

JIHI MUJIN KŌ

[The “Cooperative of Unlimited Compassion” of the Village of Tominaga]¹
by Miura Baien (1723- 1769)

Translated by Tetsuo Najita

I. Statement of Aims

When good things happen in a village everyone rejoices; and when misfortunes strike all are saddened. This is like living in the same household with brothers and sisters. When there is mutual caring for the ill, saving of the impoverished, soothing of quarrels and arguments, and counseling of those who do wrong deeds, then peace and intimacy come to prevail. Even during the ups and downs in one's life, other people should not be neglected as if their problems were unrelated to oneself.

When one respects one's parents, the children raised in such a home will observe and learn naturally to act with piety. If the relationship between husband and wife is unhappy, children will learn from this and the household will lose its intimacy. It is well to know that good as well as evil deeds replicate themselves, and thus to be gentle and honest and seek a good pathway. Avoid those who are untrustworthy, corrupt, enjoy falsehoods, disobey rules, and who are unable to maintain friendships. Just as birds build their nest and search for their own food, humans too must always attend to their households with care. Although all human beings are born alike, if they are always hungry in the morning and cold at night, they will stain their hands with evil deeds, and people will say of such deeds that they are 'stealing out of hunger.' When the household is properly maintained such wickedness will disappear and a spirit of kindness will pervade. As the saying has it, "have things well in hand so as not to bequeath step-children."

Yet there is much variety in matters of wealth and poverty. When limits are not set there is attraction to excessive spending: such as letting money run through one's fingers as one would sand, behaving in a rude and immoral manner so as to be disliked, and finally falling into beggarly ruin. Some are content being lazy and live a useless life, picking their fingernails with a toothpick, plucking their eyebrows with a tweezer, becoming worthless human beings recognizable neither as farmers nor as

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merchants. and then letting their households fall into ruin. Others indulge in *saké* and women and. unconcerned as to what the next day might bring, refuse to heed the *advice* of parents and relatives, destroying in the end their own lives. Drawn to luxury and gambling, there are those who expect quick profits and then become robbers. outcasts, and homeless vagrants. There are still others who fuel their evil *minds* to satisfy their selfish desires by stealing from other people and gaining wealth, thereby acting without any moral scruples. And there are those who ignore the *sufferings* of others and are obsessed with the accumulation of their own wealth. They are quick to make excuses and treat the members of the household without *charity*; to seek advantages that lead to disastrous and pitiless results; to engage in unreasonable struggles with others in the buying and selling of things; and they are boastful of good fortune for which they are not responsible and look down on others as being foolish and unworthy.

While these people may enjoy momentary glory, they are despised by people around them, for they act in ways that are contrary to the natural order of things. If they should burn incense before Buddha's altar or place sake as an offering before the Shrine. praying thereby for longevity, wealth and good health. their prayers surely will not be heeded, for Bodhisattvas and gods do not aid the wicked. A poem at the shrine of Tenman says it this way:

When your spirit is in accord with the way of
truthfulness

Even without prayers will the gods protect you.

[Kokoro da ni makoto no *michi ni* kanai Mba:

Inorazu tote mo kami *ya mamoran.*

(Sugawara no *Michizane*)

Joy is simply the well-being that comes effortlessly from the careful attention that is given to the needs of the household, and in being thoughtful to others, respectful of the aged, loving of the young, and gentle and compassionate. Then again. what is truly sad and miserable is for human beings to suffer through life even though they attend to the household and exercise frugality. They encounter illness, robbery, fire, flooding; or, the household and its branches being numerous, they face misfortunes beyond calculation. Especially painful is childlessness, being alone in old age, ill and immobile, homeless and without food, famished in the spring and frozen in the winter.

