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Zbigniew Wesołowski SVD[1]
Institute Monumenta Serica

The Virtues of *Xiao* (Filial Piety) and *Ti* (Brotherly Obedience) as Two Pillars of Confucian Familism

[Cnoty Xiao (pobożności synowskiej) i Ti (posłuszeństwa braterskiego) jako dwa filary konfucjańskiego familizmu]

Streszczenie: W cesarskich Chinach (221 p.n.e. – 1911) pobożność synowska (*xiao*) i posłuszeństwo braterskie (*ti*) były dwiema podstawowymi wartościami życia rodzinnego, a konfucjański familizm uczynił synowską pobożność kamieniem węgielnym całego porządku społecznego. Oryginalne użycie słowa *xiao* z Zachodniej Dynastii Zhou (ok. 1045–771 p.n.e.) odnosi się przede wszystkim do rytów dla zmarłych rodziców i przodków. Później konfucjaniści w czasach Walczących Królestw (475–221 p.n.e.) myśleli o *xiao* szczególnie jako o okazaniu posłuszeństwa i szacunku rodzicom. Po okresie Walczących Królestw konfucjaniści ponownie zinterpretowali *xiao*, rozszerzając go o wymiar polityczny, tj. posłuszeństwo i szacunek dla swego władcy. Od tego czasu *xiao*, jako posłuszne podporządkowanie dzieci rodzicom, stało się podstawą zarówno samodoskonalenia, jak i porządku politycznego. Synowie z pobożnością synowską byli również postrzegani jako lojalni słudzy, aby zaspokoić potrzeby powstającego państwa biurokratycznego w imperialnych Chinach. Na przestrzeni wieków rodzice nieustannie podkreślali swoim dzieciom, że sposób, w jaki traktują starszych, tj. za pomocą synowskiej pobożności i braterskiego posłuszeństwa, jest centralną miarą ich wartości moralnej. Konfucjański familizm z dwoma filarami *xiao* i *ti* był w rozumieniu Liang Shuminga rodzajem religii. Chociaż konfucjańska myśl o rodzinie, kładąca nacisk na synowską pobożność i braterskie posłuszeństwo, nadal ma w dzisiejszych Chinach swoją wartość i znaczenie, jednak jest coraz bardziej narażona na wiele wyzwań. Sytuacja ta jest konsekwencją głęboko zakorzenionej transformacji tradycyjnej etyki, wartości i instytucji rodzinnych, wywołanej procesami modernizacji i globalizacji.

Summary: In imperial China (221 BC – 1911), filial piety (*xiao*) and brotherly obedience (*ti*) were two core values of family life. Confucian familism made filial piety a cornerstone of the entire social order. The original use of the word *xiao* from the Western Zhou dynasty (ca. 1045–771 BC) refers primarily to ritual services to deceased parents

[1] Zbigniew Wesołowski SVD, Monumenta Serica Institute, Arnold-Janssen-Str. 20, 53757 Sankt Augustin, Germany; wesolowski@monumenta-serica.de, https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3449-4830.

and ancestors. Later, the Confucians of the Warring States (475–221 BC) thought of *xiao* particularly as showing obedience and displaying respect towards parents. After the late Warring States, the Confucians again reinterpreted *xiao* extending it to a political dimension, i.e., obedience and respect to one's lord. Since then, *xiao* as the dutiful submission of children to their parents has become the basis for both self-cultivation and the political order. Filial sons were also understood as loyal retainers to meet the needs of the emerging bureaucratic state in imperial China. Down through the centuries, parents constantly taught their children to treat elders with filial piety and brotherly obedience, this behavior being a central measure of the children's moral worth. Although Confucian thought on the family still has its value and relevance in present-day China, it is increasingly exposed to many challenges. This situation is a consequence of the profound transformation of traditional family ethics, values and institutions brought about by the processes of modernization and globalization.

Słowa kluczowe: familizm; konfucjanizm; pobożność synowska; posłuszeństwo braterskie; Chiny.

Keywords: familism; Confucianism; filial piety; brotherly obedience; China.

Introduction

Family as One of Human Universals

Donald E. Brown, an American professor emeritus of anthropology, in his book *Human Universals* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1991) argued against cultural relativism and understood human universals as consisting of "those features of culture, society, language, behavior, and mind that, so far as the record has been examined, are found among all peoples known to ethnography and history."[2] He provided a list of hundreds of items as universal, grouped around the four human areas: (1) language and cognition, (2) society, (3) myth, ritual, and aesthetics, and (4) technology.

Here I would also like to suggest the following cultural universals which are a result of my own long cultural and Sinological research: 1) a spoken language (and – as something secondary – a written language which, however, has become in Chinese culture of utmost importance); 2) family structure; 3) religion and spirituality; 4) ethics and laws; 5) education; 6) visual and performing arts (dance, architecture, body decoration, music etc.); 7) rituals and celebrations; 8) culturally experienced time like recreation and leisure; also 9) physical aspects and material evidence of culture as a cuisine (being a way of cooking defined by distinctive ingredients, manner of preparation and dishes), clothing, transportation, technological devices (material culture). In my conviction, family is a top cultural universal and essential to our human life.

[2] David Brown (1991, p. 1).

Studia Warmińskie 59 (2022)

1. Characteristics of the Traditional Chinese Family and Ancestor Worship

The traditional Chinese family can be characterized by the following six structural traits: 1) patrilineal, 2) patriarchal, 3) prescriptively patrilocal, 4) embedded in kinship group, 5) sharing a common household budget, and 6) normatively extended in form.[3]

Patrilineality refers to a kinship system in which an individual's family membership derives from and is recorded through his or her father's lineage. It also involves the inheritance of property, rights, names or titles by persons related through male kin. A connected social phenomenon with this is a patriline (father line) as line of descent only from a male ancestor to a descendant (of either sex) in which the individuals in all intervening generations are fathers.

