

TO ACQUIRE WISDOM :
THE "WAY" OF WANG YANG-MING
(1472 - 1529)

by

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Chapter I

THE CONFUCIAN WAY (TAO) AND ITS TRANSMISSION (TAO-T'UNG)

"My Way (Tao) is that of an all-pervading unity".

....

"The Master's Way is chung (faithfulness to the principles of human nature) and shu (generosity and benevolence with regard to others)."

- Analects 4:15

The word Tao is at once the simplest and most complex of words in the Chinese philosophical vocabulary.¹ It has been especially associated with the philosophy, Tao-chia 道家 and the religion, Tao-chiao 道教, both of which are known in English as "Taoism". It is a word, however, which is also used by Confucian philosophers, including Confucius and Mencius themselves.² In philosophical or religious Taoism, the word referred to a metaphysical notion, that of ultimate reality, described in negative terms, of to the possession of special and "mysterious" knowledge, such as that of the art of acquiring physical immortality or of prolonging physical life. In the Confucian tradition, on the other hand, the word carried always a moral connotation, referring both to ultimate truth and to the moral and virtuous way of life. The meaning of this word became all the more ambiguous after the introduction of Buddhism into China, when the Buddhists also started to speak of their doctrines and their manner of life as "the Way", Tao. The confusion of meaning became an important issue especially as "the Way" implies the only, correct Way, bringing thus into focus a problem of orthodoxy, both regarding doctrine and manner of life.³

It is the aim of this chapter to study the origins and crystallisation of that movement of thought which called itself in the beginning, Tao-hsüeh, but which came to be called, in the later course of its development, Hsing-li hsüeh. For this reason, we shall mention Confucius (551-479 BC) and his pre-Ch'in (before 221BC) followers only for the sake of defining the

central message of his school of thought. We shall speak briefly of Han Confucianism and its elaboration of this "message". Our attention will be especially focused on the T'ang (618-906) and Sung (960-1278) dynasties, as we hearken to the voices of the first heralds of a new Confucianism, and watch the process of rationalisation which sought to explain the transmission of doctrine believed to have been lost and re-discovered, as well as the doctrine itself. We shall then conclude with a few words on the meaning of the precious spiritual legacy, as it is formulated by the sixteen word credo taken from the "Counsels of the Great Yü" (Ta-Yü mu 大禹謨) of the Book of Documents (Shu-ching 書經).⁴

The Confucian Way

As far as it is possible for us to know, Confucius had consciously refrained from speculations touching the supernatural, and had said very little about the nature of man and his relationship to the universe. His main teaching was of jen (humanity) → the old virtue of kindness which he transformed into the universal, all-embracing virtue, that which made a man human. He failed in his endeavours to find a ruler who would be willing to put into practice his ideas of moral renovation of society, but became famous as a teacher of the good life. It is important to our discussion of "Confucian orthodoxy" to note that the school of Confucius was only one of the many schools of thought which competed for state support during the late Chou period (1111?-249BC).⁵ The philosophers Mencius (372-289 BC?) and Hsun-tzu 荀子 (fl. 280BC) made important contributions to "Confucian" thought by their divergent ideas on the nature of "Heaven" (T'ien), of Man, and of sagehood. But they both showed the same optimism in human perfectibility, to be accomplished through education, as Confucius did before them.⁶ "Confucian" humanism came to mean that man --whether originally good or evil in his nature -- had the ability to "save" himself, by learning to live virtuously, and could even reach the highest goal of moral sagehood, should he choose to strive after it.

The Ch'in dynasty (221-206 BC) put an end to the "flowering" of the "hundred schools". Confucianism emerged as the dominant philosophy of the land only under Han, with the help of state power, after being transformed into an "ideology".⁷

