

Hebei Women's Normal Education Pioneers

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*One Century's Fragrant
Trace of Wisdom*

By

Jianbing Dai and Yongyan Wang

Translated by

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Cambridge
Scholars
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PREFACE

JIANBING DAI

Normal education is the mother machine of education, so normal education should be given priority in order to develop education, and educational plans should be teacher-based for teachers are the leaders and promoters of school education and only first-class teachers can generate a first-class education. In the late Qing Dynasty, the increasing impact of the learning from the west on China's traditional education was unprecedented and forced Chinese traditional education to be gradually modernized. Western science and technology were also constantly influencing and attacking this ancient empire. In addition, the national crisis that resulted in the destruction of the nation was becoming increasingly serious. Therefore, seeking a strategic plan to break the crisis to save and rejuvenate the nation became a historical responsibility placed before patriots and advanced intellectuals, and consequently saving our country's education became an important ideological trend in the late Qing dynasty. At the end of the 19th century, under the impetus of the gradual progress of western learning and the national salvation of education, teacher education came into being in China.

This year marks the 120th anniversary of the birth of China's teacher education. Looking at the history of the development of China's normal education, we can see brilliant achievements in its tortuous course of development. Over the past hundred years, a great number of teachers have been trained, which contributes greatly to the development of China's education. Regional normal education is an important part of normal education in China. Hebei in the late Qing Dynasty was called Chihli, one of the most developed provinces in the late Qing Dynasty. Its educational reform had achieved remarkable results with the largest number of all kinds of new schools at all levels in the country. With the increase of new schools, there was a serious shortage of teachers. In particular, there were few teachers who had received a western education, which became the biggest obstacle to the development of Chihli's new schools in the late Qing dynasty. In order to solve the contradiction between the growth of new schools and the shortage of teachers, while

vigorously setting up new schools, Chihli paid great attention to developing teacher education and training teachers for the new schools.

After the full bloom of women's education in Chihli, the education of women was increasingly valued by all sectors of society, and Chihli started to set up women's schools. With the rise of women's education in Chihli in the late Qing Dynasty, Chihli Women's School and Chihli Women's Normal School were both established. Chihli women's education was known for its normal education, among which Beiyang Women's Normal School was the most famous at that time. After the coming of the Republic of China, the school had experienced several changes, from Beiyang Women's Normal School to Chihli No. 1 Women's Normal School, then to Hebei Women's Normal College. However, the fundamental purpose of women's teacher education has not changed. Although it experienced various social changes, Hebei women's normal education did not stop self-developing and was proud of its tenacious development and brilliant achievements. It not only has created a number of famous Confucianists but also has trained a large number of outstanding students for social progress and national development.

In the process of its centenary development, the Hebei women's normal education initiative has given birth to a large number of excellent modern educators and academic masters who have also made great contributions to the development of Hebei women's normal education. In addition to promoting the development of Hebei women's education, they have also taken responsibility to educate people to rejuvenate and enrich our country, cultivating a large number of revolutionary martyrs and academic masters in Hebei and even in China. Looking at the educational pioneers of Hebei women's teacher education, it is not difficult to see that they have made tremendous contributions to the development of women's education.

Starting from the traditional concepts for Chinese women, this book attempts to excavate the outstanding elements in Chinese traditional culture while criticizing the old feudal morality that binds and oppresses women. Xiangfu Jiaozi (Assisting her husband and educating her children), together with bearing filial piety to her parents-in-law are the requirements for traditional Chinese women. Although feudalism suppressed the Chinese traditional women for thousands of years, it contains traditional virtues that should not be forgotten. Since the rise of modern women's education which advocates women's rights and freedom, it has increasingly become the ideological task for women to pursue liberation and equality between men and women with Hebei women's normal education being at the forefront of the times.

With the development of modern women's education, Hebei women's normal education has become a model of Hebei women's education. Lv Bicheng, Qi Guoliang and Wang Feiman are typical representatives of Hebei women's normal education. This book attempts to present their outstanding contributions to the development of Hebei women's normal education in respect to their educational activities and ideas. Specifically, returning to the historical scene to explore the context from multiple perspectives, it aims to demonstrate the historical status of Hebei women's normal education through replaying its educational activities and contributions over the past one hundred years. Simultaneously, it also intends to extract the valuable experiences and rules to promote today's teacher education reform and development.

It is due to a group of educators such as Lv Bicheng, Qi Guoliang and Wang Feiman that Hebei women's normal education is growing stronger and stronger with brilliant achievements. It has trained revolutionary patriots like Shen Jingying, Liu Qingyang, Dong Jieru, Huang Shoujing, Deng Yingchao, Guo Longzhen, Li Yitao, Zhang Xiuyan, Xu Guangping, Zhou Zhilian, Wang Peizhi, et al. They made great efforts and even contributed their lives to the victory of the Chinese revolution and the liberation of the people. In addition, it also has cradled a large number of academic masters such as Tang Yong, Zhang Ruoming, Ling Shuhua, Zhou Zhongzheng, Luo Aihua, Zhang Xiuya and Luolan. All of these people contribute greatly to the brilliant 100-year education of women.

In a time of moral construction, it is especially important to recall the good side of traditional Chinese women's virtues to promote the Chinese traditional culture. It is also of special significance for us to recall our predecessors' educational activities, to summarize their educational ideas, to show their contributions to education, to cherish their revolutionary deeds, and to review their academic achievements. Apart from pushing forward the comprehensive educational reforms to promote vigorously the quality of education, it can also be facilitative to our current teacher training, socialist construction and academic research.

