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**THE SIX ETHICS OF
THE MIND**

The Six Ethics of the Mind

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Foreword

Today frequent chaos is witnessed in many corners of the world, with inter-racial and ethnic conflict featuring as the thorniest issue. Looking at the ethnic issue, most people often associate it with the United States. While the ethnic issue is not too much of a problem in the United States, it still remains a major global concern. In 2004, I proposed the concept of “global ethics” in my speech at Dag Hammarskjöld Library Auditorium in the United Nations Headquarters in New York, which was well received. Later I also started to support an international project toward the reconstruction of global ethics.

Looking back at East Asian societies, which have experienced one or two centuries of turbulence, we can find that many traditional ethical concepts and values have been ignored, and therefore society today is filled with all kinds of disorder: a lack of respect among people, a lack of self-respect in individuals, a poorly defined sense of role, and a lack of sense of responsibility and duty. In light of all this, Dharma Drum Mountain is initiating a new ethical movement, and we have called it the Six Ethics of the Mind.

Here, the mind means our conscience. While we understand that ethical concepts and values are necessary, we often brush them aside when it comes to putting them into practice, especially in situations involving looking out for our own interests. For matters that do not concern us, we are often very quick to demand ethical concepts and values in other people. It goes without saying that everyone should have morality and ethics, but the key lies in whether each and every one of us can demonstrate sincerity and determination, and live out our life with ethics and morality.

In short, when we live out ethical concepts and ethical morality sincerely and wholeheartedly, that is the Six Ethics of the Mind.

Ethics must be based on morality

“Ethics” and “morality” are usually mentioned in the same breath. “Ethics” means doing one’s duties and observing one’s role, and “morality” means respecting and caring for each other in relationships with others. Although they are closely related, they are not identical. For example, the domain of morality does not necessarily include ethics, while the realization of ethics must be based on morality.

“Ethics” refers to relationships with other people. An individual may have to play several different roles at the same time in his or her life. As we try our best to fulfill our duties and responsibilities, that constitutes the realization of ethics. The meaning of morality is helping all those we interact with to obtain benefits and peace, and as such it has the function of making friends, the concept that is taught in the Analects of Confucius.

The ethics promoted in the Six Ethics of the Mind requires everyone to perform his or her own duties in interpersonal relationships that come with one’s role and position. Holding a certain position without seeking to take up the attached responsibility is being negligent in carrying one’s duties, and is unethical. Ethics encompasses the fulfilling and undertaking of duties and responsibilities, and requires us to act or speak in a certain way in a given position. This is what it is meant by a Buddhist expression reflecting on monastic life: To be a monk for a day is to strike the bell for a day.

To develop correct concepts of morality we must start from ourselves. We should offer help and make contribution—what Buddhism terms “compassion” or “benevolence” as it

is popularly called today—so that those interacting with us attain peace, and gain benefit and help. At the very least, we should not cause them to suffer loss.

On the other hand, the key to the realization of morality lies in ourselves. If we only expect or demand kindness from others while failing to repay others, that would be immoral of us. I must emphasize once again: In interpersonal relationships, ethics cannot be formed without the observance of morality.

Starting from the mind

Why is that while most people identify with ethics, they still fail to put them into practice? The question lies in the mind. Are we truly applying our heart? Are we sincere and eager enough? Are we taking ethics as a lifestyle, or further, as an attitude towards life? If the answer is yes, we will be able to examine ourselves, demand of ourselves, urge ourselves, and constantly reflect on ourselves, to see whether our actions are in line with ethical standards. For this reason, we launched the Six Ethics of the Mind, which requires us to start with the mind, just as in protecting the spiritual environment, which is something our Dharma Drum Mountain organization has

always stressed.

The Six Ethics of the Mind requires us to start with our mind, to start with ourselves. The mind means the conscience and a sincere faith. So, we need to ask: What is the value of ethics to us? Are we taking it as a way of life? This all requires us to experience it with our heart and put it into practice with sincerity, and so it is never merely a slogan.

Most people would like to be a nice person, but fail in fulfilling ethical duties. In most people's view, being a nice person seems to mean refraining from doing bad deeds and uttering unwholesome language, while at the same time ignoring other people's improper deeds and speech, because that is none of our business. The group as a whole suffers as a result. So, is this ethical, or moral? When you happen to see someone who is about to hang himself or drown himself, would you go to their rescue? Or would you simply think, "That's somebody else's life, and so it's nothing to do with me?" If we just sit back and watch it happen without coming to their aid, it amounts to killing that person ourselves; if we find someone who is doing a bad deed and fail to offer them advice, that is equal to acting like an accomplice committing

the same offense. Therefore, we should urge people to refrain from actions that are detrimental to others, a community or group, and the overall environment. On the other hand, we should commit ourselves to, and encourage others to engage in actions that are beneficial to a group as a whole, and our environment. This is the spirit of the ethics of the mind.

The concept and realization of Six Ethics of the Mind

The special feature of the Six Ethics of the Mind is its adaptability to time. It responds to and reflects on current society in Taiwan, as well as current international circumstances. They are different from the Five Relationships in traditional Confucianism—the ethical relationships between sovereign and subject, father and son, husband and wife, elder and younger, and friends. Of the Six Ethics, environmental ethics, workplace ethics, and ethics among ethnic groups are dimensions representing our modern era, and these transcend the range of the traditional Five Relationships.

Within each of the different areas covered by the Six Ethics, each one of us plays not only a single role, but also actually multiple roles. Whatever role we play, we should

develop the correct concept: We should contribute ourselves for the sake of fulfilling our roles and responsibilities, instead of fighting for our interests. While seeking our own benefits we should respect others and care about them. Therefore, greed and fighting for gain are not in line with ethics; the value of ethics lies in serving and giving.

Family Ethics

Concept

The basis of family ethics lies in the interpersonal relationships between husband and wife, children and siblings, and may also be extended to include interactions with grandparents and in-laws. Within a family, a father may also be a son or a son-in-law, or may also play the role of a brother. Regardless of which role a family member plays or the particular situations involved, there is always a corresponding identity; a family member must fulfill the duties and obligations appropriate to this identity. In this way, everyone comes together to take care of the family, ensuring that all members of the family can coexist happily and harmoniously.

People today tend to have small families, or at most with three generations living under the same roof. The most common problems seen in small families of modern society are: Parents lack adequate concern and care for their children, while children's filial piety, respect, and concern toward their parents are flagging. For instance, the media often reports on the descendants of prominent celebrities fighting amongst

themselves over their inheritance, or even filing law suits against each other. They are only calculating their personal interests and do not value harmony within the family.

Moreover, many parents provide very little parenting to their children while they are growing up. As a result, these children who lack parenting are very likely to become troublemakers in society. They tend to reject discipline and are often unreasonable. Their teachers do not dare to discipline them, because once they do, the children's parents might come to argue. In the past, to point out to a child for not receiving proper parenting meant blaming and criticizing the parents harshly. But nowadays, children that lack disciplines are quite many, and some parents even refuse to let the teacher discipline their children. This has become a very serious problem.

