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

The topic of my presentation today is ‘good child should get up early’ from the First Chapter, ‘At Home,’ of *Daily Manners* (常禮舉要). My presentation is mainly divided into three parts: the introduction, text explanation, and my personal reflection.

The first part is the introduction. I see that a large number of people in today’s society, especially young people, like to stay up so late, that their circadian rhythm is reversed. And for many people, their bodies have issued an alarm, even causing an irreparable impact on these individuals and their families. So, I have realized that good living habits are very important to us, and I also remind myself to pay attention to developing good work and rest habits.

Now, this is how Mr. Xu Xingmin and Ms. Li have explained this text. Regarding this passage, Mr. Xu explains in his annotations of *Daily Manners* that as children, we should not get up too late in the morning, but should get up early. The character ‘yan’ is defined in *Shuo Wen Jie Zi*¹ as: ‘The sky is clear.’ When the sky is clear, it means that the sun has

¹ The original text is: ‘天清也’ 許慎 [Xu Shen] and 段玉裁 [Duan yucai], 說文解字註 [Shuowen jiezi zhu] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1988), p. 304.

risen. Mr. Xu has two explanations for this: one is that the sun has come out. Usually the sun is not out till daybreak. If the sun is out, it means it's already not very early. The second explanation is straightforwardly saying that it is late.

How early is it then to get up early? There are four seasons in a year, and the seasons of spring, summer, autumn and winter also alternate in a day. From three to nine in the morning is spring, from nine in the morning to three in the afternoon is summer, from three in the afternoon to nine in the evening is autumn, and from nine in the evening to three in the morning is winter. From the perspective of traditional Chinese medicine, three o'clock to five o'clock is the time when the lung meridian is the most active, and this is the most suitable time to get up. Therefore, it is recommended to get up before five o'clock.

In this text, getting up early does not simply mean getting up earlier than your parents. The bed should be made, clothing should be neatly arranged, and the room should be cleaned. Doing so will also cultivate our respect. My own experience is that when my clothes are neatly arranged, my heart also seems to be more cleaner. It's comfortable.

To look at it further, we can even get many benefits. Getting up early is

helpful for the rise of yang qi and the circulation of blood and qi, and you will be more energetic. Overall, not only is it good for our health, we would also have plenty of time to complete our tasks in the morning.

Here I thought of a historical story I heard before, called “Rising upon hearing the crow of a rooster to practice the sword”. The protagonist of this story is called Zu Ti (祖逖), a native of Fanyang, Hebei, during the Eastern Jin Dynasty. Since he was young, he aspired to make contributions and become a pillar of the country. Zu Ti once lived with his good friend Liu Ku (劉琨). One night, Zu Ti was suddenly awakened by a rooster’s crow, so he patted Liu Kun to wake him up and asked him, ‘Did you hear the rooster?’ Liu Kun listened carefully and said, ‘It’s a rooster, but a rooster’s cry in the middle of the night is not auspicious.’ While getting up, Zu Ti objected: ‘This is not an unlucky call. This rooster can remind us to get up early. How about we get up and practice swords when we hear the rooster in the future?’ Liu Kun agreed, got up and dressed himself. The two went to the yard and began to practice swords. Since then, they got up early to practice swords every day. Eventually, Zu Ti and Liu Kun became well-rounded individuals capable of literary and martial skills. Later, they joined the army and made many military accomplishments and fulfilled their hopes to serve the country.

Ms Li also talked about ‘Rise early, triple tidy; rise tardy, triple frenzy’.

When we are in a panic, we may lose and forget things and it may even present certain danger. *Xiaoer yu*² (小兒語) says: 'All words and actions must be calm. Many mistakes and errors are made only because of panic.' This is *Xiaoer yu* telling us: don't be impetuous; be peaceful in our actions. In other words, we must have plenty of time to do things calmly.

Another benefit of getting up early is to be energetic. Because a person who wakes up early in the morning will be full of vitality, bring hopefulness to one's day. I used to live within an organization and we had a fixed schedule. Because everyone lived together, we could get up early every day. When I get up early every day, I am in a good state of mind, and feel full of energy and strength. And I would be more determined. So Venerable Master Chin Kung has talked about why we should live in a community. Because everyone will influence each other and actively do their part. Everyone can supervise one another to prevent each other from slacking off.