Jianbing Dai
Hebei Normal University
June, 2017

CHAPTER ONE

CHINESE TRADITIONAL WOMEN

1.1 Introduction

China enjoys a long history and a splendid civilization, forming a distinctive Chinese traditional culture. Under the deep influence of Chinese traditional culture, Chinese women's social status and life experiences have undergone different changes. In the primitive tribal matriarchal society, women were the managers, controllers and power dominators. They were at the top of the society. However, women and men did not have big differences in their social status due to the low social productivity. After the emergence of the patriarchal society, the social status of women was declining day by day. A series of heavy shackles that bind Chinese women had increasingly become obstacles to the development and progress of women. Although Chinese women have experienced many hardships and misery due to the social shackles, the traditional virtues like Xiangfu (Assisting one's husband), Jiaozi (Educating one's children) and bearing filial piety to one's parents-in-law have been handed down for thousands of years and are worthy of our attention today.

Admonitions and precepts on traditional Chinese women have existed since ancient times. Among them, Xiangfu Jiaozi and bearing filial piety to one's parents-in-law have always been the eulogized basic ethical code that women were required to follow for generations.

Ban Zhao (about 45-117 years ago), also known as Ji, word Hui Ban, was born in Fufeng Anling (now Northeast Xianyang, Shanxi). She is known as an Eastern Han Dynasty female historian and writer. She is the daughter of the historian Ban Biao and the sister of Ban Gu. At the age of 14, she was married to Cao Shishu, so she was also known as "Cao Dajia". Her tomb is located on a high platform about 500 metres northeast of Dagu County, Xingping Fengyi town, Xianyang City, Shanxi Province. The tomb is conical, surrounded by arable land. In December 1982, the Xingping People's Government announced that it was a county-level key cultural relics protection complex. Dagu country still preserves the iron

bell of the eleventh year of Qing Qianlong which was cast during the life of Ban Zhao and the topography of that time.

Ban Zhao was highly educated, so when her brother died with the *Han*



Fig. 1-1 Ban Zhao (about 45-117)
Sanchuan Hua. *Enchanting: Hua Sanchuan's Portrait of the Beauty*.
(Taipei: Art Book Company, 1989), 35

Book (a historical record of the Han dynasty) unfinished, Ban Zhao was imperially purposed into Cangshuge (the royal library) to continue the *Han Book*. Later, Emperor Hanhe repeatedly called Ban Zhao to his palace and ordered the queen and his other wives to regard Ban Zhao as their teacher called Dajia (Master). During Empress Deng's reign, Ban Zhao had participated in politics. In the late years of her life, Ban Zhao suffered from illness. At the same time the females of her family were about to be married. Worried that they wouldn't understand women's

etiquette and might cause their potential husbands to lose face so as to dishonour their clans, Ban Zhao, in her spare time, wrote *Women's Commentary* which contained 7 chapters. The book is also very helpful for the education of women in the royal palace. Among the 7 chapters, the second chapter titled *Couples: The Second* is about how to serve one's husband, the sixth chapter titled *Obedience: The Six* is about a wife's obedience to her parents-



Fig. 1-2 Tomb of Cao Dajia

in-law, and the seventh titled *Relationships with Brothers- and Sisters-in-law* is about how to live in harmony with a husband's brothers and sisters in order to obtain the in-laws' favour and so on. In the Tang Dynasty, Cheng Miao's wife, Zhengshi wrote *Women's Filial Piety to Her Parents-in-law*. Among the 18 chapters, Chapter 6, *Relationships with Parents-in-*

law and Chapter 12, *General Principles* and other chapters also require women to treat their parents-in-law the same as their biological ones. And the sixteenth chapter titled *Antenatal Training* requires women to pay attention to their words and deeds from the beginning of pregnancy so as to do early prenatal care work and not to affect the foetus negatively in the abdomen.

Song Ruozhao (761-828), Puzhou Qingyang (now Hebei Qinghe) people, is Song Ruoxin's (the Old Tang Dynasty also recorded her as Song Ruohua) younger sister. She is the second daughter of the Tang Dynasty Confucian Song Tingfen. Song Ruoxin (also Song Ruohua) gave birth to five girls who were known for their wisdom, good genre, and pure and simple disposition. Unwilling to be married like normal women, they intended to be famous scholars. In Zhenyuan four years (788), the Song sisters, living together with their father in Shangdang, were recommended by the Zhaoyi Jiedushi (an officer in charge of



Fig. 1-3 Song Ruozhao (761-828) selecting female talent for the emperor) Li Baozhen to Dezong, the emperor, who immediately called in and tested the five sisters on their articles and knowledge of poetry and history. Greatly satisfied with the five sisters' talent, Dezong let them stay in his palace. Among them, Ruo Zi, as the compiler-in-chief of the top-secret national atlas and books, was called a Scholar (the official title for a knowledgeable person). She was strict with her sisters as their teacher and authored *The Analects of Confucius* which contained 10 chapters and was further spread and interpreted by her younger sister Ruo Zhao. There are three chapters on how to be on good terms with one's husband and parents-in-law, and how to educate their children, namely Xiangfu Jiaozi, and Bearing filial piety to one's parents-in-law.