Patriarchy points out to a social system in which men hold primary power and predominate in roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege and control of property. The most conspicuous feature of patriarchy was that the hierarchically organized and institutionalized authority in one's family was in the hands of the senior-most male whom we can also call with the Latin expression – "pater familias" as the oldest living male in a household, excising authority over his extended family (household head). Thus, in Chinese patriarchy, there were preset at least three basic and concomitant convictions: 1) older generations should be superior to younger ones; 2) the elderly should be better than younger people, and 3) male humans are superior to female ones (*nan zun* nü *bei* 男尊女卑: lit.: men are high and women low; the male is venerated and the female is denigrated, or male domination and female subordination). Patriarchy has been connected with the fundamental trait of Chinese religiosity – ancestor worship (ancestor veneration, even called the Chinese patriarchal religion) which revolves around the ritual celebration of the deified ancestors and tutelary deities of people with the same surname organized into lineage societies in ancestral shrines and performed only through the male offspring. Ancestors are also understood as those who can communicate with the supreme power of Tian 天 (Heaven) as basis for the morally normative order of human society.[4]

Prescriptive patrilocality (virilocality or virilocal/patrilocal residence) refers to the social system in which a married couple is obliged to reside with the husband's parents (groom's family). Later such a location could

[3] David K. Jordan (2006; accessed on 24.03.2022).
[4] Yao Xinzhong and Zhao Yanxia (2010, pp. 113–116).

also be extended to a larger area such as the same village, town or clan territory. Thus, married women belonged to husband's family.

Kinship (group) means the relationship between members of the same family as related genealogically, i.e., either by having common ancestors or by being married. This is the basic indicator of the difference between the insider/outsider status in Chinese culture – family member (*jiaren* 家人) and non-family member (*feijiaren* 非家人) which is followed by the distinction between "one of our blood" (*zijiren* 自己人) and "stranger in blood" (*wairen* 外人). Thus, there is a difference between a family and a household. A household included all those who lived in the same building or a *siheyuan* 四合院 (a courtyard house).[5]

Sharing a common household budget meant that family was seen as a common economic unit. This implied that all possessions, income, expenses, and resource distribution of all family members were managed through the patriarchal authority of the family (with "pater familias" at top). The phenomena of family divisions (*fenjia* 分家) were also part of the history of Chinese families. Such things typically happened after the death of the oldest living male in a household who left two brothers with their wives and children. Even though there must have been a natural affectional bond (the virtue *ti*悌) between these brothers, however, differences in the size of their own families (especially a number of children), engagement in and contribution to the family business could have led to such a painful consequence of family division by the third party.

Traditional Chinese family was normatively extended in form which included a descent line of men and their wives and children. Thus, in traditional China tree-generation families were as a rule, four-generation families were an exception, and five-generation families under the same roof (*wushi tongtang* 五世同堂 / *wudai tongtang* 五代同堂) were really extraordinary.

The first three characteristics of the traditional Chinese family, i.e., patrilineality, patriarchy, and prescriptive patrilocality, with their "patri-" as a combining form meaning "father," tell us that in traditional China the most important relation within the family was not between husband and wife, but between father and son. The family was supported by the most important family virtue, i.e., filial piety (*xiao* 孝: family reverence[6]), which begins in the relationship between father and (oldest) son (1). This relation is the first relation of the Confucian Five Cardinal (Con-

[5] A *siheyuan* as the typical residence of a large and extended family was commonly found throughout imperial China. A spacious siheyuan was normally occupied by a single, usually large and extended family, signifying its wealth and prosperity. Cf. Zhang (2017, pp. 38–56).

[6] Cf. Henry Rosemont, Jr. and Roger T. Ames (2016).

stant) Human Relationships (*wulun* 五倫)[7] according to the book *Mengzi* (3A:4[8]). The other four relations are: (2) between the lord and his minister, (3) between husband and wife, (4) between older and younger brother, and (5) between friends. Thus, the human relationship between father and son, being for Confucians the most important one, is based on *qin* 親 / *xueqin* 血親 (blood relation: consanguinity as the quality of being descended from the same ancestor). The second relation, i.e., between the lord and his minister, is the extension and adaptation of the first one. The third one – between husband and wife, is situated in the middle of the five ones with its characteristics – *bie* 別 (difference of gender/sex difference: two genders: *nan* 男 – *nü* 女). The human relationship between husband and wife in a marriage is a most suitable place to accept their offspring. The fourth relation, i.e., between older(s) and younger brother(s), is that of *ti* (brotherly obedience, brotherliness, fraternal/brotherly love, fraternal devotion to older brothers), and the fifth, i.e., between friends, is the only equal relation among the Five Cardinal Human Relationships.

Xiao as the most important Confucian family virtue is "based on a sense of continuity with one's parents and ancestors and a devotion to furthering such continuity. It involves a heightened awareness that one not only owes one's existence to parents and ancestors but also has shaped by them to become the kind of person one is."[9] It takes no wonder that the original use of the word *xiao* from the Western Zhou dynasty (ca. 1045–771 BC) refers primarily to ritual services to deceased parents and ancestors.[10] It was related to the ancestor worship and its recipients extended well beyond one's parents or grandparents. Later, the Confucians of the Warring States (475–221 BC) thought of *xiao* particularly as showing obedience and displaying respect towards parents. After the late Warring States, the Confucians again reinterpreted *xiao* extending it to political dimension, i.e., to

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[7] Roger T. Ames (2011). Confucians talk not only abut *wulun*, but also about *shiyi* 十義 (ten human reciprocal duties / obligations): Parents should be *ci* 慈 (kind, full of loving affection) for children, children – *xiao*, elder siblings should be *liang* 良 (good-natured, amicable; kind-hearted), younger ones – *ti*, husbands should be for their wives *yi* 義 (upright, morally fitting, morally proper), and the wives towards husbands – *ting* 聽 (attentive, obedient), the elders towards the younger ones – *hui* 惠 (considerate, magnanimous, great-hearted), the youngsters should be towards the elders *shun* 順 (deference, of deep respect, yielding, obedient) (十義: 父慈、子孝、兄良、弟弟[悌]、夫義、婦聽、長惠、幼順、君仁、臣忠 (*Liji*, "Liyun" 禮運 [The Conveyance of Rites]: https://ctext.org/liji/li-yun/zh; accessed on 23.06.2021).

[8] 聖人有憂之，使契為司徒，教以人倫：父子有親，君臣有義，夫婦有別，長幼有序，朋友有信 (This was a subject of anxious solicitude to the sage Shun, and he appointed Xie to be the Minister of Instruction, to teach the relations of humanity: how, between father and son, there should be affection; between sovereign and minister, righteousness; between husband and wife, attention to their separate functions; between old and young, a proper order; and between friends, fidelity [transl.: James Legge]; https://ctext.org/mengzi/teng-wen-gong-i; accessed on 23.06.2021).

[9] Shun Kwong-loi (2003, p. 793).

