

Talks at Okayama Topia for International Contribution NGO Network Conference on the United Nations' Proposal for Education Development in the Next Ten Years for a Sustainable Future

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承蒙大會對淨空上一次在岡山國際貢獻會議上所呼籲的“恢復倫理道德教育”的重視，並特別再次開此會討論如何落實四種教育，淨空感到無比的歡欣鼓舞。在目前世界嚴重動亂之中，有在座諸位志士仁人，共同為挽救世運而並肩奮鬥，乃是世界的曙光，兆民的生機！淨空非常感激大會再次給我這個機會，與諸位大德分享有關如何落實四種教育的一點淺見。淨空深深地覺得，這四種教育是二十一世紀世界存亡興衰的關鍵。

Conflict Resolution Relies on Moral Education

There are four essential parts to an education. They are all parts of a complete education and should never be separated. The first part is the family education. The second part is the formal school education. The third is the social education. The fourth is religious education. Of these four parts, family education is the foundation, and religious education is what makes an education complete and perfect. These four parts of an education were what the ancient Chinese taught their descendents – education on moral principles. All the teachings of saints and sages past and present, including all the religious scriptures, are in accord with the rules of nature. They all talk about education on moral principles. The rules of nature are the sacred teachings of God. God is not about any particular person. God is about the rules of nature and about the truth. When all four parts to an education are working, the world will be at peace, society will be stable, and people will be happy. If we neglect any part to an education, serious conflicts will undoubtedly arise.

Everyone of us today encounter one same problem: conflicts in families and between husbands and wives; conflicts between nations and tribes; and, perhaps the most intimidating of all, between religions: these are major conflicts in societies. Each of us has confrontations against all people, affairs and things: these are our own major conflicts. The problems arising from conflicts are simply so serious that their extent is beyond the imagination of ordinary people. Today's problems, explained in terms of Buddha Dharma –

the teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha – come from the seeds and habits of hostility and hatred, accumulated life after life. Formerly imbedded deep down in our sub-consciousness – the Alaya Consciousness – they have now all erupted. Thus we have situations in which people continually find faults in each other. No one and nothing seems to please them. Why do they feel this way? It is caused by the resentments and hatred people have accumulated over immeasurable eons of time. This is indeed troubling. If our resentments and hatred erupt all at the same time, this world, according to Western religions, will come to an end. The end of the world means precisely that – the whole world will be destroyed and we will have to start again, from the very beginning. This is truly horrifying!

Can we resolve conflicts? How do we resolve them? Buddhism says that our circumstances change in accord with the changes in our minds. If everyone harbors resentments and hatred, this world surely will be destroyed. By contrast, if everyone is happy, filled with love and gratitude, then this is the world of the Ultimate Bliss (the World of Amitabha Buddha's Western Pure Land). This means there is actually no difference between the Saha World of ours and the World of the Ultimate Bliss. The World of the Ultimate Bliss was not built by Amitabha Buddha, neither is our world created by God nor governed by Yama, the King of Hell. According to Buddhist Sutras (the recorded teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha), our minds are our true ruler. The instant a kind thought enters our mind, there can be no evil in this world – only goodness in all people, matters and things. There is no badness, only purity of mind and pure goodness. This is the World of Hua-Zang (a Buddhist term meaning the lotus-world, symbolizing the thousand-petal lotus containing a store of myriads of worlds), the World of the Ultimate Bliss and the Garden of Eden.

How do we cultivate our purity of mind and pure goodness? We must rely on the saints' and sages' teachings. The ancient *Book of Rites*, the Confucius Scripture says: "Education is essential in building a country and in guiding its people." Education is about teaching people to be fully aware of the facts about life and the universe.

The facts about life and the universe cover three topics: firstly, the relationship among people; then, the relationship between people and their environments; and thirdly, the relationship between people and beings of different dimensions. The ones who can truly understand the three relationships, we call Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Those who cannot understand we call ordinary people.

If we do not understand the facts, it is natural that we will treat people, matters and things according to our wondering minds, differentiations and attachments. How can this not cause problems for us? Thus, this is the root of our social disorder. It turns our living environment into a Saha world, The World of the Ultimate Misery. When we become clear, understand and are fully aware of the facts, this world is the World of the Ultimate Bliss, the heaven.

The source of current upheaval in the world is the lack of emphasis on moral

self-cultivation in all levels of education, especially the teachings of ancient saints and sages. Chinese people, seriously impacted by Western culture, lost their self-confidence as a nation, doubt the teachings of the ancient saints and philosophers, and distanced themselves from the teachings of Confucius, Mencius, and Shakyamuni Buddha. Owing to advances in scientific technology, Westerners now doubt the validity of religious education. They no longer believe in the teachings of the Bible. Religious followers cannot truly follow and practice the true and the sacred teachings of God. These are the root causes of our natural and man-made disasters.