These traditional thoughts have been handed down to the later generations and have appeared frequently in books on women's education in all previous dynasties. Some of them have also become the core ideas and basic contents of women's education. For example, in the Tang Dynasty, in Tang Biao's *Women's Required Reading*, it said that "a daughter-in-law depends on the sky that included her husband and her parents-in-law. Therefore, she must be obedient to them and try her best to

please them without the slightest violation.”¹ Another example is *Important Words for Training Women* in the Republic of China which in light of the free love style of that time advised women to follow the *Three Kinds of Obedience and Four Virtues* (*Sancong Side*: obedience to her husband and her parents-in-law; virtues of fidelity, physical charm, propriety in speech and efficiency in needlework) in the form of simple three-word sentences.

1.2 Assisting One's Husband

Xiangfu is often used together with *Jiaozi*, that is, “*Xiangfu Jiaozi*”, a well-known idiom whose basic meaning is to assist one's husband and educate one's children. It is a moral standard used to measure traditional Chinese women and is also a direct compliment to virtuous wives and good mothers. Let's begin with *Xiangfu*: Assisting one's husband.

The original intention of “*Xiang*” is “to assist, to help”, and “*Xiangfu*” means to help or assist one's husband. To be specific, a wife should take good care of her husband in daily life like doing some washing, cooking, and the family chores to facilitate her husband to set up his career. If her husband is an official, she should persuade her husband to have integrity and honesty to be a popular governor loved by the common people. If her husband does business, she is supposed to help her husband to make a good fortune. In short, a harmonious family atmosphere like the “male being the outside leader and the female being the inside leader” is supposed to be formed. However, in ancient times, it also implicated that a husband should be the dominator and his wife should be attached to him.

In ancient times, “*Xiangfu*” was often referred to as “assisting one's husband” and was the basic content that a woman was required to learn, and the basic guideline for her to follow and practise in her daily life with her husband. It was also one of the kernel contents that women should learn and explore in practice. *Rites and Etiquettes* is one of the thirteen Confucian scriptures that is a compilation of etiquettes of the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period. It has a total of 17 articles. There are five main provisions. To sum up, the five main points are: First, a woman is supposed to have tidy hair and serenity in daily life to treat her husband with the strictness of the monarch. Second, a woman is supposed to feed and clothe her husband with respect like that between the father and the son. Third, a wife is supposed to reward and love her husband like

¹ Fuqing Zhang, ed., *Chinese Traditional Precepts Abstracts* (Beijing: Minzu University of China Press, 1996), 117-118.

that between brothers. Fourth, a wife is supposed to regulate and persuade her husband away from bad addictions like a friend. Fifth, only during the sleeping time is the wife supposed to have a couple's feelings towards her husband.²

The essay *Women's Commandments* written by the Eastern Han Dynasty historian Ban Zhao profoundly affects the later generations,

depicting in detail the ethics of the feudal society and the *Three Obediences and Four Virtues (Sancong Side)*. The second chapter "Couples" mentions that "if the husband is not upright, then there will be no virtuous women; and if the wife is not

virtuous, then there will be no integrated husband. If the

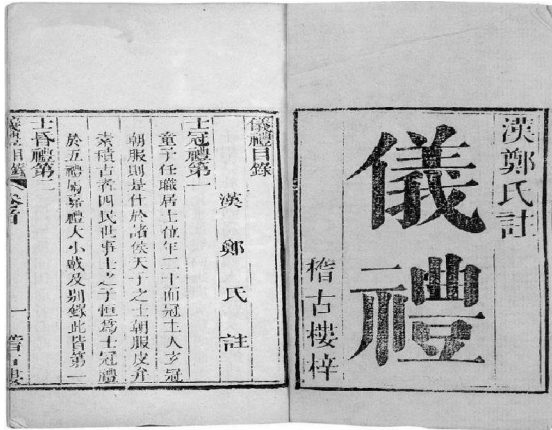


Fig. 1-4 Front Cover and Table of Contents of *Rituals and Etiquettes*

husband can't rule his wife, there will be no integrity and respect, and if the wife has no respect for her husband, there will be no morality and justice." That is, if a husband does not have virtuous conduct, he cannot control his wife. If his wife is not virtuous, she cannot serve her husband. If a husband cannot control his wife, he may lose his majesty, and if a wife is unwilling to serve her husband, she may lose her morality. So, the principle between the couples here is actually about how well the husband and wife get along, and about what kinds of principles to follow. Among them, the husband's control of his wife and his wife's obligation to serve her husband are primary. The precept also states that the husband has absolute control over the wife and the wife must obey her husband. This is contrary to today's concept of equality between the husband and the wife. However, the principle of requiring husbands and wives to be virtuous, and to coexist harmoniously should never be outdated. Rather, it should be advocated vigorously.

² Xiong Xianjun, ed., *History of Chinese Women's Education* (Taiyuan: Shanxi Education Press, 2006), 9.