Family is the cornerstone of society

Family is the most basic constituent of any society. A healthy and happy family forms the cornerstone of a happy and harmonious society. Each family member, regardless of his or her position in the family, should think of how to give to the family instead of calculating what they can gain from

others. Each should fulfill their duties and responsibilities. No matter how others act, we must play our parts, be grateful and respectful toward our elders, and care for family members of our own generation as well as the younger generation. In this way, the family, whether poor or rich, noble or lowly, will certainly become happy and live harmoniously.

When every family member plays his or her role, takes up the ensuing duties and responsibilities, by giving, contributing, and serving wholeheartedly with his or her best efforts, they are carrying out ethical concepts and conducts. And this is family ethics.

Implementations

Give without calculating

Family ethics may seem easy, but different people may carry it out differently. Every family member has his or her respective role and position. However, people differ due to their hereditary and acquired resources, such as their capacity of physical strength, intellect, skills and other resources. Therefore, it is inappropriate to ask every individual to per-

form the same duties and responsibilities regardless of their differences. Nonetheless, everyone should have the attitude of fulfilling the obligations given with one's role. Fulfilling the obligation of a given role means putting in effort and doing one's best; regardless of individual differences in ability, we strive to do our best. As a saying goes, "The skilled serve the less skilled." People who are more intelligent and more capable often give and bear more than those of average ability. So it is with the family. Some give out more, while others receive more service. It is rare to find people who give in equal proportion to what they are given.

Once, I met a couple. While the husband took care of all the major and minor household duties, his wife, apart from giving birth to their child, simply did nothing but enjoy herself. The husband had to work and support the family, and escort their child to school as well. When the husband asked me for advice about this situation, I replied, "Take it as an opportunity to cultivate compassion, and serve her. This way you're also contributing to your whole family."

Holding family meetings

People vary in their ability and resources, so it would be

quite impossible to ask every family member to perform the same duties and responsibilities—sometimes it’s quite difficult to strike a balance. In cases where there is overlap or confusion of duties among family members, they can resort to coordination and discussion, such as having a family meeting to find a solution. Take the example I just gave. The husband could sit down and have a good talk with his wife, to see if she could share some household work. Otherwise, if the couple ends up getting divorced, their child will lose his or her mother, and the wife will lose her family. Even if the wife remarries, she would probably repeat that same experience.

Also, a couple may have different ideas and styles of how to discipline their child. So whom to listen to? It requires communication between the two, finding an appropriate way of discipline that both sides agree on. Another option is to have one of the parents be in charge of their child’s discipline and education. The worst situation is when the husband and wife can’t compromise with each other, but simply insist on their own ideas and argue relentlessly—even about whether their child should become an artist or scientist in the future. In fact, there is no point for such kind of dispute, because the child will choose his or her own path. Nevertheless, it is nec-

essary to help them identify their personal interests and give them encouragement and support while they are still young.

Enhancing parenting

Parents need not worry too early about their child's future path, yet mustn't take too lightly of shaping the child's character and morals. We cannot afford to let parents decide whether they like it or not, or whether the child is interested in it or not. Education of character and morals should start from childhood. If the parents die early and the child is looked after by the grandparents instead, then the grandparents will have to do more, not only bringing up their grandchild, but also educating them. The most fundamental function of parenting is to teach children the principles of interacting with people and dealing with things. Otherwise, when they grow up they will inevitably encounter problems with their interpersonal relationships and career development.

As the Three Character Classic says, "Raising a child without disciplining the child is the father's fault." Put in the context of today's society, we should say instead, "Parents cannot excuse themselves for failing to raise and discipline their child properly." In modern society, husband and wife

should share the responsibility of raising and disciplining their children. The wife is not subordinate to the husband anymore, and therefore should have equal rights to child discipline. Unless one parent voluntarily gives up the right to educate their child, both husband and wife should jointly take up the responsibility of child education and discipline.

Applying the Four Fields for Cultivating Peace wisely

If family members are often in dispute or fighting about money, fame, profit, or position, the family will never be able to enjoy harmony. Everybody will be caught up in the fray and feel unhappy. How can it be improved? It's actually not that difficult. In a family, all it takes is one, or two members to willingly and actively make a contribution, to express loving care and concern, and to become the bridge of communication and coordination. By applying the Four Steps of Handling a Problem, which is to deal with a problem with the attitude of “facing it, accepting it, dealing with it, and letting go of it”, we can make an impact and change the situation, and eventually turning it peaceful and harmonious.

Everyone hopes to have a peaceful and harmonious family. When the whole family is in disharmony, how can

individual family member possibly enjoy peace, bliss, and happiness? Especially in today's society when occurrences of unfilial family abuse and incest become frequent, it shows not only the collapse of family ethics, but also the fact that our society is sickening. Unfilial behavior means treating our parents in verbal or physical violence, which is extremely immoral and disrespectful. For example, a child shouts at the parents or grandparents, beats or even kills them. This is seriously unethical. Another type of unfilial behavior is incest. For example, a father rapes his own daughter, which is a great offense against the ethics of blood relationship and a violence of animal act, and therefore it is a heinous crime.

Although the violations of family ethics occur now and then, there are also plenty of touching real-life stories in our society. In some families, for example, where the parents or older relatives have died young and the children left behind are getting by on their own, the siblings will support and take care of one another. It may not always be the elder brother or sister looking after the younger, and sometimes on the contrary, the younger one instead takes care of the family. This is truly very moving.

Setting family rules

Families in early society used to have family rules. In today's society, however, it is rare to see families exercising family rules. Family rules are actually derived from ethics. The idea is that when some family member violates and breaks ethical rules, there is a set of disciplinary rules to follow. Another purpose is to prevent family members from going counter to socially accepted norms. I also suggest families and couples in modern society to set a norm for spouse relationship. Once the children are older and more mature, parents should make clear to their children what are acceptable behaviors in relation to their classmates, friends, and relatives, as well as set up the family guidelines. Taking care of the family is the responsibility of every family member. No matter whether the family members are all alive, deceased or apart, while the family members are still staying together, they need to care for and look after one another. This is utterly important.

Extending family ethics to community care

A family in which all members carry out their duties and take care of each other will be one that enjoys warmth,

harmony, and happiness, and one that can serve as a model in their community, because they will extend their love for their family to caring for their community.

For example, Dharma Drum Mountain has a practice center in down town Taipei. There we have a neighbor upstairs who is very kind and friendly. She puts pots of flowers at each corner of the stairway. And she frequently cleans the pavement in front of the apartment building and around the trees, so the surrounding area always looks tidy and clean. Sometimes, when she hears that some family in the neighborhood can't pay for their child's school lunch, she will provide the lunch to the child. She feels happy and joyful while doing this for others, and she also has won the appreciation from her neighbors in the apartment building and the children she has helped. This is in a way an extended care of family ethics.

Daily Life Ethics

Concept

Our lives are comprised of the daily activities we do, anything from what we eat, wear, to where we live, and the place we go to. In the most basic sense, we breathe in daily life. The main entity of the daily life ethics is thrifty, simplicity, unwastefulness, and preferably refraining from any kind of wasting.

