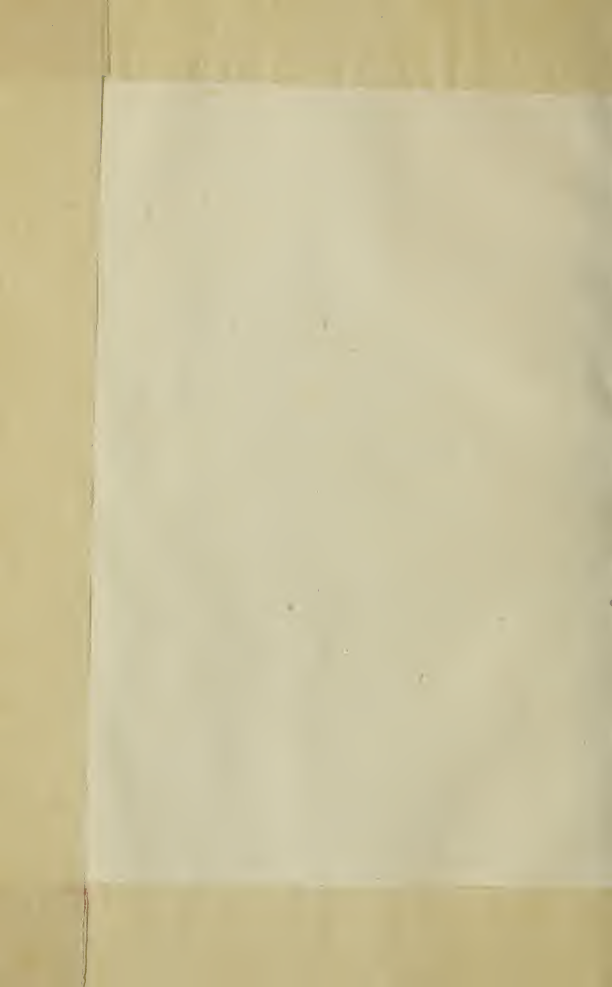


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# Chinese Moral Maxims.

TRANSLATED BY  
*Sir JOHN F.*  
*DAVIS.*

LONDON & GLASGOW.  
GOWANS & GRAY. Ltd.



CHINESE MORAL MAXIMS

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CHINESE  
MORAL MAXIMS

TRANSLATED BY  
SIR JOHN FRANCIS DAVIS

GOWANS & GRAY, LTD., LONDON & GLASGOW  
LEROY PHILLIPS, BOSTON, U.S.A.

1920

It is believed that this reprint of Sir John Davis's translation, first published in 1823, of these old Chinese maxims, will be welcomed. They are nearly all familiar to us in quite different forms, and it is very interesting to compare the varying moulds into which the same thought has been cast by Oriental and by European minds. A few only are characteristically Chinese and refer to conditions peculiar to that nation.

The Chinese characters have been omitted throughout, also the verbal translation of these characters, and six notes referring exclusively to their interpretation.

A. L. G.

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1920

HIEN WUN SHOO.

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CHINESE MORAL MAXIMS,

WITH A

FREE AND VERBAL TRANSLATION ;

AFFORDING EXAMPLES OF THE

*GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURE OF THE LANGUAGE.*

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COMPILED BY

JOHN FRANCIS DAVIS, F.R.S.

*Member of the Asiatic Society.*

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“GOOD SAYINGS ARE LIKE PEARLS, STRUNG TOGETHER.”

“INSCRIBE THESE ON THE WALLS OF YOUR DWELLING, AND  
REGARD THEM NIGHT AND DAY AS WHOLESOME ADMONITIONS.”

MING-SIN-PAOU-KIEN.

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1823.

*Asia*





To

SIR G. T. STAUNTON, BART., M.P., LL.D., AND F.R.S.

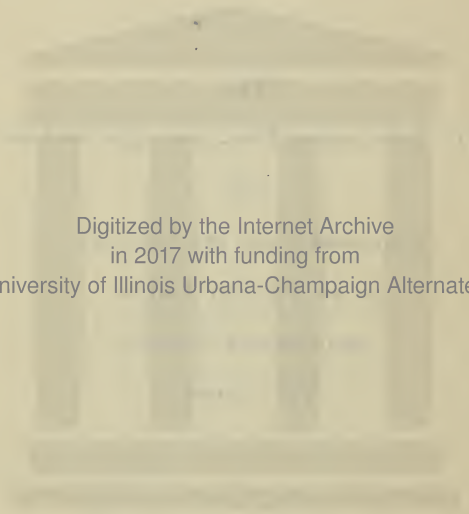
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## ADVERTISEMENT

THE following small collection was made in the year 1818, and sent home to the Library of the East India House, whence, at the recommendation of Dr. Wilkins, it was transferred back to China, and ordered by the Honourable Court of Directors to be printed at the Company's Press, the want of types in England (a want that has already been supplied in France) rendering such a step necessary towards the printing of any work which contained a large proportion of the Chinese Character. The first object of the Compilation (as set forth in the title page) was to afford some assistance to Students of the Language; but there are perhaps other Persons to whom it may not be altogether devoid of interest.

