Traditional Chinese Children's Primers

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A SOURCEBOOK

Katherine Ngo and Kelly Ngo



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謙恭待人忠孝傳家





Image of Chinese calligraphy and seals.
Translation: Be humble and respectful to all you meet; Uphold the legacy of faithfulness and family reverence.
Chin Kung at the age of 78
Seal (right): Love pervades everywhere; Kindness enriches humanity.
Seal (left): Utmost sincerity inspires all.

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INTRODUCTION

At first glance, traditional Chinese children's primers would seem to refer to "educational texts for children in pre-modern China." However, these elementary school books were a unique genre designed with sophisticated textual content and structure for a didactic purpose.[1] Described as "part of the technology of writing" (Galambos 2024, 712), primers would aid young readers in learning language, acquiring cultural knowledge and values, and familiarity with literary writing and its rhythms. This knowledge and these skills were vital for literacy but also prepared them for reading advanced texts in their educational journey.

Children aged less than fifteen years were taught to read these books in homes or village schools. The earliest children's books from the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) were primarily used to teach literacy—the recognition of Chinese characters (Lee 2000, 434). However, elementary textbooks from the Song dynasty (960–1279) onwards were written with the additional function of moral development, predominantly instilling Neo-Confucian principles, concepts, and practices.[2] Educational primers

1 For an overview of late imperial Chinese elementary textbooks and their underlying educational theories and practices, see Ngo 2025.

2 "Neo-Confucianism" is used here as an umbrella term for the philosophical discourse associated with various individuals from the Song dynasty to the Qing dynasty (1644–1912) rather than particular schools of thought.

proliferated throughout the history of imperial China and evolved into different forms. They can be classified into four general genres: those for teaching literacy, moral learning, general knowledge, and literary training (Huang 1992, 2–3). Moreover, a diversity of styles was deployed to facilitate readability and memorization in the learning process, including three-syllable verse, four-syllable verse, and rhyme. The trajectory from instruction to amusement is increasingly apparent from the sixteenth century. Compilers of children's texts since sixteenth-century China commonly provided instruction while engaging the child's interests. In other words, the dual aims of edification and engagement were considered and prioritized.

With an understanding of children's primers as texts read by children for their lessons, the next issue is what is meant by the "child." How the author conceives of childhood, the cognitive and educational needs of this life stage, determines what content is important and readable. Phillipe Ariès' controversial claim that Europe "discovered" the notion of childhood in the seventeenth century has long been displaced.[3] However, his views importantly initiated modern scholarship on the history of childhood—how to understand the evolving conceptualization and experience of childhood. There is now consensus that societies throughout history have distinguished childhood from adulthood in some way (Stearns 2017, 5). Focusing on pre-modern China, Anne B. Kinney (1995, 19–20) claims that the "discovery of childhood" and child developmental concerns occurred in the second century BCE. The newly established Han dynasty was keen to learn lessons from the collapse of the preceding short-lived Qin dynasty (221–207 BCE). Early Han thinkers highlighted the significance of moral education for the princes during their formative years, who would then be capable of preserving imperial power. For example, Jia Yi 賈誼 (200–168 BCE) was the first to assert the importance of prenatal and early education as crucial distinct phases of learning through philosophical discourse.

3 Aries argued that childhood was not given special attention prior to the seventeenth century but that this pre-modern approach did have its advantages (Stearns 2017, 10–13).

Three main strands of early Chinese thought on children emerge from these analyses: the child's nature was considered malleable and required education for full development; the phase of "nurture" was limited and a person's characteristics would be relatively fixed by the age of fifteen; and education needed to start as early as possible, including from the in utero period (*taijiao* 胎教), as what a child learnt first would form a lasting impression (*xian ru wei zhu* 先入為主). The notion that "habits formed in childhood are as if innate and such habits become second nature" was attributed to Confucius (551–479 BCE) (*Hanshu* 48.222). These views had been sanctioned by the Han government, were predominantly Confucian, and would become a mainstay in the history of ideas in Eastern philosophy. Even in the late imperial period, Hsuing Ping-chen (2005, 21–24) summarizes that the "child" in Chinese society was understood in three ways: in the literal sense as the earliest stage of human life (the biophysical child), the social sense as a person with junior or inferior status (the social child), and as an abstract embodiment of the quality of innocence. In other words, childhood was acknowledged as a phase of life that required special attention and education.

The cultural construction of childhood was derived from the philosophy in the *Changes* (*Yijing* 易經), which was canonized during the Han dynasty and is regarded as the oldest and most profound Chinese classical work. The Confucian canon was studied by scholars and government officials, forming the basis of not only the imperial state ideology but also Chinese philosophical and educational thought. Of the sixty-four hexagrams in the *Changes*, the fourth hexagram, entitled "*Meng* 蒙," establishes the concept of youthful ignorance and attitudes to teaching and learning. The commentary explains: "(The method of dealing with) the young and ignorant is to nourish the correct (nature belonging to them);—this accomplishes the service of the sage."[4] It was believed that the innocent, ignorant child needed to be taught ways of living to recover and preserve an unblemished innate nature. One who could educate in this way was regarded as a "sage." The theoretical aim of elementary education as set out by the *Changes* as "Nourishing the correct nature"

4 (*Zhouyi* 1.45; Legge 1963, 217). Unless otherwise indicated, the translations are our own.

(*meng yi yang zheng* 蒙以養正) remained largely consistent throughout history. When the renowned eighteenth-century statesman and educator Chen Hongmou 陳宏謀 (1696–1771) compiled the *Guidelines for Proper Upbringing* (*Yangzheng yigui* 養正遺規), his foreword referred to the Meng hexagram (*Yangzheng yigui* foreword.1b).[5] This education was generally undertaken in family and elementary schools before the age of fourteen. These concepts of children's education were key in the mindsets of parents, teachers, and scholars, underpinning the compilation of children's texts.

The final term that requires exploration is "traditional," here referring to the "pre-modern" and "early modern" period in China. "Early modern" is used to describe the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries in China,[6] and thus "pre-modern" refers to the period before the sixteenth century. There are several reasons for the use of this not uncontroversial periodization. From the perspective of Western scholarship, the narrative that modern China began through Western influence from the 1840s has been discredited.[7] For example, William T. Rowe (1989, 3–5) was the first to discuss common demographic and economic features that Hankou (also known as "Hankow") in the sixteenth century shared with cities of the early modern West. Moreover, use of a periodization concept appropriated from European historiography facilitates exploration of Chinese childhood within the narratives of global history.

The above discussion hopefully begins to situate pre-modern and early modern Chinese children's primers—writings designed for and read by children with an educational purpose prior to the eighteenth century in imperial China—within the broader literary tradition. Such research is richly interdisciplinary, potentially involving literary history, education,

5 Chen Hongmou had established over seven hundred charitable primary schools in the prefectures and counties, and the compilation was specifically for parents and teachers.

6 The dating of the "early modern" period is first described by Paul S. Ropp, as linked to the social, economic, and intellectual advancements during the late Ming to early Qing period, and as further corroborated by the work of Susan Naquin and Evelyn Sakakida Rawski, and William T. Rowe in the 1980s (Ropp 1981, 1–2, 11; Naquin and Rawski 1987, 232–233; Rowe 1989, 3–5).

7 From the mid-1980s, Western scholars began to call for a China-centered approach as marked by the work of Paul Cohen (2010).

literacy studies, philosophy, print culture, and child psychology, beyond merely East Asian studies. Making these Chinese texts accessible through translation opens possibilities for many lines of transcultural research.

1. PRIMERS AS A TRANSNATIONAL GENRE

Scholar of comparative studies Paul Hazard (1983, 146) advocated for children's books transcending national borders in his 1932 work *Les livres, les enfants et les hommes*, believing that this would lead to universal peace and understanding—a "universal republic of childhood." However, a different type of internationalism led by global market forces occurred from the late twentieth century. Children's literature from Great Britain and the United States was more commonly translated,[8] resulting in an asymmetrical global distribution in favor of Anglo-American books. This can be seen even in the story of the eighteenth-century novel *Robinson Crusoe*. The text not only circulated throughout the British colonies but was also recognized by Jean-Jacques Rousseau in France, created a literary genre in Germany, and inspired the *Swiss Family Robinson*.[9]

Chinese literacy primers share a similar story. As the Chinese script (called "Sinitic") was commonly used throughout East Asia from the eighth century to the mid-twentieth century, the primers were also studied beyond the Chinese empire.[10] A case in point is the *Thousand Character Essay* (*Qianziwen* 千字文). According to tradition, Emperor Wu 梁武帝 (d. 549) of the Liang dynasty (464–549), wishing to create a calligraphy textbook for his princes, ordered for one thousand different characters to be selected from the works of the renowned calligraphist Wang Xizhi 王羲之 (321–379), and for those characters to be arranged in a

8 Translations into English account for around 3 percent of books published annually in Britain and between 1 and 2 percent in the United States (O'Sullivan 2010, 9).

9 Hazard (1983, 148–149) also notes that the text has been translated into Arabic, Māori, Bengali, Syrian, Hebrew, Yiddish, Armenian, and Persian.

10 Peter Kornicki provides a brief overview of the transmission and vernacularization of Chinese primers in pre-modern East Asia, including the *Thousand Character Essay*, the *Three Character Classic*, and the *Mengqiu* 蒙求 (Inquiries of the young) (Kornicki 2018, 274–279).

rhymed composition for readability by the official Zhou Xingsi 周興嗣 (d. 521). Thereafter, the text was popularly read for literacy and calligraphy learning in imperial China. The *Thousand Character Essay* was also used in Japan and Korea as a tool for acquiring the sound structure and rhyme rules of Tang dynasty (618–907) standards of Sinitic (Steininger 2017, 140). The earliest record of the *Thousand Character Essay* (*Senjimon*) being used as a child's textbook in Japan is in 875 by the eight-year-old Crown Prince Sadaakira 貞明親王 (later Emperor Yōzei, r. 876–84).[11] Children of the royal household and nobility would begin their education with these primers. Although it is likely that Chinese texts were transmitted by land to Korea and Vietnam before Japan, the first reference of the *Thousand Character Essay* (*Ch'ŏnjamun*) in Korea dates to 1425—when King Sejong 世宗 (r. 1418–50) ordered the text to be distributed to schools (Kornicki 2018, 275). Indeed, the primer was published with the Korean alphabet as a vernacular gloss of the Sinitic from 1575 through to the end of the Chosŏn dynasty (1392–1910).[12] James Gale (1863–1937), who worked as a missionary in Korea, wrote that children learnt to recite the text character by character, learning the meaning and then the pronunciation (Rutt 1972, 149). Evidently, study of the *Thousand Character Essay* was an enduring practice in Korean primary education. The Chinese primers, in original language and in translation, also functioned as an entryway to interacting with Sinitic texts for those of a Tibetan, Old Uyghur and Tangut background (Galambos 2024, 720–721 and 723–724).

Beyond Sinitic literacy, the Chinese primers enriched target cultures by providing a new genre for literacy in general and facilitated understanding of Confucian thought. The *Thousand Character Essay* became a reader for Sanskrit and Manchu in Japan through a bilingual Manchu–Sinitic version of the early seventeenth century (Ogawa and Kida 1997, 405 and 420–431). In his monograph on Tangut translations

11 Wang Xiaoping provides evidence that the *Qianziwen* was already known to intellectuals of the Nara period (710–784) (Wang 2009, 355–361).

12 Despite the Korean alphabet having been invented in the mid-fifteenth century, the learning of Sinitic continued to dominate (Wells 2023, 339–340).

of Chinese texts, Imre Galambos (2015, 135–138) further highlights that the primers were a tool for teaching the Tangut language rather than Chinese. This also occurred in Vietnam where locally produced textbooks imitated Chinese prototypes. Although the *Three Character Classic* (*Sanzijing* 三字經) and the *Classic of Family Reverence* (*Xiaojing* 孝經) were common in nineteenth-century village education, the Sino-Vietnamese primer *Thousand Character Litany* (*Nhất thiên tự*) was designed to facilitate the transition from Vietnamese to literary Chinese (Woodside 1988, 192–193). The text had Chinese characters followed by the corresponding Vietnamese word arranged in poetic meter to facilitate familiarization with the rhythms of Southeast Asian poetry. These primers thus served as readers of Chinese literary culture and Confucian ideas. Indeed, primers were developed locally with the intention of transmitting Confucian thought. The Korean primer, the *Illustrated Guide to the Three Relations* (*Samgang haengsil-to* 三綱行實圖), was commissioned by King Sejong in 1434 for this purpose. The text reproduced stories from Chinese and Korean histories for the teaching of Confucian ethics.

In Chinese history, the familiar format of the *Three Character Classic* provided a unique medium for promoting different faith traditions within the Confucian framework during the late imperial period. The *Three Character Classic of Buddhism* (*Shijiao sanzijing* 釋教三字經) was compiled in early seventeenth century (Zhang 2020, 13). Roberta Tontini has studied how Islamic and Confucian worldviews were integrated within the format of the well-known Chinese primer in the *Three Character Classic of Islam* (*Tianfang sanzijing* 天方三字經) that emerged in 1710. Liu Zhi 劉智 (ca. 1662–1736), who authored the text, sought to demonstrate the compatibility of the Islamic teachings with the Confucian tradition to non-Muslim Chinese (Tontini 2016, 62). This proved so popular that new versions emerged in the late nineteenth century, including the *Continuation of the Three Character Classic of Islam* (*Xu Tianfang sanzijing* 續天方三字經) and the *Basic Meaning of Islam in Three Characters* (*Tianfang sanzijing youyi* 天方三字經幼義), both published in 1858 (Tontini 2016, 116). The Muslim-oriented *Three Character Classic* and its conception of Islamic law evolved even following the collapse of imperial

China in 1912 through three new versions.[13] The most recent version, *Sequel to the Three Character Classic of Islam* (*Tianfang sanzijing xupian* 天方三字經續篇), was published in 1998.

The primers were also appropriated by Christian missionaries since the seventeenth century. Giulio Aleni (1582–1649) borrowed the *Three Character Classic* structure in creating the *Four Character Classic* (*Si zi jing wen* 四字經文) as a Jesuit Chinese primer for children (Clark 2021). His work inspired a new form of Chinese Christian writing that imitated the Confucian primer genre to instill Christian beliefs. There were around thirty such Christian primers by the end of imperial China in the early twentieth century, for example, the Protestant *Three Character Classic* editions of Walter Henry Medhurst (1822–1885) in 1823 and the Taiping followers in 1853 (Clark 2021, 32–33). Limin Bai (2019) has argued that the Chinese Christian primers that developed during the period 1902 to 1915 assimilated Western educational concepts and pedagogy, which were instrumental in shaping the modern Chinese education system and its textbooks. For example, the textbooks by the Chinese Christian educator Wang Hengtong 王亨統 (1868–1928) had illustrations, adapted Aesop's fables, and incorporated Western explanations. The children's textbook genre thus manifested the complex interplay between Confucian and Christian, Western and Eastern, and traditional and modern educational ideas in response to the sociocultural milieu.

Traditional Chinese children's textbooks have been a versatile genre. In the local context, the *Three Character Classic* format was borrowed for primers relating to other fields of study, such as the *Three Character Classic of Medicine* (*Yixue Sanzijing* 醫學三字經) in 1804 (Chen 2003) and its sequel—the *Supplementary Compilation to the Three Character Classic of Medicine* (*Xubian yixue sanzijing* 續編醫學三字經) (Xu 1979), and even archival work in recent decades (Qin et al. 2021). The order of the characters in the *Thousand Character Essay* also served as an index for cataloguing

13 Hu Songshan's *Yisilanjiao sanzi keben* 伊斯蘭教三字課本 (Three character primer of Islam), published in 1938; Hu Xueliang's *Huijiao nüzi sanzijing* 回教女子三字經 (Three character classic for Muslim girls), published in 1946; and Na Guochang's *Tianfang sanzijing xupian* 天方三字經續篇 (Sequel to the *Three Character Classic of Islam*), published in 1998.

the Chinese canon of Buddhist scriptures (Fang 2016, 95). Evidently, the primers evolved in their multiple functions over time and across cultures, including learning literacy, literary culture, different faith traditions, and various branches of knowledge.

2. WHY STUDY THESE TEXTS?

The first few lines of the *Three Character Classic* allude to a story about the philosopher Mencius (372–289 BCE): "Mencius' mother chose to move" (Huang 1992, 15–16). As the story goes, Mencius was three years old when his father passed away. Living with his mother near a cemetery, he would often observe the burials. During his play, he too would pretend to mourn and prepare the burial grounds. Upon realizing that such an environment was inconducive to her child's learning, his mother relocated to a place near a bustling marketplace. However, her young boy soon imitated the manners of the merchants. Becoming increasingly concerned, Mencius' mother relocated again. They then moved to live near a school and Mencius was able to emulate the etiquette he saw from the teachers and students. His mother finally felt she had found a place they could settle. Mencius would later become one of the most influential philosophers in Chinese history.

The early years of Mencius in the *Three Character Classic* would be read by children in the early years of their education for over six hundred years. Why was the text so popular? Consider the line discussed above: "Mencius' mother chose to move" (昔孟母, 擇鄰處). Not only does the text provide six different Chinese characters for learning new vocabulary, but the terse three–three formulation also familiarizes the child with the grammar and structures of literary Chinese. This was a form of written Chinese they would need to master for reading and writing. In addition, the child would learn the well-known idiom "Mencius' mother moved three times" (*Meng mu sanqian* 孟母三遷), which connotes the importance of choosing one's living and learning environment and the sacrifices parents make for the upbringing of their children. Beyond language development, the student would also develop their cultural literacy. This was likely their first encounter with Mencius as a historical personage, whose philosophy would later be studied as part of the Four Books for the

civil service examinations in imperial China. The allusion originates from the *Lie nü zhuan* 列女傳 (Biographies of exemplary women) compiled by Liu Xiang 劉向 (77 BCE–6 CE) and thus the youngster is also acquainted with the ancient historical work at a subconscious level. This was part of the literary tradition that children would later draw upon for their prose and poetic compositions. The elementary textbook in imperial China was designed for pre-modern primary education, enabling children to learn the rudiments of literacy, culture, and history, as well as literary and general knowledge, simultaneously.

Despite the establishment of the modern Republican school system with new curricular content, many of these texts continued to be in demand even as late as 1938 (Brokaw 2010, 50–51).[14] Renewed interest in pre-modern Chinese elementary educational texts in mainland China over recent years has seen such texts increasingly being included as teaching materials at school,[15] viewed as popular literature,[16] and studied in academic research. Chinese compilations of children's primers, vernacular Chinese translations, and illustrated editions have been widely published in the last two decades.[17] They have also been studied to develop understanding of one's cultural heritage in overseas Chinese ethnic communities.[18]

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14 Even at the beginning of the 1930s, around 66.5 percent of educated males in the countryside had been schooled in a traditional school (*sishu* 私塾) (Billioud and Thoraval 2015, 18–19).

15 The Chinese Ministry of Education has issued several directives on the compulsory inclusion of traditional Chinese culture in primary school and middle school teaching materials (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China 2014, 2022).

16 The China Central Television (CCTV) network has broadcasted a number of lecture programs on the primers. For example, Qian Wenzhong's 錢文忠 (2009, 2010) lectures on the *Three Character Classic* in 2009 and the *Dizi gui* 弟子規 (Guidelines for learners) in 2010 have since been published as books.

17 Accepting the Academy Award for Best Director in 2021, Chloe Zhao quoted from the *Three Character Classic* (British Broadcasting Corporation Online 2021).

18 For example, the Singaporean publisher AsiaPac Books provides educational comics of Chinese children's literature such as the *Guidelines for Learners*, the *Thousand Character Essay*, the *Three Character Classic*, and the *Zengguang xian wen* 增廣賢文 (Extended wise sayings) in the English language (Chen and Li 2006; Lip 2008; Asiapac Editorial 2016).

For the modern reader, translations of such children's primers offer pocketbooks to the world of pre-modern Chinese culture and a unique window into the thinkers of the past. The earliest English translation of the *Three Character Classic* was by British sinologist and protestant missionary Robert Morrison (1782–1834), who sought to understand the popular tract. Indeed, the second professor of Chinese at Cambridge University, Herbert Allen Giles (1897–1932), advised his students:

> Every child throughout the empire begins his or her studies with this book, learning to repeat a certain amount daily, until the whole is known by heart. Its importance therefore to foreigners who wish to study the book-language of China, and to be able to follow out Chinese trains of thought, can hardly be overestimated (Giles 1940, iii).

The second professor of Chinese at the College de France, Stanislas Julien, also used the text as foundational learning material from 1832 (Wright 1960, 242). Like the young child in imperial China, budding sinologists in Europe turned to primers to begin their literary Chinese training. Even today, they remain useful for understanding the rudiments of Chinese classicist learning.

Children's primers of pre-modern and early modern China present an important area for transcultural dialogue on education. However, any engagement with such texts must first overcome discourse framed in the cultural dichotomy of East and West, and the traditional–modern polarity. In their volume on cross-cultural perspectives on Confucian learning published in 2020, Roland Reichenbach and Duck-Joo Kwak begin by highlighting unproductive East–West dualisms, including "formality versus free-thinking, conformity versus independence or obedience versus autonomy" (Reichenbach and Kwak 2020, 19). Such dichotomies easily fall apart upon examination of the rich history of ideas in "Eastern" and "Western" education.

Traditional Chinese elementary textbooks were authored not simply for the child's amusement but were also shaped by myriad educational concerns. These include inherited theories about the aims of education and the nature of the child's development. The textbooks provide a glimpse of the pre-modern Chinese philosophy of education, views on

early childhood education, and childhood generally. Although "philosophy of education" is an interdisciplinary field of research in the West, pre-modern Chinese educational theory can be considered a part of Chinese traditional philosophy itself. Primary educational thought was shaped by philosophers, scholar-officials, and primary school teachers. However, viewing the pre-modern and early modern Chinese curriculum as solely "philosophical," "moral education," or "rote learning" is both reductionist and misguided. Elementary education was shaped by myriad sociopolitical circumstances and different philosophical trends that interacted in creative and innovative ways. In particular, the eclectic nature of late imperial education also lends itself to possible comparison with Western curriculums that may have emerged through the ideas of different models and educators.

Many of the pre-modern pedagogies and issues may also find resonance with contemporary curricular concerns. While reading Chinese intellectual history or the history of education may be challenging to non-sinologists given the technical discourse, engaging with translations of primers provides an accessible first step to the pedagogy. Due to the requirements of the civil service examinations that were linked with the philosophical traditions, intellectual aims were largely restricted to the mastery of literary knowledge rather than mathematical or scientific knowledge. This might be considered the study of the humanities in contrast to the sciences in modern academic disciplines. However, the content of the textbooks demonstrates that learning was multidimensional, encompassing intellectual, social, aesthetic, and ethical elements. Moreover, the development of related skills through texts manifests the twin emphases of knowledge-based and process-based learning. Indeed, different schools of thought focused on practical outcomes to be acquired—sixteenth-century philosopher Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472–1528) espoused the doctrine of unity between knowledge and action (*zhi xing heyi* 知行合一).[19] For example, *Words for Children* (*Xiao'er yu* 小兒語) opens with the straightforward instruction: "What we say and do, stay calm." The curricular content in the textbooks may help educators today

19 "Knowledge is the beginning of action and action the completion of knowledge" (Chan 1963, 11).

question how different goals may be realized within the same teaching material. For example, how knowledge acquisition through book learning can also facilitate social engagement and character development while furthering vocational aims.

Engaging the powers of memory was the main learning strategy at the beginning of the child's formal schooling and primers were designed to aid memory retention. In the emphasis of memory for language development, there are interesting parallels with medieval European culture.[20] Even into the seventeenth century the schoolboy's skills in Latin composition also required memorization and explication of Roman authors (Hartman 1986, 235–236). Unlike the method of loci first described by Cicero and popularly used in medieval Europe (Carruthers 2008, 25), premodern Chinese children would memorize by iteration of the texts aided by prosodic and semantic cues. While the learning method of memorization has been criticized by some modern scholars (Xu 2016, 21–38), it is interesting that the literature on traditional Chinese literacy education has refuted claims that such a method is ungrounded. Memorization was based on linguistic concerns, as well as philosophical thought and ideas on the child's cognitive development. Zhang Zhigong (2017, 35) and Evelyn Rawski (1979, 49) believe that the nature of the Chinese language inevitably meant that committing characters and syntax to memory was the most efficient learning method. If reading required simultaneously mastering the pronunciation (reading), orthography (writing), and semantics (comprehension) of each character, the process would be extremely slow and hinder the development of other intellectual skills. Hence, it was due to the non-alphabetic script that elementary texts were learnt in an order that shifted the focus from character recognition to reading comprehension and then writing. Moreover, this learning method was likely necessitated by the classical language itself. The texts to be studied in advanced learning were written in literary Chinese, which was also the writing style for the civil service examinations. However, the lexicon and grammatical patterns of classical Chinese differed from vernacular Chinese—a situation that has been described as a form of

20 For a comparison of the role of memorization in medieval Europe and Chinese literary culture, see Nugent (2010), 72–117.

diglossia (Li 2016, 414).[21] Literary Chinese was learnt through rigorous training and used by the educated elite in formal, sophisticated writing, while vernacular Chinese referred to the informal, colloquial expression practiced among the population generally. Based on the characteristics of the written language, Charles Ridley (1973, 351) asserts that through memorization, "the traditional Chinese may have chosen the simplest and wisest approach to language teaching." The importance of committing textual information to memory in the educational process was also considered from a philosophical and physiological basis. For example, Zhang Zai 張載 (1020–1077) stated: "As long as [the classics] were memorised, they could be stated; as long as they could be stated, they could be practised" (Yu 2003, 49–51). Remembering the text meant familiarity with not only the syntax and semantics of literary Chinese but also the lessons and exemplars. Similarly, Mary Carruthers writes of medieval European scholarship:

> The process [of memorizing] familiarizes a text to a medieval scholar, in a way like that by which human beings may be said to familiarize their food. It is both physiological and psychological, and it changes both the food and its consumer (Carruthers 2008, 205).

In other words, memorization was believed to aid implementation and self-development. From a physiological perspective, Lu Shiyi 陸世儀 (1611–1672) wrote that the child's memory capacity was most robust up to the age of fifteen and this early period should ideally be dedicated to memorizing. Memorization was thus an established educational practice and a key consideration in the production of primers. Written by scholars trained in literary Chinese, the rhyme and rhythmic schemes in the textbooks were based on a long-established poetic tradition. This aided students in committing to memory the structure and content of future reading and writing.

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21 Christoph Harbsmeier argues that there was not a "strict dichotomy" between classical and colloquial Chinese prior to the May Fourth Movement, but this relates to the spoken language rather than literary language, which he notes used the "authoritative *wenyanwen*" (Harbsmeier 2001, 377 and 397).

Learning was considered a gradual cumulative process. It was believed that earlier understanding would guide future thought and behavior; thus, what a child learnt first would be most influential (*xian ru wei zhu* 先入為主). The relevant knowledge, values, attitudes, and behavior were not based on contemporary thought nor the author's opinion but distilled from the literary tradition. The personages, literary allusions, and concepts introduced in the primers commonly featured across various primers and were encountered in later reading. This repetition of information served to improve the strength of the association in the child's memory. Indeed, Christopher Nugent has argued through modern memory research that the main purpose of the *Thousand Character Essay* was as "mnemonic pegs" by which the classical writings could be recalled (Nugent 2018, 159). Such intertextuality acted as a cognitive scaffold onto which the content of advanced texts could be better comprehended at a later stage.

Beyond contributing to scholarship in Sinology and education, children's primers provide fertile ground for understanding views on the child and childhood. Admittedly, the teaching materials provide a historical representation of normative, adult-centered rather than experiential, child-oriented perspectives. Books for children are ultimately underpinned by the contemporary intellectual thought, and it is the sociocultural schemes by which childhood was constructed that remain valuable.[22] Studies on pre-modern views on the child inform a broader understanding of popular attitudes, family life, and community networks (Hsiung 2005, 2–5). Indeed, drawing on polling results from modern American families, Peter Stearns points to a nostalgia for "more traditional standards of family life and responsibility" (Stearns 2017, 178). He notes that modern models of childhood have undeniably made progress toward increased schooling and low death rates, but it does have its drawbacks. For example, the recent attention to happiness in the history of children had led to complex consequences, particularly in consumeristic interpretations (Stearns 2017, 166–172). Recognizing the strengths of more traditional childhood models from around the world through

22 Alan Prout and Allison James first argued for the new paradigm of childhood as a social construction (Prout and James 1997, 7–33).

primary sources like the primers could provide some clarity towards modern issues and how they arose.

Traditional Chinese children's textbooks may not merely be utilized for language development and educational discourse but have the potential to enrich curriculums in the teaching of the humanities, values, and culture in general. As discussed above, the primer genre was borrowed to communicate the foundational knowledge of other languages, subjects, and faith traditions. But many primers themselves were characterized by a pluralist style—a plethora of ideas were presented from the pantheon of Chinese philosophical traditions for the beginner. For example, the *Exalted Treatise on the Response of the Dao* (*Taishang ganying pian* 太上感應篇) (c. 1164) unequivocally espouses Daoist thought but includes Confucian and Buddhist elements that were widely accepted by all levels of society (Brokaw 1991, 40). Such a pluralistic approach rooted in different traditions may be relevant for an increasingly connected world. As William Theodore de Bary (2003, 369–370) explains:

> A new multicultural education for a world community will have to combine an understanding of both native cultures and world cultures. Coming to terms with one's own past culture will be, for everyone and all peoples, an essential element in arriving at the self-understanding that is a precondition for understanding others. In my view the best way to accomplish this is for every curriculum, as part of a shared general education, to have a place for the reading and discussion of classic texts that have stood as landmarks of the developing traditions in each country.

The tropes, narratives, symbols, and exemplars may be seen across cultures and invite transnational comparative research (Dutheil de la Rochère et al. 2016). But more interestingly, pre-modern and early modern Chinese children's primers may present alternative ideas, genres, and styles that can stimulate classroom discussion and inspire young minds. English translations of the primers make it possible for schools to consider content from various ancient texts and reach across cultures in relevant subjects, thereby enriching multinational and multiracial classrooms.

In summary, the translations aim to bring such literature to modern readers, including those without knowledge or training in literary

Chinese. The book is intended for both specialist and non-specialist audiences. For scholars of children's literature, early modern Chinese education, and Chinese cultural history, the text supplements the literature on traditional elementary education and provides impetus for further research in comparative literature and cross-cultural education studies. The book would also be well suited to graduate and advanced undergraduate courses on primary education that focus on cross-cultural perspectives and understanding how educational philosophy and literature interact to facilitate learning. Additionally, teachers of the Chinese language and primary and secondary school teachers may be interested in how Chinese primers can be read as part of world literature, multicultural learning, and values education subjects. The translations in this *Sourcebook* can be directly used as teaching material to support such purposes.

3. SELECTION OF PRIMARY SOURCES

Children's textbooks proliferated throughout the history of late imperial China and evolved into different forms. They can be broadly classified based on their function in the child's educational journey in pre-modern China—taking their first steps with etiquette, accumulating a rudimentary vocabulary, developing cultural literacy, and realizing their fortunes in the civil service examinations and their future careers. The *Sourcebook* offers a selection of eleven traditional primers reflecting etiquette primers, basic literacy, general knowledge for cultural literacy, and moral learning. The different types of subject matter will be briefly covered in this section.

It may be argued that some of these texts were also read by adults and were not strictly "children's" primers. Scoping out the boundaries of the field of the children's primer presents similar challenges encountered in attempting to define "children's literature" (Hunt 1994, 4–11). For example, some familiar characters from childhoods across the continents, such as Snow White, Robinson Crusoe, and the Monkey King, were not originally written for child audiences.[23] Indeed, literature for adults was often

23 In the English context, novels originally written for adults that later become popular and associated with young readers include *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Gulliver's Travels*, and *Robinson Crusoe*.

also read by children through their learning or leisure. Moreover, texts read in youth may be continually revisited, studied, and enjoyed even during adult years. The historical context is thus important in our analysis of the text, and contemporary assumptions and readership should not be imposed on the past. Carrie Hintz and Eric L. Tribunella (2019, 85) explain that early Western children's literature was a subset of mixed-age literature—"literate children would have read—and been imagined as part of the audience for—much of what was written and published before the end of the nineteenth century." This has parallels to the pre-modern Chinese context, particularly in terms of educational texts as the learning was cumulative with texts studied for the imperial examinations introduced in younger years. As such, authorial intent is not necessarily determinative—children's primers were not simply writing *for* children. On the other hand, the intention of the author or publisher may have been to produce texts for beginner readers through certain content, structure, and format, but the book must have ultimately been read by the child. The primers included in the *Sourcebook* were read by children for didactic purposes in imperial Chinese history, although many remained well read even into adulthood.

Etiquette Primers

Courtesy and good manners have long been a mainstay of primary education. The word "etiquette" conjures images of adults instructing children to sit up straight, eat without sound, and cover one's mouth when coughing. Ritual or etiquette (*li* 禮) in the Confucian sense is similar but also includes personal comportment, customs, and ceremonies. The common denominator is that these are human activities, codes of behavior and speech, that are learnt and expressed to facilitate reverence. Scholars have described Chinese etiquette as a social language or cultural grammar (Li 2007). Like any language or grammar, ritual etiquette must be learnt.

Instructions on etiquette have been important in both Occidental and Chinese education. Instructions on conduct in Europe have been found in a tenth-century German tract and in England, the "Boke of Curtasye" dates from the early fifteenth century (Field 1891, 95–96). The *Analects* records Confucius personally directing his son Boyu 伯魚 (532–483 BCE)

to study the rituals: "If you don't study the ritual etiquette, you won't have any basis to stand on" (*Lunyu* 16.13; Watson 2007, 118). Ritual was particularly emphasized in primary education as early as the Western Zhou period (1046–771 BCE). The *Rites of Zhou* (*Zhouli* 周禮) documented that the Guardian (*baoshi* 保氏) taught the "six Confucian arts" (*liuyi* 六藝), namely rites, music, archery, driving, literacy, and mathematics (*Zhouli* 14.253). However, there is no further detail of the curricular content. The *Records on Ritual* (*Liji* 禮記) compiled in the Later Han dynasty (25–220) was the first text to offer instructions on child behavior, for example: "A child should never be allowed to see an instance of deceit" (*Liji* 1.37; Legge 1968, 69–70). Song dynasty philosopher Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200) later pioneered a type of children's textbook by extracting articles specifically on ritual conduct from the *Records on Ritual*, compiling the *Essential Instructions for the Young* (*Tongmeng xuzhi* 童蒙須知).

A plethora of primers written in the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) were based on Zhu's thoughts on primary education and modeled on his textbooks. The primers were generally structured by activities of daily life, such as leisure, attire, and personal hygiene, with meticulously detailed guidelines. For example, the *Guidelines for Learners* (*Dizi gui* 弟子規) by Li Yuxiu 李毓秀 (1647–1729), *Etiquette and Various Admonitions for Children* (*You yi za zhen* 幼儀雜箴) by Fang Xiaoru 方孝孺 (1357–1402), and *Ritual Propriety for Youngsters* (*Tongzi li* 童子禮) by Tu Xi 屠羲 (dates unknown) provided instruction on ritual behavior. Other elementary textbooks that did not focus on ritual propriety still referred to the importance of such knowledge and practice for children. The *Three Character Classic* states: "A child must learn from teachers and peers, And practise manners from early years" (Huang 1992, 23). The understanding and practice of etiquette was therefore an established aspect of children's textbooks.

The *Sourcebook* presents translations of four works that trace instructions for children over their formative years. They vary in length and style—*Words for Children* and *Further Words for Children* are nursery rhymes, while the *Guidelines for Learners* and *Essentials of Daily Etiquette* (*Chang li ju yao* 常禮舉要) classify the attitudes and conduct into distinct domains of life. Ritual instructions common in late imperial China akin to the medieval European conduct guides for youth may be fruitful for cross-cultural comparison.

Basic Literacy Primers

Literacy primers were the earliest type of primer in Chinese, designed to provide a stock of vocabulary presented with rhyme and rhythm for ease of learning. While a child learning English often begins with singing the letters of the alphabet, the non-alphabetical Chinese script means that the pronunciation of the written word is not necessarily determinable from deconstructing its form. The child would have to separately learn the sound, form, and meaning of each written character individually.

Historically, learning to read began with memorizing the sound of the characters, known as character recognition (*shizi* 識字). Children would memorize elementary texts that were used primarily for basic literacy. The parent or tutor would read each sentence aloud and ask the child to repeat after them. Qing educators, such as Wang Yun 王筠 (1784–1854) and Cui Xuegu 崔學古 (dates unknown), advocated for teachers to provide brief explanations of characters as the child recited. Another method proposed by Wang Yun (1941) was to learn the characters through their form utilizing the principles of character construction. However, the predominant practice up until the last century of imperial China was that the child would read the text following recitation of the entire text (Li 2004, 1536–1543).

From the Song dynasty onwards, the *Three Character Classic*, the *Hundred Family Names*, and the *Thousand Character Essay* dominated early literacy training. The three texts became highly popular and were collectively known as the "Three Hundred Thousand" (*san bai qian* 三百千).[24] Mastering the "Three Hundred Thousand" equipped the student with a vocabulary of approximately two thousand characters within a period of one to two years. This was considered the minimum number of characters required before the classical texts of advanced learning could be read. In this way, the child was concurrently introduced to the structural patterns of classical Chinese by memorizing the phrases of the elementary texts. The reader would become familiar with key people, places, events, customs, and values of Chinese culture. The *Sourcebook* offers new translations of these three key basic literacy primers in Chinese history—the *Three Character Classic*, the *Hundred Family Names*, and the *Thousand Character Essay.*

24 Character books (*zazi* 雜字) also provided collections of characters but were largely used by the lower strata of society.

Cultural Literacy Primers

The English expression "sour grapes" does not literally mean "tart fruit" but rather a "disdain towards the unattainable." Similarly, Chinese literature is awash with literary allusions and proverbial phrases challenging the reader to discover underlying philosophical perspectives and cultural values. For example, the Chinese proverb "where the river narrows, the waters gush" (*Extended Wise Sayings*) is not a hydrological observation but an analogy for the following maxim: "When one feels pressured, ideas rush." Beyond the initial stage of developing vocabulary, reading involved comprehension and further character recognition. The classical Chinese language, historical allusions, and philosophical thought in the material that were distinct from everyday life and experience would now pose major challenges. Thus, primers with rhymed sentences and information on history, general knowledge, and ethics were designed to aid this stage of the learning process.

The *Sourcebook* has selected two works that explore the rich cultural material that budding scholars and general readers would be familiar with. The *Classic of Family Reverence* is a window to ideals of ancient China and early Confucian thought, while the *Extended Wise Sayings* (*Zengguang xianwen* 增廣賢文) represents the eclectic worldviews and beliefs from around the seventeenth century. Both functioned as primers for shared intergenerational understanding. The embedded cultural knowledge was fundamental to written and verbal communication—a cultural literacy that served as "the oxygen of social intercourse" (Hirsch Jr. 1987, 19). Aphorisms such as "Don't cast pearls before swine" seem quaint, but the underlying ability to intuit another's interests is the skill of an engaging conversationalist and an empathetic friend. Virtuous qualities were considered to stem from the cultivation of family reverence (*xiao* 孝), with the value of family reverence being the "very heart of Chinese culture" (Holzman 1998, 198). Regardless of whether the student was preparing to sit the civil service examinations or merely acquiring a functional literacy, these texts provided stepping stones to greater cultural awareness.

Morality Primers

Appealing to the common denominator in ethical thought, the literary tradition of popular morality books (*shanshu* 善書) had been established

since the Song dynasty. Such texts were described as "popular" because they served a broad readership—readers of all ages and from all walks of life, including those affiliated with different scholarly and religious traditions (Tadao 1970, 341). The texts generally explain how a person can improve their fortunes in life by accumulating merits that lead to good fortune and avoiding demerits that precipitate misfortune. They identify various types of ethical conduct and unethical conduct to that end.

The *Exalted Treatise on the Response of the Dao* and *Lord Wenchang's Essay on Quiet Merits* (*Wenchang di jun yinzhi wen* 文昌帝君陰騭文) are two works that focus on the system of merit and demerit overseen by Daoist spirits and deities. The principle of accumulating merit for good fortune underpinned this subgenre that proliferated in late imperial China. Although the following two primers are attributed to the Daoist tradition of thought, they promote values that resonated with many religious and ethical traditions, and they have enjoyed a mainstream readership with extensive dissemination by Confucian scholars and Buddhist masters alike.[25] That numerous phrases from these primers have become proverbial in vernacular Chinese is a testament to their popularity.[26]

The categorization of traditional Chinese children's primers has historically presented difficulties given the nature of the content and lack of mutual exclusivity among the categories. The literacy primers included in this compilation were not simply wordbooks but also stocks of precepts and idioms. Etiquette primers could further one's vocabulary, and cultural literacy primers also instructed on ritual practice. Thus, rather than organizing the translations into categories, the translations have been arranged in chronological order to enable the reader to form their own conclusions regarding the content. Rather than reading the *Sourcebook* sequentially, readers may consider turning to primers based on their interests.

To orient the reader, each translation begins with an introduction to the individual texts, including details of the authorship, textual history, transmission, and former translations. There are also many other

25 For example, both the *Exalted Treatise on the Response of the Dao* and *Lord Wenchang's Essay on Quiet Merits* have been lectured, promoted, and reprinted by the Buddhist Master Chin Kung 淨空 (1927–2022) (Sun 1997, 401).

26 For example, a list of proverbial phrases derived from the *Exalted Treatise on the Response of the Dao* is appended to the translation by James Webster (Webster 1918, Appendix 2).

pre-modern and early modern Chinese children's primers that are worthy of translation or re-translation. We look forward to working on another volume of translations for texts not currently included in this *Sourcebook*.

4. HISTORY OF THE CHILD'S BOOK

While the history of the children's book forms part of Chinese book history generally, children's primers were traditionally neglected by scholars, bibliophiles, and book collectors in comparison to texts for the social elite. In printing, they were often printed in smaller quantities and of inferior quality in terms of cheaper paper material and more print errors. As such, the preservation and record of elementary texts in pre-modern China did not appear to warrant compelling interest. Indeed, Zhang Zhigong, who wrote one of the first comprehensive overviews of primers for language acquisition in the 1960s, lamented:

> Elementary education was rarely recorded. Book collectors did not value elementary textbooks, and many are now lost, such that it is challenging to acquire texts nowadays. The texts were seldom documented, and even bibliographic details are difficult to find today (Zhang 2017, 7).

Despite the challenges, recent decades have seen a number of studies of late imperial Chinese book history by Sinologists that have incorporated analysis of elementary educational texts (Brokaw and Chow 2006; Brokaw 2007, 321–409).

What did the children's textbooks look like? Prior to the development of woodblock printing in China during the mid-eighth century, the material form of texts was hand-written scrolls of bamboo and wooden slips, silk cloth, or paper.[27] The earliest recorded text for teaching children literacy, the *Historian Zhou's Primer* (*Shi zhou pian* 史籀篇), written in around the eighth century BCE, is no longer extant. However, a number of excavated wooden slip fragments have been affiliated with third century BCE texts based on the *Historian Zhou's Primer*—the *Cang Jie's Primer* (*Cang jie pian* 倉頡篇) (Figures 1a and 1b), the *Yuanli*

27 The earliest evidence of printing in China dates to the mid-eighth century (McDermott 2006b, 12).



Figure 1a. Fragment of the *Cang Jie Primer* wooden slip in the Juyan Han strips 居延漢簡 JY 185.020. Courtesy of the Academia Sinica Institute of History and Philology Digital Archive of the Han Wooden Slips, CC BY-NC-ND 3.0 TW DEED.



Figure 1b. Fragment of the *Cang Jie Primer* wooden slip in the Juyan Han strips 居延漢簡 JY 260.009. Courtesy of the Academia Sinica Institute of History and Philology Digital Archive of the Han Wooden Slips, CC BY-NC-ND 3.0 TW DEED.

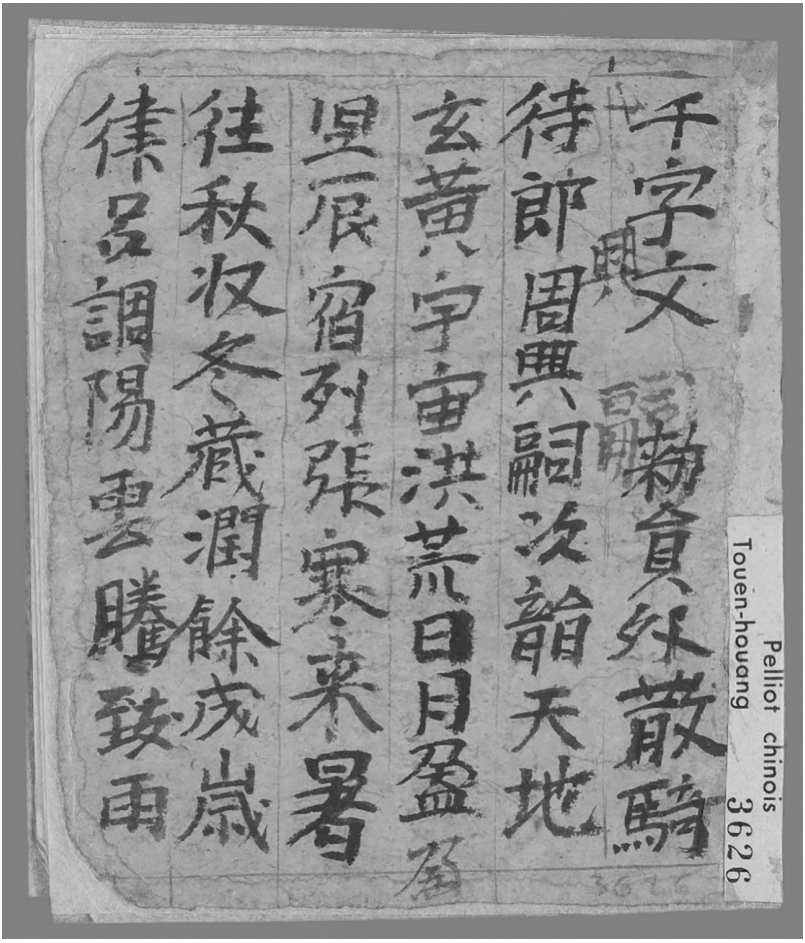


Figure 2. The first section of the *Thousand Character Essay* in the Dunhuang manuscript P.3626. Courtesy of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Primer (*Yuan li pian* 爰歷篇), and the *Scholarly Primer* (*Boxue pian* 博學篇) (Foster 2017, 61–169). Manuscripts of multiple textbooks for young readers from the medieval Chinese period have been discovered in the Mogao Caves of Dunhuang, China, such as the *Thousand Character Essay* (Figures 2 and 3) (Zheng and Zhu 2002; Jiang 2017, 77). Printed reading-primers and character lists have been documented since the late ninth century (McDermott 2006b, 10). A commercial publishing

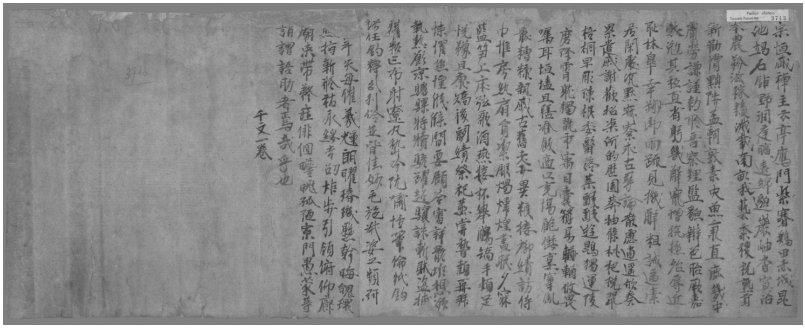


Figure 3. The final section of the *Thousand Character Essay* in the Dunhuang manuscript P.3743. Courtesy of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

boom at the start of the sixteenth century attributed to the reduced cost of paper and woodblock carving, amongst other factors, ultimately saw the imprint overtake the manuscript in circulation (McDermott 2006a, 78–80). During this period, children's textbooks particularly proliferated in variety and transmission.

Notwithstanding changes in the material form from roll to codex, the format of the text largely remained unchanged. Writing was traditionally arranged in vertical columns from top to bottom and progressed from right to left. This layout is evident even in the Shang dynasty (ca. 1200–1045 BCE) inscriptions on oracle bones and bronze vessels. Writing on bamboo or wooden slips necessitated the vertical alignment of the script, which was maintained even on sheets of silk and paper. From the fourth century, interlinear commentary or annotations were included and differentiated from the main text by smaller font in a format known as "inserted double-column annotations" (*shuanghang jiazhu* 雙行夾註)—two columns of commentary fitting into a single column of main text. The basic vertical layout continued when these manuscripts were transcribed onto wood blocks for printing (Figure 4). While illustrated matter (*tu* 圖), such as diagrams, maps, and pictures, had appeared in the Confucian classics since the early centuries of the Common Era, there is limited evidence to suggest that such material circulated outside the court (Murray 2006, 418). By the mid-sixteenth century, illustrated texts were circulated among the

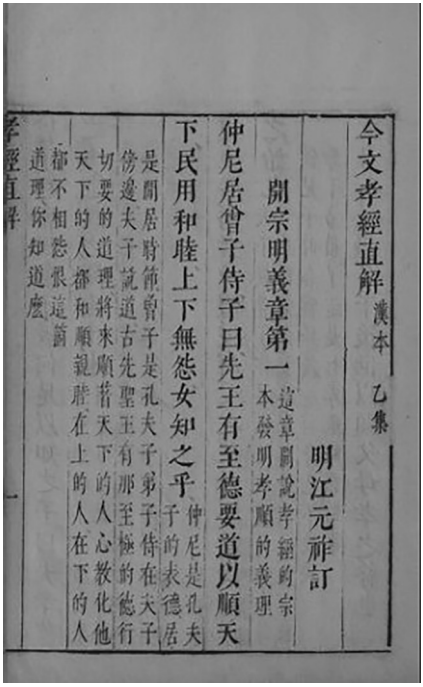

今文孝經直解 漢本 乙集
明江元祚訂
開宗明義章第一 這章開說孝經的宗本發明孝順的義理
仲尼居曾子侍子曰先王有至德要道以順天下民用和睦上下無怨女知之乎 仲尼是孔夫子的表德居是閒居時節曾子是孔夫子弟子侍在夫子傍邊夫子說道古先聖王有那至極的德行切要的道理將來順着天下的人心教化他天下的人都和順親睦在上的人在下的人都不相怨恨這箇道理你知道麽
孝經直解

Figure 4. Printed in 1633, the *Comprehensive Commentaries on the Classic of Family Reverence* (*Xiaojing daquan* 孝經大全) shows the commentary in smaller font size. Courtesy of the Chinese University of Hong Kong Library Chinese Rare Book Digital Collection.

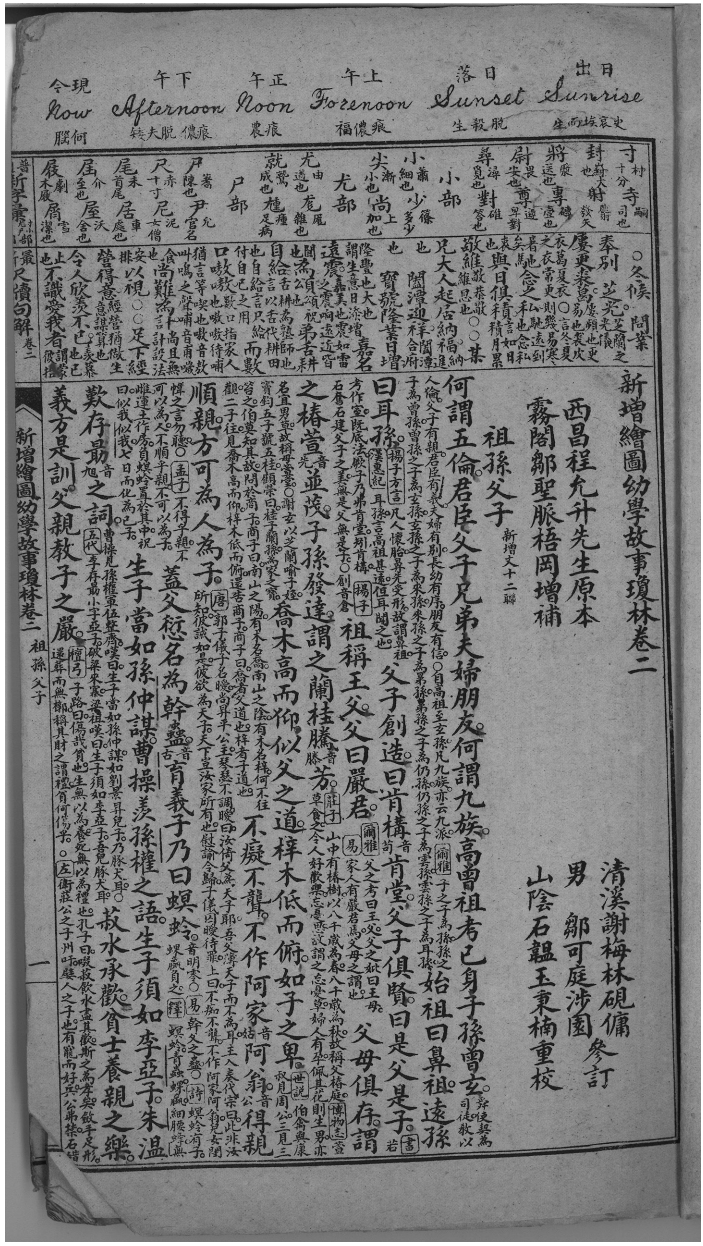
general population and illustrated primers also appeared (Figure 5) (Bai 2005, 63–64). As printing technology advanced, the page layout became increasingly complex with the inclusion of various paratexts for marketability. These paratexts produced an "encyclopedic" reference work to cater to diverse audiences beyond the young child.

The late nineteenth-century primer *Revised and Illustrated Treasury of Elementary Learning* (*Xinzeng huitu Youxue qionglin* 新增繪圖幼學瓊林) demonstrates the densely crowded page layout (Figure 6). The content reflected the intellectual milieu with increasing Western influence that would lead to educational reforms in the early twentieth century in addition to the practical needs of a popular non-elite audience. The



Figure 5. Pages from the *Illustrated Edition of the Extended Wise Sayings* (*Huitu Zengguang xianwen* 繪圖增廣賢文) with the upper register providing illustrations of selected proverbs. Courtesy of the World Book Co. Ltd.

top margin of each page includes English vocabulary for the months of the year, the days of the week, the alphabet, and the names of Chinese cities and common terms. Chinese characters precede the English and its Chinese transcription. Below the top margin, each page is divided into three registers. The upper register contains text from the *New Compendium of Characters* (*Xin Zihui* 新字彙), which was a Chinese dictionary. The characters are classified according to radicals and common words are provided in large font. Reading from right to left, the smaller font underneath shows the pronunciation on the right and a concise definition on the left. The middle register provides model correspondence (*chidu* 尺牘) from a textbook with questions and answers about learning. The lower register is the annotated primer *Treasury of*


新增繪圖幼學故事瓊林卷二

清溪謝梅林硯儒參訂

男 鄒可庭涉園

山陰石盤玉東楠重校

何謂五倫君臣父子兄弟夫婦朋友何謂九族高曾祖考己身子孫曾玄始祖曰鼻祖遠孫曰耳孫父子創造曰肯構肯堂父子俱賢曰是父是子父母俱存謂之椿萱並茂子孫發達謂之蘭桂騰芳不癡不聾不作阿家阿翁得親之椿萱並茂子孫發達謂之蘭桂騰芳喬木高而仰似父之道梓木低而俯如子之卑不癡不聾不作阿家阿翁得親順親方可為人子生子當如孫仲謀曹操羨孫權之語生子須如李亞子朱溫歎存勗之詞蓋父祭名為幹蠱育義子乃曰螟蛉敖水永歡貧士養親之樂義方是訓父親教子之嚴

Elementary Learning (*Youxue qionglin* 幼學瓊林) with the annotations printed in smaller font. The changing layout, paratexts, and physical appearance of various editions of the *Treasury of Elementary Learning* spanning three hundred years to the early twentieth century have been studied in examining the sociohistorical changes that guided publishing strategies (Li 2022, 7).

Beyond manuscript and print, children's primers were also reproduced in creative ways as an integral part of East Asian material culture, as in artwork such as paintings (Figure 7) and calligraphy, but even as a part of cups (Figure 8a and 8b) and clothing (Figure 9). Following China's renewed interest in Confucianism and research on traditional education in the late 1980s, traditional children's primers have been increasingly published as compilations and with vernacular Chinese translations. Moreover, comic and storybook editions of the primers appeared from the 1990s (Figure 10).



Figure 7. Painting of the *Classic of Family Reverence* (*Xiaojing tu* 孝經圖) on silk by Li Gonglin 李公麟 (c. 1041–1106) dated to c. 1085. This section depicts illustrations of chapters 11 and 12. Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, shared under CC0 1.0 DEED.



Figure 8a. Japanese porcelain sake-cup bearing the entire *Thousand Character Essay* text, produced 1851–1880. Courtesy of The Trustees of the British Museum, shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International Licence (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).

5. A NOTE ON THE TRANSLATIONS

This volume offers an anthology of traditional children's primers translated for an English audience. There are multiple issues of translating children's literature that have been extensively discussed in the writings on translation studies, which remain pertinent to pre-modern Chinese children's primers. While the initial language barrier is overcome, foreign names, dynastic periods, literary references, idiomatic discourse, and cultural details present another challenge. To what extent are foreign cultural terms and names adapted? Opinions on such cultural mediation in children's texts are divided based on ideas about the child's cognition



Figure 8b. Japanese porcelain sake-cup lying on its side showing inscription of the *Thousand Character Essay* text, produced 1851–1880. Courtesy of The Trustees of the British Museum, shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International Licence (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).

and interest in digesting new concepts. We have aimed for scholarly translations utilizing a "foreignising" translation strategy that brings the reader to pre-modern China (Venuti 1995, 15–20). Like the explanations in a travel guide, our footnotes decode the allusions to guide this journey. Admittedly, this format would be tedious to a seven-year-old child—the likely readership in imperial China. However, they are meant to support parents, educators, and scholars today who might first engage with the texts before they can recommend, review, and explain them to their students or children.

