

UNIQUE TANGUT MANUSCRIPTS ON MORAL AND ETHICAL REGULATIONS IN THE TANGUT SOCIETY

Each society requires an idea or a system of ideas, which make its existence reasonable. Different cultures follow different religious systems (polytheism, monotheism, the Heaven as the supreme divine power of the Chinese and Central Asian cultures), but no culture is able to avoid the problem of supernatural. Common ideology unite the whole society or some of its strata, providing the basis of its existence, regulating the society, explaining to ordinary people its origin and destination.

It will not be an exaggeration to say, that one of the basic ideas propagated by the extant Tangut texts was the concept of "hsiao", traditionally rendered as "filial piety", or, in a broader sense, the reverence of the younger towards the older, and the elder's love towards the younger. The Chinese classic on "hsiao", the "Hsiao-ch'ing", attributed to Confucius himself, states: "The filial piety is the root of all goodness. You receive your body, hair and skin from your father and mother — so, you dare not do any harm to them — that is the foundation of filial piety. To establish yourself on the Way, to glorify your name through generations to come in order to demonstrate to the world the goodness of one's father and mother is the supreme implementation of filial piety" [1]. Confucius instructed: "A young man must be an obedient son in his parents' home, an industrious laborer outside, careful and trustful in his speech, hospitable and polite to his relatives. If there are any resources left after he answered all these requirements, these resources must be devoted to learning" [2]. And: "It is not likely to happen, that people devoted to filial piety and reverence to their elders would start a riot. A decent man concentrates on the foundation. When the foundation is strong, there emerges the Right Way. Filial piety and respectfulness to the elder — that is the basis of humanity in this world" [3].

Though the concept of "hsiao" included love of the elder towards the younger, the foundation of "hsiao" was the love of children for their parents, the reverence of the younger generation for the elder generation, as well as the respect of the lower classes towards superior social strata, obedience of a subject to his ruler. The concept of "hsiao" is universal, but only in China and in the Far-Eastern cultures it was carefully investigated and accepted as a philosophy. Initially the concept of "hsiao" implied a non-

Chinese idea of reverence, devotion, service and obedience of children to their parents. Children respect and obey parents, parents love children and take care of them. Confucius instructed: "Be tender and tolerant while dealing with parents. If you see, that your intentions contradict theirs, still obey and do not go against their desires. Though you may be exhausted, still dare not be angry with them" [4]. And further on: "While your father is alive, follow his wishes, when your father is dead, follow his deeds, if within three years you do not change your father's ways, you may be called the one who fulfilled his filial duty" [5]. V. A. Rubin once wrote: "Confucius attributed crucial importance to filial piety, since he considered it to be the foundation of all other merits, first of all of humanity. According to Confucius, among the family merits respect for the elder brothers (t'i) holds the second place. Since in his time those, who fed their parents were considered model children, Confucius complained: "Dogs and horses are fed too. If it is not done with deep reverence, what is the difference?" ...Confucius believed that piety must be expressed in obedience to parents in conformity with the "li" principle while they were alive, and in a proper funeral and due sacrifices on their graves when they were dead" [6]. A Chinese scholar Hsie Wu-wei wrote, that the doctrine of "hsiao" "penetrated into every corner of Chinese life, penetrated into all the activities of the Chinese people" [7].

In a very remote past the doctrine of "hsiao" was transferred from the family relations into the sphere of relations between a ruler and his subjects. "Staying in the family, revere the elder, being on service, devote yourself to the ruler" [8]. Confucius instructed: "Filial piety starts with the service and continues in the service to the sovereign" [9]. "A man receives the order of Heaven... At home there are family relations between father and son, elder and younger. Outside there are relations between a ruler and the subject, the higher and the lower" [10].

The Tangut state of Hsi-hsia (982—1227) emerged on the western border of the Sung China. The culture and ideology of this multinational state included three major components: the traditional culture of the Tanguts (and also Chinese, Tibetans, Uighurs), the culture and ideology of Buddhism, and the general culture and ideology of the Hsi-hsia state and society. As for the dominant Tangut