Ch'ien Fu Lun—A Critical Edition

Ch'ien Fu Lun (潛夫論) was written by Wang-Fu (王符) of the Late Han Dynasty. It consists of 36 chapters and discusses the merits and demerits of politics at that time, its social trends and problems arising out of the border wars. In the history of thought, as well as the history of politics, it is a very important work. Fan-Yeh (范曄), in his History of Late Han (後漢書), describes the life of Wang-Fu, Chung Ch'ang-T'ung (仲長統) and Wang-Ch'ung (王充) in the same chapter. Han-Yu (韓愈) from Tang Dynasty, because of this very fact, wrote An Appraisal of Three Saints from Late Han Dynasty (後漢三賢贊) and proclaimed them to be the three saints from the Late Han Dynasty. Now, the Ch'ang-Yen (昌言) written by Chung Ch'ang-T'ung is already lost; the Lun-Heng (論衡) written by Wang-Ch'ung has been an object of study by many scholars through the ages and its results are quite remarkable. It is only the Ch'ien Fu Lun written by Wang-Fu which has not been studied by scholars in great numbers.

Wang Chi-P'ei (汪繼培), a scholar from the Ch'ing Dynasty has written a book called On the Ch'ien Fu Lun (潛夫論箋). It is a pity that his annotation is based on a comparatively late edition of the Yuan Dynasty. Because of this, it has many defects in the critical apparatus and annotation. The Shu Ku-T'ang (述古堂) by Ch'ien Tsun-Wang (錢遵王) survive in a manuscript of the Sung Dynasty (now available in photolithographic copy) and is a comparatively early edition of Ch'ien Fu Lun which now exists. The present Ph.D. dissertation is based on this edition. I have also collated other editions of this work and referred to various kinds of book of reference such as P'ei T'eng Shu Ch'ao (北堂書鈔), I Wen Lei Chu (藝文類聚), Ch'u Hsueh Chi (初學記), T'ai P'ing
Yu Lan (太平御覽), Ti'en Chung Chi (天中記), Yu Lin (喻林), Ku Chin T'u Shu Ch'i Ch'eng (古今圖書集成), etc, in order to annotate the sources of Ch'ien Fu Lun. As for annotation, I have referred to the works of various scholars from Ch'ing Dynasty such as Wang Chi P'ei, Wang Shao Lan (王紹蘭), Lu Wen Shao (盧文弨), Yu Yueh (俞樾) and Sun I Jang (孫詒讓). Special attention is paid to the explanation of the meanings of words. The sources of the idioms used are also traced. This, I hope will contribute to a better understanding of the Ch'ien Fu Lun.