The daily life ethics is closely related to the other five ethics because whatever the occasion may be, there are activities that form part of human life. I once saw a commercial about a young woman who bought many new clothes but did not find this make her happier. In fact, we don't really need much material, but we often want too much; the more we want, the more we lack.

Another aspect of the daily life ethics is to respect others and ourselves, and to accommodate others while we try to make things easier for ourselves. An old Chinese saying goes, "Sweep the snow in front of your own houses and never mind

the frost on other people's roofs." People in today's society should abandon this inappropriate way of thinking, because the life of every individual is in fact inseparable from that of others.

There are people who choose to live deep in the mountain as hermits, cultivating the Path by not having any contact with the outside world. Such people may seem to have nothing to do with others, but this is not actually the case. We continue to influence each other for as long as we live, wherever we are. As long as one is alive, wherever one is, one will influence others in one way or another. Therefore, the way we live, which may seem to be a personal matter, is in fact interconnected with the world around us. For instance, I spent six years in a solitary retreat in the countryside of southern Taiwan, during which time I had little contact with other people. But still, there were people bringing me meals and water. Sometimes I needed to send letters, find a certain sutra or book, or get more paper, so I needed others' help to get these things done. So you can see that it is quite unlikely that people can live in isolation without interrelating with other people at all.

Living in harmony with people and taking responsibility for our lives

Our every action, from day to night, from cradle to grave, regardless of the extent of our lives, regardless of the effects of our words, regardless of the significance of our contribution, is always connected with other people as a whole. During my time in solitary retreat, I did not get much help from the outside world. Nonetheless, in my retreat quarter I had a set of Tripitaka and the Twenty-Five Histories, along with some books on philosophy, literature, and history. They were with me everyday and became a part of my life. These Buddhist scriptures, classic texts and books represent the distilled wisdom of sages of the past. The published works in front of my eyes not only contain the thoughts of the authors, which is only available to us in book form, thanks to the efforts of a large number of people, who worked on tasks such as translation, compiling, editing, printing, and binding. Therefore, my life during the retreat time might seem to be independent, but I was not able to separate myself from the human world.

The implementation of the daily life ethics starts with every one of us. Not only do we need to cherish and make

good use of various resources in our lives, but we should also protect and respect the environment. We need to respect the rights of others when we make things easy for ourselves. I heard that in Mexico City, all water for drinking and daily use comes from groundwater. That means every drop of water they drink and use will contribute to the sinking of Mexico City. The City may one day sink if people do not stop pumping groundwater.

Cherish and share our limited resources

The Dharma Drum Mountain has always been an advocate for environmental protection. Among the Four Kinds of Environmentalism that we promote is Protecting the Living Environment, which entails a life of simplicity, tidiness, and thrifty. Some may think that the usage of water, electricity, and gasoline is an individual matter since we pay for it as individual consumers, but these are in fact shared assets of all humanity. It will be too late if we do not start to cherish the water resource until we run out of drinking water, or to realize that we can walk instead of driving till we deplete all the petroleum reservation on earth, or to stop leaving the air conditioner on all summer till we finally experience a blackout. Many more areas in our world have turned into

desert, and rain forests have been severely damaged. It is predicted that in the future there will be fewer rainy days and longer drought seasons, and then it will be even more difficult to preserve groundwater. Moreover, Taiwan has been relying on import crude oil, and so we should all be more aware of the impending danger of diminishing natural resources.

To live a simple and thrifty life is also to bear in mind that there are 6.5 billion of people on Earth who share the same right to survive as we do. World population will only increase in the future, and so will our dependency on natural resources, which are limited and not inexhaustible. Therefore, we need to cherish what we have by exercising restraint so that future generations will still have the natural resources to use.

The essence of daily life ethics is being mindful of the impacts of our actions at all times. Wherever we are and whatever situations we are in, we should frequently reflect if our behaviors cause any inconvenience, trouble, or disturbance to others and leave any undesirable consequence to future generations. By constantly reminding ourselves and reflecting on our own behaviors, we begin to put daily life ethics into practice. Life can be rather simple if we can refrain

from producing too much garbage and making too much noise. If we can constantly think about how to bring convenience, benefit, and happiness to other people, we are actually implementing the ethics of daily life.

Implementations

Taking full advantage of the public transit system

It is reported that, according to the U.S. Department of Energy, we may have a global energy crisis within five years. Some countries have stockpiled oil in response. Stockpiling oil may be one way to cope with the looming crisis, but the ultimate solution is to reduce the consumption of petroleum. Motor vehicles, being means of transportation, have brought us much convenience. People nowadays, however, have become so dependent on them that, to get places dozens of steps away, they would ride their motorcycles instead of walking or riding bicycles.

In the past, it was common for people to walk to their destinations. Now people cannot go anywhere without their motor vehicles. They think they are getting to their destina-

tions much faster by driving or riding motorcycles, but that is not necessarily the case, at least not for short distance travels. I once did an experiment: I asked four people to meet at a location one kilometer away. They all started from the same spot at the same time, with one of them traveling on foot, one by bicycle, one by motorcycle, and one by car. The person driving a car arrived first, and the person on foot, last, but the latter was only minutes behind. In fact, one could easily walk that distance in less than 20 minutes.

When I was in Europe, I noticed that Germans used public transportation to go to work and to other places; they drove only when the whole family went out together. On weekends, it was common to see a whole family out on bicycles. All major cities in Germany have bicycle lanes, which are very well utilized. That is why the air quality in Berlin is rather good even though Berlin is one of the biggest cities in Europe.

Bicycle lanes can be found in Taipei now as well, but they are not set up broadly nor being utilized much. The authorities in charge will need to come up with a comprehensive set of safety measures and arrangement so that people would feel

safe to venture out on bicycles, benefiting their own health and the health of the cities.

Recycle

In addition, we should make an effort to reduce the amount of garbage we produce in everyday life. Taiwanese are making progress in their awareness and implementation of recycling. Many household things can be recycled, such as used paper, cans, glass bottles, PET bottles, electrical appliances, and metals. Even kitchen waste like fruit peels, vegetables, and leftover food can be recycled.

Reuse

Some garbage produced in our life comes from the after-construction materials and furniture that we discard. Those after-construction materials can in fact be reused; it will no longer be garbage if we make toys or other useful things out of it. I have seen in household renovation buildings were torn down and discarded as waste, which is a pity. Wouldn't it be better for our environment if those pieces of torn-down wooden material can be recycled and re-polished into tools, toys, and construction materials? To make use of the recycled material is also important in protecting our environment.

We should try to recycle and reuse our materials as much as possible. In an office, for example, a piece of paper can be used for multiple times. After using one side, we can turn it over to use the other side, and in the end shred it so it can be used as packing material. In many little ways we may fulfill our share of protecting the environment.