The official patronage given to the study of the Five Classics, together with their "accretions", and the selective interpretation of these texts, accomplished with the help of prevalent "non-Confucian" ideas, resulted in the great Han synthesis with its yin-yang world-view, its exaltation of the Han state, its emphasis on submission to hierarchical authority. But ideas of human dignity and of man's special relationship with the universe received further elaboration. The scholar Tung Chung-shu 董仲舒 (c. 179-104 BC) propounded a theory of correspondence between Heaven and Man, describing man as the microcosm of the macrocosm, that is, the universe. Based more on artificial symbolisms, such as numbers, and not spiritual oneness, he left unexplained the ultimate meaning of man's life.⁸ Besides, the growing reverence accorded to Confucius as the greatest sage almost transformed him into a god and made sagehood generally inaccessible to the common man.⁹

The development of a "Confucian orthodoxy" during Han times revealed a certain pattern which would be repeated, with modifications, in T'ang and Sung times. Once again, the need of having a state ideology, the selection and use of Classical texts regarded as containing the deposit of ancient wisdom, the elaboration of a method of resolving inherent contradictions between the aims envisaged and the texts themselves, would lead to the formation of an eclectic teaching which came to be regarded as the embodiment of orthodoxy. Such a second reconstruction of "Confucian doctrine" had become necessary after many intervening years of political chaos and intellectual ferment between the fall of Han and the rise of T'ang. Six centuries of Taoist and Buddhist dominance impressed upon all the relative neglect which Confucianism had up to now manifested with regard to the deeper problems of man and his life in the universe -- problems to which Han scholars only provided a few superficial and artificial answers, incapable of satisfying the minds of those who had been exposed to the subtle arguments of Buddhist thought. With their interest in metaphysics and psychology, Taoist and Buddhist thinkers had at least grappled with these problems at much deeper levels of human consciousness and dialectic.¹⁰ The Ch'an sect had focused attention on the creative depths of the human personality and continued to fascinate many Confucian scholars, who

objected to the "Two Teachings".¹¹ Thus, when time came for the Confucians to strike back, they were obliged to forge new weapons --- to present a new cosmology, a new metaphysics, a new psychology, and a new method of attaining sagehood, all based upon a new evaluation of the ancient sources of inspiration. In this way, they enriched the content of Confucian thought and opened new horizons for the practice of their ideals. Thus reinforced, they hoped to combat the "unorthodox" teachings, to restore social responsibility and social order, and to justify the Confucian claim to superiority.

The first effort toward the restoration of Confucian learning was made by the Tang government which once again ruled over a unified China, and wished to put order in the intellectual life of the country as well as in its administration. A new edition of the Five Classics,¹² the texts which allegedly contained the Confucian deposit of wisdom, was published, together with what was considered to be the best available commentaries, (chu 註) as well as explanations of these, called "sub-commentaries" (su 疏). Called "Correct Meaning of the Five Classics" (Wu-ching cheng-yi 五經正義), this work represented the "orthodox" version of the wisdom of the ancients. but, when made into the required syllabus for examination candidates, who were forbidden to deviate from the given interpretations, the books became a hindrance as well as a help.¹³ Besides, they could not command the attention of men's minds, with their thirst for wisdom rather than for information. This failure on the part of state authority to promote a real inquiry into the meaning of man, of life and of the universe, accompanied by continued toleration of Taoist and Buddhist teachings and practices, left the way open for a "revival" of Confucianism under the leadership of individual thinkers and men of letters rather than of the government as such.

Tao-hsüeh: School of the Way

The man who raised most forcefully the banner of "orthodox" Confucianism against the onslaught of Taoism and Buddhism was Han Yü (786-824), known also as the herald of a new, future, Confucian orthodoxy. For him, however, "the Way" lay in a return to the "sources" of Confucian inspiration, including among these the book of Mencius, the record of the sayings of that philosopher who had first given expression to the idea of the orthodox, Confucian "Way", and of its correct transmission,¹⁴ but whose teaching had been largely forgotten in the wake of China's first "state orthodoxy", Han Confucianism. It was largely due to Han Yü that the Neo-Confucian movement became known as Tao-hsüeh, - School of the Way". As Han said:

Universal love is called humanity (jên); applying this in a proper manner is called righteousness (yi 義). Acting in accordance with them is called the Way (Tao). Finding them adequate for oneself without need of anything from the outside, is to be in possession of its inner power or virtue (tê 德). Lao-tzu... understood humanity and righteousness in only a very limited sense, and so it is natural for him to belittle them. What he called the Way was only the Way as he saw it, and not what I call the Way. What he called inner power was only power as he saw it, and not what I call inner power.¹⁵

