



Undergraduate assignment feedback form
(to be completed by marker)

<i>Student Name: Hainan Zhang</i>	
<i>Module Code: SICH3012</i> <i>Module title: A Brief History of British Sinology</i>	<i>Student number: 2503183</i>
<i>For completion by marker:</i> <i>Comments:</i>	
<i>Marker's signature:</i>	<i>Date:</i>
<i>Provisional mark:</i> NB. All marks are provisional until confirmed by the final examination board.	

AI Acknowledgement

☒ I have not used AI in my assignment

I confirm that I have not used any AI tools in the research and creation of this assignment. I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated materials as my own work. I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used, which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

☐ I have used AI in my assignment

I acknowledge the use of [AI Tool 1] [(AI Tool 1 url)] on [Date] to [Purpose my work: (e.g. support my research/proofread/edit photographic material etc.)]. I used the prompt(s):

1. [Prompt]
2. [Prompt]
3. [Prompt]

I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated text as my own work. I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used before, and after the use of AI tools which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

Good afternoon, Dr. Ngo and fellow classmates. I'm very honoured to share a story with you today, and the title of the story is The Ghost Dare Not Approach. It is from Volume Two of *Collectanea of Ethical Exemplars*. And it also recorded in Lang Gongchen 梁恭辰 ('s short story collection, *Beidongyuan Bilu* 北東園筆錄. The plot is largely consistent with the *Collectanea of Ethical Exemplars*. In what follows, my report will be presented in 3 parts. Firstly, I will show you the story; secondly, there will be a short conclusion; in the end, we will discuss the Confucian philosophical concept of 'family reverence' which is closely related to the story.

Now, let's look at part 1.

The story happened at a City God Temple in Suzhou Prefecture. Suzhou Prefecture is in Jiangsu Province, China. And the City God Temple is a Taoist temple that provides people with lessons on cause and effect. The City God is a deity in Chinese folk beliefs and Taoist beliefs, responsible for guarding the city, overseeing the lives and fortunes of people and ect. In Qianlong Period (1736-1795), Yuan Shouzhong 袁守中 (?-?) was a Taoist of this temple. He was skilled in poems and calligraphy of regular scripts in small characters. Regular scripts in small characters is a specific style of writing Chinese characters. You can have a look on the slide. One day, one of Yuan's disciples traveled among the mountains and didn't get back until midnight. Because of holding his master in respect and awe, he didn't dare to knock on the door, thus, sat in the outer hall and took a doze. Then the disciple heard a ghost speaking to another ghost, it had been ordered to detain a woman who was reluctant to leave her ill mother-in-law. And her thoughts about worrying were too strong and continuous, which led to the ghost unable to suck out her spirit. Another ghost replied, 'She is a daughter-in-law with family reverence, unlike those fierce spirits. We cannot detain her without consideration. We should report to God and request to extend her lifespan.' [God is in charge of governing the good fortune and lifespan of humankind through observing their thoughts, words and deeds.] After that, they seemed to quietly slip into the inner chamber. The disciple panicked and feared, so he hurriedly knocked on the door and came into the inner chamber. The recorder of the story said, 'There is no one in the world who does not want to extend their

lifespan. But who knows that practising family reverence could prolong one's lifespan without praying? This is the end of the story.

Now let's turn to part 2.

In the foundational classic of Taoism, Exalted Treatise on the Response of the Dao, it recorded: 'The good person will be respected by everyone and blessed by the Dao of heaven. They enjoy happiness and wealth, remain safe from misfortunes, and are protected by spirits. And in this classic, 'family reverence' is one of merits of the good person. This is why the ghosts dared not approach the daughter-in-law and suck her spirit, on the contrary, reported to God and requested extending her lifespan. Maybe now you will be curious about what family reverence is. Let's turn to part 3.

Now let's look at the first question— 'what is family reverence?' Family reverence is an important philosophical concept in Confucianism. In the Analects and the Chinese Classic of Family Reverence, Confucius said, family reverence and fraternal responsibility is the foundation of our character and not just about servicing to your parents, but also including treating your leader right, and distinguishing yourself. So you can see that its scope is very broad. And family reverence is not merely a one-way service from children to parents, but a 'reciprocal relationship practice', through caring for and showing concern for their parents, children learn to empathize with others, thereby achieving personal growth, while parents find inner peace in being cared for. Rosemont and Ames also said in the introduction of their book, 'Family reverence obviously requires one to be highly sensitive to, and caring for, the needs and welfare of family members and, by extension, is a highly valued quality for people assuming positions of authority.'