Reduce noise

The implementation of daily life ethics involves reducing not only garbage, but also noise. Some people speak loudly and act abruptly; during the weekend they stay at home and make so much noise as if they were having a sports event in the house. There are also children running around in the apartment building and their parents cannot stop them but yell at them. These are some of the typical noises heard in the city. Still some people love to raise pets in their apartments, such as cats, dogs, birds, tortoises, and even snakes or toads. Noises made by these pets and the odor of their excrements can annoy the neighbors badly. In short, if people live their life at the expense of their neighbors, producing much pollution of waste and noise that disturb their neighbors, then they have a lack of daily life ethics.

School Ethics

Concept

It may seem that a school is simply a learning environment. In fact, it is the locus of various intricate relationships, such as those between and among teachers, students, principal, and directors of all levels, class preceptors, parents' association, and board of directors.

Nurturing excellence through love and respect

Generally speaking, the subjects of school ethics are the teachers, students, and parents, many of who have complaints that I heard. For examples, teachers may feel that students nowadays cannot be disciplined, reproached, or admonished, even though they may have done something wrong. Parents may file complaints against the teachers if the latter ever discipline their children. At the same time, if students' grades drop, parents consider it teachers' responsibility and blame them for not fulfilling their duties as educators. Parents lament that teachers nowadays lack love, patience, and sense of responsibility. In their eyes, teachers behave like corporate drones and have no intent to nurture excellence in students.

All these complaints reflect only one thing: on today's campus, students do not behave like students, and teachers do not behave like teachers. Even parents, who are not on campus but have everything to do with school ethics, do not take their responsibilities. They simply send their children to schools and let them behave waywardly. Even the administrative authority of education grants students the freedom to do whatever they want to do. This administrative policy may be well intended in that it encourages students to explore and develop their unique talents, but it can bring forth destructive results. Individual freedom more often than not morphs into self-indulgence, which not only disturbs other students and teachers, but also affects the operation of the whole campus.

Taiwan is profoundly westernized now. In Western societies, equality of all is valued as an ideal. Students may appeal to this ideal and demand equal treatments with teachers and equal rights with other full citizens in society. Equality defined as such is very problematic because it focuses on the entitlement of rights without considering each person's duties and responsibilities. Such equality is inapplicable and detrimental to school ethics.

The relationship between teachers and students has to be built on the foundation of mutual love and respect. Furthermore, in school ethics, teachers, students, and parents must all fulfill their own duties and take responsibilities. Only when such ethical norms are established can the next generation be educated to excel both in character and in intellectual development.

Implementations

Teaching in accordance with students' aptitudes and molding students' characters in unobtrusive ways

The population on campus is mostly students. Some are endowed with superior intellect while others are not. Some learn quickly while others slowly. Some are mellow and stable in temperament while others are irritable and reckless. Some have been well disciplined at home while others are completely out of control. With such variances in their backgrounds, resources, and endowments, it would in fact be a tall order for school authorities and teachers to effectively educate their students in the same manners. Therefore, teachers in ancient times advocated "teaching in accordance with students'

aptitudes”, which means that teachers tailor their teaching according to each student’s unique personality and talent.

In order to “teach in accordance with students’ aptitudes”, teachers must acquire wisdom and teaching techniques in addition to love and patience. Skillful teachers know how they can comport themselves with authority. They are able to control their classes and inspire recalcitrant students to strive for the better. Teachers who are less skillful or less experienced often find themselves incapable of moving students toward their educational goals. After a while, if they do not find a way to improve their techniques, they become easily frustrated, either with themselves or with students.

Instilling the correct view of life

In middle and primary schools these days, there are on average a couple dozen students in each class, with one class preceptor responsible for all of them. Needless to say, class preceptors have huge responsibilities and are very stressful. In fact, even specialists in each subject have great responsibilities as well. From the perspective of a religious teacher, I suggest that teachers incorporate the correct view of life into their teaching. That is, besides transmitting knowledge and career

skills, I suggest that they find unobtrusive ways to help mold students' character. Mutual assistance and cooperation amongst students are also very important. We must not neglect the power of peer influence. It is largely peer influence that can pull delinquent students back on track. Peer influence is thus a valuable component of school ethics.

Enhancing communication and cooperation

That being said, parents are even more responsible than teachers for their children's education. All children, regardless of the intellect they are endowed with, can be educated as long as parents pay attention to their family education so that children are emotionally stable and mentally healthy. Without a good family education, children will turn out to be wayward and recalcitrant at school. Then teachers will have to take more care of these troublemakers in order to make up for their lack of family education.

There are many kinds of problems on campus these days, such as opposition and confrontation between teachers and students, conflicts between parents and teachers, scandals of sexual molestation, incidents of older students bullying younger ones, drug abuse, etc. The multitude of problems is shocking.

It further indicates that neither the teachers nor the students nor the parents recognize clearly their own roles and duties.

Students' duty is to learn and receive education. Teachers' duty is to transmit knowledge and skills, as well as to help students develop a healthy and sanguine character. Parents' duty is to support and back up the normative educational system. These days, however, students' rights are held supreme. Teachers cannot punish them even if they have done wrong; otherwise teachers may incur charges from students or parents, which draws much attention from the public. If the public opinion is reproachful, teachers may be disciplined and receive demerits on their educational record. If the public voice is full of condemnation, teachers may even lose their jobs.

Normal, healthy ethical relationships on campus require all three parties of students, teachers, and parents to fulfill their respective duties, respect one another, and communicate with each other more often. Only then can the endless stream of problems on campus be reduced, restoring the school to its normal function of nurturing our future leaders and achievers in the society.

Laying down ordinance to protect the right

In today's society, it is important to respect and protect individual human rights, including students' right to privacy. However, the extent and scope of right-protection should be opened up for discussion. For instance, do teachers have the right to look into students' bags if they suspect that the students are carrying drugs? From the point of view of protecting individual human rights, teachers should not be allowed access to students' personal belongings without their consent. From the point of view of guarding campus safety, however, aren't teachers failing to fulfill their duties if they suspect certain students carrying drugs but do not take any measure to prevent students from destroying their own lives with drugs?

Take suffrage for an example, according to our Constitution, people do not have the right to vote until they are twenty years old. That is because one of the basic requirements for citizenship is the mental maturity of thinking independently before making judgments, and on average, people reach that level of mental maturity at around twenty. Therefore, parents are the legal guardians of their children before they reach twenty and are granted citizenship. In other words, parents

have the right and responsibility to protect and educate their children before they are legally grown up. Should there be a similar set of principles applied to the relationship between students and teachers?

Many teachers complain that nowadays they are completely powerless with regard to recalcitrant students. No matter how disruptive and disorderly students are, they cannot do anything, not even applying a light punishment. Sometimes making students stand still as a punishment will incur public denouncement, so teachers have no choice but giving up on disciplining students and focusing only on completing the prescribed academic schedule. This is very sad. Another situation is that recalcitrant students are asked to transfer or to drop out of school since they can neither be punished nor be educated. That also poses a big problem.

In my view, there should be ordinances concerning all of the problems on campus right now, such as teacher-student conflicts, corporal punishments, sexual molestations, and drug abuse. Moreover, teachers, parents, and students all need to work together and make efforts before any improvement can be made.