To Han Yü's mind, there was no doubt that Taoist and Buddhist teachings which laid false claims to the word Tao, were destructive of Confucian morality, in the same way as those of Yang Chu and Mo Ti had been much earlier. He proposed the radical suppression of Taoism and Buddhism as a necessary first step leading to the restoration of a lost tradition, that of Confucius and Mencius. His cry was:

Make these people [Taoists and Buddhists] human again; burn their books, and convert their temples into ordinary homes. Direct them with explanations of the Way of the ancient kings... Then will all be well.¹⁶

These were strong words, to be literally executed under Emperor Wu-tsung 武宗 (r.841-846).¹⁷ But these were also misleading words, making no distinction between Taoists and Buddhists, between their clergy, or hermits and their layfolk. Confucians and the followers of Taoism and Buddhism were polarised, placed in opposing camps. Han Yü seemed, indeed, to regard himself as the lone Confucian, intent upon the destruction of the enemies of the human race. The reality, however, was quite different. Neither Han nor his disciples were free from Buddhist associations and influences.¹⁸

Han Yü was, after all, a man of letters rather than a systematic thinker. He set in focus the importance of Confucian "orthodoxy" and the question of taking up again an interrupted transmission of the "Way". He pointed out the "enemies" of Confucianism: the Taoists and Buddhists. He also brought back to the fore the problem of goodness and evil in human nature. But it was left to his friend and disciple, Li Ao (fl.798), a more conscientious thinker, to explore, in great depth, the problems relating to human nature and human emotions. In a treatise he wrote on the subject of the "recovery" of the original goodness in human nature, Li indicated that the 'Way' lay inside man:

That whereby a man may become a sage is his nature (hsing). That whereby a man may betray his nature are the emotions (ch'ing 情)...When the emotions cause hindrance, nature is obscured...[just as] when water is muddy its flow will not be clear...But this is not the fault of the water in its [inherent] clarity...¹⁹

Li Ao's notion of "inner calm" and "inner fasting"²⁰ paved the way to a freer method of exegesis, giving less attention to philology or to allegorical correlations, and more to personal insight, to a more generalised and spiritual interpretation of the Classics, with the specific aim of deepening the understanding of human nature and of finding the right way of developing its tendency toward goodness.

Tao-t'ung: Orthodox Transmission

The Sung government continued the T'ang policy of official encouragement of Confucian learning. Under imperial patronage, the stone-engraving of the classical texts was completed, the T'ang edition of the Wu-ching cheng-yi was again published, and a visit to Confucius' birthplace was made by Emperor Chen-tsung 真宗 (r.998-1022), who awarded the sage with a long posthumous title.²¹ However, such official gestures did not meet with the enthusiastic support of the leading scholars of the time, who objected to the rigid adherence to traditional commentaries required by civil examinations and criticised the government for extending patronage to Taoists and Buddhists as well as to Confucians. It would be these men, rather than the government, who eventually set up new standards of scholarship, leading to the creation of a "new" Confucianism.²²

During the Sung dynasty and after, a merging process was also taking place between the more speculative Buddhist sects, like T'ien-t'ai 天台 and Hua-yen 華嚴 on the one side, and Ch'an, on the other, to continue until the three became almost indistinguishable.²³ It was thus no accident that Sung and Ming philosophers should usually refer to Buddhism as Ch'an. Moreover, the penetration of Taoist philosophical ideas into Buddhism contributed also its share in the shaping of a final form of "Chinese" Buddhism, which, in its turn, especially through Ch'an and the Pure Land sect, also enriched the teachings of religious Taoism.²⁴ Hence, Neo-Confucian thinkers habitually referred to Buddhism and Taoism in conjunction as the two "heterodox" teachings.

