

Di Zi Gui

Standards for Being a Good Student and Child

弟子規〔英文版〕

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INTRODUCTION

Many of you will probably wonder what this book is all about? What is in this book that made it so important in ancient China? Can it still be relevant today? If we teach this book today, what can it do for us and what kind of influence will it have on our present society?

Di Zi Gui, in English, means standards for being a good student and child. It is an ancient Chinese book

handed down to us from ancient Chinese saints and sages. The source for the outline of this book was selected from *Analects of Confucius*, Book I, Chapter 6, where Confucius said: “A good student and child must first learn to be dutiful to his parents, and be respectful and loving to his siblings. Next he must be cautious with all people, matters and things in his daily life, and be a trustworthy person. He must believe in the teachings of the ancient saints and sages and put their teachings into practice. Then he must learn to love all

equally and be close to and learn from people of virtue and compassion. *Only* after all the above duties have been accomplished, if he has the time and energy, he should then further study and learn literature and art to improve the quality of his cultural and spiritual life.”

Since the main outline of this book is based on the teachings of Confucius, let us find out who he is. Confucius was a great Chinese scholar, teacher and educator. He was born in China about twenty-five hundred years ago, about the same time that Shakyamuni Buddha was

born in India. Confucius deeply influenced Chinese culture, and this influence extends throughout the world even today. He believed that moral principles, virtues, and discipline should be the very first lessons to be taught to a child, and that a child needs to practice them daily. Unlike modern day parents who disapprove of physical punishment, ancient Chinese parents actually encouraged and thanked the teacher when their children were punished for misbehaving. It was most important to ancient Chinese parents that their

children learned the moral principles and virtues first, before any other subject, because without moral principles and virtues as a foundation, the learning of all other subjects would be futile.

The sequence of ancient Chinese educational system based on the Confucian teachings is as follows: First a child learns the subject on Virtues, after which he studies Language, then Methods in Dealing with People, Matters and Things, and lastly Literature and Art. We need to understand that Confucius and Shakyamuni Buddha shared almost

the same principles and teaching methods. They both taught us that being dutiful to one's parents and being respectful to one's teachers are the basis of a person's good virtues. If we can appreciate the fact that the study of Virtues was a child's first subject in school, then we will realize how important it was for a child to be dutiful to his or her parents at home.

If you ask a student who follows Confucian teachings whether he or she can explain in a short sentence what Confucian teachings are all about, the

student will tell you this: The principles of Confucian teachings make it a person's duty to strive to be fully enlightened, to practice universal love and to be a perfectly good person. This is the summation of Confucian beliefs. For a person to practice universal love, he or she must begin at home, and learn to be a dutiful child and a loving sibling. If you ask a follower of Shakyamuni Buddha whether he or she can explain Buddha's teachings in one sentence, you will get the following reply: Shakyamuni Buddha's forty-nine years of teaching

never deviated from the principle that a person has to be dutiful to his or her parents, and be respectful and be of service to his or her teachers. This person must be all loving and must not kill any living beings. He or she must be a fervent practitioner of the ten good conducts. Therefore, both Confucius and Shakyamuni Buddha shared the same beliefs and felt that following these principles are our only duties here on earth.

The important duties stated in *Analects of Confucius* were used as

chapters in this book. Altogether there are seven chapters, with each chapter listing one duty. They are presented in sequence according to the ancient Chinese educational system. The original text written in classical Chinese, is in the form of verses that can be easily recited and memorized by young Chinese students.

The contents of this book were actually compiled and edited over a period stretching thousand of years; it contains the recommended standards of being a good student and child. The

outline starts out by telling us that those standards were taught by Confucius, Mencius and all the past Chinese saints and sages. They all agreed that those duties are the very basic disciplines a child should learn and practice every day while still young. Even though they seem stringent by today's standards, it is apparent that the people of that time felt it was important that the child should be well disciplined, and taught moral principles and virtues at an early age. They felt that without strict discipline and moral standards, a child would amount to

nothing. Without knowing what it meant to be dutiful to one's parents and respectful to one's teachers, a child would grow up not listening to or respecting anyone. Such a child would become a person without virtues. At that time, "a person without virtue" was not qualified to serve in the imperial court, thereby depriving that person the opportunity to serve his country and his people.