Environmental Ethics

Concept

Environmental ethics, the ethical principles concerning the protection of the natural environment, was not part of traditional Confucian ethics. The literati of China was a humanistic tradition; its central concern is humans, and the Five Relationships it stipulated focused on interpersonal relationships. From a Buddhist perspective, however, “all phenomena are created by the mind.” Everything in the universe, including the spiritual and physical activities of humans, is interconnected with the mind. Thus, the coexistence of humans and nature is a “phenomenon” as much as the interaction between humans is. As a matter of fact, we human beings are more closely dependent on nature than we are on each other. Everything in the world, including human beings, depends on nature for sustenance. Whether we live in groups or in isolation, we cannot live apart from nature.

The central concern of environmental ethics is the ecosystem, which includes animate and inanimate resources in our environment. Although inanimate resources such as

minerals, petroleum, coal, and other deposits do not have life, they are essential for the sustenance of the whole ecosystem. Therefore, environmental ethics involves not only protecting animate beings directly but also, indirectly, maintaining the balance and sustainability of various natural resources. All things in nature—a blade of grass, a tree, or even a rock—are relevant to the existence of human lives. We should cherish and protect them in addition to making use of them.

Nature is the grand body of all humankind

Many know that the Earth is warming up, but few really take it seriously, let alone searching for ways of improvement. If we human beings persist in our old way and remain unconcerned about the destruction that we wrought on Earth, how much longer can Earth last? We have had a long history of more than five thousand years. Will we have another five thousand years?

Every breath we take, every drop of water we drink, and every bite of food we eat—all comes from nature. We are dependent on nature at every moment of our lives, whether we are awake or asleep, moving or retiring. Nature is practically the grand body of all humankind. We have the

responsibility of taking good care of this body for as long as we live in it. We should make sure that this body is healthy and long living so that our future generations will enjoy the same living environment and natural resources on Earth as we do now.

Unfortunately, that is the opposite of what we have done. We humans are highly intelligent beings who have exhausted all means to conquer nature, particularly since the second half of the twentieth century when we entered the hi-tech era. Under the pretext of “utilizing resources” and “developing the economy”, we exploit nature with all kinds of machinery and technology. However, most of the “developments” have wreaked havocs on Earth and caused severe damages to the oceans, mountains, forests, and fields of mineral deposits. Such doings on our part are not conducive to the health and longevity of Earth and make it impossible for us to promise future generations a beautiful natural environment. The root cause of such destructive behaviors is our indifference to nature and our lack of sense of responsibility towards Earth.

Many reports indicate that, due to the green house effect, many ecosystems on Earth have experienced the most drastic

changes in history. For example, high mountains are losing their year-round snowcaps because the snow is melting at a much faster rate than the snow falls. Some ski resorts used to be open in the summer, but now they have enough accumulation for skiing only in the winter. We may never see people skiing in the spring or summer again. Icebergs are disappearing, too. Several winters ago, I was leading a meditation retreat on the top of a snow-capped mountain in Switzerland. The locals told me that the glacier seen not far away had been melting rapidly in the past several years. In less than ten years, it had receded two meters, and it was receding faster and faster each year. That is quite worrisome.

Cherish our one and only Earth

People are increasingly aware that we have only one Earth and we have to save it from destruction. Some may think that felling one tree or leveling one hill or hunting a few protected animals will not lead to the destruction of Earth, but that is very shortsighted. Nature is our home; we human beings depend on it for everything we need for living. Therefore, any act of destruction or over consumption is virtually an act against humanity, for it is depleting the resources that are commonly shared by people of our generation and future

generations. Still worse is the degradation of the natural environment, which will cast a great impact on our health; therefore, safety and protection of our lives are getting more and more fragile.

Nature does not speak up and protest against our abuse. Still, we should ask ourselves not to waste any goods or resources, whether acquired at a price or given for free. Every one of us should care for our environment, starting with refraining ourselves from destructive or wasteful behaviors, and further dedicating ourselves to protect and improve our environment so that the Earth will survive and we will be more secure in our living space. The environmental ethics that we advocate is precisely this kind of caring and dedication to our natural resources and environment. We hope everyone would take seriously the fact that our behaviors have changed the natural environment, and so we should constantly remind ourselves of the importance of protecting our precious natural resources. That is why we advocate environmental ethics.

Implementations

Less lumbering and more planting

I think that we should plant trees instead of chopping them down. When the Dharma Drum Mountain complex was under construction, we carried out a special project of tree relocation to preserve the indigenous trees and plants. We temporarily transplanted the trees from the construction site to a designated area, and then after the completion of construction transplanted them back to where they had been before. The whole project took two years.

China, under the regime of Mao Zedong, initiated a policy of acquiring farmlands through felling multitudes of trees. They would even deforest mountain woodlands for that purpose. They have now modified the policy and started reforestation in the Northeast and Northwest regions of Mainland China. The trees are growing very slowly due to the lack of rainfalls, but it is a good start. As for Taiwan, it is said that the Bureau of Forestry maintains the forests by zoning, planting trees in some zones and felling in other zones.

The paper pulp produced from Canadian trees may be well known, but what is less known is the considerable amount of trees that Canadians have planted every year. In Europe, tree planting always complements tree lumbering. In fact, saplings have to be planted and given time to grow before other grown trees can be chopped down, ensuring that the overall environmental balance is maintained. Taiwan should emulate such worthy examples and make plans to plant trees before felling trees.

Beautify our environment

There have been quite a few pieces of land overgrown with weeds in the Dharma Drum Mountain complex. After taking care of it with thorough cleaning up and panoramic landscaping, we have transformed the whole complex into a park that is pleasing to the eyes, with trails flanked by lush vegetation and blossoming flowers in all seasons. We are rendering our care for nature by tidying and beautifying our environment, so whoever visit the complex will experience the peace and tranquility permeating in the environment and in every step they take they are holding a conversation with nature.

Once I was leading a Chan retreat at a Dharma center in the United States, and some retreatants were assigned the task of pulling weeds during the working meditation period. After the retreat, one of them came to ask me, “Master, you said that every thing on Earth plays a role and has a mission. These weeds are also lives, and that means they have their own mission. So, why do we pull them out?” He was not off the mark. However, Dharma centers, different from the wilderness, serve different functions, and in a Dharma center we take care of the land by tidying up and beautifying it. Not only are we tidying and beautifying the environment by pulling the weeds, we are also enhancing the growth of higher-level vegetation, such as trees, that are conducive to green environment and clean air. People can make their contribution by planting trees in their yards, or having potted plants on their balconies.

In sum, in our coexistence with nature, not only should we avoid any act of destruction, but we should also cultivate and beautify the environment, the latter being the active implementation of environmental ethics. Moreover, we should cherish all kinds of natural resources in our daily life, particularly realizing the fact that they are not inexhaustible.

Conserve water resources

At the time when I just moved to southern Taiwan, it was common to see peasants drill a small hole on the ground and groundwater would just gush out. Groundwater was one convenient means for irrigating the farms. However, decades of overuse have drained the source and groundwater is no longer abundantly available. The government is now taking measures to protect the groundwater resource: drilling for new wells is restricted, while more and more old wells are sealed.