Song Ruoxin and her sister Song Ruozhao authored *The Analects of*

Confucius. In Chapter VII, *Husband*, they said that the “husband should be just and upright, and the wife should be gentle and soft. Couples should love and respect each other. A wise wife should listen to her husband and try her best to stop her husband doing bad things.” This is to say that the husband

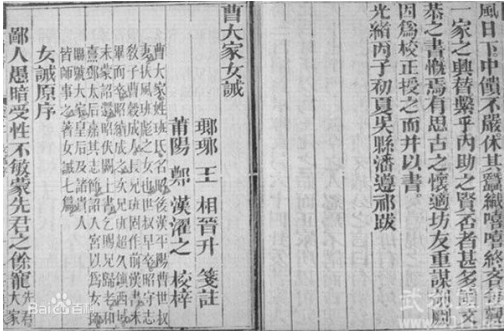


Fig. 1-5 *Women's Commandments* (excerpt)

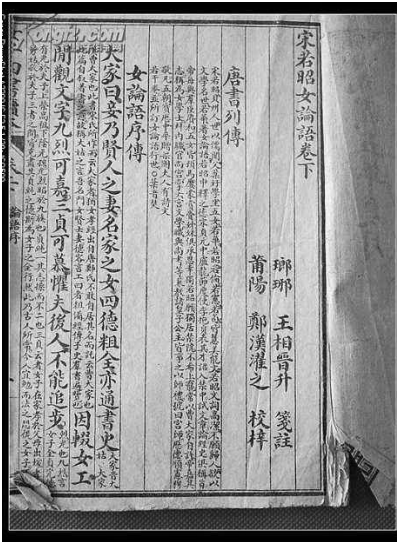


Fig. 1-6 *The Analects of Confucius* (*Analects* excerpt)

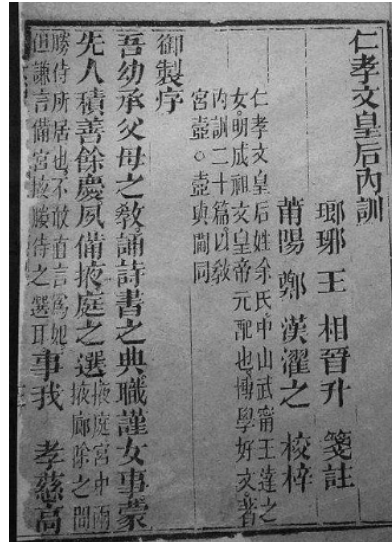


Fig. 1-7 *In House* (excerpt)

and wife should get along with each other in harmony with tolerance and politeness. The wife should obey her husband and persuade him not to do bad things. “If the husband is out of their home, she is supposed to calculate his time of return. If her husband hasn’t returned home till the twilight, the wife is supposed to look for and find him.”

“In addition, she is also not supposed to be lazy and go to bed early. Instead, she is supposed to keep the lamp on to wait for his knocking at the door.” The meaning is that when her husband goes out, she should calculate her husband’s time of return. If her husband does not come back in due time, she must go out and look for him and also prepare meals for him in advance, waiting for her husband to come home. Wives should not only manage themselves, but also are supposed to diligently run their home. “If her husband is sick, the wife should take good care of him and try to find good doctors and medicines to help him recover. In addition, she is also supposed to look after her husband attentively to wish him a long life. Apart from that, the silly actions of leaving her sick husband alone should be avoided”. The husband, as the pillar of the family, is crucial to the family, so his wife has the duty to take care of her husband’s logistics to make sure he is healthy enough. It also says that “the wife should keep her husband warm, healthy and relaxed, and not let her

husband be hungry, thirsty and tired”. In addition, “couples are supposed to be in the same boat to share happiness and sadness.” Therefore, it is a wife’s duty to do some washing and cooking, to make a good coat for her husband to keep him from the wind and the rain, and to let her husband eat well to keep him healthy and strong. Only by sharing happiness and sadness will the husband and wife get along well with each other.

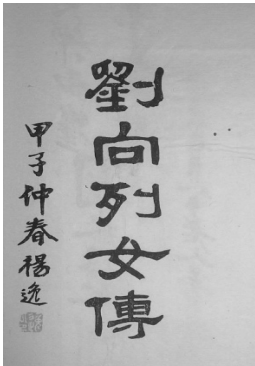


Fig. 1-8 *Virtuous Women's Biography* by Liu Xiang

As can be seen from the above requests for “serving one’s husband”, firstly, a wife should take the important responsibility of taking good care of her husband. She is also supposed to listen to her husband and take care of their basic necessities and food. In the era of men farming

and women staying at home, husbands are the backbones of their family. The fact that women do housework at home and take good care of their husbands is an inevitable product of the social labour division. The attachment of women to their husbands determines that women have these subordinate family roles. Therefore, women’s responsibility and obligation to take good care of their husbands become a traditional virtue that has been passed on from generation to generation. Second, the connotation of mutual respect between husband and wife and the sharing of happiness and sadness no matter how rich or poor are not only requirements for the wives, but also for the husbands, tending to make the original relationship

between women and their husbands equal. From this point of view, it is justified that these ancient demands were required of women, and it is also unreasonable to give an overall rejection of the ancient demands.

The requirements of the woman in her serving of her husband have had great importance throughout history. The Ming Dynasty Queen Renxiaowen wrote twenty articles in her book titled *In House*, which gives a more comprehensive exposition of feudal women's moral norms. The thirteenth chapter *Serving One's Husband* discussed that a queen should be virtuous. It says that in order to be a good wife to serve the emperor, she needs to "be humble though living in a palace with wealth, be focused on domestics, and be careful and cautious to discipline oneself to be diligent and conscientious day in and day out."³ These scholarly monographs were extended to the common people, pointing out that "the couples' matters are like the Yin (women should be gentle and soft) and Yang (men should be upright and strong), which can push things in the right way and help their families to flourish."⁴ Feng Shusen, a Jingyang man from Shanxi Province in the Qing Dynasty wrote a book titled *Four-Character GuiJian* (a book in the form of four-character sentences for women to read to discipline themselves) to teach women to follow the traditional ethics. On the matter of serving one's husband, it says "if the husband is poor, the wife should not blame him for that", "If the husband is lazy, do not take it easy, instead, the wife is supposed to persuade her husband to be hard-working. If the husband is confused, the wife is supposed to suggest positively instead of negatively in order to be a virtuous and reasonable wife." There are many such kinds of arguments that emphasize the importance of being virtuous to serve one's husband.

