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WESTERN WASHINGTON STATE COLLEGE
PROGRAM IN EAST ASIAN STUDIES

Occasional Paper No. 1

治家格言

MAXIMS FOR THE WELL-GOVERNED HOUSEHOLD

by

Chu Yung-ch'un

朱用純

Translated and with a Preface

by

Edward H. Kaplan

1971

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by

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A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

The Program in East Asian Studies of Western Washington State College is starting its series of occasional papers in the hope that it will make some small contribution to better knowledge and understanding of East Asia. Sailing into the storm of economic depression with no budget of our own, we decided to make the most of our adversity. Unlike similar endeavors by other schools, we are not obliged to publish a certain number of issues per year nor to seek manuscripts only within our own school. Consequently, we will be pleased to consider scholarly manuscripts from anyone anywhere on any aspect of East Asia.

Henry G. Schwarz

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

Maxims for the Well-Governed Household is a seventeenth-century essay which maintained broad popularity, especially as a subject for calligraphic and pedagogic exercises, throughout the late imperial period in China and among traditionalists even well into republican times. Under an alternative title, Chu Wen-kung chia-hsun (Lord Chu's Household Instructions 朱文公家訓) it was sometimes mistakenly ascribed to Chu Hsi 朱熹 (1130-1200), often considered the greatest Confucian after Confucius himself, rather than to its actual author, Chu Yung-ch'un 朱用純, an indication of the degree to which it embodied for its audience the essence of orthodox Neo-Confucianism.¹

Chu Yung-ch'un's essay is a characteristic product of late imperial Confucianism, in general, and of the great seventeenth-century political crisis, in particular. During its last half century, the Ming 明 dynasty (1368-1644) suffered from factionalism and from the steady loss of control over its crucial northeastern frontier to the Manchu barbarians. After taking much of southern Manchuria in the 1620's, the Manchus consolidated their position for a generation, and then, during the third quarter of the century, conquered China proper and established their own dynasty, the Ch'ing 清 (1644-1912).

Many members of the Ming gentry never reconciled themselves to being ruled by barbarians, even though the Manchus had become quite

¹ Herbert A. Giles, A Chinese Biographical Dictionary (Taipei: Literature House, n.d. [1898?]), 196-197.

civilized and were prepared to rule China using most of the forms and substance of the Ming regime. These 'Ming Loyalists' fought the Manchus until their cause proved irretrievably lost, and then retired from all public life, many of them to reflect on and write about the causes of Ming's fall. In doing this, they deepened a precedent for such virtual eremitism which went back to the fall of the Sung in the late thirteenth century.

The greatest of these Ming Loyalists, men like Huang Tsung-hsi 黃宗羲 and Wang Fu-chih 王夫之, went beyond eremitism to begin the process of rethinking the basic Confucian assumptions which underlay the traditional political and intellectual order of Chinese civilization and, though they themselves still remained within the Confucian framework, their innovations led ultimately to the overt transcendence of the Confucian world view by intellectuals in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The author of this essay was a relatively minor figure among these giants of seventeenth-century Ming Loyalism. Chu Yung-ch'un 朱用純² was born in K'unshan 崑山 county, Kiangsu province in 1617 and was only twenty-seven when the Manchu conquest began. His father Chi-huang 集璜 died a martyr to the Ming cause during the successful Manchu siege of the Chus' native town and young Chu vowed never to serve the alien conquerors. He remained true to this oath up to his death in 1689 even though he, like many other prominent Loyalists, was invited to accept rank in the new government during the reign of the K'ang Hsi emperor, who was eager to solidify the Manchus' position by associating with it the best men of the preceding dynasty.

Instead, Chu lived the life of a retired scholar. Though the essay Maxims for the Well-Governed Household is the most famous of his works, he also left a compendium of collected writings and a commentary

²His tzu 字 or "style" (an extra given name usually assumed as a young student) was Chih-i 致一. His hao 號 or alternative name (usually selected by a man in his mature years to reflect some key aspect of his life or interests) was Po-lu 柏廬, to commemorate his devotion to the memory of an early Ming scholar.

on two basic Neo-Confucian classics, The Great Learning (Ta Hsueh 大學) and The Doctrine of the Mean (Chung Yung 中庸) based on the teachings of the orthodox school of Chu Hsi. At his death he was privately (i.e. not formally by the government) canonised with the epithet "The Filial and Firm Gentlemen" (Hsiao-ting hsien sheng 孝定先生).³

Chu's loyalism, as expressed in this essay, unlike that of his greater contemporaries, appears to have looked backward to the Confucian tradition as already established in orthodoxy during the Ming, rather than forward to the "post-Confucian" future some two and a half centuries later. This perhaps helps render him a relatively minor figure in China's intellectual history, but his essay's consequent representativeness of the established orthodoxy also accounts in large measure for its continuing popularity through the remaining centuries of the imperial epoch.