Few people realize that Taiwan has very limited water resources. Aside from groundwater, we have only seawater and rainwater. Seawater is not usable without desalination. Rainwater needs to be collected and stored with reservoirs, but most of the terrain in Taiwan is not suitable for the construction of dams or reservoirs. The population of Taiwan is 23 millions and growing, which means the already limited water resources will seem to be more inadequate in the future. Hawaii is also an island with limited water resources. To maintain effectively the supply of usable water, their government restricts the growth of population. If we Taiwanese do

not learn to cherish our water resources, if we still use water without any moderation, perhaps our government will also have to resort to the restriction of population growth in order to deal with the problem of lacking usable water. Or perhaps people will just have to emigrate.

Water and soil conservation

The undulation of the terrain of Taiwan used to support plenty beautiful forests in the mountains, which are no longer a commonplace now. For many years, the government encouraged farmers to take advantage of the high altitude and grow vegetables and fruits that were originally found only in cold climates. That was a well-intended policy; farmers' quality of life has been improved. However, years of cultivation on the mountainsides have resulted in deforestation and destruction. The depletion of forests has negatively affected the conservation of water and soil, so when torrential rain comes, it often turns into disasters. In addition, the fertilizers that farmers use in their cultivation have contaminated the soil, which is then brought down by rainfall and contaminating the water sources of people living downstream. That is another big problem.

This is a grave matter. We must seek to improve the situation before the solidity of mountain soil is so compromised that disasters are unavoidable. Mudslides rarely occurred in Taiwan in the past. But now, whenever the season of torrential rain comes, people living in the mountainous areas are worried about mudslides. Why is that? It is because forests in the mountains that used to hold soil are over-exploited, and so now the soil is too loose to withstand torrential rains. Mudslide occurs when the soil slides down with rain in the form of mud. Some people describe it as the attack from the earth, which I think is the consequence resulted from our own destructive behaviors that have caused great damage to nature. The Earth is as kind as a mother who puts up with all the willful behaviors of her children. And yet we human beings just take whatever we want, exploiting, destroying, and polluting nature in whichever way we can. Now we have pushed nature beyond her limits and caused disasters, yet we still try to put the blame on nature by describing the disasters as the attack from the Earth, which is a very irresponsible remark. Moreover, there are irresponsible and selfish businessmen who break the law by quarrying the sand and pebbles from rivers, leading to changing the shape of the rivers and breaking the natural balance therein.

Lead by examples

Based on the above, I maintain that each and every one of us has the duty to protect nature; it is not just a matter concerning a few scholars for conducting research. Rather, we need to take their research as a reminder that every one of us should conscientiously protect nature, with which our lives are closely related and depending on.

Some may ask, “How is it possible for a nobody like me to protect nature?” It is true that ordinary people do not even have the power to exploit nature, let alone causing destruction to natural resources like oceans, air, forests, and land. They may have at most wasted some paper and gasoline or produced more garbage in their daily lives than they should have, but that is no comparison to the destruction wrought by people with power, wealth, political cliques, equipped with large machinery, and who have exploited forests, destroyed rivers, and polluted nature.

In my opinion, though, it is crucial that we start with what we can do individually. We ordinary people may not be able to put a stop to the large-scale ecological destruction

wrought by big corporations and big countries, but we should not be too discouraged. We can still do our part as individuals and protect the environment by not supporting those big corporations and countries, and by not wasting natural resources.

The implementation of environmental ethics starts with ourselves. Besides refraining from over-consumption and any other kind of behavior that may be destructive to the natural environment, we should further protect and cherish our limited natural resources. At the same time, we should also try to exert our own influence and let people around us know the importance of environmental protection, so that we would all do our best to fulfill the duty of protecting the grand body in which we dwell.

Workplace Ethics

Concept

About twenty years ago, the former Minister of Finance Kuo-Ting Li proposed the concept of the “Ethic of Person-in-Community”, exploring the proper relationship between an individual and his or her community. He proposed such a concept to supplement the traditional “Five Relationships”. Drawing much response as it did, this concept can cover a wide range of situations and is not clearly defined. “Workplace Ethics”, one of the Six Ethics of the Mind promoted by the Dharma Drum Mountain, deals more specifically with the relationship between person and community in a workplace.

Beneficial interaction: the foundation of workplace ethics

Workplace ethics covers a wide range of situations. Any interpersonal relationship developed on account of jobs, whether a job in the government, in a private enterprise, or in a non-profit organization, is included in workplace ethics.

In the agricultural societies of the past, an individual or a family managed most of the work, such as tailoring, carpentry, and grooming. There was no such concept as workplace ethics because there were not many workplaces to be found. The situations were not very different in pastoral countries such as England or Switzerland. Usually a pasture involved simply a family herding several dozen cattle or sheep on a hillside. On occasions an individual ran a pasture. Such pastures were not “workplaces” either, even though they took up vast pieces of land. I once visited a Canadian farm of a couple dozen acres, and yet all the work, from plowing, sowing to harvesting, was done by one single machinery-operating individual. Such a place, needless to say, cannot be called a workplace.

Workplace is a product of modern society. Population has greatly concentrated in metropolises since the twentieth century, and countries have been increasingly urbanized. Workplaces have been gradually formed along the lasting trend of urbanization and population concentration. As corporations replace family-owned businesses, everything related to production, such as production, organizations, work sites, and engaging, are all changed.

Charities used to involve mostly private endeavors, too. A few persons might get together to build bridges, pave roads, or serve food and medicine to the needy, but that was far from a charitable organization. The establishment of non-profit organizations nowadays allows willing people to work together for the welfare of the public. Non-profit organizations are thus workplaces as well. Management and workplace ethics are as important for non-profit organizations as for private enterprises. Unfortunately, some non-profit organizations are not very well managed and half of the painstakingly collected donations are spent on personnel expenses. Less than a half of the donations is spent on their respective causes. It is very unfortunate.

Implementations

Seeking to benefit each other, repaying and contributing to the community

Regardless of the size of the workplace, most of the relationships in a workplace are those between investors, workers, and clients and customers. Investors hire employees to produce good products and services for customers and

clients. A workplace has perhaps more than one investor and multiple workers, seeking to serve as many customers and clients as possible. Workplace ethics deals with the interrelations among these three groups of people.

The first group, the capitalists and investors, consists of people who engage in production by investing capitals and deploying their interpersonal, business, and international connections. They need the second group, the workers, to execute their plans. Some of the workers are hired to perform physical labor, while others are hired for their brainpower. Nowadays, much work is done through computers and the Internet, and not many jobs still entail physical labor.

If identifying with a sound workplace ethic, both parties would conscientiously carry out their jobs so that they can make profits for themselves while paying back to society by providing the general public with the best products they have to offer. As such, they are benefiting all three groups and making contributions to society as a whole.

Serving society by fulfilling one's duties

That is, whether in a small business or a big business, or

even a transnational corporation, everyone should uphold a good workplace ethic by fulfilling one's duties and devoting one's resources and talents to the community and the whole society. Some employers, however, think only of profits and exploit their employees, and some employees only care about salaries, either wasting time at work or swindling customers on transactions. All such behaviors indicate the lack of a workplace ethic. Conducting business in such a way may be profitable for a while, but in the long run it will result in more problems, which cannot be compensated by the profits it brings about.