As among the sayings contained in the present volume it is observed, that a man's conversation is the mirror of his thoughts, so the maxims of a people may be considered as a medium which reflects with tolerable accuracy the existing state of their manners and ways of thinking. At the same time, I would, in its application to the Chinese, qualify the observation so far as to say, that they very seldom act up to the full extent of the spirit in which some of their purer and wiser precepts are framed; and that they are more like the Athenians who *knew* what was right, than the Spartans who *practised* it. This fact, however, by no means invalidates the truth of the general

position, that there must ever be a close connection between the popular maxims, and the manners of a nation. They have in reality a reciprocal action on each other; the modes and sentiments of one generation giving birth to certain maxims, which maxims contribute in their turn to influence and mould the manners of the next.

Considered in this connection, the following Proverbs and Moral Sentences may possess some claim to the attention of the curious. If in the original language they can pretend to any merit of their own, it arises chiefly from the brevity and pointedness of expression,—a merit which wholly evaporates in the process of translation. Denuded of their native dress, they in most instances degenerate into little better than mere truisms;—truisms, however, which while they may excite the scorn of the ignorant and the unthinking, are of such utility and importance in the conduct of life, as to have made it the study of the Moralist, in every country, to inculcate them with the greatest effect; by clothing them in such forcible and striking language, and condensing them into so laconic a form, as might best allure the attention, and enable the memory most easily to retain them. I have observed in another place,\* that the language of the Chinese is well adapted to this purpose.

Their most ancient Moral Maxims (and especially those of Confucius), bear a strong resemblance to the sententious sayings of the Sages of Greece. In the earlier stages of society, before the diffusion of book learning, and when the teachers of truth

\* Preliminary Observations to a volume of Chinese Novels.

addressed themselves orally to their disciples, such pithy and condensed sentences were not only best calculated to excite immediate attention, but also the most likely to be remembered by the hearers. Being treasured up and handed down to posterity, they have at length become so many texts or theses for the more Prosaic Discourses of modern times; and accordingly, I think it will be found, that the earliest records of every country abound most with this species of sententious wisdom. Long trains of reasoning and laboured deductions are suited neither to the inclinations nor capacities of men in the infancy of society; nor were they required, when every word that fell from the lips of the teacher was received with submissive reverence by his disciples. The process of argumentation becomes necessary, only when the diffusion of knowledge, and the existence of conflicting opinions, weakens the force of authorities; and makes it incumbent on the professor to demonstrate the truth of every thing he advances.

There can be little doubt of the antiquity of the greater number of Maxims contained in this Volume. Their abstract truth or falsehood is a matter of no consequence to the European reader, to whom they are offered merely as specimens of national literature. As the Chinese, however, generally quote them with respect, and as the greater portion have a moral tendency, I have not scrupled to bestow on the collection the title of Hien-wun-shoo, "A book of virtuous lore."

*Macao, 1823*

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## CHINESE MAXIMS,

&c.

### I

THE man of first rate excellence is virtuous *independently* of instruction; he of the middling class is so *after* instruction; the lowest order of men are vicious *in spite* of instruction.<sup>1</sup>

### II

By a long journey we know a horse's strength; so length of days shews a man's heart.

### III

The spontaneous gifts of heaven are of high value; but the strength of perseverance gains the prize.

### IV

The generations of men follow each other, as the waves in a swollen river.<sup>2</sup>

### V

The heart of a worthless man is as unfixed and changeable as a mountain stream.

<sup>1</sup> The first of these are styled Shing, and are the Saints of China; the second are Hien, or Worthies; the last are called Yu, Foolish, or worthless.

<sup>2</sup> " ————— Ut unda impellitur undâ,  
Urgeturque prior veniente, urgetque priorem."

## VI

In the days of affluence always think of poverty; do not let want come upon you, and make you remember with sorrow the time of plenty.

(The Chinese have also the following, in complete opposition to the foregoing maxim.)

## VII

Let us get drunk to-day, while we have wine; the sorrows of to-morrow may be borne to-morrow.

## VIII

“The mind is it’s own place, and in itself  
“Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.”

## IX

Prevention is better than a cure.

