

慈 (CI)

慈悲為佛家之正性 即吾儒悲憫之深衷

CI (Mercifulness), which Buddhism holds to be the true essence of the mind, is understood as the most profound compassion in Confucianism.

博施濟眾 利物濟人 凡人皆宜抱此心 匹夫皆宜任此責
所謂惻隱之心 人皆有之也

Giving charity to needy people generously and bringing manifold benefits to society should be everyone's aspiration, whether they be prominent personages or mere human beings. As the common saying goes, "The feeling of compassion is some part of everyone's character."

夫慈之一字 為善念之所發端 何也 念者心之動也
事有善惡 念無善惡
是念加於事之善者為善念 是念加於事之惡者為惡念

The character of CI represents the motive of the kind thought. Why? It is because thought is an inclination of the heart and mind.

Affairs can be differentiated into the either good or bad, but pure thought itself has neither quality.

But when a thought leads to a manner of kind behavior, it is a kind thought; when it leads to manner of vicious behavior, it is a vicious thought.

書曰 惟聖罔念作狂 惟狂克念作聖

The Book of Zhou tells us, "Even a sage who loses his kind thought becomes arrogant; even people of arrogance who overcome their vicious thought become sages."

聖與狂祇有一念之分 要在未發之先 慎其幾而已

Being a sage and being arrogant are differentiated by but a thought. When a thought arises within us, we must judge its character carefully down to its tiniest constituent.

人能去惡念而存善念 去狂念而存聖念
則不於一佛二佛 三四五佛而種善根 實於無量千萬佛種諸善根
擴而充之 即為天地好生之德

If people will extirpate vicious thought from within themselves, but retain kind thought, and if they will extirpate any arrogance from within but retain the thought of the sages, then those people not only in "one Buddha, two Buddha, three, four, and five Buddha's lands have rooted

themselves with kindness, but indeed in innumerable lands of Buddha, they have already rooted themselves with kindness.¹"

When such efforts as these expand to the extent of all things, it is equivalent to the same virtue of fondness for the life of Heaven and Earth.

Note¹: These phrases are quoted from Buddhism's Diamond Sutra, chapter six. One land of Buddha can be viewed as one life.

而五教聖人救世之宏願 亦無非起於是念而已

Moreover, the ultimate hope of all sages from all the different religions is also founded upon such thought.

今吾將五教混而為一 概以天德賅之

甚願在教諸生 注意於慈 念聖賢之念 心天地之心 慈善為懷 積功累德

I have distilled five major religious philosophies into one teaching comprising the virtue of Heaven, in the hope that people who hold to this teaching will meditate on the character of CI, to think the thoughts of Sages and to sense the motive of Heaven and Earth, to live with charitable hearts, to confer benefits to society and conduct themselves with virtue.

則由一人之慈 引動千萬人之慈 推而至於無量無邊眾生 亦無不慈

將見彌綸六合 貫徹大千 肫肫其仁 無有隔閡

則妖氛無自而生 災劫亦從此而滅矣

If one person has CI, the CI in that one person can stimulate millions of people to live CI. In turn, the CI of all the people reaches out to the multitude of all living things, and they, in their turn as well, will all have CI.

Thus, an atmosphere of CI will expand to the full extent of all the six directions and the universe everywhere, and the kindness of CI will touch everyone and everything effortlessly.

As a result, no place will remain for a climate of viciousness to grow and an otherwise disastrous fate will at last be forestalled.