[10] Patricia B. Ebrey (2003, pp. 680–681).

obedience and respect to one's lord. Since then, *xiao* as the dutiful submission of children to their parents, has become the basis for both self-cultivation and the political order. Filial sons were also understood as loyal retainers to meet the needs of the emerging bureaucratic state in the imperial China (221 BC–1911 AD).[11]

Here we want to stress that ancestor worship is one of the deepest roots of Chinese religiosity. This is nothing unusual because it is also one of the constants of religious history of humankind. However, in China ancestor veneration has become a complex and widespread phenomenon. The basic conviction of this belief is that human relationships are not cut off through death, but must be preserved in the spirit of filial piety (*xiao*).

The institutional Chinese tradition of ancestor worship began from the Shang period (around 1600–1045 BC) in China. At the time, society was viewed as an alliance of the dead and the living, so ancestor worship was a natural part of everyday life.[12] On the one hand, for the people of the Shang period, Di 帝was both a (remote) ancestor of the Shang ruler and the main deity; on the other hand, nature spirits were also worshiped. Thus, religious offerings were given to them and the souls of ancestors. The source of the information about the Shang period from are oracle bone scripts (*jiaguwen* 甲骨文) that have been preserved. These texts tell of ancestor worship by noble families and rulers. During this period, ancestor worship and ancestral sacrifice played an important role in maintaining social order and legitimizing the ruler's power. People also asked the deceased for advice and protection. At the end of the Shang period, the rituals were also performed with the help of ceremonial bronze vessels with inscriptions. The vessels were especially used for preparation of sacrificial foods (ancestral offerings). This tradition of ancestor worship has been continued in China – though with its variations – until today. Especially, the recently deceased members of a family (a household) receive a domestic ancestor veneration, and these domestic rites center upon offerings at a home altar.

2. Two Pillars of Confucian Familism: The Virtues of *Xiao* (Filial Piety) and *Ti* (Brotherly Obedience)

Daniel H. Kulp (1925, p. 188) defines familism in the following way: "a form of social organization in which all values are determined by reference to the maintenance, continuity and functions of the family groups."[13]

[11] Keith N. Knapp (1995, pp. 195–222).
[12] David N. Keightley (2004, pp. 3–63).
[13] Daniel H. Kulp (1953, pp. 272–280).

Studia Warmińskie 59 (2022)

This Confucian conviction of the importance of family has led to use the family as a model for the organization of the state. Thus, the state, the society at large, was understood as the extension of family to its utmost. We can say: the state was the family writ large. This conviction was later extended even to international relationships.[14]

This sociopolitical understanding of the family as a model for the organization of the state was criticized by Rolf Trauzettel (1930–2019) with the help of Aristotle (384–322 BC). Above we have already mentioned Confucian Five Cardinal (Constant) Human Relationships (*wulun*). Here I want to cite Trauzettel's assessment of this patriarchal clan system:

> The first four of these relationships are unmistakably clear hierarchies of command and obedience where positions are not interchangeable; in other words, while lords, fathers, etc. are givers of orders by definition, ministers, sons, etc. are clearly those who have to obey. This is easily identified as an ideological formulation of the patriarchal clan system (zongfa [宗法]), the most important regulatory system of which is the authoritarian principle. This is not all, however. As the feudal territorial states of Chinese prehistory developed into a monarchical single state, Confucianists were generalizing this principle, supplementing it at the same time by adopting one of the profound products of this process of transformation, social and political collectivism. With this term, I am describing the mechanism of collective liability and its particular manifestation, the general joint liability of the family or clan, as well as the system of bondsmen (bao jia [保甲][15]) and sponsors that was developed specifically for the civil service. These systems of social order with their historical foundations contained a basic formula of what might be termed the social functionalism of China. This implies that the social hierarchy, which was circumscribed in concrete terms, contained a number of blueprints laid down in terms just as concrete, defining everybody's behavior within his social context.[16]

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[14] Donald N. Clark, *The Ming Connection: Notes on Korea's Experience in the Chinese Tributary System*, in: *Transactions of the Korea Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 58 (1983), pp. 77–89.1983, here p. 78: "The Chinese tributary system was not merely a strategic structure. It was based on an assumption of Chinese superiority, in terms both of power and of cultural – even moral – influence. The relationship between the Chinese emperor and the Korean king, for example, can be stated in Confucian terms as an older brother/younger brother relationship, involving obligations of loyalty and obedience on the part of Korea, and obligations of magnanimity and protection on the part of China."

[15] In traditional China, a social system of collective neighborhood organization, by means of which the government was able to maintain order and control through all levels of society, while not being forced to employ all too many officials. A collective neighborhood guarantee system was first instituted during the Warring States Period (475–221 BC), e.g., the so-called "Shi wu yu lianzuo zhi" 什伍與連坐制 (System of the Collective Liability of Five Families and of the Collective Punishment of Ten Families). The full-fledged creation and implementation of *baojia*保甲system was the work of Wang Anshi 王安石 (1021–1086) during the Song dynasty (960–1279), who created this community-based system of law enforcement and civil control. Does it not evoke any association with the present-day China's social credit system?

[16] Rolf Trauzettel (1977, pp. 340–362) (English translation: "Historical Aspects of the Individual-Society Relationship in China." In: Society, Culture, and Patterns of Behaviour (East Asian Civiäzations: New Attempts at Understanding Traditions 3/4), edited by C.-A. Seyschab, A. Sievers, and S. Szynkiewicz, Unkel/ Rhein: Horlemann. 1990, pp. 25–70), here p. 47.

What this social functionalism of China means for Trauzettel, is not only that the Chinese have always attempted to stretch out the concept of family upon that of a state which in European tradition since Aristotle (384–322) in his *Politics* (I,I, 1257a, 7ff.[17]) was an erroneous view of a state,[18] but especially that it implies "the social hierarchy […] contained a number of blueprints laid down in terms just as concrete, defining everybody's behavior within his social context" (p. 47). I would like to call this way of Confucian familism in traditional China "a tendency of becoming human and humanity only through the extension of one's own family (clan)."