Ironically today, the educational system is just the opposite. Many parents listen to the child instead of the

other way around. Additionally, teachers are afraid to teach and discipline children because they are fearful of violating the children's legal rights, or even being sued by the parents. Currently, we live in a world where the relationships between people, between people and their environment, between parents and children, between husbands and wives, and between employers and employees are disintegrating. Parents no longer act like parents. Children do not act like children. Without proper education our minds become polluted and our family

system disintegrates, as evidenced by an ever-increasing divorce rate. Soon planet Earth will no longer be fit for us to live on. Many of us are fearful for our futures and the futures of our children. We hope that by reintroducing this book, it will provide guidance for parents and children. In this way, future generations will benefit from it, and our world and society at large will be more at peace, and we will all have a better place to live.

As mentioned before, Confucius said: “A good student and child must first learn to be dutiful to his parents, and also

be respectful and loving to his siblings.” In accord with the ancient Chinese educational system, this book starts by teaching us how to be a good dutiful child when we are at home, and how to be a respectful and loving sibling when we are away from home, including how to be respectful to our elders. Therefore, these two duties are the headings for the first two chapters. The first chapter is on “Xiao,” which is a Chinese word that means being dutiful to one’s parents. All the ancient saints and sages thought “Xiao” was the most important duty in a

person's life. This chapter teaches children the proper conduct on how to talk to and behave in front of parents, and what their correct attitudes and manners should be.

The second chapter states the principle and standard of conduct for the younger sibling towards the older sibling when the younger siblings are away from home. In Chinese, the word "Ti," which means sincere fraternal love, describes the love between siblings. In Buddhism, its meaning extends further to include conduct towards all persons who are

older and as the same generation as ourselves. This chapter then further expands this concept towards our elders. It teaches us how to show respect to the elders and what our correct attitudes and manners should be.

Even though in this book there is no separate chapter on the standard of conduct towards our teachers, it is understood that all the principles and standards taught in this book should also be applied to our teachers.

The third chapter teaches us how

we should be cautious in whatever we do daily, whether we are interacting with people, matters or things. The fourth chapter teaches us how to be a trustworthy person. It teaches us that we need to be cautious in the language we use, in our behavior, and in our thoughts. We must also believe in the teachings of the saints and sages. A saint is a person who truly and thoroughly understands the facts about life, and about this universe. In China we call them saints. In India, people call them Buddhas. In Western culture people call him God.

Actually we are all talking about the same thing. All their teachings come from hearts that were true and pure. They have all seen the truth and this truth will never change with time. Therefore, no matter who they are as long as they are saints, Buddhas or God, they speak the same truth and if it is the truth, then their messages are the same.

The fifth chapter tells us that a person must love all equally. The love it talks about is universal love, not worldly love. It teaches us that as human beings we should have compassion for all

people. To be a person of compassion, we must first start by being filial children: respecting our parents and by loving our siblings. Then we should learn how to expand this love and respect to include all who are parents and siblings. Eventually we will learn to love all people equally.

The sixth chapter teaches us to be close to and learn from people of virtue and compassion. There is an old Chinese saying that a person with virtue and compassion has no enemies. “Xiao” and “Ti” have been the very

foundation of Chinese culture for five thousand years. Those two qualities separate a person from an animal. “Xiao” and “Ti” are the minimum requirements for being a human, while compassion and virtue are the highest standards set by Confucius for being a human. For us to reach the highest standards, we must first fulfill our duties to our parents. But where can we find these people who are truly compassionate and virtuous so that we can be close to them and learn from them? The world today is in great turmoil.

It would be a difficult task if not impossible to find even one person. If we cannot find that person, the next best thing is to follow the teachings of saints and sages from the past and learn from them. If we belong to a religious group, we can always follow the teachings of our religion. We can select from any one of the groups just mentioned and just follow the respective teachings to be our guide in this life.

