

寇準取消宴會

寇準是北宋時期的宰相，他的父親寇湘曾為後晉時期的參軍^(註1)。在寇準小時候父親就過世了，家中環境變差，母親只能靠織布養活子女，但她卻不因家中貧窮而對寇準的教導有疏忽，經常一邊紡紗一邊督促寇準讀書。

寇準也非常爭氣發奮讀書，十五歲就通曉《春秋》、《左傳》，十九歲就具有殿試^(註2)資格且考中進士，二十歲擔任知縣^(註3)。然而當寇準考中進士的好消息傳到家裡時，母親卻因為操勞過度，已經病重臥床不起，臨終前寇準母親將一幅畫交給家中僕人劉氏，並吩咐說：「寇準日後若有犯錯，便將這幅畫交給他。」

後來寇準官拜宰相，某一年他的生日擺了豐盛的筵席邀請賓客，並請戲班子來演出，劉氏見到這種情形便想起寇母臨終前交代的話，於是將畫交給寇準。寇準將畫作展開後，呈現的是一幅「寒窗課子圖」，畫上提了一首詩，大意是說：「母親含辛茹苦的教導你，要你好好讀書，為的就是希望你修身養性，造福百姓。我們一向以勤儉持家，希望你當官之後不要忘了當年貧苦的日子。」寇準讀完後淚流滿面，明白了母親對他的期望。因此，寇準撤回所有筵席以及退回所有壽禮，從此專心治理政事，自奉清正廉潔，成為一代賢相名臣。



小啟示

每個賢臣良將的家庭中，必定有一位賢明的母親，所以要培養健全的人格，良好的家庭教育是不可或缺的。

註 1：古代武官名，為重要官員的參謀軍官。

註 2：古代科舉制度中最高一級的考試。

註 3：古代官名，縣的最高行政長官。

Kou Zhon cancelled the Feast

Kou Zhon(A.D.961-1023) was a Grand Councilor during the Northern Song Dynasty(A.D.960-1127). His father Kou Xiang was a military officer¹ of the late Jin Dynasty(A.D.936-947). Kou's father passed away when Kou was young and his family was in poverty, Therefore, his mother earned their living by weaving. Despite their poverty, she never neglected Kou's education and supervised his study while working.

Kou was a diligent student. He was proficient at Spring and Autumn Annals and Zuo Zhuan when he was only fifteen and was qualified to take the dianshi² and received his qualification of Jinshi at the age of nineteen. Kou became magistrate³ when he was twenty years old. Yet when the news of his becoming a Jinshi reached home, his mother was already sick in bed due to extreme fatigue. Before she passed away, she left a painting to her servant Liu and told her, "Sometime in the future, if Kou commits any mistake, please give him this painting."

Later, Kou became the Grand Councilor. On year, he organized a feast and had performers to celebrate his birthday. Respectively, the servant Liu recalled the words from Kou's mother and gave the painting to him. Kou unrolled the painting and saw the depiction of a mother educating her son in poverty. A poem was written on it and the gist is, "I endured all kinds of hardships for your studies with the objective of inculcating virtues in you to benefit a lot of people. We have always been frugal, I hope you will not forget about those old days of poverty once you become an official." Kou wept as he read. He understood his mother's expectations. Consequently, Kou canceled the feast and returned all the gifts that he had received. Thereafter, he concentrated on his work and was very honest becoming a renowned statesman of his time.



Moral of the Story

Behind every great man, there is always a sagacious mother. Positive family education is indispensable for a sound personality.

Note 1: The military officer of the late Jin Dynasty provided counsel to high-ranking officials.

Note 2: The highest level of the Imperial exam.

Note 3: The magistrate in Northern Song Dynasty was the position for the highest ranking officer in a county.