The Confucian familism can lead to the absolutization of family as the only source of ethics in the following example from the *Lunyu* XIII/18:

> The Duke of She said to Confucius: "Among us here there is the one who is upright (honest, outspoken, and fair-minded) in his conduct. A father has stolen a sheep; his son bears witness to the fact." Confucius answered: "Among us (i.e., in the place where I live and come from) those who are upright are different from this. The father conceals [immoral behavior (wrongdoing)] of the son, and the son conceals [immoral behavior (wrongdoing)] of the father. Uprightness is to be found in this."[19]

Moreover, we can also speak about "practical" limits of filial piety. Arthur Henderson Smith (Ming Enpu 明恩溥 1845–1932), a missionary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, who did his 54-year missionary work in China, reasonably suggested that the Chinese filial conduct must be judged more by intentions, not by acts; for "judged by acts, there would not be a filial son in the world."[20] There is still another dimension of Confucian patriarchal familism which are historically proved wrongdoings as the male dominance in Chinese culture, e.g., son's

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[17] "Some people think that the qualifications of a statesman, king, householder, and master are the same, and that they differ, not in kind, but only in the number of their subjects. For example, the ruler over a few is called a master; over more, the manager of a household; over a still larger number, a statesman or king, as if there were no difference between a great household and a small state" (translated by Benjamin Jow).

[18] Rolf Trauzettel (1977, pp. 340–362). This Chinese way of "familizing" the people (i.e., enclosing into the sphere of one's own family; not "familiarizing") – which is different to the Western way, except for a Christian tradition of understanding other faithful as brothers and sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ – is even seen and heard at present-day universities: The elder students are called *xuezhang* 學長 (older/longer ones in learning: taking precedence over another younger person; the principle of seniority), the younger ones – *xuedi* 學弟 (younger brothers in learning), older female students are called – *xuejie* 學姐 (older sisters in learning) and younger female students – *xuemei* 學妹 (younger sisters in learning).

[19] 葉公語孔子曰：「吾黨有直躬者，其父攘羊而子證之。」孔子曰：「吾黨之直者異於是！父為子隱，子為父隱，直在其中矣」(https://ctext.org/analects/zi-lu/). We cannot forget the challenge of Mozi (ca. 470 – ca. 391 BC) who tried to replace the Confucian over-attachment to family and clan structures with his concept of *jian'ai* 兼愛 (universal love). Mozi was against Confucians who believed that it was natural and correct for people to care about different people in different degrees. However, Mozi was convinced that people in principle should care for all people equally.

[20] A.H. Smith, *Chinese Characteristics*, Norwalk, 2002 (1894), p. 173.

preference over the daughter which led to female infanticide, threefold female obedience (*sancong* 三從[21]), foot binding of the women, the "slave" position of daughters-in-law (*erxifu* 兒媳婦) which the latter could be only overcome by the birth of a son.

Despite these shortcomings, Confucian thought on family with its stress on filial piety and brotherly obedience has still its present-day value and relevance, and anchors the heart of Chinese social order.[22] Needless to say that the relations between parents and children (and among siblings) are to be regarded as one of the most urgent problems in our contemporary world, ranging from the United States of America and European countries to China and other Asian countries. This situation is understood as a consequence of the deep-rooted transformation of traditional family ethics, values and institutions brought about by the processes of modernization and globalization.

Filial piety as the dutiful submission of children to their parents is actually the second moral excellence related to self-cultivation of Confucian personality – the first being *ren* 仁 (humanity / humaneness). They are often mentioned together. A very important example for that, we find in the *Lunyu* 1/2[23]:

> A *junzi* [gentleman / superior man / respectable/moral person] takes care of what is basic. Having established what is basic, the Dao-course of things will go on [naturally]. Is not the basis of *ren*-humanity *xiao*-filial piety and the *ti*-love of younger brothers to the older (fraternal submission / brotherly obedience)?

The teachings of Confucius were primarily family and individual ethics. In these two core family virtues of *xiao* and *ti* is the *locus classicus* for so-called Confucian role ethics as moral thinking based on family, family members, and their roles (i.e., Confucian familism). Confucius understood man as a being who cannot live fully, and consequently, which cannot be fully understood outside of the family. He attributed to the family

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[21] Actually, the whole male expectation towards women is "Threefold Obedience" and "Four Virtues" (*sancong side* 三從四德). Thus, traditional Confucians placed a woman's value on her loyalty and obedience. The threefold obedience explains that an obedient woman is to obey her father before marriage, her husband after marriage, and her first son if widowed. As to "Four Virtues," a virtuous woman must practice 1) female moral virtues (*fude* 婦德: sexual propriety), 2) proper speech (*fuyan* 婦言: female appropriate expressions), 3) modest appearance (*furong* 婦容: modest manner), and 4) hard work (*fugong* 婦功: diligent work suitable for woman).

[22] Qi Xiaoying 2015, *Filial Obligation in Contemporary China: Evolution of the Culture-system*, in: "Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour" 45 (2015) 1, pp. 141–161; here p. 141: "The present paper will show that under conditions of cultural and social change in China filial behavior through family obligation continues to play an important role even though the conventions associated with the relevant expectations, attitudes and emotions have undergone significant change."

[23] *Lunyu* 1/2: 君子務本，本立而道生。孝弟也者，其為仁之本與！? (https://ctext.org/analects/xue-er; accessed on 24.03.2022).

a huge social role, and in its hierarchical dependencies he saw the organic and natural origin of the life beyond the family, i.e., sociopolitical. That is why the *junzi* began his education with what is first and foremost for human life, that is, our family relations.

The Confucian concept of *ren* expresses the basic quality of human being. This virtue of humanity draws attention to what human being really makes human/humane and therefore points out to the basis of human morality. The Chinese character *ren* 仁 is a combination of two graphical elements: the character *ren* 人 (man, human) as the root which is used as *ren* 亻) and the character *er* 二 with the meaning "two," which can be directly interpreted as "relatedness of two people" or "the conduct between two people." As above already stated, *ren* is in Confucian understanding that which makes a human being really a human being: According to Confucian conviction, *ren* is given first as an instinct by being born as a human) which then is guided by education within the family/clan as the most primal and most basic interpersonal relationship (consanguinity as the property of being from the same kinship as another person) becomes an intelligent instinct as a form of intuition in order eventually to develop into a (moral) virtue. This extension of *ren* comes about with the help of *xiao* and *ti* towards the people in the neighborhood and in other communities. As an ideal expression of the virtue *ren*, we can cite the golden rule of human behavior: "Is not reciprocity such a word [which may serve as a rule of practice for all one's life]? What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others."[24] This word is *shu* 恕, which basically means "to understand others through one's humane heart," was translated here "reciprocity" to stress a Confucian social natural attitude of responding to a positive action with another positive action, i.e., rewarding kind actions. However, this word has also the meaning of forbearance and magnanimity. The ruler in China without *ren* or *shu* could not keep the mandate of Heaven (*tianming* 天命), because obedience could be refused to an inhuman ruler.