Religious Education Should Lead the Other Three Educations

Let us look at how societies are formed today. Ranging from the basic family unit to the formation of a country, of our world, almost all are tending towards competition for either awards or profits and the teachings of how to fight in competition. Families no longer care about moral principles. Many couples are busy either getting divorced or making money. They have neglected to educate their children and fail to act as their role models. Therefore, children today do not listen to their parents.

Formal education values and teaches only how to compete in the fields of scientific technology and economics and has neglected the teachings of moral principles and the subjects of humanities. Therefore, the students do not listen to their teachers.

Currently social education is severely contaminated. Just look at the daily newspapers, magazines, TV programs, movies, and materials supplied by the Internet. Much of their content teaches how to kill, steal, lie, and encourage people to have indecent yearnings. They have neglected the teachings of the principle of causality. People are concerned only about their own interests. There is little kindness, gratitude, or loyalty in human relationships.

As for religious education, it has become a formality. It only puts emphasis on rituals. People read the sacred texts but do not understand their true meaning. Without actual knowledge and understanding of the sacred texts, how could anyone put the texts into practice? Today all four types of education have deteriorated. How could this world not be in turmoil?

Therefore, most family education, social education and formal education today has deserted the moral teachings. It is already impossible to recover the moral teachings in these three educations. Only religious education still talks about loving-kindness, peace and respect for

God. So the world still has a thread of light; it depends on religious education. Religious education teaches us to believe in God and in His teachings, to believe in the principle of causality. People with lofty ideals, who want to save the world from pending disasters, have no other choice but to immediately return to religious education. If we can believe in God, believe in causality, believe in the teachings of the saints and the sages, if we can let religious education lead us back, to put greater emphasis on ethics and moral principles in family education, formal and social education, this world can still be saved. The end of the world is not here yet.

In January this year, we were attending the UNESCO Asia NGO Network Summit on the topic of the United Nations' proposal of *What Should Be Done for Education in the Next Ten Years for a Sustainable Future*. We reached a consensus: the most effective way to reach stability and peace is to spread and popularize religious teachings. We should gather and concentrate our manpower, material resources and financial strength to expand education to the global mass of people.

All religions including Islam, Christianity, Buddhism etc., teach the sentient beings virtues and moral principles, and loving-kindness and peace. We should know that we need to put them into practice, to clearly explain them and be models for other people. This is very important. Therefore, since ancient times how did the Chinese rule the country? They did not rule the country by military power, police force, economics or scientific technology, none of which can solve problems. They used education. Education is essential in building a country and in guiding its people. The method employed by all the ancient Chinese saintly emperors was education. And the teachings of the saints and sages are very simple and to the point.

The Essence of the Education of Loving-kindness and Peace

As the famous English Historian Dr. Arnold Toynbee said, to resolve the social problems in the 21st century, one must rely on the Confucius' and Mencius' thoughts and the Mahayana Buddhism. "... the founders of the less crude religions and philosophies have perceived that the nature of divinity is not power but love, benevolence, and humanity. The Buddha, the Bodhisattvas, and Christ stand not for the exercise of power but for self-abnegation and self-sacrifice. Confucianism and Shinto stand for a harmonious co-operation between man and nature; Taoism for letting nature take her course, undisturbed by impertinent and clumsy human interference. Surely the *Weltanschauung* that follows from these more perceptive and less aggressive religious and philosophical traditions is the one that now offers the most promising hope of salvaging mankind. The injunction to "subdue," which modern man has taken as his directive, is immoral, impractical, and disastrous." [Source: Toynbee, Arnold,

1973, *The Genesis of Pollution*, *Horizon*, Volume 15, No. 3, summer issue, pp.4-9].

Confucianism and Buddhism taught us the following five principles of education: 1) Parents should love and care for their children, and children should love and be dutiful to their parents; 2) the leader should be benevolent to the subjects and the subjects should be loyal to their leader; 3) there should be conjugal love between husbands and wives; 4) siblings should live in harmony; and 5) friends should be trustworthy. The natural and ethical human relations of parents and children, leader and subjects, husbands and wives, and friends are called “*Dao*” which in English means the Way. Those relations are not invented by any particular person. They are the products of the natural formation of human relationships. The rules of nature are called “*Dao*” or the Way.