The seventh chapter tells us that after we have accomplished all the above duties, we should further study

literature and art to improve our cultural and spiritual life. Confucius set a standard for us as to what kind of books we should read and what kind of books we should avoid. The kind of books we should read has to have a positive effect on us. Any book that causes a negative impact should always be avoided. Confucius expected everyone of his students to be a balanced person, whose inner qualities, like a person's virtues and integrity, had to match that of outside, which were developed from the study of literature and art. Only then will this

person become a truly refined person, with integrity and a noble character.

According to Shakyamuni Buddha, we are currently living in the Dharma Ending Age. In this period, people will be constantly fighting each other. Today, endless conflicts are taking place everyday. Our current society is the result of our educational system, which has already been proven to be a great failure. The educational system of today only promotes teachings that lead our young people to a world of competition, which will eventually turn them into

hell-beings, hungry ghosts and animals. When we lose our moral standards, and search instead for money and fame, we leave the world of humans and heavenly beings, and degenerate into a lower form of being. Therefore, education that is based on moral principles is extremely important for our world today. This is the only way we can help our young discover their true self-nature, which is supposed to be all knowing and virtuous. All the ancient saints and sages recommended that the first step we must take is to start communicating and working with family

members at home. That is why both Confucius and Shakyamuni Buddha said: “Our virtues are based and build on the foundation of being dutiful children to our parents.” This book, *Di Zi Gui*, helps our children put the teachings of the ancient saints and sages into actual practice, and that is why this book is so important for our educational system today. It is definitely still relevant today, actually even more so.

Finally we must add a note here to help us understand these standards. Those standards were used in ancient

China, at a time when the society was centered on the male, and when only the male child was allowed to enter a school. Therefore, all the pronouns used in the translation are of the male gender. For today's society, it applies to all children, both male and female.

Di Zi Gui
Standards for Being
a Good Student and Child

OUTLINE

“Standards for Being
a Good Student and Child”¹
was taught by Chinese saints and sages
of the ancient past.

¹ Selected from *Analects of Confucius*, Book I, Chapter 6. It was taught by Confucius, Mencius, and other Chinese saints and sages of the ancient past.

First, it teaches you
how to be dutiful to your parents,
and how to be respectful
and loving to your siblings.²

² “*Xiao*” and “*Ti*” have been the very foundation of Chinese culture for five thousand years. *Xiao* “孝” means to be dutiful to one’s parents with affection, and to understand the basic relationship of grandparents, parents and self. In ideogram form, *xiao* has two components – the top part of *xiao* is the top portion of the word *elder* “老” and the bottom part is the word *son* “子.” Combined, it implies that the older generation and the younger generation are one: that there should be no gap between

Then it teaches you how to be
cautious with all people, matters,
and things in your daily life,
and how to be a trustworthy person,

them. In Buddhism, the meaning is further extended. Outside the family, the child should treat every male and female of the parents' generation as if they were the child's own father and mother. *Ti* “悌” means sincere fraternal love. Here it is used more as the principle and standard of conduct of the younger brother towards his older brother when the younger brother is away from home. In Buddhism, its meaning also extends further to include conduct towards all older persons of any one generation.

and to believe in the teachings
of the ancient saints and sages.³

Furthermore, it teaches you
to love all equally,
and to be close to and learn from people
of virtue and compassion.

When you have accomplished
all the above duties,

³ “To believe in the teachings of the ancient saints and sages” means to actually practice and put the teachings of the ancient saints and sages into effect.

you can study further
and learn literature and art
to improve the quality
of your cultural and spiritual life.

Chapter 1: At Home, Be Dutiful to Your Parents

When your parents call you,
answer them right away.

When they command you
to do something, do it quickly.

When your parents instruct you,
listen respectfully.

When your parents reproach you,
obey and accept their scolding;
try hard to change and improve yourself
and start anew.

In the winter, keep your parents warm;
in the summer, keep your parents cool.

Greet them in the morning
to show them that you care.

At night be sure that they rest well.