Now would it not be tragic if misfortunes such as these were to strike those who had not been so afflicted *before*? Indeed.

would it not be truly tragic if these misfortunes were to happen to oneself? To one *suffering* in misery, a portion of a meal gives that person another half-a-day of life; a cup of warm water warms the body if only for the morning. Just as every human being would want to save a frog from being swallowed by a snake, so, even more so, human beings living together in the same place [should feel the same compassion]: for a human being who does not feel compassion for other humans as he might for the frog is no longer human. Our hearts break when we ponder the sight of people in misery. We see that they are victims of disastrous storms, of famine. and of cold. or have encountered unexpected illnesses and die as a result of this sudden curse. To not give aid would mean to despise those who ought not to be despised and to speak with hatred to those who should not be addressed in that manner. So those who are physicians should extend medical aid; faith healers should provide spiritual solace and not charge outlandish fees for their services; wealthy persons should contribute in appropriate ways to save other lives: merchants should resist *taking* excessive profits. Each in one way or another should do as much as can be done. Those who eat beyond being full and who overly bundle themselves in warm garments and simply look with indifference as others die before their very eyes will incur the wrath of heaven and, in the social world around them, will have divorced themselves from the ways of human ethics. No gods will give them comfort. As the saying puts it. "when one is guilty before heaven, there is nowhere to go to and pray."

When everyone works in concert, dirt can be mounded into a hill. When an entire village sets its mind to Join together and collect small *contributions* from each person then the sufferings of those in *misery* can be alleviated, even if only in a small way. That small gift is to the *suffering* person a truly precious blessing. Life is mutable and brief. We know not what tomorrow may bring. Think of the misfortunes that happen to others around you as though they were your own. In the everyday course of events. live with care and attention, interact with others in the village as do the fish who swim in water. Each will then be said to receive the blessings of heaven.

II. Agreement

Those who are able to read will explain the above principles in detail to their wives and children. and to all others in their households.

The elderly and the weak, males and females, will all, without exception, bring forth their contributions in varying amounts of wheat in the summer, rice in the fall, and cash in the winter.

The sponsors will establish a collection-place for the cash and grain and without fail keep a detailed record of loans extended to village officials on an annual basis and the amount and interest incurred.

Loans will not be extended to those who do not deposit an appropriate item in security, even with the mediation of a sponsor.

For a five-year period, the cash fund will not be used for purposes of relief activities.

Those suffering from extreme hardship will not be compelled to make contributions.

All agree that this emergency fund exists for the entire village and is not under the direction of a single head.

Based on deliberations among village leaders and mediators, those determined to be in gravest distress will be aided first.

The fund must not be used to promote the personal interest of individuals.

Outstanding persons known for their filiality and loyalty, being close to hand, should be given assistance with special care.

Private alms and favoritism must not be allowed to intervene in council.

Those whose contributions accumulate to a sum in excess of 10 monme in cash, and of 10 *shu* in grain, will be designated benefactors: their names will be duly recorded in the benefactors' book of accounts; and their fund(s) will then extend indefinitely into the future to aid all those who encounter extreme and unexpected disasters.

In order that we carry out this agreement without fail, we call on each one of you for your watchful and diligent support.

Sponsoring group of Tomlnaga village (sewanin): Yazohachi;
Buzaemon; Tadasu ke.

FUSHI IKAI NO RYAKU

[The Twelve Tenets of the Dutch Studies Academy.
Tekijuku]¹
Ogata Kōan (1810-1863)

Translated by Tetsuo Najita

1. The work of the physician is only to help other human beings and not to promote the self. This is the basic tenet of the profession. Not seeking idleness or thinking about fame, one must simply abandon the self and pledge to save humans. No other work is involved than protecting lives, restoring people from illness, and relieving their pain.
2. When encountering a patient, see only the patient. See not high or low, poor or wealthy. Consider the gain within yourself in comparing the tears of gratitude in the eyes of the poor with the handful of gold of the wealthy. Think deeply about this.
3. When applying your method address the afflicted person as the exclusive subject. Never rely on the hit or miss method. Do not cling to biases and rely on careless testing. Always be disciplined and detailed.
4. Besides perfecting medical skills, one must also strive to speak and act in ways that will encourage trust in the patient. However, to simply rely on the latest trends and present deceptive theories to become persuasive is truly shameful.
5. Every evening review once again the cases treated during the day, and document these in detail. As they accumulate toward a book, these may be of use to yourself and to the patients as well as to others more broadly.
6. In calling on a patient, it is best to concentrate on making a detailed diagnosis in a single visit rather than on making several visits. However, to be so overly self-confident as to deny the need for repeated examinations is detestable.
7. It is the calling of the physician to provide relief to the suffering of even the incurably ill. To turn away from this

¹ Taken from Momose Meiji, *Tekijuku no Kenkyū* (Kyoto: Php Bunko, 1989), 33-34.