## X

Modesty is attended with profit; arrogance brings on destruction.

## XI

“As the twig is bent, the tree’s inclin’d.”

## XII

The same tree may produce sour and sweet fruit; the same mother may have a virtuous and vicious progeny.

## XIII

It is equally criminal in the governor, and the governed, to violate the laws.



## XIV

Prosperity and misfortune are common to all times,  
and all places.

## XV

As the scream of the eagle is heard when she has  
passed over ; so a man's name remains after his  
death.

## XVI

Questions of right and wrong (with reference to  
men's characters) are every day arising ; if not  
listened to, they die away of themselves.<sup>3</sup>

## XVII

If the domestic duties be duly performed, where is  
the necessity of going afar to burn incense ?

## XVIII

Doubt and distraction are on earth ; the brightness  
of truth, in heaven.

## XIX

Meeting with difficulties, we think of our relations ;  
on the brink of danger, we rely on our friends.

## XX

Among mortals, who is faultless ?

## XXI

In learning, age and youth go for nothing ; the best  
informed takes the precedence.

<sup>3</sup> The great Boerhaave, in like manner compared them  
to "sparks, which, if you do not blow them, will go  
out of themselves."

## XXII

Do not love idleness and hate labour ; do not be diligent in the beginning, and in the end lazy.

## XXIII

Against open crimes, punishments can oppose a barrier ; but secret offences it is difficult for the laws to reach.

## XXIV

If there be no faith in our words, of what use are they?

## XXV

If riches can be acquired with propriety, then acquire them ; but let not unjust wealth be sought for with violence.

## XXVI

If there be a want of concord among members of the same family, other men will take advantage of it to injure them.<sup>4</sup>

## XXVII

The world's unfavourable views, of conduct and character, are but as the floating clouds, from which the brightest day is not free.

## XXVIII

Wine and good dinners make abundance of friends ; but, in the time of adversity, not one is to be found.

<sup>4</sup> The moral conveyed in the fable of the old man and his sons, with the bundle of sticks.

## XXIX

Let every man sweep the snow from before his own doors, and not trouble himself about the frost on his neighbour's tiles.

## XXX

Though a tree be a thousand *Chang*<sup>5</sup> in height, its leaves must fall down, and return to its root.

## XXXI

He who can suppress a moment's anger, will prevent lasting sorrow.

## XXXII

The human relations are five<sup>6</sup> in number, but that of husband and wife is the first in rank; the great ceremonies (or rites) amount to three thousand, but that of marriage is the most important.

## XXXIII

Worldly reputation and pleasure are destructive to virtue; anxious thoughts and apprehensions are injurious to the body.

## XXXIV

Better to be upright with poverty, than depraved with an abundance. He, whose virtue exceeds his talents, is the good man: he, whose talents exceed his virtue, is the mean one.

<sup>5</sup> A *chang* is ten Chinese cubits.

<sup>6</sup> Husband and wife, parent and child, brethren, prince and minister, friends.

## XXXV

In a field of melons, do not pull up your shoe : under a plum-tree, do not adjust your cap ; (*i.e.* be very careful of your actions under circumstances of suspicion).

## XXXVI

The man of worth is really great without being proud : the mean man is proud without being really great.

## XXXVII

Time flies like an arrow : days and months like a weaver's shuttle.

## XXXVIII

It is said in the Yě-king, that "of those men, whose talent is inconsiderable, while their station is eminent : and of those, whose knowledge is small, while their schemes are large,—there are few who do not become miserable."

## XXXIX

When a man obtains a large sum without having earned it, if it does not make him very happy, it will certainly make him very miserable.

## XL

Though a man may be utterly stupid, he is very perspicacious when reprehending the bad actions of others ; though he may be very intelligent, he is dull enough while excusing his own faults : do you only correct yourselves on the same principle that you correct others ; and excuse others on the same principle that you excuse yourselves.

## XLI

The figure of men in ancient times resembled that of wild beasts;<sup>7</sup> but their hearts contained the most perfect virtue. The outward appearance of the present race of men is human, but their dispositions are utterly brutish.

## XLII

The artful are loquacious, the simple are silent; the artful toil, the simple enjoy ease; the artful are rogues, the simple virtuous; the artful are miserable, the simple happy. Oh! that all in the empire were artful and simple; punishments would then be abolished. Superiors would enjoy tranquillity, and inferiors would be obedient. The manners would be pure, and vile actions become extinct!

## XLIII

Do not anxiously hope for what is not yet come: do not vainly regret what is already past.

