathy.’ And how to respect others? The provost’s answer is first of all, you have to believe that everyone has buddha nature and great potential. We cannot look down on everyone. And the Venerable Chengde also taught us, ‘Believe firmly that human nature is good at the beginning and all sentient beings are Buddha, so that you would not see the faults of others.’

These all are good teachings to deal with envy, but for me, I still need to experience more, because when I am faced with situation of envy, I cannot deal with it well. I still need to keep working hard.

² James Legge, *The Chinese Classics* (Shanghai: Huadongshifandaxue chubanshe, 2011), vol. II, p. 205.

2. Confession

the Venerable Chengde at the beginning of the course said, ‘showing gratitude and repaying debt is very important and this is the root of being a good person.’ and also said, ‘It is the most important to have Bodhicitta in practise and being grateful is just Bodhicitta.’ *Quanfa putixin wen* 勸發菩提心文 said, ‘Forgetting the bodhicitta mind to cultivate all the good dharmas is a demon karma’³ so how could we keep our Bodhicitta in our daily life? the Venerable Chengde answer, ‘we could often remind ourselves of a sense of gratitude, for example, when we look at our coat, oh, this is my mom bought for me, and this cap is bought by my sister for me and things like that. like this, we could constantly keep our Bodhicitta. And whenever we recall these, we just would have more motivation to work hard, and this is Bodhicitta’s practice.’

When I heard that, I thought my experience that gratitude gradually disappears. I joined the Fu Zhou learning class in 2019 when I felt that I have very strongly pay a debt of gratitude. But after I came home and started to learn English and not continue to adhere to classics’ learning, I felt significantly that I regressed, and I gradually lost grateful heart until now I have some feelings.

A brother said, he once was strict with younger brothers and sisters at school and would criticize them in public, which leads to these children without confidence in the face of something. This let me evoke that I also brought a younger sister at school and also was very strict with her, and at that time at school, I ate and slept with her, and our relationship was good. Sometimes when she made mistakes, I was very strict with her, and even beat her. And sometimes I was indifferent, when she treats me warmly. I could feel that her young heart was hurt and had a bad influence on her. When I really realized that, we were separated into two places. And since then, I often felt guilty about her.

Later, the relocation of the school allowed us to study together again. When I had a chance to see her again, I was very excited, and I apologize to her severely for the

³ This is my own translation. The Chinese text is, ‘忘失菩提心，修諸善法，是名魔業.’

past. I thought she may hate me, but she did not, and she was as kind to me as before. I felt very moved and only wanted to love her.

And after listening to the brother's sharing, I thought of her and suddenly wanted to call her. On last Sunday, the teacher took all the classmates to climb the mountain. When I called with her, she was on the way home by car with other fellow students who were also my younger brothers and sisters. When I looked at them happy, I felt very happiness and gratified and felt it was very nice to have them. I am very grateful.

After listening to the Venerable Chengde's teachings, I thought carefully about why I had a strong sense of gratitude, when studying in Fuzhou. I had thought about one impressive point that is the affection of the classmates, which led me very touch and aroused my gratitude. When I recalled the past with my fellow students, I feel they made me. I reflect on myself. I have not contacted them for a long time since the school was disbanded. I felt very ashamed. I cannot forget their kindness to me. I thought when it comes to festivals, I should greet them and keep in proper touch. And I have to study well so I could help them and repay them.

The Venerable Master Chin Kung said, 'If you are in a good environment and life is smooth and do not obsession this condition, your will get blessings and wisdom.' the Venerable Chengde also said in the course, 'Nothing in this world is supposed to be done, we should all be grateful, even with a smile, including air, water, sunshine and so on. We should raise gratitude in good times, and it is not easy to experience every karma.' I feel very ashamed. This is because I did not cherish the course and did not feel the difficulty of karma.

At the opening ceremony, professors all talked about the difficulty of establishing the Academy of Sinology. I just have some feelings. Although these feelings only last for a few days, looking back now, I think of The Venerable Master Chin Kung, all teachers who teach me, my parents and all people helping me. I know what I am going to do. I will never give up bad habits. I cannot let everyone down, absolutely.

the Venerable Chengde said, 'Where is the maturity of a person? Firstly, you can

be considerate of others' difficulties. Secondly, you can think about the overall situation. Finally, you can be considerate of teachers, parents and other people and make them rest assured.' I thought during this period of time, I made my mother, teachers and fellow students worry a lot, due to negative emotions, especially no confidence. I am sorry for that. In the following days, I will try my best to adjust myself to face everything positively. I hope I can grow up to share the worries for everyone. I can do it.

This is my reflections during this period of time. Even though I have many bad situations in this period, the past is over. There is no need to be obsessive about it. Now that I am aware of these problems, I will change it in the spirit of making no mistakes twice. Hopefully, I can have some advancements in the next class than this class. Any feedback and suggestion would be appreciated. Thank you very much.

Bibliography

1. James Legge, *The Chinese Classics* (Shanghai: Huadongshifandaxue chubanshe, 2011)