However, the depth of the level of inter-penetration of ideas between all three teachings--Confucian, Buddhist and Taoist--remains obscure. It seems that, in spite of their negative tendencies, the two "heterodox" teachings acknowledged a certain underlying reality in the world.²⁵ A certain continuum between the self and the other, between man and the universe, so very central to the Confucian message, was thus affirmed. Certain Buddhist ideas, regarding the universal capacity for attaining salvation,

and the method of doing so by the recovery of one's original "Buddha-nature" from the contamination of passion or selfish desires (kiesá), acted also as a stimulus to a reinterpretation of Confucian thought.²⁶

The notion that the Confucian Tao had not been transmitted after Mencius, and the appeal for a renewed line of "orthodox transmission", voiced by Han Yü and Li Ao, found echoes in the writings of these men and early Sung scholars. They envisaged the true "Way" under three aspects. Its content or "substance" (t'i 體) is made up of unchanging moral ideals; its application or "function" (yung 用) is the pursuit of these ideals by right action, while its "literary expression" (wen 文) includes the whole range of Confucian Classics.²⁷ To understand well the content and put it into practice (yung), however, one must first acquire insights in the mind-and-heart, before expressing them in words. Both Ch'eng Hao and Ch'eng Yi emphasised this personal character of the knowledge of the "Way". Ch'eng Hao affirmed that, "Although I have learnt certain things from others, I have discovered for myself, the truth of the words, T'ien-li 天理 ('principle of Heaven')".²⁸

This does not necessarily preclude a serious knowledge of the texts of the Classics or the help of teachers. But the work of teachers was less the transmission of exegetical skills — as was that of the great "New Text" and "Old Text" Han scholars²⁹ — than that of provoking thought and inspiring insight. There was no question of the passing on of a static truth, but the transmission of faith and understanding in an eternal message, unchanging, and yet to be discovered anew by every generation.

The Transmission Determined

Chu Hsi was the first Sung philosopher to make explicit use of the term, Tao-t'ung (Transmission of the Way).³⁰ As the disciple of Li T'ung 李侗 (1093-1163), the disciple of Lo Ts'ung-yen 羅從彦 (1072-1135), the disciple, in turn, of Yang Shih 楊時 (1053-1135), Chu himself could claim to be heir to a distinguished intellectual lineage

which traced back to Yang's teacher, Ch'eng Yi.³¹ He considered that the "Way" of the sages, lost to posterity with the death of Mencius, was rediscovered by the two Ch'engs. He also honoured Chou Tun-yi as the teacher of the Ch'eng brothers. He spoke also of Chang Tsai's role in the "Transmission", but placed him after the Ch'engs, who were his nephews.³²

Besides determining the "line" of orthodox transmission, Chu Hsi was also chiefly responsible for the choice of the "Four Books"³³ as the final, authoritative storehouse of Confucian wisdom, taking precedence over the "Five Classics". Chu wrote voluminous commentaries to many classical texts, to the Historical Annals (Shih-chi 史記) of Ssu-ma Ch'ien 司馬遷 (145?-86BC), and also to some Taoist manuals. But his most important works were his commentaries on the Four Books,³⁴ which were later made into standard texts for civil examinations. Chu punctuated, annotated, and divided into chapters, the texts of the Four Books. He divided the Great Learning into eleven chapters, changing the word ch'ing 親 (love) of the first part of the first chapter into the word hsin 新 (renovate), and providing also material for a "missing" chapter, by giving his own commentary on the meaning of the "investigation of things" (ko-wu) and the "extension of knowledge" (chih-chih).

The problem, however, arises from the contradiction inherent in a "lineal" transmission of "insights" into a dynamic truth: a problem of criteria. How can it be decided that a certain man has attained any real insight at all, and what is the nature of such insight, and of truth itself? Chu Hsi's determination of the "line" of "orthodox transmission" did not provide any external criteria. It merely set up the authority of Chu himself, as the criterion of judgement regarding the orthodoxy of the insights of those thinkers whose names had been included among the transmitters of the Tao. This consideration is to be kept in mind in our analysis of Chu's philosophical synthesis, and of the responses he made to the challenges presented to him, in the metaphysical and ethical realms, by his chief

rival, Lu Chiu-yüan, and, in the realm of historical and political thinking, by his other contemporary, Ch'en Liang. It was, indeed, a problem which had deep consequences in the later development of Confucian thought.