Under the influence of traditional ethics and morals, many traditional Chinese women have served their husband and become good examples for women from generation to generation. *Biography of the Virtuous Women* by Liu Xiang, a scholar, bibliographer and writer of the Western Han Dynasty, is a biographical history book that introduces the ancient Chinese women's great deeds. The book is divided into seven volumes and contains a total of 105 women's stories. Mrs. Qi (Xuan Wang's wife), Zhong Lichun and the Qi Ladies mentioned in *Biantong Volume I* are all good examples. Zhong Lichun, born in Wuyan during the Warring States, later became the queen of King Xuan of the Qi Dynasty (Qi Xuan Wang).

³ Fuqing Zhang, ed., *Chinese Traditional Precepts Abstracts* (Beijing: Minzu University of China Press, 1996), 28.

⁴ Fuqing Zhang, ed., *Chinese Traditional Precepts Abstracts* (Beijing: Minzu University of China Press, 1996), 29.

At that time, she had an “acetabular head, deep eyes, a big angled nose, bucket-like wrists and pitch-like dark coarse skin.”⁵ Zhong Lichun was so ugly that she was still single at the age of 40. When she went to see Qi Xuan Wang, she told the guard that she was a woman that nobody wanted to marry in Qi country. She also said that she had heard that Qi Xuan Wang was wise and open so she would like to become one of his wives. Qi Xuan Wang was having a big feast by then. Hearing the notification, he was very surprised and all the other people attending the banquet burst into laugh. Thinking that this common woman who dared to come to the palace must have a unique ability, Qi Xuan Wang decided to see her and let her declare her opinion of the situation in the country. Hearing what she said about the various dangers facing the Qi kingdom, Qi Xuan Wang was deeply shocked, and immediately stopped the banquets and started to govern his country diligently and wisely, which made his kingdom stable and prosperous.

The wife of Zhou Nan in *Biography of the Wise*, one excerpt from the *Biography of the Virtuous Women*, is a sensible and virtuous woman. Zhou Nan is a place south of the capital city which is known for a virtuous



Fig. 1-9 Zhou Nan's wife

woman married to a Dafu (an official). The official was ordered to harness water to preserve the soil but he didn't return at the due time. Worried that her husband was doing slack politics, she asked her neighbours to take word to her husband, saying, “Our country now is suffering from the water disaster, so you should spare no efforts in harnessing the water without any complaints so your parents will not worry about you.” The wife of a person from Cai Kingdom is a figure from *Shunzhen Zhuan (A Biography*

⁵ [Han dynasty] Xiang Liu, and (Jin dynasty) Fumi Huang, eds., *Biography of the Virtuous Women*, annotated. Xiaodong Liu (Shenyang: Liaoning Education Press, 1998), 65.

of the Loyal and the Obedient). She was born in Song Kingdom. Her husband was seriously ill and her mother advised her to remarry. However, she was determined to stay to take care of her husband. Descendants praised her because she was “a virtuous woman who didn’t listen to her mother to desert her sick husband. Instead, she looked after him attentively and kindly.”

Educating a lady to better serve her husband is an early childhood education that runs through a woman’s life. Lv Kun, a famous scholar of the Ming Dynasty, is the son of Lv Desheng, a native of Ninglang, Henan Province, who wrote books like *Little Girls’ Reading* for girls to know how to be good wives and mothers. As for the education of girls, he pointed out that “it is better to persuade your husband early. The earlier, the better. It is improper and bad for the couples to be too intimate to neglect rites and morals.”⁶ The book also stresses that it is necessary for parents to instruct their daughters to follow the principle from childhood and to practise it after their marriage.

The Rituals • Faint Meaning says that before marriage, a woman

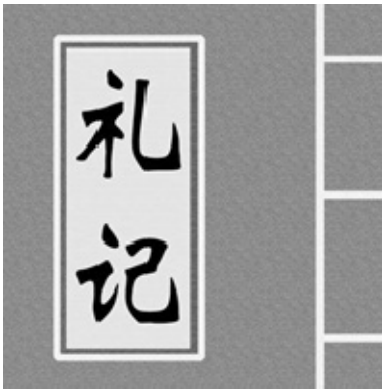


Fig. 1-10 *The Rituals*

should be taught to “be virtuous in respect of her words, feelings, appearances and skills.”⁷ “Virtue” refers to the requirements of women’s personal qualities and conduct. “Words” refers to their speeches, “appearances” refers to their facial expressions and “capacity” refers to their life skills. Specifically speaking, women should be gentle and dignified, to speak softly, dress simply and be tidy. Women are also required to have the ability to do housework. Before marrying, a woman should

be trained in all these principles so the family will not be ridiculed or lose face.⁸

⁶ Fuqing Zhang, ed., *Chinese Traditional Precepts Abstracts* (Beijing: Minzu University of China Press, 1996), 55.

⁷ Gaowei Cui, annotated., *The Rituals* (Shenyang: Liaoning Education Press, 2000), 228.

⁸ Guomin Wang, *Chinese Women in the 20th Century*. (Chengdu: Sichuan University Press, 2000), 42.