## XLIV

If your schemes do not succeed, of what use is it to regret their failure? If they do not flourish, what is the use of noisy complaints? When a

<sup>7</sup> The absurd fables, related in the Chinese books of Ancient History, tell very much against their fidelity, and afford a strong antidote to the implicit belief, with which the Jesuitical accounts of Chinese antiquity have been listened to. In fact, their most ancient historical work *extant* (the *Chun-tsew*, of Confucius) is not older than the history of Herodotus, and *not so old* as Homer's poems

heart, devoted to gain, is intent on any object, then virtue is set aside: where interested views exist, there a regard for the public welfare is extinguished.

## XLV

Men's passions are like water: when water has once flowed over, it cannot be restored; when the passions have once been indulged, they cannot be restrained. Water must be kept in by dykes; the passions must be ruled by the laws of propriety.

## XLVI

Low courage is the resentment of the blood and spirits: noble courage is the resentment of propriety and justice. The former of these, no man should possess; the latter, no man should be without.

## XLVII

Without ascending the mountain, we cannot judge of the height of heaven; without descending into the valley, we cannot judge of the depth of the earth: without listening to the maxims, left by the ancient kings, we cannot know the excellence of learning.

## XLVIII

In making a candle we seek for light, in reading a book we seek for reason: light to illuminate a dark chamber; reason to enlighten man's heart.

## XLIX

By learning, the sons of the common people become public ministers; without learning, the sons of

public ministers become mingled with the mass of the people.

## L

If you have fields, and will not plough them, your barns will be empty ; if you have books, and will not give instruction, your offspring will be ignorant : if your barns be empty, your years and months will be unsupplied ; if your offspring be ignorant, propriety and justice will not abound among them.

## LI

Though an affair may be easily accomplished, if it be not attended to, it will never be completed : though your son may be well disposed, if he be not instructed, he will still remain ignorant.

## LII

Of those, who at home are destitute of virtuous parents and elders, and abroad have no rigorous instructors and friends, and, notwithstanding this, can perfect themselves (in wisdom),—there are very few !

## LIII

A meagre soil produces late flowers ; “ slow rises worth by poverty depressed ; ” but let no man despise the snake which has no horns, for who can say that it may not become a dragon ?

## LIV

If you love your son, give him plenty of the cudgel : if you hate your son, cram him with dainties.

## LV

The small birds look around them, and eat; the swallow goes to sleep without apprehension. He who possesses an enlarged and sedate mind, will have great happiness; but the man whose schemes are deep, will have great depth of misery.

## LVI

Past events are as clear as a mirror; the future as obscure as varnish.

## LVII

What exists in the morning, we cannot be certain of in the evening; what exists in the evening, we cannot calculate upon for the next morning. The fortunes of men are as uncertain as the winds and clouds of heaven.

## LVIII

When you are happier than usual, you ought to be prepared against some great misfortune. When joy is extreme, it precedes grief. Having obtained the imperial favour, you should think of disgrace; living in peace, you should think of danger: when your glory is complete, your disgrace will be the greater; when your success is great, your ruin will be the deeper.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> “——— Qui nimios optabat honores,  
Et nimias poscebat opes, numerosa parabat  
Excelsæ turris tabulata, unde altior esset,  
Casus, et impulsæ præceps immane ruinæ.”

JUVENAL, Sat. x, 104.



## LIX

When the mirror is highly polished, the dust will not defile it; when the heart is enlightened with wisdom, licentious vices will not arise in it.

## LX

In security, do not forget danger; in times of public tranquillity, do not forget anarchy.

## LXI

The fishes, though deep in the water, may be hooked; the birds, though high in the air, may be shot: but man's heart only is out of our reach. The heavens may be measured, the earth may be surveyed: the heart of man alone is not to be known. In painting the tiger, you may delineate his skin, but not his bones; in your acquaintance with a man, you may know his face, but not his heart. You may sit opposite to, and converse with him, while his mind is hidden from you, as by a thousand mountains.

## LXII

Forming resentments with mankind may be called "planting misery:" putting aside virtuous deeds, instead of practising them, may be called "robbing one's self."

## LXIII

Riches are what the good man considers lightly: death is what the mean man considers as of importance.

## LXIV

When the man of a naturally good propensity has much wealth, it injures his acquisition of knowledge: when the worthless man has much wealth, it increases his faults.

## LXV

In enacting laws, rigour is indispensable: in executing them, mercy.<sup>9</sup>

## LXVI

Do not consider any vice as trivial, and therefore practise it: do not consider any virtue as unimportant, and therefore neglect it.

## LXVII

If men's desires and wishes be laudable, Heaven will certainly further them.

## LXVIII

Following virtue is like ascending a steep; following vice, like rushing down a precipice.