Before going out, tell your parents
where you are going,
for parents are always concerned
about their children.

After returning home,
go and see your parents
to let them know you are back,
so they do not worry about you.
Have a permanent place to stay

and lead a routine life.
Persist in whatever you do
and do not change your aspirations
at will.

Although a matter
may be considered trivial,
but if it is wrong to do it
or unfair to the other person,
do not do it thinking it will bear little
or no consequence.⁴

⁴ For example, in Buddhism, it is considered breaking the precept of not stealing if you borrow a piece of paper or take someone's pen without

If you do, you are not being a dutiful child
because parents do not want to see
their child doing things
that are irrational or illegal.
Even though an object may be small,
do not hoard it.
If you do,
your parents will be heartbroken.⁵

permission. It is considered breaking the precept of not killing if you kill an ant or mosquito. If you lie or talk about someone behind his back, you have broken the precept of not lying, etc.

⁵ Your parents will be saddened by your actions, because if their child behaves in such a way when he is still young, then he will probably twist the law

If whatever pleases your parents
is fair and reasonable,
try your best to get it for them.⁶
Should something displease
your parents, if within reason,⁷
cautiously keep it away from them.
When your body is hurt,

in order to obtain bribes and be a curse to his country and his people when he grows up.

⁶ If what pleases your parents is illegitimate or unreasonable, you should tactfully dissuade your parents, and tell them the reasons why they should not have it.

⁷ You should lead your parents to proper views and understanding of things.

your parents will be worried.
If your virtues⁸ are compromised,
your parents will feel ashamed.
When you have loving parents,
it is not difficult to be a dutiful child.

⁸ Virtues are standards and principles of one's conduct. In China a man's conduct is ruled by "*Wu Chang*" 五常 and "*Ba De*" 八德. "*Wu Chang*" are the five moral principles: kindheartedness 仁, personal loyalty 義, proper etiquette 禮, wisdom 智, and trustworthiness 信. "*Ba De*" are the eight virtues: duty to parents 孝, respect for elders 悌, loyalty 忠, credibility 信, proper etiquette 禮, personal loyalty 義, a sense of honor 廉, and a sense of shame 恥.

But if you are still dutiful to parents
who hate you,
only then will it meet the standards
of the saints and sages
for being a dutiful child.

When your parents do wrong,
urge them to change.
Do it with a kind facial expression
and a warm gentle voice.
If they do not accept your advice,
wait until they are in a happier mood
before you dissuade them again,
followed by crying

to make them understand why.
If they end up whipping you⁹
do not hold a grudge against them.

When your parents are ill,
taste the medicine first
before giving it to them.¹⁰

⁹ In ancient China, when a child did not obey the parents, the parents were allowed to discipline the child. If a child refused to be disciplined, the parents had the right to ask the authorities to have the child executed.

¹⁰ Chinese people take herbal medicine prescribed by Chinese doctors. Herbs are boiled with water to make a liquid medicine. Before giving such

Take care of them night and day;
do not leave their bedside.
During the first three years of mourning
after they passed away,
remember them with gratitude
and feel sad often
for not being able to repay them
for their kindness in raising you.
During this period
you should arrange your home
to reflect your grief and sorrow.

medicine to one's parents, a child should taste it
first to make sure it is not too hot or too bitter.

Avoid festivities and indulgence in food and
alcoholic drinks.

Observe the proper etiquette¹¹
in arranging their funerals.

Hold the memorial ceremony
and commemorate their anniversaries
with your utmost sincerity.

Serve your departed parents
as if they were still alive.¹²

¹¹ In ancient China, etiquette for funerals was set
by the emperor.

¹² When our parents were alive, we should have
treated them with our love and respect. After they
pass away, we should arrange their funerals with

our deepest sorrow. For all the subsequent commemorations and anniversaries held, we should show our love and respect as if they were still alive.

Chapter 2: Standards for a Younger Brother When Away from Home

Older siblings should befriend
the younger ones,
younger siblings should respect and love the
older ones.