The orthodox Confucianism of the late Ming was in practice and to a fair degree in principle far more rigid in its standards of personal and political behavior than Confucianism had ever been before. Early Confucianism, from Confucius' time through the first imperial epoch (sixth century B.C. to third century A.D.), contained the seeds of this later rigidity but it was still too close in time to the partly self-contradictory basic consumptions of its founders, had too much intellectual competition from other creeds and was attempting to rule over a society itself still in the process of defining its characteristic style to become consistently rigid in practice. By the end of the second imperial epoch, during the Sung dynasty (960-1279), Confucianism had outlived, swallowed whole or modified itself sufficiently to match its ideological competition. It no longer had any serious rival for control over the mind of China. Chinese society had also begun to take on the rigidity that usually accompanies a civilization's maturation.

³Chung-kuo jen-ming ta-tz'u-tien (Dictionary of Chinese Biography 中國人名大辭典). (Taipei: Commercial Press, 1965), 250.3.

The Confucians of the Yuan 元["] dynasty (1279-1368), already more rigid than their predecessors, became still more dogmatic as part of their reaction against the humiliation of the Mongol conquest. The Ming in large measure continued this Yuan trend and intensified it by officially defining as orthodoxy one of the grand syntheses of the Sung Confucians. At the level of personal behavior, by Chu's time it was long since as unthinkable for a good Confucian widow to remarry as for a good Confucian minister to serve more than one dynasty, though as recently as the Ten Kingdoms era (906-960) both phenomena had been routine.⁴ It is this stricter, more stridently didactic moral code that Chu's essay celebrates.

To be sure, the picture it limns is of an ideal rather than of the family as it often actually was. In all periods, the Chinese family was far more often a warm, comforting refuge than a rigidly hierarchical patriarchy. But these two images of the family are not necessarily incommensurate. A class's more austere ideals are also part of its reality. In addition, the essay's numerous "thou shalt not's" are themselves a roster of the numerous sins a Confucian family man of the late Imperial era was heir to.

Chu's treatment of women's position must also be placed in its proper perspective. The Confucian family had always been patriarchal in principle, even during the long period (which probably lasted until at least the tenth century A.D.) when women seem to have enjoyed a significant degree of freedom. Although the ideal family that Chu portrays is quintessentially patriarchal and hence betrays his hostility to any vestige of female influence, the essay contains at least negative indications that even among the upper classes, their own women and the females of the demi-monde with whom their men associated must have still enjoyed many privileges and considerable de facto power.

⁴Cf. Frederick W. Mote, "Confucian eremitism in the Yuan period", in The Confucian Persuasion, ed. Arthur F. Wright (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960).

Otherwise, Chu would hardly have bothered to issue such explicit warnings against the influence of such female types as the "three young females" and "six old women" mentioned in the Maxims.⁵ To judge from the evidence of Ming fiction, lower-class and middle-class women must still have enjoyed a fair degree of freedom even after marriage.⁶

So deeply and widely had the commercial spirit infused Chinese society by the late Ming,⁷ far more widely than even during Sung, where the commercial spirit may have deeply penetrated only the lower Yangtze and Cantonese centers of the Southern Sung state, that it is something of a paradox to be confronted by a moral code so pre-commercial in spirit. And yet on closer examination, Chu is seen to pay more than passing attention to the morality of business dealings. As in seventeenth-century Europe, however, his emphasis is on the need for morality as such, even in business, rather than on the virtues of business as business. In this, he was reflecting a general impulse on the part of late Ming Confucian intellectuals to moralize the new commercial sub-elites. Such gentry-written publications as the shan-shu 善書 or "morality books", were consciously designed to raise the moral level of all classes of men in a commercial society. Confucian intellectuals also assembled popular encyclopedias which included instructions for running a good Confucian household as well as literary anthologies of a more traditional sort designed to help students, many of whom now

⁵According to T'ao Tsung-i 陶宗儀 (fl. ca. 1360), the "three young females" were a Buddhist nun, a Taoist nun and a fortune teller while the "six old women" were a procuress, a go-between (not for marriages but illicit relationships), a sorceress, a thief, a quack and a midwife. T'ao Tsung-i, Cho-keng-lu 輟耕錄 a collection of miscellaneous notes, quoted in Robert H. van Gulik, Sexual Life in Ancient China (Leiden: Brill, 1961), 254.

