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名賢集

A COLLECTION

OF

CHINESE FAMILY MAXIMS

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH

BY

F. M. JEFFERSON

謝福生

EDITOR OF THE ORIENTAL REPUBLICAN MESSENGER,
AND THE WEIHAIWEI POST.

WEI-HAI-WEI, NORTH CHINA.

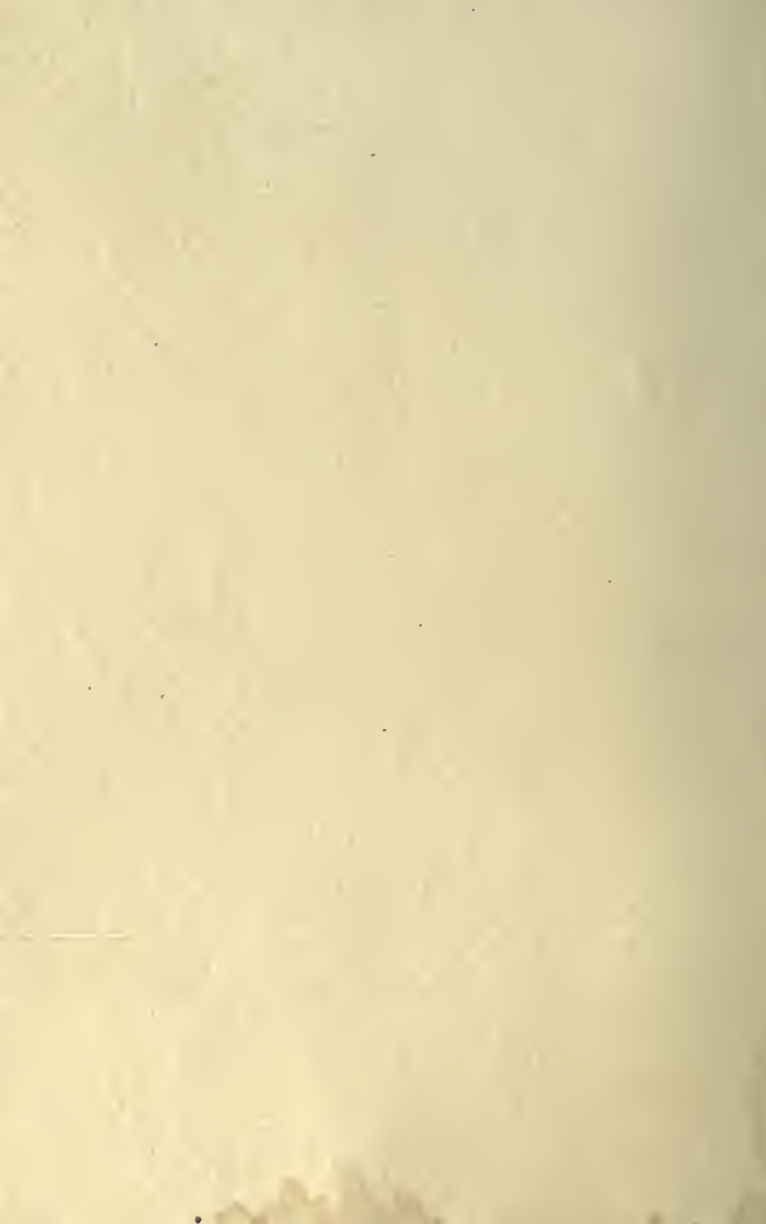
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Respectfully Dedicated