Siblings who keep
harmonious relationships
among themselves are being dutiful
to their parents.¹³

¹³ Parents are happy when their children get along with each other. This is one way children can show

When siblings value their ties
more than property and belongings,
no resentment will grow among them.
When siblings are careful with words
and hold back hurtful comments,
feelings of anger naturally die out.

Whether you are drinking, eating, walking, or
sitting,
let the elders go first;
younger ones should follow.
When an elder is asking for someone,

they are dutiful to their parents.

get that person for him right away.
If you cannot find that person, immediately
report back,
and put yourself
at the elder's service instead.

When you address an elder,
do not call him by his given name.¹⁴

¹⁴ In ancient China, a male person had at least two names. The first name was the “given name,” which was given to him by his parents when he was born. A second name was given to him by his friends when he reached the age of 20, at a “Ceremony of the Hat” given in his honor to announce his coming of age. After that only his parents called him by

This is in accord
with ancient Chinese etiquette.
In front of an elder, do not show off.
If you meet an elder you know
on the street,
promptly clasp your hands
and greet him with a bow.
If he does not speak to you,
step back and respectfully stand aside.

his “given name.” Everyone else, out of respect, including the emperor, could only call him by his second name. The only exception was if he committed a crime. During sentencing, he would be called by his “given name.”

Should you be riding on a horse
and you spot
an elder you know walking,¹⁵
you should dismount
and pay respect to the elder.
If you are riding in a carriage¹⁶,
you should stop,
get out of the carriage,
and ask if you can give him a ride.
If you meet an elder passing by,
you should stand aside

¹⁵ In ancient China, most people used horses or carriages as their means of transportation.

¹⁶ See footnote 14.

and wait respectfully;
do not leave
until you can no longer see him.

When an elder is standing, do not sit.

After an elder sits down,
sit only when you are told to do so.

Before an elder, speak softly.

But if your voice is too low
and hard to hear,
it is not appropriate.

When meeting an elder,
walk briskly towards him;
when leaving, do not exit in haste.

When answering a question,
Look at the person
who is asking you the question.

Serve your uncles
as if you are serving your parents;¹⁷
Treat your cousins
as if they are your own siblings.¹⁸

¹⁷ See footnote 2.

¹⁸ See footnote 2.

Chapter 3: Be Cautious in Your Daily Life

Get up in the morning
before your parents;
at night, go to bed
only after they have gone to sleep.

When you realize
that time is passing you by
and cannot be turned back,
and that you are getting older
year by year,
you will especially treasure

the present moment.¹⁹

When you get up in the morning,
wash your face and brush your teeth.

After using the toilet,
always wash your hands.

You must wear your hat straight,²⁰
and make sure the hooks²¹

¹⁹ There is an old Chinese proverb: “A unit of time is as precious as a unit of gold, but you cannot buy back one unit of time with one unit of gold.” It means that time is really very precious, as no amount of money can buy time.

²⁰ In ancient China, when a male wore a hat, it meant he had passed the age of becoming an adult.

of your clothes are tied.
Make sure socks and shoes
are worn neatly and correctly.
Place your hat and clothes away
in their proper places.
Do not carelessly throw
your clothes around,
for that will get them dirty.

It is more important
that your clothes are clean,

²¹ In ancient China, in place of buttons, people used hooks. When dressed, hooks had to be tied.

rather than how extravagant they are.

When with an elder
or people of importance,
wear what is suitable for your station.

At home, wear clothes
according to your family traditions
and customs.

When it comes to eating and drinking,
do not pick and choose your food.

Eat only the right amount;
do not over eat.

You are still too young,
do not drink alcohol.

When you are drunk,

your behavior will turn ugly.

Walk composed,
with light and even steps.
Stand up straight and tall.
Your bows should be deep,
with hands held in front
and arms rounded.
Always pay your respect
with reverence.²²
Do not step on doorsills.

²² In ancient China, people paid their respect to other people by bowing, holding one hand over the other which is closed, or prostrating on the ground.

Do not stand leaning on one leg.

Do not sit with your legs apart
or sprawled out.

Do not rock the lower part of your body while
sitting down.