⁶Cf. references in Edward H. Kaplan (comp.) Women in Chinese History: An Annotated Bibliography of Some English-Language Works (Bellingham: Western Washington State College, Program in East Asian Studies, Publication No. 5, 1971).

⁷Cf. Mark Elvin, "The last thousand years of Chinese history: Changing patterns of land tenure," Modern Asian Studies, IV, 2, (1970), 97-114.

came from non-gentry or nouveau riche would-be gentry families, prepare for the civil service examinations.⁸

Unlike most of the Ming shan-shu, Chu's essay does not threaten its readers with a series of vivid punishments in an ordered hierarchy of Buddho-Taoist hells. Indeed it implicitly condemns such sanctions in favor of rationalistic Confucian justifications for good behavior. It does fairly closely resemble a code recommended for the gentry in one late Ming shan-shu. This particular "morality book" lists different moral codes for different social classes and concedes a less fully Confucian based morality to commoners.⁹

Several editions of the Maxims for the Well-Governed Household may be found in American sinological libraries. Two editions are worthy of note. One was published in that ex-tributary bastion of Confucianism, Hue, Vietnam, in 1900, and a copy is in the Hoover Library. The other was published as recently as 1954 in Hong Kong, and a copy is in the Library of Congress. To my knowledge, there is only one translation of the essay into a Western language, that by Camille Imbault-Huart into French and published in Peking in 1881. A copy is in the Library of Congress.

The Chinese text which accompanies the following translation is a punctuated photoreduction of four long hanging scrolls owned by a former teacher of the translator. Material within brackets in the English text is translated from the Pei-hsin huo-yeh-pen wen-hsuan 北新活葉本文選 movable type edition¹⁰ which includes phrases not found in the accompanying Chinese text.

⁸Wolfram Eberhard, in his Guilt and Sin in Traditional China (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967) discusses the shan-shu. Tadao Sakai, "Confucianism and popular educational works" in Self and Society in Ming Thought, ed. W.T. de Bary et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970) discusses the shan-shu and popular encyclopedias (pp. 331-366).

⁹Sakai, 350-355.

¹⁰Reprinted in Yang Lien-sheng (comp.), Selected Chinese Texts in the Classical and Colloquial Styles (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), 149-51.

Mister Chu Po-lu's 'Maxims for the
Well-Governed Household'

Arise at the break of day; have the front porch swept off and everything clean and in its place. Rest from the day's work at dusk; have all doors locked and check them personally.

Remember that even a bowl of congee or rice is not easy to come by and constantly think of the material difficulty involved in the making of even a bit of silk thread.

You ought to repair the roof before it rains and not wait to dig a well until thirst approaches.

Be frugal in your personal expenditures, but do not be miserly in entertaining guests. Utensils should be simple but clean: earthenware surpasses gold or jade. Be frugal but wholesome in your food and drink: the vegetables from your own garden are better than any rare delicacies. Do not maintain an elaborate establishment and do not scheme for fertile fields.

The "three young females" and "six old women" [i.e. various types of nuns, procuresses, etc.] are truly the intermediaries of lust and thievery. Good-looking maidservants and stylish concubines do not make for good fortune in the women's quarters. Male servants ought not to be too refined or sophisticated; wives and concubines must shun overly attractive adornment.

朱柏廬先生治家格言
黎明即起。灑掃庭除。要內外整潔。既昏便息。關鎖門戶。必親自檢點。一粥一飯。當思來處不易。半絲半縷。恆念物力維艱。宜未雨而綢繆。毋臨渴而掘井。自奉必須儉約。宴客切勿流連。器具質而潔。瓦缶勝金玉。飲食約而精。園蔬愈珍饈。勿營華屋。勿謀良田。三姑六婆。實淫盜之媒。婢媵妾嬌。非閨房之福。童僕勿用。

Though the ancestors are distant, you must be sincere in sacrificing to them. Though sons and grandsons are not bright, you must have them study the Classics.

Be simple and plain in your own personal life but resort to the best possible way to bring up and teach children. Do not covet unearned profits. Do not drink to excess. When trading with peddlers, do not take advantage of them.

When you see poor and unfortunate relatives or neighbors, you must show sympathy for and assist them. If your fortune is established with stinginess, it is reasonable to expect that you will not long enjoy it. If you go against the moral principles, you will soon be destroyed. Brothers, uncles and nephews should divide their surplus with the less fortunate among them. [Among family members], old or young, men or women, there should be respect for the rules of behavior and gravity of speech.

What man of spirit will listen to the words of his woman to the detriment of his own flesh and blood? If you put great weight on wealth and yet are stingy toward your parents, you are not the son of your father.

