

# Performing Piety

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educated men in song dynasty china 960 1279 traveled frequently in search of scholarly and bureaucratic success these extensive periods of physical mobility took them away from their families homes and native places for long periods of time preventing them from fulfilling their most sacred domestic duty filial piety to their parents in this deeply grounded work cong ellen zhang locates the tension between worldly ambition and family duty at the heart of elite social and cultural life drawing on more than two thousand funerary biographies and other official and private writing zhang argues that the predicament in which song literati found themselves diminished neither the importance of filial piety nor the appeal of participating in examinations and government service on the contrary the northern song witnessed unprecedented literati activity and state involvement in the bolstering of ancient forms of filial performances and the promotion of new ones the result was the triumph of a new filial ideal luyang by labeling highly coveted honors and privileges attainable solely through scholarly and official accomplishments as the most celebrated filial acts the luyang rhetoric elevated office holding men to be the most filial of sons consequently the proper performance of filiality became essential to scholar official identity and self representation zhang convincingly demonstrates that this reconfiguration of elite male filiality transformed filial piety into a status and gender based virtue a change that had wide implications for elite family life and relationships in the northern song the separation of elite men from their parents and homes also made the idea of native place increasingly fluid this development in turn generated an interest in family preservation as filial performance individually initiated kinship and native place based projects flourished and coalesced with the moral and cultural visions of leading scholar intellectuals providing the social and familial foundations for the ascendancy of neo confucianism as well as new cultural norms that transformed chinese society in the song and beyond

the experts here provide conceptual frameworks and guidance by examining the subject in the light of current developments at multiple levels of analysis individual organizational cultural and in leadership spirituality in the workplace considers employees as a whole in spirit body and mind

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have attempted to shew in the preceding chapter exhibits no different standards of goodness applicable to different stations or characters no one can be allowed to rest in a low degree and plead his exemption for aiming no higher no one can be secure in any state of piety below that state which would not have been enjoined on all had not all been entitled to the means of attaining it those who keep their pattern in their eye though they may fail of the highest attainments will not be satisfied with such as are low the striking inferiority will excite compunction compunction will stimulate them to press on which those never do who losing sight of their standard are satisfied with the height they have reached he he is not likely to be the object of god s favour who takes his determined stand on the very lowest step in the scale of perfection who does not even aspire above it whose aim seems to be not so much to please god as to escape punishment many however will doubtless be accepted though their progress has been small their difficulties may have been great their natural capacity weak their temptations strong and their instruction defective revelation has not only furnished injunctions but motives to holiness not only motives but examples and authorities be ye therefore perfect according to your measure and degree as your father which is in heaven is perfect and what fays the old testament it accords with the new be ye holy for i the lord your god am holy this was the injunction of god himself not given exclusively to moses to the leader and legislator or to a few distinguished officers or to a selection of eminent men but vol 1 i to

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