Q2: 'Is family reverence compatible with the contemporary value of equality?' Someone may think it is unfair for children to be filial. But when we stretch the timeline further, we will find that, during our growth process, our parents provided all essential necessities (food, clothes, and whatever), gave us selfless-love and educated us to be a better person. They have done a lot for us. So it is our responsibility to do something for them and take care of them both in present and when they are gradually growing old. Meanwhile, when you practise

family reverence, you also set an example for your children. What you do to your parents will be returned to you through your children. And Rosemont and Ames stated, family reverence includes an emerging parity between senior and junior that is established over time when we factor into the equation the phasal nature of the human narrative.

Q3: Is family reverence unconditional obedience? The answer is 'No, it isn't.' Both in Chapter 15 of the Classic of Family Reverence and the Analects, Confucius said, as a filial child, you have the responsibility to remonstrate with your parents when they go astray. Ames also stressed the Confucius idea. He said: 'In our interpretation, although loyalty and obedience are necessary ingredients of family reverence, they are only part of it. Confucius indicates clearly that they are subordinate to one's obligation to do what is appropriate. All of these texts can demonstrate that family reverence isn't blind obedience.

Q4: How do we practise family reverence? First is Maintaining our physical health and cultivating healthy lifestyle habits, such as keeping regular sleep patterns and a balanced diet. What parents care about most is our physical health. Confucius also stated that this marks the beginning of family reverence. Secondly, We can help parents with small tasks within your capacity, such as preparing their favourite meals or assisting with house work. Thirdly, we can enhance communication. For example, you can show more care towards your parents and chat with them regularly, listening to their concerns, or letting them share amusing stories from your childhood. You also can share your school life with them. They may be interested in it. The above are some little tips for practising. I hope they are helpful to you. Let's together practise family reverence in our daily lives.

This is the end of my presentation. Any feedback would be greatly appreciated. Thank you for listening.

The Ghost Dare Not Approach

鬼不敢近

Module code: SI3H3012

Module tutor: Dr. Katherine Ngo

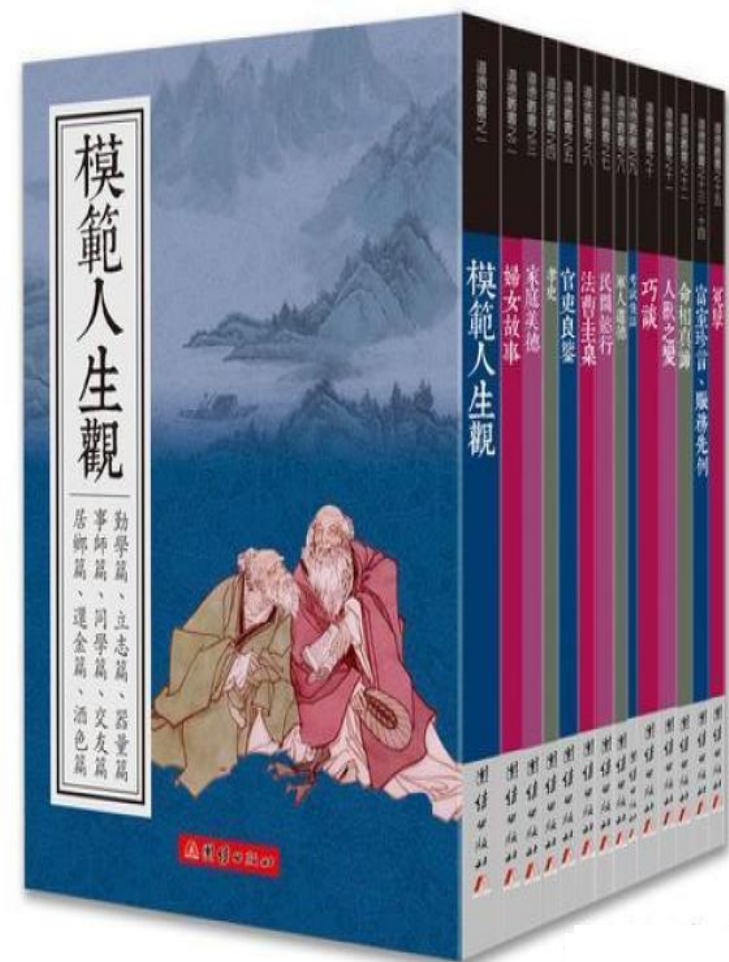
Student name: Hainan Zhang

Student ID number: 2503183

Date: 7 January 2026

Collectanea of Ethical Exemplars

(Daode congshu 道德叢書)