## LXIX

All events are separately fated before they happen. Floating on the stream of life, it is in vain that we torment ourselves. Nothing proceeds from the machinations of men; but the whole of our lives is planned by destiny.

<sup>9</sup> Whatever may be the truth or falsehood of this Maxim, it certainly appears to be the principle on which our own Criminal Code is both formed and administered.

## LXX

A vicious wife, and an untoward son, no laws can govern.

## LXXI

With the years of his parents, a man must by all means be well acquainted:—first, as a cause of joy; and again as a source of sorrow. (Joy, that they have lived so long: sorrow, that they are so old.)

## LXXII

Those who have discharged their duties as children, will in their turn have dutiful children of their own: the obstinate and untoward will again produce offspring of the same character: to convince you, only observe the rain from the thatched roof, where drop follows drop without the least variation.

## LXXIII

He, who tells me of my faults, is my teacher: he who tells me of my virtues, does me harm.

## LXXIV

Let your words be few, and your companions select;—thus you will avoid remorse and repentance; thus you will avoid sorrow and shame.

## LXXV

If a man's wishes be few, his health will be flourishing; if he has many anxious thoughts, his constitution will decay.

## LXXVI

Be temperate in drinking, and your mind will be calm : restrain your impetuosity, and your fortunes will remain uninjured.

## LXXVII

Honours come by diligence : riches spring from economy.

## LXXVIII

The mild and gentle must ultimately profit themselves : the violent and fierce must bring down misfortune.

## LXXIX

Do not precipitate yourself into legal quarrels ; but let concord and good understanding prevail among neighbours.

## LXXX

Do not ascend the hills to ensnare the birds in nets ; do not descend to the water-side, to poison the fish ; do not slay the labouring ox ; do not treat letters with irreverence, by casting away written papers.<sup>10</sup>

## LXXXI

If you wish to know what most engages a man's thoughts, you have only to listen to his conversation ; (or, a man's conversation is the mirror of his thoughts).

<sup>10</sup> The Chinese think it fair to shoot birds, but not to net them ; many, and indeed the greater number, will not eat beef ; and they are very careful not to tread on written paper

## LXXXII

Do not rely upon your wealth, to oppress the poor ;  
do not trust to your power and station, to vex  
the orphan and widow.

## LXXXIII

Let no man for a private enmity, cause disagreement  
between father and son : let no one for trifling  
gain, breed dissension among brothers.

## LXXXIV

Draw near to the virtuous, that their virtue may be  
imparted to you : flee away from the vicious, that  
misfortune may be kept far from you.

## LXXXV

Cut away the brambles which obstruct the path ;  
remove the bricks and stones which lie in the  
way ; repair the roads which are injured by the  
lapse of years ; build the bridges which may be  
crossed by multitudes.

## LXXXVI

Propagate good instruction, to correct men's vices :  
part with your wealth, to effect men's happiness.

## LXXXVII

In our actions we should accord with the will of  
Heaven : in our words we should consult the  
feelings of men.

## LXXXVIII

If a man be not enlightened within, what lamp shall he light? If his intentions are not upright, what prayers shall he repeat?

## LXXXIX

Throughout life, beware of performing acts of animosity; in the whole empire, let there not exist a revengeful minded man. It is very well for you to injure others: but what think you of others returning those injuries on yourself. The tender blade is nipped by the frost; the frost is dissipated by the sun: and worthless men will always suffer rubs from others as bad as themselves.

## XC

Man perishes in the pursuit of wealth, as the bird meets with destruction in search of its food.

## XCI

Knowing what is right, without practising it, denotes a want of proper resolution.

## XCII

There are plenty of men in the world, but very few heroes.

## XCIII

Poverty and ruin must in the end be proportioned to a man's wickedness and craft; for these are qualities which Heaven will not suffer to prevail. Were riches and honours the proper result of crafty villainy, the better part of the world must fatten on the winds.

## XCIV

The duration of wealth ill-gotten, is as that of snow on which hot water is poured; the possession of lands, improperly obtained, endures as long as the sands, heaped up by the waves. If you make craft and deceit the rule of your life, you will be like the flower, which blows in the morning, and in the evening drops.

## XCV

The best cure for drunkenness is, whilst sober, to observe a drunken man.

## XCVI

(Three subjects of consideration for the wise man.)  
If he does not learn in his youth, he will be good for nothing when grown up: if he does not give instruction in his old age, his posterity will have nothing by which to remember him: if he is possessed of wealth, and does not make good use of it, should he become poor, no one will relieve him.

## XCVII

The opening flower blooms alike in all places: the moon sheds an equal radiance on every mountain and every river. Evil exists only in the heart of man; all other things tend to shew the benevolence of Heaven towards the human race.

