



Parents: *Be a Good Example for Your Children*

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父母做子女好的模範

現在我們講一講有關兒童的心聲探討。其實兒童天生具足了敏銳的觀察與學習能力，就像海綿一樣，隨時隨地都在吸收外在環境給予他們的教化。

上個星期我參加了一個宗教研討會，這個研討會已經舉辦了六年了，記得剛開始的時候，大家彼此間都很客氣，儘量不會越過對方的宗教界線。今年，大家都已經熟悉了，所以彼此坦誠佈公，很認真地去研討事情。

會議分成幾個小組作討論，我是被分配到一個三人小組裏面，其中有一位是神父，另一位是教授，以及本人。研討會進行的方式是給我們每人的問題，我們都須要作答。第一個問題是：你幾時開始靈性上尋求？從幾歲開始？你經驗如何？等等問題。結果當講出來時，我們三人都有一個共同點——從小的時候，就開始了靈性上的尋求。

我從小學和中學都是在

Now let's talk about a related study of the children's way of thinking. In fact, children are born with a keen sense of observation and learning ability. Like a sponge, at all times and at all places, they are always absorbing teachings from their external environment.

Last week I participated in a religious seminar. This is the sixth year that this seminar has been conducted. When it first started, everyone was very courteous and tried not to step over the religious boundaries of others. This year, since all of us are already quite familiar with one another; we can all frankly speak our mind and earnestly discuss the agenda.

The meeting was divided into smaller group discussions. I was assigned to a group of three consisting of a priest, a professor and myself. Each of us was given a list of questions and everyone was required to answer them. The questions included: When did you start seeking spirituality? At what age? What kind of experiences have you had? And so on. Finally when we talked about it, we found that all three of

us had one thing in common – We all started seeking spirituality at a young age.

I had studied in a Catholic school for my elementary and secondary education in Hong Kong. In those days, our





香港的天主教學校裏讀書，那時我們的修女們都是很傳統的，很規矩的。她們都是穿上傳統長裙及帽子，冬天是黑色，夏天是白色的。給我的印象，她們都是很聖潔的，這是我跟天主教在成長中的一段因緣。而在更早時，當我還未上學時，記得我家附近有一個公園，我每一次去公園，都會經過一個全香港最大的教堂，但從沒進去過裏邊。裏邊怎麼樣，我也不知道。但是每次去公園的時候，經過那個教堂，我都會很自然地跪在教堂門前的沙子上叩三個頭才去公園。當我回家，又經過那個教堂，（直到後來長大進入佛門之後，上人才說聖母瑪麗亞是觀音的化身，我才知道這是為什麼？）我也是叩三個頭才回家。也不知道自己為什麼如此？現在講起來還可以感受到膝蓋沾著沙子的那種感覺。

同組的神父也提到，小時候他也有同樣的經驗，後來就做了神父幾十年。另外一位教授，他曾出過家；提到他小時候就常有三個疑問，在他心裏思索著。第一個就是大自然的氣息。小時候，他常常一個人在農場裏走來走去，宇宙的寂寞和大自然寧靜的那種感覺給他小小的心靈，竟然留下很深刻的印象。第二個是教堂的儀式。他爸爸每個禮拜去教堂，耳濡目染，神父和修女們做彌撒的儀式，這令他對教堂有很深的印象。第三個是他爸爸給他的影響。他爸爸很虔誠參加一個閉關活動，去了一個禮拜。那個活動是在一個小島舉行，不准聽電話，不准看電視，不准聽收音機，什麼都沒有，每天只有祈禱和打坐等活動。回來之後，父親自己不覺得有什麼改變，但是做兒子看到他爸爸的臉上發亮，表情也不一樣，所以他對閉

nuns were very traditional and very well-mannered. They dressed in traditional long skirts and wore hats which were black in the winter, and white in the summer. My impression was that they were all very holy and pure. This was my affinity with Catholicism when I was growing up. However, even before my school years, I remembered there was a public garden near my home. Every time I went to this garden, I had to pass by the biggest church in Hong Kong. Though I had never been in this church, and I had no idea what was inside, every time I passed by that church, I would naturally kneel on the sand at its front door and bow three times before continuing on my way to the garden. When I returned home and passed by that church again, I also bowed three times before heading home. I had no idea why I did that. (It was not until I grew up, became a Buddhist nun and heard the Venerable Master say that Saint Mary is the transformation body of Guanyin that I knew why I was doing that.) As I speak now, I can still recollect the feeling of my knees covered with sand grains.