As in the above example from the *Lunyu* 1/2, we can see that Confucians have often discussed *xiao* and *ti* together,[25] because these two familial virtues stressed the two most important consanguineous relationships, i.e., that of father and eldest son and between/among brothers. Mengzi (372–289 BC), the "second Sage after only Confucius himself," said:

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[24] *Lunyu* 15/24: 子曰:「其恕乎! 己所不欲, 勿施於人 (https://ctext.org/analects/wei-ling-gong; accessed on 24.03.2022).

[25] Keith N. Knapp (2002, p. 604).

> The way [through life] of Yao and Shun was simply filial piety and brotherly obedience.[26]

These two figures – Yao and Shun were paragons of humanity at the beginnings of Chinese traditional history. Yao (traditionally ca. 2353 – ca. 2234 BC; a new Chinese chronology: 2167 – 2048 BC) was a legendary Chinese ruler, one of the Three Sovereigns and the fourth of the Five Emperors. Yao's greatest achievement was to successfully fight a flood disaster that had struck ancient China. Throughout the history of China touted as a morally perfect and wise king, Yao's benevolence and diligence served as a model for future Chinese monarchs and emperors.[27] Emperor Shun (traditionally ca. 2294 – ca. 2184 BC) was also one of the legendary emperors of Chinese culture. Confucius saw him as a model for righteousness and virtue. Shun is considered by some sources as one of the Three Sovereigns and the last of the Five Emperors. According to the legendary account Shun's mother, Wodeng 握登, died, when he was very young. Shun's blind father Gusou 瞽叟remarried soon after. Shun's stepmother and half-brother Xiang 象treated Shun in a hideous and abominable way. In spite of these difficult circumstances, Shun never complained and always behaved towards his father, stepmother, and half-brother with kindness and respect, i.e., *xiao* and *ti*.

Filial piety as the attitude toward parents and brotherly obedience as the attitude to elder brothers take their root in *qin* 親 – consanguineous relationships within a family. Mengzi said (7A/15[28]):

> The ability which human beings possess without acquiring by learning is the instinctive potential [for good actions] (*liangneng*), and the knowledge which they have without thinking is their innate (intuitive) knowledge of what is good (*liangzhi*). Children held in the arms all know to love (*ai*) their parents, and when they are slightly grown, they all know to treat their elder brothers with reverence (*jing*). To treat parents as one's parents (*qinqin*: filial piety) is [the expression] of *ren*-humanity. Respect for elders is [the expression] of righteousness (*yi*). There is no other [explanation for the existence of] those [feelings and attitudes]; they are at the disposal of [all human beings] under heaven.

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[26] *Mengzi* 6B/2: 堯舜之道，孝弟而已矣 (https://ctext.org/mengzi/gaozi-ii; accessed on 24.03.2022).

[27] Chinese often spoke of three important figures of their early history, i.e., Yao, Shun, and Yu the Great (Da Yu 大禹; also known for a successful fight against a flood and flood disaster regulation) as historical figures. Contemporary historians believed that they could represent leaders of allied tribes who established a unified and hierarchical system of government in a period of transition to patriarchal feudal society. In the *Shujing* 書經 (Book of Documents), one of the *Five Classics* (*Wujing* 五經), the opening chapters deal with Yao, Shun, and Yu the Great.

[28] *Mengzi* 7A/15: 人之所不學而能者，其良能也；所不慮而知者，其良知也。孩提之童，無不知愛其親者；及其長也，無不知敬其兄也。親親，仁也；敬長，義也。無他，達之天下也 (https://ctext.org/mengzi/jin-xin-i; accessed on 24.03.2022).

At the background of understanding human life, there is for Confucians a gradation of loving concern for others. Mengzi said (7A/45[29]):

> A *junzi* [gentleman / superior man / respectable/moral person] sparingly cares (*ai*) about creatures without treating them with *ren*-humanity [as if they were people]. In regard to people, he deals with them on terms of *ren*-humanity without treating them as one's parents [or other family members] (*qin*). He treats parents as one's own parents, shows *ren*-humanity to people, and sparingly cares about creatures.

Thus, filial piety as a reverent and obedient relation to one's parents requires respectful readiness to satisfy their daily needs (*Lunyu* 2/7; *Mengzi* 4A/19) and a regular mindfulness of the parents' situation, health and an age. A filial son or daughter should seek to take over more and more of their parents' exhausting burdens and duties (*Lunyu* 2/8). One of the most important aspects of filial piety was to have a male offspring to ensure the continuation of the family line (*Mengzi* 4A/26; 5A/2). However, the obligations of children towards their parents are not exhausted only within this world. The rules of *xiao*, supported by those of *li* 禮 (rituals, rites, ceremonies; decorum, rules of propriety, good form [the outer form of expressing in a proper way the human inner world], good custom), especially described in ancient China the way in which children should treat their parents after their death, inclusive of burying them in a proper way, mourning them,[30] and then regularly offering sacrifices to them (*Liji* 禮記 [*Book of Rites*]14.18B) in order to secure their afterlife.

Another important aspect of *xiao* is to take care of one's own body which is a gift of parents and ancestors, to behave oneself in a way that only brings praise to parents and ancestors, e.g., that does not lead to their disgrace and shame; "the greatest honor one can bring to one's parents is to establish oneself as a true king, bringing peace and order to the empire (*Mengzi*, 5A.4; cf. *Zhongyong* [Doctrine of the Mean], ch. 17)."[31]

The importance of *xiao* in Chinese culture resulted in an early appearance of the work *Xiaojing* (Classic of Filial Piety),[32] probably dating from the early Han dynasty. This book describes a conversation about filial piety, conducted only between Confucius and his disciple Zengzi 曾子

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[29] *Mengzi* 7A/45: 君子之於物也，愛之而弗仁；於民也，仁之而弗親。親親而仁民，仁民而愛物 (https://ctext.org/mengzi/jin-xin-i; accessed on 9.03.2021).

[30] Filial mourning (*dingyou* 丁憂: to face/to encounter a loss of bereavement) used to be an official norm, practiced since the Han dynasty (202 BC – 220 AD), according to which officials of the imperial government of China were obliged to resign their posts and return to their home upon the death of a parent or grandparent. The mourning period, officially prescribed, was three years, though in practice there were normally shorter periods between twenty-five to twenty-seven months; three-year mourning period was in accordance with Confucian understanding that three years were required for a child to be fully weaned, i.e., no longer in need of being fed with the mother's breast milk.