To accord with “*Dao*” (nature) is virtue (“*De*”). 遵循道就是“德”。中國聖人總結出八德：“孝悌忠信、禮義廉恥”，另一個說法是“忠孝仁愛、信義和平”。這兩種說法合併起來可以歸納為：“孝悌忠信仁愛對待，禮義廉恥和平共處”。倫理道德的教育要以這個為宗旨。

All the ancient Chinese saints and sages understood this principle. This is why it was said, “Education is essential in building a country and in guiding its people.” In order to build a country or a government and to properly guide and teach the people, education is the most important factor of all.

Confucians say that man’s true self-nature was originally good. The philosophy of education made it clear from the beginning that man’s true self-nature was good. The man turns bad because of the bad influence the environment has on him. Therefore, the saints and sages highly valued the process of education. They believed that only proper education could protect and even enhance man’s original goodness to keep them away from evil. Education can change people from being malevolent to being good, turn hostility into friendship, resolve conflicts by turning hatred into brotherliness, and transform ordinary people into saints.

A family is the fundamental unit of society. When all family members can live together in harmony, all will prosper. “All” here includes the society, the country and the world. When families live in harmony, how could the world not be at peace and the society not be stable? Happiness in a family depends on parents being role models for their children, when each parent can fulfil his or her duties to keep from doing anything wrong or evil, and to cultivate good deeds. In the past, parents understood this principle; therefore, in front of their

children, the parents were bound by proper etiquettes. They would not risk leaving a bad impression on their children's minds. The parents respected the teachers and acted respectfully towards them in front of their children. When the children saw how respectful their parents were to their teachers, it strengthened the children's confidence in their teachers and helped them to listen to their teachers. This is called family education.

The teachers, on the other hand, acted as role models for the students and taught the students to be dutiful to their parents, to respect their elders and people who had virtues. From this we can understand why children at home and the students at school do not listen today. Who is responsible for this? Mencius said, "It is the parents' fault when children are raised but not taught. When teachers are not strict with their students, teachers are being lazy." This happens when both the parents and the teachers are not exemplary in their behaviour and do not properly fulfil their duties.

The sacred texts of the saints and sages tell us that in a society, no matter what profession we are in, we all have this mission to be a leader, a parent and a teacher. Anyone who wishes to achieve high moral standards or to succeed in a career within this lifetime needs to follow this principle.

To be a leader, a parent and a teacher is ancient saints' attitudes towards handling matters and treating people. Emperor Tang, the ancient saint of the Shang Dynasty of China, said: "No matter how many people are at fault, all faults are mine." Why did he say that? Because he was the Emperor. If his subjects were guilty of wrongdoing, it was because the Emperor did not teach them properly.

Take a look at our own families. In my family, if one person is bad, I am guilty. Why? Because I did not teach that person properly. I cannot put blame on anyone else, not on my siblings or my parents. When we are enlightened, we understand that it is our fault because we have failed to reform our family members. We are the ones who are guilty; therefore, the faults are ours.

Saints are different from ordinary people. Ordinary people would put all blame on others and claim all benefits as theirs. But nothing could be worse than this. Emperor Tang said: "If a group is not good, it is the fault of its leader because its leader did not do a proper job." The responsibilities of leadership are threefold: be a leader, be a parent and be a teacher. We only need to fulfill those three duties; our merits and virtues will be boundless.

To fulfill the first duty of being a 'leader' – you need to lead, to plan for and to guide your people. Your second duty is to act like a 'parent' – you need to nurture, to guide and to make provision for your people. Thirdly, your duty is to be a teacher – you need to teach your

people well. If you do not teach them well enough to enlighten them, help them solve the problems of life and guide them properly, that would be considered a very serious fault. What Emperor Tang said does make sense. All the leaders in our society need to understand this.

Everyone should fulfil the three duties of “leader, parent, and teacher”. To fulfil these three duties, we must rely on and live by the virtues and the moral principles taught by the saints and sages. Only then will everyone have a happy family. Our society will be stable and our world will be at peace.

At the farewell dinner of the last Okayama Summit, I mentioned that if we want to do peace work, we have to change our attitude to only seeing the good in others and faults in ourselves. I stated: “Even when others are wrong, they are correct. When I am correct, I am also wrong.” When the conference participants heard these words, they all sighed with emotion, pointing out how difficult it would be to effect such a change in attitude. I said: “No matter how hard it is, we have to do it. This is our contribution to the work for world peace and stability. If we cannot do it, then we are only shouting for peace and stability; peace and stability will never be practiced. Those who work for world peace should all maintain this attitude: “Others are always correct, I am wrong. I am wrong even when I am correct. Even when others are wrong, they are correct.” This is what Zhuang Zi (an ancient Taoist Master) said “I only see the good in others and faults in myself.”

