



The Classic of Filial Respect

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開宗明義章第一

Chapter 1: Overall Principles at the Beginning



zhòng ní jū , zēng zǐ shì 。 zǐ yuē : 「 xiān
仲尼居，曾子侍。子曰：「先
wáng yǒu zhì dé yào dào , yǐ shùn tiān xià , mǐn
王有至德要道，以順天而下，民
yòng hé mù , shàng xià wú yuàn , rǔ zhī zhī hū
用和睦，上下无怨。汝知之乎
? 」 zēng zǐ bì xí yuē shēn bù mǐn
？」曾子避席曰：「参不敏，
hé zú yǐ zhī zhī ! 」 zǐ yuē fú xiào
何足以知之！」子曰：「夫孝
, dé zhī běn yě jiào zhī suǒ yóu shēng yě
, 德之本也，教之所由生也。
fù zuò ! wú yù rǔ shēn tǐ fā fū shòu
復坐！吾语汝。身體髮膚，受
zhī fù mǔ , bù gǎn huǐ shāng xiào zhī shǐ yě
之父母，不敢毀傷，孝之始也。
○ lì shēn xíng dào , yáng míng yú hòu shì , yǐ
○ 立身行道，揚名於後世，以
xiǎn fù mǔ , xiào zhī zhōng yě fú xiào , shǐ
顯父母，孝之終也。夫孝，始
yú shì qīn , zhōng yú shì jūn , zhōng yú lì shēn
於事親，中於事君，終於立身
○ 《大雅》云：『無念爾祖，
yù xiū jué dé
聿修厥德。』」

Confucius was at leisure and his disciple Zeng Zi was attending upon him. Confucius said, "The ancient sage-rulers possessed the utmost virtues and essential Way, with which they ruled the nation, and as a result people lived harmoniously, and neither the nobility nor the commoners had any grievance. Do you know about it?"

Zeng Zi rose from his seat and said, "How could I, Shen*, who is dull-witted, know about it?"

Confucius continued, "Filial respect is the foundation of all virtue, and the source of all teachings. Be seated, and I will explain to you. Every part of our bodies, even the hair and skin, is derived from our parents; therefore, we should protect our bodies and keep them from injury; this is the fundamental act of filial respect. We establish ourselves by practicing the Way so that we can leave a good name for future generations. Thus, we honor and glorify our parents; this is the ultimate act of filial respect. To practice filial respect, we begin by serving our parents, followed by serving the sovereign, and finally by establishing ourselves well. As it is said in the *Major Odes* (*of The Book of Poetry*):

*How can you not be mindful of your ancestors
And not cultivate your virtues to safeguard theirs?"*



Notes:

*Shen is the name by which Zeng Shen refers to himself.

- ① 開宗明義 : 孝經首章篇名。說明全書宗旨義理
○ 開，張也；宗，本也；明，顯也；義，理也。
- ② 先王：古代聖王。或稱已故的君王。
- ③ 曾子：（公元前505～公元前436年），名參，字子
輿，春秋末魯國人。事親至孝。十六歲拜孔子
為師，勤奮好學，頗得孔子真傳。
- ④ 立身：建立自身做人處世的基礎。
- ⑤ 聯：發語詞，用於句首或句中，無義。
- ⑥ 厥：他的、那個。同“其”。



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身體髮膚，受之父母，
不敢毀傷，孝之始也。

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is derived from our parents; therefore,
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this is the fundamental act of filial respect.



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