[31] Shun Kwong-loi (2003, p. 794).

[32] Cf. *Xiaojing* (https://ctext.org/xiao-jing; accessed on 24.03.2022).

(Zeng Shen 曾參, 505–435 BC), one of Confucius' most able and beloved students. William Boltz wrote about this book in his article "*Hsiao ching* 孝經"[33] as follows: "a comparatively small work, of not more than two thousand characters, dealing with the virtue of *xiao* (filial piety) in its predictable contexts, i.e., with respect to one's behavior towards parents and other seniors, and also in connection with comparable attitude of fealty and duty towards one's lord (*jun* 君)." The present-day text counts nine chapters (*juan*) and is divided into 18 sections (*zhang*). It mostly contains quotations from the *Shijing* 詩經 (Classic of Poetry) and only one from the *Shujing* (Classic of History) which was meant to stress the authenticity of its Confucian content. Already in the first verse we hear Confucius saying to Zengzi: "Filial piety is the root of [all] virtue, and [something] from which burgeons [all moral] teaching.[34]

Even more popular have been among the Chinese various collections called *Ershisi xiao* 二十四孝 (Twenty-Four Filial Exemplars), and among them the most famous one which is written by Guo Jujing 郭居敬 (*fl.* 1295–1321) from the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368).[35] However, the earliest extant text carrying the name *Ershisi xiao* was a Buddhist hymn from the period of Five Dynasties (907–960), read before beginning a sutra lecture.[36] Depictions of 24 exemplars of *xiao* with some variations were very popular in Chinese art throughout the whole history, commencing with Han dynasty. Patricia Ebrey commented on the content of this book with following words: "Some of the passion for extreme forms of filial piety seems more like religious passion than calculating acts. Truly devoted children, for instance, would cut off a piece of their flesh to feed an ill parent,[37] confident that it would cure them."[38] (Please see Appendix: Twenty-Four Filial Exemplars Arranged Chronologically)

Confucian texts for children constantly propagated the virtue of filial piety. In Tang dynasty, a special book on *xiao* was prepared for girls – *Nü xiaojing* 女孝經 by Miss Zheng 鄭 (Zheng *shi* 鄭氏). She was the wife of a high

[33] William Boltz (1993, pp. 141–152, here p. 141).

[34] 子曰:「夫孝, 德之本也, 教之所由生也 (https://ctext.org/xiao-jing; accessed on 24.03.2022).

[35] Cf. "[THE TWENTY-FOUR PARAGONS OF FILIAL PIETY [ERSHISI XIAO]" http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~asia/24ParagonsFilialPiety.html (accessed on 24.03.2022).

[36] Knapp (2003, pp. 200–201).

[37] E.g. there are many stories about cutting off a piece of meat in order to cure parents (*gegu liaoqin* 割股療親/*gerou liaoqin* 割肉療親). One of them goes like this: A young man named Ruan Yuzi 阮與子from the county Xiangshan in Guangdong tried to save his sick father in the year 1276. Having no other means, he eventually cut off a piece of meat from his own leg (thigh) [and cooked it] and gave it to eat to his father. Afterwards his father lived another five years. This act of filial piety was acknowledged by his local officials who gave him two bulks of silk and an arch of filial piety (Cf. *Guangdong tongzhi* 廣東通志 (General History of Guangdong), "Liezhuan san" [Biographies, Part Three], the 1822 edition, vol. 4, *juan* 270, p. 4691).

[38] Patricia B. Ebrey (2003, p. 681).

official of Xianbei 鮮卑[39] origin called Houmochen Miao 侯莫陳邈. Miss Zheng wrote this book for her niece, the consort of Prince Yong (Yong *wang* 永王).[40] Another work meant for children where much space is devoted to the problematic of filial piety was Zhu Xi's 朱熹 (1130–1200) *Xiaoxue* 小學 (Elementary learning).

At the end of this part, let us look again at the virtue of brotherly/fraternal obedience (*ti*) which together with *xiao* build the foundation of Confucian familism. *Ti* as the respect and obedience towards elderly brothers, especially towards the eldest brother as the one entitled to succeeding the father as a head of the family when the latter died, was the stress of the principle of seniority in the family within the patriarchal clan system. "As for the specific actions that embody this virtue, traditional illustrative stories posit three types. They are (1) yielding wealth for food to one's brother, (2) taking his place when he is in danger, and (3) after his death, supporting his widow and orphans."[41] One of the exemplars of *ti* (brotherly obedience) is Kong Rong 孔融 (153–208). He had five *gege* 哥哥 (elder brothers) and *didi* 弟弟 (one younger brother). When he was four years old, Kong Rong's father brought some tasty pears for the family. Being fond of Kong Rong, his father gave him the biggest pear. However, Kong Rong politely declined and took the smallest pear instead, leaving the larger pears to his older and younger brothers.

The importance of the virtues of *xiao* and *ti* in Chinese education of children and in the life of the Chinese in their history cannot be stressed enough. Popular literature, sayings, and proverbs show in a positive way their weight and significance and in a negative one expresses the disdain for those who did not live up to the standards required by *xiao* and *ti*.

It is interesting that John C. H. Wu (Wu Ching-hsiung [Wu Jingxiong] 吳經熊, 1899–1986), a prominent Chinese Catholic convert,[42] in his

[39] The Xianbei were a tribal and nomadic association from the Mongolian-Manchurian border area with apparently several subgroups. The ethnic composition is still not exactly known, but this problematic has been discussed by some researchers and understood as possibly Proto-Mongolian. The Xianbei people seems to have merged with the general Chinese population by the Tang dynasty. Cf. Charles Holcombe (2013, pp. 1–38).

[40] *Nü xiaojing* is similar to Ban Zhao's 班昭 (c. 45 – c. 117 AD) book *Nüjie* 女誡 (Female Admonitions [to My Daughers]) during the Han dynasty).

[41] Knapp (2003, p. 604).

[42] John Wu was also lawyer, juristic philosopher, and educator. As to Christianity, he was originally a Methodist Christian, baptized in the winter 1917 at the Comparative Law School of China in Shanghai, run by the American Methodist Mission, and converted to Catholicism on December 18, 1937 by conditional baptism at the Catholic Aurora University in Shanghai after reading of the autobiography of St. Thérèsa of Lisieux (1873–1897). He authored numerous articles and books on various subjects including law, philosophy, and religion. He also translated the Psalms (1946: *Shengyong yiyi* 聖詠譯義) and the New Testament (1949: *Xinjing quanqi* 新經全集) into Classical Chinese. (Cf. John Wu 1951, p. 153).