All religions should unify and cooperate to promote the education of loving-kindness and peace

Originally all religions were forms of multicultural social education. We call Buddhism the multicultural social education because Buddha taught people without differentiating between nationalities, races, cultures; no matter who they were, their social positions and whether they were rich or poor. As long as they were willing to accept Buddha’s teachings, Buddha accepted them as his disciples. All were treated equally and studied together. Therefore, Buddhism is called the multicultural social education. But other religions, such as Islam and Christianity, also teach people without differentiating between nationalities, races, and whether they are rich or poor. The Islamic religion in China has about 80 million followers. Considering the number of people in China who have religious faith, it has a considerable following. When we look at all the religions, we find their teachings are not limited to just people of one country or one race. They propagate their religious teachings to the whole world. Therefore, all religions are forms of multicultural social education.

The sacred texts of all religions emphasize loving-kindness and peace. For example, Islam's Koran says: "Allah is indeed loving and merciful to all people in this world." It also says: "You ought to be dutiful to your parents, to live in harmony with your kinfolk, and to speak only kind words to people." 『歸信真主，祈主恩慈，行善改過，遵循教誨，不犯禁誡，和解紛爭，息事寧人，親賢善，遠邪惡，常懷真主無盡慈愛』 It is said repeatedly in the New Testament that God loves all people. The Buddhists say: "Loving-kindness and compassion are the basis for all relationships, and are also our driving force to embrace all people and to make sure they can benefit."

Thus all the religious teachings in this world are based on unconditional loving-kindness and compassion. They teach people to respect one another, to live in harmony, and to treat all equally without differentiating between nationalities or races. Therefore, all religions are really about the education of peace and selfless compassion. They teach people to love one another and to love all living beings. All the religious texts are broad-minded. The Buddhists say: "The mind encompasses all." If we are concerned only about ourselves and look down on others, this is not God's will, nor is it the aspiration of religious teachings. Rather, it is only the will and the wish of a certain individual or a group of people.

Everyone asks the same question: How did the universe come about? Where did life come from? How was the world created? Buddhism talks about space, the dharma realms, all the lands and the sentient beings. Where do they come from? Who created them? The teachings of all religions say that God created them. The creator is God. The universe has only one true God. Even though the name of the God who created the world that every religion talks about is different, the universe is created by the same God. In Buddhism, we do not refer to God but to the nature underlying all things. In the *Flower Adornment Sutra*, it says: "All are created by the mind and changed by its consciousnesses." Buddha dharma talks about the mind and the consciousness. The mind and the consciousness are our true self-nature. The true self-nature, Allah and God of other religions are of the same facts and principles. This is the fundamental condition and belief we must have in learning, studying and accepting a religious education.

Thus we firmly believe different religions are created by the same God in different forms and taught by different teaching methods. The different manifestations of God are for the convenience of teaching and accommodating people from different areas, cultures and levels of understanding. We have researched all the religious texts. The principles they teach are the same, heading in the same direction and towards the same goal. They all teach people to stop doing all that is evil and to do all that is good, to be enlightened not deluded, to change from being ordinary to being a saint. If we can observe and understand from these points of view, we will come to realize that there is only one true God (our true self-nature). All religions have their similarities.

Therefore, there can be unity and cooperation within the religions. They should teach people together. They can teach the followers to be sincere, pure, equal and compassionate. They should accept one another, respect and love one another, trust one another, be humble and tolerate each other, be concerned for the welfare of one another, care for one another, co-operate with one another. Together, we can change the earth and this world into a place of Heaven, the World of the Ultimate Bliss. This is our mission when we become a teacher of religion. We should put our hearts into it and direct our best efforts towards this aim. Thus, the pending world disasters can be resolved. Stability, peace and happiness will come upon us all.

落實仁愛和平教育的建議

關於落實仁愛和平教育，淨空不揣冒昧，獻上兩點建議：

(一) 衛星電視(網際網路)教學

首先可以在衛星電視臺上設立“仁愛和平大講堂”的節目。這個節目由聯合國教科文組織選拔和聘請主講老師，所宣揚的是“孝悌忠信、禮義廉恥、仁愛和平”的觀念，教導倫理道德和推廣宗教教育。每個節目以四種語言播出：英語、華語、西班牙語和阿拉伯語。其他的語言可以從這四種語言中翻譯過去。

開始時先租用現有的衛星電視臺的時段，每天在最佳時段播一個小時，使世界各地都能收看到。然後逐漸增加播放時間，最終目標是籌建自己的獨家衛星電視臺，24小時專門播放道德教育節目。