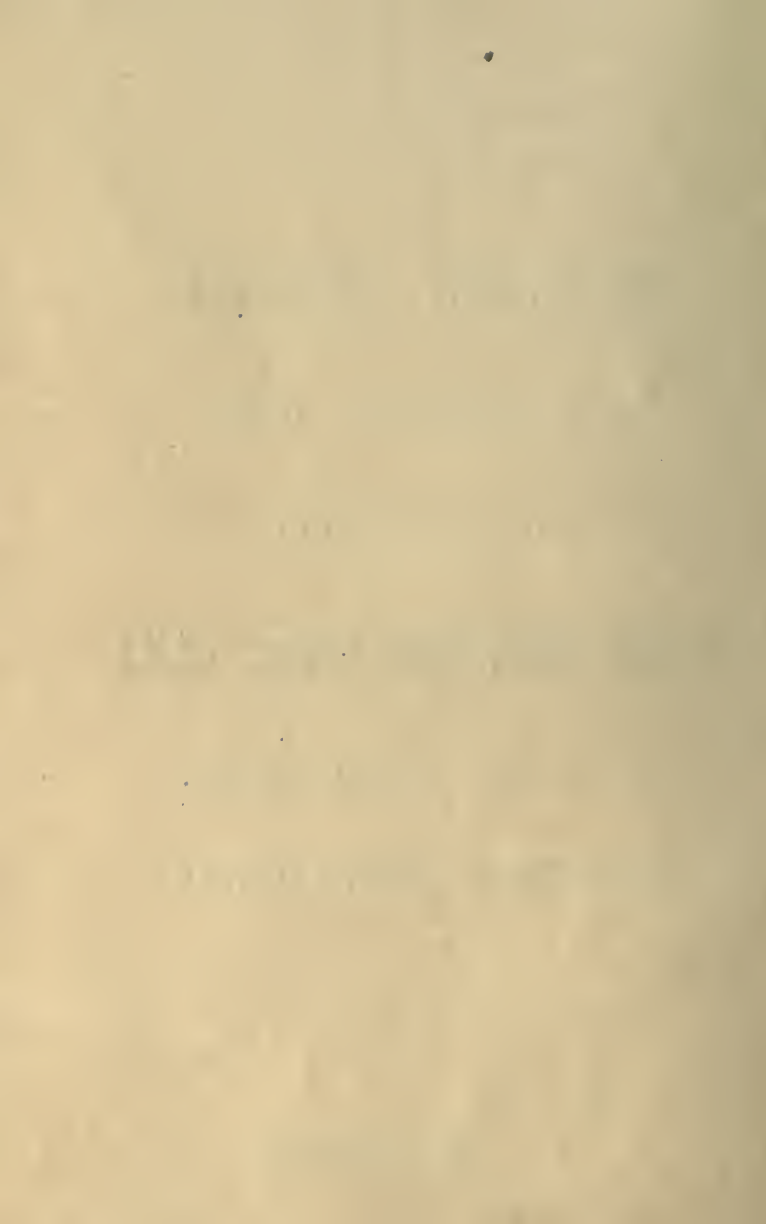
AS A GRATEFUL TOKEN

TO HIS HONOUR

Sir James Haldane Stewart Lockhart, K.C.M.G.

H. B. M.'s COMMISSIONER,

WEIHAIWEI, NORTH CHINA.



PREFACE.

Among the many admirable characteristics of ideal manhood good morals occupy a unique place of importance. It justly follows that the moral sayings of worthy men are held in great esteem from generation to generation. Such sayings are, as a rule, the cream of sound philosophical conclusions conveying much wisdom in a few words. The contents of this volume are, as the name implies, a collection of Chinese moral maxims. They are drawn from various sources and are adapted to the needs of daily life.

These maxims were specially translated for the "Oriental Republican Messenger"—a bimonthly magazine edited for the benefit of English-speaking Chinese who desire to improve their knowledge of English and to succeed in life—and have been reprinted in booklet form so as to afford a wider circle of readers an opportunity of reading them.

The translator desires to acknowledge the assistance he has received from the translation of these maxims made by Mr. H. Dawson-Gröne, Commissioner of Customs at Kirin.

If the perusal of this small collection of Chinese moral maxims should prove helpful in any way to even a single reader the translator will regard himself as amply rewarded for the labour he has expended.

F. M. JEFFERSON (謝福生).

Office of THE ORIENTAL REPUBLICAN MESSENGER.

亞東民國二月報

WEI-HAI-WEI, NORTH CHINA,

CHRISTMAS, 1914.

名賢集

A Collection of Chinese Moral Maxims.

1—但行好事、莫問前程。

Do good without inquiring what will be the future result.

2—與人方便、自己方便。

To benefit others is to benefit yourself.

3—善與人交、久而敬之。

“The man who knows how to make and retain friends always maintains his respect for them, however long the acquaintance may be.” *

4—人貧志短、馬瘦毛長。

Narrow ideas are the distinguishing mark of a poor man just as long hair is that of a lean horse.