The priest from my group also mentioned a similar experience from his youth. He has been a priest for several decades. The professor, on the other hand, had left the home-life before. He mentioned that when he was young, he had three questions that he always contemplated in his mind. The first one was the breath of nature. When he was young, he often roamed around the farm by himself. The loneliness of the universe and the serenity of mother-nature made a deep impression on his young mind. The second was the rituals in a church. His father went to church every Sunday. He was influenced by what he saw and heard, and the rituals conducted by the priest and nuns during a mass also left a very deep impression on him. The third was the influence of his father. On one occasion, his father had faithfully participated in a seclusion retreat for a week. The retreat was held on a small island. The participants were not permitted to answer the phone, watch TV, or listen to the radio. There was nothing there. Every day, people would just pray and sit in meditation. When his father returned home, he was unaware of any change himself. However, his son observed that his father had a radiant





關有很深刻的印象。

所以做父母的要很注意，不要錯過孩子這個黃金時候的教育；孩子在這時候容易教，過了這時候，就很難教的了。如果父母只曉得去賺錢，做自己喜歡的事情，逛街購物，以致沒有時間去教小孩子，會耽誤了孩子的善根。孩子的未來在你的手上，應該令他有一個很美好的童年。

父母和成人的價值觀直接影響孩子，孩子的觀念就會不一樣，有不同的生活體會；若父母不注意，整天給他講：「你將來要怎麼樣，怎麼樣才可以賺很多的錢。」這樣孩子以後看一切都是從名和利開始。假如做父母知足常樂，注重品德，注重修行，那麼你的觀念有形無形都在影響你的孩子。為什麼現在教育這麼困難？這不是因為小孩子難教，而是大人的問題。所以提醒大人們，要以身作則，先要把自己的價值觀清理一下，讓一代傳一代；若是不懂得這個道理，則會把錯誤的價值觀灌輸到孩子的心靈上，染污孩子的思想，反而把做人最重要的都丟了。

其實無處不是在跟我們說法，只看看我們有沒有把眼睛打開，六祖壇經上說：「佛法在世間，不離世間覺；離世覓菩提，猶如求兔角。」上人也說：「見事省事出世間，見事迷事墮沈淪。」見到一切事相，不被它所迷惑，才能出離這煩惱的世界。如果我們見到什麼就迷亂，不但自己起煩惱，還把煩惱傳給別人令他人起煩惱。所以說來說去，一切都是：「以身作則，從己做起。」我們祈求世界和平，也要從自身做起，這樣世界才會有和平的希望。

complexion and a different demeanor. Because of this event, he had a very strong feeling about seclusion.

Therefore, parents have to really pay attention. Do not miss this golden opportunity to educate your children. Children at this time are easy to teach. If you miss this golden period, it will be very difficult to tutor them. If parents know only to make money, do things that they desire, and go shopping, and find no time to teach their kids, this will hinder their children from developing good roots. The future of your children is in your hands. You should give them a good and happy childhood.

The ideas and values of parents and adults have a direct influence on their children. It will change children's ideas and values, and they will get different perspectives in their life experience. If parents do not pay attention, and all day long, they keep saying, "In the future, you must do this and that in order to make a lot of money," then their children will see everything in terms of the pursuit of fame and gain when they grow up. If the parents are contented and always happy, pay attention to character building and virtues, and emphasize cultivation, then their ideas and values will also visibly and imperceptibly affect their children. Why is education so difficult nowadays? It is not that little kids are hard to teach. It is the problem of the adults. Hence, the adults should be reminded that they must set an example themselves. First of all they should have a clear mindset of their own ideas and values to pass on generations to come. If they do not understand this principle, then they may instill wrong ideas and values in their children's minds, pollute their thoughts, and throw away what is most important in being a person.

In fact, the Dharma is being spoken for us in every place we find ourselves. It all depends on whether we have opened our eyes or not. The *Sixth Patriarch Platform Sutra* says, "The Buddhadharma is here in the world; enlightenment is not apart from the world. To search for Bodhi apart from the world is like looking for a hare with horns." The Venerable Master also said, "One who understands what one sees will transcend the world. One who is confused by what one sees will go astray." When one sees the myriad phenomena and is not confused by them, one can then be free from this world of afflictions. If we see something and are confused by it, not only will we get afflicted, but we will also pass our afflictions on to others, causing them to be afflicted too. Therefore, after all is said and done, we must start by setting an example with our own behavior. If we hope for world peace, we must start by being peaceful ourselves. Then there will be hope for the world to come to peace.