Studia Warmińskie 59 (2022)

autobiographical work *Beyond East and West* discussed Zengzi, contrasting him with Confucius:

> I cannot help thinking that Confucius was a theist. His childlike attitude to--wards Heaven, which was for him another name for God, was the source of his greatness. It was only in the hands of his disciple Tseng Tzu [Zengzi] that Confucianism became almost purely humanistic, laying exclusive emphasis on the moral duties involved in the ethical relations of man, especially the duty of filial piety. Tseng Tzu himself being noted as filial son, it is little wonder that his emphasis should have taken that direedt6ion. In his hands, filial piety become the fountain of all other virtues, the bond of perfection.[43]

In the conviction John Wu, Confucianism under Zengzi "became almost purely humanistic" – here I would supplement – an "almost purely humanistic" religion which we will see in the following part about Liang Shuming's understanding of *xiao* and *ti* within Confucianism.

Conclusion

Confucian thought on family with its stress on filial piety and brotherly obedience has still its present-day value and relevance, and anchors the heart of Chinese social order. Needless to say, the relations between parents and children are to be regarded as one of the most urgent problems in our contemporary world. This situation is understood as a consequence of the deep-rooted transformation of traditional family ethics, values and institutions brought about by the processes of modernization and globalization.[44] Of course, this transformation – or even metamorphosis – does also affect traditional Chinese family nowadays. The sociologist Martin King Whyte (b. 1942) wrote the following words: "In imperial China filial piety was a central value of family life, and the centrality of family life in Confucian statecraft made filial piety a lynchpin for the entire social order. Down through the centuries parents constantly stressed to their children that the way they treated their elders was a central measure of their moral worth."[45] In today's China – like in many Western countries – families become smaller and children fewer, filial piety – or as I would say – the fourth commandment of the Decalogue "Honor your father and your mother" has a universal value despite its being challenged and transformed by the processes of modernization and globalization.

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[43] John Wu (1951, pp. 69 and 242–244).
[44] Loreta Poškaitė (2014, pp. 99–114).
[45] Martin Whyte (2004, p. 106).

Confucian familism with its two pillars of *xiao* and *ti* in Liang Shuming's understanding is kind of religion.[46] In his comparison of China with the West, Liang was searching to show the individuality (*gexing*) of Chinese culture, i.e., to interpret it as a product of the early manifestation of reason within humankind. The problem of religion in the *Zhongguo wenhua yaoyi* became the watershed between Chinese and Western culture (cf. "The Watershed Between Chinese and Western Cultures," pp. 52–55).[47] The main function and contribution of religion – Christianity in the West was for Liang its being a pedagogue of community life and organized life-style. It is this aspect of human life that – according to Liang – Chinese culture badly needed. Although China lacked this kind of pedagogue, there was, however, another one – family morality, based on radical familial-ethical human relations (Confucian familism). This family (morality) replaced religion.

Thus, we can say that there is an analogy between Europe (the West) and China: What was for traditional Europe Christianity, this was for traditional China the institution of family. As to Christianity in Europe, we speak of secularization which historically means the processes triggered by Renaissance humanism spreading across Western Europe in the 14th, 15th, and 16th centuries. and the Enlightenment of the late 17th and 18th centuries, which loosened the ties to Christianity and have assigned questions of conduct to the realm of individual reason. Sociologically, this process is seen as the social loss of significance of religion. Nowadays in the Western world, the separation between the state and religious institutions (Church) is generally regarded as a desirable and necessary prerequisite for a democratic form of society. In secular democracy, it is not religiously based beliefs, but the will of the voters, the common good and civic values such as freedom, equality and solidarity that guide political action. In the current discussions, secularization is understood as a comprehensive process that is centrally linked to modernization, which at the same time expresses a valuation. This process is not only reflected in the separation of state and church, but also includes a dwindling social importance of religion in the sense of a decline in its influence on public life (e.g., in the educational system) and the number of members of churches such as the number of religious people.

The institution of family in China has been also undergoing a kind of process of "secularization" in the sense of the crumbling of patriarchal system und traditional familial values. During the last century with the fall of imperial China in 1911, the rise of Communist China in 1949, and with

[46] Liang Shuming (1989, pp. 466–477).
[47] Liang Shuming (1990, pp. 1–316).

the Communist one-child policy (1979–2015), Chinese family structure has changed from a desired extended family (as a complex corporate organization with the main vertical son-father relationship) to a nuclear family (as a simple conjugal unit with the primary horizontal husband-wife relationship), consisting of parents and children. As to changes in marriage traditions among the Chinese, the family-arranged marriages – so common in the past – have been substituted by love-oriented marriages nowadays. Both divorces and living together before marriage have also become a characteristic of today's Chinese (post-)modernity. Notwithstanding, some traditional conceptions of marriage prevail, e.g., a son is supposed to remain in his parents' family even after having married, while a daughter is hoped to join the family of her husband. In addition, women are also expected by their parents and siblings to marry men with higher social status, i.e., those with better education or finances.

I can clearly see the vulnerability of Chinese family in the fact that Taiwan as a representative of Chinese culture, because in today's China (People's Republic of China) there is no recognition of same-sex (guy or lesbian) marriages, accepted the same-sex marriage as legal on May 24, 2019. In this way, Taiwan became the first country in Asia to approve same-sex marriage. In this situation, it would be interesting to ask how Chinese Confucian familism, based on filial piety and brotherly obedience, will cope with these new – in the West already formidable – challenges for a traditional – natural – family and future humanity.

John Wu, already above mentioned, gives a powerful witness of his Judeo-Christian theism as an expression of his innermost spiritual life. He understood the concept of natural law as one of the ladders to "moving beyond East and West" (next to love and friendship) as a most suitable bridge between East and West:

> […] our vision of Natural Law, which, like the face of God, is ever-glowing, vivid, expressive of internal feelings, responsive to external changes, and looking forward to the welfare of Humanity, is a truer vision of Natural Law.[48]

I am convinced that the concept of natural law, which can be accepted both by theists and atheists, should be an excellent instrument to unite the West and China for protection of human natural family.[49]

> Natural Law Theory can be held and applied to human conduct by both theists and atheists. The atheist uses reason to discover the laws governing natural events and applies them to thinking about human action. Actions in accord with such natu-

[48] John Wu (1951, p. 97).