節目的主講老師是由聯合國教科文組織從世界各地選聘出來的，有道德、有學問的長者，最好是大學的退休教授。他們的言論沒有絲毫危害社會安定、族群和睦的，而是對於每個族群、國家都是至善的。

世界上哪一個國家感興趣的話，由政府出面捐出土地，設立招待所，在招待所裏設攝影棚。節目主講老師可以在招待所裏住一兩個月，將他的節目錄製下來，由聯合國教科文組織審查，確定沒有危害社會安定和諧的節目才可以播放，並且以四種語言對全世界播出。這個事情可以馬上做，以便給衛星電視節目準備教材。相信節目播放一年，便能收到很好的效果。

I have been propagating the teachings of Buddha Dharma for 46 years. For the past two decades, with the help of many civic supporters, I have circulated numerous lectures on sutras recorded on cassette and video tapes, CDs and DVDs. In addition, for the past six years I have used the Internet for long-distance religious education. Since last year I have

used satellite television for broadcasting my lectures. These modern technologies have resulted in positive influences for many students all over the world.

If the United Nations can lead the efforts in conducting long-distance education, I believe the positive result after just one year will surpass those resulting from our efforts over the past 20 years. I believe that after one year, the global security will greatly improve. Other countries will also follow the footsteps of the United Nations. Thus, prosperity, peace and harmony will prevail and people will be more honest and kind.

These approaches are really the answer to save the world from pending disasters. If anyone can really put these approaches into practice, they are truly the angels of God, the saintly saviour of this world.

如果聯合國要成立這個教學節目，淨空一定會在衛星電視上向全球做廣告，幫助籌募款項。我的衛星電視臺將向聯合國免費開放每天十小時的節目播放時間。淨空只是從旁協助，不參與這個節目的行政管理，樂觀其成。淨空衷心希望聯合國最終有自己的全球衛星電視臺，展開對世界全民的仁愛和平教育。

（二）仁愛和平國際大學校

從事神聖教學的事業必須後繼有人。因此在聯合國領導下，由某個國家志願提供土地，建立一所大學校，從幼稚園到大學研究所都包含在內。學生從小開始培養純淨純善的道德和淵博的學問，使其不受外界社會污染，甚至連生活中的娛樂都要用正面的、最好的東西。因此，學校裏的生活都要有專人或保姆照顧，請有愛心的人來擔任這些工作。

師資隊伍如上述一樣，由聯合國教科文組織從世界各地選拔聘請出有道德、有學問的老師來擔任教學。

這個國際大學校向全世界招生，教學的宗旨是：

“孝悌忠信仁愛對待 禮義廉恥和平共處”

同上述的衛星電視教學計畫的宗旨一致，目標是培養拯救世界的聖賢人物。學生的骨幹由本校從小培養，而開始的時候大學部和研究所的學生先請世界著名大學來推薦，以品德優良為主要考量。淨空相信世界各地一定有許多有識見的父母將他們的兒女送來讀書。

仁愛和平大學校培養學生應遵循“修身、齊家、治國、平天下”的理念。以修身為根本。《大學》說：「自天子，以至於庶人，壹是皆以修身為本。」修身有『入則孝，出則悌，言忠信，行篤敬』。待人接物則有『己所不欲，勿施於人。行有不得，反求諸己』。這就是孔子說的“仁”。我希望別人怎樣對我，我應先要如是對人；我不希望別

人對我的，我也不應該用同樣方式去對付別人，這是自然的法則。『行有不得，反求諸己』是教導人們應當時常真誠悔改。我常常教導同學們：在處事待人接物時，若產生矛盾，必須要承認自己永遠是錯的，別人永遠都是對的；我自己要不斷努力，改過自新。呂氏春秋說：「凡事之本，必先治身。成其身而天下成，治其身而天下治。爲天下者，不於天下，於身。」所以一切必須從自己切身做起，釋迦、孔子皆是先成就自己，才能教化眾人，和平才有希望。

爲了保證這個大學校的教學質量，人力、財力、物力必須集中，暫時不應考慮設立分校。可以設立獎學金和助學貸款，鼓勵優秀學生和幫助貧困地區學生來讀書。淨空願意在這所大學設立獎學金。

Within our limited resources, we will help and give you our support for this great undertaking. We deeply believe that peace-lovers throughout the world will, too, extend their firm support for this project. With all these wishes fulfilled, there will be light to the world which shall be saved!

I am most fortunate to have this opportunity to offer my humble opinions on this topic. Any comment will be greatly appreciated. Lastly, I wish you all good health, happiness, and best of fortunes! Thank you all!

[淨空法師專集網站\(簡\)製作](#)