Lift the curtain slowly,²³
do not make a sound.

Leave yourself room when you turn
to make sure you do not bump
into a corner.

²³ In ancient China, curtains were made of bamboo strips woven together. They were used to shelter a room from view.

Hold carefully empty containers
as if they were full.²⁴

Enter empty rooms
as if they were occupied.²⁵

Avoid doing things in a hurry,
as doing things in haste
will lead to many mistakes.

Do not be afraid of difficult tasks,

²⁴ Even though a container may be empty, out of reverence to things, whether living or not, one should treat it with respect and handle it with care.

²⁵ In ancient China, a virtuous man always behaved properly, regardless of whether he was alone or with others.

but do not become careless
when a job is too easy.
Keep away from rowdy places,
and do not ask about things
that are abnormal or unusual.

When you are about to enter
a main entrance,
ask if someone is inside.
Before entering a room,
make yourself heard,
so that those inside know
someone is approaching.
If someone asks who you are,

give your name.

To answer “It is me” or “Me” is not clear.

Before borrowing things from others,
you must ask for permission.

If you do not ask, it is stealing.

When borrowing things from others, return
them promptly.

Later on, when you have an urgent need,
you will not have a problem borrowing from
them again.

Chapter 4: Be Trustworthy

When you speak, honesty is important.
Deceitful words and lies are not allowed.

Rather than talking too much,
it is better to speak less.

Speak the truth, do not twist the facts.

Cunning words, foul language,
and bad habits
must be avoided at all costs.

What you have not seen
with your own eyes,
do not readily tell to others.

What you do not know for sure,
do not readily pass on to others.

When asked to do something
that is inappropriate or bad,
do not promise lightly.

If you do, you will be wrong either way.

When speaking, make the words clear and to
the point.

Do not talk too fast or mumble.

Some like to talk
about the good points of others,
while some like to talk
about the faults of others.

If it is none of your business,

do not get involved.

When you see others do good deeds,
think about following their example.

Even though your own achievements
are still far behind those of others,
you are getting closer.

When you see others do wrong,
immediately reflect upon yourself.

If you have made the same mistake, correct it.

If not, be extra cautious
not to make the same mistake.

When your morals, conduct, knowledge, and
skills

are not as good as others,
you should encourage yourself
to be better.

If the clothes you wear,
and the food you eat and drink
are not as good as others,
do not be ashamed.

If criticism makes you angry
and compliments make you happy,
bad company will come your way
and good friends will shy away.
If you are uneasy about compliments
and appreciative of criticism, sincere

and understanding virtuous people
will gradually be close to you.

If your mistake is not done on purpose,
it is only an error.

If it is done on purpose, it is evil.

If you correct your mistake
and do not repeat it,
you no longer have the mistake.

If you try to cover it up,
you will be doubly wrong.

Chapter 5: Love All Equally

Human beings, regardless
of nationality, race, or religion
- everyone - should be loved equally.
We are all sheltered by the same sky
and we all live on the same planet Earth.

A person of high ideals and morals
is highly respected.
What people value is not based
on outside appearance.
A person's outstanding ability
will naturally honor him

with a good reputation.
Admiration from others
does not come
from boasting or praising oneself.

If you are a very capable person,
use your abilities for the benefit of others.

Other people's competence
should not be slandered.

Do not flatter the rich,
or despise the poor.

Do not ignore old friends,
and take delight in new ones.

When a person is busy,

do not bother him with matters.
When a person's mind is not at peace,
do not bother him with words.

If a person has a shortcoming,
do not expose it.

If a person has a secret,
do not tell others.

Praising the goodness of others
is a good deed in itself.

When people approve of and praise you,
you should feel encouraged
and try even harder.

Spreading rumors

about the wrongdoings of others
is a wrongdoing in itself.
When the harm done
has reached the extreme,
misfortunes will surely follow.
When encouraging each other
to do good,
the virtues of both are built up.
If you do not tell others of their faults,
you will both be wrong.

Whether you take or give,
you need to know the difference
between the two.