Beidong Yuan Bilu

北東園筆錄



Outline

- 1 Story Content**
- 2 Story Conclusion**
- 3 Several Questions About Family Reverence**

Part 1 Story Content

鬼不敢近

蘇州城隍廟向有道士住持。乾隆間有袁守中者。杭州袁春圃之族裔也。工詩詞。善小楷。其徒皆敬畏之。有某徒私出遊山。半夜始歸。不敢叩院戶。卽坐堂上假寐。逾時。聞一鬼曰：「奉牒拘某婦。乃戀其病姑。念念固結。神不離舍。不能攝取。奈何。」一鬼答曰：「精誠固結。以戀病姑。此孝婦也。與強魂捍拒者不同。不可率拘。宜稟請上帝。議延其壽。慎勿孟浪。」語畢。似潛入內殿去。卽寂然。其徒惶懼。急叩戶院而進。朱蕉圃曰：「世人未有不思延壽者。孰知孝之延壽。有不求而自得者耶。」

Story Content

蘇州城隍廟向有道士住持。
乾隆間有袁守中者。杭州袁
春圃之族裔也。工詩詞。善
小楷。其徒皆敬畏之。

The City God Temple in Suzhou Prefecture has always had Taoist priests, who reside and were in charge of it. In the Qianlong Period (1736-1795), Yuan Shouzhong 袁守中 (?-?), who was a descendant of Yuan Chunpu 袁春圃 (1727-?)'s family. He was skilled in poems and calligraphy of regular script in small characters. His disciples all held him in respect and awe.



Jiangsu Province
江蘇省

Suzhou Prefecture
蘇州府

Story Content

The City God is a deity in China's folk beliefs and Taoist beliefs, responsible for guarding the city, overseeing the lives and fortunes of people, rewarding and punishing good and evil, and eliminating natural disasters.