Given that a few of the primers have not, or not fully, been translated into English, we chose not to adopt some existing translations, but to translate all of them afresh for lucidity, readability, and consistency in approach throughout this *Sourcebook*. Each translation endeavors to accurately convey an understanding of the original text (what did it say) along

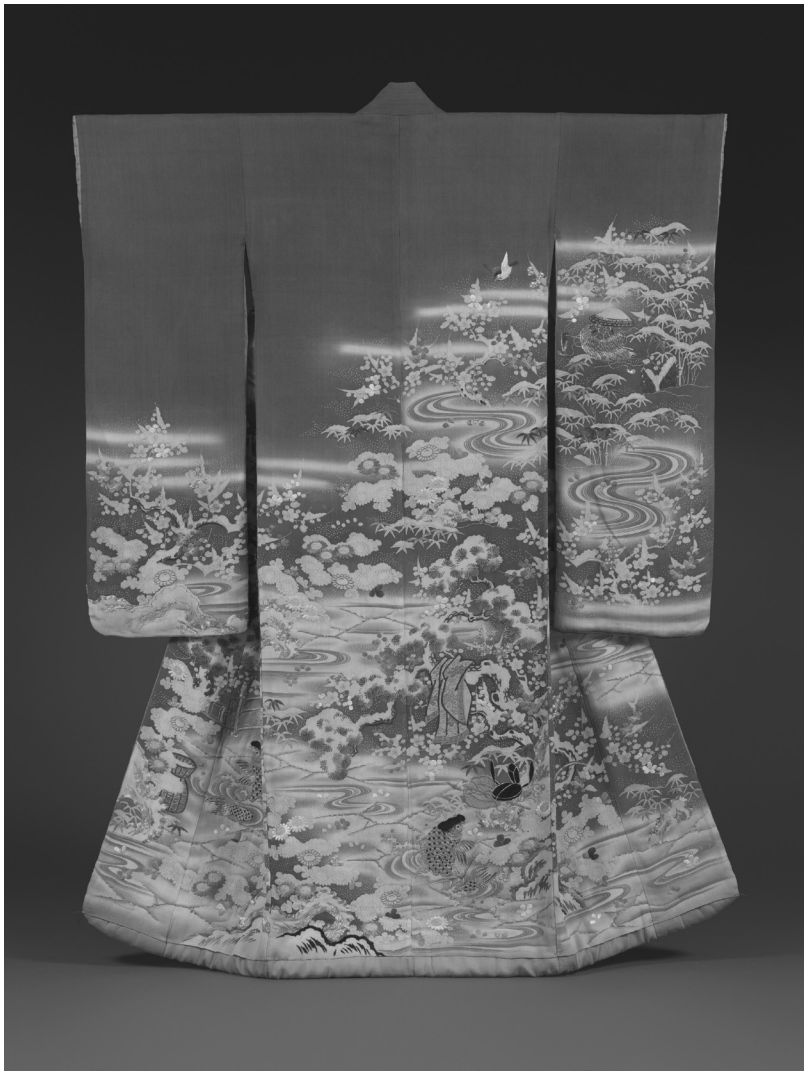


Figure 9. Japanese warrior-class woman's silk outer robe (Uchikake) with scenes from the primer *Twenty-Four Exemplars of Family Reverence* (*Ershisi xiao* 二十四孝), dated to the late eighteenth–early nineteenth century. Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, shared under CC0 1.0 DEED.



Figure 10. Page from the *Illustrated Reader of the Guidelines for Learners* (*Dizi gui tu shuo* 弟子規圖說) published in 2012. Courtesy of the Hwadzan Pure Land Association.

with a sense of its style and linguistic richness (how did it read), with clarity in the language and the logic and flow of ideas. The following discussion hopes to lay out the translation considerations based on the stylistic devices and terminology in the primers to facilitate reader engagement.

Matters of Style

While many of the primers in this volume remain well read in modern China, the dates of composition span nearly 1,400 years—from the earliest of the *Thousand Character Essay* in the sixth century to the most

recent being the *Essentials of Daily Etiquette* compiled from pre-modern literature in the late twentieth century. Various styles were employed to facilitate learning, recitation, and enjoyment. Identifying textual structures common to all texts in this compilation may be difficult given their different time periods and functions. However, key elements of style found in the primer genre include rhyme and rhythm, use of literary allusions, and metaphors.

Readers will immediately notice the brevity of the sentences. Most of the texts were written in poetic meter for prosodic effect—the *Classic of Family Reverence*, the *Exalted Treatise on the Response of the Dao*, *Lord Wenchang's Essay on Quiet Merits*, and the *Essentials of Daily Etiquette* are the only texts in the *Sourcebook* written in prose. Most textbooks that employed rhyme had sentences of a fixed length. The *Three Character Classic* and the *Guidelines for Learners* were written in three-syllable verse. However, the four-syllable verse was most common, as exemplified by primers such as the *Thousand Character Essay*, the *Inquiries of the Young* (*Mengqiu* 蒙求), and the *Hundred Family Names* (*Bai jia xing* 百家姓). Both *Words for Children* and *Further Words for Children* (*Xu Xiao'er yu* 續小兒語) of the sixteenth century were composed of four-syllable verse, six-syllable verse, and verse of various different syllable lengths. The rhythm of the short sentences coupled with rhyme resulted in catchy phrases that could be easily sung and recited. Even when sentences were not of fixed length, there was a conscious attempt to compile couplets (*Extended Wise Sayings*) or to write in parallel prose or pairs of sentences with equal length (*Lord Wenchang's Essay on Quiet Merits*).[28] Readability was crucial in catering to the young audience and helping them commit the instructions to memory for mastery. Our translations thus endeavor to follow the same rhyme patterns where the primers were originally

28 The five rules for parallel constructions are that both lines should have: an equal number of characters, related meaning, the same lexical categories of corresponding characters (also known as "character pairs"), the same grammatical function of corresponding characters, and inverse tones. However, parallel sentences that do not strictly adhere to the rules may allow for repetition of characters, tonal variation and dissimilar lexical categories (Cheng et al. 1991, 813–814; Wang 2015, 86).

written in rhymed verse. The rhymed translation aims to offer a sense of the catchy prosody characteristic of the original primer. Each line of the English translation is accompanied by the original Chinese text to help the reader appreciate the relevant syllable length and pithy phrasing, which may not be apparent in the English lines.

A striking difference between pre-modern Chinese children's primers and modern Western children's literature is the lack of narrative. Legends, fables, and historical accounts that were an essential part of cultural literacy are not recounted in full detail. Instead, they are embedded in laconic literary allusions—fragments that provide a window to texts that the child would study in the future. The lessons from these stories were also transmitted as idioms used for everyday expression. Whether translating verse or prose, the English expression attempts to be as crisp, clear, and concise as the classical Chinese. However, to aid in understanding the allusions and links to the broader corpus of Chinese literature, we have endeavored to provide references to relevant texts, along with their English translations where available, in the footnotes. Such function of the footnotes may help to understand the role of the teacher in explicating the text as the child read in pre-modern China.

An example of the richness and density of this stylistic feature is the following line from *Further Words for Children*:

> Forbearance and yielding shows the greatest mind of all;
> Put on shoes, tie up socks, and crawl—are the hero's call

Three allusions from the *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the historian) are employed to elaborate on the importance of forbearance. The person who "put on the shoe" refers to Zhang Liang 張良 (d. 185) (*Shiji* 55.296–297; Yang and Yang 1979, 238–239). It was recorded that Zhang Liang in his youth encountered an elderly man who intentionally dropped his shoe under a bridge and requested him to retrieve it. After completing the task, he was further requested to help the elderly man put on the shoe. This was a rather demeaning act—having to kneel and put the shoe on a stranger—but Zhang Liang respected the man's seniority and followed his instructions. The elder subsequently revealed that the exercise had been a test of character and later left him with an ancient military treatise that shaped

Zhang Liang's success. The one who "tied up the socks" is a reference to government official Zhang Shizhi 張釋之 (fl. 177) known for his integrity (*Shiji* 102.672; van Ess 2008, 363–364). Even as the Superintendent of Trials (*tingwei* 廷尉), Zhang Shizhi willingly knelt to tie up the socks of an elder counsel in front of the assembled court. Consequently, he became highly regarded for his humility. The one who "crawled below" alludes to Han Xin's 韓信 (d. 196) humiliation of crawling under the legs of a bully rather than engaging in a fight to the death (*Shiji* 92.596; Wang 2008, 70). After achieving success some years later, Han Xin rewarded the bully for teaching him a lesson in fortitude. The allusion to each historical account is conveyed in no more than two Chinese characters, which fits the short rhythmic sentences of the primer. It is as if the compilers had aimed for maximum efficiency by referring to entire narratives using the fewest possible words. This presents both an obstacle and opportunity for the reader as they discover the literary world beyond the pages of the children's text.

Another stylistic device is the metaphor. Classical Chinese cosmologies have been described as dominated by correlative thinking—image or concept-clusters in the natural and social world are associated through meaningful disposition rather than physical causation (Ames 2023, 57–63). This is evident in the earliest sources of the Confucian and Daoist traditions. For example, in the *Odes* (*Shijing* 詩經), verses open with an image of nature analogous to the human situation posed in later lines. Pauline Yu writes that a fundamentally monistic view of the universe meant a oneness between humanity and the environment, and figurative language merely revealed the underlying connections. Yu (1987, 33) states: "the connections between subject and object or among objects, which the West has by and large credited to the creative ingenuity of the poet, are viewed in the Chinese tradition as already pre-established." Principles underlying the natural world informed humanity and how we should live. Imagery involving plants, animals, weather, and objects feature prominently in the primers. In describing the importance of time for assessing a relationship, the *Extended Wise Sayings* begins with reference to a horse: "Distance sets horses apart; Time reveals a person's heart." Similarly, the *Three Character Classic* explains that every creature has their responsibility to contribute through an analogy to insects: "The silkworm offers silk, bees make honey; Humans without learning are not worthy."

What children could observe in their environment was thus enlisted as relatable tools for the communication of abstract concepts. While our translations attempt to retain the metaphoric language, our priority is to use accessible vocabulary and avoid convoluted or overly technical expressions. This is to make the content approachable and engaging, as the primers were intended to be for beginner readers.

Terminology

As children's primers prepared youngsters for studying the Chinese literary tradition, foundational concepts in Chinese philosophy are mentioned. However, explanations of principles are largely absent in the genre. The following outline of key terms is to help readers navigate through the philosophical and intellectual ideas that informed the world of the primers, predominantly from a Confucian perspective. Although different English terms may be used depending on context and for the sake of prosody, we have tried to be reasonably consistent in our translation of terminology. It is hoped that seemingly familiar Western terms in the translations will not mislead but stimulate constructive engagement and association with the reader's own areas of interest.

***Dao* 道:** How the ultimate reality functioned was known as the Dao. The Dao denotes the workings of the universe for the flourishing of all beings and is also the way of human living that would lead to the realization of one's innate nature and hence the ultimate reality. Learning the Dao to realize one's nature was to begin from the formative stages of life, with "nourishing the correct nature" being the underlying principle for childhood education. The Dao was ever-present, but one needed to make a conscious effort to manifest it in each moment through the heart and mind. We have chosen the transliteration of the Chinese term "Dao," over translating it as the "Way" or "way," to draw the reader's attention to its philosophical significance. Moreover, it is written in a nominal form as distinct from other connotations of the Chinese term *dao* 道 as a path, method, or general "way" of conducting a task.

Family reverence (*xiao* 孝): Learning to care for parents and elders was foremost in the personal cultivation of character and conduct, encapsulated

in the virtue of family reverence (*xiao* 孝). The child would begin their cultivation through family interactions before relations in educational or community settings. This was considered a logical progression for one's cognitive, moral, and emotional development—one's relations at home being established relatively early in life and the frequent contact with family members being significant in shaping one's character. Knowledge, skills, and emotions refined at home could then be applied at school, in the workplace and beyond. As Mencius explained, "Attend to the elders in one's family and extend this to all elders. Care for the young in one's family and extend this to all youngsters" (*Mengzi* 1A.7). Virtuosity in conducting relations as between spouses, leader-subordinate, and friends was believed to stem from knowing how to fulfill one's moral duties within the family as between parent–child and among siblings. The culmination of family reverence was to "love all broadly" (*Lunyu* 1.6) and, in doing so, bring lasting renown to parents (*Xiaojing* 1.5). The Chinese character *xiao* 孝 has been translated as "filiality" or "filial piety"; however, we adopt Henry Rosemont Jr. and Roger Ames' (2009, 1) translation of "family reverence" as it more readily connotes a deference toward all generations of the family both past and present.

Fate (*ming* 命): The concept of fate is referred to in the texts not as a passive acceptance of one's situation—the result of past causes and antecedent conditions—but as a reminder of the need to cultivate oneself according to the Dao. It has been argued that early Confucian thought presents a tension between hard determinism (all events are completely determined) and indeterminism (events occur at random).[29] It was thought that humans had freedom to choose the good, with agency of freedom through the heart and mind (*xin* 心) (Li 2014). While many factors in life are predetermined, including a person's natural aptitudes and the family they are born into, the future is based on their choices and conduct in the present. In other words, choosing the good leads to the good life. Seemingly contradictory positions in the texts, as exemplified by the three extracts below, can be reconciled given this understanding.

29 Based on the Western philosophy of mind frameworks, Hwang has argued that early Confucian thought demonstrates soft determinism or compatibilism (Hwang 2013).

With no way out, one must accept fate;
Blame and impatience furthers disgrace.

(*Further Words for Children*)

Fate decides all we know;
Humans have no control.

(*Extended Wise Sayings*)

To expand fields of fortune, rely on the foundations of one's mind.

(*Lord Wenchang's Essay on Quiet Merits*)

The first two extracts take a hard deterministic tone exhorting the reader to submit to fate—the people, the environment, and the circumstances that one encounters. In contrast, the third extract employs the metaphor of crops in a field to refer to the good fortune that results from one's efforts in cultivating better character and conduct. Improving one's fortunes is thus feasible through learning and practice, just as harvests are brought about from tilling the fields. In fact, the extracts are not inconsistent as they offer constructive responses to different situations. In times of adversity, patience and tolerance can be more productive than resentment and blame, which risk causing detriment to one's integrity. However, one must actively choose to accord with the Dao in hopes of future flourishing. When conceit and complacency arise under favorable conditions, one must continue to choose the good rather than exhausting current fortunes. The adage "Humans have no control" thus informs the reader that fortune does not result from one's desires or scheming but requires abiding by the principle underlying the administration of fate. That is why "Fate decides all we know" and yet one must "rely on the foundations of their mind."

Heart or mind (*xin* 心): In Chinese philosophy, the non-duality between cognitive and affective states is reflected in the concept of *xin* 心, which refers to both the heart and the mind. While the translation "heart-mind" is common in Sinology to avoid an unreflective dualism between body and mind on the part of the reader, the term would be unfamiliar to non-specialists. We have therefore chosen to translate as "heart" or

"mind" depending on the context of cognition or emotion. Traditional Chinese learning involved cultivating the *xin* 心—to evaluate and modify one's thoughts and feelings such that they were consistent with the Dao. This would ultimately lead to words and deeds that also accorded with the Dao. As such, the mind could be trained through education to influence one's circumstances and others for the better.

Heaven and earth (*tiandi* 天地): The ancient Chinese worldview was based on the philosophy of the *Changes* in which the ultimate is encapsulated in the compound word "heaven and earth" (*tiandi* 天地) (Littlejohn 2022, 11), or the singular concept of "heaven" (*tian* 天). "Heaven" in the Confucian context had several meanings: the universe, the sky, the source of moral principles, and the ultimate. Similarly, "earth" was also a loaded concept connoting the physical terrain or the counterpart to heaven as a source of earthly life. The concept of "heaven and earth" refers to the underlying source and essential nature of all things above and below. The translations here do not capitalize the nouns to prevent confounding with religious connotations of "Heaven" and the notion of the planet "Earth."

Humanity (*ren* 仁): Like the English counterpart of "human" and "humanity," the Chinese character for "humanity" (*ren* 仁) and "human" (*ren* 人) share the same written components and pronunciation. Hence the *Practice of the Mean* states, "Humanity (*ren*) is [the distinguishing characteristic of] a human, and the greatest application of it is in being affectionate toward relatives" (*Sishu zhangju jizhu* 21.28; Chan 1969, 104). The *Explanations of Simple and Compound Characters* (*Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字) defines "humanity" (*ren* 仁) as closeness with others; the character is comprised of the Chinese characters for "person" (*ren* 人) and the number "two" (*er* 二) (*Shuowen jiezi zhu* 8.369). Hence, both the semantic meaning and structural connotation point to humanity being realized in a oneness with others. In the Confucian tradition, the practice of humanity begins with love and concern in familial relations ("being affectionate toward relatives"). Children receive unconditional love from their parents and reciprocate their kindness through being filial. Humanity is simply the same loving kindness that is applied to all interpersonal relationships, extending beyond the family context. As Confucius said: "The humane person wants standing, and so he helps others to gain standing. He wants

achievement, and so he helps others to achieve" (*Lunyu* 6.30; Watson 2007, 85). The human spirit is thus thought to be defined by its caring and kindness towards fellow human beings and all living beings.

Interpersonal relationships (*renlun* 人倫): There are traditionally five broad classifications of human relations, also known as the five foundational relations (*wulun* 五倫) with corresponding duties ascribed to the ten inherent roles (*shi yi* 十義). Fulfilling moral responsibilities in those roles would enable one to realize the Dao—commentators further elaborated that such practice applied to both the ancient and contemporary world (*Sishu zhangju jizhu* 21.28). It is notable that Henry Rosemont Jr. and Roger T. Ames propose that the early Confucian moral vision was a form of role ethics, as moral personhood was the sum of one's roles in life, as distinct from Western philosophical frameworks (Rosemont 1991, 71–102; Ames 2011; Rosemont and Ames 2016).

The five foundational relations are translated within the historical context as: the relationship between father and son (*fuzi* 父子), the relationship between husband and wife (*fufu* 夫婦), the relationship between leader and subordinate (*junchen* 君臣), the relationship between senior and junior (*zhangyou* 長幼), and the relationship between friends (*pengyou* 朋友). The relationship between older brother and younger brother (*xiongdi* 兄弟) is often mentioned instead of the senior and junior relation. References to roles within the social and family structures of traditional society enable the reader to appreciate the historical context. The translation is not intended to limit the scope for a broader interpretation today. For example, the father–son relationship describes familial relationships generally and across generations. As such, the role of "father" can also include the mother, stepparent, adoptive parent, and other elders such as grandparents, aunts, and uncles. Correspondingly, the role of the "son" may include daughter, stepchild, adopted child, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews. Like many other cultures, the traditional spousal bond in these pre-modern primers refers to the marital bond between husband and wife. However, the ideas and values may apply to partners generally. Leader and subordinate relations exist outside the family sphere and provide the category for hierarchical interactions within the contexts of employment and society. The relationship between senior and junior refers to those who are within the same peer or age group, or even

between workplace colleagues. The relationship between brothers can be interpreted as sibling relations generally. Finally, friendship is considered the relationship between equals outside of the family. Each of these five relations involve two distinct but mutually interdependent roles, and each role is in turn normative with prescribed responsibilities. As the *Three Character Classic* outlines:

> Kindness between father and son, spouses in harmony;
> Older brothers befriend, younger siblings show esteem;
> Seniors and juniors keep an order, friends share devotion;
> Leaders are respectful, subordinates have dedication.
> These ten duties bind us all;
> Each to learn and heed their call.

Although these relationships are commonly considered hierarchical in nature, Rosemont and Ames (2016, 80–81) discuss the roles as "beneficiary" and "benefactor," which are constantly changing in time and place. For example, a young child may receive support and nurturance from parents but support their aging parents in later years. Also, the team leader at work is the "benefactor" when providing strategic direction. However, they become a "beneficiary" when relying on the support of staff for their decision-making. Thus, there is a dynamic nature to the roles in each of the foundational relations.

The five foundational relations reiterated through the ten roles and their corresponding duties were the staple of children's textbooks. In philosopher Zhu Xi's 朱熹 (1130–1200) reconstruction of the Confucian philosophical system, he not only compiled a new curriculum but also placed the five relationships at the core of children's education. Indeed, the defining structure and content of his textbook, *Xiaoxue* 小學 (Elementary learning), was that of "clarifying human relations" (*ming lun* 明倫) (Kelleher 1989). The focus on roles was consistent in children's primers of the late imperial period as authors sought to distill the philosophical traditions into an accessible and practical approach for young audiences. Children's textbooks primarily focused on furnishing an understanding of the role of the "child," while the other four foundational relationships were summarily included. In comparison, the texts of advanced learning

like the Five Classics (*wujing* 五經) provided greater emphasis on the roles of leader and subordinate.[30]

Learning (*xue* 學): The learning referred to in traditional primers was not simply for the sake of knowledge, skills, or employment, but to realize the Dao and become a sage. The importance of developing consistent attitudes and conduct from a young age translated into the child's foremost role as a learner. Thus, a staple of Chinese children's primers is the exhortation to study and develop positive dispositions.[31] This included instruction on being attentive and considerate of others, receptive to criticism, developing resilience, and self-discipline. For example, the final section of the *Three Character Classic* presents a list of model students. The exemplars encompass young and old, male and female, the disadvantaged, the high officials, the child prodigies, and even the renowned Confucius himself. Learning was not merely through the teachings of sages recorded in the texts but from the people one encountered (e.g., friends, teachers, peddlers) and one's surrounding environment (e.g., plants and animals). It was also expected that the students would become lifelong learners in the university of life and not merely within classroom walls.

Nature (*xing* 性): Humanity's relationship to the ultimate or "heaven and earth" is traditionally regarded to be manifest in one's native propensities or "nature." Humanity's innate propensities for moral development were thought to be naturally bestowed by heaven and considered equal to heaven and earth (*Sishu zhangju jizhu* 1.17). These propensities were not inferior nor reduced in any respect throughout life, but merely obscured or concealed by habits developed over time. Although it has been argued that the word "nature" may further erroneous essentialist claims of such

30 The "Five Classics" refer to five Confucian canonical works designated as the core curriculum for civil servants since the Han dynasty, including the *Shijing* 詩經 (Odes), the *Shujing* 書經 (Documents), the *Liji* 禮記 (Records on ritual), the *Yijing* 易經 (Changes), and the *Chunqiu* 春秋 (Spring and Autumn annals).

31 To prevent ambiguity and conflation with the Aristotelian intellectual virtues, we have avoided the term "virtue" in this context and instead use positive intellectual "dispositions" to discuss these mental traits and qualities.

human potential,[32] the *Sourcebook* adopts the translation "nature" or "innate nature" based on prosodic considerations.

Ritual, etiquette, manners (*li* 禮): The Confucian concept of ritual includes etiquette, personal comportment, customs, and ceremonies. The common denominator is that these are human activities, codes of behavior and speech, that are learned and expressed to facilitate reverence within a cultural context. Scholars have described Chinese etiquette as a social language or cultural grammar, which must be learned (Li 2007). A typical scenario is at the dinner table where an adult might insist on a child saying "please" to request the salt—the child cannot simply create their own words for this speech act. Similar to language, ritual etiquette also expresses one's thoughts and emotions. A familiar script is to say "thank you" to show appreciation upon receiving a gift, while absence of these words may imply ingratitude. Indeed, Confucian ritual etiquette was thought to express consideration for others—the underlying principle being respect (*Xiaojing* 6.52). In the Confucian tradition, the daily rituals and expressions were not merely for polite interactions but also to develop one's virtue, and ultimately an understanding of the principles of the universe (Yao 2000, 191–192). Contemporary philosopher Herbert Fingarette (1972, 7) coined ritual etiquette as the "sacred ceremony" of human existence.

Who formulated this ritual etiquette? The introduction to the *Records on Ritual* states that ritual existed before the division of heaven and earth (*Liji* 1.1). In other words, ritual propriety was considered a manifestation of the Dao—the functioning of reality and the innate nature. This is less enigmatic given that ritual propriety is one of humanity's four innate virtues according to Mencius. Practice of these guidelines may seem restrictive initially, but they would become spontaneous and "second nature" to the learner over time. The Confucians believed that this was not a second nature but the restoration of one's innate propensities. Ritual etiquette was to be adapted to the circumstances, but the children began by following the guidelines before

32 For a full discussion on the translation of *xing* 性 as "human propensities" rather than "human nature," which assumes an essentialist, abstract, a priori conception of human nature, see Ames (2022), 201–208.

developing the competency to adapt the rules and navigate exceptions to them. Thus, it is not surprising that ritual etiquette is highly detailed even in the elementary texts.

For example, a point of etiquette from the canonical works that is extracted for youngsters in various primers is: "Before entering a room, those inside should hear."[33] This is a straightforward action of knocking on the door to be heard before being seen. Having read the text, the child would be guided by seniors and elders to translate the words into action in their daily life. The significance of not barging into a room can be appreciated if one were in the position of the room occupants. The few seconds afforded by the door knock could be used to swiftly tidy one's appearance or cover a confidential document—a crucial timeframe to prevent potential embarrassment or awkwardness. Making the conscious effort to provide that time shows respect and consideration for the other party and would be received with gratitude, which allows a positive start to the meeting. In training, the child may adhere to the guideline mechanically, thinking: "Must remember to knock first." Through practice, they may come to recognize the positive effect that such thoughtful conduct has on the interpersonal interaction. It was hoped that over time they would learn to extrapolate and extend the courtesy to other interactions, such as making a call to someone to check their availability before visiting them. On another level, practicing sensitivity to others and putting their needs before oneself was integral to the Dao of living and achieving greater awareness of and collaboration with heaven and earth.

Retribution (*baoying* 報應): There is an unequivocal consensus in the Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist traditions on the concept of retribution.[34] Retribution is the notion that conduct according with the Dao ("good" deeds) leads to fortune and conduct contrary to the Dao ("misdeeds") would lead to misfortune. Inclusion of such concepts in children's textbooks showed that they not only reflected popular belief but

33 In this compilation, the instruction is found in the *Essentials of Daily Etiquette* and the *Guidelines for Learners*. It is derived from the *Records on Ritual* (*Liji* 2.41; Legge 1968, 70–71).

34 Cynthia Brokaw writes that faith in a force, supernatural, or autonomic cosmic force that recompensed human behavior in a rational manner was the fundamental belief of Chinese religion since the beginning of recorded history (Brokaw 1991, 28).

also served to shape it. Although the underlying idea was subscribed to across socioeconomic classes, the source, mechanism, system, and consequences of retribution were differently characterized by the various traditions. For example, the Daoist concept of response (*ganying* 感應) in the *Exalted Treatise of the Response of the Dao* describes a bureaucracy of supernatural spirits that dwell in the human body, among the human realm, as well as beyond, meting out reward and punishment according to the individual's conduct.

Rightness (*yi* 義): Humanity and rightness are often mentioned collectively to refer to virtuous conduct. However, they are distinct in that humanity points to an overall state of mind, while rightness is the quality of achieving humanity within the situation (*Mengzi* 6A.11; Bloom 2009, 108). As the *Practice of the Mean* states, "Rightness is the principle of setting things right and proper, and the greatest application of it is in honouring the worthy" (*Sishu zhangju jizhu* 21.28; Chan 1969, 104). Rightness begins with the right frame of mind—thinking in accordance with the Dao. Moreover, practicing rightness in the context of one's interpersonal relations means fulfilling the roles specified in the five foundational relationships and the duties corresponding to those roles.

Sage (*sheng* 聖): Refers to a person who has achieved an understanding of their heaven-bestowed propensities ("innate nature") and thus the ultimate ("heaven and earth"). The term "sage" recognizes the highest level of a person's moral cultivation across the various traditions of Confucianism, Daoist, and Buddhism. From the Confucian perspective, cultivating to the highest level would enable the person to not only achieve a flourishing life but also lay the foundations for realizing familial, political, and universal flourishing.[35] Sages were recognized to have existed since early times and written records of their words and deeds were transmitted for learning and emulation. The goal of pre-modern education was ultimately to become a sage, although the specific method and practices were debated throughout imperial history.

35 This was the main thesis in the seminal Confucian classic—the *Highest Learning* (*Sishu zhangju jizhu* 1.4).

Virtue (*de* 德): Moral qualities that were considered manifestations of the innate nature and thus in accordance with the Dao were generally termed "virtue" (*de* 德). Mencius was the first to specify four innate virtues that were cultivated through one's mind (*xin* 心), namely, "humanity" (*ren* 仁), "rightness" (*yi* 義), "ritual propriety" (*li* 禮), and "wisdom" (*zhi* 智),[36] to which later Confucians added "trustworthiness" (*xin* 信) and they were collectively coined the "Five Constants." Different lists of moral qualities appear in the *Analects* and Confucian classical texts, and these qualities have been re-emphasized by different thinkers throughout the history of the Confucian ethical tradition. *De* has been variously translated as "virtue," "moral power," and "moral force." Parallels with the Aristotelian virtues have been made; however, as Bryan van Norden notes in his comparative study:

> The term *de* 德 is standardly translated as virtue but this is different from the notion of the English "virtue" or the Classical Greek "arete." *De* is a sort of "ethical force" that a person has, which can have a transformative effect on others. A person typically attains this force by possessing good qualities such as benevolence and righteousness (i.e. what we would call "virtues"). And *de* is eventually used to refer to individual virtues (van Norden 2007, 21).

Another way of understanding the concept of *de* is how humans manifest the Dao in particular situations in life. Roger Ames and Henry Rosemont Jr. explain: the "*dao* [Way] speaks to the wholeness of experience as it unfolds, while its correlate, *de*, reflects the commitment to particularity. That is, the wholeness of experience is always entertained and engaged from one particular perspective or another" (Rosemont and Ames 2009, 67). For example, the notion of trustworthiness (*xin* 信) as a virtue (*de*)

36 Mencius summarized the Five Constants as follows: "Feeling pity and commiseration is humanity; knowing shame and dislike is rightness; being respectful and reverent is ritual propriety; and discerning right and wrong is wisdom. Humaneness, rightness, ritual propriety, and wisdom are not infused into us from without. We definitely possess them" (*Mengzi* 6A.6; Bloom 2009, 124, with modifications).

is exercised between friends who, in the Confucian context, are committed to supporting each other achieve moral excellence. Virtues are thus innate attitudes of conduct to be cultivated through learning, which provide efficacious and productive ways of living.

6. A NOTE ON THE TEXTS

The edition chosen for translation is specified for each text below in chronological order.

The *Classic of Family Reverence* translation is based on the *Commentaries and Subcommentaries on the Classic of Family Reverence* (*Xiaojing zhushu* 孝經註疏) edition annotated by Emperor Xuanzong 唐玄宗 (r. 713–756) of Tang China, with subcommentary by Xing Bing 邢昺 (932–1010). This edition is part of the *Commentaries and Subcommentaries on the* Thirteen Classics (*Shisan jing zhushu* 十三經註疏) collated by Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764–1849), which was commonly regarded as the standard edition from its publication in 1816.

The *Thousand Character Essay* has been described as an "astoundingly stable" work that has been studied for some fifteen hundred years (Nugent 2023, 116). Manuscript versions of its text found at Dunhuang, China, are essentially the same as the received version that was later transmitted through print culture. It is the version consisting of one-thousand non-repeating characters that is translated afresh here with rhyme in hopes of conveying a glimpse of this endearing, memorable quality of the original primer (Li and Zhang 2011).

The transliteration of the *Hundred Family Names* is based on the edition found in the *New Interpretation of the Hundred Family Names* (*Xinyi Bai jia xing* 新譯百家姓) published by the San Min Book Company, which highlights the category of disyllabic surnames in the latter section of the text (Ma and Gu 2011).

The seminal *Inherited Interpretations on the Exalted Treatise on the Response of the Dao* (*Taishang ganying pian zuan yi* 太上感應篇纘義) by the Qing dynasty evidential scholar Yu Yue 俞樾 (1821–1907) in 1872 brought critical reception to the *Exalted Treatise* (Yu 2012). Through references to Confucian writings, Taoist discourses, and other philosophical and historical works, along with explanation of word meanings, the *Inherited*

Interpretations enabled readers to appreciate the significance of the *Exalted Treatise* and its instructions. This volume translates the recension of the *Exalted Treatise* found in the influential *Inherited Interpretations*, which was included in the key collection of Daoist writings—*Record of the Essential Blossoms of the Daoist Canon* (*Daozang jinghua lu* 道藏精華錄).

The *Lord Wenchang's Essay on Quiet Merits* translation is based on the recension entitled the *Annotated Essay on Quiet Merits* (*Yinzhi wen zhu* 陰騭文註) found in the main collection of Daoist writings—*Reprinted Essentials of the Daoist Canon* (*Chongkan Daozang jiyao* 重刊道藏輯要).

There are many editions of the *Three Character Classic* given its widespread circulation in the late imperial period (Brokaw 2007, 328–329). This translation uses one of the earliest commentaries written for the *Three Character Classic* by Qing scholar Wang Xiang 王相 (fl. 1662–1722), titled the *Exegesis of the Three Character Classic* (*San zi jing xungu* 三字經訓詁) (Wang 1991).

The *Words for Children* and *Further Words for Children* translations are based on the edition found in Chen Hongmou's 陳宏謀 (1696–1771) compilation—the *Guidelines for Proper Upbringing*. As provincial administration commissioner of Yunan, Chen established over seven hundred charitable primary schools from the prefecture to county level during the Yongzheng reign (1722–1735) (Wang 2012, 4.502). His compilation provided instructions on childhood education for family elders and teachers at those schools and was also widely circulated in the Qing period (*Yangzheng yigui* foreword.1-2). Our translation is from the edition that was included in the *Supplementary Compilation to the Complete Library of the Four Branches of Literature* (*Xuxiu Siku quanshu* 續修四庫全書).

The translation of the *Extended Wise Sayings* is based on the received edition published by the Zhonghua Book Company (*Zhonghua shuju* 中華書局). This edition was extensively circulated during the Ming and Qing dynasties and has been circulated for much longer than adaptations from the late Qing period, such as the *Revised Edition of the Extended Wise Sayings for Instructing the Young* (*Xun meng Zengguang gaiben* 訓蒙增廣改本) and the *Revised Extended Wise Sayings* (*Chong ding Zengguang xianwen*) (1869) (Ma and Li 2010, 2).

The *Guidelines for Learners* translation is based on the widely circulated edition with modern vernacular Chinese interpretations of the

text by Wang Mingquan 王明泉 titled the *Concise Explanations of the Guidelines for Learners* (*Dizi gui jian shuo* 弟子規簡說) (Wang 2007).

This volume translates the *Essentials of Daily Etiquette* based on the edition from the collected writings of its author—the *Complete Works of the Buddhist Elder Li Bingnan* (*Li Bingnan lao jushi quanji* 李炳南老居士全集) (Li 2006, 46–78). This edition includes the author's preface, which we have also translated, while popular versions merely compile the main text.

This anthology of pre-modern and early modern Chinese children's primers provides a window to the thinkers of the past, a stepping-stone to the broader literary Chinese tradition, and snapshots of sociocultural perspectives. While some of the primers in this volume have already been translated into several European languages, others are translated into English for the first time. As the existing translations may be expressed in older English, incomplete, or out of print, this *Sourcebook* hopes to recover the texts in a new and accessible light. We hope that the translations enable modern scholars and learners, both young and old, to be introduced to these time-honored writings. Let's turn the page and head down the rabbit hole.

TRANSLATIONS

CLASSIC OF FAMILY REVERENCE 孝經 (HAN DYNASTY, C. 202 BCE)

This text purports to record a dialogue between Confucius and his student Master Zeng 曾子 (c. 505–436 BCE) on the topic of family reverence (*xiao* 孝), a concept integral to the Confucian cultivation of moral life that is rooted in reverence for one's parents as well as other elders and ancestors of the family.[1] As the shortest text in the canon of classicist scholarship, the *Classic of Family Reverence* has been studied by children since the Han dynasty, usually after basic literacy was established through their reading of wordbooks (Xiong 1996, 6 and 11). The text comprises fewer than two thousand characters that are divided into eighteen sections of varying lengths. Although the origins of this text remain unclear, its authorship has been traditionally attributed to Confucius, Master Zeng, or their respective students, and it is dated to the early Han dynasty based on bibliographical records in the *History of the Han Dynasty* (*Han shu* 漢書) and the *History of the Sui Dynasty* (*Sui shu* 隋書).[2]

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1 It must be noted that family reverence is not limited to the family but extends to characterize all interpersonal interactions, nor does it involve blind obedience in light of the moral duty to counsel and advise against reprehensible conduct of one's parents and political superiors, including the emperor himself (see chapter 15 of the *Classic of Family Reverence*).

2 Zhu Xi considers that the question-and-answer sections of the *Classic of Family Reverence* may predate other sections that elaborate on terminology (Loewe 1993, 142).

An official post of specialist in the *Classic of Family Reverence* formed part of the court at times during the Han dynasty and Jin dynasty (265–420). For example, Emperor Ping 漢平帝 (r. 1 BCE–6 CE) of the Han dynasty assembled teachers of the *Classic* in the capital.[3] The *Classic* was studied by empresses such as Empress Deng Sui 鄧綏 (81–121) and Empress Liang Na 梁妠 (106–150) of the Han dynasty, specialists in other classic texts, and became required reading in schools and for the civil service examinations at times in the period from medieval China through to the Qing dynasty. Several rulers wrote commentaries on the *Classic of Family Reverence*, e.g. the Emperors Wu and Jianwen 梁簡文帝 (r. 549–551) of the Liang dynasty, and Emperor Xuanzong of the Tang dynasty, while others lectured or led discussions on the *Classic* at court, e.g. Emperor Xiaowu 晉孝武帝 (r. 373–396) of the Jin dynasty and Emperor Renzong 宋仁宗 (r. 1023–1063) of the Song dynasty.

The *Classic of Family Reverence* was compiled in the *Essentials for Bringing about Order from Assembled Texts* (*Qunshu zhiyao* 群書治要), an anthology of essential statecraft readings for Emperor Taizong (624–649) of the Tang dynasty. Emperor Kangxi 康熙 (r. 1661–1722) of the Qing dynasty commissioned the *Imperially-approved Extended Explanation of the Classic of Family Reverence* (*Yuding Xiaojing yanyi* 御定孝經衍義), which was completed in 1682 and circulated to all provinces by imperial decree in 1690. Among the intellectual elite, the *Classic of Family Reverence* was often read during periods of mourning, recited for its apostropaic potential to cure illness and ward off malevolent spirits, and its manuscript and engraved editions have been imparted as family heirlooms (Lu 2017, 276–277).[4] This text has also been well-received throughout Inner Asia[5] and pre-modern East Asia (de Bary 2000, 326). Its format has inspired subsequent works, such as the *Classic on Loyalty* (*Zhong jing* 忠經) and the *Women's Classic of Family*

3 The official post was established by Emperor Wen of Han 漢文帝 (r. 180–157 BCE), abolished by Emperor Wu of Han 漢武帝 (r. 141–187 BCE), and reinstated by Emperor Yuan 晉元帝 (r. 318–321) of the Jin dynasty (Lu 2017, 273).

4 The *Collection of Providential Accounts on the Classic of Family Reverence* (*Xiaojing jiling* 孝經集靈) is a compilation of miraculous accounts related to the *Classic of Family Reverence* by the scholar Yu Chunxi 虞淳熙 (1553–1621).

5 Manuscripts of the *Classic of Family Reverence* have been found at Dunhuang and Turfan (Galambos 2024, 715–716, 721–722, 724, 727).

Reverence (*Nü xiao jing* 女孝經). As adumbrated by the *Three Character Classic*, students would typically read and learn the *Classic of Family Reverence* before the *Highest Learning* (*Daxue* 大學), the *Practice of the Mean*, the *Analects*, and the *Mencius* (*Mengzi* 孟子), which were collectively known as the "Four Books." Many features of the *Classic of Family Reverence*—including the convenient brevity of the work, summary of core principles underlying Confucian ethical rulership, and references to core texts of classicist learning—have led to its enduring use as a primer since the Han dynasty (Ebrey 1993, 64). The preface by Sun Shi 孫奭 (962–1033), excerpted before the main text, highlights the traditional significance of this primer.

TRANSLATIONS

There are mentions in the literature of Xianbei, Tangut, Khitan, Jurchen, and pre-classical Mongolian translations (Galambos 2024, 716, 726–727). Other translations of the *Classic of Family Reverence* are as follows:

English

Ames, Roger T., and Henry Rosemont, Jr. *The Chinese Classic of Family Reverence: A Philosophical Translation of the Xiaojing*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i, 2009.

de Bary, Theodore. "The Classic of Filiality." In *Sources of Chinese Tradition: From Earliest Times to 1600*, vol. 1, edited by Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom, 326–329. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.

Chên, Ivan. *The Book of Filial Piety*. London: John Murray, 1908.

Gao, Wang Z. *Confucian Filiality*. New York: CN Times Books, 2013.

Goldin, Paul R. "Filial Piety." In *Hawai'i Reader in Traditional Chinese Culture*, edited by Victor H. Mair, Nancy S. Steinhardt, and Paul R. Goldin, 106–112. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005.

Legge, James. *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. 3. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879.

Li, Ronald Fook-shiu. *Three Traditional Chinese Texts on Family and Family Responsibilities*. Springfield: Board of Directors of Wittenberg College, 1996.

Liu Ruixiang and Lin Zhihe. *The Classic of Filial Piety* 孝經. Jinan: Shandong Xinhua Printing House, 1993.

Makra, Mary Lelia. *The Hsiao Ching*, edited by Paul K. T. Sih. New York: St. John's University Press, 1961.

French

de Rosny, Leon. *Le Hiao-king* (Classic of family reverence). Paris: Maisonneuve et Ch. Leclerc, 1889.

Le Blanc, Charles, and Rémi Mathieu. *Philosophes confucianistes* (Confucian philosophers). Paris: Gallimard, 2009.

Pinto, Roger. *Confucius: Le livre de la Piété filiale* (Book of filial piety). Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1998.

German

Wilhelm, Richard. *Hiau Ging: Das Buch der Ehrfurcht* (Classic of filiality: the book of reverence). Peking: Verlag der Pekinger Pappelinsel, 1940.

Italian

Tomassini, Fausto. *Testi confuciani* (Confucian texts). Turin: Unione tipografica-editrice torinese, 1974.

Latin

Noël, François. *Sinensis Imperii libri classici sex* (*Six classical books of the Chinese empire*). Prague: Charles-Ferdinand University Press, 1711.

Polish

Pejda, Katarzyna. "*Xiao Jing* 孝經 – wczesne znaczenie pojęcia xiao 孝 i tłumaczenie tekstu" (*Xiao Jing* 孝經: early meaning of *xiao* 孝 and translation of the text). *Roczniki Humanistyczne* (Humanities annals) 9 (2019): 119-138.

Portuguese

Gomes, Luís Gonzaga. *O clássico da Piedade Filial* (Classic of filial piety). Macau: Prensa de Macau, 1944.

Spanish

Bueno, André. *Tratado da Fraternidade Familiar* (Treatise on family fraternity). União da Vitória, Brazil: Fafiuv/Agbook, 2012.

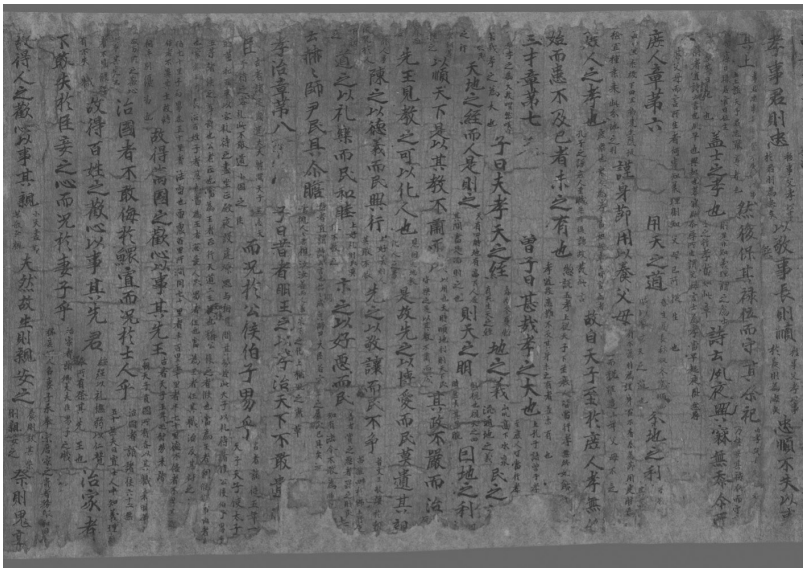


Figure 11. A section from an annotated edition of the *Classic of Family Reverence* in the Dunhuang manuscript P.3428. Courtesy of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

CLASSIC OF FAMILY REVERENCE

孝經序
Preface to the *Classic of Family Reverence*

夫《孝經》者，孔子之所述作也。述作之旨者，昔聖人蘊大聖德，生不偶時，適值周室衰微，王綱失墜，君臣僭亂，禮樂崩頹。居上位者賞罰不行，居下位者褒貶無作。孔子遂乃定《禮》、《樂》、刪《詩》、《書》，讚《易》道，以明道德仁義之源；修《春秋》，以正君臣父子之法。

The *Classic of Family Reverence* is a work transmitted by Confucius. The objective of his transmission being to preserve the extensive sagely virtue of the ancient sages during the times in which he lived. The authority of the Zhou ruling house had declined, the mainstays of kingship were all but lost, the relationship between ruler and minister was affected by accroachment and disorder, and the system of ritual and music had fallen into disuse. Leaders failed to administer rewards and punishments, and subordinates did not ascribe praise and censure. Confucius then standardized the *Rituals* and the *Music*, edited the *Odes* and the *Documents*, and commended the principles in the *Changes*, to make manifest the sources of the Dao, virtue, humanity, and rightness. He revised the *Spring and Autumn Annals* to correct the principles for the relationships among ruler and minister, and among father and son.

又慮雖知其法，未知其行，遂說《孝經》一十八章，以明君臣父子之行所寄。知其法者修其行，知其行者謹其法。故《孝經緯》曰：「孔子云：『欲觀我褒貶諸侯之志，在《春秋》；崇人倫之行，在《孝經》。』」是知《孝經》，雖居六籍之外，乃與《春秋》為表矣。

As Confucius was also concerned that people may understand the principles but fail to grasp their application, he then taught the *Classic of Family Reverence* with its eighteen chapters. This was to clarify the basis underlying the relationships between ruler and minister, and between father and son. Knowing the principles helps a person to cultivate their conduct. Knowing to [correctly] conduct themselves helps them be mindful of the principles. Hence, Confucius said: "How I ascribe praise and censure of the feudal lords is known through the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. The conduct of interpersonal relationships is known through the *Classic of Family Reverence*." Therefore, although falling outside of the Six Classics, the *Classic of Family Reverence*, along with the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, serve as their exposition.

先儒或云「夫子為曾參所說」，此未盡其指歸也。蓋曾子在七十弟子中，孝行最著，孔子乃假立曾子為請益問荅之人，以廣明孝道。既說之後，乃屬與曾子。洎遭暴秦焚書，並為煨燼。漢膺天命，復闡微言。《孝經》河間顏芝所藏，因始傳之于世。自西漢及魏，歷晉、宋、齊、梁，注解之者迨及百家。至有唐之初，雖備存祕府，而簡編多有殘缺，傳行者唯孔安國、鄭康成兩家之注，并有梁博士皇侃《義疏》，播於國序。然辭多紕繆，理昧精研。至唐玄宗朝，乃詔羣儒學官，俾其集議。是以劉子玄辨鄭注有十謬七惑，司馬堅斥孔注多鄙俚不經。其餘諸家注解，皆榮華其言，妄生穿鑿。明皇遂於先儒注中，採摭菁英，芟去煩亂，撮其義理允當者，用為注解。至天寶二年注成，頒行天下，仍自八分御札，勒于石碑，即今京兆石臺《孝經》是也。

Former Confucian scholars have claimed: "Confucius explained [the *Classic of Family Reverence*] to Zengzi." However, this does not fully express the intention. As Zengzi was most renowned for filial conduct among Confucius' seventy students, it is likely that Confucius designated Zengzi as the interlocutor to elaborate and clarify the Dao of family reverence. After the teachings were imparted, they were entrusted to Zengzi. However, these writings were reduced to ashes during the turbulent Qin dynasty's burning of books. When the Han dynasty received the mandate of heaven, the work of restoring and elucidating moral teachings resumed. The transmission of

the *Classic of Family Reverence* was revived with the edition preserved by Yan Zhi of Hejian. In the period from the Former Han to the Wei, Jin, Song, Qi, and Liang dynasties, over a hundred scholars compiled commentaries on the text. Although the works were preserved in the palace library of the early Tang dynasty, many of the scrolls were incomplete or damaged. The only commentaries then in circulation were those by Kong Anguo (c. 156–174) and Zheng Xuan (127–200), along with the *Yishu* (Explication of meaning) by Liang dynasty erudite Huang Kan (488–545), which was disseminated throughout the state academies. As the wording of those commentaries was found to suffer from negligent errors, and their interpretations lacked rigorous inquiry, Emperor Xuanzong of Tang issued an edict summoning scholar officials to discuss the *Classic of Family Reverence* and its interpretations. Liu Zhiji (661–721) identified ten errors and seven misconceptions in Zheng's commentary, Sima Jian (dates unknown) criticized Kong's commentary as crude and unorganized, and other commentators were found to have embellished their interpretations with unsubstantiated claims. Emperor Xuanzong thus ordered that the refined and essential insights be selected from earlier commentaries, extraneous and irregular parts be eliminated, and interpretations consistent with proper principle and meaning be compiled for the official commentary. In the second year of the Tianbao era (743), the completed commentary was promulgated throughout the empire. The emperor also personally wrote it in clerical script, and had it engraved in stone, which is the *Classic of Family Reverence* stele inscribed on the stone platform in the capital (now known as Xi'an).

孝經

Classic of Family Reverence[6]

開宗明義章 第一

1. Introducing the Purpose and Illuminating Its Significance

仲尼居，曾子侍。子曰：「先王有至德要道，以順天下，民用和睦，上下無怨。汝知之乎？」曾子避席曰：「參不敏，何足以知之？」子曰：「夫孝，德之本也，教之所由生也。復坐，吾語汝。身體髮膚，受之父母，不敢毀傷，孝之始也。立身行道，揚名於後世，以顯父母，孝之終也。夫孝始於事親，中於事君，終於立身。〈大雅〉云：『無念爾祖，聿脩厥德。』」

Confucius was at home and Zengzi was attending to him. Confucius said: "The former kings had utmost virtue and an essential principle (Dao) to bring all under heaven into accord. The people on this account were able to live in harmony and without ill will between those above and below. Do you know of this?"

Zengzi rose from his mat and replied: "I am not intelligent enough to understand this."

Confucius said: "It is family reverence that is the root of virtue, from which education is derived. Sit down again and I will explain it to you.

"Our body, with its hair and skin, are received from our father and mother, and not daring to destroy or injure them is the beginning of family reverence. Establishing our character, practicing the Dao, and cultivating a lasting renown to bring esteem to our father and mother is the culmination of family reverence. Family reverence commences in service to our parents, continues in service to the ruler, and culminates in establishing our character. It is said in the 'Greater Court Songs' of the *Odes*:

> Cherish the memory of your ancestor,
> Cultivate and extend their virtue."

6 This translation has been aided greatly by the work of Roger T. Ames and Henry Rosemont Jr., *The Chinese Classic of Family Reverence: A Philosophical Translation of the Xiaojing* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i, 2009).

天子章 第二
2. The Son of Heaven

子曰：「愛親者，不敢惡於人。敬親者，不敢慢於人。愛敬盡於事親，而德教加於百姓，刑于四海。蓋天子之孝也。〈甫刑〉云：『一人有慶，兆民賴之。』」

Confucius said: "One who loves their parents will not dare to despise others, and one who respects their parents will not dare to be arrogant to others. With love and respect being fully expressed in the service to parents, such virtuous conduct will educate and transform the hundred clans, and be exemplary to all within the four seas. This is the family reverence of the Son of Heaven. The 'Marquis of Fu on Punishments' of the *Documents* states:

> When one has cause to celebrate,
> All people share in the fate."

諸侯章 第三
3. The Hereditary Lords

在上不驕，高而不危。制節謹度，滿而不溢。高而不危，所以長守貴也。滿而不溢，所以長守富也。富貴不離其身，然後能保其社稷，而和其民人。蓋諸侯之孝也。《詩》云：「戰戰兢兢，如臨深淵，如履薄冰。」

"Occupying lofty positions without arrogance, they dwell on high without peril. Adhering to economy and carefully observant of the regulations, they are replete without overflowing. To dwell on high without peril is the way to preserve nobility; to be replete without overflowing is the way to preserve riches. When their riches and nobility do not leave their persons, they can preserve the altars of soil and grain, and secure the harmony of their people. This is the family reverence of the hereditary lords. The *Odes* states:

> Be apprehensive and cautious,
> As though on the brink of a deep abyss.
> As though treading on thin ice."

卿、大夫章 第四
4. The Ministers and High Officials

非先王之法服不敢服，非先王之法言不敢道，非先王之德行不敢行。是故非法不言，非道不行。口無擇言，身無擇行。言滿天下無口過，行滿天下無怨惡。三者備矣，然後能守其宗廟。蓋卿大夫之孝也。《詩》云：「夙夜匪懈，以事一人。」

"If the attire had not been sanctioned by the former kings, the ministers and high officials would not dare to wear it. If the ways of speaking had not been sanctioned by the former kings, they would not dare to speak in those ways. If the ways of conduct do not accord with the virtuous ways of the former kings, they would not dare to act in those ways. Hence, if it is not sanctioned, they do not say it; if it is not the proper way, they do not do it.

"There is nothing arbitrary in what the ministers and high officials say, and nothing arbitrary in what they do. Though their words may spread throughout the kingdom, there is no imprudence in what is said. Though their actions may spread throughout the kingdom, they arouse neither resentment nor animosity. With these three things being as they should be, they can maintain their ancestral temples. This is the family reverence of ministers and high officials. The *Odes* states:

> Whether day or night they are never remiss,
> In their service to the one principal."

士章 第五
5. The Lower Officials

資於事父以事母，而愛同；資於事父以事君，而敬同。故母取其愛，而君取其敬，兼之者父也。故以孝事君則忠，以敬事長則順。忠順不失，以事其上，然後能保其祿位，而守其祭祀。蓋士之孝也。《詩》云：「夙興夜寐，無忝爾所生」。

"Drawing on their devotion to their father to serve their mother, the love is the same. Drawing on their devotion to their father to serve their lord, the respect is the same. While the mother receives love

and the lord receives respect, the father receives both. Thus, serving the lord with family reverence is faithfulness, and serving elders with respect is compliance. Not failing in this faithfulness and compliance in serving superiors, they can maintain their official tenure and continue their ancestral offerings. This is the family reverence of lower officials. The *Odes* states:

> Rise early and retire late,
> Never dishonor those who gave you life."

庶人章 第六
6. The Common People

用天之道，分地之利，謹身節用，以養父母。此庶人之孝也。故自天子至於庶人，孝無終始，而患不及者，未之有也。
"Caring for their parents by utilizing the Dao of heaven, discerning the advantages of the earth, and being careful in conduct and moderate in expenditure. This is the family reverence of the common people. Therefore, from the Son of Heaven to the common people, family reverence applies without exception, and there should be no one concerned about their lack of ability."

三才章 第七
7. The Three Resources

曾子曰：「甚哉，孝之大也！」

子曰：「夫孝，天之經也，地之義也，民之行也。天地之經，而民是則之。則天之明，因地之利，以順天下。是以其教不肅而成，其政不嚴而治。先王見教之可以化民也，是故先之以博愛，而民莫遺其親。陳之德義，而民興行。先之以敬讓，而民不爭。導之以禮樂，而民和睦。示之以好惡，而民知禁。《詩》云：『赫赫師尹，民具爾瞻。』」
Zengzi said: "Profound indeed, the greatness of family reverence!"

Confucius said: "Family reverence is the constancy of heaven, the munificence of earth, and the moral conduct of the people. The people take the constancy of heaven and earth as their model. Emulating the

brightness of heaven and the advantages of the earth to bring all under heaven into accord. Consequently, their education was successful without being exacting, and their governance was ordered without being onerous. The former kings saw how the teachings could transform the people so they led them with broad love such that none would neglect their kin. They affirmed moral rightness such that the people would be motivated to practice. They led with respectful deference such that the people would not be contentious. They guided through ritual and music such that the people would be harmonious and friendly. They showed them what was approved and disapproved such that the people knew what was prohibited. The *Odes* states:

> The eminent Grand-Master Yin,
> The people all look to you."

孝治章 第八
8. Governing by Family Reverence

子曰：「昔者明王之以孝治天下也，不敢遺小國之臣，而況於公侯伯子男乎？故得萬國之懽心，以事其先王。治國者，不敢侮於鰥寡，而況於士民乎？故得百姓之懽心，以事其先君。治家者，不敢失於臣妾，而況於妻子乎？故得人之懽心，以事其親。夫然，故生則親安之，祭則鬼享之。是以天下和平，災害不生，禍亂不作。故明王之以孝治天下也如此。《詩》云：『有覺德行，四國順之。』」

Confucius said: "In the past, when the wise kings governed with family reverence, they did not dare to neglect the ministers of small states, much less the dukes, princes, lieges, masters, and heads. Thus, they obtained the happy support of the myriad states in serving the former kings. The rulers of states did not dare to slight the widowers and widows, much less their officials and the people. Thus, they obtained the happy support of the hundred clans in serving the former rulers. The heads of clans did not dare to offend their manservants and maidservants, much less their wives and children. Thus, they obtained the happy consent of the people in serving their parents. As such, their parents were happy while alive, and received offerings as spirits after death. Therefore, peace and harmony prevailed in the world, disasters and dangers were averted, and

misfortunes and disorder did not arise. This was how the wise kings governed with family reverence. The *Odes* states:

> With great virtuous conduct,
> All states in the four directions accord with them."

聖治章 第九
9. Governing by the Sages

曾子曰：「敢問聖人之德，無以加於孝乎？」

子曰：「天地之性人為貴。人之行莫大於孝，孝莫大於嚴父，嚴父莫大於配天，則周公其人也。昔者周公郊祀后稷以配天，宗祀文王於明堂，以配上帝。是以四海之內，各以其職來祭。夫聖人之德，又何以加於孝乎？

故親生之膝下，以養父母曰嚴。聖人因嚴以教敬，因親以教愛。聖人之教不肅而成，其政不嚴而治。其所因者本也。父子之道，天性也，君臣之義也。父母生之，續莫大焉。君親臨之，厚莫重焉。故不愛其親而愛他人者，謂之悖德；不敬其親而敬他人者，謂之悖禮。以順則逆，民無則焉。不在於善，而皆在於凶德，雖得之，君子不貴也。君子則不然，言思可道，行思可樂，德義可尊，作事可法。容止可觀，進退可度。以臨其民，是以其民畏而愛之，則而象之。故能成其德教，而行其政令。《詩》云：『淑人君子，其儀不忒。』」

Zengzi said: "May I ask if there was anything that surpasses family reverence in the virtue of sages?"