It is better to give more and take less.

What you ask others to do,
first ask yourself if you will do it.
If it is not something you will do,
ask not others to do it.

You must repay the kindness of others
and let go of your resentments.
Spend less time holding grudges
and more time
paying back the kindness of others.

When you are directing
maids and servants,
you should be respectable and dignified.

Even though you are respectable
and dignified,
treat them kindly and generously.
If you use your influence
to make them submissive,
their hearts will never be with you.
If you can convince them
with sound reasoning,
they will then have nothing more to say.

Chapter 6: Be Close to and Learn from People of Virtue and Compassion

We are all human,
but we are not the same.
Most of us are ordinary;
only a very few have great virtues
and high moral principles.
A truly virtuous person
is greatly respected by others.
He will not be afraid to speak the truth
and he will not fawn on others.
If you are close to and learn from people

of great virtue and compassion,
you will benefit immensely.

Your virtues will grow daily
and your wrongdoings
will lessen day by day.

If you are not close to
and learn from people of great virtue,
you will suffer a great loss.

People without virtue will get close to you
and nothing you do will succeed.

**Chapter 7: After All the Above
Are Accomplished, Study Further
and Learn Literature and Art
to Improve
Your Cultural and Spiritual Life**

If you do not actively make use
of what you have learned,
but continue to study on the surface,
your knowledge is increasing
but it is only superficial.

What kind of person will you be?

If you do apply your knowledge diligently, but
stop studying,

you will only do things
based on your own opinion,
thinking it is correct.
In fact, what you know is not the truth.

There are methods to study correctly.
They involve concentration
in three areas:
your mind, your eyes, and your mouth.
To believe in what you read
is equally important.
When you begin to read a book,
do not think about another.
If you have not completed the book,

do not start another.
Give yourself lots of time to study,
and study hard.
Given time and effort,²⁶
you will thoroughly understand.
If you have a question, make a note of it.
Ask the person who has the knowledge for the
right answer.

Keep your room neat,
your walls uncluttered and clean,

²⁶ If you do not understand part of book you are reading, read it again and again, even for a thousand times. Its meaning will come to you naturally.

your desk tidy
and your brush²⁷ and inkstone²⁸ properly
placed.

If your ink block²⁹ is ground unevenly,
it shows you have a poor state of mind.

When words are written carelessly, showing no
respect,
it shows your state of mind

²⁷ “Brush” here means a Chinese writing brush.

²⁸ “Inkstone” is a stone stand used for the preparing and holding the ink used in Chinese brush calligraphy.

²⁹ “Ink block” is a solid ink piece. A person grinds it with water against the inkstone to make ink for writing Chinese brush calligraphy.

has not been well.
The books³⁰ should be classified,
placed on the book shelves,
and in their proper places.
After you finish reading a book,
put it back in its right place.
Even though you are in a hurry,
neatly roll up
and bind the open bamboo scroll³¹

³⁰ Here “books” refer to books on laws, constitutions, and the structural systems of a nation.

³¹ Scroll, or *juan* “卷,” means a bamboo scroll. It is an ancient book, in the form of a scroll made of bamboo slips with knife-carved or painted Chinese

you were reading.
Any missing or damaged pages
are to be repaired.
If it is not a book on the teachings
of the saints and sages,
it should be discarded
and not even be looked at.
These other books
can block your intelligence and wisdom,
and will undermine your aspirations
and sense of direction.

characters. They were used before paper was
invented.

Neither be harsh on yourself,
nor give up on yourself.
To be a person of high ideals,
moral standards and virtue
is something we can all attain in time.

WAYS TO REACH US

(Please call for information and the best time to visit)

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DEDICATION OF MERIT

May the merit and virtues accrued
from this work
Adorn the Buddha's Pure Land,
Repaying the four kinds of kindness above,
And relieving the sufferings of
Those in the Three Paths below.

May those who see and hear of this,
All bring forth the heart of understanding,
And live the teachings
for the rest of this life,
Then be born together in
The Land of Ultimate Bliss!

Homage to Amitabha Buddha!

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