An interesting phenomenon which accompanied the development of a new, "orthodox" Confucianism was the emphasis on oral transmission. Whereas, before, scholars either spent their time annotating the Classics or writing their own treatises, based always on the appeal to the authority of the Classics, another literary genre came into vogue during the Sung dynasty. Probably following the examples of Ch'an monks who published recorded conversations (yü-lu) of their great Masters, and also going back to the Confucian models in the Analects and Mencius, students of famous philosophers began to note down for later publication the conversations they had with their Masters.³⁵ These yü-lu made up the largest repository of Neo-Confucian philosophy. As a genre, it expressed the attitude of the men who considered themselves primarily as teachers of disciples, living with them in an intimate circle, and communicating to them the ineffable teaching of the Sages, which could be easily distorted when given too ornate a form. Such a lack of organization in written expression (wen) stands in strong contrast to the truly organic system of philosophy which was constructed, embracing within itself a synthetic view of the world and of man's role in it, of the deeper recesses of the human spirit and its longing for self-transcendence, goals of personal cultivation and of sagehood.³⁶

The Four Masters

Chu Hsi's greatness consists less in originality of thought than in his remarkable ability to adapt and fuse together in one system of thought the individual contributions of the thinkers who preceded him.³⁷ These included especially four of the so-called "Five Masters" of the Northern Sung period: Chou Tun-yi, Chang Tsai, Ch'eng Hao and Ch'eng Yi.³⁸ For this reason, their names have been associated with that of Chu's as the chief moulders of Tao-hsüeh, which became known, more and more from then on as Li-hsüeh or Hsing-li hsüeh.

T'ai-chi, T'ai-ho and T'ai-hsu

The first of the "Four Masters" was Chou Tun-yi. According to Chu, he was the first philosopher after Mencius to discover anew the lost Confucian Tao and to transmit it on to others. From Chou, Chu derived his understanding of the world, both of things and of men, as the spontaneous production of the interaction between the five agents and the principles of yin and yang, which, in their turn, came from the transcendent T'ai-chi 太極, a notion derived from the Book of Changes where it refers to the "Ground of Being", that which holds the universe together.³⁹ But Chou also described it as Wu-chi 無極 (literally, "limitless" or "Non-Ultimate"), thereby giving rise to later debates about his intended meanings.⁴⁰ But his effort was generally directed toward the construction of a world-view which explains the countless phenomena of existence as having come from an original source, pure and undifferentiated, the totality of reality.⁴¹ In this way, he affirmed the idea that reality is both "one" and "many", an idea which became basic to the Sung philosophical synthesis.⁴²

Also from Chou, Chu derived his belief that man participates in the excellence of T'ai-chi, possessing a "moral" nature which came to him through the cosmic transformations. Contact with external things provides the occasion for evil, as a deflection from the good rather than as a positive presence.⁴³ The perfect man, the sage, is completely sincere (ch'eng 誠). His mind-and-heart is like a mirror, quiet when passive, upright when active or moved by emotions.⁴⁴ Chou asserted unequivocally, however, that sagehood can be acquired by effort or learning (hsdeh 學). This is done by keeping inner tranquillity (ching 靜) or freedom from desires (wu-yü 無欲).⁴⁵

For Chu Hsi -- as for the later Wang Yang-ming -- Chang Tsai, uncle of the two Ch'engs, had a special importance as a thinker. Chang called Chou's T'ai-chi, "T'ai-ho" 太和 (Great Harmony), and described it as the Tao, the undifferentiated First Principle, source of all activity as well as tranquillity. He also gave it the name of T'ai-hsu 太虛 (Great Void), describing it, in another regard as the totality of formless ch'i 氣 (ether or vital force), of which yin and

yang are two modes. The gathering of ch'i gives rise to all things, including man, who participates thereby in the T'ai-ho. Ch'i is the basic "stuff" of everything. It is characterised by constant flux, a process which man should seek to comprehend, in order that he may "harmonise" his action with it.⁴⁶ For man is, after all, part of the cosmos, and so the truer is his unity with it, both morally and physically, the better he becomes in his human nature. In a very famous passage, which exerted a tremendous influence on the whole hsing-li movement, Chang enunciated his doctrine of the unity of man with all things, which extends not only to the cosmic realm, but also to the social realm.