Confucius replied: "Among the creatures of heaven and earth, human beings are the noblest. There is no greater form of human conduct than family reverence. There is no greater form of family reverence than venerating one's father. There is no greater form of venerating one's father than making them a counterpart to heaven. It was the Duke of Zhou who did this.

"In the past, the Duke of Zhou performed the sacrifice at the outskirts of the capital with Hou Ji as counterpart to heaven, and he performed the ancestral sacrifice in the Hall of Brilliance with King Wen as counterpart to the supreme ruler. Consequently, all within the four seas came to assist in the sacrifices according to their offices. How could there be anything in the virtue of sages that surpasses family reverence?

"Affection develops from the time at the parents' knees, and veneration grows daily in caring for parents. The sages taught respect through veneration, and taught love through affection. The education of the sages was effective without being exacting, and their governance was ordered without being onerous, because what they taught proceeded from the root.

"The Dao of the father and son is of the innate nature, and becomes the rightness between ruler and subordinate. There is no greater form of continuity than being born from parents. There is no greater form of kindness than that received from the ruler and the parents. Thus, those who do not love their parents but love other people, are not in accord with virtue. Those who do not respect their parents but respect other people, are not in accord with ritual. When the ruler should be in accord but acts contrary, the people have no standards to emulate. If they do not remain in goodness but are preoccupied with what is injurious to virtue, though they may attain prominence, the exemplary person would not honor them.

"The exemplary person is not like this. They speak after considering whether the words are appropriate, and act after considering whether the actions bring joy. Their virtue and rightness are estimable, their actions and undertakings are imitable, their demeanor and deportment are creditable, and their interactions are measured. This is how they draw near to their people. Therefore, the people revere and love them, they admire and emulate them. Thus, they can accomplish their moral teachings and implement their government orders. The *Odes* states:

> The virtuous one, the exemplary person,
> Is without fault in their deportment."

紀孝行章 第十
10. A Record of the Family Reverence in Practice

子曰：「孝子之事親也，居則致其敬，養則致其樂，病則致其憂，喪則致其哀，祭則致其嚴。五者備矣，然後能事親。事親者居上不驕，為下不亂，在醜不爭。居上而驕則亡，為下而亂則刑，在醜而爭則兵。三者不除，雖日用三牲之養，猶為不孝也。」

Confucius said: "The child who practices family reverence will serve their parents by being fully respectful in daily life, fully joyous in caring for them, fully concerned while they are ill, fully grieved in mourning them, and fully solemn in commemorating them. When a child fulfils these five matters, they may be said to serve their parents.

"One who serves their parents will not be arrogant in a superior position, nor rebellious in a subordinate position, nor contentious among peers. Arrogance in a superior position leads to ruin, rebellion in a subordinate position leads to punishment, and contention among peers leads to violence. Without eradicating these three faults, a person is unfilial even if they serve their parents with beef, mutton, and pork every day."

五刑章 第十一
11. The Five Punishments

子曰：「五刑之屬三千，而罪莫大於不孝。要君者無上，非聖人者無法，非孝者無親。此大亂之道也。」

Confucius said: "There are three thousand offences pertaining to the five punishments, and there is no greater crime than not abiding by family reverence. Threatening a ruler is renouncing one's superiors. Dismissing the authority of the sages is renouncing the law. Rejecting family reverence is renouncing one's parents. These pave the way to grave disorder."

廣要道章 第十二
12. Elaborating on the Essential Principle

子曰：「教民親愛，莫善於孝。教民禮順，莫善於悌。移風易俗，莫善於樂。安上治民，莫善於禮。禮者，敬而已矣。故敬其父則子悅，敬其兄則弟悅，敬其君則臣悅，敬一人而千萬人悅：所敬者寡而悅者眾，此之謂要道也。」

Confucius said: "There is nothing more effective than family reverence for teaching the people love and affection. There is nothing more effective than fraternal deference for teaching them ritual and concordance. There is nothing more effective than music for transforming mores and customs. There is nothing more effective than ritual for stabilizing authority and governing the people.

"Ritual is nothing more than respect. Thus, respect towards a father pleases their son; respect towards an elder brother pleases their younger brother; respect towards a ruler pleases their subordinates. The respect towards one pleases the multitudes. Those who are respected are few, yet the pleasure extends to many. This is what is called the 'essential principle' (Dao)."

廣至德章 第十三
13. Elaborating on the Utmost Virtue

子曰：「君子之教以孝也，非家至而日見之也。教以孝，所以敬天下之為人父者也。教以悌，所以敬天下之為人兄者也。教以臣，所以敬天下之為人君者也。《詩》云：『愷悌君子，民之父母。』非至德，其孰能順民如此其大者乎！」

Confucius said: "The teaching of family reverence by the exemplary person does not require that they visit families and meet with them daily. By educating on family reverence, all fathers are respected. By educating on fraternal deference, all elder brothers are respected. By educating on being a subordinate, all superiors are respected. The *Odes* states:

> The joyful and approachable sovereign,
> Is the father and mother of the people.

If not with utmost virtue, how could they inspire such extensive following of the people?"

廣揚名章 第十四
14. Elaborating on the Cultivation of Renown

子曰：「君子之事親孝，故忠可移於君；事兄悌，故順可移於長；居家理，故治可移於官。是以行成於內，而名立於後世矣。」

Confucius said: "Serving their parents with family reverence, the exemplary person is thus able to serve the ruler with loyalty. Serving elder brothers with fraternal deference, they are able to serve elders with complaisance. Maintaining order in the family, they can serve the government with sound administration. Therefore, when their conduct is perfected within the family, their renown will be established for future generations."

諫争章 第十五
15. Remonstrance

曾子曰：「若夫慈愛恭敬，安親揚名，則聞命矣。敢問子從父之令，可謂孝乎？」子曰：「是何言與？是何言與？昔者天子有争臣七人，雖無道，不失其天下。諸侯有争臣五人，雖無道，不失其國。大夫有争臣三人，雖無道，不失其家。士有争友，則身不離於令名。父有争子，則身不陷於不義，故當不義，則子不可以不争於父，臣不可以不争於君。故當不義則爭之，從父之令，又焉得為孝乎？」

Zengzi said: "I have heard your instructions on loving and respecting parents, giving them peace of mind, and establishing one's name. May I presume to ask if a child can practice family reverence by following their father's every instruction."

Confucius replied: "What kind of talk is this? What kind of talk is this? In the past, the Son of Heaven had seven remonstrating subordinates, and the kingdom would not perish even if he did not accord with the Dao. The hereditary lord had five remonstrating subordinates, and the state would not perish even if he did not accord with the Dao. The minister had three remonstrating subordinates, and the family would not perish even if he did not accord with the Dao. The lower official had remonstrating friends and could preserve his illustrious character. The father had remonstrating children and would not be mired in improper deeds. Thus, when there is improper conduct, a child must remonstrate with their father, and a subordinate must remonstrate with their superior. Since remonstrance is required in the case of improper conduct, how can a child practice family reverence by following their father's every instruction?"

感應章 第十六
16. Resonance

子曰：「昔者明王事父孝，故事天明；事母孝，故事地察。長幼順，故上下治。天地明察，神明彰矣。故雖天子，必有尊也，言有父也；必有先也，言有兄也。宗廟致敬，不忘親也。脩身慎行，恐辱先也。宗廟致敬，鬼神著矣。孝悌之至，通於神明，光於四海，無所不通。《詩》云：『自西自東，自南自北，無思不服。』」

Confucius said: "In the past, the wise kings served their fathers with family reverence, and thus were able to serve heaven with understanding. They served their mothers with family reverence, and thus were able to serve the earth with percipience. With concord among seniors and juniors, relations between superiors and subordinates were in order. When heaven and earth are served with understanding and percipience, the spirits are manifest. Therefore, even the Son of Heaven must have those he honors, namely, his father. He must have those whom he places before himself, namely, his older brothers. In the ancestral temple he is fully respectful for he does not forget his parents. He cultivates his character and is careful of his conduct for fear of disgracing his predecessors. With full respectfulness in the ancestral temple, the spirits of the departed are apparent. Family reverence and fraternal deference at the ultimate level connects with the spirits, enlightens all within the four seas, and unites all. The *Odes* states:

> From the west to the east,
> From the south to the north,
> There were no thoughts but of homage."

事君章 第十七
17. Serving One's Ruler

子曰：「君子之事上也，進思盡忠，退思補過，將順其美，匡救其惡，故上下能相親也。《詩》云：『心乎愛矣，遐不謂矣。中心藏之，何日忘之？』」

Confucius said: "The exemplary person serves their ruler by being mindful of loyalty at court, considering how to rectify their ruler's errors while away from court, according with their excellence, and correcting their faults. Hence, the ruler and subordinate can become close. The *Odes* states:

> I cherish them in my heart,
> Is distance an issue?
> I keep them within my mind,
> When would I forget them?"

喪親章 第十八
18. Mourning One's Parents

子曰：「孝子之喪親也，哭不偯，禮無容，言不文，服美不安，聞樂不樂，食旨不甘：此哀戚之情也。三日而食，教民無以死傷生，毀不滅性：此聖人之政也。喪不過三年，示民有終也。為之棺槨衣衾而舉之，陳其簠簋而哀戚之，擗踊哭泣，哀以送之。卜其宅兆，而安措之。為之宗廟，以鬼享之。春秋祭祀，以時思之。生事愛敬，死事哀慼，生民之本盡矣，死生之義備矣，孝子之事親終矣。」

Confucius said: "A son practicing family reverence will mourn their parents by weeping without wailing, performing the rituals without regard for their appearance, speaking without eloquence, feeling uncomfortable wearing fine clothes, deriving no pleasure from music, and eating without any taste for fine food. Such is the emotion of grief and sorrow. Eating after three days teaches people that the living should not be injured on account of the dead, and that loss does not destroy what is inborn. Such is the governing of the sages. Limiting the mourning period to three years shows the people that there is an end. They prepare the inner and outer coffin, the grave-clothes and the shroud are put on, and the body is lifted into the coffin. With grief and sorrow, they arrange the round and square sacrificial vessels. They beat their breasts, stamp their feet, and crying and weeping, they mournfully escort the coffin to the grave. They divine the burial ground for laying the body to rest. They prepare the ancestral temple to present offerings for the spirits of the deceased. They offer sacrifices in spring and autumn to commemorate the departed on a timely basis. Parents are served with love and respect while they are alive, and with grief and sorrow when they are dead. In doing so, the people fulfil their fundamental duties, the rightness between the living and the dead is realized, and the son's practice of family reverence towards their parents is complete."

THOUSAND CHARACTER ESSAY 千字文 (LIANG DYNASTY, C. 500)

As its title suggests, this short primer is composed of one thousand different characters that were chosen for calligraphy practice.[1] The characters were organized into four-syllable verse with rhyming eight-character couplets by the supernumerary senior recorder Zhou Xingsi in the space of a single night sometime during the early sixth century.[2] This primer is aptly described as teaching a maximum number of characters in a minimum of text and making their learning easier and more interesting by a coherent and rhymed arrangement that is grammatically varied and semantically meaningful (Paar 1963, 3; Nugent 2018, 161, 165, 166). Besides building vocabulary, the *Thousand Character Classic* offers general knowledge of science, geography, history, and culture, not least through its references to notable individuals, events, and places. The concepts of classicist learning and the contents of advanced texts ultimately form the basis of the rich tapestry of terse sentences. While there are some clusters of couplets on similar topics, its eight sections vary in length and are structured by rhyme rather than theme. In the area of Chinese calligraphy, the work served as

1 Only one character (*jie* 潔) is repeated in some editions (Nugent 2018, 161).

2 The narratives associated with the composition of the *Thousand Character Essay* is related by Paar (1963, 3). Scholars generally agree that Zhou Xingsi likely composed the *Thousand Character Essay* between 507 and 521 (Nugent 2023, 83).

a model form for showcasing calligraphic style in the absence of repeated characters (Ma and Li 2010, 5; Shou 2020, 1–2). Indeed, the *Thousand Character Essay* has generated the most works of calligraphy, with a profusion of models and styles (Xu 2017, 130–131). Medieval manuscripts reveal that, from the sixth century onwards, the *Thousand Character Essay* was the most popular primer.[3] The primer was also influential as a text for learning classical Chinese language and culture in pre-modern Korea, Japan, and Vietnam (Wang 2009, 348–364; Nugent 2018, 169; Nugent 2023, 84; Falato 2020, 36). As the *Thousand Character Essay* was so well known, its characters were commonly used as numerals, and for indexing from the Song dynasty through early modern China, for example cataloging documents in the state archive and stack lists of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) imperial library, and numbering examination stalls and the Buddhist Tripitaka fascicle cases (Fang 2016, 95; Wilkinson 2022, 547, 711, 897, 1121). The significance of the primer in the literary tradition is evidenced by the existence of commentaries on the text,[4] its common reference among pre-modern literary writings and the adoption of its format by subsequent works.[5]

TRANSLATIONS

English

Bridgman, E. C. "The Thousand Character Classic Extracts." In *Classical Chinese Literature: An Anthology of Translations, Volume 1: From Antiquity to the Tang Dynasty*, edited by John Minford and Joseph

3 There are at least a dozen manuscripts of the *Thousand Character Essay* from Turfan and almost three times as many from the Dunhuang library cave (Galambos 2024, 713).

4 For example, the Dunhuang manuscript P.2721 records commentaries on the *Thousand Character Essay* by Li Xian 李暹 of the Liang dynasty; Ge Gangzheng 葛剛正 of the Song dynasty; Lou Fangzhu 婁芳著 and Lou Guo'an 婁國安 of the Ming dynasty; Wang Xiaoyin 汪嘯尹 and Sun Qianyi 孫謙益 of the Qing dynasty.

5 For example, the *Fanyu qianzi wen* 梵語千字文 (Sanskrit *Thousand Character Classic*) of the Tang dynasty, the *Xu qian wen* 續千文 (Another thousand characters) and *Chongxu qian wen* 重續前文 (Further addition to the thousand characters) of the Song dynasty, the *Guang yi qian wen* 廣易千文 (Extended and simplified version of the thousand characters) of the Ming dynasty, and the *Xunmeng qianziwen* 訓蒙千字文 (*Thousand Character Classic* for instructing children) of the Qing dynasty (Falato 2020, 36).

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German

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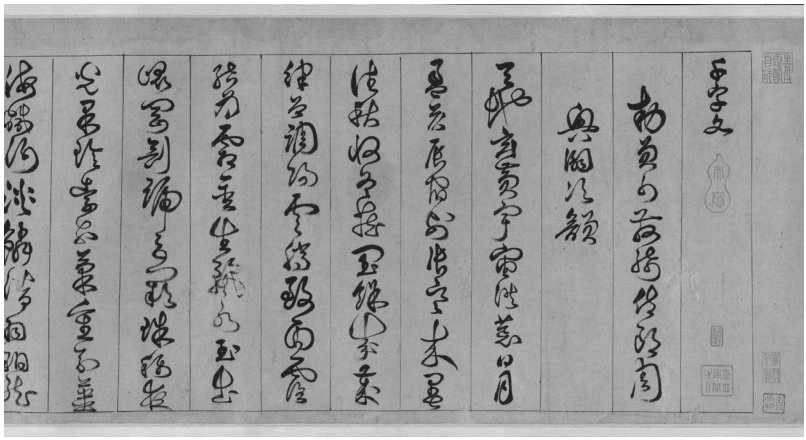


Figure 12. Handscroll of the *Thousand Character Essay* in cursive script dated 1599, by Zhan Jingfeng (1520–1602). Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, shared under CC0 1.0 DEED.

THOUSAND CHARACTER ESSAY

Zhou Xingsi 周興嗣

Section 1

天地玄黃 宇宙洪荒
Yellow earth below dark skies;[6]
Vast spaces and endless time.[7]

日月盈昃 辰宿列張
The moon waxes, the sun sets;[8]
The stars align like a net.[9]

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6 From Hexagram 2 "Kun (*kun* 坤)" of the *Changes*: "Black-and-yellow refers to how Heaven and Earth are mixed together. Heaven is black and Earth is yellow" (*Zhouyi* 1.39; Lynn 1994, 150).

7 In relation to the terms "space" and "time," *Huainanzi* 淮南子 (Master of Huainan) explains: "From furthest antiquity to the present days is called 'extension-in-time'; the four directions [plus] up and down are called 'extension-in-space.'" (*Huainanzi* 11.798; Major et al. 2010, 415).

8 The Chinese literally means: "Sun and moon, full and setting" and alludes to Hexagram 55 "Abundance (*feng* 豐)" of the *Changes*: "When the sun is at midday, it begins to set, and when the moon is at its full, it begins to wane" (Paar 1963, 7; Lynn 1994, 488).

9 *New Discourses* (*Xinyu* 新語): "[Heaven] suspends the sun and the moon, arranges stars and constellations, regulates the four seasons, adjusts the *yin* and *yang*, diffuses the *qi*, governs the nature [of the myriad creatures], and establishes the sequence of the Five Phases" (Goldin and Sabatinni 2020, 20–21).

寒來暑往 秋收冬藏
Cold weather after the warmth fades;[10]
Autumn harvest stored for wintry days.[11]

閏餘成歲 律呂調陽
A leap month makes the full year's span;[12]
Music blends the *yin* with the *yang*.

雲騰致雨 露結為霜
Clouds collect to make gentle rain;[13]
Dew turns to frost when cold remains.[14]

金生麗水 玉出崑岡
Gold comes from the river Li;[15]
Kungang is where jade will be.[16]

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10 The *Changes* describes the cyclical nature of worldly phenomena: "When the cold goes, then the heat comes, and when the heat goes, then the cold comes. The cold and the heat drive each other on, and the yearly seasons come into being in this process. What has gone is a contraction, and what is to come is an expansion. Contraction and expansion impel each other on, and benefits are generated in this process" (*Zhouyi* 8.358; Lynn 1994, 81).

11 *Xunzi* 荀子 (Master Xun): "Plow in the spring, weed in the summer, harvest in the fall, and store in the winter" (*Xunzi* 5.165; Hutton 2014, 77).

12 *Documents*: The surplus days in the lunar year accumulate to form an intercalary month every few years (Legge 2011, 22).

13 Hexagram 1 "Qian (*qian* 乾)" of the *Changes*: "How great is the fundamental nature of Qian! The myriad things are provided their beginnings by it, and, as such, it controls Heaven. It allows clouds to scud and rain to fall and things in all their different categories to flow into forms" (*Zhouyi* 1.8; Lynn 1994, 131).

14 Like the previous line, this line describes the importance of being aware of the subtle beginnings of things. From Hexagram 2 "Kun (*kun* 坤)" of the *Changes*: "The frost one treads on reaches its ultimate stage as solid ice" (*Zhouyi* 1.32; Lynn 1994, 146; Waley 1960, 42).

15 *Han Feizi* 韓非子 (Master Han Fei) refers to gold being mined from the Li River. The Li River (now known as the Jinsha River) is the westernmost headwater stream of the Yangtze River in southwestern China and flows into Yunnan Province (*Han Feizi* 9.225; Liao 1939, I.295).

16 "Kungang" refers to the Kunlun Mountains of Central Asia (Gale 1967, 15).

劍號巨闕 珠稱夜光
"Great Watchtower" was the sword's name;[17]
The pearl "Luminous Night" was famed.[18]

果珍李柰 菜重芥薑
The finest fruits are crab-apple and plum;
Mustard and ginger are second to none.

海鹹河淡 鱗潛羽翔
The sea is salty, the river bland;
Fish swim in water, birds fly from land.

龍師火帝 鳥官人皇
Dragon Master, Fire Emperor;
Bird-named ranks, the people's ruler.[19]

始制文字 乃服衣裳
The written word was formed;
And garments first worn.[20]

---

17 The Great Watchtower is thought to be the most powerful sword commissioned of the swordmaker Ou Yezi 歐冶子 (dates unknown) by King Goujian 勾踐 (r. 495–465) of the state of Yue 越 (*Yuejue shu* 11.114).

18 The earliest account of this famous pearl relates to it being discovered by King Yu (trad. r. 2205–2197 BCE) of the Xia dynasty (*Shiyi ji* 2.320).

19 The "Dragon Master," the "Fire Emperor," and the "bird-named ranks" refer to legendary pre-dynastic rulers Fu Xi, either Yan Di 炎帝 or Suiren shi 燧人氏, and Shaohao Zhi 少皞摯, respectively. According to tradition, Fu Xi adopted dragons as his guide and established masters who were named after dragons; the Fire Emperor (also known as "Shennong") took fire as his guide and established masters who were named after fires; Suiren shi is credited with discovering how to create fire, and because a phoenix appeared when Shaohao Zhi was established as ruler, he took birds as his guide and established masters who were named after birds (*Han Feizi* 19.442; Liao 1959, 11.275; Durrant et al. 2016, 1544–1545).

20 The text alludes to the legendary rulership of the Yellow Emperor, whose scribe Cang Jie 倉頡 and empress Leizu 嫘祖 are credited with inventing the writing of the Chinese characters and developing sericulture for making garments, respectively (Malmqvist 1974, 48).

推位讓國 有虞陶唐
Abdicating the throne;
Yao and Shun stand alone.[21]

吊民伐罪 周發殷湯
Righting wrongs for all the land;
Credits to Wu and Tang's hands.[22]

坐朝問道 垂拱平章
Seeking the Dao while hearing court;
Effortless ruling achieves all.[23]

愛育黎首 臣伏戎羌
They loved and taught their people dear;
By those foreign, they were revered.

遐邇一體 率賓歸王
Serving those both near and far;
Loyalty from lands afar.

---

21 The text alludes to King Yao and King Shun. "Tang" and "Yu" are titles of King Yao (trad. r. 2357–2255 BCE) and King Shun (trad. r. 2255–2205), respectively. Both are known for choosing their successor based on merit and abdicating in their favor. See the "Canon of Yao," the "Canon of Shun" and the "Counsels of the Great Yü" chapters in the *Documents* (Legge 2011, 26–27, 32, 57–63).

22 The text alludes to King Tang and King Wu. Tang overthrew King Jie 桀 (d. c. 1600 BCE) of the Xia dynasty to establish the Shang dynasty, which is also known as the "Yin Shang" or the "Yin dynasty." The Shang ruling house lasted for approximately six centuries and ended with the reign of King Zhou 紂 (c. 1105–1046 BCE) (Legge 2011, 184–190). King Zhou of the Shang dynasty was overthrown by King Wu 武 (r. 1049/45–1043 BCE), who established the Zhou dynasty (1046–256 BCE) and acknowledged his father King Wen 文 (r. 1099/56–1050 BCE) as its posthumous founder. The Zhou dynasty lasted nearly eight centuries and was the longest ruling house in Chinese history (Legge 2011, 306–316).

23 The text literally means "Sitting at court, seeking counsel, with robes draping and cupped hands for orderly government" and alludes to the *Documents*: "He (also) regulated…the people (of his domain)" and "Then he had only to let his robes fall down, and fold his hands, and the kingdom was orderly ruled" (Legge 2011, 17 and 316).

鳴鳳在竹 白駒食場
A phoenix sings in the grove;[24]
White colts graze in the meadow.[25]

化被草木 賴及萬方
Transforming all from plants to trees;
Bring blessings to the furthest seas.

蓋此身髮 四大五常
Our body, with its hair, skin and all;
The virtues five and elements four.[26]

恭惟鞠養 豈敢毀傷
Mindful of our parents' care;
To suffer harm, who would dare?[27]

女慕貞潔 男效才良
Women esteem purity's grace;
Men follow the talented sage.

---

24 The appearance of phoenixes was an indication the effective governance during the reign of the legendary Huangdi 黃帝 (Yellow Emperor) (Henry 2021, 1070–1071).

25 The white colt was a symbol of virtuous ministers who would be present in times of good governance. This allusion is found in "White Colt" (*Bai ju* 白駒; Mao 186) (*Maoshi* 11.787–790; Waley 1960, 194).

26 The five virtues may refer to humanity (*ren* 仁), rightness (*yi* 義), ritual propriety (*li* 禮), wisdom (*zhi* 智) and trustworthiness (*xin* 信); those associated with the five interpersonal relationships: love (*qin* 親) between parent and child, rightness between leader and subordinate, harmony (*bie* 別) among spouses, orderliness (*xu* 序) between senior and junior, and trustworthiness among friends; or those associated with the five roles: fatherly rightness, motherly compassion (*ci* 慈), older brother's friendliness (*you* 友), younger brother's respectfulness (*gong* 恭), and the child's reverence for their family (*xiao* 孝). The four elements may refer to earth, fire, water, and wind, or the Dao, heaven, earth, and human beings as in the *Laozi* 老子 (Old master) (Chen 2020, 179).

27 *Classic of Family Reverence*: "Our body, with its hair and skin, are received from our father and mother, and not daring to destroy or injure them is the beginning of family reverence."

知過必改 得能莫忘
Know your mistakes and make them right;[28]
Learn your lessons, keep them in mind.[29]

罔談彼短 靡恃己長
Speak not of another's faults;
Nor boast of one's own merits.

信使可復 器欲難量
Honesty that stands the test;
Strive for virtue none can best.

墨悲絲染 《詩》贊羔羊
Mo was sad for silk that's dyed;[30]
The *Odes* praise lambs pure and white.[31]

二
Section 2

景行維賢 克念作聖
Virtue is the hallmark of the wise;[32]
Master thoughts to be a sagely guide.[33]

---

28 The text literally means "Realizing one's mistake, one must correct it" and alludes to the *Guoyu* 國語 (Discourses of the states): "One who can correct their mistakes is superior to the masses" (*Guoyu* 4.53).

29 The text literally means "Do not forget what you have learned." *Analects*: "Zixia said, 'Day by day understanding what is beyond you, month by month never forgetting what you can do—you may be called a lover of learning'" (*Lunyu* 19.5; Watson 2007, 134).

30 "Master Mo Zi told how, when he saw someone dyeing silk, he sighed and said: 'When something is dyed by blue [dye], it becomes blue. When it is dyed by yellow [dye], it becomes yellow. What [the dye] enters changes in that its colour changes….Therefore, dyeing must be given careful attention'" (Johnston 2010, 14–15).

31 "Lamb and Sheep" (*Gao yang* 羔羊; Mao 18): "In skins of the young lamb; Sewn with white silk of five and twenty strands…" (*Maoshi* 1.99–103; Waley 1960, 23).

32 "Linchpin" (*Che xia* 車舝 ; Mao 218): "High hills we breasted, Long ways we went" (*Maoshi* 14.1023; Waley 1960, 88).

33 *Documents*: "The wise, through not thinking, become foolish, and the foolish, by thinking, become wise" (Legge 2011, 500).

德建名立 形端表正
Virtue is how renown is derived;
Models from proper conduct are prized.

空谷傳聲 虛堂習聽
Valleys have resounding calls;
Echoes stir though empty halls.

禍因惡積 福緣善慶
Misfortune from misdeeds accrued;
Fortune from the good deeds we do.[34]

尺璧非寶 寸陰是競
A foot of jade a small amount;
Must strive to make each second count.[35]

資父事君 曰嚴與敬
To father and ruler give care;
And service that's thoughtful and fair.[36]

孝當竭力 忠則盡命
In family reverence, do one's best;
As with faithful service too, do no less.[37]

---

34 The text literally means "Misfortune arises from accumulated misdeeds, Happiness results from the joys of virtue." *Changes*: "A family that accumulates goodness will be sure to have an excess of blessings, but one that accumulates evil will be sure to have an excess of disasters" (*Zhouyi* 1.36; Lynn 1994, 146).

35 *Master of Huainan*: "Thus sages do not value a foot of jade as much as they esteem an inch's movement of the sundial's shadow. Time is difficult to gain but easy to lose" (*Huainanzi* 1.95; Major et al. 2010, 62).

36 *Classic of Family Reverence*: "Drawing on their devotion to their father to serve their mother, the love is the same. Drawing on their devotion to their father to serve their lord, the respect is the same. While the mother receives love and the lord receives reverence, the father receives both."

37 *Analects*: "Zixia said, If he treats worthy persons as worthy and is respectful to them, does all in his power to serve his father and mother, gives his best in the service of the ruler, and in dealings with friends is faithful to his word, though some may say he lacks learning, I would surely call him learned!" (*Lunyu* 1.7; Watson 2007, 17).

臨深履薄 夙興溫凊
Nearing depths or treading on thin ice;[38]
Come summer or winter, day and night.[39]

似蘭斯馨 如松之盛
Fragrant like the orchid fine;[40]
Ever thriving like the pine.[41]

川流不息 淵澄取映
Ever flowing like the stream;
Clear pools have a mirror's gleam.

容止若思 言辭安定
Thoughtful in look and gaze;
Calm and composed in phrase.[42]

---

38 "Fearsome Sky" (*Xiao min* 小旻; Mao 195): "With fear and caution should we tread, Like men above some torrent's bed, Or those upon thin ice who go" (*Maoshi* 12.868; Legge 1876, 233).

39 A dedicated attitude expressed through the line "Rise early, and go late to sleep" appears three times in the *Odes*: "Faithless Man" (*Mang* 氓; Mao 58), "Turtle Dove" (*Xiao wan* 小宛; Mao 196) and "Dignified Demeanour" (*Yi* 抑; Mao 256) (*Maoshi* 3.274, 12.868 and 18.1369; Legge 1876, 106, 234, and 324). *Records on Ritual*: "For all sons it is the rule: in winter, to warm (the bed for their parents), and to cool it in summer; in the evening, to adjust everything (for their repose), and to inquire (about their health) in the morning" (*Liji* 1.27; Legge 1968, 67).

40 Orchids were observed to grow deep in forests where they will still emit fine fragrance in the absence of appreciation by others. The flower is a metaphor for those of noble character who would continue to cultivate themselves regardless of recognition. *Shuoyuan* 說苑 (Garden of eloquence): "Purple mushrooms and orchids grow deep in forests, but the absence of people there does not mean that these plants are devoid of fragrance" (Henry 2021, 1000–1001).

41 The evergreen nature of pine trees is a common metaphor for resilience. For example, "May Heaven Guard" (*Tian bao* 天保; Mao 166): "Like the pine-tree, the cypress in their verdure – All these blessings may you receive!" (*Maoshi* 9.686; Waley 1960, 176) Also in the *Analects*: "The Master said, When the year-end cold comes, then we know that the pine and cypress are the last to lose their leaves" (*Lunyu* 9.29; Watson 2007, 64).

42 *Records on Ritual*: "Always and in everything let there be reverence; with the deportment grave as when one is thinking (deeply), and with speech composed and definite" (*Liji* 1.7–8; Legge 1968, 61).

篤初誠美 慎終宜令
Honesty from the start is best;
Take care that the end is no less.

榮業所基 籍甚無竟
On great deeds the foundation lies;
Widespread fame that never dies.

學優登仕 攝職從政
High learning leads to office;
With rank in the state service.[43]

存以甘棠 去而益詠
Like the pear-tree, memory remains;
Treasured ever more in the song's strains.[44]

三
Section 3

樂殊貴賤 禮別尊卑
The music for various ranks has been set;
Noble and lowly differ in etiquette.

上和下睦 夫唱婦隨
Leader and those led in harmony;
Partners together in unity.

外受傅訓 入奉母儀
Follow the words of wise teachers;
Uphold all that mother teaches.

---

43 The text literally means "One who excels in studies, will ascend to serve." *Analects*: "One who excels in his official position should then devote himself to learning. One who excels in learning should then devote himself to official service" (*Lunyu* 19.13; Slingerland 2003, 225).

44 "Sweet Pear Tree" (*Gan tang* 甘棠; Mao 16): "Young and tender is this sweet pear-tree; Do not lop it or knock it, For the Lord of Shao took shelter under it" (*Maoshi* 1.91; Waley 1960, 135).

諸姑伯叔 猶子比兒
With elders like aunts and uncles;
Treasure their children like my own.[45]

孔懷兄弟 同氣連枝
Let brothers to each other be;
Like branches from a single tree.[46]

交友投分 切磨箴規
Make friends with those of matching views;
Help each other refine virtue.[47]

仁慈隱惻 造次弗離
Sympathy, compassion, and humanity;[48]
Sustain even in haste and calamity.[49]

節義廉退 顛沛匪虧
Maintain rightness, deference, and integrity;
Even in times of hardship and adversity.[50]

性靜情逸 心動神疲
Calm by nature, one feels a sense of ease;
A restless mind will tire the inner peace.

---

45 *Records on Ritual*: "The mourning worn for the son of a brother should be the same as for one's own son" (*Liji* 8.263; Legge 1968, 147).

46 "Cherry Tree" (*Chang di* 常棣; Mao 164): "When awful death comes near, 'Tis brothers sympathize" (*Maoshi* 9.666; Legge 1876, 193).

47 The text literally refers to friends having a moral duty to refine each other, as stated in "Bay of the Qi" (*Qi yu* 淇奧; Mao 55): "As [something] cut, as [something] filed, As [something] chiselled, as [something] polished" (*Maoshi* 3.254; Waley 1960, 46).

48 *Mencius*: "Now, if anyone were suddenly to see a child about to fall into a well, his mind would be filled with alarm, distress, pity, and compassion" (*Mengzi* 2A.6; Bloom 2009, 35).

49 The text literally means "Never departing from benevolence, compassion, and empathy, even in times of confusion and distress." *Analects*: "The gentleman never departs from humaneness even for the space of a meal—in confusion and distress he holds fast to it; stumbling, faltering, he holds fast to it" (*Lunyu* 4.5; Watson 2007, 32).

50 The text literally means "Not lacking in integrity, rightness, honesty, and humility, even in times of stumbling and faltering" and alludes to the *Analects* passage as noted above.

守真志滿 逐物意移
Staying true brings one satisfaction;
Chasing things leads one to distraction.[51]

堅持雅操 好爵自縻
Hold fast to fine sentiments;
High ranks will come from this.[52]

四
Section 4

都邑華夏 東西二京
The Splendid Kingdom once possessed;
Capitals in the east and west.[53]

背邙面洛 浮渭據涇
With Mount Mang behind and River Luo in view;
Above River Wei, near River Jing too.[54]

宮殿盤鬱 樓觀飛驚
The palace and halls winding high;
Their towers seem to reach the sky.

51 The text literally means to "Hold fast to the truth for realising aspirations, Chasing the material distracts the mind." *Master Zhuang*: "If you were diligent in improving yourself, careful to hold fast to the Truth, and would [leave] the [material] things to [others], you could avoid [being burdened]" (*Zhuangzi* 1031; Watson 2013, 275).

52 The text literally means "Hold fast to your noble conduct, High rank, one will naturally earn." *Changes*: "I have a fine [rank]; I will share it with you" (*Zhouyi* 6.285; Lynn 1994, 524).

53 The text refers to the former capital cities of imperial China at Luoyang 洛陽 in the east, and Chang'an 長安 in the west.

54 The text describes Luoyang being situated with Mount Mang 邙山 behind and the Luo River 洛水 in front, and Chang'an being located where the Jing River 涇水 joins the Wei River 渭水.

圖寫禽獸 畫彩仙靈
Hung with drawings of birds and beasts;
And color paintings of spirits.

丙舍傍啟 甲帳對楹
The buildings boast halls on each side;
Wondrous drapes face the pillars wide.

肆筵設席 鼓瑟吹笙
Set the banquet and each seat;
While the melodies entreat.[55]

升階納陛 弁轉疑星
Into the court above the steps;
Like the stars, those with turning caps.[56]

右通廣內 左達承明
To the right, the Guangnei (spacious hall) lies near;
On the left, the Chengming (mansion bright) is clear.

既集墳典 亦聚群英
Collecting the classics of all kinds;
And gathering the finest minds.[57]

---

55 The text literally means "Setting the banquet and the seats, Play the zither and blow the reed-organ" and alludes to "Deers Call" (*Lu ming* 鹿鳴; Mao 161): "With guests renowned for noble deeds. The lutes are struck; the organ blows" (*Maoshi* 9.650; Legge 1876, 190).

56 "Bay of the Qi" (*Qi yu* 淇奧; Mao 55): "His ear-plugs are of pebbles fine; And gems like stars bright glittering shine" (*Maoshi* 3.256; Legge 1876, 102).

57 The text literally means "Then collecting the classics and canons, and assembling many exemplars" and alludes to the *Zuo Tradition*: "This is a good scribe.…He is able to recite 'Three [Classics],' 'Five Canons,' 'Eight Guidelines,' and 'Nine Mounds'" (Durrant et al. 2016, 1482–1483).

杜稿鐘隸 漆書壁經
Writings by Du and Zhong's clerical hand;[58]
Texts written with lacquer and on walls grand.

府羅將相 路俠槐卿
Here commanders and chancellors meet;
And the high officials line the street.

戶封八縣 家給千兵
A fief of eight districts, granted with pride;
One thousand troops given, ready to ride.

高冠陪輦 驅轂振纓
High caps follow the carriage's flight,
Speeding wheels shake the tassels bright.

世祿侈富 車駕肥輕
Heir to rank and wealth no less;
With swift steeds and finest dress.

策功茂實 勒碑刻銘
Their merits are ever known;
Etched into steel and stone.

磻溪伊尹 佐時阿衡
Lü Shang from Panxi and Yi Yin wise;[59]
Guided their rulers to rise and thrive.

58 The library collection includes the renowned works of the calligraphists Du Du 杜度 (fl. c. 75) and Zhong Yao 鐘繇 (151–230), respectively (De Crespigny 2007, 175, 1134–1135).

59 Advisors Yi Yin 伊尹 (fl. 1675 BCE) and Lü Shang 呂尚 (fl. 1056 BCE) assisted the founding of the Shang and Zhou dynasties, respectively. The latter is alluded to by the location of Pan Creek 磻溪 where he was fishing when he met King Wu, then the ruler of the Zhou state.

奄宅曲阜 微旦孰營
The place Qufu is at Yan,
Who could manage the state but Dan?[60]

桓公匡合 濟弱扶傾
Lord Huan of Qi brought all in line;
Helped those weak and in decline.[61]

綺回漢惠 說感武丁
By Qi's support, Hui claimed the throne;[62]
With Yue's advice, Wu Ding was known.[63]

俊乂密勿 多士寔寧
When many talents govern as one;
Peace and stability soon are won.[64]

60 The text refers to the Duke of Zhou, whose name was "Dan 旦," and is credited as being instrumental in setting the foundations for the Zhou dynasty.

61 Lord Huan of Qi is the first hegemon in a new balance of power that emerged as the Zhou dynastic rule declined during the Spring and Autumn period. The merits of his rulership are attested by Confucius as recorded in the *Analects*: "[Lord] Huan nine times called the other feudal rulers together in assembly and did so without employing his war chariots" (*Lunyu* 14.17; Watson 2007, 98).

62 Qi Liji 綺里季 is one of the four venerable elders that persuaded Emperor Gaozu of the Han dynasty to maintain the heir apparent, who later became Emperor Hui 惠 (r. 195–188 BCE) (Loewe 2000, 483).

63 The longest serving Shang ruler Wu Ding 武丁 (r. 1324–1264 BCE) credits his success to his chief minister Fu Yue 傅說 (dates unknown). For example, the following words are attributed to Wu Ding in the *Documents*: "Yue, that all within the four seas look up to my virtue is owing to you. As his legs and arms form the man, so does a good minister form the sage (king)" (Legge 2011, 261–262).

64 The text literally means "Many officials enabled [the state to be at] peace" and alludes to "King Wen" (*Wen wang* 文王; Mao 235): "Such aid their numerous bands supply, That Wan rests tranquilly on high" (*Maoshi* 16.1125; Legge 1876, 285).

晉楚更霸 趙魏困橫
The states Jin and Chu in turns took lead;[65]
Pacts for Zhao and Wei did not succeed.[66]

假途滅虢 踐土會盟
Guo was ended via borrowed route;[67]
The Jiantu treaty was approved.[68]

何遵約法 韓弊煩刑
Xiao He kept to simple laws;[69]
Han Fei's exacting sanctions were flawed.[70]

起翦頗牧 用軍最精
Qi, Jian, Po, Mu, commanders four;
The very best in the art of war.[71]

---

65 The text refers to the states of Jin and Chu, whose rulers Lord Wen and King Zhuang in turn became hegemons, respectively, during the Spring and Autumn period.

66 The states of Zhao and Wei, along with four allied states were defeated by the state of Qin during the Warring States period. The state of Qin overthrew the Zhou ruling house in 256 BCE and conquered the six other states (Han, Zhao, Wei, Chu, Yan, and Qi) to unify the empire in 221 BCE (Loewe 2000, 654).

67 The state of Yu granted permission for the state of Jin to travel through its territory to attack its neighbor state of Guo in 655 BCE. However, Yu was also extinguished when the Jin troops launched a surprise attack on their return from defeating Guo (Durrant et al. 2016, 276–279).

68 A covenant was concluded between the states of Lu, Jin, Qi, Song, Cai, Zheng, Wei, and Ju at Jiantu in 632 BCE (Durrant et al. 2016, 406–407).

69 Xiao He 蕭何 (d. 193 BCE) is credited with formulating the laws of the Han empire based on those of the former Qin regime (Loewe 2000, 605).

70 Han Fei 韓非 (c. 280–233 BCE) was a prince of the state of Han 韓 and a philosopher who advocated a legalist model of state governance. Although the Qin ruler was interested in Han Fei's ideas, he distrusted him, and Han Fei ultimately committed suicide while confined in the state of Qin (Watson 2003, 2–4).

71 Bai Qi (fl. 291 BCE) and Wang Jian (fl. 236 BCE) of the state of Qin, and Lian Po (fl. 283 BCE) and Li Mu (fl. 244 BCE) of the state of Zhao, were renowned military commanders during the Warring States period (*Shiji* 73.445–450 and 81.506–512; Sima 1994, 167–177 and 263–272; Loewe 2000, 530).

宣威沙漠 馳譽丹青
Their force commanded across the sands;
In paintings, their legacy stands.

九州禹跡 百郡秦並
All nine provinces bear Yü's stride;[72]
The hundred states Qin unified.[73]

岳宗泰岱 禪主云亭
Mount Tai is the most revered of heights!
Yun and Ting are sites for sacrifice.[74]

雁門紫塞 雞田赤城
Yanmen pass and the Great Wall stand tall;[75]
Jitian and Chicheng are known to all.[76]

72 The legendary King Yu, who founded the Xia dynasty, is credited with dividing the territory of early China into nine provinces and making them habitable (Legge 2011, 92–151).

73 The state of Qin had incorporated the domains of the other states by 221 BCE.

74 The rulers in early China would conduct state sacrifices on or near Mount Tai, which is located in Shandong province. For example, the Feng sacrifice to heaven was conducted by the ruler in person on Mount Tai, and the Shan sacrifice to earth was conducted at the foot of Mount Tai (e.g., Yunyun) or on one of the lesser peaks surrounding it (e.g., Tingting) (*Guanzi* 16.952–953; Rickett 1998, 2.181 and 2.183).

75 The Yanmen Pass was once the northernmost strategic pass and is located in the area now known as Shanxi Province. The Great Wall was constructed across the historical northern borders of pre-imperial and imperial China (Herrmann 1966, 8–9, 11–12, 14).

76 Jitian was the location of an ancient relay station near the north-western strategic pass. It is situated in the area now known as Ningxia Hui, an autonomous region northwest of China. Mount Chicheng is known for the red color of its soil and located in the area now known as Zhejiang Province. Note that Mount Qing in Sichuan Province is also known as "Mount Chicheng" (Ma and Li 2010, 260).

昆池碣石 鉅野洞庭
Mount Jieshi and Lake Kunchi charm;
Lake Dongting and Juye Marsh are calm.[77]

曠遠綿邈 巖岫杳冥
Vast, distant, stretching endlessly;
Cliffs and peaks are dim and dusky!

五
Section 5

治本於農 務茲稼穡
Governing is based on farmers' yields;
Diligence lies in working the fields.[78]

俶載南畝 我藝黍稷
Plow the southern land;[79]
Millet sown by hand.[80]

稅熟貢新 勸賞黜陟
Tax what's ripe, offer some harvest;
Guide, reward, advance or dismiss.[81]

---

77 Mount Jieshi is located in Hebei Province, Lake Kunchi (also known as "Lake Kunming 昆明湖") is located in Yunnan Province, and Lake Dongting is located in the northeast of Hunan Province. The Juye Marsh (also known as "Daye Marsh 大野澤") no longer exists but was one of the nine largest marshlands of early China and located in the area now known as Shandong Province (Herrmann 1966, 4, 13 and 34).

78 "Cutting the Hardwood" (*Fa tan* 伐檀; Mao 112): "If we did not sow, if we did not reap, How should we get corn, three hundred stackyards?" (*Maoshi* 5.435; Waley 1960, 286).

79 "Large Fields" (*Da tian* 大田; Mao 212): "With our sharp ploughs, Let us begin on the southern acre" (*Maoshi* 14.991; Waley 1960, 171).

80 "Large Fields" (*Da tian* 大田; Mao 212): "From of old, what have we been doing? We grow wine-millet and cooking-millet" (*Maoshi* 14.998; Waley 1960, 172).

81 The text literally translates as "encourage, reward, dismiss and promote." *Documents*: "Every three years there was an examination of merits, and after three examinations the undeserving were degraded, and the deserving advanced. (By this arrangement) the duties of all the departments were fully discharged" (Legge 2011, 50).

孟軻敦素 史魚秉直
Mencius upheld simplicity;
Shi Yu embodied integrity.[82]

庶幾中庸 勞謙謹敕
Perfecting practice of the mean;[83]
Ever humble with prudence seen.[84]

聆音察理 鑑貌辨色
Consider the reasons behind words said;
Observe the face for the thoughts in their head.[85]

貽厥嘉猷 勉其祗植
For those to come, leave a legacy bright;[86]
Inspire them to seek what is good and right.

省躬譏誡 寵增抗極
On ridicule and warning, one must reflect;
With favor and reward, let pride be checked.

---

82 *Analects*: "The Master said, How upright Shi Yu was! When the state followed the Way, he was straight as an arrow. When the state was without the Way, he was straight as an arrow" (*Lunyu* 15.7; Watson 2007, 107).

83 The text "庶幾中庸" literally translates as "not far off from the practice of the mean" and alludes to Confucius' remark in the *Analects* that the practice of the mean has long been rare among people (*Lunyu* 6.29; Watson 2007, 46).

84 The text literally translates as "strive to be humble and be prudent with instruction" and alludes to Hexagram 15 "Qian (*qian* 謙)" of the *Changes* that describes the noble person maintaining their position through diligence in their modesty (*Zhouyi* 2.97; Lynn 1994, 231).

85 The text literally translates as "understand the tone, examine the reasons, reflect on forms, and discern appearances" and alludes to the *Analects*: "The accomplished man… weighs people's words, observes their attitude, and is careful to defer to others" (*Lunyu* 12.20; Watson 2007, 84).

86 The text literally translates as "to bequeath their admirable principles" and alludes to "King Wen is Renowned" (*Wen wang you sheng* 文王有聲; Mao 244): "He bequeathed his teaching and counsels That they might give peace and protection to his sons" (*Maoshi* 16.1237; Waley 1960, 264).

殆辱近恥 林皋幸即
Facing shame and dreading disgrace;
In the woods and marsh, seek solace.[87]

兩疏見機 解組誰逼
Both the Shus heeded their time;
Then left their seals and resigned.[88]

六
Section 6

索居閑處 沉默寂寥
Seek to dwell in a peaceful place;[89]
Quiet is a silent embrace.[90]

求古尋論 散慮逍遙
Study wisdom of ancient lore;
Let tranquil thoughts drift and explore.[91]

欣奏累遣 慼謝歡招
As joys increase, burdens depart;
Sorrows end and happiness starts.

---

87 The text literally translates as "forest and hills are happiness precisely" and alludes to *Master Zhuang*: "The mountains and forests, the hills and fields, fill us with overflowing delight, and we are joyful" (*Zhuangzi* 765; Watson 2013, 187).

88 The "Shus" refer to Shu Guang 疏廣 and his nephew 疏受, who were appointed as the Senior Tutor and Junior Tutor to the Heir Apparent, respectively. Mindful of the dangers of over-extending their political careers, Shu Guang and Shu Shou later voluntarily resigned from public service (Loewe 2000, 481).

89 *Records on Ritual*: "It is a long time since I left the herd, and lived apart here" (*Liji* 7.236; Legge 1968, 136).

90 The text literally translates as "deep, silent, still and undisturbed" and alludes to *Master Wen*: "It is (deep, dark,) silent, undefined; we do not hear its voice. Assigning a name to it, I call it the Way" (Cleary 1991, 3).

91 The text literally translates as "thinking freely and wandering at ease" and partly alludes to "White Colt" (*Bai ju* 白駒; Mao 186): "Its owner, cherished in my heart, Shall then with me at ease abide" (*Maoshi* 11.788; Legge 1876, 220).

渠荷的歷 園莽抽條
Lotus blooms adorn the pond;
Garden grass grows far beyond.

枇杷晚翠 梧桐蚤凋
While the loquat stays green for long;
The parasol tree leaves are gone.

陳根委翳 落葉飄搖
While buried roots twist and wind about;
Fallen leaves dance, fluttering around.

游鵾獨運 凌摩絳霄
When the lone stork takes flight;
It soars to crimson heights.

七
Section 7

耽讀玩市 寓目囊箱
The lively markets fade away;
While books invite the mind to stay.[92]

易輶攸畏 屬耳垣墻
Take care with every word shared;
Remember the walls have ears.[93]

92 The official Wang Chong 王充 (27–c.100) is known to have read in the bookshops as a student because his family could not afford books. The *Discourses on Balance* (*Lunheng* 論衡) with its various questions of philosophy, history, literature and natural science, is attributed to Wang Chong (De Crespigny 2007, 806–807).

93 The text literally translates as "enclosing walls have connected ears" and alludes to "Banished Prince" (*Xiao bian* 小弁; Mao 197): "O'er his words the king should watch; Ears are set each word to catch" (*Maoshi* 12.880; Legge 1876, 236).

具膳餐飯 適口充腸
Prepare the meals, eat enough;
Serve to taste, the gut to stuff.

飽飫烹宰 饑厭糟糠
Once full, even dainties can't be forced;
But when hungry, the food can be coarse.[94]

親戚故舊 老少異糧
Among family and friends dear;
Young and old served different fare.

妾御績紡 侍巾帷房
Wives weave at the loom;
And tend to each room.

紈扇圓絜 銀燭煒煌
The silk fan is round and white;
While silver candles gleam bright.

晝眠夕寐 藍筍象床
We sleep at night and snooze at noon;
On ivory beds, spread bamboo.[95]

弦歌酒宴 接杯舉觴
Songs and strings grace the feast;
Raise the cups, let joy not cease.

---

94 *New Writings* (*Xinshu* 新書): "The cold make use of sackcloth and burlap, while the hungry savour dregs and chaff" (*Xinshu* 1.14).

95 The text literally translates as "blue bamboo-shoot and ivory couch" and alludes to the *Documents* and the *Strategies of the Warring States*, where there is mention of a fine bamboo mat placed before the western side-chamber and a carved ivory couch that is presented to Lord Mengchang, respectively (Legge 2011, 553; Crump Jr. 1970, 187).

矯手頓足 悅豫且康
Raising hands and stomping feet;
Happy, healthy, and at ease.

嫡後嗣續 祭祀蒸嘗
The wife's sons preserve the line;[96]
Honor ancestors through time.[97]

稽顙再拜 悚懼恐惶
Humbly prostrate, twice bowing;[98]
Feeling nervous and trembling.

箋牒簡要 顧答審詳
While writing must be clear and tight;
Let answers be careful and right.

骸垢想浴 執熱願涼
Dirty bones will long for a cleansing bath;
Handling hot things, one wants a cooling draft.[99]

驢騾犢特 駭躍超驤
Startled donkeys, mules and calves;
Leap away and gallop fast.

---

96 *Discourses of the States*: "The descendants of Jin will continue the undertakings of their ancestor just as the crops grow in the field" (Wang and Zhao 2012, 221–223).

97 The text identifies the autumn and winter sacrifices in the ancestral temples of the son of Heaven and the feudal princes, termed "Zheng" and "Chang," respectively (*Liji* 12.451; Legge 1968, 224–225).

98 The text literally translates as "to kowtow and twice bow" and alludes to the *Records on Ritual* that prescribes how mourners would bow and kowtow to express courtesy and sorrow to visitors (*Liji* 6.199; Legge 1968, 122–123).

99 "Young Mulberry Tree" (*Sang rou* 桑柔; Mao 257): "What burns and glows, Ere used, you in the water cool" (*Maoshi* 18.1387; Legge 1876, 328).

誅斬賊盜 捕獲叛亡
Harshly punish bandits and thieves;
Capture rebels and those who flee.

八
Section 8

布射僚丸 嵇琴阮嘯
Bu shot his arrows,[100] Liao could juggle balls;[101]
Ji played the qin,[102] Ruan whistled a call.[103]

恬筆倫紙 鈞巧任釣
Tian refined the brush,[104] and Lun the sheet;[105]
Jun was skillful,[106] Ren had fishing feats.[107]

釋紛利俗 竝皆佳妙
In solving disputes for the common good;
All proved just as effective as they should.

---

100 Lü Bu 呂布 (d. 198) is known for being an expert archer and horseman (De Crespigny 2007, 624–325).

101 Xiong Yiliao 熊宜遼 (fl. 479 BCE) is known for his juggling skills as recorded in *Master Zhuang*: "Yiliao from south of the Market juggled a set of balls, and the trouble between the two houses was resolved" (*Zhuangzi* 850; Watson 2013, 208).

102 Ji Kang 嵇康 (224–263) is known for playing a zither-like instrument called *qin* (*Shishuo xinyu* 326; Mather 2002, 150).

103 Ruan Ji 阮籍 (210–263) is known for his whistling and poetry (Shih 2015, 334).

104 Meng Tian 蒙恬 (d. 210 BCE) is thought to have refined the invention of the writing pen (Ma and Li 2010, 272).

105 Cai Luan 蔡倫 (d. 121) is credited with the development of the paper-making process in about 105 (De Crespigny 2007, 27).

106 Ma Jun 馬鈞 (dates unknown) (Ma and Li 2010, 273).

107 Ren Gongzi 任公子 (dates unknown). *Master Zhuang*: "Ren made an enormous fishhook with a huge line, baited it with fifty bullocks, settled himself on top of Mount Kuaiji, and cast with his pole into the eastern sea" (*Zhuangzi* 925; Watson 2013, 228).

毛施淑姿 工顰妍笑
Mao Qiang and Xi Shi had elegant grace;
Others try to imitate Xi's frowning face.[108]

年矢每催 曦暉朗曜
The years fly by, swift as arrows;
Bright sunshine casts off the shadows.

璇璣懸斡 晦魄環照
The turning sphere revolves on high;[109]
Waxing and waning, the moon shines.

指薪修祜 永綏吉劭
Strive to nurture virtues each day;
For peace and happiness always.[110]

矩步引領 俯仰廊廟
With measured steps, one looks ahead;
Dignified in manners and dress.[111]

---

108 Mao Qiang 毛嬙 (dates unknown) and Xi Shi 西施 (c. 503–c. 473 BCE) are known for their beauty in ancient China (Chan 2007, 84–86; Harris 2016, 107).

109 The text literally translates as "the turning sphere revolves while hanging" and alludes to the turning sphere that was examined by King Shun. *Documents*: "He examined the pearl-adorned turning sphere, with its transverse tube of jade, and reduced to a harmonious system (the movements of) the Seven Directors" (Legge 2011, 33).

110 The text literally translates as "oil for the torch and cultivate blessings." The first half alludes to *Master Zhuang*: "Though the grease burns out of the torch, the fire passes on, and no one knows where it ends" (*Zhuangzi* 129; Watson 2013, 21). The latter half alludes to the purpose of rituals to secure divine blessing as delineated in the "Evolution of ritual" chapter in the *Records of Ritual* (*Liji* 21.782; Legge 1968, 370–371).

111 The text literally translates as "guided steps, craning neck; lower and raise one's head to the court." *Mencius*: "If there were one who was not fond of killing people, the people of the empire would crane their necks to look for him" (*Mengzi* 1A.6; Bloom 2009, 6): "Look up and not be abashed before Heaven, look down and not to be ashamed before others" (*Mengzi* 7A.20; Bloom 2009, 148).

束帶矜莊 徘徊瞻眺
Dressed in formal wear with girdle tight;
Pacing back and forth to catch the sight.[112]

孤陋寡聞 愚蒙等誚
Like the ignorant and ill-informed;
The dull and foolish are often scorned.[113]

謂語助者 焉哉乎也
Four words that make the sentence;
"So," "indeed," "really," "ending."

112 The text literally translates as "tied sash and formally dressed" and alludes to the *Analects*: "(Chi), Dressed in formal robes, standing in court, would do very well to discourse with the visitors and guests" (*Lunyu* 5.8; Watson 2007, 37).

113 The text literally translates as "narrow-minded, limited learning" and alludes to the chapter "Record on Education" in the *Records on Ritual*: "If students study alone without the company of peers and friends, they become idiosyncratic in their manner and limited in their learning" (Xu et al. 2016, 13).

HUNDRED FAMILY NAMES 百家姓 (SONG DYNASTY, C. 1000)

The *Hundred Family Names* enabled young learners to become familiar with common family names while developing their basic vocabulary and practicing calligraphy (Falato 2020, 35).[1] Although the author is unknown, the text has been traditionally dated to the early Song dynasty as it starts with the surname of the ruling family Zhao 趙 (Wang 2013, 659). Based on references to the *Hundred Family Names* in extant literature, Zhang Zhigong claims that the text was already a standard primer for children in the Song and Yuan (1271–1368) dynasties.[2] This primer lists 504 family names arranged in eight-syllable rhyming couplets with a total of 514 different characters.[3] While other primers had contained some

1 Historical individuals of each surname are detailed in biographical dictionaries, for example, see Lee, Lau, and Stefanowska (1998); Loewe (2000); De Crespigny (2007); Lee and Stefanowska (2007); Hummel (2010); Lee and Wiles (2015); Xiong (2017); and Nienhauser and Naparstek 2022.

2 Lu You's 陸遊 (1125–1209) annotation to his poem "Qiu yue jiao ju 秋日郊居" (Autumn day in the suburbs), in which he mentions the *Hundred Family Names* as one of the texts studied in the village schools, is generally thought to be the earliest reference to the *Hundred Family Names* (Wang 2003, 28–29; Zhang 2017, 24).