From the *Encyclopedia of China*



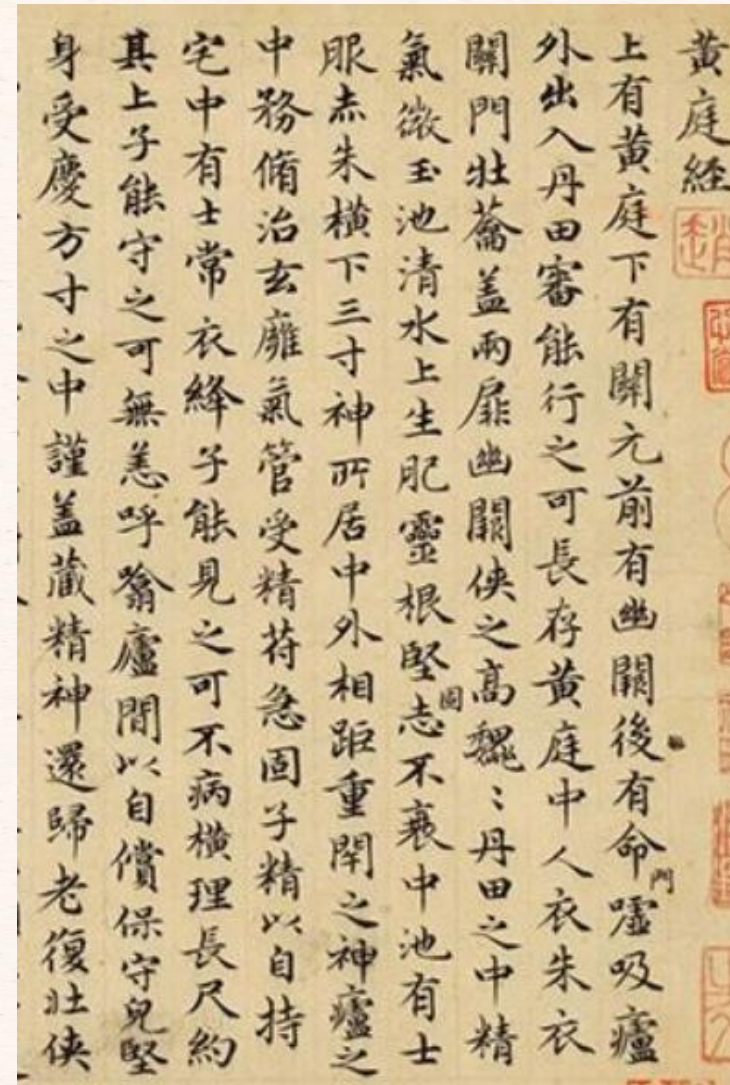
Story Content

蘇州城隍廟向有道士住持。
乾隆間有袁守中者。杭州袁
春圃之族裔也。工詩詞。善
小楷。其徒皆敬畏之。

The City God Temple in Suzhou has always had Taoist priests, who reside and were in charge of it. In the Qianlong Period (1736-1795), Yuan Shouzhong 袁守中 (?-?), who was a descendant of Yuan Chunpu 袁春圃 (1727-?)'s family. He was skilled in poems and calligraphy of regular script in small characters. His disciples all held him in respect and awe.

Calligraphy of regular script in small characters

小楷



Story Content

有某徒私出遊山。半夜始歸。
不敢叩院戶。卽坐堂上假寐。
逾時。聞一鬼曰：「奉牒拘某
婦。乃戀其病姑。念念固結。
神不離舍。不能攝取。奈何。」

A disciple wandered among the mountains in private and didn't get back until midnight.(so) he didn't dare to knock on the door (because he was afraid of disturbing the teacher and others' rest. Thus, he sat in the hall and took a light doze. After a while, he heard a sound from a ghost, which said, 'I was commanded by the document to detain the woman who was reluctant to part with her ill mother-in-law. But her thoughts about worrying about her mother-in-law were too strong. Her spirit did not leave its abode. I could not suck out her spirit. What should we do?

Story Content

一鬼答曰：「精誠固結。以戀病姑。此孝婦也。與強魂捍拒者不同。不可率拘。宜稟請上帝。議延其壽。慎勿孟浪。」

Another ghost replied, 'Her mind to her ill mother-in-law is earnest and strong. Because she is a daughter-in-law with family reverence, unlike those fierce spirits who refused to be sucked away. We can not detain her without consideration. We should report to God and request to consider extending her lifespan. We can not act rashly or carelessly.'

Story Content

一鬼答曰：「精誠固結。以戀病姑。此孝婦也。與強魂捍拒者不同。不可率拘。宜稟請上帝。議延其壽。慎勿孟浪。」

Another ghost replied, 'Her mind to her ill mother-in-law is earnest and strong. Because she is a daughter-in-law with family reverence, unlike those fierce spirits who refused to be sucked away. We can not detain her without consideration. We should report to God and request to consider extending her lifespan. We can not act rashly or carelessly.'

Story Content

語畢。似潛入內殿去。卽寂然。
其徒惶懼。急叩戶院而進。朱
蕉圃曰：「世人未有不思延壽
者。孰知孝之延壽。有不求而
自得者耶。」

After they finished their conversation, they seemed to quietly slip into the inner chamber. Then the surroundings returned to silence. The disciple (who heard the conversation) was panicked and feared, so he hurriedly knocked on the door of the inner chamber and came in. Zhu Jiaopu 朱蕉圃 (?-?) said, ‘There is no one in the world who does not want to extend their lifespan. But who would have known that practising family reverence could prolong one's lifespan, and that it could be achieved without praying for it?’

Part 2 Story Conclusion

Story Conclusion

The good person will be respected by everyone and blessed by the Dao of heaven. They enjoy happiness and wealth, remain safe from misfortunes, and are protected by spirits. They succeed in all endeavors and may aspire to become an immortal.

所謂善人，人皆敬之，天道佑之，福祿隨之，眾邪遠之，神靈衛之，所作必成，神仙可冀。

EXALTED TREATISE ON THE RESPONSE OF THE DAO
(Trans. Katherine and Kelly)



Story Conclusion

Practice faithfulness, family reverence, friendliness, and fraternal deference. Correct oneself and transform others.