One of the Qiantang people in the Qing Dynasty, Lu Jin, word Li Jing, or Jing Yi, self-named Jiang Shan, is a tribute student. His *New Bride* is a special present for his daughter on her marriage. The book is easy to understand and focuses on how to honour her parents-in-law and her husband. *Respect Your Husband* lists a total of seven requirements for the new wife, which are mainly about “how a wife should respect her husband”. It says that a wife should “stand up at the sight of her husband” and “take the initiative to respect her husband in the morning and at night”. In addition, it also says that “when the husband is away on business, the wife should not disturb him by too frequent letters in order not to disturb him.” Apart from that, it also says that “a virtuous wife should persuade her husband to be far away from the improper temptations and bad deeds and to be focused on their family business and interests. In cases where the husband is unhappy or worried about something, the wife should comfort and encourage him; while the husband is prosperous in his career, a good wife should admonish him to be dutiful and humble.”⁹ From here, we can see that a Chinese traditional woman is required to be absolutely obedient to her husband with her husband as the centre. It puts much emphasis on the husband’s rights and the wife’s obligations, but rarely mentions the rights of the wife. Although it is proper for the wife and the husband to respect each other, principles like a wife should encourage her husband when he is unhappy, and a wife should admonish her husband promptly when he is conceited, are still valuable at present.

1.3 Educating One’s Children

It is also a traditional virtue of Chinese women to educate and raise their children. In the primitive society, women were engaged in the production and management of the clan. They also shouldered the heavy responsibility of breeding offspring and educating them properly. Primitive society does not have specialized educational institutions, so women are social managers, education organizers and leaders. Children’s education is mostly related to social life and production experience. The content of education is mostly farming, hunting, spinning, sewing, cooking and other basic knowledge. The forms of education are merely by words of mouth. After entering the patriarchal society, the man replaced the woman in social status and became the dominant person in the society. As

⁹ Fuqing Zhang, ed., *Chinese Traditional Precepts Abstracts* (Beijing: Minzu University of China Press, 1996), 95.

a result, the woman gradually moved towards her family and became the main undertaker of housework.

With the diminishing of women's social status, women were more



Fig. 1-11 Working women

economically and socially dependent on men. In addition to domestic work, women were also engaged in agriculture, handicrafts and other labour. With the arrival of the farming civilization, the production methods of hunting and collecting and other primitive societies were gradually being eliminated. Agricultural production could provide food for social development to meet the needs of population growth and reproduction. Consequently, people's lifestyles had undergone significant changes. Agricultural production required more labour, and the production of labour required the commitment of women. After entering into an agrarian society, the responsibilities of giving birth and surviving were even more arduous than before. Such responsibilities made women depend on men and they themselves concentrated more on spinning, washing, cooking, doing family chores and educating children at home.

Giving birth to children is a woman's nature. Children's activities are



Fig. 1-12 Yang Liuqing's Festival Pictures:
Raising Children

mainly carried out domestically.

Family education is the main form of education in early childhood. Parents are their first teachers. Mothers bear the dual responsibility of parenting and educating for most of

the time the children are with their mother instead of their father.

The mother's educating of her children begins with prenatal education. Prenatal education is not the product of today's economy and society, nor is it only valued nowadays. Prenatal education had emerged in the Han

Dynasty. *Volume 1 of Biography of the Virtuous Women* written by Liu Xiang records the story of three mothers. Among these is the mother of Zhou Wen Wang (Ji Chang), Tai Ren who had a good understanding of prenatal care. Tai Ren, the second daughter of the late Shang Dynasty aristocrat Zhiren Shi, paid attention to prenatal education. Tai Ren was very serious and solemn and did everything in line with righteousness and ethics. Tai Ren admired the virtues of her mother-in-law Tai Jiang so much that she also emphasized prenatal care when she was pregnant with Zhou Wen Wang.

When Tai Ren was pregnant with Zhou Wen Wang, she saw no evil, spoke no evil and never did she sleep on her side or sit on the edge. Instead, she stood still and ate well-cut and well-prepared food. During the night, she let the musicians play noble music and songs. Thus, Wen Wang was born talented and creative. People attributed it to Tai Ren's proper prenatal education. Tai Ren, her mother-in-law Tai Jiang and her daughter-in-law Tai Si were called the Three Virtuous Mothers of the Zhou Dynasty. It is because of Zhou Ren, the first Chinese prenatal educator that Zhou Wen Wang was able to become an open and outstanding emperor in history.



Fig. 1-13 *Tianzhong Night News*,
“Statue of Tai Ren with her son”,
May 13, 2016.

Tai Ren is very serene and serious. After becoming pregnant, she saw no evil, heard no evil, spoke no evil. She kept doing appropriate things till she gave birth to Wen Wang, the great emperor of the Zhou dynasty. From here we can see that ancient people also paid attention to prenatal education. It is said that when ancient women were pregnant, they didn't sleep on their side, nor did they sit on the edge. Besides, they also stood still. They didn't eat anything evil-tasting, nor did they look at or listen to anything evil. At night, they chanted poetry. Therefore, when pregnant, be cautious, because if the mother feels good everything will be good.