3 The figures are based on the widely received edition in the *New Interpretation of the Hundred Family Names* (*Xinyi Bai jia xing* 新譯百家姓) (Ma and Gu 2011).

surnames,[4] the *Hundred Family Names* was the first primer to be dedicated to such content—enumerating 444 one-syllable and 60 two-syllable family names in total (Wilkinson 2022, 547). A person's surname was "revered" because it linked the individual to the long history and heritage of their family clan, and people generally did not change their surnames as by doing so they would risk severing such ties with the past. Those sharing the same family name would consider themselves relatives regardless of the number of generations removed, the geographical distance, or lack of consanguinity (Tom 1989, 12). Through the surnames, learners could discover more about the historical background of those families and such social perspective was thought to help them understand their place in the community and improve their sense of belonging and responsibility to society (Falato 2020, 35). Wilkinson (2022, 547) surmises that "Its popularity in the Song and later may reflect a desire to emulate the aristocrats of the Tang and earlier, who had their names listed in exclusive pedigrees (genealogical lists of the leading families in each part of the empire)." The *Hundred Family Names* format came to be adopted by various ethnic groups for their respective compilations, including the *Hundred Family Names in Mongolian Script* (*Menggu zimu Bai jiaxing* 蒙古字母百家姓) and the *Hundred Family Names in Jurchen Script* (*Nüzhen zimu Bai jia xing* 女真字母百家姓). There were also imperially endorsed editions, such as the *Ming Dynasty's Thousand Family Names* (*Huang ming Qian jia xing* 皇明千家姓) published in 1381, the *New Commentary on the Hundred Family Names* (*Bai jia xing xin jian* 百家姓新箋) of the late Ming dynasty, and the Qing dynasty *Imperial edition of the Hundred Family Names* (*Yu zhi Bai jia xing* 御制百家姓). Some editions strived for comprehensive coverage of surnames, e.g., the *Thousand Family Names* (*Qian jia xing* 千家姓) by Wu Shen 吳沈, Liu Zhongshi 劉仲實 and Wu Bozong 吳伯宗 in the Ming dynasty. Other editions added explanations to facilitate understanding of the surnames, e.g. the *Five Hundred Family Names* (*Wu Bai jia xing* 五百家姓) by the Chinese statesman Zeng Guofan (1811–1872) (Xu 2017, 116–125). Although these later editions proved to be less popular than the Song dynasty original, their compilation is a testament to the extensive transmission of the format (Zhang 2017, 25).

4 The *Ji jiu pian* 急就篇 (Ready reference tract [for mastering characters]) by Shi You 史游 (fl. 43–33 BCE) was the first literacy primer to include common family names, listing 132 in total (Wilkinson 2022, 547).

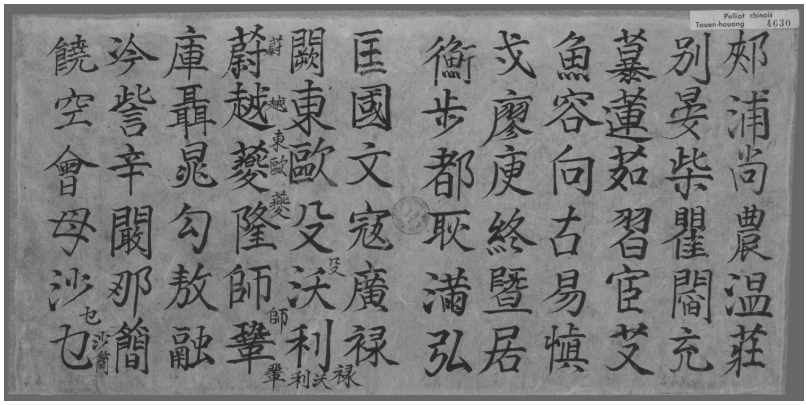


Figure 13. A section of the *Hundred Family Names* in the Dunhuang manuscript P.4630. Courtesy of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

HUNDRED FAMILY NAMES

Unknown author

趙錢孫李
Zhao, Qian, Sun, Li;

周吳鄭王
Zhou, Wu, Zheng, Wang.

馮陳褚衛
Feng, Chen, Chu, Wei;

蔣沈韓楊
Jiang, Shen, Han, Yang.

朱秦尤許
Zhu, Qin, You, Xu;

何呂施張
He, Lü, Shi, Zhang.

孔曹嚴華
Kong, Cao, Yan, Hua;

金魏陶姜
Jin, Wei, Tao, Jiang.

戚謝鄒喻
Qi, Xie, Zou, Yu;

柏水竇章
Bai, Shui, Dou, Zhang.

雲蘇潘葛
Yun, Su, Pan, Ge;

奚范彭郎
Xi, Fan, Peng, Lang.

魯韋昌馬
Lu, Wei, Chang, Ma;

苗鳳花方
Miao, Feng, Hua, Fang.

俞任袁柳
Yu, Ren, Yuan, Liu;

鄭鮑史唐
Feng, Bao, Shi, Tang.

費廉岑薛
Fei, Lian, Cen, Xue;

雷賀倪湯
Lei, He, Ni, Tang.

滕殷羅畢
Teng, Yin, Luo, Bi;

郝鄔安常
Hao, Wu, An, Chang.

樂于時傅
Yue, Yu, Shi, Fu;

皮卞齊康
Pi, Bian, Qi, Kang.

伍余元卜
Wu, Yu, Yuan, Bu;

顧孟平黃
Gu, Meng, Ping, Huang.

和穆蕭尹
He, Mu, Xiao, Yin;

姚邵湛汪
Yao, Shao, Zhan, Wang.

祁毛禹狄
Qi, Mao, Yu, Di;

米貝明臧
Mi, Bei, Ming, Zang.

計伏成戴
Ji, Fu, Cheng, Dai;

談宋茅龐
Tan, Song, Mao, Pang.

熊紀舒屈
Xiong, Ji, Shu, Qu;

項祝董梁
Xiang, Zhu, Dong, Liang.

杜阮藍閔
Du, Ruan, Lan, Min;

席季麻強
Xi, Ji, Ma, Qiang.

賈路婁危
Jia, Lu, Lou, Wei;

江童顏郭
Jiang, Tong, Yan, Guo.

梅盛林刁
Mei, Sheng, Lin, Diao;

鍾徐邱駱
Zhong, Xu, Qiu, Luo.

高夏蔡田
Gao, Xia, Cai, Tian;

樊胡凌霍
Fan, Hu, Ling, Huo.

虞萬支柯
Yu, Wan, Zhi, Ke;

經房裘繆
Jing, Fang, Qiu, Miao;

丁宣賁鄧
Ding, Xuan, Ben, Deng;

包諸左石
Bao, Zhu, Zuo, Shi;

程嵇邢滑
Cheng, Ji, Xing, Hua;

荀羊於惠
Xun, Yang, Yu, Hui;

芮羿儲靳
Rui, Yi, Chu, Jin;

井段富巫
Jing, Duan, Fu, Wu;

牧隗山谷
Mu, Wei, Shan, Gu;

全郗班仰
Quan, Chi, Ban, Yang;

甯仇欒暴
Ning, Qiu, Luan, Bao;

祖武符劉
Zu, Wu, Fu, Liu;

葉幸司韶
Ye, Xing, Si, Shao;

咎管盧莫
Zan, Guang, Lu, Mo.

干解應宗
Gan, Xie, Ying, Zong.

郁單杭洪
Yu, Shan, Hang, Hong.

崔吉鈕龔
Cui, Ji, Niu, Gong.

裴陸榮翁
Pei, Lu, Rong, Weng.

甄麴家封
Zhen, Qu, Jia, Feng.

汲邴糜松
Ji, Bing, Mi, Song.

烏焦巴弓
Wu, Jiao, Ba, Gong.

車侯虙蓬
Che, Hou, Fu, Peng.

秋仲伊宮
Qiu, Zhong, Yi, Gong.

甘斜厲戎
Gan, Dou,[5] Li, Rong.

景詹束龍
Jing, Zhan, Shu, Long.

郜黎薊薄
Gao, Li, Ji, Bo.

5 There is an alternative pronunciation of Tou.

印宿白懷
Yin, Su, Bai, Huai;

索咸籍賴
Suo, Xian, Ji, Lai;

池喬陰鬱
Chi, Qiao, Yin, Yu;

聞莘黨翟
Wen, Shen, Dang, Zhai;

姬申扶堵
Ji, Shen, Fu, Du;

郤璩桑桂
Xi, Qu, Sang, Gui;

邊扈燕冀
Bian, Hu, Yan, Ji;

溫別莊晏
Wen, Bie, Zhuang, Yan;

慕連茹習
Mu, Lian, Ru, Xi;

向古易慎
Xiang, Gu, Yi, Shen;

暨居衡步
Ji, Ju, Heng, Bu;

匡國文寇
Kuang, Guo, Wen, Kou;

歐殳沃利
Ou, Shu, Wo, Li;

蒲邰從鄂
Pu, Tai, Cong, E.

卓藺屠蒙
Zhuo, Lin, Tu, Meng.

胥能蒼雙
Xu, Nai,[6] Cang, Shuang.

譚貢勞逄
Tan, Gong, Lao, Pang.

冉宰酈雍
Ran, Zai, Li, Yong.

濮牛壽通
Pu, Niu, Shou, Tong.

郟浦尚農
Jia, Pu, Shang, Nong.

柴瞿閻充
Chai, Qu, Yan, Chong.

宦艾魚容
Huan, Ai, Yu, Rong.

戈廖庾終
Ge, Liao, Yu, Zhong.

都耿滿弘
Du, Geng, Man, Hong.

廣祿闕東
Guang, Lu, Que, Dong.

蔚越夔隆
Wei, Yue, Kui, Long.

6 There is an alternative pronunciation of Neng.

師鞏厙聶
Shi, Gong, She, Nie;

晁勾敖融
Chao, Gou, Ao, Rong.

冷訾辛闞
Leng, Zi, Xin, Kan;

那簡饒空
Nuo,[7] Jian, Rao, Kong.

曾毋沙乜
Zeng, Wu, Sha, Nie;

養鞠須豐
Yang, Ju, Xu, Feng.

巢關蒯相
Chao, Guan, Kuai, Xiang;

查郈荊紅
Zha, Hou, Jing, Hong.

游竺權逯
You, Zhu, Quan, Lu;

蓋益桓公
Ge, Yi, Huan, Gong.

万俟司馬
Moqi, Sima;

上官歐陽
Shangguang, Ouyang.

夏侯諸葛
Xiahou, Zhuge;

聞人東方
Wenren, Dongfang.

赫連皇甫
Helian, Huangfu;

尉遲公羊
Yuchi, Gongyang.

澹臺公冶
Tantai, Gongye;

宗政濮陽
Zongzheng, Puyang.

淳于單于
Chunyu, Chanyu;

太叔申屠
Taishu, Shentu.

公孫仲孫
Gongsun, Zhongsun;

軒轅令狐
Xuanyuan, Linghu.

鍾離宇文
Zhongli, Yuwen;

長孫慕容
Zhangsun, Murong.

7 There is an alternative pronunciation of Na.

鮮于閭丘
Xianyu, Lüqiu;

司徒司空
Situ, Sikong.

亓官司寇
Qiguan, Sikou;

仉督子車
Zhang, Du, Ziju.

顓孫端木
Zhuansun, Duanmu;

巫馬公西
Wuma, Gongxi.

漆雕樂正
Qidiao, Yuezheng;

壤駟公良
Rangsi, Gongliang.

拓跋夾谷
Tuoba, Jiagu;

宰父穀梁
Zaifu, Guliang.

晉楚閆法
Jin Chu, Yan, Fa;

汝鄢涂欽
Ru, Yan, Tu, Qin.

段干百里
Duangan, Baili;

東郭南門
Dongguo, Nanmen.

呼延歸海
Huyan, Gui, Hai;

羊舌微生
Yangshe, Weisheng.

岳帅緱亢
Yue, Shuai, Gou, Kang;

況後有琴
Kuang Hou, You, Qin.

梁丘左丘
Liangqiu, Zuoqiu;

東門西門
Dongmen, Ximen.

商牟佘佴
Shang, Mou, She, Nai;

伯賞南宮
Bo, Shang, Nangong.

墨哈譙笪
Mo, Ha, Qiao, Da;

年愛陽佟
Nian, Ai, Yang, Tong.

第五言福
Diwu, Yan, Fu;

百家姓終
thus ends the *Hundred Family Names*.

EXALTED TREATISE ON THE RESPONSE OF THE DAO 太上感應篇 (SONG DYNASTY, C. 1164)

Following its publication in around 1164, the *Exalted Treatise on the Response of the Dao* became a popular text for character cultivation as it provided a definitive statement of the principles for merit accumulation. Thomas H. C. Lee describes this primer as the "most influential ethical text" since the twelfth century (Lee 2000, 34–35). In particular, the *Exalted Treatise on the Response of the Dao* was employed in the moral education of children in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Brokaw 1991, 221–222), and received imperial approval from the Shunzhi 順治 (r. 1644–1661) and Yongzheng 雍正 (r. 1723–1735) emperors of the Qing dynasty (1644–1912). Although the details of authorship are unknown, the *Exalted Treatise on the Response of the Dao* is traditionally attributed to Laozi, the sixth-century founder of the Daoist tradition of thought. The text is credited with distilling the system for cultivating merits that had been documented in esoteric scriptures into a practical moral code accessible to a general audience (Brokaw 1991, 35, 39–40; Wong 1994, xxvii, xxxx). Its overarching principle is that a person's life fortunes are determined by their own conduct as good deeds being rewarded with good fortune and misdeeds are punished with

misfortune. The text sets out how such deserts are duly administered by a spiritual bureaucracy that know and record all about the individual and their family. Moreover, general and specific advice and admonitions, incentives, and penalties, as well as a prescription for repentance, are provided. Eclectic allusions to Confucian classics and Buddhist scriptures enhance the universal appeal of the text. For example, it opens with a quotation from the *Zuo Tradition of Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chunqiu Zuo shi zhuan* 春秋左氏傳): "There are no doors to fortune and misfortune, they simply arise from one's conduct." The text concludes with a quotation from the Chinese translation of the *Dhammapada* collection of verses from the Pali canon (*Faju jing* 法句經): "refrain from wrongdoings and do all that is good." The following exhortation to practice virtue and abstain from vice is also by reference to the Buddhist behavioral classifications of word, thought, and action. Moreover, by outlining the role of various deities from Chinese folklore, such as those associated with the Ursa Major and other constellations, the Kitchen God, and the patron of education and literature—Lord Wenchang, the *Exalted Treatise on the Response of the Dao* offers a glimpse into the spiritual dimensions of personal cultivation.

TRANSLATIONS

The translation of the *Exalted Treatise on the Response of the Dao* in Manchu is mentioned in the literature (e.g., Kiely 2011, 4). Other translations are as follows:

English

Chan, Wing-tsit. "The Treatise of the Most Exalted One on Moral Retribution." In *Sources of Chinese Tradition: From Earliest Times to 1600*, vol. 1, edited by Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom, 899–902. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000. (partial translation)

Balfour, Frederic Henry. *Taoist Texts: Ethical, Political, and Speculative*. London: Trübner & Co., 1884.

Brokaw, Cynthia J. *The Ledgers of Merit and Demerit: Social Change and Moral Order in Late Imperial China*, 36–39. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991. (partial translation)
Coyle, Mark. "Book of Rewards and Punishments." In *Chinese Civilization and Society: A Sourcebook*, edited by Patricia Ebrey, 71–74. New York: Free Press, 1981.
Douglas, Robert K. *Confucianism and Taouism*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1906.
Legge, James. "The Thâi-Shang Tractate of Actions and their Retributions." In *Sacred Books of the East*, edited by F. Max Müller, 235–246. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1891.
Suzuki, Daisetz Teitaro, and Paul Carus. *Treatise of the Exalted One on Response and Retribution*. Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1906.
Webster, James. *The Kan Ying Pien: Book of Rewards and Punishments*. Shanghai: Presbyterian Mission Press, 1918.
Wong Eva. *T'ai-Shang Kan-Ying P'ien: Lao-tzu's Treatise on the Response of the Tao*. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1994.
Xing De. *Tai Shang's Treatise on Action and Response*. Beijing: Purple Cloud Press, 2020.

French

Goossaert, Vincent. "Versets du Très-Haut sur les effets des actes (Verses of the most exalted on the effects of actions)." In *Livres de Morale Révélés par les Dieux* (Moral books revealed by the gods). Paris: Belles-Lettres, 2012.
Julien, Stanislas. *Le Livre des Recompenses et des Peines, en Chinois et en Francais* (The book of rewards and punishments in Chinese and French). Paris: Oriental Translation Fund, 1835.

Vietnamese

Thái Thượng Cảm Ứng Thiên (Exalted treatise on the response of the Dao). Sydney: Tịnh Tông Học Hội, 2011.

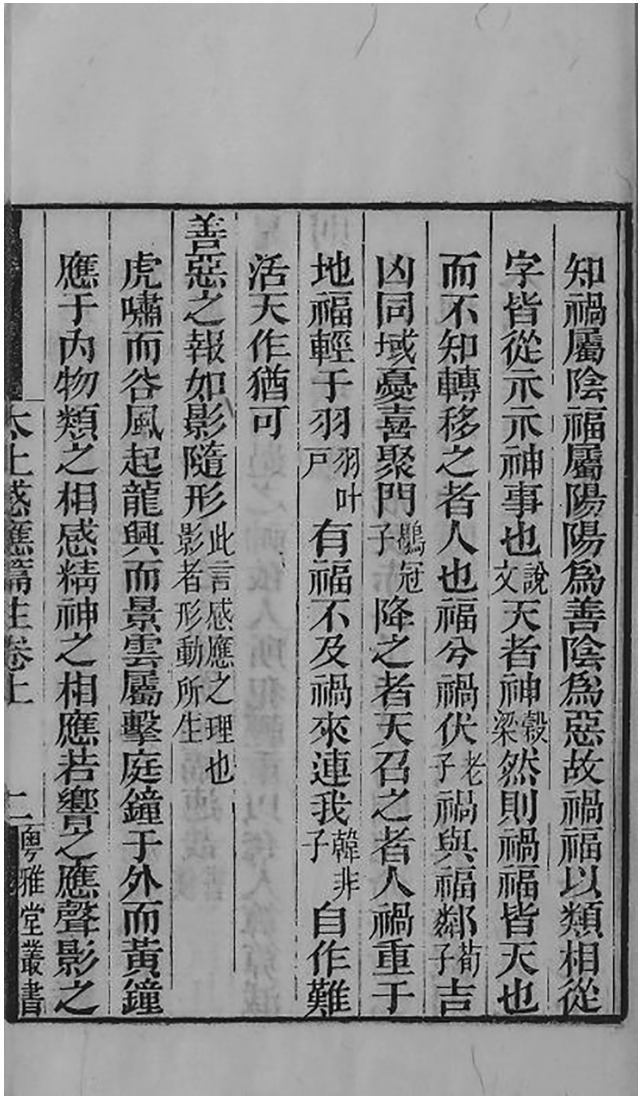

知禍屬陰福屬陽陽爲善陰爲惡故禍福以類相從
字皆從示示神事也說文天者神穀梁然則禍福皆天也
而不知轉移之者人也福兮禍伏老子禍與福鄰荀子吉
凶同域憂喜聚門鶡冠子降之者天召之者人禍重于
地福輕于羽羽叶尸有福不及禍來連我韓非子自作難
活天作猶可
善惡之報如影隨形此言感應之理也影者形動所生
虎嘯而谷風起龍興而景雲屬擊庭鐘于外而黃鐘
應于內物類之相感精神之相應若響之應聲影之
太上感應篇注卷上 二 粵雅堂叢書

Figure 14. A page of the *Annotated Exalted Treatise on the Response of the Dao* (*Taishang ganying pian zhu* 太上感應篇注) compiled by Hui Dong 惠棟 (1697–1758), reprint dated 1855. The page shows inserted double-column annotations with commentary in smaller font on the indented lines. Courtesy of the Chinese University of Hong Kong Library's Chinese Rare Book Digital Collection, shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License.

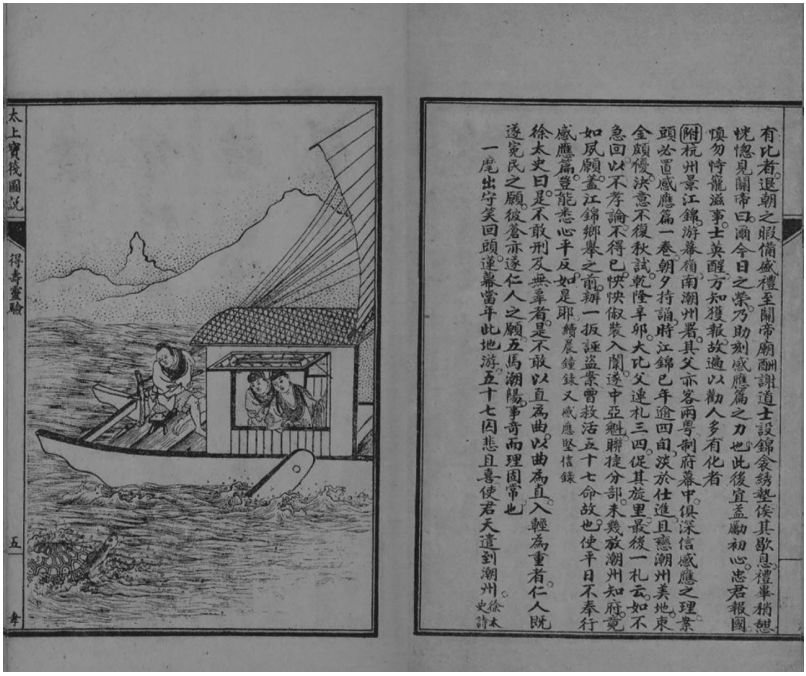


Figure 15. An anecdote with illustration from the *Precious Raft of the Exalted Treatise with Illustrated Stories* (*Taishang bao fa tu shuo* 太上寶筏圖說), originally known as the *Exalted Treatise on the Response of the Dao with Illustrated Stories* (*Taishang ganying pian tu shuo* 太上感應篇圖說), compiled by Huang Zhengyuan 黃正元 (1713–1755). This edition was printed in 1892. Courtesy of the Chinese University of Hong Kong Library's Chinese Rare Book Digital Collection, shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License.

EXALTED TREATISE ON THE RESPONSE OF THE DAO

太上曰：禍福無門，惟人自召。善惡之報，如影隨形。
The Exalted One states: There are no gates to fortune and misfortune, they simply arise from our conduct. The outcomes of reward and retribution are as shadow follows form.

是以天地有司過之神。依人所犯輕重，以奪人算。
This is because there are spirits in heaven and on earth overseeing our misdeeds. Based on the gravity of the offences, our lifespan is shortened by units of a hundred days.

算減則貧耗，多逢憂患。人皆惡之，刑禍隨之，吉慶避之，惡星災之。算盡則死。
As hundred-day units are deducted, one will incur poverty and depletion, encounter much distress and troubles, become generally despised, suffer penalty and misfortune, know no joy nor happiness, but be tormented by natural or man-made disasters. Once our hundred-day units are exhausted, life ends.

又有三台北斗神君，在人頭上，錄人罪惡，奪其紀算。
The spirit-lords of the northern constellations dwell above the heads of human beings. Recording human misdeeds, they reduce lifespans in units from a hundred days to twelve years accordingly.

又有三尸神，在人身中，每到庚申日，輒上詣天曹，言人罪過。
There are also three spirits dwelling within the human body. On *geng shen* day (fifty-seventh day of the sixty-day cycle), they report on our misdeeds to the court in heaven.

月晦之日，竈神亦然。
On the last day of each lunar month, the Kitchen God does the same.

凡人有過，大則奪紀，小則奪算。
Any person that has committed misdeeds will have their life shortened by twelve-year units for major offences and hundred-day units for minor offences.

其過大小，有數百事。欲求長生者，先須避之。
These offences, great and small, number in the hundreds. One who seeks longevity must first refrain from them.

是道則進，非道則退；
Proceed if in accord with the Dao.
Retreat if in breach of it.

不履邪徑，不欺暗室；
Do not take an unethical course.
Do not misbehave in private.

積德累功，慈心於物；
Accumulate virtue and amass merits.
Be compassionate towards all creatures.

忠孝友悌，正己化人；
Practice faithfulness, family reverence, friendliness, and fraternal deference.
Correct oneself and transform others.

矜孤恤寡，敬老懷幼；
Take pity on orphans and be sympathetic to widows.
Respect the old and care for the young.

昆蟲草木，猶不可傷；
Insects, plants, and trees;
Even those should not be harmed.

宜憫人之凶，樂人之善；
Sympathize with a person's misfortunes.
Rejoice in a person's good fortune.

濟人之急，救人之危；
Help people in need.
Save people in danger.

見人之得，如己之得；
見人之失，如己之失；
View someone's gain as our gain.
View someone's loss as our loss.

不彰人短，不衒己長；
Do not expose someone's shortcomings nor boast of our strengths.

遏惡揚善，推多取少；
Curb wrongdoing and promote goodness.
Give more and take less.

受辱不怨，受寵若驚；
Suffer humiliation without grudges.
Accept recognition as if apprehensive.

施恩不求報，與人不追悔。
Help without seeking reward.
Give without regret.

所謂善人，人皆敬之，天道佑之，福祿隨之，眾邪遠之，神靈衛之，所作必成，神仙可冀。
The good person will be respected by everyone and blessed by the Dao of heaven. They enjoy happiness and wealth, remain safe from misfortunes, and are protected by spirits. They succeed in all endeavors and may aspire to become an immortal.

欲求天仙者，當立一千三百善。欲求地仙者，當立三百善。
To become a heavenly transcendent, one must perform one thousand three hundred merits.
To become an earthly transcendent, one must perform three hundred merits.

苟或非義而動，背理而行；
If one has thoughts contrary to rightness.
Act in breach of principle.

以惡為能，忍作殘害；
Regard oneself capable when committing wrong.
Bear to be cruel or destructive.

陰賊良善，暗侮君親；
Secretly undermine the good and kind.
Surreptitiously humiliate rulers and parents.

慢其先生，叛其所事；
Disrespect our teachers.
Defy our superiors.

誑諸無識，謗諸同學；
Cheat the uninformed.
Slander fellow students.

虛誣詐偽，攻訐宗親；
Mislead and deceive.
Malign and expose relatives.

剛強不仁，很戾自用；
Be harsh and inhumane.
Be ruthless and willful.

是非不當，向背乖宜；
Confuse right and wrong.
Reject what is right and follow the contrary.

虐下取功，諂上希旨；
Oppress subordinates for gain.
Flatter superiors for favor.

受恩不感，念怨不休；
Not grateful for help.
Always harboring resentment.

輕蔑天民，擾亂國政；
Disdain the people.
Disrupt state administration.

賞及非義，刑及無辜；
Reward the undeserving.
Punish the innocent.

殺人取財，傾人取位；
Murder someone for profit.
Depose someone to take their position.

誅降戮服，貶正排賢；
Kill those who have capitulated.
Banish the upright and demote the virtuous.

陵孤逼寡，棄法受賂；
Mistreat orphans and coerce widows.
Ignore the law and take bribes.

以直為曲，以曲為直；
Treat the right as wrong.
Treat the wrong as right.

入輕為重，見殺加怒；
Administer excessive punishment.
Aggravate executions with rage.

知過不改，知善不為；
Refuse to correct faults.
Refrain from good deeds.

自罪引他，壅塞方術；
Frame others for our offences.
Obstruct the arts of healing and divination.

訕謗聖賢，侵陵道德；
Denounce the wise and sagely.
Intimidate the moral and virtuous.

射飛逐走，發蟄驚棲；
Shoot the birds and hunt the beasts.
Expose the dormant and disturb the nested.

填穴覆巢，傷胎破卵；
Fill burrows and upturn nests.
Injure the pregnant and damage eggs.

願人有失，毀人成功；
Hope that someone fails.
Ruin someone's success.

危人自安，減人自益；
Endanger others for personal safety.
Impoverish others for personal gain.

以惡易好，以私廢公；
Exchange worthless for valuable.
Spend public resources on private interests.

竊人之能，蔽人之善；
Appropriate someone's skills.
Conceal someone's strengths.

形人之醜，訐人之私；
Describe someone's disgrace.
Disclose someone's secrets.

耗人貨財，離人骨肉；
Squander someone's property.
Cause divisions in someone's family.

侵人所愛，助人為非；
Take what others cherish.
Assist someone in wrongdoing.

逞志作威，辱人求勝；
Flaunt influence by having our way.
Seek success by humiliating others.

敗人苗稼，破人婚姻；
Destroy someone's crops.
Break up someone's marriage.

苟富而驕，苟免無恥；
Become arrogant on coming into wealth.
Being shameless on escaping punishment.

認恩推過，嫁禍賣惡；
Claim false credit and shift the blame.
Inculpate others and let them take the fall.

沽買虛譽，包貯險心；
Procure false fame and reputation.
Conceal unscrupulous motives.

挫人所長，護己所短；
Curb someone's strengths.
Indulge one's shortcomings.

乘威迫脅，縱暴殺傷；
Threaten and coerce with our authority.
Kill and wound with wanton cruelty.

無故翦裁，非禮烹宰；
Make clothes without reason.
Cook meat without occasion.

散棄五穀，勞擾眾生；
Waste and discard the five grains.
Exhaust and disturb living things.

破人之家，取其財寶；
決水放火，以害民居；
Ruin someone's family to take property and valuables.
Breach dams and commit arson to destroy homes.

紊亂規模，以敗人功；
損人器物，以窮人用；
Derail someone's plans to thwart their efforts.
Damage someone's tools so they become ill-equipped.

見他榮貴，願他流貶；
見他富有，願他破散；
See someone honored and hope for their downfall.
See someone wealthy and hope they suffer loss and ruin.

見他色美，起心私之；
負他貨財，願他身死；
See someone beautiful and think of seducing them.
Owe debts of goods or money and hope that the creditors die.

干求不遂，便生咒恨；
見他失便，便說他過；
Curse and hate when others do not comply with our requests.
See someone suffering adversity and say they deserve it.

見他體相不具而笑之，
見他才能可稱而抑之；
See someone suffering physical impairment and ridicule them.
See someone of laudable skill and discredit them.

埋蠱厭人，用藥殺樹；
Bewitch people with sorcery.
Kill trees with poison.

恚怒師傅，抵觸父兄；
Be angry towards one's teacher and adviser.
Oppose one's father and older brother.

強取強求，好侵好奪；
Acquire and demand by force.
Delight in fraud and theft.

虜掠致富，巧詐求遷；
Achieve riches by pillage and plunder.
Achieve promotion by cunning and scheme.

賞罰不平，逸樂過節；
Reward and punish without impartiality.
Enjoy leisure and amusement beyond measure.

苛虐其下，恐嚇于他；
Harass and bully subordinates.
Threaten and intimidate others.

怨天尤人，訶風罵雨；
Blame heaven and others.
Rage against unseasonable winds and rain.

鬬合爭訟，妄逐朋黨；
Provoke dispute and litigation.
Rashly join factions.

用妻妾語，違父母訓；
Listen to the gossip of wives.
Disregard the instructions of parents.

得新忘故，口是心非；
Be taken with the new while forgetting the old.
Say something without meaning it.

貪冒于財，欺罔其上；
造作惡語，讒毀平人；
Deceive superiors in coveting wealth.
Fabricate rumors to defame the innocent.

毀人稱直，罵神稱正；
Disparage someone while asserting our integrity.
Revile deities while claiming correctness.

棄順效逆，背親向疏；
Abandon the right and learn the wrong.
Spurn relatives and follow acquaintances.

指天地以證鄙懷，引神明而鑑猥事；
Ask heaven and earth to witness our mean thoughts.
Call on spirits to examine our base deeds.

施與後悔，假借不還；
Give and then regret.
Falsely borrow without returning.

分外營求，力上施設；
Seek beyond what we deserve.
Plan beyond our means.

淫欲過度，心毒貌慈；
Indulge excessive desires.
Mask cruel intentions behind a kind face.

穢食餧人，左道惑眾；
Feed others spoiled food.
Mislead people with heresy.

短尺狹度，輕秤小升；
Give short measure in dimension, concentration, weight, or volume.

以偽雜真，采取姦利；
Adulterate goods in trade.
Profit from illegitimate business.

壓良為賤，謾驀愚人；
Force the good into menial roles.
Take advantage of the ignorant.

貪婪無厭，咒詛求直；
Have insatiable greed.
Curse and swear before deities for vindication.

嗜酒悖亂，骨肉忿爭；
Be disordered when drinking alcohol.
Quarrel with family members.

男不忠良，女不柔順；
Fail to be faithful and kind as a man.
Fail to be gentle and harmonious as a woman.

不和其室，不敬其夫；
Fail to be harmonious with the relatives of one's husband.
Fail to respect one's husband.

每好矜誇，常行妬忌；
Constantly boastful and conceited.
Always being jealous.

無行於妻子，失禮於舅姑；
Being undutiful towards wife and children.
Behaving improperly towards parents-in-law.

輕嫚先靈，違逆上命；
Irreverent towards ancestors.
Disobey the instructions of superiors.

作為無益，懷挾外心；
Do what is not beneficial.
Harbor a treacherous mind.

自咒咒他，偏憎偏愛；
Curse oneself and others.
Be partial in hatred and love.

越井越竈，跳食跳人；
Step over wells and hearths.
Leap over food and people.

損子墮胎，多行隱僻；
Harm children and abort the unborn.
Engage in clandestine misdeeds.

晦臘歌舞，朔旦號怒；
Sing and dance on the last day of each lunar month, the first day of the year, the fifth day of the fifth lunar month, the seventh day of the seventh lunar month, the first day of the tenth lunar month, and the eighth day of the twelfth lunar month.
Scold and wail at dawn or on the first day of each lunar month.

對北涕唾及溺，對竈吟咏及笑；
Blow our nose, expectorate, or urinate facing the north.
Sing or laugh at the hearth.

又以竈火燒香，穢柴作食；
Use hearth fire to light incense.
Cook food with dirty firewood.

夜起裸露，八節行刑；
Expose our body at night.
Administer punishment on the eight solar terms.[1]

唾流星，指虹蜺；輒指三光，久視日月；
Spit at shooting stars and point at rainbows.
Always gesturing at the Three Luminaries and long gazing at the sun and moon.

春月燎獵，對北惡罵；無故殺龜打蛇。
Hunt and burn forests in spring.
Utter profanities in the northerly direction.
Kill turtles and attack snakes without reason.

1 The eight solar terms are the start of spring, the vernal equinox, the start of summer, the summer solstice, the start of autumn, the autumnal equinox, the start of winter, and the winter solstice.

如是等罪，司命隨其輕重，奪其紀算，算盡則死。
For such misdeeds, the spirits of destiny reduce our lifespan by units of twelve years or a hundred days according to the gravity of each offence. When our lifespan is completely depleted, we die.

死有餘責，乃殃及子孫。
If there are unpunished offences at death, misfortunes will befall on our descendants.

又諸橫取人財者，乃計其妻子家口以當之，漸至死喪。
Having forcefully cheated someone of their property, misfortune befalls our wife, children, or other family members until the end of their lives.

若不死喪，則有水火盜賊、遺亡器物、疾病、
口舌諸事，以當妄取之直。
If our family members do not die, they will experience damage by floods, fire, theft, and robbery, and suffer loss of property, illness, disputes, and the like, to the value of the original misappropriation.

又枉殺人者，是易刀兵而相殺也。
Those who have caused someone to die unjustly will suffer death by another's blade or battalion.

取非義之財者，譬如漏脯救飢，鴆酒止渴。非不暫飽，死亦及之。
Those taking ill-gotten gains may be likened to satisfying hunger with tainted meat or quenching thirst with poisoned wine. Not only is there no temporary satiation but death also becomes imminent.

夫心起于善，善雖未為，而吉神已隨之。
One who gives rise to a thought of kindness will be accompanied by spirits of good fortune, though the thought has yet to be actioned.

或心起于惡，惡雖未為，而凶神已隨之。
One who gives rise to a thought of wrongdoing will be followed by spirits of misfortune, though the thought has yet to be actioned.

其有曾行惡事，後自改悔，諸惡莫作，眾善奉行。久久必獲吉慶，所謂轉禍為福也。
One who repents and reforms from past misdeeds, refrains from wrongdoings, and undertakes various good deeds will in time attain happiness. This is how misfortune transforms into good fortune.

故吉人語善、視善、行善，一日有三善，三年天必降之福；
Therefore, a fortunate person is virtuous in word, thought, and deed. By practicing these three ways of virtue each day, heaven will bless them with good fortune in three years.

凶人語惡、視惡、行惡，一日有三惡，三年天必降之禍，胡不勉而行之？
A misfortunate person is unvirtuous in word, thought, and deed. By engaging in these three ways of unvirtuous conduct each day, heaven will punish them with misfortune in three years. Why not make efforts in our practice?

LORD WENCHANG'S ESSAY ON QUIET MERITS 文昌帝君陰騭文 (SONG DYNASTY, C. 1200)

It is thought that *Lord Wenchang's Essay on Quiet Merits* roughly dates to the same period as the *Exalted Treatise on the Response of the Dao*, namely, sometime during the Song dynasty and no later than the Ming dynasty. While the authorship of *Lord Wenchang's Essay on Quiet Merits* remains unknown, the text purports to be the instructions of Lord Wenchang, a deity that has been revered as the patron of education and literature in China. The instructions encourage individuals to practice good deeds without seeking approbation to accrue pure and full merits ("quiet merits"). The essay relates the lord's personal experience of practicing quiet merits that has been rewarded with good fortune and commends the same to others. There is guidance on the various ways of accumulating quiet merits, with references to historical exemplars and practices pertaining to the Daoist, Confucian, and Buddhist traditions. The directions range from the generally applicable ("Be accommodating with others and strict with yourself") to those specific to certain social groups ("Measures and scales must be fair, do not underpay or overcharge"). Together with the *Exalted Treatise on the Response of the Dao*, *Lord Wenchang's Essay on Quiet Merits* has been described as "among the most widely printed, distributed, and read books in China" (Kleeman 1996, 65).

TRANSLATIONS

English

Chan, Wing-tsit. "The Silent Way of Recompense." In *Sources of Chinese Tradition: From Earliest Times to 1600*, vol. 1, edited by Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom, 902–904. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000. (partial translation)

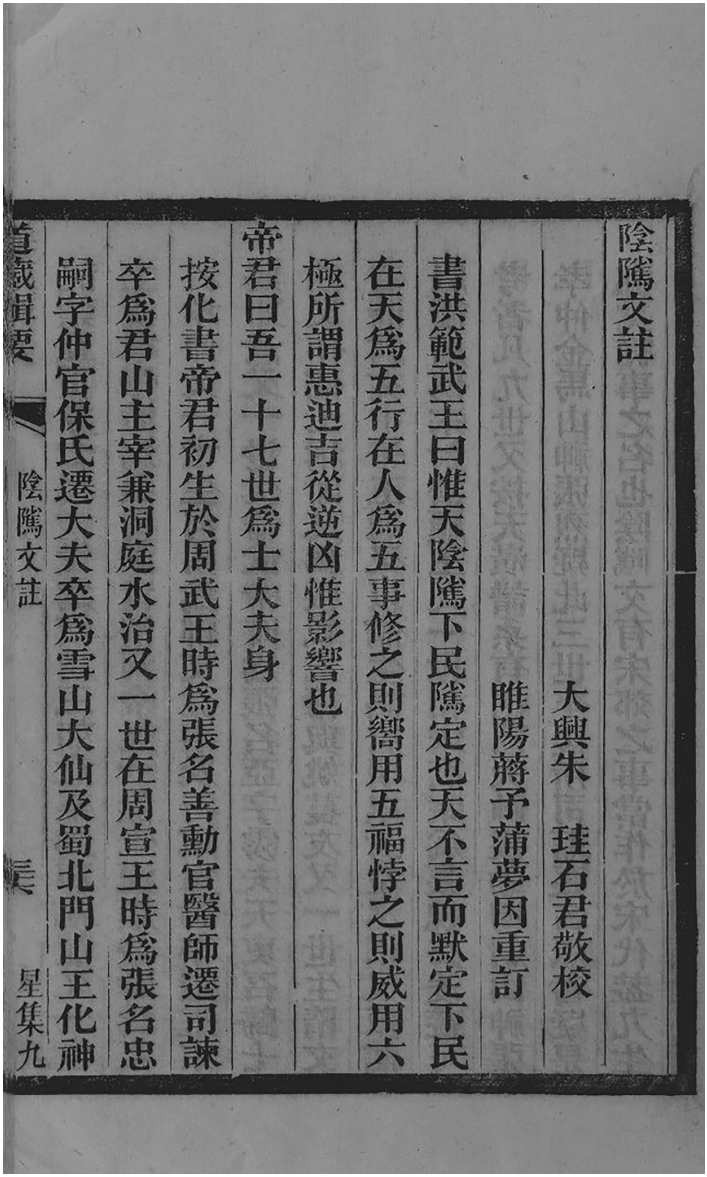
Douglas, Robert K. *Confucianism and Taouism*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1906. (partial translation)

Kleeman, Terry F. "The Tract on the Hidden Administration." In *Religions of China in Practice*, edited by Donald S. Lopez, 70–71. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.

Suzuki, Daisetz Teitaro, and Paul Carus. *The Tract of the Quiet Way*. Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1906.

French

Goossaert, Vincent. *Livres de Morale Révélés par les Dieux* (Moral books revealed by the gods). Paris: Belles-Lettres, 2012.


陰騭文註

大興朱　珪石君敬校

睢陽蔣予蒲夢因重訂

書洪範武王曰惟天陰騭下民騭定也天不言而默定下民在天爲五行在人爲五事修之則嚮用五福悖之則威用六極所謂惠迪吉從逆凶惟影響也

帝君曰吾一十七世爲士大夫身

按化書帝君初生於周武王時爲張名善勳官醫師遷司諫卒爲君山主宰兼洞庭水治又一世在周宣王時爲張名忠嗣字仲官保氏遷大夫卒爲雪山大仙及蜀北門山王化神

Figure 16. First page of the *Annotated Essay on Quiet Merits* (*Yinzhi wen zhu* 陰騭文註) in the *Reprinted Essentials of the Daoist Canon* (*Chongkan Daozang jiyao* 重刊道藏輯要) published 1906. Courtesy of the Chinese University of Hong Kong Library's Chinese Rare Book Digital Collection, shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License.

LORD WENCHANG'S ESSAY ON QUIET MERITS

帝君曰：吾一十七世為士大夫身，未嘗虐民酷吏。救人之難，濟人之急，憫人之孤，容人之過。廣行陰隲，上格蒼穹。人能如我存心，天必錫汝以福。

The Lord says, For seventeen generations I have reincarnated as a high official, who has never oppressed the people nor abused my subordinates. I have saved people from hardship, helped people in need, taken pity on the orphaned, and forgiven people's mistakes.[1] I have extensively practiced quiet merits and moved heaven. If people can maintain a heart like mine, heaven will certainly bless them.

於是訓於人曰：昔于公治獄，大興駟馬之門；竇氏濟人，高折五枝之桂。救蟻，中狀元之選；埋蛇，享宰相之榮。欲廣福田，須憑心地。行時時之方便，作種種之陰功。利物利人，修善修福。正直代天行化，慈祥為國救民。忠主孝親，敬兄信友。

1 *Geyan lianbi*, 102.

I therefore teach people as follows: In the past, Elder Yu oversaw the prisons and broadened his gates for a four-horse carriage.[2] Master Dou helped others and yielded five high twigs from the cinnamon tree.[3] By saving ants, [Song Jiao] ranked first in the civil service examinations.[4] By burying a snake, [Shun Shu'ao] had the honor of being the chancellor.[5] To expand fields of fortune, rely on the foundations of one's mind. Help others at all times, and perform quiet merits of all types. Benefit living creatures and human beings. Cultivate kindness and good fortune. Be honest, straightforward, and promote moral reform on behalf of heaven. Be compassionate, merciful, and alleviate suffering for the state. Practice faithfulness to the ruler

2 Yu Gong (fl. first century) was compassionate and fair in his work as a prison official and advocating for the wrongly accused. In renovating the gates to his house, he instructed that the gates be built to accommodate a four-horse carriage as fit for a high official, because he could anticipate that his descendants would achieve honorable government positions based on the quiet merits he accumulated in his work. His son Dingguo 定國 (fl. 52) became a chancellor, and his grandson Yonglü 永侶 became an imperial counsellor (*Hanshu* 70.589; Loewe 2000, 659–660).

3 The story of Dou Yujun 竇禹鈞 (fl. 914) was recorded in the *History of the Song Dynasty* (*Song shi* 宋史) (*Song shi* 263.250–252) and is also alluded to in the *Three Character Classic*. In his thirties, Dou dreamed of his late grandfather warning him that he would not live much longer nor have any sons if he did not perform good deeds. From then on, Yu helped others in various ways—by providing financial support for funerals and weddings in the local community, establishing a school with a library for disadvantaged youth, and even raising the daughter of a servant who had stolen from him. Through such quiet merits, Yu not only extended his lifespan but also had five sons who rose to high ranks in the government service.

4 Song Jiao 宋郊 (996–1066) and his brother Song Qi 宋祁 (998–1061) excelled in the civil service examinations. As a student, Song Jiao once encountered an ant nest that was in danger of being flooded by the rain, and he used some bamboo as a bridge for the ants to cross to safety. Such quiet merits enabled him to achieve first place in the examinations.

5 The anecdote in the *New Order* records the young Sun Shu'ao 孫叔敖 (fl. c. 600) encountering a two-headed snake. Having heard that such a snake would bring death to those who saw it, Sun killed and buried the snake to prevent harm to others. His mother predicted that not only would he survive but that his quiet merits would be rewarded. Sun later became the chancellor of the state of Chu (*Xinxu* 1.189).

and family reverence towards parents. Be respectful to elder brothers and be trustworthy among friends.

或奉真朝斗，或拜佛念經。報答四恩，廣行三教。濟急如濟涸轍之魚，救危如救密羅之雀。矜孤恤寡，敬老憐貧。措衣食，周道路之饑寒；施棺槨，免屍骸之暴露。家富，提攜親戚；歲饑，賑濟鄰朋。
Some revere the Perfected and worship the Northern Constellation, while others prostrate before the buddhas and recite sutras. Repay the four kindnesses.[6] Propagate the three traditions.[7] Relieve people in crisis as urgently as if helping a fish in a drying wheel-track puddle.[8] Deliver people from peril as if freeing a sparrow from a fine net. Be compassionate to the orphaned and care for the widowed. Respect the elderly and commiserate with the poor. Collect food and clothes to assist cold and hungry travelers. Donate coffins to save corpses from being exposed. When one is affluent, support relatives and in-laws.[9] When the harvest fails, aid neighbors and friends.

斗秤須要公平，不可輕出重入；奴僕待之寬恕，豈宜備責苛求。印造經文，創修寺院。捨藥材以拯疾苦；施茶水以解渴煩。或買物而放生，或持齋而戒殺。舉步常看蟲蟻，禁火莫燒山林。點夜燈以照人行；造河船以濟人渡。
Measures and scales must be fair, do not overcharge or underpay. Treat servants and maids with generosity and understanding; do not impose

6 The "four kindnesses" may refer to either the compassion of parents, teachers, the ruler, and patrons, or the compassion of parents, sentient beings, the ruler, and the Three Treasures, according to the *Shi shi yao lan* 釋氏要覽 (Essential overview of Buddhism) and the *Dasheng ben shengxin di guan jing* 大乘本生心地觀經 (Mahayana sutra on contemplation of the mind and its original nature), respectively (*Shi shi yao lan* 2.289).

7 The three traditions of teachings refer to Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism.

8 The text alludes to the account of Master Zhuang finding a perch in a carriage rut that is in desperate need of water to stay alive (*Zhuangzi* 924; Watson 2013, 228).

9 The *Youpose jie jing* 優婆塞戒經 (Sūtra of the Upāsaka precepts) explains that if one has much wealth and property but lacks moral conviction and does not give charitably, this is also termed "poverty" (*Youpose jie jing* 4.1056).

harsh demands and exacting expectations. Print and publish scriptures and writings. Build and repair monasteries and academies. Give medical resources to alleviate the suffering of illness. Offer tea and water to relieve the distress of thirst. Some buy [captive] animals to set them free, while others are vegetarian to abstain from taking life. Always look out for bugs and ants while walking. Never start fires in mountain forests during fire bans. Light lamps to illuminate walkways at night. Construct boats to facilitate water crossings.

勿登山而網禽獸，勿臨水而毒魚蝦。勿宰耕牛，勿棄字紙。勿謀人之財產；勿妬人之技能；勿淫人之妻女；勿唆人之爭訟；勿壞人之名利；勿破人之婚姻。勿因私讐，使人兄弟不和；勿因小利，使人父子不睦。勿倚權勢而辱善良，勿恃富豪而欺窮困。

Do not climb mountains to catch birds and animals. Do not approach the waters to poison fish and crustaceans. Do not slaughter the plowing oxen. Do not throw away paper that is written on. Do not scheme to gain someone's wealth and property. Do not envy someone's skills and abilities. Do not lust after someone's wife or daughter. Do not rouse someone to dispute and litigate. Do not destroy someone's reputation and interests. Do not break up someone's marriage. Do not sow dissension among brothers on account of private enmity. Do not cause disharmony between father and son on account of trivial gain. Do not rely on authority and influence to disgrace the good and honest. Do not depend on wealth and prestige to deceive those enduring poverty and hardship.

善人則親近之，助德行於身心；惡人則遠避之，杜災殃於眉睫。常須隱惡揚善，不可口是心非。剪礙道之荊榛，除當途之瓦石。修數百年崎嶇之路，造千萬人來往之橋。

Befriend and learn from good people to practice virtue in thought and deed. Avoid and distance ourselves from the unkind to ward off immediate misfortune and disaster. Always conceal wrongs and promote virtue. Do not condone with words while condemning in thoughts. Cut away brambles and branches from the track. Remove tiles and stones from the path. Repair rugged roads to last centuries. Erect bridges that millions will cross.

垂訓以格人非，捐資以成人美。作事須循天理，出言要順人心。見先哲於羹牆，慎獨知於衾影。諸惡莫作，眾善奉行。永無惡曜加臨，常有吉神擁護。近報則在自己，遠報則在兒孫。百福駢臻，千祥雲集，豈不從陰隲中得來者哉？

Bequeath instruction to help correct misconduct. Contribute resources to facilitate the good deeds of others. Deeds must comply with nature's principles. Words must accord with human hearts. See the ancient sages in the soup and on the walls.[10] Be mindful of matters known to one's quilt and shadow.[11] By refraining from all wrongdoing and doing all that is good,[12] one will never suffer harm from baleful stars, and always be protected by auspicious spirits. Imminent responses affect oneself, while later responses reach descendants.[13] When hundreds of blessings arrive together and thousands of good fortunes gather like clouds, how could these not have been derived from quiet merits?

10 *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 (History of the Later Han): King Shun revered King Yao greatly such that when Yao passed away, Shun seemed to see Yao's face in the walls whenever he was seated and in his soup whenever he was eating (*Hou Hanshu* 93.311).

11 Cai Yuanding 蔡元定 (1135–1198) instructed his sons: "When walking alone, do nothing that would be shameful before one's shadow. When sleeping alone, do nothing of guilt before one's blanket" (*Song shi* 434.111).

12 *Zeng yi A'han jing* 1.551.

13 *Documents*: "Order your affairs by righteousness; order your heart by propriety—so shall you transmit a grand example to posterity" (Legge 2011, 182, 590).

THREE CHARACTER CLASSIC 三字經 (SONG DYNASTY, C. 1300, REVISED 1928)

As one of the first books that a child would learn to read in pre-modern China, the *Three Character Classic* introduces some common vocabulary along with a foundational grasp of moral norms, cultural knowledge, and literary training using just over 1,400 Chinese characters. Like a pocketbook, it succinctly conveys an overview of Chinese history and culture, with a focus on the curriculum for classicist learning, a chronicle of dynasties, and general knowledge, as well as positive exemplars for diligent study. Like a nursery rhyme, the *Three Character Classic* is structured in three-syllable verse with rhyming alternate lines for readability, comprehension, and recitation. Reading the primer would thus foster a familiarity with the basic patterns of classical Chinese expression, such as parallelism. As James T. C. Liu (1985, 192) notes, "Truly, never has any other book said so much on so many points in so few words."

The putative author of the *Three Character Classic* is the thirteenth century scholar-official Wang Yinglin 王應麟 (1223–1296).[1] Other writers have contributed to subsequent editions, such as the philologist Zhang Binglin 章炳麟 (1868–1936) supplementing the sections on history and classical learning in 1928. The *Three Character Classic* enjoyed uninterrupted circulation for over seven hundred years and was considered a

1 On the authorship of the *Three Character Classic*, see Liu (1985, 193–196).

bestseller even for publishers in the Ming and Qing dynasties. It was read by the children of the ruling house, as exemplified by the son of Emperor Shizong 世宗 (r. 1521–1566) of the Ming dynasty, who later became Emperor Muzong 穆宗 (r. 1567–1572) (Wang 2013, 26). This primer's role in the teaching and learning of classical Chinese in East Asia has been likened to Aelius Donatus' (fl. fourth century) texts for teaching Latin grammar in the West (Bischoff 2005). Beyond its native shores, the second Professor of Chinese at the Collège de France, Stanislas Julien, used the *Three Character Classic* as a foundational textbook from 1832 (Wright 1960, 242), and both the first Professor of Chinese at the University of Oxford, James Legge, and the second Professor of Chinese at the University of Cambridge, Herbert A. Giles, required university students to memorize the primer (Giles 1940, iii; Wilkinson 2022, 65). Its tri-metrical structure has influenced the format of subsequent primers, including the *Guidelines for Learners*.[2]

TRANSLATIONS

Translations of the *Three Character Classic* in Manchu and Russian have been mentioned in the literature.[3] Other translations of the *Three Character Classic* are as follows:

English

Chiang Ker Chiu. *The Three Character Classic*. London: Arthur Probsthain, 1941.

Clark, Anthony E. *A Chinese Jesuit Catechism: Giulio Aleni's Four Character Classic* 四字經文. Singapore: Springer Nature, 2021.

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2 For example, the *Sanzi Xiaojing* 三字孝經 (Classic of family reverence in three characters) and the *Guang Sanzi jing* 廣三字經 (Extended *Three Character Classic*), and the *Dangan shiye sanzijing* 檔案事業三字經 (Three character classic of archival work) (Bai 2005, 28; Qin et al. 2021).

3 On the Manchu editions of the *Three Character Classic*, see Fitzgerald (2021, 14). The four Russian translations by Illaline Kalinovich Rossohin c. 1740, Aleksyei Leont'ev in 1779, Anton Vladkin c. late 1700s, and Nikolai Bichurin in 1829 have been used as textbooks for understanding Chinese language and culture, respectively, with the latest being most well known (Zhang and Ren 2019, 941–942).

Gray, Phoebe Xu. *The Three Character Classic: A Bilingual Reader of China's ABCs*. Paramus: Homa & Sekey Books, 2012.
Giles, Herbert A. *Elementary Chinese* 三字經 *San Tzu Ching*. Shanghai: Kelly & Walsh, 1940.
Li, Ronald Fook-shiu. *Three Traditional Chinese Texts on Family and Family Responsibilities*. Springfield: Board of Directors of Wittenberg College, 1996.
Mao Zengyin 毛增印. *Verse in Three Characters and Genre Pictures* 三字經與中國民俗畫. Beijing: China Intercontinental Press, 2009.
Pepper, Jeff. *San Zi Jing—Three Character Classic in Chinese and English*. Verona: Imagin8 Press LLC, 2020.
Phen, S. T. *Three Character Classic* 三字經. Singapore: EPB Publishers Pte Ltd., 1989.
Zhao Yanchun 趙顏春. *Lessons of the Three Word Primer Translations* 英韻三字經. Beijing: Guangming ribao chubanshe, 2014.

French

Deverge, Michel. *Le Livre des Trois Caractères* (Book of three characters). Paris: Challamel Ainé, 1873.
Julien, Stanislas. *Classique des trois caractères* (Classic of three characters). Genève: H. Georg, 1873.
Pauthier, Guillaume. *Le Livre Classique des Trois Caractères* (Classic book of three characters). Paris: Challamel Aîné, Libraire-Éditeur, 1873.

German

Schestag, Eva. *Drei Zeichen Klassiker: Ein Lehrgedicht für Schüler*. Frankfurt: S. Fischer, 2009.

Italian

Classico dei tre caratteri (Three character classic). Edited by Edoardo Fazzioli and Eileen Fazzioli. Milano: La Vita Felice, 2023.

Vietnamese

Des Michels, Abel. *Tam Tự Kinh* (Three character classic). Paris: Ernest Leroux, Éditeur, 1882.
Nguyễn tấn Hưng. *Tam Tự Kinh* (Three character classic). Saigon: Imprimerie J. Viêt, 1917.

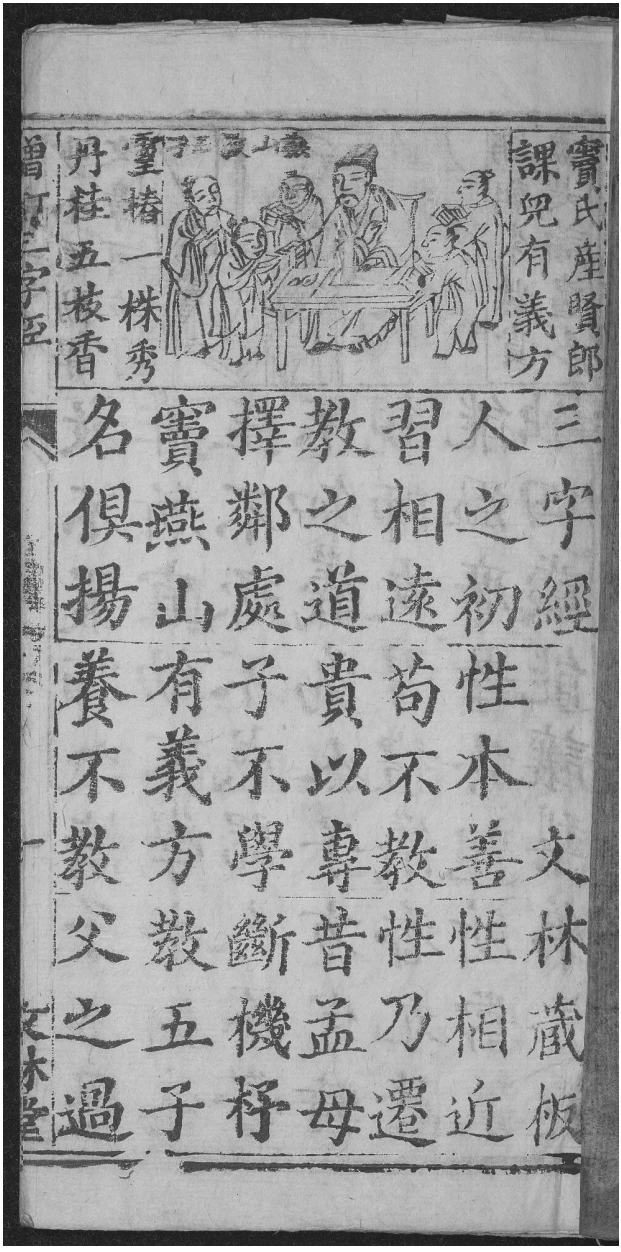


Figure 17. First page from the *Three Character Classic with Illustrations* (*Tu xiang San zi jing* 圖像三字經) dated to the nineteenth century. Image provided by the John Rylands Research Institute and Library, University of Manchester.