Protecting each other's interests as a community

In workplace ethics, the social relations between investors, workers, and clients and customers make them a community in which members need to watch out for one another rather than guarding one's own interests only. A good work ethic is an ethic that stresses mutual care and collaboration. Different departments in a workplace should supply each other's needs, support each other, and coordinate with each other. The communication between the managerial level and average workers should also be kept open. Otherwise, workers would not do their best. Some may even minutely calculate the effort

they put in and compensation they receive, thinking that they are not equally compensated.

Besides fulfilling duties and responsibilities, a person with a good workplace ethic values mutual assistance and cheerful collaboration. Work will get done smoothly and pleasantly if everyone in a workplace selflessly devotes himself or herself to his or her duties. Contrarily, if everyone fusses about his or her workload, attacks each other, or criticizes each other, then the efforts they put in would disperse or counteract one another's, and the aggregate whole would be much smaller than its parts. When that happens, the more departments exist in a company, the less united the workers become. And the longer the employees stay, the more miserable they feel.

Valuing morality and integrity

Although they may have formidable abilities, some people lack moral character and have no concept of workplace ethics. Such people are generally unpopular and contribute little to either their companies or societies as a whole. Employees who do not value workplace ethics find it difficult to hold down a steady job, as they start to disrupt working relation-

ships as soon as they arrive at a new place of work. For this reason, they are unable to stay for long in any job. If this happens to you, you need to see for yourself where the problem lies in order to be able to solve it. By contrast, some people are able to transform the environment as soon as they arrive at a new company or department, bringing about a major improvement in morale at work.

I wish every one of you would be a positive influence to your workplace. When the atmosphere of your workplace has become warm and harmonious due to your efforts, and when all of your coworkers can feel the positive influences you have brought along with, you are then a bodhisattva who benefits others as well as yourself.

Ethics between Ethnic Groups

Concept

“Ethics between Ethnic Groups” contains primarily the respect and accommodation for people of different groups, cultures, languages, customs, religions and so on.

A group can be of any size. Large groups are generally formed because of races, religions, and geographical areas. It is quite natural for people to form groups. The formation of groups is found everywhere in the natural world. Birds in the sky and lions and tigers in the wilderness all have their own territories. A single group often occupies a territory and no outside group is allowed. Even birds of the same species in the same area may fight with one another over turfs.

The Dharma Drum Mountain has a meditation center in upstate New York, called the Dharma Drum Retreat Center. One may find traces of deer there all year round. Deer of different groups coexist and do not bother each other, but they do not appear in the same location, either. One group would not get close to a spot already occupied by another

group. Various groups naturally emerge in such a fashion.

The largest human groups are formed by race, religion, and culture. Within each group smaller groups can be found, such as groups of women, entrepreneurs, academics, artists, veterans, and politicians. Within each of these groups there are even smaller groups. In a political party, for example, there are different factions. With its own ideology, reasoning, and approach, each faction is also a group. Several individuals may form a small group; several small groups may be integrated into a medium-sized group; and several medium-sized groups may form an alliance and make a large group. Conversely, a large group may contain several medium-sized groups, and a medium-sized group may be divided into multiple small groups. It is normal for a society to have these unions and divisions of groups.

Overcoming racial prejudices

Presently, most of the thorny ethnic group conflicts in the world stem from religious and political differences. The contemporary world is a multicultural world. Citizens of a country need to see each other as people of the same group and should not discriminate due to differences in race,

color, or language. However, some people in less developed countries or regions still hold onto their racial prejudices. They will need to overcome such prejudices, or they will be dooming themselves and calling upon themselves the condemnation from the contemporary multicultural world.

Taiwan is a society with multiple groups. Different groups used to coexist peacefully with one another on this land and prosper through collaboration with each other. Recently, however, a few politicians have sought to attract votes by driving a wedge between groups and amplifying group differences. As a result, what used to be a land of harmonious coexistence is now two camps filled with mutual hatred. Even members of the same family may be on the opposite sides of the issue due to group difference and fight with each other. Group difference is not an issue in people's daily life, but those politicians resort to sensationalism whenever election comes, making a mountain out of a molehill. Once the election is over, everything vanishes into thin air again. It is really a terrible election culture. There is in fact no ethnic problem in Taiwan in and of itself.

A rapidly growing group in Taiwan in recent years is the

“new sons of Taiwan”, the children of Taiwanese men and foreign women. Those foreign women, besides adapting to the climate, language, and culture of Taiwan, have to endure some level of discrimination. Life in Taiwan is difficult for them and for their children. How can we discriminate against these people, considering that those foreign women are married to Taiwanese and that their children are born here and will one day be the decision-making citizens of Taiwan? It is a fact that they are a part of Taiwanese society already. Another group that is often discriminated against is those who, due to illness or other reasons, do not live their lives in the same way average people do.

Seeking common ground while preserving and respecting differences

From a historical perspective, the encounter, interaction, and collaboration of different groups often enrich the culture and make it more colorful. Sophisticated civilizations did not happen by accident, and the prerequisite of those cultural advancements was that different groups stopped blind opposition and learned to accommodate each other by seeking common ground while preserving differences. The ethics between ethnic groups is about respecting diversity so that

the characteristic strengths of each group may be fully developed. It is also about being considerate and caring toward minority others, respecting and protecting them. A multicultural society as such is rich in culture and valuable for all those who live in it.

Thus, in the discourse of ethics between ethnic groups, we need to recognize and consider in the context that individual groups are members of a larger society. Therefore, besides the interests of individual groups, we also need to consider the interests, well-being, and peace of the larger society. Only with broad perspective can we hope to lay down the foundation of social harmony and eventually achieve world peace.

Implementations

Instituting protective measures

Groups are formed naturally among humans as well as among animals. The aborigines were the first group of people to settle down in Taiwan. And then there came Fukienese and Hakkas, followed by people from different provinces of

Mainland China. There are many groups in Taiwan, even more if we include the Hollanders, who once ruled Taiwan.

In the early days, there used to be bitter feud between the Hakka settlers and the Fukienese settlers. Inter-marriage was out of the question, and armed conflicts frequently occurred. After a period of adaptation and accommodation, they have broken down the barrier and learned to coexist with each other peacefully. Some have even married one another. Ethnic conflict has not occurred in the last several decades. The aborigines are minorities because they are few in number and inhabit remote regions. They are not excluded, however, in governmental regulations. In fact, the government has looked after them by instituting protective measures. The majority may not necessarily treat aborigines in the exact same way, but at least they are not discriminated or rejected, thanks to governmental regulations. Another example of governmental protection of minority groups is seen in the United States, the big melting pot of peoples from all over the world. Since they are under the protection of the U.S. Constitution, all groups are equal.