Why sometimes we are unable to get up in the morning? It's usually because we slept late. The first negative influence of sleeping late is that we can't get up early. The second damage is that it could harm our

² The original text is: '一切言動，都要安詳。十差九錯，只為慌張。' 因緣生 [Yinyuanshen], comp. 聖學根之根 [Shengxue Genzhigen], (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 2015), vol. 1, p. 1.

health both physically and mentally.

According to traditional Chinese medicine, if we do not sleep when we should at night, damp and cold will easily invade our bodies, because at that time our Yang Qi is the weakest. When the damp and cold invades, it's easy to catch a cold and get sick.

Another very serious problem is that we will become increasingly suspicious. The teacher mentioned that the most harmful thing about stay up late is that is damaging to the liver qi and gall bladder qi, which means 肝氣 and 膽氣 in Chinese. When we go to bed late, our gall bladder qi will be affected. If our gall bladder qi is weak, we will become timid and afraid, and then very suspicious. So our body and mind will undergo negative interaction. After we understand this truth, we should follow the rhythm of nature and live according to nature's changes. If we do not live according to the laws of nature, it means that we are not abiding nature's rule.

Mr. Zeng Guofan's family teachings talks about three aspects to predict the rise and fall of a family: whether the children get up early, whether they do housework, and whether they read the sages' books. So why can't we get up now? One reason is staying up late, and second is a lack

of life goals. Therefore, whatever we do today, we must first set goals and life ambitions. The teacher said that our life's motivation comes from having a sense of mission. Although we have many bad habits and faults, lack of knowledge, wisdom, and morality, it does not matter. The most important thing is to have this sense of mission. When we have this heart, all Buddhas, ancestors and sages will bless us. And when we practice it in our lives, our bodies will become healthier, our wisdom will grow, our virtues will become more and more fulfilled, and our blessings will increase.

The last part is my reflection. After I studied this text, my deepest experience is that getting up early is actually a kind of filial piety to our parents. Because if we wake up late every day, our parents may be worried about us. Parents will wonder if it's too stressful for us to rest well at night or if we are suffering from insomnia. It will cause a series of concerns for our parents.

There is a verse in *Classic of Family Reverence*³ (孝經) : '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.' Therefore, if we can take good care of our health, that

³ The original text is: '身體髮膚，受之父母，不敢毀傷，孝之始也.' Henry Rosemont . JR and Roger T Ames , *The Chinese Classic of Family Reverence* (University of Hawai 'i Press, 2009) , p .106.

gives our parents the greatest peace of mind. I have personally experienced waking up early every day, and I remember the happiness on my parents' faces. I can also take this time and spend it with my parents, and have more time to let them know of my situation so that they feel at ease. I can also help my parents prepare breakfast while I am at home. Although these seem like little things, our parents can be quite happy for several days.

If we can't get up early, maybe even when our parents call us up to eat, it will make our parents upset and angry. It is extremely unfilial to make our parents angry. I also reflect back to when I came home for winter and summer vacations, I was often called by my father to get up for breakfast in the morning. Sometimes my dad would call me many times before I slowly got up. Our parents will understand that we are usually tired from school. It is a rare chance to take a break during vacations, and they will not blame us for sleeping a little longer. But we should be able to realize and be able to get up early.

After studying this text, we can train ourselves by using this teaching. Mr. Xu Xingmin also emphasized that the most important thing for developing a good habit is the word 'training'. The process of habituation is normal and necessary. If we don't train, we can't develop good habits,

we can't be a well-mannered person, and we can't observe the precepts well. Therefore, I want to train myself by getting up early to grow my filial nature towards my parents, and then to be respectful to everyone and everything. When we can always maintain this respect, we will know how to deal with everyday situations, and we will become more and more determined and comfortable with this. We can also improve ourselves. When we have become better people , we can share more of our teachers' responsibilities, and do our part for the inheritance of culture.

That concludes my presentation. Any feedback and suggestions will be appreciated. Thank you for listening patiently!

Bibliography

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