THREE CHARACTER CLASSIC

Wang Yinglin 王應麟

人之初，性本善。性相近，習相遠。
Human nature is good at the start;[4]
First alike, then habits set apart.[5]

苟不教，性乃遷。教之道，貴以專。
Without teaching, the nature sways;
Focus in teaching is the way.

4 The *Mencius* advocates the notion that moral goodness is innate to human beings. Each person is born with incipient tendencies towards such goodness but whether those moral "sprouts" are fully developed necessarily depends on personal inclination and environmental influences (*Mengzi* 2A.6; Bloom 2009, 35–36).

5 The *Analects* records Confucius (551–479 BCE) commenting on the human condition: "In nature close to one another, in practice far apart" (*Lunyu* 17.2; Watson 2007, 120).

昔孟母，擇鄰處。子不學，斷機杼。
Mencius' mother chose to move;[6]
She cut her cloth to disapprove.[7]

竇燕山，有義方。教五子，名俱揚。
Dou of Mount Yan knew how to teach;
He taught his sons, and fame was achieved.[8]

養不教，父之過。教不嚴，師之惰。
To love but not teach is the father's fault;
To teach without care is the teacher's fault.

子不學，非所宜。幼不學，老何為。
Learn as a child, you should at this stage;
Not learning when young, what of old age?

玉不琢，不成器。人不學，不知義。
A jade unpolished will never gleam bright;
A mind unlearned knows not what is right.[9]

---

6 The mother of Meng Ke 孟軻 (372–289 BCE) relocated from living near a graveyard, and later beside a marketplace, to settle next to a school as a conducive environment for her son's learning. Her son became the renowned Confucian philosopher known as "Mengzi 孟子" (Master Meng), which is Latinized as "Mencius" (*Lienü zhuan*, 1.15; Cook 2007, 46–47; Kinney 2014, 18).

7 Mencius' mother cut the cloth that she was weaving to explain to Mencius that if he abandoned his studies, his prospects in life would be limited like the futility of the half-woven cloth (*Lienü zhuan*, 1.15; Cook 2007, 47; Kinney 2014, 18).

8 Dou Yujun 竇禹鈞 (fl. 914) is known for raising his five sons who were all successful in the civil service examinations. Dou is praised accordingly in a poem by his friend Feng Dao 馮道 (882–954) (*Song shi* 263:250–252). There is also an allusion to Dou Yujun in *Lord Wenchang's Essay on Quiet Merits*.

9 The chapter "Record on Education" (*Xueji* 學記) in the *Records on Ritual* (*Liji* 禮記) states, "A piece of jade that remains uncut will never become a sacred vessel, and a person that does not learn will never realise the proper way (*dao* 道)" (Xu et al. 2016, 10). Like the raw jade, a person must learn and fulfill their moral obligations to contribute to society.

為人子，方少時，親師友，習禮儀。
A child must learn from teachers and peers;[10]
And practice manners from early years.

香九齡，能溫席。孝於親，所當執。
Xiang aged nine could warm up the bed;
Serving parents should be the mindset.[11]

融四歲，能讓梨。弟於長，宜先知。
Rong aged four could share the pears;
Respecting elders, one's first cares.[12]

首孝弟，次見聞。知某數，識某文。
Learn to love parents and elders, then the rest;
That is, master the numbers and read the texts.[13]

---

10 The *Analects* records that Zeng Shen 曾參 (505–435 BCE), one of Confucius' students who became a master in his own right ("Master Zeng"), said: "Through friends, the [noble person] develops their humanity" (*Lunyu* 12.24).

11 After the mother of Huang Xiang 黃香 (fl. 100) passed away, he was dedicated to looking after his father and became known for his family reverence at the age of nine (De Crespigny 2007, 350–351). He is recorded as one of twenty-four exemplars of family reverence compiled in the *Twenty-Four Filial Exemplars* (*Ershisi xiao* 二十四孝) by the scholar Guo Jujing 郭居敬 (dates unknown) during the Yuan dynasty (1279–1368): "Warming the blankets in the winter months and fanning the pillows in summer to make them cool; as a youth, he knows the duties of a child" (Kimbrough 2019, 83).

12 Kong Rong 孔融 (153–208) at the age of four became known for respecting his older brothers by leaving them the larger pears and choosing a smaller pear for himself (De Crespigny 2007, 391–393).

13 According to the *Analects*, Confucius prioritizes character education, as exemplified by showing love and respect for one's parents and elder siblings, before academic studies like learning to count, read, and write: "Young people should be filial at home, brotherly with others, circumspect, and trustworthy. Let them act kindly toward the populace in general and befriend those of humane character. If, after that, they have energy left over, let them study the arts" (*Lunyu* 1.6; Watson 2007, 16). This chapter of the *Analects* also forms the "Outline" to the *Guidelines for Learners*.

一而十，十而百，百而千，千而萬。
Units to tens to hundreds, as we know;
Thousands to ten-thousands the numbers go.

三才者，天地人。三光者，日月星。
The Three Resources are heaven, earth, and humanity;[14]
The Three Luminaries, sun, moon, and stars in clarity.[15]

三綱者，君臣義。父子親，夫婦順。
Ruler and subject have duty, father and child in love respond;
And harmony between partners, these relations are the Three Bonds.[16]

曰春夏，曰秋冬，此四時，運不窮。
Spring then summer, autumn and winter;
Four seasons defer to each other.

曰南北，曰西東，此四方，應乎中。
North, south, east, and west, these points four;
Relate to the center for sure.

曰水火，木金土。此五行，本乎數。
Water, fire, wood, metal, and earth;
The Five Phases follow their birth.[17]

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14 Derived from the exegetical tradition relating to the *Changes*, the Three Resources refer to the three elements that facilitate life: Heaven denotes the atmosphere, encompassing the celestial bodies, four seasons, and the weather conditions; Earth denotes the geographical conditions and natural resources from the ground; and humanity represents all life forms in existence. See, for example, Lynn (1994, 121).

15 The Three Luminaries refer to the most visible celestial bodies in the sky—the sun, moon, and stars.

16 Proposed by Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (179–104), who was instrumental in making Confucianism the state ideology in 136 BCE, the Three Bonds denote three interpersonal relationships thought to underpin societal order, and the basis for mutual reciprocity by their parties is denoted by "responsibility," "love," and "harmony" respectively (Queen and Major 2016, 329, 426–427).

17 The Five Phases refer to five basic elements that became part of a correlative cosmology within the state ideology of Han China around the third century BCE. The dynamic

曰仁義，禮智信，此五常，不容紊。
Humanity, rightness, ritual, trust;
And wisdom completes the Five Constants we must.[18]

稻粱菽，麥黍稷。此六穀，人所食。
Millet, pulse, broomcorn, sorghum, wheat;
And rice are the six grains we eat.[19]

馬牛羊，雞犬豕。此六畜，人所飼。
The horse, ox, fowl, dog, pig, and sheep;
Are six animals that we keep.[20]

曰喜怒，曰哀懼。愛惡欲，七情具。
The seven emotions are sadness;
Joy, anger, fear, love, greed, and hatred.[21]

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relationship among the Five Phases is illustrated by their productive cycle: water generates wood by nourishing trees, the wood fuels fire, the fires produces earth (soil), the earth forms metal, and the metal (minerals) enriches water; and destructive cycle: wood parts the earth, the earth dams water, the water extinguishes fire, the fire melts metal, and the metal cuts wood (Harper 1999, 866).

18 The Five Constants are five moral qualities considered to be inherent to human nature and enduring regardless of changes to a person's habitual nature. Mencius specified the first four moral qualities: humanity, rightness, ritual propriety, and wisdom: "Feeling pity and commiseration is humanity; knowing shame and dislike is rightness; being respectful and reverent is ritual propriety; and discerning right and wrong is wisdom" (*Mengzi* 6A.6; Bloom 124). Later Confucian scholars added "trust" to the preceding four and coined the term "Five Constants."

19 The "six grains" include rice, millet, pulse, wheat, broomcorn, and sorghum. Regional diets vary due to agriculture, as exemplified by millet and rice being staple crops in northern and southern China, respectively.

20 The six types of animals would have specific roles on the farm, for example, the horse, ox, and goat could be used for transportation, the oxen would help in tilling the fields, the roosters could announce the dawn, and the dogs for hunting and guarding the home.

21 The human emotional dispositions were classified into seven types according to the chapter "Evolution of Ritual" in the *Records on Ritual* (Puett 2010, 363).

匏土革，木石金。絲與竹，乃八音。
Gourd, clay, leather, metal, bamboo, and wood;
Stone and silk – the eight sounds understood.[22]

高曾祖，父而身。身而子，子而孫。
From great-great-grandfather to father;
Then self, son, and grandson together.

自子孫，至元曾。乃九族，人之倫。
From son to grandson to great-great grandson;
These nine agnates shape our kinship bond.[23]

父子恩，夫婦從。兄則友，弟則恭。
Kindness between father and son, spouses in harmony;
Older brothers befriend, younger brothers show esteem;

長幼序，友與朋。君則敬，臣則忠。
Seniors and juniors keep an order, friends share devotion;
Leaders are respectful, subordinates have dedication.

22 The traditional Chinese musical instruments were grouped into eight categories based on the primary material used to create them. For example, gourd instruments include the cucurbit flute and the mouth organ; clay instruments include the ocarina; leather instruments include drums; wood instruments include the *yu* percussion instrument that is shaped like a hollow tiger with a serrated strip on its back; stone instruments include the stone chimes; metal instruments include bells, cymbals, and gongs; "silk" refers to the stringed instruments like the pipa, and "bamboo" refers to the woodwind instruments like the reed pipes.

23 The "nine agnates" encompass four past generations, namely from our paternal great-great-grandfather to oneself, and four future generations from one's children to one's great-great-grandson. In the traditional Chinese ancestral remembrance ceremony, an individual would recall the lessons of their ancestors and be mindful to live in honor of, and contribute to, the family heritage as part of their legacy for future generations. The earliest description of such familial relationships is found in the chapter on "Explaining kinship" in the *Erya* 爾雅 (Approaching standard) (*Erya* 3.75–76).

此十義，人所同。
These ten duties bind us all.[24]

凡訓蒙，須講究。詳訓詁，明句讀。
Teaching the young needs thorough explanation;
Know the commentary and punctuation.[25]

為學者，必有初。小學終，至四書。
Every learner must know where to begin;
Four Books after *Elementary Learning*.[26]

24 Interpersonal relationships are broadly divided into five types of relationship: the relationship between parent and child, the relationship between spouses, the relationship between older and younger siblings, the relationship between seniors and juniors generally, the relationship between friends, and the relationship between leader and subordinate (the "Five Relationships"). As each relationship involves distinct roles with reciprocal obligations between the respective parties, there are "ten duties" in total. Based on *Mencius*, the concept of the Five Relationships has existed since the time of Emperor Shun (*Mengzi* 3A.4; Bloom 2009, 56–57).

25 Book learning was of central importance in the classicist learning of pre-modern China, and students would generally learn to read in stages. They would begin by mastering the minimum amount of vocabulary needed for reading classical texts (e.g., approx. two thousand characters). The teacher would then explicate the text for their student to comprehend each word, each phrase, each sentence, and the entire section, and lead their student in reading to ensure they adopted appropriate punctuation and pronunciation.

26 These lines mark the start of a section of the *Three Character Classic* that sets out the sequence of formal learning as formulated by the scholar Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200)—elementary learning first, followed by the *Classic of Family Reverence*, the Four Books, the Five Classics, the philosophical works, and the historical works. The *Elementary Learning* (*Xiaoxue* 小學) is a primer written by Zhu Xi covering the content of elementary education as taught within the family. In the Four Books—the *Highest Learning* (*Daxue* 大學), the *Practice of the Mean* (*Zhongyong* 中庸), the *Analects* (*Lunyu* 論語), and the *Mencius* (*Mengzi* 孟子)—Zhu Xi curated a subset of classical texts as a core curriculum in the Confucian tradition (Gardner 2007, xiii–xxv).

論語者，二十篇。羣弟子，記善言。
The *Analects* has twenty books;
Wise words recorded by students.[27]

孟子者，七篇止。講道德，說仁義。
Seven chapters make up the works of *Mencius*;
Teach the Dao, virtue, humanity, and rightness.[28]

作中庸，子思筆。中不偏，庸不易。
The *Zhongyong* text Zisi arranged;
"*Zhong*" means unbiased, "*yong*" unchanged.[29]

作大學，乃曾子。自修齊，至平治。
The *Highest Learning* was penned by Master Zeng;
Harmony of world, state, and home starts within.[30]

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27 An authoritative account of Confucius' life and philosophy, the *Analects* records the words and conduct of Confucius, his students, and their contemporaries, and is traditionally thought to have been compiled by Confucius' students and their students following his death in 479 BCE (*Hanshu* 30.806). However, there is ongoing debate regarding authorship of the *Analects* as some of its chapters have been dated to significantly later periods based on linguistic and literary analyses.

28 The *Mencius* records the words and conduct attributed to Mencius and his students, as well as their dialogues with contemporary rulers, thinkers, and friends. The earlier extant commentary on the *Mencius* was written by Zhao Qi 趙岐 (d. 201), who edited the text such that it has been received as seven chapters. The *Mencius* further developed Confucian ideas in response to the philosophical debates and political conditions of the Warring States period. It came to be classified as a canonical work largely due to Zhu Xi's commentary on and choice of the *Mencius* for the Four Books (Bloom 2009, xi).

29 The *Zhongyong* 中庸 (Practice of the mean) is thought to expound the metaphysics of Confucian thought. Its authorship is traditionally attributed to Confucius' grandson Zisi 子思 (492–431 BCE).

30 The *Highest Learning* is traditionally attributed to Master Zeng. The text sets out a conceptual framework that identifies how an individual's cultivation of moral character will have flow-on effects in expanding circles of influence, such that they bring about order within their family, orderly families in turn facilitate harmony within their local community, and harmony among states ultimately realizes global peace.

孝經通，四書熟。如六經，始可讀。
Know the *Xiaojing*[31] and the Four Books;
Then the Six Classics one can look.[32]

詩書易，禮春秋。號六經，當講求。
The Six Classics to be studied—*Annals*,
Changes, *Documents*, *Odes*, and *Rituals.*

有連山，有歸藏。有周易，三易詳。
Detailing the *Changes* are the *Zhouyi*;
The *Lianshan* and the *Guicang*, all three.[33]

有典謨，有訓誥。有誓命，書之奧。
In the *Documents* are canons, oaths, instructions;
counsels, decrees, proclamations, and injunctions.[34]

我周公，作周禮。著六官，存治體。
The Duke of Zhou set its rituals grand;
Only six offices to govern the land.[35]

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31 The *Classic of Family Reverence* outlines the philosophical theory, sociopolitical significance, and metaphysics of the practice of family reverence that starts from serving family and continues in serving the community. Comprising little more than 1,800 Chinese characters, the *Classic of Family Reverence* would often be read first before the Four Books.

32 The Six Classics refer to six canonical texts that formed the core curriculum of classicist scholarship, namely, the *Odes*, the *Documents*, the *Changes*, the *Rituals*, the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, and the *Music.* There is no further mention of the *Music* in the *Three Character Classic*, presumably because the text was no longer extant.

33 The *Changes* is consulted as a text of wisdom for practical guidance and divinatory purposes. The *Lianshan*, the *Guicang*, and the *Zhouyi* refer to three traditions for divining with the hexagrams in the *Changes*.

34 The *Documents* is a collection of court records relating to early China. Their contents are classified here into six forms of account: canons, counsels (ministerial consultations), injunctions (advice or remonstration from ministers), proclamations (by rulers to their subjects), oaths (declarations related to military action), and decrees.

35 The *Rites of Zhou* is a record of the system of bureaucratic administration during the Western Zhou period (c. 1046–771 BCE) comprising ministries of the royal court, internal affairs, ritual, war, justice, and works, respectively. Its authorship is traditionally attributed to the Duke of Zhou 周公 (r. as regent 1042–1036 BCE) but modern scholars date the text to the late Warring States (475–221 BCE) or Qin (221–206 BCE) periods.

大小戴，註禮記。述聖言，禮樂備。
Of the *Records on Ritual*, the two Dais wrote,
Of teachings on propriety and music, they note.[36]

曰國風，曰雅頌。號四詩，當諷詠。
State songs, odes, and hymns;
Four verse forms with rhythm.[37]

詩既亡，春秋作。寓褒貶，別善惡。
As collecting odes ceased, the *Annals* were compiled;
Ascribing praise and blame, judgments reconciled.[38]

三傳者，有公羊。有左氏，有穀梁。
Its commentaries are three, the *Zuo zhuan*;
The *Gongyang zhuan* and the *Guliang zhuan*.[39]

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36 The *Records on Ritual* is a collection of texts describing the social forms, administration, and ceremonial rites as they were understood in the period from the Warring States period to the Former Han dynasty (25–220). The scholar-official Dai De 戴德 (fl. c. 74 BCE) compiled an edition comprising eighty-five chapters known as the *Da Dai Liji* 大戴禮記 (Senior Dai's records on ritual) and his nephew Dai Sheng 戴聖 (fl. 51) compiled a further edition of forty-nine chapters—the *Xiao Dai Liji* 小戴禮記 (Junior Dai's records on ritual).

37 Compiled over 2,500 years ago, the *Odes* is one of the earliest anthologies of verse in the world. Its poetry consists of state airs (*guo feng* 國風) for the court to gauge public sentiment and court songs (*ya* 雅) for state functions and official audiences, as well as ceremonial hymns (*song* 頌) for honoring the ancestors of rulers and inspiring their descendants. As the category of court songs is further divided into major and minor songs, there are four forms of verse in total.

38 The *Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chunqiu* 春秋) chronicles major political events affecting the state of Lu 魯 and its neighbors over the course of twelve ducal reigns spanning some 242 years from 722 to 479 BCE. Confucius is traditionally thought to have compiled the *Spring and Autumn Annals* based on the historical records of Lu because odes were no longer used (*Mengzi* 4B:21). Through this text, Confucius sought to provide positive and negative examples of historical figures and governmental institutions, conveying through his wording subtle moral judgments of the people and events.

39 Of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*' five known exegetical traditions, only three remain extant—the *Gongyang* 公羊, the *Guliang* 穀梁, and the *Zuo* 左. The *Gongyang* and

經既明，方讀子。撮其要，記其事。
Read the masters after the classics;
Learn the matters and grasp the basics.

五子者，有荀楊。文中子，及老莊。
The five masters: Xunzi, Yang Xiong,
The Laozi, Zhuangzi, and Wenzhong.[40]

經子通，讀諸史。考世系，知終始。
Read history after the classics and masters,[41]
Examine the lineages, their rise and disasters.[42]

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the *Guliang* traditions of commentary have been traced to two students of Zixia—Gongyang Gao 公羊高 and Guliang Chi 穀梁赤, who were natives of the feudal states of Qi and Lu, respectively, during the Warring States period of 475–221 BCE. The *Zuo* tradition of commentary is traditionally attributed to Zuo Qiuming (or Zuoqiu Ming) 左丘明 (dates unknown), a scribe at the court of Lu and a contemporary of Confucius during the Spring and Autumn period.

40 Regarded as the most influential Confucian scholar after Confucius and Mencius, Master Xun (Xunzi 荀子, c. 325–c. 235 BCE) advocated personal learning and cultivation as essential to civilize and refine the detestable original condition of human nature. Yang Xiong 揚雄 (53 BCE–18 CE) considered that human nature was a mixture of good and bad, and thus needed to be refined through self-cultivation. Master Wenzhong (Wang Tong 王通, c. 584–617) is known for lecturing on the classicist learning and composing supplements to the Six Classics. The Old Master (Laozi 老子, fl. c. 571–471 BCE) is traditionally credited with composing the *Daode jing* 道德經 (Classic of the Way and its virtue), also known as *Laozi* 老子 (Old Master), which is a foundational text of Daoist thought and one of the most translated and commented texts. Zhuang Zhou 莊周 (c. 370–301 BCE) and his students are traditionally credited with the *Master Zhuang* (*Zhuangzi* 莊子), a collection of anecdotes, allegories, parables, and fables in thirty-three chapters (Addiss and Lombardo 1993, xii; Chan 1969, 137).

41 Familiarity with the principles expounded in the classical and philosophical writings was thought to enable the learner to navigate and evaluate the historical writings that often document complex webs of people and events.

42 The *Three Character Classic* draws attention to the ruling families not least because the conduct of their members, particularly the ruler, had personal and far-reaching consequences, to the extent of precipitating dynastic collapse.

自羲農，至黃帝。號三皇，居上世。
Fuxi, Shennong to the Yellow Emperor;
Are the Three Sovereigns of ancient honor.[43]

唐有虞，號二帝。相揖遜，稱盛世。
Tang and Yu are the Two Emperors great;
Who abdicated in turn for the state.[44]

夏有禹，商有湯。周文武，稱三王。
Wen, Wu of Zhou, Yu of Xia;
And Tang of Shang, the Three Kings are.[45]

夏傳子，家天下。四百載，遷夏社。
From the Xia, the throne was hereditary;[46]
Until their dynasty fell after four centuries.

湯伐夏，國號商。六百載，至紂亡。
After the Xia came the Shang;
Of six centuries from King Tang.[47]

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43 The outline of Chinese history begins with legendary rulers of antiquity: Fuxi 伏羲, Shennong 神農, and the Yellow Emperor, who are collectively known as the Three Sovereigns. It is thought that their pioneering ideas and developments have shaped human civilization.

44 "Tang" and "Yu" are titles of King Yao (trad. r. 2357–2255 BCE) and King Shun (trad. r. 2255–2205), respectively.

45 The founding of the Xia dynasty (c. 2070–1600 BCE), the Shang dynasty (c. 1600–1046 BCE), and the Zhou dynasty (1046–256 BCE) are attributed to King Yu, King Tang (trad. r. 1675–1646 BCE), and King Wu (r. 1049/45–1043 BCE). King Wu acknowledged his father King Wen 文 (r. 1099/56–1050 BCE) as the posthumous founder of the Zhou dynasty.

46 During the Xia dynasty, Qi 啟 (trad. r. 2197–2117 BCE) ascended the throne after his father King Yu passed away and succession of the throne became hereditary among the ruling families thereafter.

47 King Tang overthrew King Jie 桀 (d. c. 1600 BCE) of the Xia dynasty to establish the Shang dynasty.

周武王，始誅紂。八百載，最長久。
Zhou King Wu ended the last Shang king's reign;
For eight centuries the Zhou did sustain.

周轍東，王綱墜。逞干戈，尚遊說。
The Zhou capital moved east as their power waned;
Military force rose and strategists gained fame.[48]

始春秋，終戰國。五霸強，七雄出。
From the Spring and Autumn through to the Warring States;
Five Hegemons and Seven Kingdoms met their fates.[49]

嬴秦氏，始兼并。傳二世，楚漢爭。
Ying Zheng of Qin unified all states;
Then Chu and Han contended for reign.[50]

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48 The Zhou dynasty is divided into two periods—the Western Zhou (1046–771 BCE) and the Eastern Zhou (770–221 BCE). The latter period is known as the Eastern Zhou because the Zhou court had moved eastwards to establish a new capital at Luoyi 洛邑. By the Eastern Zhou period, the authority of the Zhou court had eroded such that its military and economic strength were inferior to the various feudal states. Those states increasingly waged war against each other for power and territory.

49 The Eastern Zhou is traditionally analyzed in terms of the Spring and Autumn Period (722–476 BCE) and the Warring States period (475–221 BCE). The decline of the Zhou court during this time saw the emergence of five dominant rulers, namely, Lord Huan of Qi 齊桓公 (r. 685–643), Lord Wen of Jin 晉文公 (r. 636–628), Lord Mu of Qin 秦穆公 (r. 659–621), Lord Xiang of Song 宋襄公 (r. 650–637), and King Zhuang of Chu 楚莊王 (r. 613–592), who are collectively known as the "Five Hegemons" (Som 1949, 236). The seven states that contended for supremacy included Qin 秦, Qi 齊, Chu 楚, Yan 燕, Han 韓, Zhao 趙, and Wei 魏, which are collectively known as the "Seven Kingdoms."

50 The state of Qin overthrew the Zhou ruling house in 256 BCE and conquered the six other states (Han, Zhao, Wei, Chu, Yan, and Qi) to unify the empire in 221 BCE. The Qin ruler Ying Zheng 嬴秦 (r. 246–210 BCE) proclaimed himself the First August Emperor (*Shi huangdi* 始皇帝). When he died, his second son Hu Hai 胡亥 (210–207 BCE) was installed as a puppet emperor and later assassinated. The throne then passed to Ying Zheng's grandson Zi Ying 子嬰 (r. 206), who ruled for only forty-six days before the Qin dynasty was overthrown by rebel forces in 206 BCE (Loewe 2000, 600, 654–656 752). Xiang Yu 項羽 (fl. 203 BCE), as the chief of the rebel forces, attempted to establish a confederation of states and proclaimed himself as "King of the Western Chu." However, civil war broke out within one year as the rival "King of Han" Liu Bang 劉邦 (202–195 BCE)

高祖興，漢業建。至孝平，王莽篡。
From Gaozu to Xiaoping was the Han;[51]
Til the dynasty was ousted by Wang Mang.[52]

光武興，為東漢。四百年，終於獻。
Guangwu then restored Han rule once more;
Four centuries until Xian's fall.[53]

魏蜀吳，爭漢鼎。號三國，迄兩晉。
Wei, Shu, and Wu fought for the Han domain;
Known as the Three Kingdoms till the Jin reign.[54]

宋齊繼，梁陳承。為南朝，都金陵。
Based at Nanjing, Song, Liang, Chen, Qi;
These were the Southern dynasties.[55]

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sought to gain control. The Chu–Han contention lasted for four years with the Han troops emerging victorious.

51 Having defeated Xiang Yu in 202 BC, Liu Bang became Emperor Gaozu 高祖 (r. 202–195 BCE) of the Han dynasty (202 BCE–220 CE).

52 The fourteenth Han dynasty ruler Emperor Xiao Ping 孝平 (1 BCE–5 CE) ascended the throne at the age of eight, and the regent Wang Mang 王莽 (45 BCE–23 CE) usurped power to establish the Xin 新 dynasty (9–23), which lasted eighteen years (Loewe 2000, 322–323, 326, 538–539; Sargent 1977, 177–179).

53 Liu Xiu 劉秀 (5–57), as a member of the former Han ruling family, reclaimed the throne as Emperor Guangwu 光武 (r. 25–57) of the Later Han dynasty (25–220). Northern Han China later came to be controlled by Cao Cao 曹操 (c. 155–220), who was chancellor for the last Han ruler, Emperor Xian 獻 (r. 189–220). In 220, Cao Cao's son Cao Pi 曹丕 (187–226) took over the throne by forcing Emperor Xian to abdicate (Loewe 2000, 389; De Crespigny 2007, 45, 555, 557).

54 After the fall of the Han dynasty, the Chinese empire became divided among the three states of Wei 魏, Shu 蜀, and Wu 吳, and this period, known as the "Three Kingdoms," lasted until Sima Yan 司馬炎 (236–290) usurped the state of Wei, conquered Wu, and established the Jin 晉 dynasty (265–420) as Emperor Wu 武 (r. 266–290) (De Crespigny 2007, 749).

55 The end of the Jin dynasty saw a period of geographical, cultural, and political division between the north and south of the Chinese empire, termed the "Northern and Southern Dynasties" (420–589). See for example Lewis (2009). The Southern Dynasties include Song, Qi, Liang, and Chen, which all located their capitals at Nanjing. The Southern Song dynasty (420–479) lasted fifty-nine years until Xiao Daocheng 蕭道成 (r. 479–482) seized power and established the Southern Qi Dynasty (479–502). The Southern Qi lasted

北元魏，分東西。宇文周，與高齊。
The Northern Wei split into East and West;
And then Northern Zhou and Northern Qi's quest.[56]

迨至隋，一土宇。不再傳，失統緒。
The Sui unified the land again;
But it ended as authority waned.[57]

唐高祖，起義師。除隋亂，創國基。
The rebel troops that Tang Gaozu raised;
Set order and the rule's solid base.[58]

二十傳，三百載。梁滅之，國乃改。
For three centuries and some twenty reigns;
Until the Tang was deposed by Liang's claims.[59]

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some twenty nears until Xiao Yan 蕭衍 (r. 502–549) usurped the throne and founded the Southern Liang dynasty (502–557). The Southern Liang was, in turn, overthrown by Chen Baxian 陳霸先 (r. 557–559), who established the Southern Chen dynasty.

56 The Northern Dynasties are the Northern Wei (386–535), the Eastern Wei (534–550), the Western Wei (534–556), the Northern Qi (550–577), and the Northern Zhou (557–581). The Northern Wei was divided into Eastern Wei and Western Wei in 534. In 550, Gao Yang 高洋 (r. 550–559) usurped the Eastern Wei throne and created the Northern Qi state. The Western Wei was later overthrown in 557 by Yuwen Jue 宇文覺 (r. 557), who established the Northern Zhou dynasty.

57 Yang Jian 楊堅 (r. 581–604) deposed the young ruler of the Northern Zhou and conquered the Southern Chen to reunify the Chinese empire as Sui China (581–618). However, the Sui dynasty was short-lived and did not last beyond its second ruler, Yang Guang 楊廣 (r. 604–618).

58 The military commander Li Yuan 李淵 (566–635) raised troops to capture the Sui capital in late 617, and after initially installing Emperor Yang's grandson Yang You 楊侑 as a puppet emperor, he ascended the throne himself in 618 as the founding emperor of the Tang dynasty (618–907), posthumously known as "Emperor Gaozu" (r. 618–624).

59 The Tang dynasty lasted nearly three hundred years, with an interregnum of a Zhou 周 dynasty (690–705) presided by Wu Zetian, the only female emperor in Chinese history. The penultimate Tang ruler Li Jie 李傑 (posthumously "Emperor Zhaozong 昭宗," r. 888–904) was murdered by the rebel commander Zhu Wen 朱溫, who initially installed his own son Li Zhu 李柷 (posthumously "Emperor Aizong 哀宗," r. 904–907) as a nominal last Tang emperor, but deposed him in 907 to establish his new Liang dynasty (907–923).

梁唐晉，及漢周。稱五代，皆有由。
Liang, then Tang, Jin, Han, and Zhou;
Five Dynasties that followed.[60]

炎宋興，受周禪。十八傳，南北混。
The Yan Song took over from the Later Zhou;
After eighteen rulers, north and south were in woe.[61]

十七史，全在茲。載治亂，知興衰。
There are seventeen histories in all;
From order and chaos, know rise and fall.

讀史者，考實錄。通古今，若親目。
Read the histories and their records span,
Know the past and present as if from first-hand.

口而誦，心而惟。朝於斯，夕於斯。
Recite with the mouth, ponder in mind;
Study both day and night to seek and find.

---

60 The Tang dynasty was succeeded by the Five Dynasties (907–960), which were five successive states that ruled briefly during the tenth century: the Later Liang (907–923), the Later Tang (923–926), the Later Jin (936–946), the Later Han (947–950), and the Later Zhou (951–960). The Later Liang dynasty lasted for sixteen years until it was toppled by Li Cunxu 李存勗 (885–926, r. 923–926), who established the Later Tang. The Later Tang lasted for thirteen years until Shi Jingtang 石敬瑭 (892–942, r. 936–942) took over and founded the Later Jin. The Later Jin lasted for ten years before the capital was seized by the Qidan 契丹 ethnic group, who established the Later Liao. The Later Liao lasted but one year before Liu Zhiyuan 劉知遠 (895–948, r. 947–948) took over and changed the dynastic title to "Later Han." The Later Han lasted for only three years before Guo Wei 郭威 (904–954, r. 951–954) staged a coup in 951 and established the Later Zhou.

61 Zhao Kuangyin 趙匡胤 (927–976) was chief commander of the Later Zhou, but he seized authority in 960 with the support of rebel troops and founded his Song dynasty (960–1279). He was known as the "Yan Song" emperor. There were eighteen rulers during the Song dynasty, which was divided into the Northern Song (960–1127) and the Southern Song (1127–1279) periods.

昔仲尼，師項橐。古聖賢，尚勤學。
Confucius was student of Xiang Tuo;
The sages learned to improve ever more.[62]

趙中令，讀魯論。彼既仕，學且勤。
Zhao kept up his *Analects* reading;
Though of rank, tireless in his learning.[63]

披蒲編，削竹簡。彼無書，且知勉。
One wove rushes, another pared bamboo;
Though without texts, yet they worked hard too.[64]

頭懸梁，錐刺股。彼不教，自勤苦。
Tie hair to the beam, prick thighs with an awl;
No prodding yet they applied efforts all.[65]

---

62 Confucius is known to have learned from the child prodigy Xiang Tuo 項橐 (dates unknown) (Crump 1970, 140).

63 "Secretariat Director Zhao" refers to Zhao Pu 趙普 (922–992), who assisted Zhao Kuangyin (posthumously known as "Emperor Taizu") in establishing the Song dynasty, as well as his successor Emperor Taizong (r. 976–997). Zhao Pu is known for saying to Taizong, "When assisting Emperor Taizu conquer China, I simply used half of the teachings in the *Analects*" (*Gujin yuanliu zhi lun* 8.113).

64 As impoverished scholars Gong Sunhong 公孫弘 (201–121 BCE) and Lu Wenshu 路溫舒 (fl. c. 80–73 BCE) could not afford to buy texts, so Gong would copy out the *Spring and Autumn Annals* onto bamboo slips that he made, while Lu would borrow texts and copy them out onto booklets made from bulrush leaves that he plaited together. Through such arduous efforts in their studies, both were able to serve as government officials at the courts of Emperor Wu and Emperor Xuan of the Han dynasty, respectively (Loewe 2000, 125–126 and 418–419).

65 As Sun Jing 孫敬 (fl. c. 25–220) and Su Qin 蘇秦 (380–284 BCE) would study late into the night, Sun would tie his plaited hair to the rafters so that the pull on his hair would wake him if he nodded off, and Su would prick himself in the thigh with an awl to prevent himself from falling asleep.

如囊螢，如映雪，家雖貧，學不輟。
By moonlit snow or firefly's light;
Though poor, they studied through the night.[66]

如負薪，如挂角，身雖勞，猶苦卓。
Texts hung from ox horns or carried with wood;
Though toiling away, their success was good.[67]

蘇老泉，二十七，始發憤，讀書籍。
From twenty-seven did Old Su;
Start to read the texts through and through.[68]

彼既老，猶悔遲。爾小生，宜早思。
Advanced in age, he regretted time lost.
Young pupils should ponder this early cost.

若梁灝，八十二，對大廷，魁多士。
Like Liang Hao, who at eighty-two;
Ranked first in court counsel too.[69]

彼既成，衆稱異。爾小生，宜立志。
His success amazed one and all;
Young learners should aspire to soar.

---

66 Before becoming government officials during the Jin dynasty, Che Yin 車胤 (dates unknown) and Sun Kang (dates unknown) could not afford lamps, so Che would utilize a make-shift lamp by catching fireflies in a gauze bag to study in the evenings, and Sun would read by the light reflected from the snow.

67 Zhu Maichen 朱買臣 (d. 115) sold firewood and he would carry his texts along with the firewood to study in his spare moments. Li Mi 李密 (582–619) would study while grazing the cattle by hanging the texts from the horns of the oxen.

68 Having neglected his studies in his youth, the scholar-official Su Xun 蘇洵 (1009–1066) only became motivated to study from the age of twenty-seven.

69 Liang Hao 梁灝 (dates unknown) was aged eighty-two when he achieved first place in the palace examinations during the Northern Song dynasty. It must be noted that the authenticity of this account has been questioned as historical writings record Liang attaining first place at the age of twenty-three (Huang 1992, 153).

瑩八歲，能咏詩。泌七歲，能賦碁。
Ying aged eight wrote poems long or terse;[70]
On chess, Li Mi aged seven, could verse.[71]

彼穎悟，人稱奇，爾幼學，當效之。
Clever and hailed as prodigies bright;
Early learners should aspire to such heights.

蔡文姬，能辨琴。謝道韞，能咏吟。
Cai Wenji knew the sounds of the *qin*;[72]
Xie Daoyun could write in verse and sing.[73]

彼女子，且聰敏，爾男子，當自警。
These girls were astute and so wise;
Boys should take heed, aim for the skies.

唐劉晏，方七歲，舉神童，作正字。
Tang's Liu Yan, just seven years old;
Yet a famed prodigy and a scribe bold.[74]

---

70 Zu Ying 祖瑩 who lived during the Northern Qi period could recite poetry at the age of eight.

71 During an imperial audience, the young Li Mi 李密 impressed Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (712–756) of the Tang dynasty by composing a poem about Chinese chess on the spot.

72 While her father was playing the *guqin* (a zither-like instrument), the second string broke, and Cai Wenji 蔡文姬 (162–239) could identify the broken string from its sound. As her father thought that it was a lucky guess, he deliberately broke another string to test her, but Cai Wenji was again able to identify the broken string correctly.

73 Xie Daoyun 謝道韞 lived during the Jin dynasty, and she impressed her uncle who was then the chancellor Xie An 謝安 (320–385) with her poetic talent by describing falling snowflakes as windblown willow blossoms.

74 Liu Yan 劉晏 (715–780) passed the civil service examinations for prodigious talent during his childhood and was then appointed as an official responsible for the revision and collation of texts by Emperor Xuanzong of the Tang dynasty.

彼雖幼，身已仕。爾幼學，勉而致。
有為者，亦若是。
Though still a child, he held office;
Young learners should follow no less.
Those who work also gain success.

犬守夜，雞司晨。苟不學，曷為人。
The cock heralds the dawn, the dog guards at night;
Without learning, how can one grasp what's right?

蠶吐絲，蜂釀蜜。人不學，不如物。
Silkworms offer silk while bees make honey;
Humans without learning are not worthy.

幼而學，壯而行。上緻君，下澤民。
Learn while young and live it all the years through;
Serve both the ruler and the people true.

揚名聲，顯父母。光於前，裕於後。
Through my fame, esteem father and mother;
And enrich descendants and ancestors.[75]

人遺子，金滿籯。我教子，惟一經。
People bequeath coffers of gold;
I teach them one classic of old.[76]

勤有功，戲無益。戒之哉，宜勉力。
Diligence rewards, while games are in vain;
Heed this wisdom well, efforts will yield gain.

---

75 The *Classic of Family Reverence*: "Establishing our character, practicing the Dao, and cultivating a lasting renown to bring esteem to our father and mother is the culmination of family reverence."

76 These lines originate from an anecdote of a Han dynasty chancellor Wei Xian 韋賢 (148–60 BCE). He mastered three of the five Confucian classics and was later appointed as tutor to the young emperor before becoming the chancellor. One of his sons became a governor and another became the chancellor. His family's achievements gave rise to the common saying: "Better to teach children one classic than bequeathing them coffers of gold" (*Hanshu* 73.618). The account is also alluded to in *Further Words for Children*.

WORDS FOR CHILDREN 小兒語 (MING DYNASTY, 1558)

This primer by scholar Lü Desheng 呂得勝 (d. 1568)[1] was composed in or around the early sixteenth century during Ming China. According to his preface dated 1558, Lü Desheng chose to write his own nursery rhyme after observing that the nursery rhymes for young children at the time were not edifying (Lü n.d., 1).[2] He leveraged the familiar style and format of a nursery rhyme to produce a primer that was both enjoyable and educational. Lü also employed plain, colloquial language that was targeted towards a young audience with developing literacy.[3] The rhyme, rhythm, and simplicity of language facilitated learning and memorization. The Chinese text consists of parts written in four-syllable verse, six-syllable verse, followed by verses of differing lengths.

The eighteenth-century statesman Chen Hongmou included *Words for Children* in his compilation the *Guidelines for Proper Upbringing*

1 Lü Desheng 呂得勝 is also known by his formal name "Jinxi 近溪."

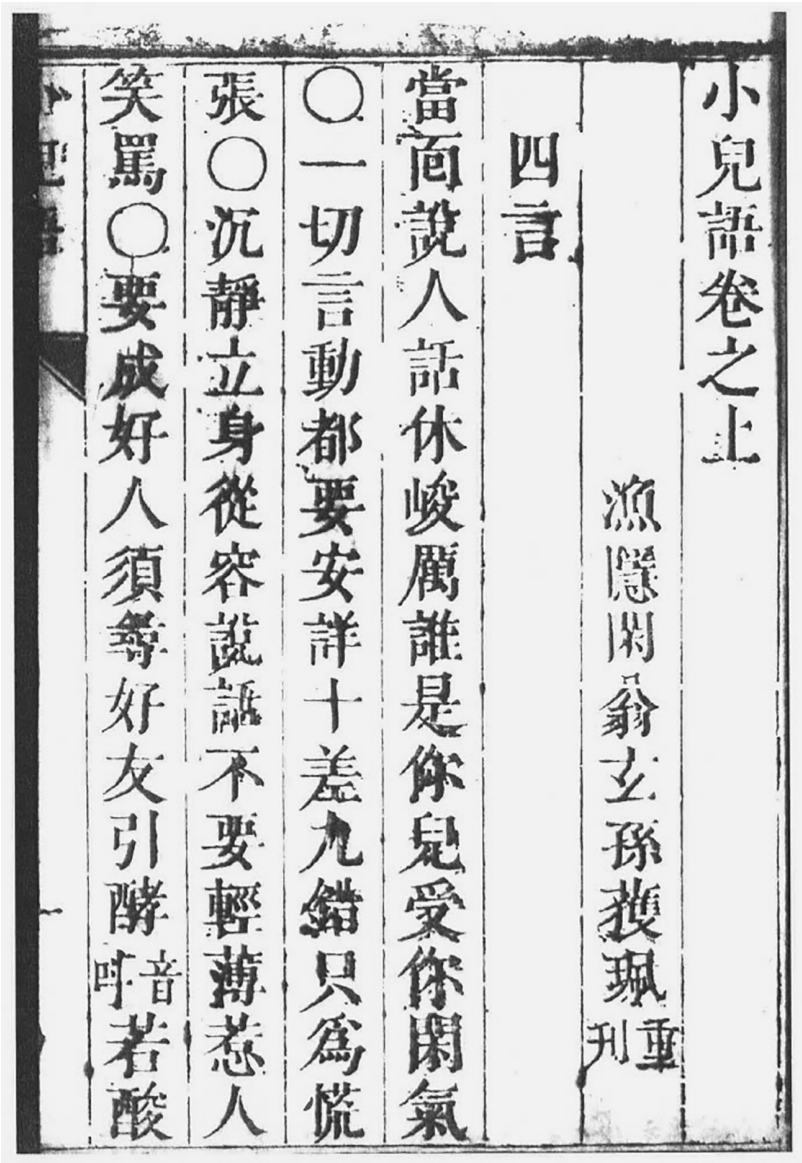
2 Desheng "rejected as dull and meaningless the outdated children's songs from the Liang and [Song] dynasties" (Smith 1983, 146).

3 "[Lü Desheng] boldly declared that because his verses were instructive and principled, he need not be ashamed of using 'shallow' words to win the attention of his young audience" (Smith 1983, 146).

(*Yangzheng yigui* 1.20–22). In his commentary to this primer, Chen wrote that Lü Desheng's work aimed to help learners understand truths of life with a tone that could be variously cautionary, critical, satirical, and jocular (*Yangzheng yigui* 1.20). Although the young learner may not be capable of comprehending the philosophical or social implications of the text at this stage, it would become apparent as they matured. He also believed that appreciation of the primer would not be limited to younger audiences. To scholars who dismissed *Words for Children* as merely a nursery rhyme rather than formal prose, Chen asserts that the primer's value lay in its relevance to the audience. Using the child's level of language naturally facilitates their learning, understanding, and enjoyment. Written in the language of children for children (*yi xiao'er yu yu xiao'er* 以小兒語語小兒)—therein lies its value.

TRANSLATIONS

Wu, Kathy S. X. *Moral Precepts for the Young*. Singapore: China Publishing House, 2014. (This partial English translation does not include the primer's final section of phrases of various lengths).


小兒語卷之上

漁隱閑翁玄孫獲珮重刊

四言

當面說人話休峻厲誰是你兒受你閑氣

〇一切言動都要安詳十差九錯只爲慌

張〇沉靜立身從容說話不要輕薄惹人

笑罵〇要成好人須尋好友引酵音吽若酸

Figure 18. First page of a 1573 edition of *Words for Children* from the *Complete Works of Lü Xinwu* (*Lü Xinwu quanshu* 呂新吾全書). Courtesy of the National Taiwan University Library.

WORDS FOR CHILDREN

Lü Desheng 呂得勝

四言
Four Character Phrases

一切言動，都要安詳。
十差九錯，只為慌張。
What we say and do, stay calm;
Rush leads to mistakes and harm.

沉靜立身，從容說話。
不要輕薄，惹人笑罵。
Calm in conduct and speak with care;
Avoid rash deeds, else tempers flare.

先學耐煩，快休使氣。
性燥心粗，一生不濟。
First learn to be patient, and not have our way;
If hasty and careless, always a bad day.

能有幾句，見人胡講。
洪鐘無聲，滿瓶不響。
We know so little and yet boast so loud;
Large bells are hush, the full bottle no sound.

自家過失，不消遮掩。
遮掩不得，又添一短。
If it is my mistake, do not cover up;
That never works, and another fault adds up.

無心之失，說開罷手。
一差半錯，那箇沒有？
If I slip up, just say so and sigh;
All make mistakes, not just you and I.

寧好認錯，休要說謊。
教人識破，誰肯作養？
Admit our faults, don't tell a lie;
When they find out, who will stand by?

要成好人，須尋好友。
引酵若酸，那得甜酒？
For good character, seek friends with care;[4]
With sour yeast, how can sweet wine appear.

與人講話，看人面色。
意不相投，不須強說。
When talking to someone, observe their face;
If they disagree, do not press your case.[5]

4 *Analects*: "Three kinds of friends are beneficial; three kinds are harmful. Straightforward friends, sincere friends, well-informed friends—these are beneficial. Hypocritical friends, sycophantic friends, glib-talking friends—these are harmful" (*Lunyu* 16.4; Watson 2007, 116).

5 *Analects*: "In one's relations with a gentleman, there are three errors to avoid. To speak of something before the time is right—this is called boorishness. To fail to speak when it is time to do so—this is called secretiveness. To speak without first observing the face of the person one is addressing—this is called blindness" (*Lunyu* 16.6; Watson 2007, 116).

當面證人，惹禍最大。
是與不是，儘他說罷。
Confront someone, stir up misery;
Right or wrong, best to just let them be.

造言起事，誰不怕你？
也要隄防，王法天理。
Those spreading rumors, who does not fear?
Law and principle, we must adhere.

我打人還，自打幾下。
我罵人還，換口自罵。
If I strike at others, they will hit back;
If I scold others, with words they attack.[6]

既做生人，便有生理。
箇箇安閒，誰養活你？
We must earn a living to survive;
If all are idle, who will provide?

世間生藝，要會一件。
有時貧窮，救你患難。
Of the arts and trades,[7] one skill we must gain;
For in times of need, it will ease our pain.

飽食足衣，亂說閒耍。
終日昏昏，不如牛馬。
Well-fed and clothed, yet gossip and play,
Worse than an ox or horse, wasting the days.[8]

---

6 *Mencius*: "Beware! Beware! What comes forth from you will return to you" (*Mengzi* 1B.12; Bloom 2009, 24).

7 *Family Instructions for the Yan Clan*: "To amass wealth by the million does not compare with the mastery of a small skill" (Teng 1968, 55).

8 The text alludes to the criticism in the *Analects* of whiling the days away with idle play, chatter, and dining. For example, "The Master said, Groups gathered together all day, not a word touching what is right, happy in carrying out their petty schemes—don't

擔頭車尾，窮漢營生。
日求升合，休與相爭。
Peddlers and drivers are the working poor;
They earn so little, do not ask for more.

兄弟分家，含糊相讓。
子孫爭家，廝打告狀。
Brothers unclear in splitting the estate;
Their children will dispute and litigate.

強取巧圖，只嫌不彀。
橫來之物，要你承受。
Forceful, scheming, always seeking more;
Unknown troubles for us lie in store.

六言
Six Character Phrases

兒小任情驕慣，大來負了親心。
費盡千辛萬苦，分明養箇讐人。
A spoiled, headstrong child betrays their family's care;
Through toil and sacrifice, a foe is nurtured there.

世間第一好事，莫如救難憐貧。
人若不遭天禍，舍施能費幾文。
The greatest kindness is to help those in dire straits;
Without misfortune, how little effort it takes.

乞兒口乾力盡，終日不得一錢。
敗子羹肉滿桌，喫著只恨不甜。
Thirsty and tired, the beggar child gains not a coin all day,
The prodigal's food overflows, but joy remains at bay.

---

look for much from them!" (*Lunyu* 15.17; Watson 2007, 108); "The Master said, Stuff yourself with food all day, never give your mind anything to do, and you're a problem!" (*Lunyu* 17.22; Watson 2007, 124).

蜂蛾也害飢寒，螻蟻都知疼痛。
誰不怕死求活，休要殺人害命。
Crickets and ants know pain, bees and moths seek food and warmth;
Don't kill or harm, respect dignity of all life forms.

自家認了不是，人再不好說你。
自家倒在地下，人再不好跌你。
Admit our faults, and they will say no more.
No one will kick us once we're on the floor.

氣恼他家富貴，暢快人有灾殃。
一些不由自己，可惜壞了心腸。
Annoyed by their wealth and fame, one finds joy in their pain;
Such things though beyond our control, still drive one's mind insane.

雜言
Phrases of Various Lengths

老子終日浮水。
兒子做了溺鬼。
老子偷瓜盜果。
兒子殺人放火。
The father swims dawn till night;
His son then drowns out of sight.
The father steals fruit and gourd;
His son harms with fire and sword.

休著君子下看。休教婦人鄙賤。
Don't lose the regard of the wise;
Nor the respect from women's eyes.

人生喪家亡身。言語占了八分。
Loss of family and life;
Mostly our words cause such strife.

任你心術奸險。哄瞞不過天眼。
Whatever schemes you may devise;
It won't escape the heavens' eyes.

使他不辨不難。要他心上無言。
Persuading someone is not tough;
Just do not let them bear a grudge.

人言未必皆真。聽言只聽三分。
Their words may not be fully true;
Just listen to a point or two.

休與小人為讐。小人自有對頭。
Petty persons, do not oppose;
They will one day meet their own foes.

幹事休傷天理。防備兒孫辱你。
If we refrain from deeds that stain;
Our descendants will bring no shame.

你看人家婦女。眼裏偏好。人家看你婦女。你心偏惱。
Gazing at another's wife, you do enjoy;
They look at your wife and you feel annoyed.

惡名兒難揭。好字兒難得。
A bad reputation ever stains;
A good name is hard to gain.

大嚼多噎。大走多蹶。
Eat safe with small bites and sips;
Run too fast, and you might slip.

為人若肯學好。羞甚擔柴賣草。
為人若不學好。誇甚尚書閣老。
If we learn for our character;
No shame in tasks mean and humble.
But if we lack moral learning;
How can we gain rank and title?

慌忙到不得濟。安詳走在頭地。
In haste, success keeps out of sight;
With calm, we'll lead and get it right.

話多不如話少。話少不如話好。
Better to speak less than too much;
Better speak well than not enough.

小辱不肯放下。惹起大辱倒罷。
Small insults if not let go;
Great shame and harm will unfold.

天來大功。禁不得一句自稱。
海那深罪。禁不得雙膝下跪。
The best work undone by boastful praise;
The worst fault pardoned with humble ways.

一爭兩醜。一讓兩有。
Quarrels make both look bad;
Giving makes both sides glad.

FURTHER WORDS FOR CHILDREN 續小兒語 (MING DYNASTY, 1593)

As the title suggests, this primer by the scholar-official Lü Kun 呂坤 (1536–1618)[1] is a sequel to *Words for Children* by his father Lü Desheng. After passing the highest level of civil service examinations and becoming a presented scholar (*jinshi* 進士) in 1574, Lü Kun served in various offices, including the role of vice-minister of justice, and was posthumously awarded the title of minster of justice (*Ming Lü Kun Shen yin yu quanji* 1.4; Ching and Fang 1987, 218–219). His tablet was installed in the Confucian temple in 1826, and his writings have been well received among eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Confucian scholars in Japan (Smith 2000, 888).

Lü Kun's 1593 preface to *Further Words for Children* commends his father for "writing [nursery rhymes] as though he were speaking, with the result that everyone who recited them was moved to clap and dance" (Smith 1983, 146). Compared to the flair of *Words for Children*, he was concerned that readers would find his sequel stilted and bookish (Smith 1983, 147). Nonetheless, Lü Kun hoped that the didactic nature of his sequel would benefit young learners over time in the same spirit as the

1 Lü Kun 呂坤 is also known by his formal name "Xinwu 新吾."

original (*Yangzheng yigui* 1.22). *Further Words for Children* is also found in the *Guidelines for Proper Upbringing* anthology (*Yangzheng yigui* 1.22–27). Indeed, Chen Hongmou likens *Words for Children* and *Further Words for Children* to the sounds of nature and humanity, respectively: "The former relies on natural spontaneity, the latter relies on human deliberation with further didactic intention" (*Yangzheng yigui*, 1.22). Like *Words for Children*, *Further Words for Children* opens with the parts in four-syllable verse and six-syllable verse, followed by parts of various lengths.

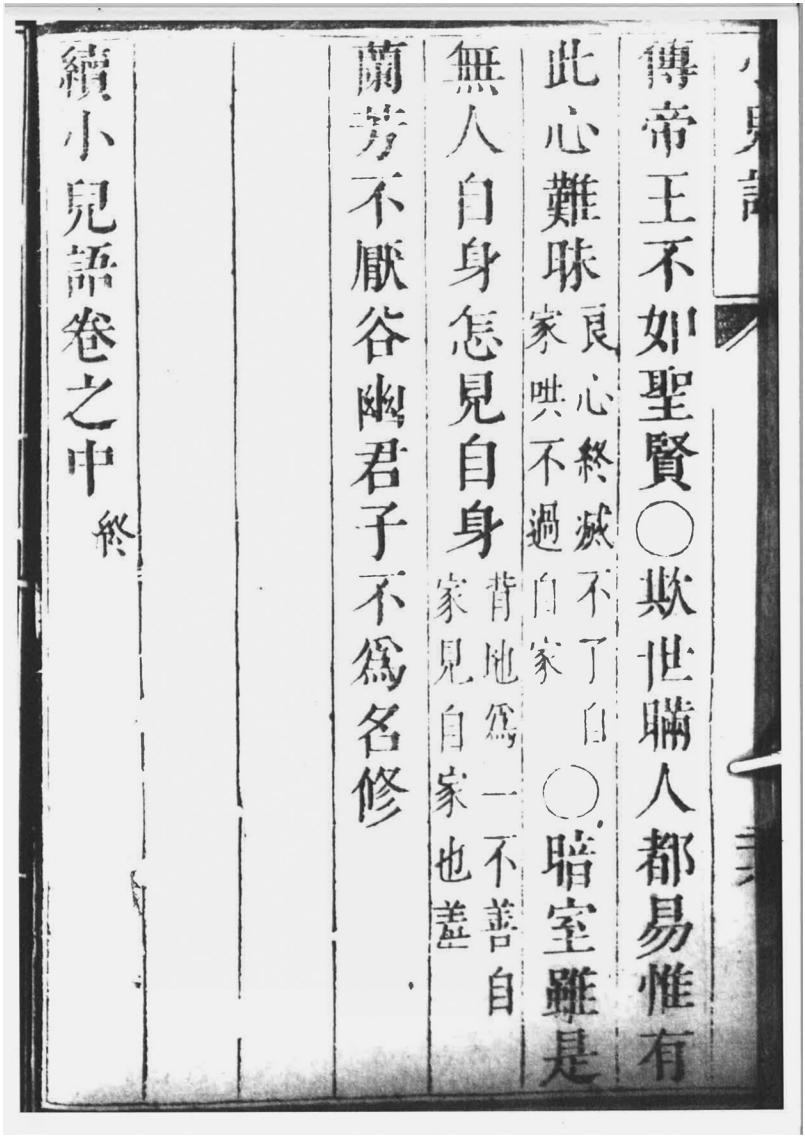


Figure 19. A page from a 1573 edition of the *Further Words for Children* from the *Complete Works of Lü Xinwu* (*Lü Xinwu quanshu* 呂新吾全書). Courtesy of the National Taiwan University Library.

FURTHER WORDS FOR CHILDREN

Lü Kun 呂坤

四言
Four Character Phrases

心要慈悲。事要方便。殘忍刻薄。惹人恨怨。
Compassion in our mind and ease in all we do;
Harshness and cruelty drive hearts away from you.

手下無能。從容調理。他若有才。不服事你。
Train one's servants with care and grace;
Skilled hands would find another place.

遇事逢人。豁綽舒展。要看男兒。須先看膽。
With matters and people, be open and kind;
A son's worth is seen in his mettle and mind.

休將實用。費在無功。蝙蝠翅兒。一般有風。
Don't waste what's useful on things that are vain;
Even the cheapest fan cools just the same.

一不積財。二不結怨。睡也安然。走也方便。
Don't hoard nor incur hate;
Live with ease and sleep great.

要知親恩。看你兒郎。要求子順。先孝爺孃。
Care for kids to know the parents' love true;
Honor your parents and your kids will too.

別人情性。與我一般。時時體悉。件件從寬。
Others have feelings just like my own;
Do forgive, let empathy be shown.

都見面前，誰知腦後。笑著不覺，說著不受。
Actions are seen, but motives are not;
A smile may mislead, words can be fraught.

人誇偏喜，人勸偏惱。你短你長，你心自曉。
Praise brings joy, advice brings woe;
Your strengths and faults you well know.

卑幼不才，瞞避尊長。外人笑罵，父母誇獎。
The wayward youth hides flaws from the wise;
Praised by their parents, others deride.