5—人心似鐵、官法如爐。

The heart of man is like iron; the force of the law is like a furnace that melts it.

6—諫之雙美、毀之兩傷。

Reproof is beneficial to the reprover and the reproved: slander is injurious to the slanderer and the slandered.

* See Legge's Translation of the Lun Yü, page 43.

7—積善之家、必有餘慶。

A family that treasures goodness will have an abundance of good fortune.

8—積惡之家、必有餘殃。

A family that stores up wickedness will have an abundance of misfortune.

9—休爭閒氣、日有平西。

Do not quarrel over trifles: and let not the setting sun go down on your wrath.

10—來之不善、去之亦易。

Wealth wrongly acquired easily disappears.

11—人平不語、水平不流。

A calm man is silent just as calm water is still.

12—得榮思辱、處安思危。

When honoured, think of disgrace: when secure, think of danger.

13—羊羔雖美、衆口難調。

However good lamb may be, it cannot be made to suit every palate.

14—事要三思、免勞後悔。

Think thrice before you act and so avoid future repentance.

15—太子入學、庶民同例。

When the heir apparent goes to school, he ranks as an ordinary person.

16—官至一品、萬法依條。

The most exalted officials must yield implicit obedience to the law.

17—凡事從實、積福自厚。

Be genuine in all things and you will lay up a rich store of happiness.

18—無功受祿、寢食不安。

To receive a reward that has not been merited should make one uneasy when eating or sleeping.

19—財高語壯、力大欺人。

Great wealth is attended by strong words: great power, by oppression.

20—言多語失、食多傷心。

Excess in words produces errors: excess in food injures the mind.

21—酒要少吃、事要多知。

Drink little wine, but seek after much knowledge.

22—相爭告人、萬種無益。

Quarrels and litigation of every kind are useless.

23—禮下與人、必有所求。

He who humbles himself to others must have some favour to seek.

24—敏而好學、不恥下問。

“One should (like Kung Wên) be diligent and studious, and not ashamed to ask for information from others inferior to himself.” *

25—居必擇鄰、交必良友。

Wherever you reside select your neighbours: associate only with good friends.

26—順天者存、逆天者亡。

He who conforms to the will of Heaven will survive, but he who opposes it will perish.

27—人爲財死、鳥爲食亡。

A man will die for riches just as a bird will die for food.

* See Legge's Translation of the Lun Yü, page 66.

28—得人一牛、還人一馬。

If you get from a man an ox, return to him a horse.

29—老實常在、脫空常敗。

An honest man will always prosper: a crafty man will never succeed.

30—三人同行、必有我師。

"When I walk with two men, at least one of them can teach me something." *

31—人無遠慮、必有近憂。

"A man who takes no thought about what is distant will find sorrow near at hand." §

32—寸心不昧、萬法皆明。

To the mind that is not clouded all things will be clear.

33—明中施捨、暗裏填還。

Benefactions made in the light of day will be repaid in unknown ways.

34—人間私語、天聞若雷。

Words uttered in secret among men are as audible as the roar of thunder to Heaven.

* See Legge's Translation of the Lun Yü, page 42.

§ " " " " " 162.

35—暗室虧心、神目如電。

Wicked deeds done in secret are as visible as a flash of lightning to the eyes of God.

36—肚裏蹺蹺、神道先知。

The evil machinations of the heart are known to God before they are revealed.

37—人離鄉賤、物離鄉貴。

A man remote from his native village is held cheap: goods remote from their native village become dear.

38—殺人可恕、情理難容。

Murder may be pardonable, but inhumanity cannot be forgiven.

39—人欲可斷、天理可循。

Neither the control of human passions nor the observance of eternal principles should be regarded as impossibilities.

40—心要忠恕、意要誠實。

Let faithfulness and sympathy guide your heart, and sincerity and honesty your mind.

41—狎暱惡少、久必受累。

Familiarity with those who are young but wicked will ultimately bring trouble.

42—屈志老成、急可相依。

Deference to men of age and experience will bring support in time of need.

43—施惠無念、受恩莫忘。

Forget any kindness you have done but remember any favour you have received.