忠孝友悌，正己化人；

EXALTED TREATISE ON THE RESPONSE OF THE DAO
(Trans. Katherine and Kelly)



Part 3 Family Reverence



- ? What is family reverence?**
- ? Is family reverence compatible with the contemporary value of equality?**
- ? Is family reverence the unconditional obedience?**
- ? How do we practise family reverence?**



What is family reverence?

An important philosophical concept in Confucianism

What is family reverence?



As for family reverence and fraternal responsibility, it is, I suspect, is the foundation of our character.

孝弟也者，其為仁之本與？

Analects 1.2

(Trans. Ames, with modifications)

This family reverence begins in service to your parents, continues in service to your leader, and culminates in distinguishing yourself in the world.

夫孝始於事親，中於事君，終於立身。

Chinese Classic of Family Reverence

(Trans. Rosemont and Ames, with modifications)

Not a one-way service

Reciprocal relationship practice

Children

Achieving personal growth



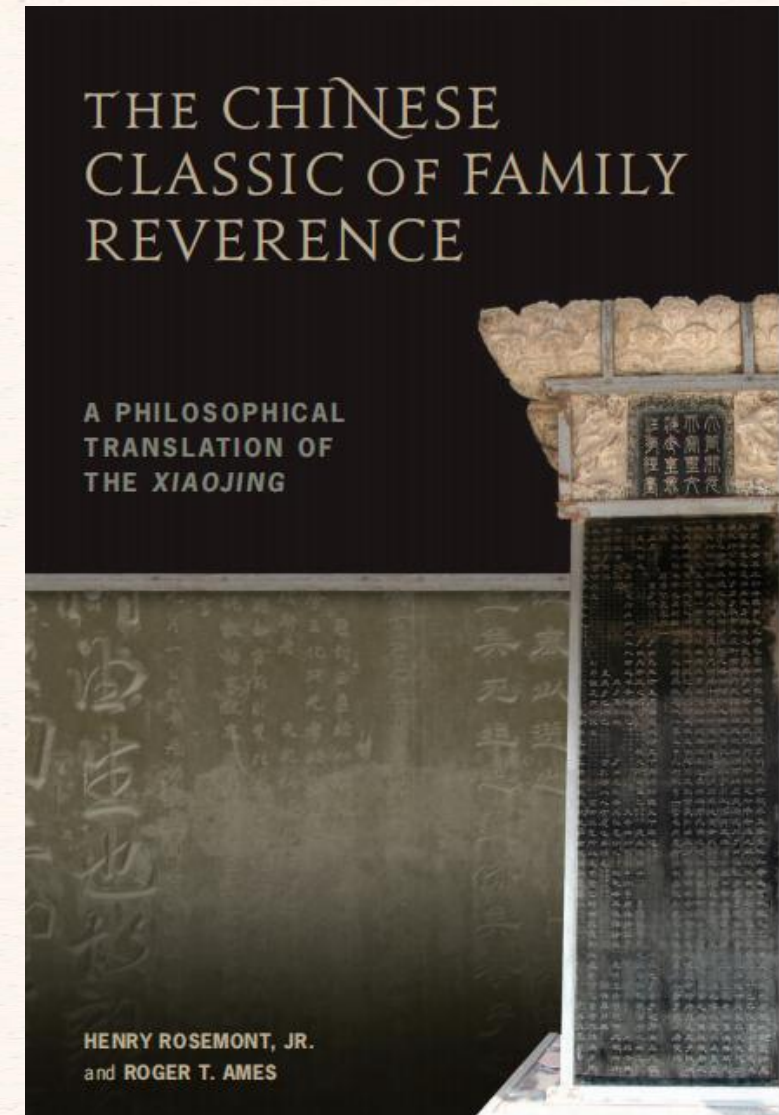
Parents

Finding inner peace

What is family reverence?

Family reverence obviously requires one to be highly sensitive to, and caring for, the needs and welfare of family members and, by extension, is a highly valued quality for people assuming positions of authority.

(Rosemont and Ames 2009, 13)





Is family reverence compatible with the contemporary value of equality?