When marrying off a daughter, choose a good son-in-law, and do not aim at expensive gifts. When you seek a wife for your son, look for a good girl and do not merely scheme for a fat dowry.

俊美。妻妾切忌豔妝。祖宗雖遠，祭祀不可不誠。子孫雖愚，詩書不可不讀。居身務期質樸。教子要有義方。勿貪意外之財。勿飲過量之酒。與肩挑貿易，毋佔便宜。見貧苦親鄰，須多溫恤。刻薄成家，理無久享。倫常乖舛，立見消亡。兄弟叔姪，須分多潤寡。長幼內外，宜法肅辭。嚴聽婦言，乖骨肉，豈是丈夫。重貲財，薄父母，不成人子。嫁女擇佳婿，無索重聘。娶媳求淑女，勿計厚匳。見富

To put on a flattering countenance when among the rich and well-born is most reprehensible. To behave arrogantly toward the poor is mean beyond all reckoning.

Avoid litigation, for it can only end in trouble. When among people avoid talking too much, for garrulosity must result in errors. Do not presume upon your power to insult and annoy widows and orphans. Do not be gluttonous in your appetites and wanton in the slaughter of animals. If you are obstinately sure that you are always right, you will have many mistakes to repent for. If you are lazy and self indulgent, your household will in the end waste away.

If you keep bad company when young, you will in the long run suffer for it. But if you keep on friendly terms with the honest and reliable, then you will have them to lean on in time of crisis.

If you unthinkingly listen to whatever is said, how will you be able to identify slander? You ought to patiently think things over three times. If you are contentious, how will you know when you are not right? You must calm yourself and then reconsider a situation.

Do not dwell upon the favors you have conferred on others, but do not forget favors received. In all dealings with people, leave them room to retreat honorably. When you have gained what you intended, do not press for more.

貴而生諂容者、最可耻。過貪賤而作驕態者、鄙莫甚。居家戒爭訟。訟則終凶。處世戒多言。言多必失。毋恃勢力而逼凌孤寡。毋貪口腹而恣殺牲禽。乖僻自是、悔悟必多。顏墮自甘、家道難成。狎暱惡少、久必受其累。屈志老成、急則可相。依輕聽發言、馬知非人之譖訴。當忍耐三思。因事相爭、馬知非己之不是。須平心暗想。施惠無念。受恩莫忘。凡事當留餘地。得意不宜再往。人有

When others have good fortune, do not be jealous; when others are in trouble, do not rejoice. To do good so that others may see it is not true goodness. To do evil and fear that others will know of it is a great evil. If, when you see a pretty woman you lust after her, your own wives and daughters will suffer retribution. If you hold grudges and use under-handed methods to gain revenge, calamity will surely be visited upon your sons and grandsons.

If your family is smoothly regulated, then even if there is not enough food for all to eat regularly, you will still always have a surplus of happiness. If you pay your taxes early, then even if there is nothing left in your pockets, you can still attain full happiness. In your studies, your ambition should be to emulate the sage and the virtuous [and not merely to win a degree]. An official's heart should be dedicated to his country; [how dare he scheme for his personal advantage?]

Maintain your place and be content with your fate. Be in accord with the times and listen to the commands of Heaven.

If a man can do all these things, he will not be far from the ideal.

Copied out in the thirty-second year [of the Republic, i.e. 1944], fourth month [for] Mr. Tzu-wen of the Ta-ya. Written by Wu Lei-ch'uan of Hang-hsien in the Sung-p'o Library, Pei-hai Park in the Old Capital [i.e. Peking, then called Pei-p'ing (Peping)].

予文先生 大雅之屬

杭縣吳雪川寫於故都北海公園松坡圖書館

喜慶不可生妬嫉心。人有禍患不可生欣幸心。善欲人見不是真善。惡恐人知便是大惡。見色而起淫心報在妻女。匿怨而用暗箭禍延子孫。家門和順雖饕餮不繼亦有餘歡。國課早完即囊橐無餘自得至樂。讀書志在聖賢為官心存君國守分安命順時聽天為人若此庶乎近焉。

三十二年四月錄應

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Edward H. Kaplan was born in 1936 in New York City. After completing his undergraduate work at the School of Languages and Linguistics of Georgetown University in 1960, he went to the University of Iowa where he received his doctorate in history in 1970. His specialty is the Southern Sung (1126-1279). He wrote his dissertation on Yueh Fei (1103-1141 A.D.) and he is currently a contributor to the Sung Biographical Dictionary Project under the direction of Herbert Franke. Dr. Kaplan joined the Department of History of Western Washington State College in 1968 and the Program in East Asian Studies in 1970.