However, if the mother feels evil and then everything will be evil. Thus, we can see Wen Wang's mother is good at prenatal education.¹⁰

The 16th chapter of the *Book of Filial Piety* written by Zheng in the Tang Dynasty is titled *Women's Filial Piety*, from which we can see that



Fig. 1-14 Three Virtuous Mothers of the Zhou Dynasty

ancient people also earnestly sought the basic common sense of prenatal education and had an early prenatal education. Zheng said, “People are subject to the rules of the Five Immortals, and they have the innate personalities. Women, when pregnant, shouldn’t sit on the edge, eat anything evil-tasting, see evil, speak evil and never should she sleep on her side or sit on the edge. Instead, she should pay attention to their safty to stand still and eat food that is well-cut. In the daytime, she should listen to the right music, and at night, she should read good books. Hence, the baby that is born can be wise, upright, and kind.” The prenatal education mentioned here follows that of Tai Ren.

After their birth, the children’s education is also the mother’s duty. Chen Que, a native of Haining in the Qing Dynasty, word Qian Chu, a student of Liu Zongzhou, is an expert in rituals and ceremonies. In his book titled *New Bride’s Guides*, he discussed how the new bride could comply with etiquette, abide with the rules, parent the children, and

¹⁰ [Han] Xiang Liu, and (Jin) Fumi Huang, eds., *Epitaph Biography*. Noted. Xiaodong Liu (Shenyang: Liaoning Education Press, 1998), 4.

manage the home and other things. He stressed that parents must take good care of their children, but they shouldn't spoil them. If they should give them too much, their children would be spoiled. Do not hug the newly-born children too frequently, instead, just wrap them up and let them cry. In feeding, he pointed out that "no more than three times a day. At day break, just water the children once." He also stated that "it is good to wear less than to wear more, to be a little hungry than to be too full in order to raise a healthy baby."¹¹ That is to say, we should not spoil our children from the very beginning.

Educating children is the virtue of the traditional Chinese for which the women and the mothers are respected. Since ancient times, the ethical norms of a mother educating her children have been passed down from generation to generation and have gradually become the standard of



Fig. 1-15 Bathing a baby

evaluating women's morality. In *The Analects of Confucius* written by Song Ruozhao in the Tang Dynasty, the chapter titled *Training Men and Women: The Eighth*, he discussed a mother's education of her children:

Generally speaking, every family has its children. When they grow up, they should be taught rituals and virtues. And their mother should take this responsibility. For the boys, it is proper for them to go to schools to be educated to know the virtues and to be away from laziness and alcoholism. As to the girls, it is proper for them to stay at

home to be inside the house.

They are supposed to be in

¹¹ Fuqing Zhang, ed., *Chinese Traditional Precepts Abstracts* (Beijing: Minzu University of China Press, 1996), 112.

spoil them to lose their temper or shout with no reasons. Teach them not to steal or to be rude or to be lascivious or arrogant. Teach them not to stroll aimlessly or be indulgent of alcohol or feasts. If the children, be they boys or girls, pay no attention to the law, the virtues and the social morals, and consequently do harm to their family and their parents, it will be like raising pigs or mice.¹²

As can be seen from the above text, the mother has the obligation to educate their children. When the children grow up, the boys should be educated by professional teachers to learn what is good and not to be contaminated with abuse. For the girls, they are supposed to stay indoors to follow the call of their parents to learn etiquette.



Fig. 1-16 Playing with a frog

Queen Renxiaowen wrote in her book titled *Domestic Principles* that a mother should stay at home to educate her children. Therefore, “in order to teach the children to be virtuous, upright, kind, modest and thrifty, the parents should be dutiful instead of indulgent, be strict instead of indifferent, and be good examples themselves.” Only in this way, can the children be well-educated. She also stated that it was proper to focus

on cultivating children’s morals, humility, diligence and other good qualities with strict attitudes. Otherwise, being too tolerant towards children can only pamper them to “be good for nothing.”¹³ Spoiling children can’t cultivate good generations, and can never be called a virtue. Feng Shusen of the Qing Dynasty wrote Four-word verses for Women where parents can learn how to educate their children. It says “Tai Ren’s prenatal education has been passed on for the generations. The mother is the child, so pampering is not true love and cheating should be forbidden. Admonish the children from the very beginning for fear that it can spread

¹² Fuqing Zhang, ed., *Chinese Traditional Precepts Abstracts* (Beijing: Minzu University of China Press, 1996), 18.

¹³ Fuqing Zhang, ed., *Chinese Traditional Precepts Abstracts* (Beijing: Minzu University of China Press, 1996), 30.

out of control. Just like being cautious of theft and drought, parents should not overpraise their children or cover their shortcomings. In addition, parents should be wise enough like Mengzi's mother to encourage and administrate their children to learn to be upright, dutiful and virtuous." From here, we can see parents should not spoil their children.

For thousands of years, traditional Chinese women have been serving their husbands, educating their children, working hard and showing virtues as good wives and mothers. Their deeds are widely circulated and become the models of later generations. *Mother Biography*, an excerpt from the *Biography of the Virtuous Women* written by Liu Xiang in the Han Dynasty, tells a story titled *Ji Jingjiang in the Ju Kingdom* to show how Ji Jingjiang educated Wenbo. It also tells a story about Tai Si, one of the Three Virtuous Mothers of Zhou, instructed her ten sons to be upright without any bad deeds. When they



grew up, Wen Wang continued to instruct them, and hence came

Fig. 1-17 Mang's virtuous mother in the Wei kingdom instructing 5 sons of her husbands' ex-wife



Fig. 1-18 Ji Jingjiang instructing her son

into being the great kings like Zhou WuWang. Another story is about Mang Mao's wife in the Wei kingdom who loved deeply his five sons given by her husband's ex-wife, which won the five children's respect. Still another story is about Tian Ji's mother in the Qi kingdom who admonished her son to move away from being avaricious. The story of Mengzi's mother moving her house away from the butcher's is also of significance for children's education.