[49] Cf. Stephen O'Sullivan and Philip A. Pecorino, (2002, http://www.qcc.cuny.edu/SocialSciences/ppecorino/ETHICS_TEXT/Chapter_7_Deontological_Theories_Natural_Law/Natural_Law_Theory.htm; accessed on 24.03.2022).

ral law are morally correct. Those that go against such natural laws are morally wrong. For the theists there is a deity that created all of nature and created the laws as well and so obedience to those laws and the supplement to those laws provided by the deity is the morally correct thing to do.

The concept of natural law, which in Christian understanding refers to God's moral law as revealed through nature, is God's gift of the human conscience. We can also point out to natural law when constructing a case for our understanding of marriage and family in the public sphere, since God has written His moral law in the consciences of all people and created all people with the faculty of reason for discerning these truths of human nature (Romans 2:14-15[50]). We Christians have to admit that original and actual sin can be a cause for the conscience and human reason which become invincibly or incorrigibly erroneous. That is why we affirm the need for our consciences to be continuously reformed by the Word of God (the Bible): "We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5[51]).

Appendix

Twenty-Four Filial Exemplars Arranged Chronologically

1. Emperor Shun 舜 (traditionally ca. 2294 – ca. 2184 BC) – the greatness of his filial piety touched the gods;

2. Liu Heng 劉恆, Emperor Wen of the Western Han Dynasty (Han Wendi 漢 文帝, 203–157 BC) – personally cared for his sick mother with great dedication for three years. When she was given the medicine, he insisted that she first taste it for herself to make sure it was safe for her.

3. Zeng Shen 曾參 (Zengzi 曾子, 505– 435 BC; a disciple of Confucius) – when his mother bit her finger worrying about her son, he felt pain in his heart.

4. Min Sun 閔 損 (536 – c. 487 BC, disciple of Confucius) – Dressed by his cruel stepmother in a gown of leaves, he showed her the respect due to her mother.

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[50] "For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them" (https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%202:14-15&version=ESV; accessed on 24.03.2022).

[51] https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Corinthians%2010%3A5&version=NIV (accessed on 24.03.2022).

5. Zhong You 仲 由 (Zilu 子路, 542–480 BC, one of Confucius's most famous and faithful disciples) – carried baskets of rice on his back to feed his parents.

6. Tanzi 郯 子 (the Spring and Autumn period 771 to 476 BC) – believing that doe's milk could help remove the blindness of parents, he tried to obtain it at the risk of his life and gave it to his parents.

7. Laolaizi老萊子 (the Spring and Autumn period 771 to 476 BC) – He dressed up in bright colored clothes, played with toys, and behaved in a childish manner to amuse his parents and keep them happy.

8. Dong Yong 董永 (Eastern Han dynasty, 25–220 AD) – he sold himself into slavery to give his father an appropriate funeral.

9. Guo Ju 郭巨 (Eastern Han dynasty, 25–220 AD) – He was about to bury his son in order to let his mother survive. He thought that he and his wife could have another child again, but he could not have his mother back if he lost her. While Guo was digging, he discovered a pile of gold which was a gift to him from Heaven in order to provide food for his whole family.

10. Jiang Shi 姜詩 (Eastern Han dynasty, 25–220 AD) – He traveled long distances every day to bring his mother fresh water and fish from the river.

11. Cai Shun 蔡順 (Xin dynasty, 9–23 AD / Eastern Han dynasty) – He picked mulberries and placed them in different baskets: the black ones (which tasted sweet) were for his mother, while the red ones (which tasted sour) were for himself.

12. Ding Lan 丁蘭 (Eastern Han dynasty, 25–220 AD) – after the death of his parents, he made their wooden images to serve them.

13. Lu Ji 陸績 (188–219) – As a six-year old boy, he hid two oranges into his sleeves, which he could eat himself, with the intention of giving them to his mother who liked them.

14. Jiang Ge 江革 (Han dynasty 202 BC–9 AD and 25 AD – 220 AD) – He always carried his mother on his back wherever he went and worked hard to ensure that his mother could live comfortably.

15. Huang Xiang 黃香 (Eastern Han dynasty, 25–220 AD) – In summer, he fanned his father's pillow to ensure that his father could sleep comfortably at night. In winter, he first wrapped himself with his father's blanket to warm it and then gave it to his father.

16. Wang Pou 王裒 (Three Kingdoms period, 220–280 AD) – Wang Pou's mother feared the sound of thunder while still living. After her death, whenever Wang Pou heard thunder, he rushed to her grave to visit her tomb and to console her.

17. Wu Meng 吳猛 (Jin dynasty, 266–420) – During summer nights, he let mosquitoes suck his blood in order to protect his parents from them.

18. Wang Xiang 王祥 (185–269) – Once, during winter, Wang's stepmother who used to speak ill of him to his father, wanted to eat fish. Wang went to the frozen river, undressed, and lay on the icy surface. The ice thawed and Wang was able to catch two carps for her.

19. Yang Xiang 楊香 (Jin dynasty, 266–420) – While only 14, she fought a tiger with her bare hands to save her father which she succeeded.

20. Meng Zong 孟宗 (Eastern Han dynasty, 25–220 AD / Three Kingdoms period, 220–280 AD) – He walked in the woods in winter in search of bamboo shoots for his mother in order to help her recover from illness and after drinking the soup, she became healthy.

21. Yu Qianlou 庾黔婁 (Southern Qi dynasty, 479–502) – In order to know better the health condition of his ill father, he was told by the physician to taste his father's faeces which he did. At night, he prayed to the gods for the recovery of his health and were prepared to die in his father's place. Pitifully enough, his father died soon. Yu Qianlou buried his father and mourned – as required – for three years.

22. Madam Tang (Tang furen 唐夫人, Tang dynasty, 618–907) – She nursed her old and ailing mother-in-law with her own breast.

23. Zhu Shouchang 朱壽昌 (Song dynasty, 960–1279) – As he was seven years old, his mother, being his father's concubine, was driven away from home, he never gave up the wish to be reunited with her. When he eventually got clues of her whereabouts, he gave up his official career to find his mother. As he eventually reunited with his mother, she was already in her 70s.

24. Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅 (1045–1105) – He took care of his mother personally, also after becoming a government official. He cleaned his mother's bedpan by himself.

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