僕隸縱橫，誰向你說。惡名你受，暗利他得。
Your servants do wrong but you're unaware;
You face disgrace while they gain without care.

從小做人，休壞一點。覆水難收，悔恨已晚。
Do avoid misdeeds from young;
Spilled milk cannot be undone.

貪財之人。至死不止。不義得來。付與敗子。
Those who want wealth will crave till the end;
Ill-gotten gains left to those who spend.[2]

2 *Highest Learning*: "Ill-gotten goods go out when ill-gotten goods come in" (Johnston and Ping 2012, 97).

威震四海，勇冠三軍。只沒本事，降伏自心。
Might and courage more than any general;
Just cannot master the mind's inner battle.

矮人場笑，下士塗說。學者識見，要從心得。
Short folks laugh with the crowd,[3] the base scholar parrots;[4]
The true scholar's learning realized through efforts.

讀聖賢書，字字體驗。口耳之學，夢中喫飯。
Learn the teachings of sages, savor every word;[5]
Like food in a dream is repeating what's heard.[6]

男兒事業，經綸天下。識見要高，規模要大。
A man's work should set the world right;[7]
With grand scale and his vision high.

待人要豐，自奉要約。責己要厚，責人要薄。
Frugal with self but with others generous;
Demand more of oneself and less of others.

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3 *Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類 (Classified sayings of Master Zhu): "A person of short stature may be unable to observe a performance [because of their view being blocked by taller audience members] and merely laughs with the crowd" (*Zhuzi yulei* 140.808).

4 *Analects*: "The Master said, Hear it along the road and expound it in the byways—this is to throw virtue away" (*Lunyu* 17.14; Watson 2007, 122).

5 *Classified Sayings of Master Zhu*: "The study of texts must involve personally putting them into practice as merely regarding their words does not help one improve" (*Zhuzi yulei* 111.164).

6 *Master Xun*: "The learning of the petty person enters through his ears and passes out his mouth. From mouth to ears is only four inches—how could it be enough to improve a whole body much larger than that?" (*Xunzi* 1.12; Hutton 2014, 5).

7 The text "經綸天下" literally translates as "weave the warp and threads of ordering all under heaven" and alludes to Hexagram 3 "Zhun (*zhun* 屯)" of the *Changes*: "the noble man weaves the fabric of government" (*Zhouyi* 1.40; Lynn 1994, 153).

一飯為恩，千金為讐。薄極成喜，愛重成愁。
Kindness of one meal,[8] enmity from much gold;
A little help brings joy, too much makes hearts cold.

鼷鼠殺象，蜈蚣殺龍。蟻穴破隄，螻孔崩城。
Mouse and centipede kill elephants and dragons;
An ant breaks the dyke and crickets breach the bastions.

意念深沉，言辭安定。艱大獨當，聲色不動。
With deep thought and calm speech;[9]
Pass all tests within reach.

相彼兒曹，乍悲乍喜。小事張皇，驚動隣里。
Observe the caprices of the child;
Trivial things will drive them wild.

分卑氣高，能薄欲大。中淺外浮，十人九敗。
Among those bound to fail are the careless;
The arrogant and overambitious.

自家有過，人說要聽。當局者迷，旁觀者醒。
When in the wrong, listen to others;
Matters are clearer to bystanders.

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8 The "Kindness of one meal" alludes to gratitude of the early Han dynasty chancellor and commandant Han Xin 韓信 (d. 196 BCE) for the meal from the washerwoman in his hour of need. The historical account is recorded in the *Records of the Historian*: "[Once] Han [Xin] fished at the foot of the city wall where several old women were washing coarse silk [in the river]. There was an old woman who saw [Han] [Xin] was hungry and she fed [Xin]....[Han] Hsin was pleased and said to the old washwoman, 'I shall definitely have [something] to generously repay you, Old Mother'" (*Shiji* 92.596; Wang 2008, 70).

9 The text literally translates as "calm composure and definite speech" and alludes to the "Summary of Rituals I" (*Quli shang* 曲禮上) chapter in the *Records on Ritual*: "Always and in everything let there be reverence; with the deportment grave as when one is thinking (deeply), and with speech composed and definite" (*Liji* 1.7–8; Legge 1968, 61–62).

丈夫一生，廉耻為重。切莫求人，死生有命。
The noble keep integrity and a sense of shame;
As life and death are fated, seek no other to blame.[10]

要甜先苦，要逸先勞。須屈得下，纔跳得高。
Hardship then happiness, labor then leisure;
To leap to tall heights, crouch low without measure.

白日所為，夜來省己。是惡當驚，是善當喜。
Reflect each night on the day that's passed;[11]
Find joy in merits, at faults aghast.

人譽我謙，又增一美。自誇自敗，還增一毀。
Humble when praised will add another grace;
Boasting leads to failure and worsens the case.

害與利隨，禍與福倚。只箇平常，安穩到底。
Misfortune follows fortune, loss comes with gain;
Peace and stability, composure maintains.[12]

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10 *Analects*: "The way I've heard it, life and death are a matter of fate; wealth and eminence rest with Heaven" (*Lunyu* 12.5; Watson 2007, 81).

11 Evening reflection alludes to the *Mencius* on the restorative effect of the night for preserving the goodness of one's mind: "if this fettering occurs repeatedly, the effect of the night *qi* will no longer be enough to allow one to preserve his mind, and he will be at scant remove from the animals" (*Mengzi* 6A.8; Bloom 2009, 126).

12 *Laozi*: "Misfortune, that is what fortune relies on. Fortune, that is what misfortune hides in" (Chen 2020, 324). The idea of misfortune and good fortune following one another is exemplified by the account of the old man at the frontier losing his horse in the *Master of Huainan*: "At the near Frontier, there was a [family of] skilled diviners whose horse suddenly became lost out among the Hu [people]. Everyone consoled them. The father said, 'This will quickly turn to good fortune!' After several months, the horse returned with a fine Hu steed. Everyone congratulated them. The father said, 'This will quickly turn to calamity!' The household was [now] replete with good horses; the son loved to ride, [but] he fell and broke his leg. Everyone consoled them. The father said, 'This will quickly turn to good fortune!' After one year, the Hu people entered the frontier in force; the able and strong all stretched their bowstrings and fought. Among the people of the near frontier, nine out of ten died.

怒多橫語，喜多狂言。一時褊急，過後羞慙。
In fury one rages, while in joy one raves;
Moments of remiss bring regret and shame.

人生在世，守身實難。一味小心，方得百年。
Hard to uphold character in life;[13]
Caution ensures success without strife.

慕貴耻貧，志趣落羣。驚奇駭異，見識不濟。
Admiring power, scorning poor, just like the others;
Thrilled by the odd and strange, a limited mind one suffers.

心不顧身，口不顧腹。人生實難，何苦縱欲。
Careless craving and excessive eating;
Desires make for a life of suffering.

纔說聰明，便有障蔽。不著學識，到底不濟。
Claiming to be clever, one will face distress;
Without knowledge, there is no chance of success.

都要便宜，我得人不。虧人是禍，虧己是福。
All seek to gain advantage at another's cost;
Better to be cheated than to cause others loss.

怪人休深，望人休過。省你閒煩，免你暗禍。
Be less critical, expect less from others;
Saves hassle and unexpected disaster.

It was only because of lameness that father and son protected each other. Thus, good fortune becoming calamity, calamity becoming good fortune; their transformations are limitless, so profound they cannot be fathomed" (*Huainanzi* 18.1256–1258; Major et al. 2010, 728–729).

13 The text "守身實難" literally translates as "vigilance over one's person is difficult indeed" and alludes to the *Mencius*: "Of all kinds of vigilance, which is the greatest? It is vigilance over one's own person" (*Mengzi* 4A.19; Bloom 2009, 82–83).

正人君子，邪人不喜。你又惡他，他肯饒你？
The upright and noble, dishonest people will despise;
Resent them, and you'll find no pardon applies.

好衣肥馬，喜氣揚揚。醉生夢死，誰家兒郎。
Full of pride with nice dress and fine steeds;
A life of leisure, whose child indeed.

今日用度，前日積下。今日用盡，來日乞化。
Today's spending comes from yesterday's store;
Spend it all today, you will end up poor.

無可奈何，須得安命。怨歎燥急，又增一病。
With no way out, one must accept fate;
Blame and impatience further disgrace.

讐無大小，只怕傷心。恩若救急，一芥千金。
Hatred great or small, can hurt the mind;
When in need, small acts are beyond price.

坐井觀天。面墻定路。遠大事業。休與共做。
A frog in the well, directors facing a wall;[14]
Never work with them on any matter at all.

冷眼觀人。冷耳聽語。冷情當感。冷心思理。
Objectively observe both words and deeds;
Calmly reflect and consider their needs.

理可理度。事有事體。只要留心。切莫任己。
Principles have reasons, matters have objectives;
Be careful not to use only one's perspective.

14 The text may allude to Confucius' advice to his son Boyu on the airs of the states of Zhou and Shao: "Anyone who doesn't know the 'Zhounan' and 'Shaonan' [airs] is like a person who stands with a wall in front of him" (*Lunyu* 17.10; Watson 2007, 122).

六言
Six Character Phrases

脩寺將佛打點，燒錢買免神明。災來鬼也難躲，為惡天自不容。
Repair temples and burn joss paper to affect spirits;
Even spirits meet disaster, like all without merits.

貧時悵望糟糠，富日驕嫌甘旨。天心難可人心，那箇知足餓死。
Faulting fine food when rich, dreaming of dregs when in need;
Who starves if content, heaven cannot satisfy greed.[15]

苦甜下咽不覺，是非出口難收。可憐八尺身命，死生一任舌頭。
Flavors swallowed have no taste, rumors told can't be unsaid;
What a shame that one's tongue can cause life to hang by a thread.

因循惰慢之人，偏會引說天命。一年不務農桑，一年忍饑受凍。
Lazy and procrastinating, they leave to heaven their fate;
A year without farming and silkworms, cold and hunger await.[16]

天公不要房住，神道不少衣穿。強似将佛塑畫，不如救些貧難。
The heavenly emperor needs no house, nor do gods need clothing;
Instead of crafting buddha statues, better aid those in wanting.

世上三不過意，王法天理人情。這箇全然不顧，此身到處難容。
Life is bound by law, causality, human relations;
Ignore the above and life is tough in all locations.

15 *Laozi*: "knowing satisfaction one will not suffer humiliation or disgrace, knowing when it is appropriate and acceptable to stop, then danger will not follow, and this way can be maintained for a long time" (Chen 2020, 269).

16 The text alludes to sericulture as mentioned in the *Mencius*: "Let mulberry trees be planted around households of five *mu*, and people of fifty will be able to be clothed in silk" (*Mengzi* 1A.3; Bloom 2009, 3).

責人絲髮皆非，辨己分豪都是。盜蹠千古元兇，盜蹠何曾覺自。
Defend oneself as all right, blame others for the slightest error;
The classic villain Zhi,[17] ever did he see himself a terror?

柳巷風流地獄，花奴胭粉刀山。喪了身家行止，落人眼下相看。
Brothels are misery for women and dissolute men;
Ruining oneself, families are never the same again.

只管你家門戶。休說別個女妻。第一傷天害理。好講閨門是非。
Just mind your family matters, don't talk of their wife;
Gossip about someone's marriage brings nothing but strife.

人侮不要埋怨，人羞不要數說。人極不要跟尋，人愁不要喜悅。
Don't hold grudges if insulted, say no more to those in shame;
Don't force the desperate, nor rejoice before those in pain.

大凡做一件事，就要當一件事。若還苟且粗踈，定不成一件事。
In working on a matter, treat it with care;
If careless or reckless, success won't be there.

少年志肆心狂，長者言之偏惱。你到長者之時，一生悔恨不了。
The wild and reckless youth scorn the elder's advice;
With age comes much regret, and they pay the price.

改節莫云舊善，自新休問昔狂。貞婦白頭失守，不如老妓從良。
Ignore the good of the regressed and faults of the reformed;
Better to improve with age than be worse as time transforms.

17 The text refers to the notorious robber Zhi 跖 (fl. seventeenth century BCE), who was feared across the Central States. *Master Zhuang*: "Robber Zhi, with a band of nine thousand followers, rampaged back and forth across the empire, assaulting and terrorizing the feudal lords, tunneling into houses, prying open doors, herding off men's horses and cattle, seizing their wives and daughters….The ten thousand people all lived in dread of him" (*Zhuangzi* 990; Watson 2013, 252).

自家痛痒偏知，別箇辛酸那覺。體人須要體悉，責人慎勿責苛。
Aware of one's troubles, who knows others have it rough;
Fully sense with empathy, blame others not too tough.

快意從來沒好，拂心不是命窮。安樂人人破敗，憂勤箇箇亨通。
Good times never help, hardship is not about having poor fate;
All decline in times of ease,[18] but with care and work, become great.

兒好何須父業，兒若不肖空積。不知教子一經，只要黃金滿室。
Good sons need no estate, prodigals waste it all;
Not teaching them classics,[19] but storing gold in halls.

君子名利兩得，小人名利兩失。試看往古來今，惟有好人便益。
The noble have fame and profit that the petty never attain;
Observe the past and present, only the good will really gain.

厚時說盡知心，隄防薄後發洩。惱時說盡傷心，再好有甚顏色。
Share secrets with friends, yet as foes they may tell;
Trade insults when angry, can the rift mend well?

事到延挨怕動，臨時却恁慌忙。除却差錯後悔，還落前件牽腸。
Stalled with doubt at the start, only to rush at the end;
Besides mistakes and regret, many worries contend.

往日真知可惜，來日依舊因循。若肯當年一苦，無邊受用從今。
Regret the past, yet keeping just the same;
If one had worked hard then, rewards now to gain.

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18 Mencius: "Thus, in the absence of law-abiding families and worthy counselors within and hostile states and external challenges without, a state will often perish. From this we know that we thrive from experiencing sorrow and calamity, and perish from comfort and joy" (*Mengzi* 6B.15; Bloom 2009, 143).

19 *History of the Former Han*: "Better to teach children one classic than bequeathing them coffers of gold" (*Hanshu* 73.618). The final sentence in the *Three Character Classic* alludes to the same quote.

東家不信陰陽，西家專敬風水。禍福彼此一般，費了錢財不悔。
Some believe in *yin yang*, others by *feng shui* swear;
Though they fare the same, it is a costly affair.

德行立身之本，才識處世所先。孟浪癡呆自是，空生人代百年。
Virtue is key in conduct, in matters—skills and brains;
Rash, foolish, and willful—such a life is lived in vain.

謙卑何曾致禍，忍默沒箇招災。厚積深藏遠器，輕發小逞凡才。
Humility and forbearance spare the woes;
The average will brag, lasting talent quietly grows.

儉用亦能彀用，要足何時是足？可憐惹禍傷身，都是經營長物。
Frugal ways can satisfy, when is enough for content?
A pity that misfortune comes to those who seek excess.

未來難以預定，算彀到頭不彀。每事常餘二分，那有悔的時候？
Nothing goes to plan, hard to predict the future;
No regrets if one always leaves room for error.

火正灼時都來，火一滅時都去。炎涼自是通情，我不闕心去住。
All gather when the flames burn, and leave when the fire ends;
Though this seems the way it goes, I'm not swayed by trends.

何用終年講學，善惡箇箇分明。穩坐高談萬里，不如蹉踔一程。
Need one teach all year if right and wrong are clear;
Stumbling in walk beats sitting for words to hear.

萬古此身難再，百年展眼光陰。縱不同流天地，也休涴了乾坤。
A hundred years pass in a blink and life won't come again;
Though you may not be the best, at least don't leave a stain.

世上第一伶俐，莫如忍讓爲高。進屨結襪胯下，古今真正人豪。
Forbearance and yielding shows the greatest mind of all;
Put on shoes, tie up socks, and crawl—are the hero's call.[20]

學者三般要緊。一要降伏私欲。二要調馴氣質。三要跳脫習俗。
The priorities of learners to truly aspire;
Refine habits and manners, subdue selfish desire.

百尺竿頭進步。鑽天巧智多才。饒你站得脚穩。終然也要下来。
Rising to the highest ranks with talents second to none;
Even if you can stand firm, you will in time be undone.[21]

莫防外面刀鎗。只怕隨身兵刃。七尺盖世男兒。自殺只消三寸。
Of all weapons, just beware the portable blade;
By his words, the mighty man may be slayed.

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20 A literal translation would refer to "those who put on the shoe, tied up the socks, and crawled below." The *Records of the Historian* note that the acclaimed strategist Zhang Liang 張良 (d. 185) once retrieved a shoe for an old man and helped him put it on (*Shiji* 55.296–297; Yang and Yang 1979, 238–239; Loewe 2000, 683–686). The text also records that the Superintendent of Trials Zhang Shizhi 張釋之 (fl. c. 177) once helped an elderly master tie his socks (*Shiji* 102.672; Loewe 2000, 690–691; van Ess 2008, 363–364). Han Xin courted a reputation for cowardice by being willing to crawl between his attacker's legs in public and putting up with insults. *Records of the Historian*: "There was a young man among the butchers in Huai-yin who insulted [Han Xin] by saying, "Although you are tall and large and like to wear knives and swords, you are cowardly inside." He humiliated him in public by saying, 'If you are truly willing to die, stab me; if you are not willing to die, crawl between my legs.' At this [Han Xin] looked at him closely, bent down, and crawled through his legs. Everyone in the market laughed at Han [Xin] and considered him a coward" (*Shiji* 92.596; Loewe 2000, 147; Wang 2008, 70).

21 *Laozi*: "Holding tight and being replete are not as good as knowing when to stop. By flaunting one's talents, one will not remain on top of things for very long" (Chen 2020, 89).

雜言
Assorted Phrases

創業就創乾淨。休替子孫留病。
Start your ventures in the right way;
Leave no troubles for those who stay.

童生進學喜不了。尚書不陞終日惱。
Young students in class feel no cheer;
Unpromoted clerks fret all year.

若要德業成。先學受窮困。若要無煩惱。惟有知足好。
To grow in virtue, learn strength when poor;
To live with ease, do not ask for more.

若要度量長。先學受冤枉。若要度量寬。先學受懊煩。
To grow forbearance, learn to bear injustice with grace;
To grow generosity, endure remorse and hate.

十日無菽粟，身亡。十年無金珠，何傷。
Ten days with no beans and grain, life is gone;
Ten years with no gold and pearls, life goes on.

事只五分，無悔。味只五分，偏美。
Half-done work, no regret in sight;
Simple charm may be pure delight.

老來疾痛，都是壯時落的。衰後冤孽。都是盛時作的。
Pains and sickness in old age come from young days;
All later troubles stem from earlier ways.

見人忍默偏欺。忍默不是癡的。
One may quietly endure deceit;
Silence does not make one dumb or weak.

鳥獸無雜病。窮漢沒奇症。
Birds and beasts suffer no illness;
The poor have no rare sickness.

聞惡不可就惡。恐替別人洩怒。
Hearing misdeeds, don't join in;
Else you might be the victim.

休說前人長短。自家背後有眼。
Don't speak of a predecessor's woes;
Behind one's back, others will disclose.

濕時綑就，斷了約兒不散。小時教成，歿了父兄不變。
Bound when damp, things stay tight even when the ties break down;
Taught when young, hearts stay firm though elders are not around.

說好話。存好心。行好事。近好人。
Speak kind words, keep one's heart sincere;
Do good deeds and hold good folks near.

算計二著現在。纔得頭著不敗。
With a backup plan in mind;
Success will come in one try.

君子口裏沒亂道。不是人倫是世教。
君子腳跟沒亂行。不是規矩是準繩。
君子胸中所常體。不是人情是天理。
A noble person's words are not senseless, they share truths to guide;
A noble person's steps don't stray, keeping standards that abide;
A noble person's heart holds wisdom, for light that ever shines.

好面上灸個疤兒。一生帶破。白衣上點些墨兒。一生帶涴。
Scars on the face are marks that remain;
Ink on white clothes is a lasting stain.

恩怕先益後損。威怕先鬆後緊。
From much to less, kindness will fade;
From slack to strict, power degrades.

饑可使耐。飽可使再。
熱勿使汗。冷勿使顫。
When hungry don't bear pangs, when full don't overeat;
Don't shiver in the cold, and don't sweat in the heat.

未饑先飯。未迫先便。
久立先養足。久夜先養目。
Eat before you're hungry, rest before the deadline;
Mind your feet when long standing, and your eyes at night.

清心寡慾。不服四物。省事休嗔。不服四君。
A calm mind and few wants avoids the Four-Ingredient mix;
Less hassle and cease anger avoids the Four-Gentlemen fix.

酒少飯淡。二陳沒幹。慎寒謹風。續命無功。
Avoid Double-Chen herbs with less alcohol and food plain;
Avoid Life-Extension herbs keeping cold and wind at bay.

線流衝倒泰山。休為惡事開端。
A creek wears down Mount Tai by parts;
Do no wrong, stop it from the start.

才多累了己身。地多好了別人。
Much talent tires oneself;
More land aids someone else.

白首貪得不了。一身能用多少。
Even with age, greed won't cease;
How much does one lifetime need.

趁心休要歡喜。災殃就在這裏。
Do not rejoice when things work out;
Disaster might be close about.

未須立法。先看結煞。
When setting rules, do take care;
Think first if they will work fair.

休與衆人結讐。休作公論對頭。
With the crowds do not offend;
With the public don't contend.

做第一等人。幹第一等事。說第一等話。抱第一等識。
Be the best person, do the best things;
Speak the best words, hold the best learning.

欺世瞞人都易。惟有此心難昧。
暗室雖是無人。自身怎見自身。
One fools others, but the conscience knows;
How do I face myself when alone.

蘭芳不厭谷幽。君子不為名修。
In remote valleys orchids bloom;
For fame, the noble do not move.[22]

觸龍耽怕。騎虎難下。
Touching dragon scales makes one feels fright;
Riding the tiger, hard to alight.

焚結碎環。這箇不難。解環破結。畢竟有說。
Easy to burn the rope or break the chain;
To untie and free them does need more strain.

22 As flowers that bloom with fine fragrance even in places far away from human notice and appreciation, orchids were a metaphor for the person of noble character who would cultivate themselves regardless of recognition from others.

無忽久安。無憚初難。
When long at ease, be not careless;
Hard to begin, be not nervous.

處世怕有進氣。為人怕有退氣。
In working with others, don't be too keen;
In conducting oneself, don't be too mean.

乘時如矢。待時如死。
When the chance comes, swift as an arrow's flight;
When biding the time, still as deathly night.

毋賤賤。毋老老。毋貧貧。毋小小。
Don't look down on the humble or judge the old;
Don't scorn the young or poor for lacking gold.

同困相憂。同亨相讐。
In tough times, we bond for survival;
Dividing the spoils makes us rivals.

欲心要淡。道心要艷。
Let selfish desires decline;
Let selfless hearts ever shine.

上看千仞。不如下看一寸。前看百里。不如後看一。
Better check the ground below than admire heights;
Better view steps taken than gaze at far sights.

將溢未溢。莫添一滴。將折未折。莫添一搦。
Don't add another drop when close to overflow;
When it's set to snap, don't add another blow.

無束燥薪。無激憤人。
Dry wood do not bundle and bind;
Do not incite the angry mind.

辯者不停。訥者若聾。辯者面赤。訥者屏息。
The glib keeps on talking, the tongue-tied seem deaf;
The glib appears flushed, the tongue-tied holds their breath.

辯者纔住。訥者一句。辯者自慚。訥者自謙。
The tongue-tied barely speak, while the glib never rest;
The glib feel ashamed, the tongue-tied are modest.

積威不論從違。積愛不論是非。
To grow influence, ignore if they go along;
To foster affection, don't inspect right or wrong.

一子之母餘衣。三子之母忍飢。
While a mother of one has clothes to spare;
The mother of three, hunger she must bear.

世情休說透了。世事休說彀了。
Don't claim to have seen the whole world through;
Don't claim to have lived and done it too.

眄望也不來。空勞眄望懷。愁懼也須去。多了一愁懼。
Expecting what cannot be tires in vain;
Stress over what to do adds to the pain.

貪喫那一杯。把百杯都嘔了。舍不得一金。把千金都丟了。
Greed for a drink, a hundred more one vomits;
Sparing one coin can lead to thousands in losses.

怪人休怪老了。愛人休愛惱了。
Be critical, but don't blame through and through;
Be sincere in love, but don't overdo.

侵晨好飯。算不得午後飽。平日恩多。抵不得臨時少。
A good meal in the morning won't last past the noon;
Much daily kindness not enough when needs are soon.

禍到休愁。也要會救。福來休喜。也要會受。
When misfortune strikes, don't be down—find ways to see it through;
When fortune smiles, don't rejoice but remain steadfast and true.

不怕驟。只怕輳。不怕一。只怕積。
Don't fear the unexpected, watch out when tasks collide;
Don't fret one hardship, worry when troubles coincide.

聲休要太高。只是人聽的便了。事休要做盡。只是人當的便好。
Don't speak too loud, just enough to be heard;
Don't go all out, always have due measure.

要喫虧的是乖。占便宜的是獃。
Willing to lose shows one to be wise;
Taking advantage reveals short sight.

雨後傘，不須支。怨後恩，不須施。
No need for an umbrella after rain;
No need to be kind after causing pain.

人欺不是辱。人怕不是福。
To be fooled is not an insult;
To be feared is a poor result.

剛欲殺身不顧。柔欲殺身不悟。
Life ends with an ambitious mind;
Life is over when pleasures blind.

當遲就要寧耐。當速就要慷慨。
When it is time to slow, let patience grow;
When at speed, let generosity show.

回顧莫辭頻。前人怕後人。
Do reflect on the past with more care;
For the sake of those remaining here.

歇事難奮。玩民難振。
Stalled things are hard to revive;
Those carefree are hard to drive.

窮易過。富難享。寧受疼。莫受癢。
Poverty can be endured but wealth is hard to keep;
Rather suffer pain at one time than an itch that creeps.

一向單衫耐得凍。乍脫綿襖凍成病。
Wearing a single shirt at all times, one braves the cold at will;
Shedding their quilted coat for a moment, they can't take the chill.

無醫枯骨。無澆朽木。
Don't mend bones that are long dried;
Don't water trees that have died.

EXTENDED WISE SAYINGS 增廣賢文 (MING DYNASTY, C. 1600)

The *Extended Wise Sayings* is a supplemented version of the *Ancient Wise Sayings* (*Xi shi xianwen* 昔時賢文)—an eclectic compilation of maxims and proverbs of unknown authorship dated to the early seventeenth century.[1] The full title of the primer is *Extended Ancient Wise Sayings*, more often abbreviated as the "Extended Wise Sayings," which is the translated title here. Both the author of the *Extended Wise Sayings* and its date of publication are unknown. Historically regarded as a core text of elementary learning (Brokaw 2005, 191), its contents comprise classical and vernacular sayings designed to expand the reader's cultural knowledge and broaden their outlook on life. Comprising less than 4,000 Chinese characters, the *Extended Wise Sayings* was also known for being a resource for learning speech and conversation—"Read the *Extended Wise Sayings* to learn how to speak" (*du Zengguang hui shuo hua* 讀增廣會說話) was a common saying (Zhang and Mu 1989, 72). Expressed in colloquial language with rhyming couplets of various lengths and tones, the

1 The earliest reference to the *Extended Wise Sayings* appears in the play *Peony Pavilion* (*Mudan ting* 牡丹亭) by Tang Xianzu 湯顯祖 (1550–1616) (Jiang 2017, 94).

sayings are drawn from an extensive corpus of textual traditions and genres. There are references and allusions to writings associated with Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist schools of thought and historical and literary works, as well as fiction, dramas, and folk wisdom. Such a compilation arguably reflects the syncretic nature of popular beliefs at the time (Jiang 2017, 94). As such, the *Extended Wise Sayings* enabled students to learn the appropriate use of set phrases and proverbs as well as the principles for moral character and responsible conduct, while becoming familiar with rhyme, rhythm, and parallelism for future composition. This primer appealed to a broad readership, was widely circulated among the young and old, and has been revised several times through to the late Qing dynasty (Ma and Li 2010, 2–3).

TRANSLATIONS

To date, other translations of the *Extended Wise Sayings* appear to cover only part of the Zhonghua Book Company edition, and are listed below:

English

Bridgman, J. G. "Apothems and Proverbs." In *Confucius and the Chinese Classics or Readings in Chinese Literature*, edited by A. W. Loomis, 351–355. San Francisco: A. Roman & Company, 1867.[2]

Chen Wangheng and Li Xiaoxiang. *Wisdom from Chinese Proverbs*. Singapore: Asiapac Books Pte Ltd., 2006.

Davies, John Francis. *Chinese Moral Maxims*. London: John Murray, 1823.

Foster, Arnold. *Collection of Chinese Proverbs*. Hankow: Arthington Press, 1916.

Wu, Kathy S. X. *Chinese Art of Living*. Singapore: China Publishing House, 2014.

2 Selected proverbs from the *Notitia Linguae Sinicae* (Knowledge of the Chinese language) are translated into English by Bridgman.

French

Perny, Paul. *Proverbes Chinois Recueillis et Mis en Ordre* (Chinese proverbs collected and arranged). Paris: Firmin Didot Frère, Fils et Cie, 1869.[3]

Latin

Prémare, Joseph-Henri de. *Notitia Linguae Sinicae* (Knowledge of the Chinese language). Malacca: Collegii Anglo-Sinici, 1831.[4]

3 Scholars have found that the *Proverbes Chinois Recueillis et Mis en Ordre* (Chinese proverbs collected and arranged) includes translation of some proverbs in the *Extended Wise Sayings* (Sang and Nardone 2024, 1421).

4 It has been noted that some proverbs in the *Extended Wise Sayings* have been translated in this text (Sang and Nardone 2024).



Figure 20. Title page of the *Ancient Wise Sayings* (*Xi shi xianwen* 昔時賢文), the earlier form of the *Extended Wise Sayings*, printed 1936. Courtesy of the National Taiwan University Library.



Figure 21. Title page of the *Extended Wise Sayings* dated 1890. Courtesy of the National Taiwan University Library.

EXTENDED WISE SAYINGS

Unknown Author

昔時賢文，誨汝諄諄。集韻增廣，多見多聞。
The ancient sayings of the wise give teaching;
Extended and arranged with rhyme for learning.

觀今宜鑑古，無古不成今。
Without yesterday there is no today;
Learn from the past to know the present way.[5]

知己知彼，將心比心。
Know myself to know you;[6]
Put myself in your shoes.[7]

---

5 *Zhenguan zheng yao* 貞觀政要 (Essentials of governance): "With the past as a mirror We can foretell the rise and fall of events" (De Weerdt 2020, 40).

6 *Master Sun's Art of War* (*Sunzi bingfa* 孫子兵法) records: "He who knows the enemy and himself will never in a hundred battles be at risk" (Ames 1993, 80).

7 The text literally translates as "consider and compare one heart to another" and is described as a common saying in the *Classified Sayings of Master Zhu* (*Zhuzi yulei* 700.313).

酒逢知己飲，詩向會人吟。
Drink with those who know your mind;
Recite verses to the refined.[8]

相識滿天下，知心能幾人。
Acquaintances are everywhere;
But true friends are very rare.[9]

相逢好似初相識，到老終無怨恨心。
Treat friends kindly as when you first met;
Never will there be cause to resent.

近水知魚性，近山識鳥音。
Those near the river know how fishes belong;
Those of the hills know all the bird songs.

易漲易退山溪水，易反易覆小人心。
The small stream fluctuates quickly;
The small mind changes easily.

運去金成鐵，時來鐵似金。
Out of luck, gold to iron turns;
In luck, iron has gold returns.

讀書須用意，一字值千金。
Focus the mind while reading books, we're told;
One word is worth a thousand pieces of gold.[10]

8 *Wu deng hui yuan* 17.745.

9 *Wu deng hui yuan* 17.651.

10 The *Annals of Master Lü* (*Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋) was posted at the Xianyang city gates with a reward of one thousand gold pieces per character for anyone who could improve the text by adding or deleting any part of it (*Shiji* 80.543; Sima 1994, 314).

逢人且說三分話，未可全抛一片心。
Do be slow to speak your mind;
Don't reveal the thoughts you hide.[11]

有意栽花花不發，無心插柳柳成蔭。
Carefully grown, yet no flowers at all;
Carelessly planted, the willow grows tall.

畫虎畫皮難畫骨，知人知面不知心。
Paint a tiger, the skin is easier than the bones;
Know a person, see their face but the mind is unknown.

錢財如糞土，仁義值千金。
Money and wealth are dirt-common and cheap;[12]
Kindness and rightness are treasures to keep.[13]

流水下灘非有意，白雲出岫本無心。
Without intent, waves swell on the beachside;
Without design, clouds from the mountains rise.

當時若不登高望，誰信東流海洋深。
If we had not climbed high to look ahead;
Who believes the sea flows from the riverbed?

路遙知馬力，事久見人心。
Distance sets horses apart;
Time reveals a person's heart.

11 *Wu deng hui yuan* 15.657.

12 *History of the Jin dynasty* (*Jinshu* 晉書): "Money is fundamentally filth and dirt. Hence, one about to gain money will dream about feces" (*Jinshu* 77.284).

13 *Mencius*: "Why must the king speak of profit? I have only [teachings concerning] humaneness and rightness" (*Mengzi* 1A.1; Bloom 2009, 1).

兩人一般心，無錢堪買金；一人一般心，有錢堪買針。
Money turns to gold when two work together;[14]
Never enough cash when two fight each other.

相見易得好，久住難為人。
Easy to be friends at first meeting;
Hard to keep close after long staying.

馬行無力皆因瘦，人不風流只為貧。
A horse's stamina is limited by malnutrition;
A person's popularity suffers from destitution.

饒人不是癡漢，癡漢不會饒人。
Forgiving does not make one a fool;
For that is what a fool cannot do.

是親不是親，非親卻是親。
Family like strangers within;
Strangers can become close as kin.

美不美，鄉中水；親不親，故鄉人。
Nice or not, the water from my native grounds;
Friend or not, the folks do come from my hometown.

鶯花猶怕春光老，豈可教人枉度春。
End of spring is feared by birds and flowers;
How can one while away their youthful hours.

相逢不飲空歸去，洞口桃花也笑人。
To leave a reunion without a drink;
What would the peach blossoms by the cave think.[15]

---

14 "*Xici shang* 繫辭上 (Commentary on the appended phrases, Part One)" of the *Changes*: "But for two people to share mind and heart, Such sharpness severs metal" (*Zhouyi* 7.325; Lynn 1994, 58).

15 This passage is about making the most of opportunities to cultivate oneself with good friends.

紅粉佳人休便老，風流浪子莫教貧。
May the beautiful young lady not age;
May the dissolute young man keep his wage.

在家不會迎賓客，出路方知少主人。
One who is not host at home;
Seldom welcomed when they roam.

黃金無假，阿魏無真。
Hard to forge real gold;
Fake rare herbs often sold.

客來主不顧，應恐是癡人。
A host who would ignore their guests;
Can only be a fool, I guess.

貧居鬧市無人識，富在深山有遠親。
Poor in a busy city, no one visits;
Rich in remote sites, distant kin solicit.[16]

誰人背後無人說，那個人前不說人。
Who has not been talked about behind their back;
The one who does not gossip, keeping quiet tact.

有錢道真語，無錢語不真。
不信但看筵中酒，杯杯先勸有錢人。
While the poor are ignored, the words of the rich keenly heard;
If in doubt, watch the banquets where the rich are toasted first.

鬧裏有錢，靜處安身。
Make money in busy places;
Settle oneself in quiet spaces.

16 *Master Shen* (*Shenzi* 慎子): "When a family is rich, then distant relatives will gather together. When a family is poor, then brothers will separate. It is not because they do not care for one another; it is because profits are not sufficient to accommodate them both" (Harris 2016, 128).

來如風雨，去似微塵。
Arrive like the storm;
Depart like the dust.

長江後浪催前浪，世上新人趲舊人。
The front waves are from behind pursued;
Out with the old and in with the new.

近水樓臺先得月，向陽花木早逢春。
The shore pavilion is first to sight the moon;
In spring, the east-facing plants are first to bloom.

古人不見今時月，今月曾經照古人。
While the ancients never saw this moon so bright;
Yet it shone for them as it graces our night.

先到為君，後到為臣。
First to arrive becomes leader;
Latecomers are the advisers.[17]

莫道君行早，更有早行人。
Do not claim to be early to rise;
For others are earlier to rise.[18]

莫信直中直，須防仁不仁。
山中有直樹，世上無直人。
Do not trust those who claim to be true;
One must guard against the liars too;[19]

---

17 Similar to the sayings "First in, best dressed" and "First come, first served."

18 *Jingde chuandeng lu* 景德傳燈錄 (Records of the transmission of the lamp): "The master ascended the hall and said, 'If it is said that it rises early morning, then there is still a person walking through the night. Like is like, so it is and is not. Now take care!'" (*Wu deng hui yuan* 3.128; Whitfield 2019, 22.672).

19 *Xi you ji* 西遊記 (Journey to the west): "Do not trust those most upstanding of all, be cautious of those who are unkind" (*Xi you ji* 17.1212).

In the mountains, there may be straight trees;
Few are honest in society.

自恨枝無葉，莫怨太陽偏。
Do blame branches for lack of leaves,
Don't fault the sun for lack of reach.

大家都是命，半點不由人。
Fate decides all we know;
Humans have no control.[20]

一年之計在於春，一日之計在於寅，一家之計在於和，一生之計在於勤。
A year is planned in the spring, the day is planned in the morning;
A family thrives on harmony, a life thrives on working.

責人之心責己，恕己之心恕人。
How we fault others, criticize ourselves;
Forgive them as we would forgive ourselves.[21]

守口如瓶，防意如城。
Keep your mouth like a bottle seal;
Keep your thoughts like the city shield.

寧可負我，切莫負人。
Rather be treated unfair;
Than not give others their fair share.

再三須重事，第一莫欺心。
Be cautious with matters, great and small;
And stay true to yourself through it all.

---

20 *Analects*: "Life and death are a matter of fate; wealth and eminence rest with Heaven" (*Lunyu* 12.5; Watson 2007, 81).

21 *Geyan lianbi* 格言聯璧 (Jade collection of maxims): "For perfect relations, forgive others as one would forgive oneself. For fewer shortcomings, reproach oneself as one would reproach others" (*Geyan lianbi* 101).

虎生猶可近，人熟不堪親。
A tiger one may dare to meet;
A known person makes one retreat.

來說是非者，便是是非人。
One who speaks of other's wrongs;
Is to whom the fault belongs.[22]

遠水難救近火，遠親不如近鄰。
Local fires can't be saved by waters remote;[23]
Distant kin are not as good as neighbors close.

有茶有肉多兄弟，急難何曾見一人。
人情似紙張張薄，世事如棋局局新。
Many friends when there's food and drink, but none help in urgency;
Social bonds are thin like paper, like each chess match things vary.

山中也有千年樹，世上難逢百歲人。
A thousand years in the forest, trees will last;
A hundred years of life, humans seldom pass.

力微休負重，言輕莫勸人；無錢休入眾，遭難莫尋親。
Don't bear a load if you're weak, nor speak advice none will heed;
Don't join the crowd when you're broke, nor seek out kin in your need.

平生不作皺眉事，世上應無切齒人。
Don't do what would cause frowns;
No one will bring you down.

---

22 *Wu deng hui yuan* 19.822.

23 *Master Han Fei*: "Suppose a fire burst out and we fetch water from the sea. Then though the water of the sea is abundant, the fire would not go into extinction. Thus, distant water cannot put out a fire at hand" (*Han Feizi* 7.177; Liao 1939, I.236).

士者國之寶，儒為席上珍。
Scholars are treasures of the land;[24]
Confucians are the guests so grand.[25]

若要斷酒法，醒眼看醉人。
If one wants to quit the drinks;
Take a look at how drunks sink.

求人須求英雄漢，濟人須濟急時無。
渴時一滴如甘露，醉後添杯不如無。
When in need, seek from the generous;
To help others, do so in prompt time.
In thirst, a drop of water tastes sweet;
When drunk, another drink do decline.[26]

久住令人賤，貧來親也疏。
Staying long invites disdain;
When poor, kin become estranged.

酒中不語真君子，財上分明大丈夫。
A noble person stays silent when drunk;
A good person keeps fair with wealth in trust.

出家如初，成佛有餘。
Uphold efforts like a novice;
One will surely be accomplished.

積金千兩，不如明解經書。
Better to know the classics;
Than hoard more golden relics.[27]

---

24 *Xinxu* 4.212.

25 *Records on Ritual*: "The scholar has a precious gem placed upon its mat, with which he is waiting to receive an invitation (from some ruler)" (*Liji* 59.1842; Legge 1885, 403).

26 *Wu deng hui yuan* 12.496.

27 *Hanshu* 73:618.

養子不教如養驢，養女不教如養豬。
An unschooled boy is like a mule;
Like a pig is an unschooled girl.

有田不耕倉廩虛，有書不讀子孫愚。
倉廩虛兮歲月乏，子孫愚兮禮義疏。
Stores and minds will be empty without grains and books to share;
Manners fade without learning and life despairs as stores clear.

同君一席話，勝讀十年書。
One conversation with the knowing;
Better than ten years of learning.[28]

人不通今古，馬牛如襟裾。
Without knowing the past and present;
Just like a horse or ox in garments.

茫茫四海人無數，哪個男兒是丈夫！
Of all the people on the earth,
Which of the young men show their worth![29]

美酒釀成筵好客，黃金散盡為收書。
Fine wine is brewed for hosting guests;
Gold is spent on collecting texts.

救人一命，勝造七級浮屠。
Better to save a life;
Than build a stupa high.

城門失火，殃及池魚。
When the city gate is set aflame;
The fish in the moat are doomed the same.

---

28 *Classified Sayings of Master Zhu*: "One night's conversation with the wise benefits more ten years of study" (*Zhuzi yulei* 117.370).

29 *Combined Essence of the Five Lamps*: "Of all the people in the universe, how many are true heroes?" (*Wu deng hui yuan* 20.880).

庭前生瑞草，好事不如無。
When the courtyard grows a plant that stuns;
Some matters are not as good as none.

欲求生富貴，須下死功夫。
To become wealthy and respected;
One must apply all time and effort.

百年成之不足，一旦敗之有餘。
A hundred years yet success not attained;
One morning enough to ruin all gained.

人心似鐵，官法如爐。
Strong as iron, a person's mind;
Like a furnace, the legal bind.

善化不足，惡化有餘。
What fails to improve by education;
Can achieve reform by regulation.

水至清則無魚，人太緊則無智。
No fish in waters too clear;[30]
No insight when time is near.

知者減半，省者全無。
Reduce the wise by half;
And no fools would there last.

在家從父，出嫁從夫。
At home, she follows her father's guide;
When married, with husband she resides.

---

30 *Senior Dai's Records on Ritual*: "In ancient times, rulers wore ceremonial crowns with hanging tassels to shield their eyes from excessive clarity and blocked their ears with cords to prevent acuity of hearing. This is because water that is too clear contains no fish, and a person who is overly critical has no followers" (*Da Dai Liji* 8.802).

癡人畏婦，賢女敬夫。
The foolish man will be afraid of his wife;
The wise woman respects her husband in life.

是非終日有，不聽自然無。
Gossip may be heard everywhere;
Ignore it and it disappears.

寧可正而不足，不可邪而有餘。
Better to be honorable with less;
Than to profit from dishonest intents.

寧可信其有，不可信其無。
Better to believe it exists;
Than to believe it doesn't.

竹籬茅舍風光好，道院僧堂終不如。
Simple dwellings have good views there;
Temple halls just cannot compare.

命裏有時終須有，命裏無時莫強求。
What is fated will come in due course;
What is not fated, don't take by force.

道院迎仙客，書堂隱相儒。
庭栽棲鳳竹，池養化龍魚。
Daoists and Confucians learn at temples and academies;
Court bamboo supports the phoenix, ponds harbor dragons to be.

結交須勝己，似我不如無。
Make friends with those who surpass;
Better not have friends like us.[31]

31 *Analects*: "The Master said,...Put prime value on loyalty and trustworthiness, have no friends who are not your equal, and, if you make mistakes, don't be afraid to correct them" (*Lunyu* 1.8; Watson 2007, 17).

但看三五日，相見不如初。
Relations formed in a few days;
Are worse than on first acquaintance.

人情似水分高下，世事如雲任卷舒。
Social bonds divide like the tides;
Matters unfold like cloudy skies.

會說說都是，不會說無禮。
Most convincing are the words of the glib;
Ill-mannered are the less articulate.

磨刀恨不利，刀利傷人指。
求財恨不多，財多害人己。
Sharpen blades like they are too blunt, but sharp blades will injure;
Seek wealth like not enough, but riches cause all to suffer.[32]

知足長足，終身不辱；
知止常止，終身不恥。
Suffer no disgrace when content with one's lot;
Be free from shame by knowing when one must stop.[33]

有福傷財，無福傷己。
While the fortunate incur material loss;
The misfortunate suffer more personal cost.

差之毫釐，失之千里。
Missing by the slightest;
Makes losses of the greatest.[34]

---

32 *Documents*: "If you do not attend jealously to your small actions, the result will be to affect your virtue in great matters" (Legge 2011, 349–350).

33 *Laozi*: "Knowing what is enough there won't be disgrace, knowing when to stop there won't be danger, and there can be long permanence" (Chen 2020, 268).

34 *Records on Ritual*: "The superior man is careful at the commencement; a mistake, then, of a hair's breadth, will lead to an error of a thousand *li*" (*Liji* 50.1603; Legge 1885, 260).

若登高必自卑，若涉遠必自邇。
Start low to climb up high;
Start near to reach the sky.[35]

三思而行，再思可矣。
Before acting do think thrice;
But thinking twice may suffice.

使口不如自走，求人不如求己。
Better to do than to say;
Better to self-help than to pray.

小時是兄弟，長大各鄉里。
In younger years, brothers at heart;
As adults, we drifted apart.

妒財莫妒食，怨生莫怨死。
Jealous of their wealth but not their bread;
Resent the living but not the dead.

人見白頭嗔，我見白頭喜。
多少少年亡，不到白頭死。
People dislike white hairs, but I am glad at the sight;
How many perish while young, before their hair turns white.

牆有縫，壁有耳。
The screens have tears;
The walls have ears.[36]

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35 *Documents*: "Your course must be as in ascending high you begin from where 'tis low, and when in traveling far you begin where 'tis near" (Legge 2011, 211). *Practice of the Mean*: "The Way of the noble man may be compared to travelling a long distance—one must start from nearby. It may be compared to scaling a height—one must start from below" (Johnston and Wang 2012, 260–261).

36 "Banished Prince" (*Xiao bian* 小弁; Mao 197): "O'er his words the king should watch; Ears are set each word to catch" (Legge 1876, 236).

好事不出門，惡事傳千里。
Good deeds are seen at home;
Misdeeds are widely known.

賊是小人，知過君子。
Though small-minded is the thief;
Their cunning exceeds the chief.

君子固窮，小人窮斯濫矣。
In hard times, noble persons are steadfast;
While the petty persons will fall apart.[37]

貧窮自在，富貴多憂。
While the poor will be at ease;
Those of wealth and rank worry.[38]

不以我為德，反以我為仇。
Instead of being grateful to me;
I am treated as an enemy.[39]

甯向直中取，不可曲中求。
Rather gain through honesty;
Than to seek with treachery.

人無遠慮，必有近憂。
A person without long term cares;
Is bound to have imminent fears.[40]

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37 *Analects*: "The Master said, The gentleman remains firm in the face of hardships. The petty man, when he encounters hardship, gives way to panic" (*Lunyu* 15.2; Watson 2007, 106).

38 *Records of the Transmission of the Lamp*: "Rather contentment in simplicity and poverty than worries from dubious wealth" (Whitfield 2019, 21.605).

39 "Valley Wind" (*Gu feng* 谷風; Mao 35): "Why do you not cherish me, But rather treat me as an enemy?" (*Maoshi* 2.178; Waley 1960, 101).

40 *Analects*: "The Master said, The person who fails to take far-reaching precautions is sure to encounter near-at-hand woes" (*Lunyu* 15.12; Watson 2007, 108).

知我者謂我心憂，不知我者謂我何求？
While those who know me say I am troubled;
Others claim my motives are muddled.

晴天不肯去，只待雨淋頭。
Not leaving on a sunny day;
Only to travel in the rain.[41]

成事莫說，覆水難收。
Don't talk of what's taken place;
Spilt water cannot be saved.[42]

是非只因多開口，煩惱皆因強出頭。
Gossip arises from too much chatter;
Troubles come from making one matter.

忍得一時之氣，免得百日之憂。
Keep our temper in the moment;
Avoid troubles in the distant.

近來學得烏龜法，得縮頭時且縮頭。
I recently learned the turtle's move;
To hide my head when I should.

懼法朝朝樂，欺公日日憂。
Observing the law, one remains at ease;
Cheating the public, one lives with worries.

人生一世，草木一春。
People live through but one lifetime;
Plants and trees know just one springtime.

41 *Combined Essence of the Five Lamps*: "Refusing to leave while the skies are clear, Waiting until there is rain overhead" (*Wu deng hui yuan* 15.622).

42 *History of the Later Han*: "Split water cannot be gathered" (*Hou Hanshu* 99.387).

白髮不隨老人去，看來又是白頭翁。
Gray hair won't leave the aging;
Too soon, our hairs are graying.

月過十五光明少，人到中年萬事休。
The light of the waning moon is dim;
The prospects of the middle-aged are grim.

兒孫自有兒孫福，莫為兒孫作馬牛。
Each child will find their way;
Don't work too hard for their sake.

人生不滿百，常懷千歲憂。
A lifetime ends within a hundred years;
Yet hearts are burdened with a thousand cares.

今朝有酒今朝醉，明日愁來明日憂。
Drink up today, let joy take flight;
Any worries can wait the night.

路逢險處難回避，事到頭來不自由。
On meeting danger on the road, it's hard to flee;
When things have occurred, it is hard to be free.

藥能醫假病，酒不解真愁。
Medicine can cure disease;
But wine won't resolve crises.

人平不語，水平不流。
A person at peace speaks few words;
The level water never stirs.[43]

43 *Guanzi* 管子 (Master Guan): "When water is perfectly level, it will not flow" (*Guanzi* 12.638; Rickett 1998, 2.308).

一家有女百家求，一馬不行百馬憂。
A daughter at home a hundred suitors seek;
One horse injured makes a hundred horses weak.

有花方酌酒，無月不登樓。
Enjoy wine while the flowers are in bloom;
Don't ascend the tower without the moon.

三杯通大道，一醉解千愁。
Grasp the Dao in three drinks;
Once drunk, all worries shrink.

深山畢竟藏猛虎，大海終須納細流。
Fierce tigers live on the mountains steep;
Small rivers converge in oceans deep.

惜花須檢點，愛月不梳頭。
Cherish the flowers, treat them with care;
Love the moonlight, don't comb your hair there.

大抵選他肌骨好，不傅紅粉也風流。
Look for those with a frame so fine;
Without make-up, they will still shine.

受恩深處宜先退，得意濃時便可休。
莫待是非來入耳，從前恩愛反成仇。
Step back with grace when you're praised, retire once dreams are complete;
Don't wait till slander starts and friends turn into enemies.

留得五湖明月在，不愁無處下金鉤。
As long as a moonlit lake exists;
There will always be a place to fish.[44]

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44 *Journey to the West*: "While the moon shines bright over the Five Lakes, why worry about finding a place to fish" (*Xi you ji* 17.1230).

休別有魚處，莫戀淺灘頭。
Don't abandon the fishing grounds;
Nor linger where shallows resound.

去時終須去，再三留不住。
When the time comes for departure,
One must leave and stay no longer.

忍一句，息一怒，饒一著，退一步。
Endure some words, let anger cease;
Forgive a slight, embrace the peace.

三十不豪，四十不富，五十相將尋死路。
Not secure by thirty, nor rich by forty;
By fifty, success is but a dream lofty.[45]

生不認魂，死不認屍。
Alive, the soul they do not know;
Dead, the body they do not show.

父母恩深終有別，夫妻義重也分離。
人生似鳥同林宿，大限來時各自飛。
Parents will pass and spouses will part, no matter how much they care;
Life is like birds of one tree, flying their own way through the air.

人善被人欺，馬善被人騎。
People will bully a kind and gentle soul;
People will ride a horse that's under control.

人無橫財不富，馬無夜草不肥。
None grow rich without a windfall delight;
No horse grows stout without grazing at night.

---

45 *Analects*: "At fifteen I set my mind on learning; by thirty I had found my footing" (*Lunyu* 2.4; Watson 2007, 20): "Forty and hated by others and he'll be so the rest of his life" (*Lunyu* 17.26; Watson 2007, 125).

人惡人怕天不怕，人善人欺天不欺。
善惡到頭終有報，只爭來早與來遲。
All but the heavens fear the wicked;
All but the heavens betray the kind;
Each will meet their due in course of time;
Then for better or worse, they will find.[46]

黃河尚有澄清日，豈可人無得運時。
The Yellow River may yet clear;
How can one's fate not turn to cheer?

得寵思辱，居安慮危。
When in favor, beware of disgrace;[47]
In safety, watch for danger's trace.[48]

念念有如臨敵日，心心常似過橋時。
Mindful each day as before an opponent;
Like crossing a bridge, take care in each moment.

英雄行險道，富貴似花枝。
The hero walks a dangerous path;
Wealth and honor like flowers don't last.

人情莫道春光好，只怕秋來有冷時。
Don't talk of human warmth and affection;
In time, one suffers cold and rejection.

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46 *Pipa ji* 元本琵琶記 (Record on the pipa): "Good and bad deeds ultimately receive their retribution; the only difference is whether it comes sooner or later" (*Yuan ben Pipa ji jiao zhu* 2.156).

47 *Laozi*: "When people gain favor, they will feel frightened and restless. When they fall out of favor, they will also feel terrified and confused. This is what is meant by the idea that being favored and being humiliated both should make you feel frightened and panic" (Chen 2020, 112).

48 *Zuo Tradition*: "'While living in calmness, think of dangers.' To dwell on this is to be prepared; to be prepared is to have no cause for anxiety" (Durrant et al. 2016, 993).

送君千里，終須一別。
I travel miles to see you depart;
But there comes a time when we must part.

但將冷眼觀螃蟹，看你橫行到幾時。
Calmly watch as the crab walks sideways;
How far from good conduct can one stray.

見事莫說，問事不知，閑事休管，無事早歸。
Don't say what was seen, know nothing when asked;
Avoid others' affairs, home without tasks.

假緞染就真紅色，也被旁人說是非。
Fake silk though dyed true red;
It is still false they said.

善事可作，惡事莫為。
Good deeds do pursue;
Misdeeds do not do.

許人一物，千金不移。
A promise once spoken;
Should never be broken.

龍生龍子，虎生豹兒。
Dragons beget dragon bubs;
Tigers beget tiger cubs.

龍游淺水遭蝦戲，虎落平陽被犬欺。
A dragon teased by shrimp in waters shallow;
A tiger bullied by dogs in terrains low.[49]

49 This expression conveys the idea that even powerful individuals may be vulnerable sometimes and suffer disrespect and mistreatment (*Xi you ji* 6.448).

一舉首登龍虎榜，十年身到鳳凰池。
Passing the palace exams is one lucky break;
Rising to be chief minister takes a decade.

十載寒窗無人問，一舉成名天下知。
Ten years of efforts, poor, cold, and alone;
One moment's success and the whole world knows.[50]

酒債尋常行處有，人生七十古來稀。
While drinking debts are commonplace;
Seventy remains a rare age.[51]

養兒防老，積穀防饑。
Raise children for old age support;
Store grain for when supplies are short.

雞豚狗彘之畜，無失其時，數口之家，可以無饑矣。
The livestock if cared for promptly;
Homes thrive and no one goes hungry.

常將有日思無日，莫把無時當有時。
Cautious of shortage when there is plenty;
Don't hope for much in times of scarcity.

時來風送滕王閣，運去雷轟薦福碑。
When in luck, one speeds with wind in the sails;
Out of luck, damage happens to stone details.

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50 *Gui qian zhi* 歸潛志 (Record from a return to obscurity): "For ten years, no one enquires beneath the window; With a single accomplishment, the world comes to know." This expression conveys the idea that one can work in relative obscurity for a long time, but a single achievement can bring widespread renown (*Gui qian zhi* 7.49).

51 *Quan Tangshi* 全唐詩 (Complete collection of Tang poems): "Debts from wine are common everywhere; In life, reaching seventy has always been rare" (*Quan Tangshi* 225.127).

入門休問榮枯事，觀看容顏便得知。
Don't ask the host about their day;
Their face will tell you right away.

官清書吏瘦，神靈廟祝肥。
When officials are honest, their clerks are thin;
When prayers come true, the abbot is not slim.

息卻雷霆之怒，罷卻虎狼之威。
One's thunder-like rage should cease;
One's tiger-like might should ease.

饒人算之本，輸人算之機。
Forgiving others helps one live;
Deference is the gift you give.

好言難得，惡語易施。
Words of praise are hard to gain;
Harsh words are hard to restrain.

一言既出，駟馬難追。
A word once expressed;
Horses can't arrest.[52]

道吾好者是吾賊，道吾惡者是吾師。
Thieves are those who praise and flatter,
Teachers tell me faults that matter.[53]

---

52 This expression conveys the idea that foolish words once spoken cannot be taken back. *Analects*: "Zigong replied, 'It is regrettable, Sir, that you should speak of the gentleman in this way—as they say, "a team of horses cannot overtake your tongue"'" (*Lunyu* 12.8; Slingerland 2003, 129).

53 *Master Xun*: "And so, he who rightly criticizes me acts as a teacher toward me, and he who rightly supports me acts as a friend toward me, while he who flatters and toadies to me acts as a villain toward me" (*Xunzi* 1.21; Hutton 2014, 9).

路逢險處須當避，不是才人莫獻詩。
With dangers, one must avoid with care.
With unrefined, poems do not share.

三人同行，必有我師焉，擇其善者而從之，其不善者而改之。
Find teachers when walking with two;
Embrace their strengths, their faults don't do.[54]

少壯不努力，老來徒悲傷。
Those who in younger days refuse to strive;
Will come to regret it later in life.

人有善愿，天必佑之。
A person of kindness;
Heaven will surely bless.[55]

莫吃卯時酒，昏昏醉到酉。
莫罵酉時妻，一夜受孤淒。
Don't drink in the morning, you'll feel drunk all day;
Don't scold your wife at dusk, you will sleep your own way.

種麻得麻，種豆得豆。
Flaxseed for flax, beans for beans;
Thus what you sow you will reap.