Ji Jingjiang in the Lu kingdom was a native of Ju Kingdom. She is the wife of Mu Bo, an official in Lu kingdom,

and her Hao is Daiji. She is also the great aunt of Ji Kangzi, the mother of Wen Bo. She is knowledgeable and virtuous. Mubo died early, leaving her raise her son alone. Once, when his son Wen Bo returned from studying outside, she saw his friend enter the hall with him, and then retreated downwards, holding his sword upright, just like when serving his father or elder brother. Wen Bo thought he was already an adult. Jingjiang scolded him, “You are in a low status, only associating with people who serve you. Thus, it is clear that in this way, you will not have any future.”

Wen Bo admitted his mistakes, and after that he chose to associate with highly respected people to advance himself. Wen Bo took the post of the Lu kingdom’s *Xiang* (Prime Minister) and Jingjiang said to him, “I tell you that the key point of governing the country is *Jing* (Managing). *Fu* is used to correcting wrongs, so people like *Fu* can be used as Generals. *Hua* is used to regulating the unruly or uneven, which requires people with strong fortitude.” Once, Wen Bo went back home and saw his mother weaving linen. Wen Bo said: “How can a mother in a family like ours weave linen? I am worried that it will anger Ji Sunshi who may think I can’t feed my Mother.” Ji Jingjiang sighed, “Is our country going to perish? How can a country be administered by ignorant officials with such a low perspective? Sit down, I will tell you how the ancient saints administered their countries. They chose barren land for people to work hard and make



Fig. 1-19 Tian Jizi’s mother ordered Jizi to return the unjustified money to obey the law

it arable so that they could possess the land for the long-term.” The following generations eulogized Jingjiang by saying that she was knowledgeable, considerate, and virtuous to teach her son to correct mistakes, and to be self-dependent and upright. Even Confucius said repeatedly that Jingjiang was a great, virtuous mother.

The next story is about

Tian Jizi’s mother in the Qi kingdom. When Tian Jizi was serving the Qi kingdom as *Xiang* (Prime Minister), he accepted some money given by his subordinate officials and handed over all his money to his mother. His

mother said: “You have been serving the Qi kingdom for three years and have never earned such a great amount of money. How did you get it? Is it from another official?” Tian Yizi replied: “I indeed took a bribe.” His mother admonished him, “I heard that officials should be clean and just, and not be scrupulous and greedy. They are supposed to express their true feelings, not be involved in cunning hypocrisy. I also heard that officials should not take unjustified money and they were supposed to suit their deeds to their words. Now the monarch has entitiled you higher position with power to let you contribute as a courtier serve the monarch and as a son serve his father with loyalty. So, you should be determined to carry out the monarch’s order loyally and devotedly in order to keep yourself safe. However, you act the other way to stay away from loyalty. Ah! You are unfaithful to the monarch like an unfilial son to his father! I can’t take possession of the money, neither can I regard you as my loyal son! You



Fig. 1-20 Mencius’s mother choosing her residence

go!” Tian Jizi, ashamed of himself, went out and gave all the money back to the man and pleaded guilty to Qi Xuan Wang. After listening to this, King Xuan greatly admired Tian Jizi’s mother’s righteousness, and also exempted Tian Jizi from being guilty of the crime. He still made him his Xiang, and used the money of the state treasury to reward Tian’s mother. Gentlemen praised Tian Jizi’s mother’s clean and good enlightenment. Ode said, “Tian Jizi’s mother, honest and upright, blamed her son for taking a bribe, and encouraged him to do his best to serve the country. She is really a great mother!”

Meng Ke's Mother from Zou City tells the story of the mother of Mencius. Stories like Meng's mother moving three times to choose the proper residence can be described as household stories. Meng, surnamed Ji, also named Ke, word Yu, was from Zou city during the Warring States Period (now Zoucheng, Shandong). He is also a great thinker and educator, and a representative of the Confucian school, and together with Confucius, is called "Confucius and Mencius." Thus, Mencius's great achievement can't be separated from the education from his mother.

During Mencius's childhood, his home was near a cemetery. Mencius often played here and learned about things like burials and crying. Seeing this, his mother said: "This place should not be the right one to raise a child!" So, she led Mencius away to move to a place next to a market. However, Mencius started to learn from traders and merchants how to boast. His mother said, "This is not where I should live with my child, ah!" Then later they moved to a place next to a school, from which he learned various rituals, morals and ceremonies. His mother said, "This is really where I can live with my son, ah!" So, they settled down here. When Mencius grew up, he learned the six arts: *The Poetry*, *The History*, *The Rituals*, *The Changes*, *The Music* and *The Spring and Autumn* and finally became a Confucian master.

When Mencius was young, he came home from school once and his



Fig. 1-21

Mencius's mother cutting off the thread

mother was weaving. Meng Mu saw his son had come back and asked him "How about your learning?" Mencius casually replied, "As usual." Seeing him indifferent to his study, his mother was very angry and sheared the cloth with a pair of scissors. Mencius looked terrified and asked his mother, "Why do you burst into anger?" His mother said, "You abandoned your study just like I cut the cloth. Ambitious people learn to establish a reputation and to gain knowledge. If now you abandon your study, you can't be exempted from doing cheap labour, and it is also difficult for you to avoid the