## XCVIII

Of things defective, there is nothing more so than ill-obtained wealth; of the destitute and orphaned,

there are none more so than the self-sufficient man.

## XCIX

Confucius said, "A man, without thought for the future, must soon have present sorrow."

## C

When you put on your clothes, remember the labour of the weaver: when you eat your daily bread, think of the hardships of the husbandman.

## CI

Would you understand the character of the Prince, examine his ministers: would you know the disposition of any man, look at his companions; would you know that of father, look at his son.

## CII

A man is ignorant of his own failings, as the ox is unconscious of his great strength.

## CIII

A man, by the cultivation of virtue, consults his own interest: his stores of wisdom and reflection are every day filling up.

## CIV

Confucius says, "The capacity, for knowledge, of the inferior man is small, and easily filled up: the intelligence of the superior man is deep, and not easily satisfied."



## CV

Though the screen be torn, its frame is still preserved: though the good man be plunged in want, his virtue still remains to him.

## CVI

Without the wisdom of the learned, the clown could not be governed: without the labour of the clown, the learned could not be fed.

## CVII

The cure of ignorance, is study,—as meat is that of hunger.

## CVIII

The poverty of others is not to be ridiculed, for the decrees of destiny are in the end equal: nor are the infirmities of age a fit subject for laughter, since they must at last be the portion of us all. When the day that is passing over us is gone, our lives are proportionably contracted;—what reason, then, have the fish to be merry, when the water in which they swim is ebbing away.

## CIX

An immoderate use of dainties generally ends in disease; and pleasure, when past, is converted into pain. It is better to avert the malady by care, than to have to apply the physic, after it has appeared.

## CX

Though the white gem be cast into the dirt, its purity cannot be (lastingly) sullied: though the

good man live in a vile place, his heart cannot be depraved. As the fir and the cypress withstand the rigours of the winter, so resplendent wisdom is safe in situations of difficulty and danger.

## CXI

If you do not intreat their assistance, all men will appear good-natured; if you do not want to drink, it makes little difference whether the wine be dear or cheap; it is easier to seize the tiger in the hills, than to obtain the good offices of men.

## CXII

It is not easy to stop the fire, when the water is at a distance; friends at hand are better than relations afar off.

## CXIII

Though the sun and moon be bright, their rays cannot reach under the inverted bowl; though the sword of justice be swift, it cannot slay the innocent man; nor can sidelong mischance penetrate the doors of the careful.

## CXIV

If a man wish to attain to the excellence of superior beings, let him first cultivate the virtues of humanity; for if not perfect in human virtue, how shall he reach immortal perfection?

## CXV

Man is born without knowledge, and when he has obtained it, very soon becomes old;—when his experience is ripe, death suddenly seizes him.

## CXVI

Let those, who are the instructors of mankind, cherish their virtuous feelings, and vice will of itself vanish; let the rulers of the people teach them mutual respect and deference, and contentions will of themselves cease.

## CXVII

There are only three great rules, to be observed by those who hold public situations: viz. To be upright,—to be circumspect,—to be diligent. Those who know these three rules, know that, by which they will ensure their own safety in office.

## CXVIII

A man's prosperous, or declining condition, may be gathered from the proportion of his waking to his sleeping hours.

## CXIX

Unsullied poverty is always happy; while impure wealth brings with it many sorrows.

## CXX

The goodness of a house does not consist in its lofty halls, but in its excluding the weather: the fitness of clothes does not consist in their costliness, but in their make and warmth; the use of food does not consist in its rarity, but in its satisfying the appetite: the excellence of a wife consists, not in her beauty, but in her virtue.

## CXXI

In disposing of his daughter in marriage, let a man

choose for her a husband, superior to herself (in rank and fortune) : she will then serve her husband with respect and awe : in choosing his own wife, let a man take care that she be his inferior (in those respects) : she will then serve her new relations as a woman should.<sup>11</sup>

## CXXII

He who receives a benefit, and is not ungrateful,—as a son, will be dutiful,—as a minister, will be faithful.

## CXXIII

The fame of men's good actions seldom goes beyond their own doors ; but their evil deeds are carried to a thousand miles' distance.<sup>12</sup>

## CXXIV

Tae-kung says, "In the practice of hospitality, no difference should be made between relations and others ; all who come must be well received."

## CXXV

The sincerity of him, who assents to every thing, must be small : and he, who praises you inordinately to your face, must be altogether false.

<sup>11</sup> In China, when a woman is married, she is obliged to regard the father and mother of her husband, exactly in the light, in which she before regarded her own.

<sup>12</sup> "The evil which men do, lives after them.  
The good is oft interred with their bones."