44—勿營華屋、勿謀良田。

Do not build a grand house nor scheme to obtain rich fields.

45—祖宗雖遠、祭祀宜誠。

Though ancestors may be remote sacrifices should be offered to them in a spirit of sincerity.

46—子孫雖愚、詩書宜讀。

Though your sons and grandsons may be stupid, they should be educated.

47—刻薄成家、理無久享。

The fortune of a family made by oppression will naturally not be long enjoyed.

48—黃金浮在世、白髮故人稀。

Gold in the world is abundant but grey-haired old friends are few.

49—多金非爲貴、安樂值錢多。

Great wealth is not valuable; but peace and happiness are worth much money.

50—休爭三寸氣、白了少年頭。

Do not give vent to anger for it will make the young prematurely grey.

51—百年隨時過、萬事轉頭空。

The years roll on imperceptibly and all things quickly pass away.

52—耕牛無宿草、倉鼠有餘糧。

The ox at the plough has no fodder left while the rat in the barn has more than enough grain to eat.

53—萬事分已定、浮生空自忙。

All things are pre-ordained: in vain do mortals flurry themselves in this fleeting life.

54—結有德之朋、絕無義之友。

Make friends of those who are virtuous: have no intercourse with friends who have no sense of duty.

55—常懷克己心、法度要謹守。

Always remember to keep your thoughts under control and respectfully observe the law.

56—君子坦蕩蕩、小人長戚戚。

“A wise and good man is composed and happy: a fool is always worried and full of distress.”*

57—見事知長短、人面識高低。

When a man exercises his powers of observation he can distinguish between right and wrong just as when he sees a face he can tell whether its owner is good or bad.

58—心高遮甚事、地高逐水流。

Just as high land (becomes arid and useless) owing to the water running off it so he who is too high and mighty can accomplish nothing.

59—水深流去慢、貴人語話遲。

As the current is slow when the water is deep so a man of distinction is slow to speak.

60—道高龍虎伏、德重鬼神欽。

A man possessed of the highest truth can tame dragons and tigers: a man of great virtue will be respected by demons and spirits.

61—人高談今古、物高價出頭。

A man highly gifted can discuss the present and past: an article highly valuable sells for a very high price.

* See Legge's Translation of the Lun Yü, page 7.

62—休倚時來勢、隄防時去年。

Do not depend on your present good fortune but take precautions against the time when it may desert you.

63—藤蘿繞樹生、樹倒藤蘿死。

The creeper lives by winding itself around the tree: when the tree falls, the creeper dies.

64—官滿如花謝、勢敗奴欺主。

An official whose service is at an end is like a faded flower: a man whose power has gone will be insulted even by his own underlings.

65—命強人欺鬼、時衰鬼欺人。

When his luck is good, a man can control the devil: when his luck has gone, the devil can control him.

66—但得一步地、何須不爲人。

If you can get but a footing, why not play the man?

67—人無千日好、花無百日紅。

Human prosperity will not endure for ever just as flowers will not bloom for aye.

68—人有十年壯、神鬼不敢傍。

When a man practises honesty for ten years, spirits and demons dare not approach him.

69—厨中有剩飯、路上有饑人。

If there is any food over in the kitchen, there are hungry men on the road (who will be glad to eat it).

70—饒人不是癡、過後得便宜。

Forgiveness is not folly, for subsequently it will prove advantageous.

71—量小非君子、品高是丈夫。

A narrow-minded person is not a gentleman: a person of high character is a true man.

72—路遙知馬力、日久見人心。

Distance reveals the strength of a horse; time, the character of a man.

73—長存君子道、須有稱心時。

Always maintain the ideals of a gentleman: there is sure to be a happy time in store for you.

74—鴈飛不到處、人被利名牽。

Just as there is no place to which the wild goose cannot wing its flight so there are no lengths to which a man who is attracted by gain and fame will not go.

75—有錢便使用、死後一場空。

If you have money spend it: when you are dead it will be useless.

76—爲仁不富矣、爲富不仁矣。

If you are benevolent, you cannot be rich; if you are rich, you cannot be benevolent.