All essential necessities

Selfless-love

Education



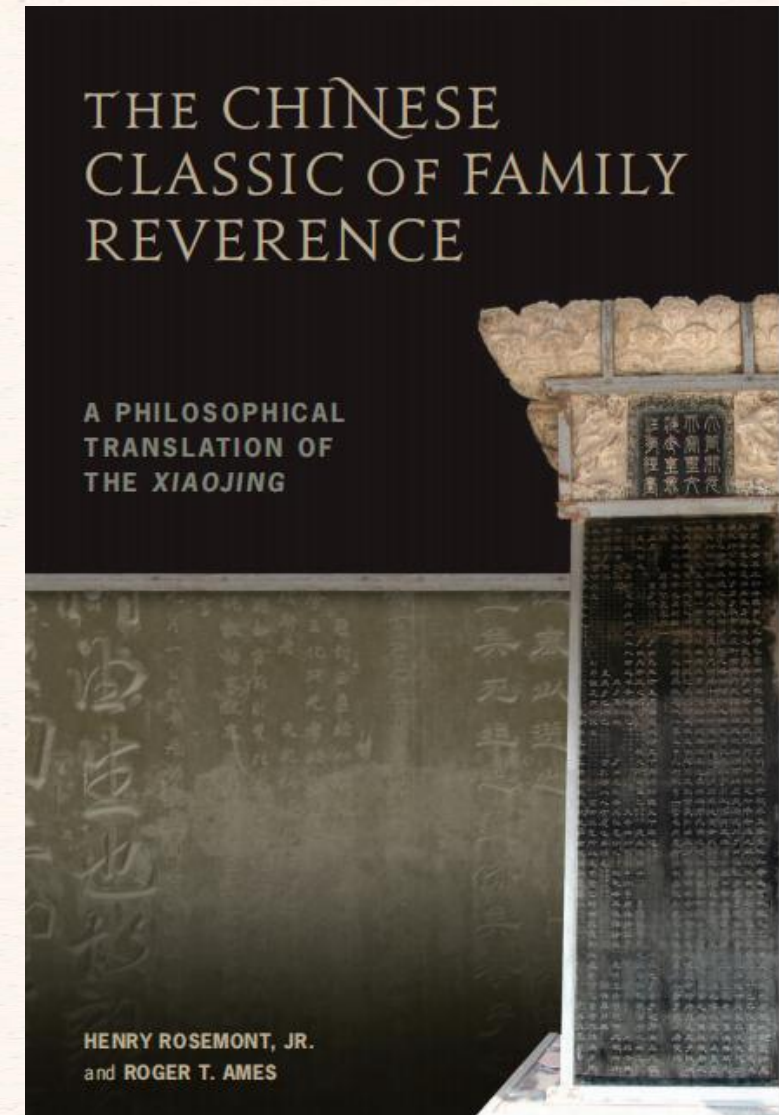
Be concerned about parents

Take care of them

What you do to your parents will be returned to you through your children.

Indeed, unwarranted assumptions about equality can rob relationships of their complexity and can lead us to overlook **an emerging parity** between senior and junior that is established over time when we factor into the equation the phasal nature of the human narrative.

(Rosemont and Ames 2009, 6)





Is family reverence the unconditional obedience?

Thus, if confronted by reprehensible behavior on his father's part, a son has no choice but to remonstrate with his father..... Hence, remonstrance is the only response to immorality. How could simply obeying the commands of one's father be deemed filial?

故當不義，則子不可以不爭於父……故當不義則爭之。從父之令，又焉得為孝乎！

The Chinese Classic of Family Reverence
(Trans. Rosemont and Ames)