Considering oneself a Global Citizen

During the war against Japan, the Nationalist government moved its capital to Chongqing, Sichuan, calling it the “Auxiliary Capital”. At the time, numerous people fled to Chongqing from the regions occupied by the Japanese military. From the viewpoint of the locals in Chongqing, those people from other provinces who arrived all at once were alien groups. When I was a child, I moved from Jiangsu to Shanghai, and people in Shanghai considered me an “other” before I mastered the Shanghai dialect. My accent indicated to them that I was foreign or uneducated.

In 1949, when the Nationalist government moved to Taiwan, many people from different provinces of China followed and thus formed another new group in Taiwan. I was one of them. Now I have been in Taiwan for nearly 60 years and consider myself a Taiwanese. However, many have claimed the term “Taiwanese” for themselves and still think of me as a mainlander. And yet when I visit China these days, mainlanders do not regard me one of them, either. They think I am Taiwanese. Neither side considers me one of them. Where exactly do I belong, then?

I consider myself a “global citizen”. Wherever I go, I belong there; I do not rigidly claim the identity of only one group. I think I am Taiwanese so long as I identify with this land; it does not matter what others say.

Leaving room for each other

A mandarin orange has many asci, and an ascus has many clusters of cells. The mandarin is a group, an ascus is a group, and a cluster of cells is also a group. What is the function of groups? If we look at the natural world, we realize that groups are formed not to fight with one another, but to protect and support each other so that all may prosper and all needs are met. In the natural world, a small group supports the large group to which it belongs, and a large group protects the small groups within itself. They all function for the benefit of the whole.

It should be the same with human society: different groups help, support, accommodate, and protect one another so that society may prosper on account of their coexistence. As such, all groups, no matter how many, are positive influences on society as a whole. No group should be growing at the expense of others or, worse, by crushing others. If all the

asci of a mandarin bitterly fought with one another, would the mandarin even grow to be ripe? All asci must coexist in harmony, supporting and leaving room for one another, before they can together form a full and juicy mandarin.

Establishing a Global Ethic

I have been advocating a “global ethic” in recent years, calling all different groups in the world to come up with a set of behavioral codes by which we can all abide. With a set of globally agreed upon behavioral codes as such, we respect and accommodate one another, and pull all of our strengths together to work for the well-being of the humankind.

We hope that every individual, every race, every religion, and every nation observe such a “global ethic” so that, when dispute or conflict occurs among nations, races, or religions, we may discuss and negotiate a solution based on the common behavioral codes. Otherwise, each of the parties in conflict would stick to its own judgment, citing the sacred scripture of its religion to support its own definition of “justice” and “sacredness”. They may use the same terms, but their interpretations of those terms are different. Thus, different interpretations lead to constant disputes, persistent wars, and

endless killings. It is very sad for the entire humanity.

Therefore, we would like to call upon all peoples, from the smallest group to the global community, to recognize the common foundation of ethics: fulfilling one's duties while devoting oneself to serving, caring for, and accommodating others; collaborating with different others for the prosperity of the whole. This is the basic principle of all types of ethics.

Conclusion: Constructing Pure Land in the Human World with the Six Ethics of the Mind

I would like to urge you all to keep a broad perspective, looking far and wide at the big picture and thinking about the future. This “Six Ethics of the Mind” that I promote is really not just a wave of activities; it is an ongoing movement. The Dharma Drum Mountain is hoping to uplift the ethical conducts, and change the moral image of Taiwan and further to influence the common practices of the Chinese societies around the world. Once we produce some results for others to see, more people will be willing to join us and echo our effort in promoting this type of social change.

Pure land in the human world can be constructed only when the qualities of human beings are raised. In other words, the purification of the human society is predicated on each one of us transforming our own concepts and mentality. Most people nowadays are overly concerned with competition. Competition in and of itself is not a bad thing. From the perspective of the “Six Ethics”, however, every competitor, besides pursuing a comfortable, secure, and promising life for oneself, should also consider the survival of one’s rivals, who

also want a comfort and security in their lives. More importantly, one should consider the structure of the stage on which one competes, lest it collapse as a result of the fierce competition. That is what an ethical person will do. It is immoral to be so engulfed in competition that one disregards the survival of others and the survival of future generations.

Ethics is fundamentally about kindness. It is about being as compassionate as bodhisattvas. One must seek to benefit others in addition to benefiting one's self. In fact, self-interests are most secure when they are obtained on the foundation of the interests of others. If one thinks only of oneself and seeks to benefit one's self at the expense of others, he or she will have a hard time maintaining those self-interests, for others will covet them and scheme to take them away.

The more chaotic the situation, the greater need there is to promote ethical education. I hope that every reader of this book will be a pioneer in applying the "Six Ethics of the Mind" in his or her own way, striving to serve others and make a contribution to society. The best value and, in fact, the true meaning of a happy life, is to seek one's own growth through benefiting others.

Vows of the Six Ethics of the Mind

Family Ethics starts with myself

I vow to fulfill my duties in the family and help other family members to fulfill theirs.

Being helpful, respectful, accommodative, considerate, and non-calculative, I vow to cherish my connections with my family and build a home of harmony, happiness, and warmth.

Daily Life Ethics starts with myself

I vow to enact the power of goodness within me.

Saying good words and doing good deeds each day, I vow to circulate goodness around, thereby beautifying the world.

School Ethics starts with myself

I vow to respect everyone and dedicate myself to the harmony on campus.

Looking on the bright side, I vow to generate good thoughts before dealing with everything, to say good words every day, and to do good deeds for the campus.

May the atmosphere on campus get more and more positive, and may teachers and students grow happily together.

Environmental Ethics starts with myself

I vow to protect Nature and never do anything to destroy it.

I vow to take on the work of environmental protection with all my heart.

May the Earth get more and more beautiful, and may all live happily on it.

Workplace Ethics starts with myself

I vow to share with others and manage interpersonal relationships with good intentions.

I vow to do my best at my job with a strong sense of responsibility.

May the workplace get better and better, and may we all work to enrich our hearts.

Ethics between Ethnic Groups starts with myself

I vow to be open-minded and to care about people of diverse cultures.

I vow to respect and accommodate different groups with all sincerity.

May society get more and more harmonious, and may everyone show more love to this land.

(Translation: Hsiao-Lan Hu and DDM International Translation Office)

Appendix

Dharma Drum Mountain Pocket Guides to Buddhist Wisdom

The books series already published:

E-1 Meeting of Minds

E-2 In the Spirit of Chan

E-3 A General Introduction to the Bodhisattva Precepts

E-4 The Effects of Chan Meditation

E-5 The Meaning of Life

E-6 Why Take Refuge in the Three Jewels?

E-7 The Buddhadharma in Daily Life

E-8 A Happy Family and a Successful Career

E-9 Chan Practice and Faith

E-10 Establishing Global Ethics

E-11 Wu Ming Exposes Ignorance

E-12 The Buddha Mind, Universe, and Awakening

E-13 The Dharma Drum Lineage of Chan Buddhism

E-14 Master Sheng Yen

E-15 The Six Ethics of the Mind

E-16 Living in the 21st Century: A Buddhist View

E-17 Encounters with Master Sheng Yen I

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E-19 Encounters with Master Sheng Yen III

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