77—君子喻於義、小人喻於利。

“A gentleman regards what is right; a cad, what will pay.” (1)

78—貧而無怨難、富而無驕易。

“To be poor without murmuring is difficult: to be rich without being proud is easy.” (2)

79—萬般全在命、半點不由人。

All depends on chance and nothing on man.

80—在家敬父母、何須遠燒香。

Honour your father and mother at home; of what avail is it to burn incense afar?

81—家和貧也好、不義富如何。

A family that lives in harmony though poor is happy: to the unrighteous riches are of no avail.

82—晴乾開水道、須防暴雨時。

Clear the gutters while the weather is fine and dry as you must provide against the season of heavy rains.

(1) See Legge's Translation of the Lun Yü, page 34.

(2) " " " " " 143.

83—寒門生貴子、白屋出公卿。

From a humble home may be produced noble sons and from a poor cottage may spring the highest dignitaries.

84—將相本無種、男兒當自強。

As prime ministers and generals do not spring from any special class, all young men should exert themselves.

85—成人不自在、自在不成人。

To become a real man, you cannot live at ease; if you live at ease, you cannot become a real man.

86—國正天心順、官清民自安。

A well-ordered government will be favoured by Heaven: an upright official will bring peace to the people.

87—妻賢夫禍少、子孝父心寬。

A good wife will save her husband much trouble: a filial son will relieve his father's mind from anxiety.

88—自家無運至、却怨世界難。

He upon whom fortune does not smile is sure to complain that the world is hard.

89—有錢能解話、無錢語不聽。

If you have money your words will be readily understood; but if you have none, they will not receive even a hearing.

90—人生不滿百、常懷千歲憂。

Though the life of man does not last for one hundred years, he has the worries of a thousand.

91—來說是非者、便是是非人。

He who talks evil of others is himself an evil-doer.

92—積善有善報、積惡有惡報。

He who does good is rewarded with good: he who does evil is rewarded with evil.

93—報應有早晚、禍福自不錯。

Retribution is bound to come sooner or later; misfortune and happiness unerringly come to those who deserve them.

94—花有重開日、人無長少年。

The flowers will blossom again; but youth is not perennial.

95—人無害虎心、虎有傷人意。

Man has no intention of harming the tiger; but the tiger is bent on injuring man.

96—上山擒虎易、開口告人難。

It is easy to ascend a hill and catch a tiger; but it is difficult to ask a favour.

97—忠臣不怕死、怕死不忠臣。

A loyal servant of his country does not fear death; he who fears death is not a loyal servant of his country.

98—從前多少事、過去一場空。

How many events have passed and gone and are now but an empty dream.

99—既在矮簷下、怎敢不低頭。

When under low eaves, how can one presume not to bend one's head?

100—家貧知孝子、國亂顯忠臣。

The poverty of a family is a test of the filial piety of a son just as the disorder of a country reveals the loyalty of a public servant.

101—命貧君子拙、時來小人強。

Bad fortune may render a wise man helpless whilst good fortune may make a weakling strong.

102—命好心也好、富貴直到老。

If both your luck and your heart are good, riches and honours will be yours till old age.

103—命好心不好、中途夭折了。

If your luck is good but your heart is bad, your life will be cut short prematurely in the middle of your career.

104—心命都不好、窮苦直到老。

If both your luck and your heart are bad, poverty and misery will attend you till old age.

111—人無酬天之力、天有養人之心。

Though man is powerless to requite the favours of Heaven, Heaven is always heedful of the needs of man.

112—一馬不韝雙鞍、忠臣不事二主。

Just as one horse does not carry two saddles, so a loyal statesman will not serve two masters.

113—長想有力之奴、不念無爲之子。

Be always mindful of your hardworking servants but have no thought of your good-for-nothing sons.

114—人有旦夕禍福、天有晝夜陰陽。

The good and bad fortune of men is as sudden and fitful as the changes of the weather.

115—君子當權積福、小人仗勢欺人。

A wise man whilst in authority lays up happiness for his future: a mean man relies upon his power to oppress others.

116—人將禮樂爲先。樹將枝葉爲圓。

Ceremonial and music are of first importance to man just as the tree has branches and leaves to complete its appearance.