## CXXVI

If sincerity be wanting between the prince and his minister, the nation will be in disorder ; if between father and son, the family will be discordant ; if between brothers, their affections will be loosened ; if between friends, their intercourse will be distant.

## CXXVII

Petty distinctions are injurious to rectitude ; quibbling words violate right reason.

## CXXVIII

Though powerful medicines be nauseous to the taste, they are good for the disease ; though candid advice be unpleasant to the ear, it is profitable for the conduct.

## CXXIX

To shew compassion towards the people, by remitting the severity of the taxes, is the virtue of the prince ; and to offer up their possessions, sinking their private views in regard for the public, is the duty of the people.

## CXXX

Though the life of man be short of a hundred years, he gives himself as much pain and anxiety, as if he were to live a thousand.

## CXXXI

The advantages of wise institutions, can be sought for only in an inflexible observance of them.

## CXXXII

If a man does not receive guests at home, he will meet with very few hosts abroad.

## CXXXIII

Where views and dispositions agree, the most distant will unite in friendship: where they disagree, relations themselves will soon be at enmity.

## CXXXIV

Without a clear mirror, a woman cannot know the state of her own face: without a true friend, a man cannot discern the errors of his own actions.

## CXXXV

A man should choose a friend who is *better* than himself: if only *like* himself, he had better have none.—There are plenty of acquaintances in the world, but very few real friends.

## CXXXVI

The evidence of others is not comparable to personal experience: nor is "I heard," so good as, "I saw."

## CXXXVII

We should make it the business of our lives to control our temper; and whenever we find it becoming unruly, that instant bring it into order.

## CXXXVIII

The three greatest misfortunes in life, are,—in youth,

to bury one's father ;—at the middle age, to lose one's wife,—and, being old, to have no son.

## CXXXIX

In her accomplishments, it is not requisite for a woman to display talents of a famous, or uncommon description : in her face, it is not requisite that she should be very handsome : her conversation need not be very pointed or eloquent ; her work need not be very exquisite or surpassing.

## CXL

A virtuous woman is a source of honour to her husband ; a vicious one causes him disgrace.

## CXLI

It being asked, “ Supposing a widowed woman to be very poor and destitute, might she in such a case take a second husband.” It was answered, This notion arises merely from the fear of cold and hunger : but to be starved to death is a very small matter compared with the loss of her respectability.

## CXLII

When offences proceed from inadvertency, let gentle remonstrances be used to inculcate a better knowledge for the future : where they are wilful, make use of severer denunciations, to prevent a repetition.

## CXLIII

Those who promote disputes, and instigate to legal discussions, (for their own profit) convert the pen

into a sword as the means of a livelihood ; and regard quarrels, which affect the dearest interest of others, as mere child's play.

## CXLIV

Those who cause divisions, in order to injure other people, are in fact preparing pit-falls for their own ruin.

## CXLV

Though the Mow-tan be beautiful, it is supported by its green leaves.

## CXLVI

A man's patrimony must suffer by trifling and idleness, as it must flourish by diligence. The chief rule to be observed, in one's plan of life, is to be strenuous in the beginning, and to increase one's exertions to the last.

## CXLVII

Even the carriers of burthens may, by honesty and diligence, obtain a sufficiency. The proverb says, "Every blade of grass has its share of the dews of heaven : " and "though the birds of the forest have no garners, the wide world is all before them."

## CXLVIII

Wisdom, and virtue, and benevolence, and rectitude, without politeness are imperfect.

## CXLIX

He, who fears the laws, will not be likely to violate



them. The dread of punishments is the best method of avoiding them.

## CL

Do not think lightly of crimes, and fancy that they may be trifled with; for to every crime there is a law adapted, for its punishment.

## CLI

He, who wishes to know the road through the mountains, must ask those who have already trodden it; (i.e. we must look, for instruction, to the experienced.)

## CLII

Rich men look forward to the years that are to come: but the poor man has time to think of only what is immediately before him.

## CLIII

It is better to believe that a man does possess good qualities than to assert that he does not.

## CLIV

The mischiefs of fire, or water, or robbers, extend only to the body; but those of pernicious doctrines, to the mind.

## CLV

The original tendency of man's heart is to do right; and if a due caution be observed, it will not of itself go wrong.

## CLVI

As it is impossible to please men in all things, our only care should be to satisfy our own consciences.

## CLVII

He who at once knows himself, and knows others, will triumph as often as he contends.

## CLVIII

One man's good fortune is the good fortune of his whole family.

## CLIX

Though brothers are very near relations, the difference of fortune widely separates them.