天眼恢恢，疏而不漏。
Heaven's net has holes so wide;
Yet none can escape or hide.[56]

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54 *Master Xun*: "The Master said, When I walk with two others, I'm bound to find my teacher there. I single out their good points and pursue them, note their bad points and make my corrections" (*Lunyu* 7.21; Watson 2007, 50).

55 *Master Xun*: "Those who do good are rewarded by Heaven with good fortune, and those who do bad are rewarded by Heaven with misfortune" (*Xunzi* 20.526; Hutton 2014, 323).

56 This expression conveys the idea that justice has long arms as expressed in the *Laozi*: "The limits of nature are vast and boundless, far reaching and yet nothing will leak through" (Chen 2020, 378).

見官莫向前，做客莫在後。
Meeting an official, don't be too fast;
When leaving as a guest, don't be the last.

甯添一斗，莫添一口。
Better to add a peck of grain;
Than a hungry mouth to sustain.

螳螂捕蟬，豈知黃雀在後。
The mantis has the cicada as its prey;
The oriole behind hunts it the same day.[57]

不求金玉重重貴，但願兒孫個個賢。
Don't seek all jade and golden prize;
Just wish for each child to be wise.

一日夫妻，百世姻緣，
百世修來同船渡，千世修來共枕眠。
Many lifetimes to become husband and wife;
A thousand lives intertwined for marital life.

殺人一萬，自損三千。
Killing ten thousand of the enemy;
Costs one's troops thousands of lives equally.[58]

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57 *Master Zhuang*: "Zhuang Zhou was wandering in the park at Diaoling when he saw a peculiar kind of magpie that came flying along from the south. It had a wingspread of seven feet, and its eyes were a good inch in diameter. It brushed against Zhuang Zhou's forehead and then settled down in a grove of chestnut trees.…Then he hitched up his robe, strode forward, cocked his crossbow, and prepared to take aim. As he did so, he spied a cicada that had found a lovely spot of shade and had forgotten all about [the possibility of danger to] its body. Behind it, a praying mantis, stretching forth its claws, prepared to snatch the cicada, and it, too, had forgotten about its own form as it eyed its prize. The peculiar magpie was close behind, ready to make off with the praying mantis, forgetting its own true self as it fixed its eyes on the prospect of gain" (*Zhuangzi* 695; Watson 2013, 164–165).

58 *Xi you ji* 1.70.

傷人一語，利如刀割。
Words that are unkind;
Cuts sharp as a knife.

枯木逢春猶再發，人無兩度再少年。
In spring, withered trees renew in turn;
But youth once gone will never return.

未晚先投宿，雞鳴早看天。
Seek shelter before the nightfall;
Set out before the rooster calls.

將相頂頭堪走馬，公侯肚裏好撐船。
Bearing horses on their head—the chancellor;
Harboring ships in their belly—the ruler.

富人思來年，窮人思眼前。
The wealthy plan for years ahead;
The poor think just of the present.

世上若要人情好，賒去物件莫取錢。
If in pursuit of good relations;
Forgive debts from credit transactions.

死生有命，富貴在天。
Life and death are by fate determined;
Riches and honor shaped by heaven.

擊石原有火，不擊乃無煙；
人學始知道，不學亦徒然。
Striking a stone sparks flame, if unstruck no smoke is gained;
Study is learning the Dao, if not, hopes are in vain.[59]

59 *Complete Collection of Tang Poems*: "Strike the stone for fire; without striking, there's no smoke. Humans study to learn the Way; without study, it is not naturally known" (*Quan Tangshi* 373.588).

莫笑他人老，終須還到老。
Do not mock the aged;
We all will reach that stage.

但能依本分，終須無煩惱。
If all our duties we can fulfil;
We will have peace and goodwill.

君子愛財，取之有道；貞婦愛色，納之以禮。
The gentleman desires wealth but acquires through honesty;
The lady loves beauty but achieves with propriety.

善有善報，惡有惡報，不是不報，日子未到。
Good is rewarded, the wrong must pay;
Might not be now but another day.[60]

人而無信，不知其可也。
Someone without honesty;
What can they do, honestly.[61]

一人道好，千人傳實。
One person saying it is good;
Thousands will spread as the truth.

凡事要好，須問三老。
For great success in all you do;
One must consult three elders too.

若爭小可，便失大道。
Over the petty one fights;
The Dao is far from sight.

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60 *Master Xun*: "Those who do good are rewarded by Heaven with good fortune, and those who do bad are rewarded by Heaven with misfortune" (*Xunzi* 20.526; Hutton 2014, 323).

61 *Analects*: "The Master said, Persons who lack trustworthiness—I don't know how they get by! Big carts that have no yoke-bar, little carts that have no collar-bar—how can you go anywhere in them?" (*Lunyu* 2.22; Watson 2007, 23).

年年防饑，夜夜防盜。
Each year, store grain for times of need;
Each night, safeguard the home from thieves.

學者如禾如稻，不學者如蒿如草。
The learned are like the rice and wheat;
The ignorant are like grass and weed.

遇飲酒時須飲酒，得高歌處且高歌。
Drink when it's time for drinking;
Sing when it's time for singing.

因風吹火，用力不多。
When the wind fans the flames of fire;
It doesn't take much to rise higher.[62]

不因漁父引，怎得見波濤。
Without the guidance of fishermen;
How could one face the mighty waves then?[63]

無求到處人情好，不飲隨他酒價高。
Not asking favors, relations are all fine;
Not drinking, who cares about the price of wine.

知事少時煩惱少，識人多處是非多。
Worry less by knowing few matters;
Know more people creates more chatter.

入山不怕傷人虎，只怕人情兩面刀。
Fear not hills where tigers are seen;
Fear those who are not as they seem.

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62 *Jingshi tong yan* 28.420.

63 This saying is derived from the *Historical Novel of the Records on the Eunuch Sanbao's Voyage to the Western Ocean* (*Sanbao taijian xiyang ji tongsu yanyi* 三寶太監西洋記通俗演義) (*Sanbao taijian xiyang ji tongsu yanyi* 12.732).

強中更有強中手，惡人自有惡人磨。
Strong persons have the stronger to verse;
The unkind suffer those who are worse.

會使不在家豪富，風流不在著衣多。
Wise spending not through wealth aplenty;
Fine style does not need clothes too many.

光陰似箭，日月如梭。
Like the speeding arrow, the time flies;
Like the weaver's shuttle, days pass by.[64]

天時不如地利，地利不如人和。
Good timing matters less than a good location;
Good location matters less than good relations.

黃金未為貴，安樂值錢多。
Gold is not most precious;
Peace and joy are priceless.[65]

世上萬般皆下品，思量唯有讀書高。
Worldly pursuits are but small;
Reading books surpasses them all.

世間好語書說盡，天下名山僧占多。
All fine words have been written in the texts;
Most famous peaks are home to monastics.

為善最樂，為惡難逃。
Doing good brings one the greatest joy;[66]
Doing wrong brings pain hard to avoid.

64 *Xi you ji* 2.118–119.
65 *Xi you ji* 11.824.
66 *Hou Hanshu* 72.21.

羊有跪乳之恩，鴉有反哺之義。
Lambs show their thanks by kneeling to nurse;
Crows feed their parents as roles reverse.[67]

你急他未急，人閑心不閑。
They are carefree while you stress;
I stop but my mind won't rest.

隱惡揚善，執其兩端。
Conceal their flaws, but praise their virtues true;
Be wise and choose which path is best to do.[68]

妻賢夫禍少，子孝父心寬。
A wise wife will shield her husband from strife;
A good son brings peace to his father's life.

既墜釜甑，反顧無益。
翻覆之水，收之實難。
Broken pot, looking back is in vain;
Spilt water, one can't pick up again.

人生知足何時足，人老為閑且是閑。
Be content in life, but when do we not lack;
Relax in old age, is truly to relax.

但有綠楊堪系馬，處處有路透長安。
With green poplars where the horse can stay;
The road to Chang'an found in all ways.[69]

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67 The conduct of such animals was thought to inspire care and gratitude towards one's parents as part of the virtue of family reverence.

68 *Practice of the Mean*: "The Master said: 'Shun loved to ask questions and he loved to examine "near" (i.e. simple, familiar) words. Concealing the bad and revealing the good, he grasped these two ends and used their centre in relation to the people'" (Johnston and Wang 2012, 231).

69 *Combined Essence of the Five Lamps*: "There are green willows in every place for tying horses; The gateways of every household pervade Chang'an" (*Wu deng hui yuan* 20.880). This expression is similar to the phrase: "All roads lead to Rome."

見者易，學者難。
Easy to see;
Hard to study.

莫將容易得，便作等閒看。
What's gained easily;
Do not treat lightly.

用心計較般般錯，退步思量事事寬。
Intent on squabbling, wrongs abound;
Step back and think, ways will be found.[70]

道路各別，養家一般。
Roads may all be different;
Raising kin is a constant.

從儉入奢易，從奢入儉難。
Easy to be saving then spend to excess;
But being wasteful then saving is the test.

知音說與知音聽，不是知音莫與談。
What is spoken among close friends;
Do not share where the circle ends.[71]

點石化為金，人心猶未足。
Stones turn gold with just a touch;
Yet humans still want for much.

信了肚，賣了屋。
Led astray by tastes;
I sold the estate.

---

70 *Chui jian lu waiji*, 504.

71 Bo Ya 伯牙 never played the lute again after his friend Zhong Ziqi 鍾子期 passed away, because he felt that Zhong understood his music best, and there was no one else worth playing for (Knoblock and Riegel 2000, 308; Graham 1990, 109).

他人睨睨，不涉你目；他人碌碌，不涉你足。
Others look and stare, but their gaze won't hurt;
Others toil away, but it's not your work.

誰人不愛子孫賢，誰人不愛千鐘粟，奈五行不是這般題目。
Worthy children and more grain, all desire;
But the five virtues are all one requires.[72]

莫把真心空計較，兒孫自有兒孫福。
Don't trouble oneself in vain;
One's descendants will make their gains.

與人不和，勸人養鵝；與人不睦，勸人架屋。
When they lack harmony, advise them to raise geese;
When they lack accord, in building a house make peace.

但行好事，莫問前程。
Just do good, that's all;
Don't ask what's in store.[73]

不交僧道，便是好人。
One who avoids the Buddhist or Taoist fellows;
May be a fine person, as virtue clearly shows.

河狹水急，人急計生。
Where the river narrows, the waters gush;
When one feels pressured, ideas rush.

明知山有虎，莫向虎山行。
There are tigers on mountains, you know;
So do not toward those mountains go.

---

72 *He lin yulu* 鶴林玉露 (Jade dew of the crane grove): "Who doesn't love a golden house? Who doesn't envy a thousand-cash stipend? But this is not what life is about" (*He lin yulu* 14.378–379).

73 *Complete Collection of Tang Poems*: "Just know to do what is right, No need to wonder about the future" (*Quan Tangshi* 737:331).

路不行不到，事不為不成，人不勸不善，鐘不打不鳴。
Tasks won't be done without work, one won't get places without walking;
Bells won't ring without being struck, one won't be good without teaching.

點塔七層，不如暗處一燈。
One candle in the dark of the night;
Better than all the pagoda's lights.[74]

萬事勸人休瞞昧，舉頭三尺有神明。
Do not your conscience cover;
Above us spirits hover.[75]

但存方寸地，留於子孫耕。
Just keep a small plot of land;
For children to plow by hands.[76]

滅卻心頭火，剔起佛前燈。
Do cease the angry mind;
The buddha you then find.

惺惺常不足，懵懵作公卿。
The clever are often found lacking;
While the dull rise to higher ranking.[77]

眾星朗朗，不如孤月獨明。
One moon alone at night;
Outshines the stars so bright.

---

74 *Yanzi chunqiu* 晏子春秋 (Spring and autumn annals of Master Yan): "The light of a star cannot outshine the glow of the waning moon; the success of a small matter is less important than the failure of a great one; and a gentleman's mistake is still better than a petty person's good deed" (Milburn 2016, 231).

75 *Lei shuo* 45.794.

76 The plot of land refers to one's moral character. The text appears as a popular saying in the *Jade Dew of the Crane Grove* (*He lin yulu* 6.300).

77 *Master Shen* states: "A proverb says, If one's hearing is not keen and one's eyesight not clear, one cannot be a king. If one is not blind and deaf, then one cannot be public minded" (Harris 2016, 128–129).

兄弟相害，不如友生。
Brothers who harm each other;
Are worse than friends and neighbors.[78]

合理可作，小利莫爭。
Reasonable tasks are fine to pursue;
Do not quibble over gains that are few.

牡丹花好空入目，棗花雖微結實成。
Peonies are only pleasing to the eye;
Date blossoms, though small, will bear fruit in time.

欺老莫欺小，欺人心不明。
Do not take advantage of the young;
To wrong others shows a mind undone.

隨分耕鋤收地利，他時飽暖謝蒼天。
Profit from the earth by plowing in season;
For food and warmth, thank heaven with good reason.

得忍且忍，得耐且耐，不忍不耐，小事成大。
Bear what you must, endure what you can;
Otherwise, things will be worse than planned.

相論逞英雄，家計漸漸退。
Arguing for due credit, both parties are blind;
A family's wealth fades as the fortunes unwind.

賢婦令夫貴，惡婦令夫敗。
A wise wife helps her husband be noble;
A wicked wife makes her husband troubled.

---

78 "Cherry Tree" (*Chang di* 常棣; Mao 164): "Even brothers are not the equal of friends" (*Maoshi* 9.668–669; Waley 1960, 203).

一人有慶，兆民咸賴。
When one has cause to celebrate;
All the people share in the fate.

人老心未老，身貧志不窮。
Though old in age, one stays young at heart;
Though poor in wealth, ambitions won't part.

人無千日好，花無百日紅。
One won't be lucky every day;
A flower's bloom won't last always.

殺人可恕，情理難容。
Though murder may be pardoned;
Unforgiven in feelings and reason.

乍富不知新受用，乍貧難改舊家風。
Newly rich don't know how to use their assets;
Newly poor find it hard to change past habits.

座上客常滿，杯中酒不空。
There are tables of guests aplenty;
The cups of wine are never empty.[79]

屋漏更遭連夜雨，行船又被打頭風。
A leaky roof suffers endless rain;[80]
A sluggish boat fights headwind in vain.

筍因落籜方成竹，魚為奔波始化龍。
Bamboo sheds its sheath to grow upright;
The fish fight through waves to take their flight.

---

79 *History of the Later Han*: "When the seats are often filled with guests, and the wine goblet is never empty, I have no worries" (*Hou Hanshu* 100.400).

80 *Yuan ben Pipa ji jiao zhu* 22.134.

記得少年騎竹馬，看看又是白頭翁。
I still recall my bamboo steed, so free and bold;
In the blink of an eye, I've become grey and old.

禮義生於富足，盜賊出於貧窮。
Ritual and rightness grow in plenty;
Robbers and rebels form in poverty.[81]

天上眾星皆拱北，世間無水不朝東。
All stars in the sky gather round the northern lights;[82]
All rivers on earth flow eastward through day and night.

君子安貧，達人知命。
Noble persons at peace with poverty;
Wise persons understand their destiny.[83]

忠言逆耳利於行，良藥苦口利於病。
Honest advice helps but is hard to bear;
Good medicine is bitter but repairs.[84]

---

81 *Qianfu lun* 潛夫論 (Discourses of a recluse): "Thus, propriety and rightness issue from there being wealth and enough for all, and theft and robbery arise from poverty and deprivation" (Pearson 1989, 139).

82 *Analects*: "The Master said, Conduct government in accordance with virtue, and it will be like the North Star standing in its place, with all the other stars paying court to it" (*Lunyu* 2.1; Watson 2007, 20).

83 "Commentary on the Appended Phrases, Part One" in the *Changes*: "As he rejoices in Heaven and understands Its decrees, he will be free from anxiety" (*Zhouyi* 7.314; Lynn 1994, 52). In the *Analects*, Confucius praised his student Yan Hui 顏回 (521–490 BCE): "What a fine man Hui was! One container of rice, one dipperful of drink, living in a back alley—others couldn't have endured the gloom of it, but he never let it affect his happiness" (*Lunyu* 6.11; Watson 2007, 43).

84 *Garden of Eloquence*: "Good medicine is bitter to the tongue but efficacious in treating illness; loyal speech is offensive to the ear but efficacious in improving behavior" (Henry 2021, 563). *Master Han Fei*: "Indeed, good drugs are bitter to the mouth, but intelligent people are willing to take them because they know the drugs after being taken will cure their diseases. Loyal words are unpleasant to the ears, but the enlightened sovereign listens to them, because he knows they will bring about successful results" (*Han Feizi* 11.267; Liao 1959, II.35).

順天者存，逆天者亡。
Those who follow nature's way will thrive;
Those who oppose it cannot survive.[85]

人為財死，鳥為食亡。
Humans risk their life for wealth and gain;
Birds risk their life to find food and grain.

夫妻相好合，琴瑟與笙簧。
Happy together in marriage, husband and wife;
Like zither and reed organ, harmony of life.

有兒貧不久，無子富不長。
With a child, poor days will soon pass;
Without a child, wealth will not last.

善必壽老，惡必早亡。
The good will thrive long;
The wicked die young.

爽口食多偏作病，快心事過恐生殃。
Gourmet indulgence brings illness;
Excessive joy leads to sadness.

富貴定要安本分，貧窮不必枉思量。
Those of wealth and honor must observe their duties as such;
Those in poverty and hardship need not think too much.

畫水無風空作浪，繡花雖好不聞香。
Painted waters have waves that don't swell;
Embroidered flowers bloom but don't smell.

85 *Mencius*: "Those who follow Heaven are preserved, while those who rebel against Heaven perish" (*Mengzi* 4A.7; Bloom 2009, 77).

貪他一斗米，失卻半年糧；爭他一腳豚，反失一肘羊。
Lose half a year's grain over a peck of rice.[86]
Lose a mutton leg for a pig's trotter slice.

龍歸晚洞雲猶濕，麝過春山草木香。
While the dragon returns to its cave at night, the clouds are damp with rain;
The plants and trees are fragrant as the musk deer passes through spring terrain.

平生只會量人短，何不回頭把己量。
Those who only think of others' flaws;
Why not turn round to judge their own score.

見善如不及，見惡如探湯。
See the good like you can't catch up;
Heed the bad like hot water's touch.[87]

人貧智短，馬瘦毛長。
The hair is longer on a thin horse;
The wisdom of the poor appears flawed.

自己心裏急，他人未知忙。
Desperate I feel inside;
Yet others may not surmise.

貧無達士將金贈，病有高人說藥方。
While none will give money to the poor;
In sickness, some will offer a cure.

---

86 *Combined Essence of the Five Lamps*: "Greed for one millet seed brings a loss of half the year's grain" (*Wu deng hui yuan* 19.834).

87 *Analects*: "He sees what is good and acts as though he could never attain it, sees what is not good and acts as though he had put his hand in scalding water" (*Lunyu* 16.11; Watson 2007, 117).

觸來莫與競，事過心清涼。
Don't contend when feeling slighted;
Stay calm when troubles have subsided.

秋至滿山皆秀色，春來無處不花香。
Colors paint the hills in the fall;
Fragrant flowers bloom with spring's call.

凡人不可面相，海水不可斗量。
No person can be judged by their face;[88]
The sea cannot by pecks be weighed.

清清之水，為土所防；濟濟之士，為酒所傷。
Using earth, clear waters are blocked in;
With drinking, countless scholars are ruined.

蒿草之下，或有蘭香；茅茨之屋，或有公王。
Fragrant orchids may grow beneath weeds and grass;
A thatched hut may house one of the ruling class.

無限朱門生餓殍，幾多白屋出公卿。
Countless from noble estates starve to death;
Many from poor homes to high ranks ascend.

醉後乾坤大，壺中日月長。
Drunk on wine, the world feels vast;
In the bottle, time is cast.

萬事皆先定，浮生空自忙。
Every matter is by fate ordained;
In fleeting life, efforts are in vain.

---

88 *Baopuzi* 抱樸子 (Master who embraces simplicity): "The reason I am critical but cannot remain silent is that I hope for those gentlemen in positions of authority not to judge people by their appearance, to encourage and promote humility and frugality, for the perpetuation of celestial harmony" (*Baopuzi* 1.27).

千里送毫毛，寄物不寄失。
A thousand miles to gift feathers;
Must still take care to deliver.

一人傳虛，百人傳實。
One person saying it is good;
Thousands will spread as the truth.

世事明如鏡，前程暗似漆。
World affairs are clear like a bright mirror;
The future is as bleak as dark lacquer.

人生一世，如駒過隙。
The years of a life flies;
Like a colt in its prime.[89]

良田萬頃，日食三升；大廈千間，夜眠八尺。
On vast acres of fertile fields, one eats but three meals a day;
In grand mansions of countless rooms, one sleeps in just eight feet of space.

千經萬典，孝義為先。
Above all, the canons and classics teach;
Love kin, be dutiful to one and each.[90]

一字入公門，九牛拖不出。
Just one word can start litigation;
Nine oxen can't pull the court action.[91]

---

89 *Master Zhuang*: "Man's life between heaven and earth is like the passing of a white colt glimpsed through a crack in the wall— whoosh! and that's the end" (*Zhuangzi* 746; Watson 2013, 181).

90 *Analects*: "Filial and brotherly conduct—these are the root of humaneness, are they not?" (*Lunyu* 1.2; Watson 2007, 16).

91 *Combined Essence of the Five Lamps*: "One word can start a lawsuit; But nine oxen cannot move one out of the case" (*Wu deng hui yuan* 20.885).

衙門八字開，有理無錢休進來。
The gate of the courthouse stands open wide;
With a case but no funds, don't step inside.

富從升合起，貧因不算來。
Riches start from saving up the small;[92]
Poverty from not counting at all.

家中無才子，官從何處來。
Without learned sons at home;
Where do officials come from?

萬事不由人計較，一生都是命安排。
All matters are not based on my say;
A lifetime is predestined by fate.[93]

急行慢行，前程只有多少路。
Whether one travels fast or takes it slow;
There are only so many paths to go.

人間私語，天聞若雷；暗室虧心，神目如電。
Whispers on earth resound in heaven like thunder;
Spirits see as clear as lightning, misdeeds covered.

一毫之惡，勸人莫作；一毫之善，與人方便。
The smallest wrong, guide them to avoid;
The smallest good, help them with full joy.

虧人是禍，饒人是福。
Cheating others is misfortune;
Forgiving others is fortune.

---

92 *Master Han Fei*: "For this reason, if wise men frugally spend their money, their families will become rich" (*Han Feizi* 6.151; Liao 1939, I.199).

93 *Xingshi heng yan* 醒世恆言 (Stories to awaken the world): "Do not bicker over anything, One's entire life is a matter of destiny" (*Xingshi heng yan* 714).

天眼恢恢，報應甚速。
聖賢言語，神欽鬼伏。
Heaven's eyes are sweeping, retribution is fast;
Words of saints and sages, all spirits highly regard.

人各有心，心各有見。
Each person their own mind;
Each mind their own designs.

口說不如身逢，耳聞不如目見。
One's experience beats hearsay;
See for oneself, the better way.

養軍千日，用在一朝。
Train troops for a thousand days;
Use them at a moment's raid.[94]

國清才子貴，家富小兒驕。
An honest government values scholars with talent;
A rich family makes their young arrogant.

利刀割體痕猶合，惡語傷人恨不消。
The wound from a sharp blade can improve;
Grudges from a sharp tongue hard to remove.

公道世間惟白髮，貴人頭上不曾饒。
Grey hairs are the world's only fairness;
Even the noble are not missed.

有錢堪出眾，無衣懶出門。
The wealthy can be bold;
The poor loathe to leave home.

94 *Shuihu zhuan* 61.817.

為官須作相，及第必爭先。
As a state official, one seeks to be chief;
In imperial exams, one strives to lead.

苗從地發，樹向枝分。
Seedlings rise from earth below;
Trees with branches spread and grow.

父子和而家不退，兄弟和而家不分，
Harmony between father and son keeps the family strong;
Harmony among brothers, young and old, keeps them close for long.

官有正條，民有私約。
The state has formal laws to regulate;
Private contracts are what the people make.

閑時不燒香，急時抱佛腳。
Not offering incense in times of ease;
Seeking the Buddha's help in times of need.

幸生太平無事日，恐逢年老不多時。
Lucky to live in times of peace;
Growing old makes one ill at ease.

國亂思良相，家貧思賢妻。
A country in turmoil seeks a shrewd guide;
A house in hardship longs for a wise bride.[95]

池塘積水須防旱，田地深耕足養家。
Store water in ponds to prevent drought;
Farm well so the household won't go without.[96]

95 *Shiji* 44.200.

96 *Jade Dew of the Crane Grove*: "Adding more fish to the ponds temporarily increases tax, deeply cultivating land provides enough to support the family" (*He lin yulu* 16.400).

根深不怕風搖動，樹正何愁月影斜。
Deep roots hold strong as the gusty wind blows;
Straight trees don't mind the moon's slanting shadows.

奉勸君子，各宜守己。
只此程式，萬無一失。
Heed this counsel, fulfill your roles;
Follow these lines to reach your goals.

GUIDELINES FOR LEARNERS 弟子規 (QING DYNASTY, C. 1700)

The original composition of this primer was entitled *Essay for Training Youngsters* (*Xun meng wen* 訓蒙文) and is traditionally attributed to the scholar Li Yuxiu 李毓秀 (1647–1729). The primer was later revised and retitled *Guidelines for Learners* (*Dizi gui* 弟子規) by the phonologist Jia Cunren 賈存仁 (1710–1764). As a specialist in the sounds of the Chinese language, Jia rearranged the text in the style of the *Three Character Classic*—phrases had a fixed length of three syllables for rhythm and there was a consistent rhyme every six syllables. Moreover, the content was made concise. With enhanced readability, it is unsurprising that Jia's edition became popularly circulated.

This received version opens with an overview in the form of a "preface" that is inspired by the following passage from the *Analects*:

> The Master said, Young people should be filial at home, brotherly with others, circumspect, and trustworthy. Let them act kindly toward the populace in general and befriend those of humane character. If, after that, they have energy left over, let them study the arts (*Lunyu* 1.6; Watson 2007, 16).

The primer is arranged in seven sections that elaborate on respective parts of the preface, setting out pragmatic guidance for conducting oneself when interacting with the family and community, and pursuing formal learning. Compared to the didactic nursery rhymes *Words for Children* and *Further Words for Children* that were designed to be sung, the contents of the *Guidelines for Learners* are structured with a consistent logic to its specific advice. The absence of explanation implies an underlying assumption that its directives are generally applicable (Xu 2017, 161–162).

This primer has been widely used for childhood education since the mid-Qing dynasty (Zhe 2018, 62–63) and continues to be taught in junior high schools of mainland China and Taiwan (Winckler 2014, 115). Through developing moral habits, modern research has shown that school instruction in the *Guidelines for Learners* is effective in improving the prosocial behaviour and peer relationships of Chinese adolescents and their teacher–student relationships (Yao and Wong 2021, 384–400). The primer has also been identified as a representative Confucian text that is foundational to traditional Chinese culture and family instruction (Zhe 2018, 68–73). Recent decades have seen the circulation of lectures that make the text accessible to general audiences.[1] Such popular discourse has resulted in the text being applied to various contexts beyond the classroom, ranging from staff training (Zhang and Teng 2015, 41–47), corporate decision-making (Winckler 2014, 111–125), correctional education in prisons (Zhe 2018, 63), and English-language learning (Nguyen 2022). That translations of the *Guidelines for Learners* are available in vernacular Chinese, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Malay, Spanish, Thai, and Vietnamese, may further serve as an indicator of contemporary interest and readership.

1 A series of twenty-two episodes on the *Guidelines for Learners* was presented by Qian Wenzhong 錢文忠 on national television on China Central Television in 2010. The episodes have been published as a book (Qian 2010).

TRANSLATIONS

English

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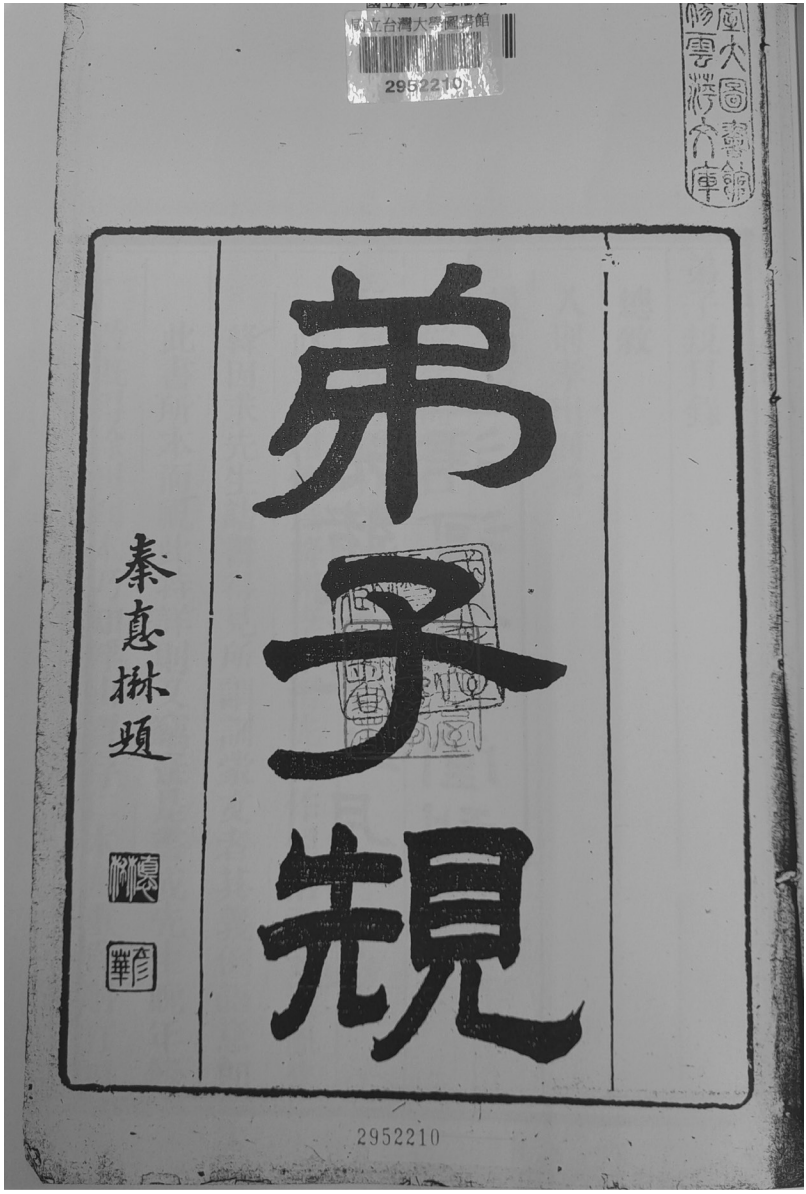


Figure 22a. Cover page of the *Guidelines for Learners* edition printed in 1827. Courtesy of the National Taiwan University Library.

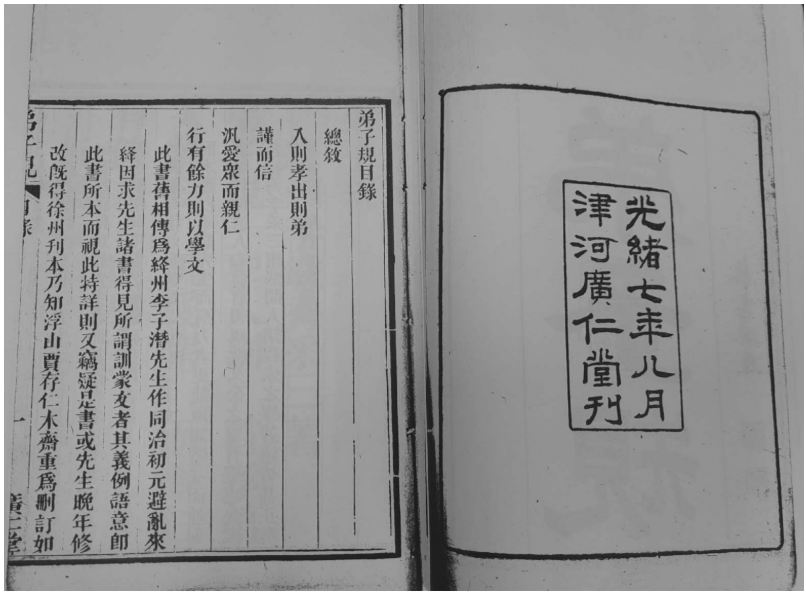


Figure 22b. First page of the *Guidelines for Learners* edition printed in 1827. Courtesy of the National Taiwan University Library.

GUIDELINES FOR LEARNERS

Li Yuxiu 李毓秀

總 敘
Outline

弟子規 聖人訓
The *Guidelines for Learners* are ancient instructions from the wise.

首孝弟 次謹信
From parents and siblings, caution and honesty arise.

汎愛眾 而親仁
Love all broadly but learn from those of humanity.

有餘力 則學文
Study literature with further capacity.[2]

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2 *Analects*: "Young people should be filial at home, brotherly with others, circumspect, and trustworthy. Let them act kindly toward the populace in general and befriend those of humane character. If, after that, they have energy left over, let them study the arts" (*Lunyu* 1.6; Watson 2007, 16).

入則孝
Family Reverence at Home

父母呼 應勿緩
When parents call, we should respond quickly.[3]

父母命 行勿懶
When parents direct, we should act keenly.[4]

父母教 須敬聽
When parents instruct, we must listen with respect.[5]

父母責 須順承
When parents find fault, we must gracefully accept.[6]

冬則溫 夏則清
Keep them warm in winter, keep them cool in summer.

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3 *Records on Ritual*: "When a father's summons came to him, a son reverently obeyed it without any delay. Whatever work he had in hand, he laid aside. He ejected the meat that was in his mouth, and ran, not contenting himself with a measured, though rapid pace" (*Liji* 30.1074; Legge 1885, 24).

4 *Records on Ritual*: "When with their parents, (sons and their wives), when ordered to do anything, should immediately respond and reverently proceed to do it.…Sons and sons' wives, who are filial and reverential, when they receive an order from their parents should not refuse, nor be dilatory, to execute it" (*Liji* 27.973 and 27.975; Legge 1968, 453, 455).

5 *Essential Instructions for the Young*: "When seniors and elder brothers offer instruction and correction, one must only listen attentively with lowered heads, and not engage in arrogant contention" (*Tongmeng xuzhi* 5).

6 *Essential Instructions for the Young*: "When elders admonish or find fault with you, do not immediately defend yourself; instead, remain silent for the time being. After some time, carefully and thoughtfully consider the matter. It is likely that the issue was as they described, and what happened before may have been an occasional lapse of memory. Or perhaps it was a momentary lack of reflection. In such cases, there is no harm in accepting the criticism, and the truth of the matter will become clear" (*Tongmeng xuzhi* 5).

晨則省 昏則定
Enquire when they wake, settle them before slumber.[7]

出必告 反必面
Inform when going out, see them when coming back.

居有常 業無變
Be constant in habit, stay on a steady track.[8]

事雖小 勿擅為
A matter may be minor but do check still.

苟擅為 子道虧
Without checking, our duties are not fulfilled.

物雖小 勿私藏
A thing may be small but do not conceal.

苟私藏 親心傷
Keeping secrets, how will our parents feel.[9]

親所好 力為具
What our parents like, strive to attain.

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7 *Records on Ritual*: "For all sons it is the rule:—in winter, to warm (the bed for their parents), and to cool it in summer; in the evening, to adjust everything (for their repose), and to inquire (about their health) in the morning" (*Liji* 1.27; Legge 1968, 67).

8 *Records on Ritual*: "A son, when he is going abroad, must inform (his parents where he is going); when he returns, he must present himself before them. Where he travels must be in some fixed (region); what he engages in must be some (reputable) occupation" (*Liji* 1.32; Legge 1968, 68).

9 *Records on Ritual*: "A son and his wife should have no private goods, nor animals, nor vessels; they should not presume to borrow from, or give anything to, another person" (*Liji* 27.968; Legge 1968, 458); "While his parents are alive, a son should not dare to consider his wealth as his own, nor to hold any of it as for his own private use…" (*Liji* 51.1652; Legge 1885, 295).

親所惡 謹為去
What they dislike, take care to refrain.[10]

身有傷 貽親憂
When our body is hurt, this gives them pain.[11]

德有傷 貽親羞
When our virtue is poor, this gives them shame.[12]

親愛我 孝何難
When loved, family reverence is not hard to do.

親憎我 孝方賢
When hated, family reverence is a virtue.[13]

10 *Records on Ritual*: "They will ask whether they want anything, and then respectfully bring it. All this they will do with an appearance of pleasure to make their parents feel at ease" (*Liji* 27.978; Legge 1968, 451).

11 *Records on Ritual*: "A filial son will not do things in the dark, nor attempt hazardous undertakings, fearing lest he disgrace his parents. While his parents are alive, he will not promise a friend to die (with or for him)" (*Liji* 1.35; Legge 1968, 69). The *Classic on Family Reverence* also states: "Our body, with its hair and skin, are received from our father and mother, and not daring to destroy or injure them is the beginning of family reverence."

12 *Records on Ritual*: "Although his parents be dead, when a son is inclined to do what is good, he should think that he will thereby transmit the good name of his parents, and carry his wish into effect. When he is inclined to do what is not good, he should think that he will thereby bring disgrace on the name of his parents, and in no wise carry his wish into effect" (*Liji* 27.978; Legge 1968, 457); "Of all that Heaven produces and Earth nourishes, there is none so great as man. His parents give birth to his person all complete, and to return it to them all complete may be called filial duty. When no member has been mutilated and no disgrace done to any part of the person, it may be called complete; and hence a superior man does not dare to take the slightest step in forgetfulness of his filial duty" (*Liji* 48.1559; Legge 1885, 229).

13 *Records on Ritual*: "When his parents love him, to rejoice, and not allow himself to forget them; when they hate him, to fear and yet feel no resentment" (*Liji* 48.1556; Legge 1885, 228).

親有過 諫使更
When parents have a fault, advise to improve.

怡吾色 柔吾聲
With a kind manner and gentle voice to soothe.[14]

諫不入 悅複諫
If the advice is dismissed, try again when they are happier.

號泣隨 撻無怨
With emotion and tears, if they get angry do not feel bitter.[15]

親有疾 藥先嘗
When parents are unwell, assist with treatment.[16]

14 *Records on Ritual*: "A filial son, cherishing a deep love (for his parents), is sure to have a bland air; having a bland air, he will have a look of pleasure; having a look of pleasure, his demeanour will be mild and compliant" (*Liji* 47.1539; Legge 1885, 215–216).

15 *Records on Ritual*: "In serving your father and mother, you may gently admonish them. But if you see they have no intention of listening to you, then be respectful as before and do not disobey them. You might feel distressed but should never feel resentful" (*Lunyu* 4.18; Watson 2007, 34); "In the service of his parents by a son, if he have (*sic*) thrice remonstrated and is still not listened to, he should follow (his remonstrance) with loud crying and tears" (*Liji* 5.175; Legge 1968, 114). The *Classic of Family Reverence* also states: "The father had remonstrating children and would not be mired in improper deeds. Thus, when there is improper conduct, a child must remonstrate with their father and a subordinate must remonstrate with their superior. Since remonstrance is required in the case of improper conduct, how can a child practice family reverence by following their father's every instruction?" See also Legge 1968, 456–457; Legge 1885, 228, 290.

16 *Records on Ritual*: "When an ailing parent is ill, and has to drink medicine, the son first tastes it. The physic of a doctor, in whose family medicine has not been practised for three generations at least, should not be taken" (*Liji* 5.175–176; Legge 1968, 114).

晝夜侍 不離床
Attend day and night, by their side each moment.[17]

喪三年 常悲咽
When mourning, remember in sadness.[18]

居處變 酒肉絕
Live simply, abstain from indulgence.[19]

喪盡禮 祭盡誠
Funeral and memorial, with all of one's heart.

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17 *Records on Ritual*: "When his father or mother is ill, (a young man) who has been capped should not use his comb, nor walk with his elbows stuck out, nor speak on idle topics, nor take his lute or cithern in hand. He should not eat of (different) meats till his taste is changed, nor drink till his looks are changed. He should not laugh so as to show his teeth, nor be angry till he breaks forth in reviling. When the illness is gone, he may resume his former habits" (*Liji* 2.77; Legge 1968, 83).

18 *Analects*: "If after three years he hasn't changed his father's way of doing things, then you can call him filial" (*Lunyu* 1.11; Watson 2007, 17). *Records on Ritual*: "A son, three years after his birth, ceases to be carried in the arms of his parents. The mourning of three years is the universal rule of all under heaven" (*Liji* 58.1820; Legge 1885, 394). *Classic of Family Reverence*: "Limiting the mourning period to three years shows the people that there is an end."

19 *Records on Ritual*: "According to the same rules (for the period of mourning for his father), if he have (*sic*) a scab on his head, he should wash it; if he have (*sic*) a sore on his body, he should bathe it. If he be ill, he should drink spirits, and eat flesh, returning to his former abstinence when he is better. If he make (*sic*) himself unable to perform his mourning duties, that is like being unkind and unfilial. If he be fifty, he should not allow himself to be reduced (by his abstinence) very much; and, if he be sixty, not at all. At seventy, he will only wear the unhemmed dress of sackcloth, and will drink and eat flesh, and occupy (the usual apartment) inside (his house)" (*Liji* 3.88; Legge 1968, 87–88); "When he came back to the house from completing the grave, he did not venture to occupy his chamber, but dwelt in the mourning shed, lamenting that his parent was now outside. He slept on the rushes, with a clod for his pillow, lamenting that his parent was in the ground. Therefore he wailed and wept, without regard to time; he endured the toil and grief for three years. His heart of loving thoughts showed the mind of the filial son, and was the real expression of his human feelings" (*Liji* 56.1791–1792; Legge 1885, 377).

事死者 如事生
Honor our parents just as if they did not depart.[20]

出則弟
Continue with Fraternal Deference

兄道友 弟道恭
Older brothers befriend, younger brothers revere.

兄弟睦 孝在中
When brothers get along, love of parents is there.[21]

財物輕 怨何生
Put wealth and goods second, how could hatred arise.

言語忍 忿自泯
Holding back words, anger naturally subsides.

或飲食 或坐走
Whether eating, drinking, walking, or sitting.

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20 *Analects*: "While they are alive, serve them according to ritual. When they die, bury them according to ritual, and sacrifice to them in accord with ritual" (*Lunyu* 2.5; Watson 2007, 20). *Records on Ritual*: "Such is the filial son to the end of life. By 'the end of life,' I mean not the end of parents' lives, but the end of his own life" (*Liji* 28.995; Legge 1968, 467); "The filial son, in sacrificing, seems never able to exhaust his earnest purpose, his sincerity, and reverence. He observes every rule, without transgression or shortcoming. His reverence appears in his movements of advancing and retiring, as if he were hearing the orders (of his parents), or as if they were perhaps directing him" (*Liji* 47.1538; Legge 1885, 214–215).

21 *Practice of the Mean*: "The *Odes* says: 'Happy accord with one's wife and children is like the playing of zither and lute; in accord between older and younger brothers, there is harmonious joy and pleasure. Let all be as it should be in your household, and there will be joy among your wife and offspring.' The Master said: 'Surely this accords with the parents' wishes'" (Johnston and Wang 2012, 261).

長者先 幼者後
The elder first, the younger following.[22]

長呼人 即代叫
When an elder calls for someone, find them with haste.

人不在 己即到
If that person is absent, respond in their place.

稱尊長 勿呼名
Do not address by name, the respected or elder.[23]

對尊長 勿見能
Before such elders, do not show off or be clever.

路遇長 疾趨揖
On seeing an elder, approach quickly to greet.

長無言 退恭立
If they do not respond, respectfully retreat.[24]

騎下馬 乘下車
If riding a horse or carriage, do alight.

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22 *Records on Ritual*: "The elder (meantime) lifts (his cup); but until he has emptied it, the [junior] does not presume to drink his."; "when going out or coming in at a gate or door, and going to their mats to eat and drink, they were required to follow their elders" (*Liji* 2.73 and 28.1012; Legge 1968, 81, 478).

23 *Essential Instructions for the Young*: "When addressing one's elders, one should not use their given names" (*Tongmeng xuzhi* 6).

24 *Records on Ritual*: "When he meets his teacher on the road, he should hasten forward to him, and stand with his hands joined across his breast. If the teacher speak to him, he will answer; if he [does] not, he will retire with hasty steps" (*Liji* 2.40; Legge 1968, 70). *Essential Instructions for the Young*: "Whenever you encounter an elder on the road, you should immediately stand up straight, clasp your hands, and promptly hasten to approach them with a respectful bow" (*Tongmeng xuzhi* 7).

過猶待 百步餘
After they pass, wait till they are out of sight.

長者立 幼勿坐
When an elder is standing, the younger should too.[25]

長者坐 命乃坐
When an elder sits, the younger waits to sit too.

尊長前 聲要低
With the respected or elder, use a soft tone.

低不聞 卻非宜
But not so soft that our words will remain unknown.[26]

進必趨 退必遲
Approach them quickly but leave slowly.[27]

問起對 視勿移
Answer questions looking directly.[28]

事諸父 如事父
Serve uncles as if our father.

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25 *Records on Ritual*: "Whenever one's parents are present, even when one is old, one should not sit" (*Liji* 28.995).

26 *Essential Instructions for the Young*: "As a child or junior, one must always maintain a gentle voice and humble demeanour" (*Tongmeng xuzhi* 5).

27 *Records on Ritual*: "When he sees an intimate friend of his father, not to presume to go forward to him without being told to do so; nor to retire without being told; nor to address him without being questioned:—this is the conduct of a filial son" (*Liji* 1.29; Legge 1968, 68).

28 *Records on Ritual*: "When one, in attendance on a superior man, replies to a question without looking round to see (if any other be going to answer), this is contrary to rule" (*Liji* 4.126; Legge 1968, 101).

事諸兄 如事兄
Treat male cousins as our brothers.[29]

謹
Being Attentive

朝起早 夜眠遲
Early to rise but sleep not too late.

老易至 惜此時
Cherish the present, time does not wait.[30]

晨必盥 兼漱口
After waking, face must be washed and teeth brushed.[31]

便溺回 輒淨手
After the toilet, hand washing is a must.[32]

冠必正 紐必結
Clothes are to be worn neatly.

襪與履 俱緊切
Socks and shoes done up tightly.[33]

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29 *Records on Ritual*: "He should serve one twice as old as himself as he serves his father, one ten years older than himself as an elder brother; with one five years older he should walk shoulder to shoulder, but (a little) behind him" (*Liji* 1.32; Legge 1968, 68).

30 *Essential Instructions for the Young*: "All children and juniors must rise early and sleep late" (*Tongmeng xuzhi* 6).

31 *Records on Ritual*: "All charged with the care of the inner and outer parts (of the house), at the first crowing of the cock, should wash their hands and mouths, gather up their pillows and fine mats, sprinkle and sweep out the apartments, hall, and courtyard, and spread the mats, each doing his proper work" (*Liji* 27.971; Legge 1968, 452).

32 *Essential Instructions for the Young*: "Whenever using the restroom, one must remove outer garments, and always wash hands afterwards" (*Tongmeng xuzhi* 7).

33 *Essential Instructions for the Young*: "When putting on clothes, make sure to adjust the collar and lapels, fasten the two lappets, tie belts securely, ensuring nothing is left loose" (*Tongmeng xuzhi* 5).

置冠服 有定位
Store our hats and clothes in their right proper place.[34]

勿亂頓 致污穢
Do not leave them around, keep them clean and safe.[35]

衣貴潔 不貴華
Value clothes for being clean not fancy.

上循分 下稱家
Dress to our role and in the family.[36]

對飲食 勿揀擇
In food and drink, do not fuss.

食適可 勿過則
Just eat enough, not too much.[37]

年方少 勿飲酒
Do not drink alcohol at a young age.

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34 *Essential Instructions for the Young*: "In general, as a person, one should begin with maintaining a tidy appearance, taking care of one's cap and headcloth, clothing, shoes, and socks, ensuring they are orderly, and kept clean and tidy" (*Tongmeng xuzhi* 5).

35 *Essential Instructions for the Young*: "When disrobing, always neatly fold and place them in boxes or chests, avoid leaving them in a disorderly or haphazard mess. This way, they won't be soiled by dust and dirt, and will be easily retrievable without risk of loss" (*Tongmeng xuzhi* 5).

36 *Records on Ritual*: "A lad should not wear a jacket of fur nor the skirt" (*Liji* 1.37; Legge 1968, 70).

37 *Essential Instructions for the Young*: "When it comes to food and drink, eat what you have it, do not dwell on what you don't have...In all things related to food and drink, do not contend over their quantity or quality" (*Tongmeng xuzhi* 6).

飲酒醉 最為醜
Getting drunk is ugly at any stage.[38]

步從容 立端正
Walk without hurry, and stand up straight.[39]

揖深圓 拜恭敬
Bow deeply, kowtow to venerate.[40]

勿踐閾 勿跛倚
Do not step on doorsills, lean, or on one leg stay.[41]

勿箕踞 勿搖髀
Do not sit legs apart, or lower body sway.[42]

38 *Analects*: "Only in the case of wine did he have no fixed limit, but he never drank to the point of confusion" (*Lunyu* 10.8; Watson 2007, 68). *Essential Instructions for the Young*: "When drinking alcohol, one must not allow oneself to become drunk" (*Tongmeng xuzhi* 7).

39 *Records on Ritual*: "If a man be sitting, let him do so as a personator of the deceased; if he be standing, let him do so (reverently), as in sacrificing" (*Liji* 1.13; Legge 1968, 62). *Essential Instructions for the Young*: "When walking fast or slow, one should maintain an upright posture and avoid rushing, running, leaping and staggering" (*Tongmeng xuzhi* 5).

40 *Essential Instructions for the Young*: "When bowing to another person, one must bend at the waist" (*Tongmeng xuzhi* 6).

41 *Analects*: "[Confucius] never stood in the middle of the gateway or stepped on the threshold" (*Lunyu* 10.4; Watson 2007, 66). *Records on Ritual*: "A great officer or (other) officer should go out or in at the ruler's doors, on the right of the middle post, without treading on the threshold" (*Liji* 2.43; Legge 1968, 71); "(A Great officer) on a mission from another court, did not enter at the middle of (either half of) the gate, nor tread on the threshold" (*Liji* 30.1076; Legge 1885, 24).

42 *Records on Ritual*: "Do not saunter about with a haughty gait, nor stand with one foot raised. Do not sit with your knees wide apart, nor sleep on your face" (*Liji* 2.56; Legge 1968, 76).

緩揭簾 勿有聲
Open curtains slowly, do not make sound.[43]

寬轉彎 勿觸棱
Do not bump corners when walking around.

執虛器 如執盈
Hold empty containers as if full, with care.

入虛室 如有人
Enter empty rooms as if someone was there.[44]

事勿忙 忙多錯
Do not rush tasks, else mistakes will be many.[45]

勿畏難 勿輕略
Do not fear the tough, nor discount the easy.

鬥鬧場 絕勿近
Disorderly places, one should never go in.[46]

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43 *Essential Instructions for the Young*: "When opening doors or lifting curtains, one must do so slowly and gently, avoiding causing a startling or noisy sounds" (*Tongmeng xuzhi* 6).

44 *Records on Ritual*: "An empty vessel was carried (with the same care) as a full one, and an empty apartment entered (with the same reverence) as if there were people in it" (*Liji* 35.1202; Legge 1885, 75). *Essential Instructions for the Young*: "When handling utensils and vessels, one must be duly careful, to prevent any mishaps" (*Tongmeng xuzhi* 7).

45 *Analects*: "Don't try to hurry things; don't go after petty gain. Try to hurry, and you accomplish nothing. Go after petty gain, and the big undertakings won't succeed" (*Lunyu* 13.17; Watson 2007, 91). *Words for Children*: "What we say and do, stay calm; Rush leads to mistakes and harm."

46 *Essential Instructions for the Young*: "Do not approach any place of noise and contention" (*Tongmeng xuzhi* 6).

邪僻事 絕勿問
Strange or improper things, never ask about them.[47]

將入門 問孰存
Before entering the main gate, ask who is there.

將上堂 聲必揚
Before entering a room, those inside should hear.[48]

人問誰 對以名
If someone asks, use our name to reply.

吾與我 不分明
It is not clear to just say "me" or "I."[49]

用人物 須明求
Ask for permission before taking.

倘不問 即為偷
Without asking first, it is stealing.[50]

借人物 及時還
Return on time the items borrowed.

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47 *Analects*: "If it is contrary to ritual, don't look at it. If it is contrary to ritual, don't listen to it. If it is contrary to ritual, don't utter it. If it is contrary to ritual, don't do it" (*Lunyu* 12.1; Watson 2007, 80).

48 *Records on Ritual*: "When about to go up to the hall (of a house), he must raise his voice" (*Liji* 2.41; Legge 1968, 70–71).

49 *Essential Instructions for the Young*: "When responding to parents, elders, or friends, one must use one's name" (*Tongmeng xuzhi* 6).

50 *Essential Instructions for the Young*: "Where one's father, elder brothers, or superiors attend to matters, or deal with papers and correspondence, if there is any disorder or disarray, one must carefully arrange them in order. Do not take or use anything on one's own initiative" (*Tongmeng xuzhi* 6).

後有急 借不難
If in need, then easier to loan.[51]

信
Honesty

凡出言 信為先
Honesty comes first in speech.

詐與妄 奚可焉
How can one deceive and cheat?[52]

話說多 不如少
With words, the less spoken, the better.[53]

惟其是 勿佞巧
Tell the truth, do not charm or flatter.[54]

奸巧語 穢污詞
Avoid coarse language and cunning speech.[55]

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51 *Essential Instructions for the Young*: "Whenever borrowing someone's written materials, one must kept a record of the owner's name, and return them promptly" (*Tongmeng xuzhi* 6).

52 *Analects*: "Persons who lack trustworthiness—I don't know how they get by! Big carts that have no yoke-bar, little carts that have no collar-bar—how can you go anywhere in them?" (*Lunyu* 2.22; Watson 2007, 23).

53 *Analects*: "The gentleman desires to be hesitant in speech but prompt in action" (*Lunyu* 4.24; Watson 2007, 34).

54 *Records on Ritual*: "According to those rules (of propriety), one should not (seek to) please others in an improper way, nor be lavish of his words" (*Liji* 2.15; Legge 1968, 63).

55 *Analects*: "The Master said, Clever words and a pleasing countenance—little humaneness there!" (*Lunyu* 1.3; Watson 2007, 16). Confucius voices similar criticism of "cunning speech" (*qiaoyan* 巧言) in other passages (*Lunyu* 5.25, 15.27, 17.17; Watson 2007, 39, 109, and 123).

市井氣 切戒之
Avoid crude habits, never breach.

見未真 勿輕言
If we have not seen it, do not share the news.

知未的 勿輕傳
If we are uncertain, do not spread the views.

事非宜 勿輕諾
If not appropriate, do not promise lightly.

苟輕諾 進退錯
To keep or break such promises is not easy.[56]

凡道字 重且舒
Articulate our words, be slow and clear.

勿急疾 勿模糊
Do not mumble or talk too fast to hear.

彼說長 此說短
Some talk on merits and faults of others meanly.

不關己 莫閒管
Do not get involved if it does not concern me.[57]

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56 *Records on Ritual*: "Dissatisfaction and calamity will come to him whose lip-kindness is not followed by the corresponding deeds. Therefore the superior man will rather incur the resentment arising from his refusal than the charge of promising (and then not fulfilling)" (*Liji* 54.1744; Legge 1885, 349).

57 *Records on Ritual*: "Outside affairs should not be talked of inside the threshold (of the women's apartments), nor inside (or women's) affairs outside it" (*Liji* 2.59; Legge 1968, 77). *Essential Instructions for the Young*: "Whenever one hears of others' wrongdoing, even as lowly as servants and maidservants making mistakes, it is advisable to temporarily conceal it and not immediately voice it. Rather, one should inform them privately, so that they may understand and make amends" (*Tongmeng xuzhi* 5).

見人善 即思齊
See the good in others, think to equal their success.

縱去遠 以漸躋
Though they far surpass us, we can make steady progress.[58]

見人惡 即內省
See the faults of others, one must promptly reflect.[59]

有則改 無加警
Change if we have the same, or else readily detect.

唯德學 唯才藝
When learning of virtue and skillful ability

不如人 當自礪
are worse than others, we need to improve actively.[60]

若衣服 若飲食
If what we eat or if what we wear

不如人 勿生慼
are worse than others, do not despair.[61]

聞過怒 聞譽樂
If annoyed by criticism, enjoying praise,

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58 *Analects*: "When you see a worthy person, think about how you can equal him. When you see an unworthy person, reflect on your own conduct" (*Lunyu* 4.17; Watson 2007, 34).

59 Ibid.

60 *Analects*: "He sees what is good and acts as though he could never attain it, sees what is not good and acts as though he had put his hand in scalding water" (*Lunyu* 16.11; Watson 2007, 117).

61 *Analects*: "A man of station whose will is set on the Way but who is ashamed of poor clothing and poor food—not worth talking to!" (*Lunyu* 4.9; Watson 2007, 33).

損友來 益友卻
good friends leave and bad company associate.

聞譽恐 聞過欣
If welcoming criticism and nervous with praise,

直諒士 漸相親
those noble and true befriend in the coming days.[62]

無心非 名為錯
A mistake it is if by accident.

有心非 名為惡
A misdeed it is if done with intent.[63]

過能改 歸於無
If we improve, our wrongs will cease.[64]

倘揜飾 增一辜
Cover them up and faults increase.[65]

62 *Analects*: "Authoritative words—can one fail to heed them? But what is important is that they bring about a change in you. Words of friendly advice—can one fail to delight in them? But what is important is to interpret them correctly. To delight but not interpret, to heed but not change—I can do nothing with those who take that approach" (*Lunyu* 9.24; Watson 2007, 63). *Further Words for Children*: "Praise brings joy, advice brings woe; Your strengths and faults you well know."

63 *Zuo Tradition*: "Who among men is without errors? Having erred and being capable of correction—there is no good greater than that" (Durrant et al. 2016, 593).

64 *Analects*: "The gentleman's errors are like eclipses of the sun or moon. His errors can be seen by all, and when he corrects them, all look up in admiration" (*Lunyu* 19.21; Watson 2007, 136).

65 *Analects*: "To make a mistake and not correct it is to make a mistake indeed" (*Lunyu* 15.30; Watson 2007, 109). *Words for Children*: "If it is my mistake, do not cover up; That never works, and another fault adds up."

汎愛眾
Love All Broadly

凡是人 皆須愛
All of humanity we must love.

天同覆 地同載
Sharing the earth, below and above.[66]

行高者 名自高
Those of noble deeds gain great influence.