117—馬有垂韁之義、狗有濕草之恩。

The horse showed its faithfulness by lowering its bridle (into a well to thus enable its master to save himself): the dog showed its kindness by wetting (the grass to prevent fire from reaching the spot where its master lay).

118—運去黃金失色、時來鐵也爭光。

When fortune departs, gold loses its glitter; but when it arrives, even iron dazzles.

119—怕人知道休做、要人敬重勤學。

Do nothing which you fear may become known; study hard if you wish to command respect.

120—泰山不却微塵、積小壘成高大。

The highest mountain does not reject grains of sand: every mickle makes a muckle.

121—人道誰無煩惱、風來浪也白頭。

Who is free from trouble and care? When the wind blows, even the waves that were calm are crested with foam.

122—貧居鬧市無人問、富在深山有遠親。

If you are poor, no one will inquire about you though you may be living in a thronged market: if you are rich, your distant relations will come to you though you may be living on a remote mountain.

123—交情當慎初相見、到老終無怨恨心。

In forming friendship care should be exercised at the first meeting. This will save discontent and regret when you become old.

124—白馬紅纓彩色新、不是親者強來親。

Riding on a white horse with red trappings bright and new, you will have relationship thrust upon you by those who are not related to you.

125—一朝馬死黃金盡、親者如同陌路人。

But when one morning the horse is dead and your gold is all gone, your relations will be to you just the same as the man in the street.

126—青草發時便蓋地、運通何須覓故人。

As the new grass grows, it covers the ground, so if you are prosperous, what need have you to seek for old friends?

127—但能依理求生計、何必欺心作惡人。

If you can make an honest livelihood, why suppress your better nature and be a wicked man?

128—纔爲人交辨人心、高山流水向古今。

When you make a friend, you must know his heart just as Chung Tzu-ch'i understood the meaning of the music played by Po Ya. (When Po Ya played *hills* Chung Tzu-ch'i could see a lofty mountain before his eyes and when he played *water*, he could see the roaring torrent dashing down).

129—莫作虧心僥倖事、自然災患不來侵。

Do not indulge in discreditable, venturesome transactions and calamity and disaster will not overtake you.

130—人着人死天不肯、天着人死有何難。

Heaven will not permit one man to kill another; but Heaven has no difficulty in killing whomever it pleases.

131—我見幾家貧了富、幾家富了又還貧。

I have seen many families that were poor become rich and many families that were rich become poor.

132—三寸氣在千般用、一旦無常萬事休。

While there is life, all things are practicable; but once death supervenes, all is over.

133—人見利而不見害、魚見食而不見鈎。

Man sees the gain, not the danger, just as the fish sees the bait and not the hook.

134—是非只爲多開口、煩惱皆因強出頭。

Mischief arises from talking too much; annoyance, from unnecessary interference.

135—平生正直無私曲、問甚天公饒不饒。

If you have always been perfectly straightforward and free from crookedness, why should you ask whether God will forgive you or not?

136—猛虎不在當道臥、困龍也有上天時。

A ferocious tiger does not sleep on the public road: a dragon though now depressed will some day ascend to Heaven.

137—臨崖勒馬收韁晚、船到江心補漏遲。

When you are on the edge of a precipice, it is too late to draw rein and pull up your horse: when the boat is in the middle of the stream, it is too late to mend a leak.

138—家業有時爲來往、還錢長記借錢時。

Those who have property must sometimes have monetary transactions: when you have to make repayment of a loan, remember that you have been a borrower.

139—金風未動蟬先覺、暗算無常死不知。

The cicada is aware of the autumn wind before it blows; but he who is assassinated in secret does not know his assassin.

140—青山只會明今古、綠水何曾洗是非。

The green hills ever remain as witnesses of the past and present: the green water cannot wash away the right and wrong.

141—常將有日思無日、莫待無時思有時。

In the days of prosperity think of the days of adversity: do not wait for adversity to come and then sigh for the days of prosperity.

142—善惡到頭終有報、只爭來早與來遲。

Good and evil will be rewarded and punished at last: it is only a question of sooner or later.

143—蒿蓬隱着靈芝草、淤泥陷着紫金盆。

The plant of immortality may lie hidden among weeds: a basin of the finest gold may be buried in the mud.