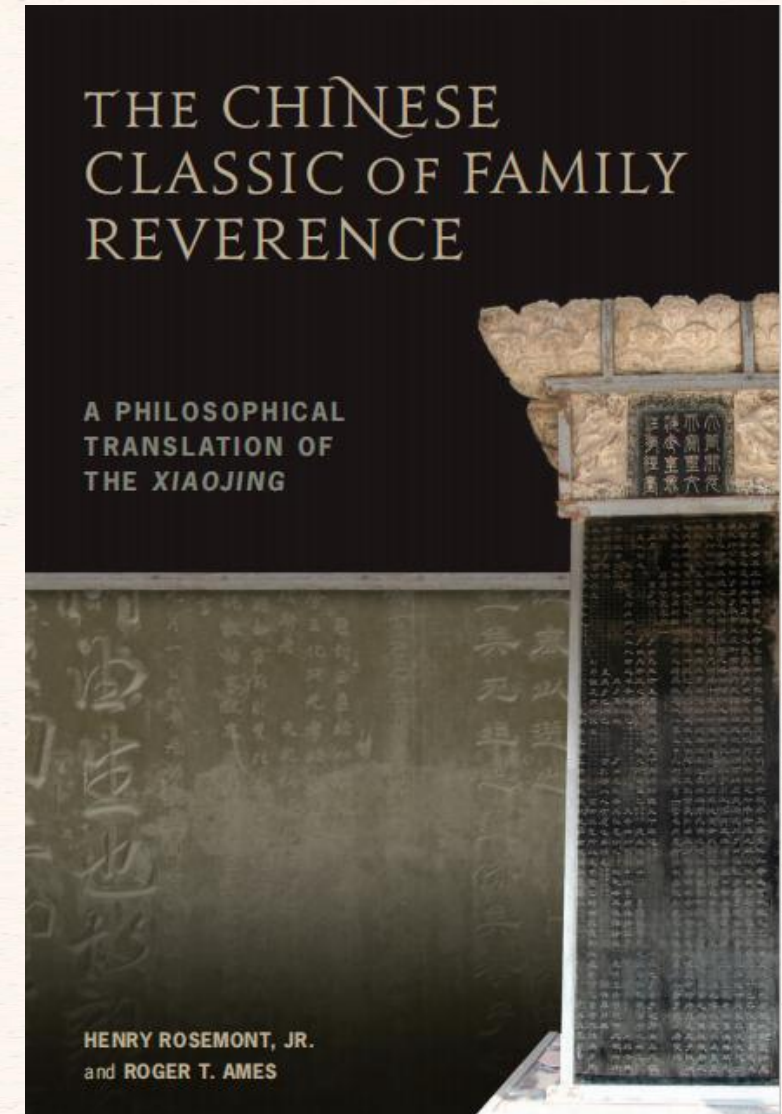
The Master said, 'In serving your father and mother you ought to dissuade them from doing wrong in the gentlest way.'

子曰：「事父母幾諫。」

Analects 4.18
(Trans. D. C.Lau)

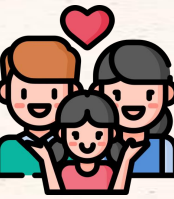
This theme, enunciated even more forcefully in Chapter 15 of the Classic of Family Reverence, indicates clearly that **loyalty and obedience are subordinate to one's obligation to do what is appropriate** in the larger familial, moral, and indeed spiritual context of assumed personal responsibilities.

(Rosemont and Ames 2009, 25)





How do we practise family reverence?



Maintaining physical health

Cultivating healthy lifestyle habit

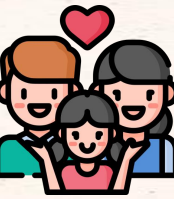
E.g., keeping regular sleep patterns and a balanced diet.

Your physical person with its hair and skin are received from your parents. Vigilance in not allowing anything to do injury to your person is where family reverence begins.

身體髮膚，受之父母，不敢毀傷，孝之始也。

Chinese Classic of Family Reverence

(Trans. Rosemont and Ames, with modifications)



Maintaining physical health

Cultivating healthy lifestyle habit

E.g., keeping regular sleep patterns and a balanced diet.



Helping parents with small tasks within your capacity

E.g., preparing their favourite meals or assisting with household chores.



Enhance communication

E.g., listening to their concerns or sharing your school life.

Thank you for listening!

Bibliography

Chen Jingyi 陳鏡伊, *The Collectanea of Ethical Exemplars* 道德叢書 (Beijing: Tuanjie chubanshe, 2016)

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

Katherine Ngo and Kelly Ngo, *Traditional Chinese Children's Primers: A Sourcebook* (The United States of America: Lever Press, 2025)

Roger T. Ames and Henry Rosemont, Jr., *The Analects of Confucius: A Philosophical Translation* (New York: The Random House Publishing Group, 1999)

D.C. Lau, *The Analects* (London: Penguin Books, 1979)

<https://www.zgbk.com/ecph/words?SiteID=1&ID=494791&Type=bkzyb&SubID=218969>[accessed 6 January 2026]