人所重 非貌高
What people honor is not appearance.

才大者 望自大
Those of great talent will gain great reputation.

人所服 非言大
What people admire is not exaggeration.

己有能 勿自私
If we are competent, do not be selfish.[67]

人有能 勿輕訾
Of someone's competence, do not disparage.

勿諂富 勿驕貧
Do not flatter the rich or look down on the poor.[68]

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66 *Records on Ritual*: "Heaven overspreads all without partiality; Earth sustains and contains all without partiality; the Sun and Moon shine on all without partiality" (*Liji* 51.1630; Legge 1885, 281).

67 *Analects*: "The humane person wants standing, and so he helps others to gain standing. He wants achievement, and so he helps others to achieve" (*Lunyu* 6.30; Watson 2007, 46).

68 *Analects*: "Zigong said, Poor but free of obsequiousness, rich but free of arrogance—how would that do? The Master said, All right. But not as good as poor but happy in the Way, rich but a lover of rites" (*Lunyu* 1.15; Watson 2007, 18).

勿厭故 勿喜新
Do not ignore old friends, just seeking after more.[69]

人不閒 勿事攪
When someone is busy, do not bother.

人不安 勿話擾
When someone feels troubled, do not chatter.

人有短 切莫揭
A person's flaws, never lay bare.

人有私 切莫說
A person's secrets, never share.[70]

道人善 即是善
To speak of someone's good is a good itself.

人知之 愈思勉
Knowing they are praised, they will improve themselves.[71]

揚人惡 即是惡
To speak of someone's wrongs is a misdeed.

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69 *Records on Ritual*: "Relations should not forget their relationship, nor old acquaintances their friendship" (*Liji* 10.376; Legge 1968, 199).

70 *Analects*: "He hates those who go on about what is hateful in others" (*Lunyu* 17.24; Watson 2007, 125). *Essential Instructions for the Young*: "Whenever one hears of others' wrongdoing, even as lowly as servants and maidservants making mistakes, it is advisable to temporarily conceal it and not immediately voice it. Rather, one should inform them privately, so that they may understand and make amends" (*Tongmeng xuzhi* 5).

71 *Analects*: "The delight of regulating oneself with rites and music, the delight of speaking of others' good points, the delight of having many worthy friends—these are beneficial" (*Lunyu* 16.5; Watson 2007, 116). *Records on Ritual*: "If (the ruler) ascribe (*sic*) what is good to others, and what is wrong to himself, the people will not contend (among themselves). If he ascribe (*sic*) what is good to others, and what is wrong to himself, dissatisfactions will more and more disappear" (*Liji* 51.1644; Legge 1885, 288–289).

疾之甚 禍且作
At its worst, slander leads to misery.[72]

善相勸 德皆建
Encourage each other to be good, both can cultivate.[73]

過不規 道兩虧
Not correcting each other, both will deteriorate.

凡取與 貴分曉
To give or to take, know one's share.

與宜多 取宜少
To give more and take less is fair.

將加人 先問己
Before asking of others, ask of oneself first.

己不欲 即速已
If we would not do so, do not put them to work.[74]

恩欲報 怨欲忘
Repay kindness, forget the rest.

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72 *Words for Children*: "Those spreading rumors, who does not fear? Law and principle, we must adhere."

73 *Analects*: "Zigong asked how to deal with friends. The Master said, Advise them in a loyal manner; lead them with goodness. But if you get nowhere, then stop. No use to bring shame on yourself" (*Lunyu* 12.23; Watson 2007, 85). *Classic of Family Reverence*: "The lower official had remonstrating friends and could preserve their illustrious character." *Mencius*: "To demand goodness of one another is the Way of friends" (*Mengzi* 4B.30; Bloom 2009, 94).

74 *Analects*: "Zigong asked, Is there a single word that can guide a person's conduct throughout life? The Master said, That would be reciprocity, wouldn't it? What you do not want others to do to you, do not do to others" (*Lunyu* 15.24; Watson 2007, 109).

報怨短 報恩長
Be more grateful and complain less.

待婢僕 身貴端
With our attendants, act to inspire respect.

雖貴端 慈而寬
Be warm and forgiving even if correct.[75]

勢服人 心不然
Imposing on others, they will resist inside.

理服人 方無言
Reasoning with others, they will be on our side.[76]

親仁
Learn from Those of Humanity

同是人 類不齊
All are human but they differ in integrity.

流俗眾 仁者希
Most follow the crowd, few cultivate humanity.

果仁者 人多畏
Those of humanity, many will revere.

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75 *Essential Instructions for the Young*: "In all dealings with maids and servants, one must maintain propriety and order, and not engage in jokes and laughter with them" (*Tongmeng xuzhi* 7). *Further Words for Children*: "Train one's servants with care and grace; Skilled hands would find another place."

76 *Mencius*: "When one uses force to make people submit, they do not submit in their hearts but only because their strength is insufficient. When one uses Virtue to make people submit, they are pleased to the depths of their hearts, and they sincerely submit. So it was with the seventy disciples who submitted to Confucius" (*Mengzi* 2A.3; Bloom 2009, 33).

言不諱 色不媚
As they speak frankly and are always sincere.[77]

能親仁 無限好
Near those of humanity, we benefit greatly.

德日進 過日少
Our faults will be fewer and our virtues grow daily.[78]

不親仁 無限害
Not learning from them is our immense loss.

小人進 百事壞
As the wrong friends draw near, all will be worse.

餘力學文
Study Literature to Supplement

不力行 但學文
To just learn literature without experience.

長浮華 成何人
What will become of us as we grow in arrogance.

但力行 不學文
To just practice without checking our learning.

77 *Records on Ritual*: "The superior man takes no erroneous step before men, nor errs in the expression of his countenance, nor in the language of his speech. Therefore his demeanour induces awe, his countenance induces fear, and his words produce confidence" (*Liji* 54.1713–1714; Legge 1885, 330).

78 *Records on Ritual*: "Men of talents and virtue can be familiar with others and yet respect them; can stand in awe of others and yet love them" (*Liji* 2.15; Legge 1968, 62).

任己見 昧理真
We think we know but we lack understanding.[79]

讀書法 有三到
The method for study has three aspects.

心眼口 信皆要
Focus, read, say aloud for best effect.[80]

方讀此 勿慕彼
When reading this book, do not think of another.

此未終 彼勿起
If this is not finished, do not start another.

寬為限 緊用功
Set our goals high, work hard without fear.

工夫到 滯塞通
When we master it, then all be clear.

心有疑 隨札記
Make a note when unsure in thinking.

79 *Analects*: "The Master said, Acquire broad learning in cultural matters, focus it through ritual, and you are hardly likely to go far astray—isn't that so?" (*Lunyu* 12.15; Watson 2007, 83).

80 *Essential Instructions for the Young*: "I have often said that there are three levels of reading: reading with the heart, reading with the eyes, and reading with the mouth. If your heart is not in it, your eyes won't pay attention to the details. When your heart and eyes are not focused, simply reciting without understanding will not lead to memorisation, and even if you do memorise, it won't last. Among these three levels, focusing your heart is the most critical. When your heart is focused, won't your eyes and mouth follow suit?" (*Tongmeng xuzhi* 6).

就人問 求確義
Ask the right person for the meaning.[81]

房室清 牆壁淨
One's room and walls are to be clear and clean.

几案潔 筆硯正
The pens are to be neat, the desk to gleam.[82]

墨磨偏 心不端
Writing tools not straight shows we are careless.

字不敬 心先病
Poor handwriting shows our lack of focus.[83]

列典籍 有定處
Arrange books in their correct space.

讀看畢 還原處
Once read, return books to their place.[84]

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81 *Practice of the Mean*: "If you have not enquired, or have enquired but not understood it, do not put it aside" (Johnston and Wang 2012, 321).

82 *Essential Instructions for the Young*: "When reading a book, it is necessary to organise the desk, ensuring it is clean, clear, and properly ordered. Arrange the texts and documents neatly in order" (*Tongmeng xuzhi* 6).

83 *Essential Instructions for the Young*: "When writing, one must hold the inkstick high, grind it meticulously, and avoid staining one's hands with ink. Hold the brush high, in the *shuanggou* 雙鉤 (outline) method, and write characters in an orderly standard script, without allowing the hand to smudge the paper." Moreover, "When writing characters, before considering the skill or clumsiness of the writing, focus on each stroke, maintaining a careful, correct and clear execution without careless scrawl" (*Tongmeng xuzhi* 6).

84 *Essential Instructions for the Young*: "Every child or pupil should sweep their living area, dust and wipe their desks so that it is clean and clear. Papers, brushes and inkstones, along with various instruments and implements are to be kept in careful order, completely tidy, stored in a regular place, and returned there after use" (*Tongmeng xuzhi* 6).

雖有急 卷束齊
Take care of one's books even in a rush.

有缺壞 就補之
For defects, apply a repairing touch.[85]

非聖書 屏勿視
If not a text of wisdom, do not read.

蔽聰明 壞心志
It will cloud one's mind and ruin one's dream.

勿自暴 勿自棄
Our potential, do not damage nor deny.[86]

聖與賢 可馴致
And then we can surely be worthy and wise.[87]

85 *Essential Instructions for the Young*: "One must take care of all documents and books and not let them be damaged, soiled, crinkled or broken. If Jiang Lu of Jiyang hadn't finished reading the document, although there was an urgent matter, he would not leave without closing the text and put it in order. This is the most exemplary standard" (*Tongmeng xuzhi* 6).

86 *Mencius*: "With those who do violence to themselves, one cannot speak, nor can one interact with those who throw themselves away. To deny propriety and rightness in one's speech is what is called 'doing violence to oneself.' To say, 'I am unable to abide in humaneness or to follow rightness' is what is called 'throwing oneself away'" (*Mengzi* 4A.10; Bloom 2009, 79).

87 *Practice of the Mean*: "Even if others can do it after one attempt, you must make a hundred attempts. Even if others can do it after ten attempts, you must make a thousand attempts. If you are resolutely able to follow this Way, even if you are foolish, you will inevitably become enlightened; even if you are weak, you will inevitably become strong" (Johnston and Wang 2012, 321).

ESSENTIALS OF DAILY ETIQUETTE 常禮舉要 (MODERN CHINA, 1959)

Compiled by Li Bingnan李炳南 (1891–1986) in 1959, the *Essentials of Daily Etiquette* stands out as the latest composition compared to the other primers in this volume. The *Essentials* draws on elements of traditional etiquette from the established canon of ritual texts—the *Rites of Zhou*, the *Ceremonial Rites* (*Yili* 儀禮), and the *Records on Ritual*—that remain relevant for harmonious interpersonal interactions (Xu 2012, 15). The contents take the form of guidelines that are thematically arranged in twelve sections relating to various aspects of modern life—from home and school interactions, to dining, visiting others, receiving visitors, traveling, gift-giving, and attending weddings and funerals. The concise format of the *Essentials of Daily Etiquette* is designed to facilitate regular familiarization and practice, as emphasized by its author.

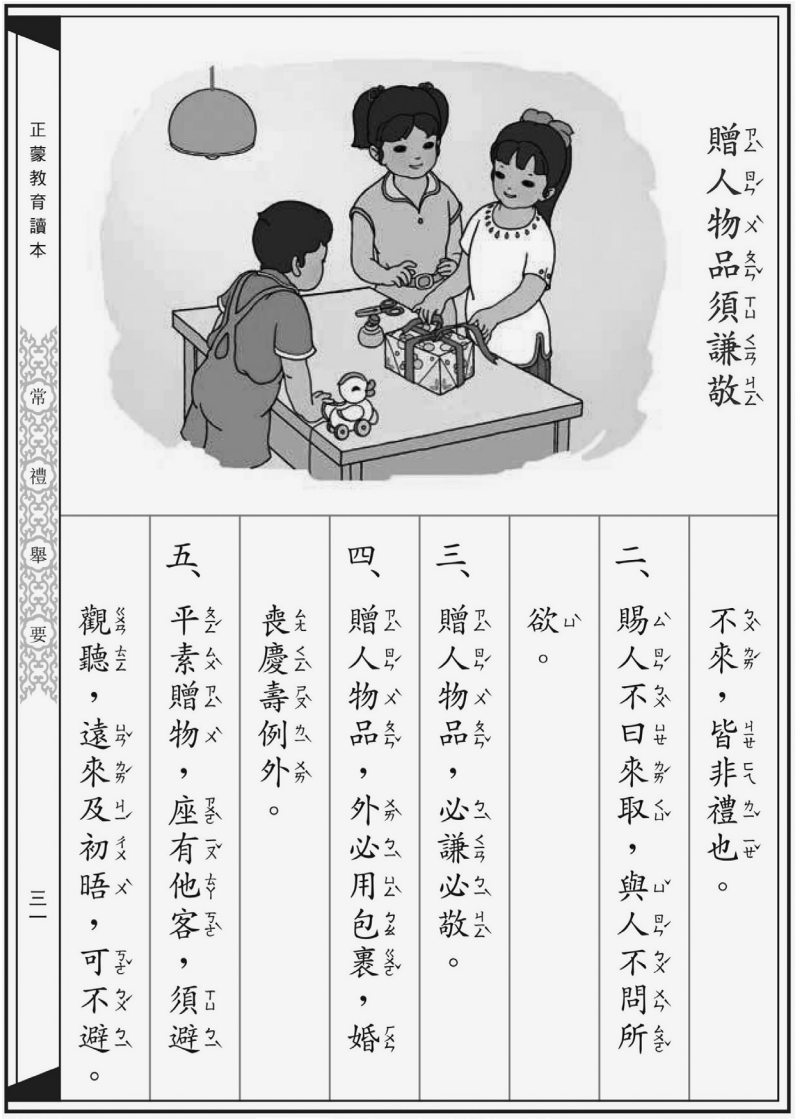


Figure 23. Page 31 from a modern edition of the *Essentials of Daily Etiquette* with illustrations. Courtesy of the Hwadzan Pure Land Association.

ESSENTIALS OF DAILY ETIQUETTE

Li Bingnan 李炳南

緣起
Preface

禮節這件事，在人羣中，是決不能少的；就是極野蠻的民族，亦有他們的一套禮節。人與人交通感情，事與事維持秩序，國與國保持常態，皆是禮節從中周旋的力量。

Etiquette is crucial within social groups, even the most primitive or uncivilized societies will have their own set of etiquette. It is the power of etiquette that facilitates the emotional connection between individuals, maintains order in various matters, and ensures normalcy in interactions between nations.

自從一般人，不察實際，好奇務怪，起來反對禮教，硬說禮教是吃人的猛獸，主張把他打倒以後，大家就對禮節存了輕視的心理，自己不去做，也不肯再去教導子弟。這個問題，並不簡單，決不是中國人單獨的問題。行得通，行不通，却也不敢斷定了！但是現在還是行不通。

Those who are out of touch with practical reality and curious about peculiar ways have opposed etiquette. Persisting in the view that etiquette is a monstrous predator, they advocated its elimination. Since then, many look down on etiquette, they no longer practice it themselves nor teach

their children. This issue is not a simple matter, nor is it just a matter for Chinese people. Whether or not etiquette is practicable, one dares not to make any definitive judgments. However, it remains difficult to practice etiquette nowadays.

請看今天客來了，明天訪客去，這裏來饋贈，那裏請聚餐，東街慶弔，西街開會。仔細一考查，還是把那些禮節，一套跟著一套的排演。有人說這些事沒有學過，誰能曉得。
Imagine—a guest comes over today, you visit someone tomorrow, a present is given here, a dinner is hosted there, there are occasions for celebration and condolences on the street to the east, there is a meeting held on the street to the west. On close examination, there are still forms of etiquette being performed one after the other. Some say, "Who could possibly understand these things without having learned them?"

那怕你不曉得，你只管不去做，過後請去聽吧！七言八語，訕笑譏誚，絲毫不客氣的，都發表出來了。什麼某人豈有此理，未曾受過教育、沒有常識、粗卑不堪、不近人情、見過場面、真討厭、極可笑、遠著他、少來往，一連串的這些名詞，就都給你加在頭上。你的前途，一切一切，也怕因此受到影響！
Even if you do not know what to do and you do not bother with the etiquette, listen out for what comes next. There will be gossip and ridicule without the slightest misgivings—"how ridiculous," "so uncivilized," "lacks common sense," "unbearably crude," "simply unfeeling," "they have never been to such occasions," "truly loathsome," "extremely laughable," "stay away from them," "avoid contact," a string of labels will be attached to you. As a result, it is likely that your prospects, in every aspect, will be affected.

再看那些反對禮教的人，見了比他地位高的人，他也是脫帽鞠躬；見了外國人，也是去拉手；不經通報，你直跑進他的房裏去，他也是不高興；他送你東西，你不說謝謝，他也是不痛快。這真矛盾，為什麼他嘴裏反對禮教，他還去拘泥這些形迹呢？可見他們是空倡怪論，自己也不能實行，專去欺騙他人，尤其是欺騙天真爛漫的青年人。深刻一點說，簡直是損害青年人的社會事業發展！
Let us examine the actions of those who disapprove of etiquette. They take their hat off and bow on meeting those in a senior position. They will shake hands when meeting a foreigner. If you enter their office without

prior notice, they will be displeased. If you do not express gratitude on receipt of their gift, they will be offended. This is utterly contradictory—why do they oppose the teaching of etiquette and yet adhere to these formalities? Evidently, they are advocating empty and unfeasible arguments, which they themselves cannot put into practice. They are intent on deceiving others, especially innocent young people. It could even be said that they are practically harming the social and professional development of the youth!

我是在社會裏碰過壁的人，也是吃過無限虧的人。知道沒有禮節，萬事行不通。我深恐青年同胞，不懂禮節，也免不了到處碰壁吃虧，特意檢出通常用的幾條來，貢獻給大家，做箇參考。要知禮節是不妨人的美德，是恭敬人的善行，也是自己一種光榮的徽章，是必要通達的！

I am someone who has encountered challenges in life and suffered innumerable setbacks. I understand that nothing can be achieved without etiquette. I am deeply concerned about the younger generation who will inevitably suffer obstacles and loss without understanding etiquette. As such, I have selected some common forms of etiquette to share with everyone as a reference. One must understand that etiquette is not troublesome, but a beautiful virtue. It is respectful conduct, a badge of honor for oneself, and something that we cannot do without!

子、居家
I. At Home

一、為人子不晏起，衣被自己整理，晨昏必定省。

1. As a child, we must not sleep in.[1] We must tidy our bed and clothes. We must greet our parents in the morning and make sure that they are resting comfortably at night.[2]

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1 *Essential Instructions for the Young*: "All children and juniors must rise early and sleep late" (*Tongmeng xuzhi* 6).

2 *Records on Ritual*: "For all sons it is the rule:—in winter, to warm (the bed for their parents), and to cool it in summer; in the evening, to adjust everything (for their repose), and to inquire (about their health) in the morning; and, when with their companions, not to quarrel" (*Liji* 1.27; Legge 1968, 67).

二、為人子坐不中席，行不中道。
2. As a child, we must not sit in the seat of honor nor walk in the middle of a pathway.[3]

三、為人子出必告，反必面。
3. As a child, we must let our parents know when we are going out and see them upon our return.[4]

四、長者與物，須兩手捧接。
4. When an elder hands over something, we must receive it with both hands.[5]

五、徐行後長，不疾行先長。
5. When walking, always remain behind an elder. Do not walk swiftly in front of them.[6]

六、長者立，不可坐；長者來，必起立。
6. Do not sit when an elder is standing. Do not remain seated when an elder approaches.

七、不在長者座前踱來踱去。
7. Do not stroll about in front of elders who are seated.

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3 *Records on Ritual*: "A son should not occupy the south-west corner of the apartment, nor sit in the middle of the mat (which he occupies alone), nor walk in the middle of the road, nor stand in the middle of the doorway" (*Liji* 1.33; Legge 1968, 68–69).

4 *Records on Ritual*: "A son, when he is going abroad, must inform (his parents where he is going); when he returns, he must present himself before them" (*Liji* 1.32; Legge 1968, 68).

5 *Records on Ritual*: "When an elder is holding him with the hand, he should hold the elder's hand with both hands" (*Liji* 1.37; Legge 1968, 70).

6 *Records on Ritual*: "He should serve one twice as old as himself as he serves his father, one ten years older than himself as an elder brother; with one five years older he should walk shoulder to shoulder, but (a little) behind him" (*Liji* 1.32; Legge 1968, 68).

八、立不中門，過門不踐門限。
8. Do not stand in the middle of a doorway. When passing through a doorway, do not step on the doorsill.[7]

九、立不一足跛，坐勿展脚如箕，睡眠不仰不伏，右臥如弓。
9. Do not stand on one leg. When sitting, do not spread your legs apart. Do not sleep on one's back or stomach. Sleep on one's right-hand side in a bow position.[8]

十、同桌吃飯，不另備美食獨啖。
10. When dining with others, do not bring gourmet food for oneself.

十一、不挑剔食之美惡。
11. Do not be fussy about one's food.[9]

十二、食時不歎，不訓斥子弟。
12. When dining, do not sigh nor scold the children or younger siblings.[10]

丑、在校
II. At School

一、升降國旗及唱國歌校歌時，肅立示敬。
1. Stand up to show respect when the national flag is being raised or lowered, and while singing the national anthem and the school song.

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7 *Analects*: "[Confucius] never stood in the middle of the gateway or stepped on the threshold" (*Lunyu* 10.4; Watson 2007, 66). *Records on Ritual*: "(A Great officer) on a mission from another court, did not enter at the middle of (either half of) the gate, nor tread on the threshold" (*Liji* 30.1076; Legge 1885, 24).

8 *Records on Ritual*: "Do not saunter about with a haughty gait, nor stand with one foot raised. Do not sit with your knees wide apart, nor sleep on your face" (*Liji* 2.56; Legge 1968, 76).

9 *Analects*: "A man of station whose will is set on the Way but who is ashamed of poor clothing and poor food—not worth talking to!" (*Lunyu* 4.9; Watson 2007, 33).

10 *Records on Ritual*: "When eating (with others), he should not sigh" (*Liji* 3.91; Legge 1968, 89).

二、師長上下課時，起立致敬。
2. At the start and end of class, stand up to pay our respects to the teacher.

三、向師長質疑問難，必起立。
3. A student must stand up when asking the teacher a question.[11]

四、路遇師長，肅立道旁致敬。
4. On meeting a teacher or an elder on the street, respectfully stand aside.[12]

五、聽講時，應端坐或直立；不支頤交股，彎腰，翹足。
5. When listening to a lecture, one should sit upright or stand straight. Avoid resting your chin on your hand, crossing your legs, slouching, or raising your feet.

六、考試時，不交頭接耳，或左顧右盼。
6. During an exam, do not whisper to each other or glance around.

七、安其學而親其師，樂其友而信其道。
7. Find satisfaction in your learning, be close with your teachers, enjoy the company of friends, and have faith in the Dao.[13]

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11 *Records on Ritual*: "When requesting (instruction) on the subject of his studies, (the learner) should rise; when requesting further information, he should rise." The chapter further states, "In the same position (when one is sitting in attendance on another of superior rank or rank), if the superior man put a question on a new subject, he should rise up in giving his reply" (*Liji* 2.53 and 2.55; Legge 1968, 75–76).

12 *Records on Ritual*: "When he meets his teacher on the road, he should hasten forward to him, and stand with his hands joined across his breast. If the teacher speak to him, he will answer; if he do not, he will retire with hasty steps" (*Liji* 2.40; Legge 1968, 70). *Essential Instructions for the Young*: "Whenever you encounter an elder on the road, you should immediately stand up straight, clasp your hands, and promptly hasten to approach them with a respectful bow" (*Tongmeng xuzhi* 7).

13 "Record on Education" in the *Records on Ritual*: "Therefore, as exemplary persons (*junzi* 君子) study, they gather knowledge from all sources, cultivate themselves with it, immerse themselves in it even during their leisure and respite, and roam freely within it. As such, they find satisfaction in their learning, grow closer to their teachers, enjoy their relationship with friends and peers, and are ever more committed to the proper way (*dao* 道)" (Xu et al. 2016, 12).

寅、處世
III. Social Conduct

一、無道人之短，無說己之長。
1. Do not speak of the shortcomings of others. Do not boast of one's strengths.[14]

二、家庭之事，不可向外人言。
2. Do not discuss family matters with others.[15]

三、口為禍福之門，話要經一番考慮再說。
3. Our mouth is the gateway to fortune and misfortune. Words must be carefully considered before being spoken.[16]

四、見失意人，不說得意語；見老年人，不說衰喪話。
4. In meeting a disheartened person, do not speak about one's joys. In meeting an elderly person, do not talk about aging and death.[17]

五、交淺不可言深，絕交不出惡聲。
5. Do not speak of private matters with acquaintances.[18] Do not speak ill of those who are estranged.[19]

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14 *Essential Instructions for the Young*: "Whenever one hears of others' wrongdoing, even as lowly as servants and maidservants making mistakes, it is advisable to temporarily conceal it and not immediately voice it. Rather, one should inform them privately, so that they may understand and make amends" (*Tongmeng xuzhi* 5).

15 *Records on Ritual*: "Outside affairs should not be talked of inside the threshold (of the women's apartments), nor inside (or women's) affairs outside it" (*Liji* 2.59; Legge 1968, 77).

16 There are multiple instructions on speaking with caution in the Confucian classical texts. E.g., *Analects*: "The gentleman speaks one word and shows that he is wise, speaks one word and shows that he is unwise. Therefore, he must be careful how he speaks" (*Lunyu* 19.25; Watson 2007, 137).

17 *Records on Ritual*: "In ordinary conversation (with his parents), he does not use the term 'old' (with reference to them)" (*Liji* 1.32; Legge 1968, 68).

18 *Analects*: "He must be trusted before he can remonstrate [with his superiors]. If he is not trusted, they will think he is speaking ill of them" (*Lunyu* 19.10; Watson 2007, 135).

19 *Records of the Historian*: "Your servant has heard that when their friendships ended, the gentleman of old did not speak ill [of former friends]" (*Shiji* 80.503; Sima 1994, 259).

六、不侮辱人，不向人開玩笑。
6. Do not humiliate or insult others. Do not make jokes at the expense of others.[20]

七、與殘疾人會面，須格外恭敬。
7. In meeting a person with disabilities, we must be especially respectful to them.[21]

八、於肩挑小販苦力，莫討便宜。
8. Do not bargain with or take advantage of peddlers and the working poor.

九、施恩求忘，受恩必報；開罪於人須求解，開罪於我應加恕。
9. We seek to be forgotten when we have helped someone. When receiving assistance, we must repay others for their kindness. If you have wronged someone, you must seek reconciliation. When someone has wronged me, I should forgive them.

十、善人自當親近，須要久敬；惡人自當敬而遠之。
10. A good person should be approached and always treated with respect.[22] An unkind person should be kept at a polite distance.

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20 *Records on Ritual*: "With the scholar friendly relations may be cultivated, but no attempt must be made to constrain him; near association with him can be sought, but cannot be forced on him; he may be killed, but he cannot be disgraced" (*Liji* 59.1847; Legge 1885, 405).

21 Confucius demonstrates this etiquette in the following passage. *Analects*: "Music Master Mian called on Confucius. When they reached the steps, the Master said, Here are the steps. When they reached the seating mats, the Master said, Here are the mats. After everyone was seated, the Master reported, So-and-so is over here. So-and-so is over there. After Music Master Mian had left, Zizhang asked, Is that the way one talks to a music master? The Master said, Yes, of course. That's how one assists a music master" (*Lunyu* 15.42; Watson 2007, 111).

22 *Analects*: "The Master said, Young people should be filial at home, brotherly with others, circumspect, and trustworthy. Let them act kindly toward the populace in general and befriend those of humane character" (*Lunyu* 1.6; Watson 2007, 16).

十一、遇事要鎮靜，做不到的事，莫妄逞能。
11. Stay calm when encountering issues. Do not attempt what is beyond our abilities.

十二、瓜田不納履，李下不整冠。
12. Do not tie shoelaces in a melon patch. Do not adjust one's hat under a plum tree.[23]

十三、凡事要合理智，不可偏重感情。
13. Everything should be based on reason and wisdom. Do not be swayed by emotional feelings.

十四、己所不欲，勿施於人。
14. Do not do to others what we would not wish for ourselves.[24]

十五、凡求教他人的事，必須造門請問。
15. When seeking advice, one must visit the person and ask respectfully.

卯、聚餐
IV. Dining Together

一、座有次序，上座必讓長者。
1. The seating arrangement should follow an order, with the seat of honor given to the elders.

23 *Biographies of Exemplary Women*: "But "a person passing through a melon field does not bend over to tie his shoes, and someone walking in a plum orchard does not adjust his hat." That I did not avoid these things was my first crime" (*Lienü zhuan* 6.58; Kinney 2014, 122).

24 *Analects*: "Zigong asked, Is there a single word that can guide a person's conduct throughout life? The Master said, That would be reciprocity, wouldn't it? What you do not want others to do to you, do not do to others" (*Lunyu* 15.24; Watson 2007, 109).

二、入座後不橫肱，不伸足。
2. After sitting down, do not spread your arms horizontally or stretch your legs.[25]

三、主先舉杯敬客，客致謝辭。
3. The host is first to raise their cup to toast the guests, and the guest responds with words of thanks.

四、主人親自烹調，須向主人禮謝後食。
4. If the host has personally cooked the meal, the guests must thank them with respect before eating.[26]

五、主人敬酒畢，正客須回敬主人。
5. After the host offers a toast, the guest of honor must return the gesture with a toast.

六、舉箸匙，必請大家同舉。
6. When [the guest of honor is] about to use chopsticks or a spoon, they must invite everyone else to do the same.

七、用箸夾菜，只取向己之一方者，不立起向他角器中取菜。
7. When using chopsticks to take food [from communal dishes], only take from the side closest to oneself. Do not stand up to take food from dishes further away.

八、箸匙不向碗盤頂心取菜取湯。
8. Do not use chopsticks or spoons to take any food or soup from the centre of the dishes.

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25 *Records on Ritual*: "In the apartment the elbows should not be held out like wings in bowing. When two (equals) are sitting side by side, they do not have their elbows extended crosswise" (*Liji* 2.47; Legge 1968, 72).

26 *Records on Ritual*: "When (a youth) is in attendance on an elder at a meal, if the host give (*sic*) anything to him with his own hand, he should bow to him and eat it" (*Liji* 2.70; Legge 1968, 80).

九、公食之器，不用己箸翻攪。
9. Use communal utensils to take from communal dishes. Do not use personal chopsticks to mix or turn the food.

十、匙有餘瀝必傾盡，方再入公食器中。
10. The communal spoon must be emptied completely before it is placed back into the communal dish.

十一、自己碗中之餚菜，不可反回公器中。
11. One must not return the food from one's own bowl to the communal dish.[27]

十二、箸匙所取餚菜，不倍於他人。
12. The proportion of food taken with one's chopsticks and spoons should not be more than others.[28]

十三、食勿響舌，咽勿鳴喉。
13. Do not make noises with our tongue while eating and with our throat while swallowing.[29]

十四、公食以不言為原則，須言亦應避免唾沫入公器中。
14. While dining together, the general principle is not to speak. If it is necessary to say something, one must prevent saliva landing on the communal dishes.

十五、咳嗽必轉身向後。
15. When coughing, always face away from the table.

十六、勿叱狗，不投骨於狗。
16. Do not scold the dog. Do not throw the dog a bone.[30]

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27 *Records on Ritual*: "Do not put back fish you have been eating" (*Liji* 2.71; Legge 1968, 80).
28 *Records on Ritual*: "When eating with others from the same dishes, one should not try to eat (hastily) to satiety" (*Liji* 2.70; Legge 1968, 80).
29 *Records on Ritual*: "Do not make a noise in eating" (*Liji* 2.71; Legge 1968, 80).
30 *Records on Ritual*: "Do not throw the bones to the dogs" (*Liji* 2.71; Legge 1968, 80).

十七、碗中不留飯粒。
17. Do not leave any rice in the bowl.

十八、不對人剔牙齒。
18. Do not pick one's teeth in front of others.[31]

十九、客食未畢，主人不先起。
19. The host should not leave the table before the guests have finished eating.

二十、起席，主遜言慢待，客稱謝。
20. After the meal, the host modestly apologizes for poor hospitality and the guests express thanks.

二一、宴畢，主人進巾進茶。
21. After the meal, the host should bring out towels and tea.

辰、出門
V. Going Out

一、衣冠不求華美，惟須整潔。
1. Our attire need not be fashionable and expensive, just neat and clean.

二、見長者，必趨致敬。
2. When meeting an elder [in public], one must approach and pay respects.

三、登高不呼、不指、不招呼。
3. At a high location, do not call out, point to anything, or wave to anyone.[32]

31 *Records on Ritual*: "Do not keep picking the teeth" (*Liji* 2.71; Legge 1968, 81).

32 *Records on Ritual*: "When one has ascended the wall of a city, he should not point, nor call out" (*Liji* 2.41; Legge 1968, 70).

四、路上不吸煙，不嚼食物，不歌唱。
4. While walking on the street, do not smoke, chew, or sing.

五、乘車見長者必下，見幼者亦須與之頷首為禮。
5. If we see an elder while traveling in a vehicle, we must alight to greet them.[33] If we meet a younger acquaintance, we should nod to acknowledge them.

六、夜必歸家，因事不能歸時，必先告家人。
6. One must return home at night. If we are unable to do so, we must inform our family in advance.

七、車馬繁雜衝區，不招呼敬禮。
7. In areas of busy traffic, do not stop to greet or wave to others.

八、不立在路上久談。
8. While standing in the street, do not talk to others for a long time.

九、不走馬路中間，越路須先向左右看清，不可與汽車爭路。
9. Do not walk in the middle of the road. Before crossing the road, we must look to the left and right to check that the road is clear. Do not compete with vehicles on the road.

十、行走時，步履宜穩重，並宜張胸閉口，目向前視。
10. When walking, we should walk steadily, with back straight, mouth closed, and eyes looking ahead.

十一、遇婦女老弱，應儘先讓路讓座。
11. We should make way and give up our seat for the vulnerable (e.g., pregnant women, injured, and elderly).

33 *Records on Ritual*: "Hence, the ruler bows forward to his cross-board to (an old man of) yellow hair; he dismounts (and walks on foot) past the places of his high nobles (in the audience court)" (*Liji* 3.113; Legge 1968, 96).

十二、途次有人問路，須詳為指示；問路於人，須隨即稱謝。
12. When someone asks for directions, we must give detailed directions. When asking someone for directions, we must thank them immediately.

十三、一人不入古廟，兩人不看深井。
13. Do not enter ancient temples alone. Two people should not look into a deep well.

十四、逢橋先下馬，過渡莫爭船。
14. When crossing a bridge on horseback, dismount from the horse. When crossing a river, do not rush to embark or disembark from the boat.

十五、在舟車上或飛機上，不探手或伸手出窗，並不得隨便涕痰。
15. On boats, cars, and planes, do not extend our hand or arm out the window, and do not casually spit or blow your nose.

巳、訪人
VI. Visiting Someone

一、先立外輕輕扣門，主人讓入方入。
1. First, stand outside the house and knock gently on the door; enter on the invitation of the host.[34]

二、入內有他客，主人為介紹，須一一為禮，辭出時亦如之。
2. In the presence of other visitors, the host must introduce them to each other, and the visitors must greet each other respectfully. When leaving, the same courtesy should be shown.

三、入內見有他客，不可久坐；有事，須請主人另至他所述說。
3. In the presence of other visitors, one must not stay long. If there are matters to discuss, one must ask to speak with the host in private.

34 *Records on Ritual*: "When outside the door there are two (pairs of) shoes, if voices be heard, he enters; if voices be not heard, he will not enter" (*Liji* 1.41; Legge 1968, 70–71).

四、坐談時見有他客來，即辭出。
4. While talking with the host, if other visitors arrive, promptly excuse oneself and leave.

五、坐立必正，不傾聽，不譁笑。
5. We must sit upright and stand straight. Do not lean or laugh loudly.[35]

六、不攜一切動物上堂。
6. Do not bring animals into someone's home.

七、主人室內之信件文書，概不取看。
7. Do not read any of the host's letters and documents.

八、談話應答必顧望。
8. When talking to someone or answering a question, we must look at the person we are talking to.[36]

九、將上堂，聲必揚。
9. Before entering a room, we should make ourselves heard, so that those inside know that someone is approaching.[37]

十、戶開亦開，戶闔亦闔；有後入者，闔而勿遂。
10. Leave the door open or closed as we found it. The last person to enter may need to close the door.[38]

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35 *Records on Ritual*: "He must stand straight and square, and not incline his head in hearing" (*Liji* 1.37; Legge 1968, 70).

36 *Records on Ritual*: "When one, in attendance on a superior man, replies to a question without looking round to see (if any other be going to answer), this is contrary to rule" (*Liji* 4.126; Legge 1968, 101); "In all cases looks directed above to the face denote pride, and below the girdle grief; directed askance, they denote villainy" (*Liji* 5.188; Legge 1968, 118).

37 *Records on Ritual*: "When about to go up to the hall (of a house), he must raise his voice" (*Liji* 2.41; Legge 1968, 70).

38 *Records on Ritual*: "If the door were open, he should leave it open; if it were shut, he should shut it again" (*Liji* 2.41; Legge 1968, 71).

十一、主人欠伸，或看鐘錶，即須辭出。
11. If the host yawns or looks at the clock, we should promptly take our leave.[39]

十二、飯及眠時不訪客。
12. Do not visit during meal times or sleeping hours.

十三、晉謁長官尊長，應先鞠躬敬禮，然後就座；及退，亦然。
13. When meeting an elder or a senior officer, we should greet them with a bow and then be seated. Before leaving, we should bow again.

十四、與長官尊長，及婦女行握手禮時，應俟其先行伸手，然後敬謹與握。
14. When shaking hands with ladies, elders, or senior officers, we should wait for them to offer their hand first, and then respectfully shake their hand.

十五、訪公教人員，必先問明其上班鐘點，不可久坐閑談。
15. Before visiting public servants and teachers, we must find out in advance their working hours. Do not sit and talk for a long time.

十六、訪客不遇，或留片，或寫字登留言牌。
16. If the person we wish to call on is away, leave a note or business card to let them know.

午、會客
VII. Receiving Guests

一、見先致敬，熟客道寒暄，生客請姓字住址。
1. Be the first to offer a greeting on meeting the guest. With familiar guests, one exchanges pleasantries. With unfamiliar guests, one should ask their name and address.

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39 *Records on Ritual*: "When one is sitting in attendance on another of superior character or rank, and that other yawns or stretches himself, or lays hold of his staff or shoes, or looks towards the sun to see if it be early or late, he should ask to be allowed to leave" (*Liji* 2.55; Legge 1968, 76).

二、及門先趨，為客啟闔。
2. On approaching the door, one should walk faster to open and close it for the guest.

三、每門必讓客先行。
3. One must hold each door open and let the guest enter first.[40]

四、入門必為客安座。
4. After the guest arrives, one must show them to their seat.[41]

五、室內有他客，應與介紹，先介幼於長，介卑於尊，介近於遠，同倫則介前於後。
5. When there are other guests in the room, one should introduce them to each other. Introduce the younger to the older, the junior to the senior, and those living nearby to those from afar. Among peers, introduce earlier arrivals to later arrivals.

六、敬茶果先長後幼，先生後熟。
6. Serve tea and fruit to elders before juniors and to new acquaintances before old acquaintances.

七、主人必下座，舉杯讓茶。
7. The host must be seated in the seat of least importance. When the tea is served, invite the guest to drink first.

八、客去必送致敬，遠方客必送至村外或路口。
8. When a guest leaves, one must show respect by seeing them off, and guests from afar must be escorted to the crossroads or beyond the village.

40 *Records on Ritual*: "Whenever (a host has received and) is entering with a guest, at every door he should give place to him" (*Liji* 2.43; Legge 1968, 71).

41 *Records on Ritual*: "When the guest arrives at the innermost door (or that leading to the feast-room), the host will ask to be allowed to enter first and arrange the mats. Having done this, he will come out to receive the guest" (*Liji* 2.43; Legge 1968, 71–72).

九、遠方客專來，須備飲食寢室，導廁所，導沐浴。
9. For guests from afar, one must prepare food, drink, and accommodation, and show them where the toilet and bathroom are located.

十、遠方客去，必送至驛站，望車開遠，始返。
10. For guests from afar, we must see them off at the station, and wait until their car becomes distant before we return home.

未、旅行
VIII. Traveling

一、將遠行，必辭親友，祭祖辭親。
1. Before embarking on long-distance travel, one must bid farewell to family and friends, commemorate ancestors, and take leave from our parents.

二、遠到目的地，必先拜訪有關人士。
2. After arriving at the destination, one must visit relevant persons (including those of authority and influence) as a matter of priority.

三、歸來必謁親友，或略送土物。
3. Upon returning from travels, one must visit family and friends with some souvenirs.

四、遠行之親友辭行，必往送行，事前或贈物，或宴餞。
4. When family and friends take leave to travel afar, one must go to send them off, and give gifts or host a farewell banquet for them.

五、遠方客來拜訪，須往答拜，或設宴接風。
5. When guests are visiting from afar, one must visit them in return or host a reception to welcome them.

六、旅人歸來拜，須詣回拜，或設宴洗塵。
6. When a returning traveler visits us, we should visit them in return or host a reception to welcome them back.

七、受人之送行及餞別，達到所在地，須一一函謝。
7. On reaching the destination, one must send a letter of thanks to each of those who held a farewell reception for us or sent us off.

八、人之接風或洗塵畢，須還席。
8. After someone holds a welcome reception for us, we must return the hospitality.

九、入境問禁，入國問俗，入門問諱。
9. When entering a state or territory, ask about local laws, customs, including prohibitions. When entering a house, ask about any taboos.[42]

十、入國不馳，入村里必下車馬。
10. When entering a state, drive slowly. When entering a village, one must dismount from the horse and alight from the carriage.[43]

申、對眾
IX. In Public

一、他人正談話，不在中間插言。
1. When someone is talking, do not interrupt them.

二、兩人對談，不向中間穿走。
2. When two people are in conversation, do not walk between them.[44]

42 *Records on Ritual*: "When one is crossing the boundaries (of a state), he should ask what are its prohibitory laws; when he has fairly entered it, he should ask about its customs; before entering the door (of a house), he should ask about the names to be avoided in it" (*Liji* 3.101; Legge 1968, 93).

43 *Records on Ritual*: "He does not gallop the horses of his carriage in the capital; and should bow forward on entering a village" (*Liji* 3.114; Legge 1968, 96).

44 *Records on Ritual*: "When two men are sitting or standing together, do not join them as a third. When two are standing together, another should not pass between them" (*Liji* 2.56; Legge 1968, 77).

三、不高聲喧嘩擾亂他人視聽。
3. Do not disturb others by talking loudly or creating a racket.

四、不橫坐，不橫腿，不捫脚。
4. Sit facing the front, do not place our feet on another seat, and do not touch our feet.

五、不隔席談話。
5. Only talk to those who are seated next to us.

六、坐不掀起椅凳之後方。
6. Do not raise the back of our chair while seated.

七、衣帽不加於他人之衣帽上。
7. Do not place our hat and clothes on top of someone else's hat and clothes.

八、不向人噴水吐痰。
8. Do not expectorate spittle or phlegm towards others.

九、不向人呵欠，舒伸，噦噴。
9. Turn away from others to yawn, stretch, and sneeze.

十、饋贈
X. Giving Gifts

一、禮尚往來，來而不往，往而不來，皆非禮也。
1. Etiquette attaches importance to reciprocity and requires returning the courtesy shown to oneself.[45]

45 *Records on Ritual*: "What the rules of propriety value is that reciprocity. If I give a gift and nothing comes in return, that is contrary to propriety; if the thing comes to me, and I give nothing in return, that also, is contrary to propriety" (*Liji* 1.20; Legge 1968, 65).

二、賜人不曰來取，與人不問所欲。
2. When giving someone a gift, do not ask them to collect it,[46] nor ask them what they would like.

三、贈人物品，必謙必敬。
3. When giving someone a gift, one must be humble and respectful.

四、贈人物品，外必用包裹，婚喪慶壽例外。
4. All gifts must be wrapped unless they are for weddings, funerals, or birthdays.

五、平素贈物，座有他客，須避觀聽，遠來及初晤，可不避。
5. Generally, when giving a gift, we must avoid others knowing about it. One may give gifts in front of others only when one has traveled from afar or at an initial meeting.

六、受贈先略謙辭後受，稱謝，逾日須往拜。
6. In receiving a gift, humbly decline before accepting, express gratitude, and visit them on another day.

七、長者賜，不敢辭。
7. Do not decline any gifts from an elder.[47]

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46 The "Tan Gong 檀弓 II" chapter of the *Records on Ritual* states that Qian Ao 黔敖 had prepared food for those in need during a famine but by saying "Poor man! Come and eat" in offering the food, a famished man felt insulted, refused the food, and subsequently died (*Liji* 10.370; Legge 1968, 194–195).

47 *Records on Ritual*: "When an elder offers a gift, neither a youth, nor one of mean condition, presumes to decline it" (*Liji* 2.75; Legge 1968, 65); "When (their parents) give them anything to eat or drink, which they do not like, they will notwithstanding taste it and wait (for their further orders); when they give them clothes, which are not to their mind, they will put them on, and wait (in the same way)" (*Liji* 27.975; Legge 1968, 455).

戊、慶弔
XI. Occasions for Celebrations and Condolences

一、參加吉禮，不談衰喪話，不戚容，不啼泣。
1. When attending celebrations, do not speak about adversity or mourning; do not look sad, and do not cry.

二、居喪不參加吉禮，只送儀物。
2. Do not attend celebrations while in mourning, just send a gift.

三、喪服不入公門，不觀吉禮。
3. Do not wear mourning clothes to government offices, nor to attend celebratory occasions.

四、賀婚在眾賓前，辭不諧謔。
4. When congratulating the married couple in front of their guests, refrain from jokes and inappropriate remarks.

五、臨喪不笑。
5. Do not smile or laugh at funerals.[48]

六、里有殯，不巷歌。
6. When there is a funeral procession in the neighborhood, do not sing in the streets.[49]

七、飯於喪家，酒不赭顏。
7. When dining with a family in mourning, do not drink too much wine.[50]

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48 *Records on Ritual*: "In a house of mourning, one should not laugh…When presenting himself at any mourning rite, one should have a sad countenance.…Hence the superior man is careful to maintain the proper expression of his countenance before others" (*Liji* 2.71; Legge 1968, 89–90).

49 *Records on Ritual*: "When there is a body shrouded and coffined in his village, one should not sing in the lanes"; "When there are mourning rites in the neighbourhood, one should not accompany his pestle with his voice" (*Liji* 2.71 and 6.205; Legge 1968, 89, 125).

50 *Analects*: "When the Master was eating at the side of a person in mourning, he never ate his fill" (*Lunyu* 7.9; Watson 2007, 48).

八、佩會葬徽章者，禮終即卸去，不佩帶他往。
8. Funeral badges are worn to express one's condolences. They must be removed at the conclusion of the funeral service and not worn to other places.

亥、稱呼
XII. Chinese Forms of Address

一、初見面之人問姓，曰貴姓，問名，曰台甫。自說姓曰敝姓某，說名曰草字某某。
1. On meeting a Chinese person for the first time, ask their surname by saying "*gui xing*" (esteemed surname) and ask their name by saying "*tai fu*" (eminent name). We would offer our surname by saying "*bi xing* (*insert surname*)" (my humble surname is) and our name by saying "*cao zi* (*insert name*)" (my humble name is).

二、有親戚世交者，應各以其名分彼此相稱。普通稱人曰先生或某兄，自稱曰弟。老者長者，稱曰老先生，自稱曰後學，或稱自名。
2. We should address family and established friends according to their respective status. We generally address someone as "*xian sheng*" (master) or "(insert surname) *xiong*" (elder brother), and refer to ourselves as "(insert surname) *di*" (younger brother). Address those who are older or of higher status as "*lao xiansheng*" (elder master), and refer to ourselves by name or as "*hou xue*" (student).

三、稱人之父曰令尊，母曰令堂。向人稱自父母，曰家嚴，曰家慈。見朋友之父，稱老伯，母稱伯母，自稱晚或侄。
3. Refer to someone's father as "*lingzun*" (your honorable father) and their mother as "*lingtang*" (your honorable mother). Introduce our father and mother as "*jiayan*" (humble father) and "*jiaci*" (humble mother), respectively. Address the father and mother of a friend as "*laobo*" (senior uncle) and "*bomu*" (senior aunt), respectively, and refer to oneself as "*wan*" (junior) or "*zhi*" (nephew).

四、稱人之祖，曰令祖公，祖母曰令祖太夫人。向人稱自祖曰家祖。祖母曰家祖母。見人之祖父祖母，稱太老伯，太伯母。自稱己名即可。

4. Refer to someone's grandfather and grandmother as "*ling zugong*" (your honorable grandfather) and "*ling zu tai furen*" (your honorable grandmother), respectively. Refer to our grandfather and grandmother as "*jia zu*" (humble grandfather) and "*jia zumu*" (humble grandmother), respectively. Address someone's grandfather and grandmother as "*tai laobo*" (senior grand-uncle) and "*tai bomu*" (senior grand-aunt), respectively. Refer to oneself by name.

五、稱人之兄弟，曰令兄，曰令弟。向人稱自兄弟，曰家兄舍弟。稱人之姊妹，曰令姊令妹。向人稱自姊妹，曰家姊舍妹。見人之兄弟，稱幾先生，或幾兄，自稱小弟。見人之姊妹，統稱幾姐，稱自曰小弟。（書款則稱侍）

5. Refer to someone's elder and younger brothers as "*lingxiong*" (your honorable older brother) and "*lingdi*" (your honorable younger brother), respectively. Refer to one's elder and younger brothers as "*jiaxiong*" (humble older brother) and "*shedi*" (humble younger brother), respectively. Refer to someone's elder and younger sisters as "*lingjie*" (your honorable older sister) and "*lingmei*" (your honorable younger sister), respectively. Refer to one's elder and younger sisters as "*jiajie*" (humble older sister) and "*shemei*" (humble younger sister). Address someone's elder and younger brothers as "[*insert rank*] *xiansheng*" (Mr....) and "[*insert rank*] *xiong*" (older brother) as per the order of siblings in the family, respectively, while referring to oneself as "*xiaodi*" (humble younger brother). Address someone's elder and younger sisters as "[*insert rank*] *jie*" as per the order of siblings in the family, while referring to oneself as "*xiaodi*" (humble younger brother). (In writing, refer to oneself as "*shi*" [servant].)

六、稱人之妻，曰令正或尊夫人，向人稱自妻，曰拙荊或賤內。見人之妻稱嫂，自稱己名。（女子可自稱妹）

6. Refer to someone's wife as "*lingzheng*" (your honorable wife) or "*zun furen*" (your honorable lady). Refer to one's wife as "*zhuojing*" (humble wife) or "*jiannei*" (humble wife). Address someone's wife as "*sou*" and refer to oneself by name. (A woman can refer to herself as "*mei*" [younger sister].)

七、女子稱人之夫，曰尊府某先生，向人稱自夫，曰外子。見人之夫稱某先生，自以避免稱呼為佳，如必要時，只稱本人即可。
7. A woman refers to someone's husband as "*zunfu* [*insert surname*] *xiansheng*" (your honorable husband Mr.…), and refers to her husband as "*waizi*" (humble husband). She addresses someone's husband as "[*insert surname*] *xiansheng*" (Mr.…). It is best to avoid having to refer to oneself, but if necessary merely say "myself".

八、稱人之子，曰令郎或公子，稱人女曰令愛，或女公子。向人稱自子，曰小兒，女曰小女。見人子稱世兄，自稱弟，稱女曰世姐，自不稱。
8. Refer to someone's son as "*linglang*" (your honorable son) or "*gongzi*" (young master). Refer to someone's daughter as "*ling 'ai*" (your honorable daughter) or "*nü gongzi*" (young lady). Refer to one's son and daughter as "*xiao'er*" (humble son) and "*xiaonü*" (humble daughter), respectively. Address the son of an established family friend as "*shixiong*" (senior brother), and refer to oneself as "*di*" (younger brother). Address the daughter of an established family friend as "*shijie*" (senior sister).

九、稱人之孫及孫女，曰令孫曰令女孫。向人稱自孫，及女孫，曰小孫，曰小女孫。見人之孫及女孫，稱幾公子幾小姐。
9. Refer to someone's grandson and granddaughter as "*lingsun*" (your honorable grandson) and "*ling nüsun*" (your honorable granddaughter), respectively. Refer to one's grandson and granddaughter as "*xiao sun*" (humble grandson) and "*xiao nüsun*" (humble granddaughter), respectively. Address someone's grandson and granddaughter as "[*insert rank*] *gongzi*" (young master) and "[*insert rank*] *xiaojie*" (young lady) as per the order of siblings in the family, respectively.

十、稱人或稱自之已故上輩，統加一先字。如稱人之故父母，曰令先尊令太夫人；稱自之故父母，曰先嚴先慈之類。稱人已故下輩不必另加字，只云「以前某兄」即可，稱自故下輩，但加一亡字，或云「以前某某」亦可。
10. Refer to a deceased elder as "*xian*…" (former). For example, refer to someone's deceased father and mother as "*ling xianzun*" (your honorable late father) and "*ling taifuren*" (your honorable late mother), respectively. Refer to one's deceased father and mother as "*xian yan*" (humble

late father) and "*xian ci*" (humble late mother), respectively. Refer to a deceased junior relative of someone as "*yi qian* [*insert name*] *xiong*" (the late brother…). Refer to one's deceased junior relative as "*wang* [*insert name*]" (the deceased…) or "*yi qian* [*insert name*]" (the late…).

十一、稱人之姑丈姑母，曰令姑丈令姑母。向人稱自姑丈姑母，曰家姑丈姑母。見人之姑丈姑母，稱老先生老太太；交厚者，可稱老伯及老伯母。

11. Refer to the older sister of someone's father and her husband as "*ling gumu*" (your honorable paternal aunt) and "*ling guzhang*" (your honorable paternal uncle), respectively. Refer to the older sister of one's father and her husband as "*jia gumu*" (humble paternal aunt) and "*jia guzhang*" (humble paternal uncle), respectively. Address the older sister of someone's father and her husband as "*lao taitai*" (elder lady) and "*lao xiansheng*" (elder gentleman), respectively. If one has a close relationship with them, one may address them as "*lao bomu*" (elder paternal aunt) and "*laobo*" (elder paternal uncle), respectively.

十二、稱人之舅父舅母，曰令母舅令舅母。向人稱自舅父舅母，曰家母舅家舅母。見人之舅父舅母，稱謂仿前。

12. Refer to and address the brother of someone's mother and his wife as "*ling mujiu*" (honorable maternal uncle) and "*ling jiumu*" (honorable maternal aunt), respectively. Refer to the brother of one's mother and his wife as "*jia mujiu*" (humble maternal uncle) and "*jia jiumu*" (humble maternal aunt), respectively.

十三、稱人之岳父岳母，曰令岳令岳母。向人稱岳父母，曰家岳家岳母。見人之岳父母，稱謂仿前。

13. Refer to and address someone's father-in-law and mother-in-law as "*ling yue*" (your honorable father-in-law) and "*ling yuemu*" (your honorable mother-in-law), respectively. Refer to one's father-in-law and mother-in-law as "*jia yue*" (humble father-in-law) and "*jia yuemu*" (humble mother-in-law), respectively.

十四、稱人之內姪，曰令內姪。稱人之甥，曰令甥。稱人之壻，曰令壻。向人稱自內姪，甥，壻，曰敝內姪，曰舍甥，曰小壻。

14. Refer to the son of a wife's brother as "*ling neizhi*" (your honorable nephew). Refer to the son of a wife's sister as "*lingsheng*" (your honorable nephew). Refer to someone's son-in-law as "*ling xu*" (your honorable son-in-law). Refer to the son of one's brother as "*bi neizhi*" (my humble nephew), the son of one's sister as "*she sheng*" (my humble nephew), and one's son-in-law as "*xiao xu*" (my humble son-in-law).

十五、稱人之親友，曰令親曰貴友。向人稱自親友，曰舍親敝友。
15. Refer to someone's relatives and friends as "*lingqin*" (your honorable relative) and "*guiyou*" (your honorable friend), respectively. Refer to one's own relatives and friends as "*sheqin*" (my humble relative) and "*biyou*" (my humble friend), respectively.

十六、稱人之師，曰令師，生曰令高足。向人稱自師，曰敝業師。稱自生曰敝徒。自稱師，曰夫子或吾師。稱自曰受業，或曰門生。
16. Refer to someone's teacher and student as "*ling shi*" (your honorable teacher) and "*ling gaozu*" (your esteemed student), respectively. Refer to one's own teacher and student as "*bi yeshi*" (my humble teacher) and "*bi tu*" (my humble student), respectively. Address one's teacher as "*fuzi*" (master) or "*wushi*" (my teacher). Refer to oneself as "*shouye*" (a pupil) or "*mensheng*" (a student).

十七、稱人之長官，曰貴某長（院部廳局等）。稱人之屬員，曰貴部下或貴屬。向人稱自長官，曰敝某長。稱自屬員，曰敝同事或敝屬，稱其某姓某職亦可。
17. Refer to someone's superior as "*gui…zhang*" (your honorable [*insert title—e.g., dean, minister, head of the bureau or office*]). Refer to someone's subordinate as "*gui buxia*" (your subordinate) or "*gui shu*" (your staff). Refer to one's superior as "*bi…zhang*" (humble [*insert title*]). Refer to one's subordinate as "*bi tongshi*" (humble colleague), "*bi shu*" (humble staff) or by their surname and role.

十八、稱人之主人，曰貴上，稱人之僕，曰尊紀。向人稱自主人，曰敝上，稱自僕曰小价。

18. Refer to someone's principal as "*gui shang*" (your excellency). Refer to someone's servant as "*zun ji*" (respectful servant). Refer to one's principal and servant as "*bi shang*" (humble principal) and "*xiao jie*" (humble servant), respectively.

附說
Notes

一、稱呼一事，本甚繁雜，各地習慣，直接見面之稱，尤多不同，故難備載。本編僅錄其對外交際通常用者。

1. It is difficult to provide a comprehensive treatment of the forms of address as they are generally numerous and complex—with variations used in different places and in face-to-face contact. This section simply outlines the most common forms of address.

二、親戚之間，稱呼甚為微細，每有錯一字而貽笑者。茲編本為舉要，專為常用，故不詳載。

2. There are many intricacies in the forms of address among family relatives. We may make a fool of ourselves with a minor mistake. As this section is based on the essentials and focuses on common usage, it does not record those details.

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