144—勸君莫作虧心事、古往今來放過誰。

Be advised not to do evil for from time immemorial who has escaped the penalty of his guilt?

145—山寺日高僧未起、算來名利不如閒。

In the monastery on the hill the monk does not rise till the sun is high: fame and riches are after all not equal to quiet repose.

146—欺心莫賭洪誓水、人與世情朝朝隨。

Let not a man of guile take an oath: for man cannot escape the consequence of his acts.

147—人生稀有七十餘、多少風光不同居。

Few men live to be over seventy, and how much has happened and will happen of which septuagenarians know nothing.

148—長江一去無回浪、人老何曾再少年。

As the water of the Great River flows onward and never returns, so a man when old can never renew his youth.

149—大道勸人三件事、戒酒除花莫賭錢。

In morality there are three things regarding which men should be specially exhorted. They should beware of drinking, abandon licentiousness, and refrain from gambling.

150—言多語失皆因酒、義斷親疏只爲錢。

Garrulity and errors of speech are the result of drink. Loyal ties are severed and relations estranged through money.

151—有事但近君子說、是非休聽小人言。

Consult only men of wisdom when seeking guidance in your affairs. Give no ear to the gossip of fools.

152—妻賢何愁家不富、子孝何須父向前。

If your wife is worthy, you need have no anxiety about your family not being rich. If sons are filial, it is not necessary for the father to come to the front.

153—心好家門生貴子、命好何須靠祖田。

In the family of him whose heart is good, a son who will succeed will be born: it is unnecessary for him whose luck is good to depend on his ancestral lands.

154—侵人田土騙人錢、榮華富貴不多年。

He who encroaches on another's land or swindles people out of money will not for many years enjoy glory, honour and riches.

155—莫道眼前無可報、分明折在子孫邊。

Do not say there are not before your eyes those on whom retribution can fall, for it will inevitably overtake your children and grandchildren.

156—酒逢知己千杯少、話不投機半句多。

If you meet a bosom friend, a thousand cups of wine seem too few. If you utter words that are wide of the mark, half a sentence is more than enough.

157—衣服破時賓客少、識人多處是非多。

When your clothes are tattered, your friends will be few. Many acquaintances will lead to much gossip.

158—草怕嚴霜霜怕日、惡人自有惡人磨。

Just as the grass dreads severe frost and the frost dreads the sun, so does one wicked man dread the oppression of others more wicked than himself.

159—月過十五光明少、人到終年萬事和。

As in the middle of the month the brightness of the moon diminishes, so in middle age (the ferment of youth is over and) harmony prevails.

160—良言一句三冬暖、惡口傷人六月寒。

Kind words make one feel warm even in mid-winter. Unkind words make one feel cold even in mid-summer.

161—雨裏深山雪裏煙、看時容易做時難。

The mountains in rain and mist amidst snow are easy to look at but difficult to reproduce.

162—無名草木年年發、不信男兒一世窮。

Shrubs and plants flourish year after year though unknown to fame: so do not believe that a man of character will remain poor all his life.

163—若不與人行方便、念盡彌陀總是空。

If you do not good to others, all your prayers to Buddha will be in vain.

164—少年休笑白頭翁、花開能有幾時紅。

Let not the young laugh at the grey hairs of the old. When a flower blooms, how long does its blossom last?

165—越奸越狡越貧窮、奸狡原來天不容。

The more wicked and cunning a man is the poorer he will become. Heaven never tolerates wickedness and cunning.

166—富貴若從奸狡得、世間呆漢吸西風。

If wealth and honour are obtained by craftiness and cunning, then the simple in this world will have to live on air.

167—忠臣不事二君主、烈女不嫁二夫郎。

A loyal servant of the state will not serve two rulers: a virtuous woman will not marry two husbands.

168—小人狡猾心腸歹、君子公平托上蒼。

The heart of the mean, cunning cad is bad. The honest and upright gentleman puts his trust in God.

169—一字千金價不多、會文會算有誰過。

For one character 1,000 taels are not too much. Who can surpass him who can read, write and calculate?

170—小身會文國家用、大漢空長作甚麼。

A dwarf if educated can be of service to the state; but of what use is a giant if he is all height and nothing more?



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