## CLX

Eat your three meals in the day, and look forward to sleeping at night.<sup>13</sup>

## CLXI

A man's countenance is a sufficient index of his prosperity or adversity, without asking him any questions.

## CLXII

Adversity is necessary to the development of men's virtues.

<sup>13</sup> "Carpe, mortalis, mea dona lætus,  
Carpe, nec plantas alias require,  
Sed satur panis, satur et soporis,  
Cætera sperne."

## CLXIII

He who neglects to study diligently in his youth, will, when he is old, repent that he put it off until too late.

## CLXIV

He who studies ten years in obscurity, will, when once preferred, be known universally.

## CLXV

It is too late to pull the rein, when the horse has gained the brink of the precipice: the time for stopping the leak is passed, when the vessel is in the midst of the river.

## CLXVI

The scholar is acquainted with all things, without the trouble of going out of doors.

## CLXVII

He who advances may fight; but he who retreat may take care of himself.<sup>14</sup>

## CLXVIII

Those who respect themselves will be honourable, but he, who thinks lightly of himself, will be held cheap by the world.

<sup>14</sup> "He who flies, may fight again:  
Which he can never do, that's slain;  
Hence, timely running's no mean part  
Of conduct, in the martial art."

## CLXIX

Do not believe that all are honest, who appear to be so: but beware, lest the semblance of goodness turn out to be the reverse.

## CLXX

Walls have ears, and there are listeners under the window.

## CLXXI

Among principals, there may be distinctions of rank: but among subordinates, none.

## CLXXII

Expression for "He has met with his match."

## CLXXIII

Great promises are not followed by corresponding actions.

## CLXXIV

Neat compositions, and elegant hand-writing; skill in drawing pictures, or in playing at chess,—are nothing more than a species of mechanical skill; what great value is there in them?

## CLXXV

As the behaviour of the world towards men of learning is respectful, learned men should have a due respect for themselves.

## CLXXVI

Expel pernicious doctrines, that the true code may be duly honoured.

## CLXXVII

If the stream be not confined, it will soon flow away and become dry: if wealth be not economized, there will be no limits to its expenditure, and it will soon be wasted.

## CLXXVIII

It is easy to convince a wise man: but to reason with a fool is a difficult undertaking.

## CLXXIX

To meet an old friend in a distant country, may be compared to the delightfulness of rain after a long drought.

## CLXXX

Speak of men's virtues as if they were your own; and of their vices, as if you were liable to their punishment.

## CLXXXI

The slow horse is fated to receive the lash: the worthless man will ultimately get his deserts.

## CLXXXII

Diligence is a treasure of inestimable price: and prudence is the pledge of a security.

## CLXXXIII

Mencius said, "All men concur in despising a glutton, because he gives up everything that is valuable, for the sake of pampering what is so contemptible."

## CLXXXIV

Him, whose words are consistent with reason, and whose actions are squared by the rule of rectitude, what man shall dare to oppose?

## CLXXXV

Inattention to minute actions, will ultimately be prejudicial to a man's virtue.

## CLXXXVI

To the contented, even poverty and obscurity bring happiness; while to the ambitious, wealth and honours themselves are productive of misery.

## CLXXXVII

As the light of a single star tinges the mountains of many regions; so a single unguarded expression injures the virtue of a whole life.

## CLXXXVIII

The evidence of a single glance should not be relied on as true: nor are words, spoken behind a man's back, deserving of much credence.

## CLXXXIX

If a horse goes slowly, it is only because he is weak: if a man is not luxurious, it is only because he is poor.

## CXC

Though a poor man should live in the midst of a noisy market, no one will ask about him: though

a rich man should bury himself among the mountains, his relations will come to him from a distance.

## CXC I

Knowledge is boundless; but the capacity of one man is limited.

## CXC II

Plausible words are not so good as straightforward conduct: a man, whose deeds are enlightened by virtue, need not be nice about his expressions.

## CXC III

A single hair of silk does not make a thread: one tree does not make a grove.

## CXC IV

A single conversation across the table, with a wise man, is better than ten years' mere study of books.

## CXC V

Virtue is the surest road to longevity; but vice meets with an early doom.

## CXC VI

By a single day's practice of virtue, though happiness may not be attained, yet misery may be kept at a distance: by a single day of ill doing, though misery does not immediately follow, happiness is prevented.

## CXC VII

If in the way of riches, do not use improper means

to possess them : if in the way of misfortune, do not use improper means to avoid it.

## CXCVIII

No medicine can procure long life, even to the ministers of the emperor : no money can purchase for any man a virtuous posterity.

## CXCIX

A single false move loses the game.

## CC

Prudence will carry a man all over the world : but the impetuous find every step difficult.

**THE END**



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