Heaven is my Father, and Earth is my Mother. Even such a small creature as I find an intimate place in their midst. Therefore that which fills the Universe I regard as my body, and that which directs the Universe I consider as my nature. All people are my brothers and sisters, and all things are my companions.

The great ruler [the Emperor] is the eldest son of my parents; the great ministers are his stewards. By showing respect for the aged, [I] treat the elders as elders. By evincing affection for the lonely and the weak, [I] treat the young as young. The sage is one who merges his virtue with Heaven and Earth, and the worthy is one who is outstanding. All persons in the world who are without brothers, children, wives or husbands, are my brothers in distress who have no one to turn to....⁴⁷

Chang Tsai gave great importance to hsin (mind-and-heart). According to him Heaven (T'ien) has no mind-and-heart of its own,⁴⁸ but man alone has a mind-and-heart. He can, however, "give" a mind-and-heart to Heaven-and-Earth.⁴⁹ For he can "enlarge" his own hsin, until it embraces all things within itself.⁵⁰ This is accomplished both by knowledge and by love, the knowledge which arises from sincerity (ch'eng) and enlightenment (ming 明) being described as T'ien-te 天德 (Heavenly virtue) or that which is endowed by Heaven, and liang-chih 良知 (knowledge of the good). This is far superior to knowledge gained through "seeing" and "hearing".⁵¹

Li 理 and ch'i 氣

The two Ch'engs were closely related to their contemporary thinkers, having had Chou Tun-yi as their teacher and Chang Tsai as their uncle. Chu Hsi tended to regard the doctrines of Ch'eng Hao and Ch'eng Yi as forming a single school, although it was later recognised that the divergences in the ideas of the two brothers contained the seeds of that difference which was to divide Hsing-li hsüeh into two major branches: the so-called li-hsüeh or Ch'eng-Chu school named after Ch'eng Yi and Chu Hsi and Hsin-hsüeh or Lu-Wang school, named after Lu Chiu-yüan and Wang Yang-ming.⁵²

Both brothers treated the same problems: of the nature of things and of man and of a method of recapturing man's original goodness. Ch'eng Hao remained closer to the pronouncedly monistic assumption of Chou Tun-yi, that all things are one, having emerged from a common source, which is imperceptible and yet continuous with them.⁵³ In his famous essay, Shih-jen 識仁 ["On Understanding jen"], Ch'eng Hao explained how man is united to the universe by a vital, creative and mysterious power universally active within the operations of Heaven-and-Earth. This power is jen, the old Confucian virtue which receives a new dimension. He said that since the jen of Heaven-and-Earth is life-giving, man partakes of this virtue in so far as he is one with all things, through a kind of vital "sympathy" for all life and growth.⁵⁴ Human nature, as received from Heaven, is originally good, and in a state of harmony with the universe. Once actualised, however, good and evil may be both present, on account of the "ether" in which nature is embedded.⁵⁵ The work of spiritual cultivation is the transformation of our physical endowment. This is done by uniting man's inner and outer existence through the practice of reverence (ching 敬) towards one's self and righteousness (yi 義) towards the world outside.⁵⁶ In a famous letter written to Chang Tsai, he discussed these ideas, showing an undeniable affinity with the mystical doctrine of Chuang-tzu and of Buddhism:

The constant principle (li) of Heaven-and-Earth is that their hsin is in all things, yet of themselves they have no hsin. The constant principle of the

sage is that his feelings are in accord with all creation, yet of himself he has no feelings. Therefore, nothing that the gentleman learns is more important than to be completely disinterested toward everything, responding spontaneously to things [or events] as they arise.⁵⁷

Ch'eng Yi elucidated the distinction between the realm of li (principle of being and goodness), which is "above shapes" (hsing-erh-shang 形而上) and the realm of ch'i (ether, matter-energy) which is "within shapes" (hsing-erh-hsia 形而下). Using a vocabulary derived from the Appendix of the Book of Changes, he sought to explain that li, the transcendent principle, is what gives form and identity to ch'i, the basic stuff which makes up all things. This provided a basis for his explanation of human nature and its capacities for good and evil.⁵⁸

Ch'eng Yi affirmed Mencius' doctrine of human nature as being originally good, ascribing the capacity for evil to the "quality" of ch'i or physical endowment. His theory of human nature is much clearer than that of Chang Tsai or of Ch'eng Hao. He said:

Nature (hsing) comes from Heaven, whereas capacity (ts'ai 才) comes from ch'i (ether). When the ether is clear, the capacity is wholesome. When the ether is turbid, the capacity is also affected. Take, for instance, wood. Its straightness or crookedness is due to its nature. But whether it can be used as a beam or as a truss is determined by its capacity. Capacity may be good or evil, but nature is always good.⁵⁹

Ch'eng Hao had spoken of inner reverence (ching) and outer righteousness (yi) in the cultivation of moral character. Ch'eng Yi advocated the additional practice of "investigating things" through assiduous study.⁶⁰ This was Chang Tsai's proposition. But Ch'eng Yi expressed it with greater vigour, giving moral cultivation a strongly intellectual dimension. He is known to have emphasised, that li (being and goodness) is present in everything, and should be "investigated" to the utmost. "There are many ways of doing this. One way is to read books and under-

stand moral principles (li). Another way is to discuss people and events of the past and present, and to distinguish the right and the wrong. Still another way is to handle affairs and settle them properly." He also added significantly: "Every blade of grass and every tree has its li (being and goodness) which should be examined."⁶¹

Criticism of Heterodox Teachings

Of the "Four Masters", all but Chou Tun-yi criticised Taoist and Buddhist thought. Chang Tsai said that the doctrine of transmigration represents merely a desire to escape from suffering, that the attitude of regarding life to be a delusion prevents true understanding, not only of man himself, but also of Heaven, since "Heaven and man form a unity".⁶² Ch'eng Hao's criticisms were more practical. He attacked the Buddhists for their "selfishness", their abandonment of social responsibilities for the sake of seeking mere inner tranquillity. "The Buddhists advocate reverence for the sake of straightening one's inner life, but they do not require righteousness [which is necessary] for the sake of making one's outer life correct ... Buddhism is narrow. Our Way is different. [We simply] follow [the goodness of] our nature".⁶³ Ch'eng Yi attacked both Buddhism and Taoism with greater vehemence than did his brother, without, however, saying anything new.⁶⁴ For him, as for Chang, Ch'eng Hao, and Chu Hsi, there was no doubt that Buddhism and Taoism, and in particular Buddhism, was the great enemy to the restoration of the true Confucian Way. The expression of militant opposition to "unorthodox teachings" became characteristic of the hsing-li movement.

The Synthesis of Chu Hsi

Chu Hsi's synthesis of hsing-li philosophy is left to posterity in his numerous writings: letters, essays, poems and commentaries, as well as in the recorded conversations noted down by his disciples. It is best given in the Chin-ssu lu ⁶⁵. Thus, through such works, he greatly expanded the content of "Confucian" thought, enlarging it to embrace a more speculative world-view, while taking care to

keep the emphasis on moral and spiritual issues. He recognised Chou's T'ai-chi as the source and fullness of all being and perfection, and identified it with the Ch'engs' T'ien-li, the embodiment of all truth, wisdom and virtue.⁶⁶ By so doing, he also internalised this T'ai-chi, describing it as that which is not only immanent in the whole of the cosmos, but also in each individual person.

Chu sought also to bring more clarity to the question of goodness and evil in human nature incorporating the teachings of Chang Tsai and the Ch'engs and distinguishing between hsing (nature) as it is endowed by Heaven, full of li (being, goodness), and its physical endowment, which is conditioned by ch'i (ether).⁶⁷ He confirmed the assertion of Mencius, repeated by Chou, Chang and the Ch'engs, that all men are capable of attaining sagehood by their own efforts,⁶⁸ and defined this goal in terms of the possession by man in himself of perfect virtue and goodness, T'ien-li. Such a possession would also enable man to realise the conscious unity which exists between himself and all things. As a method of self-perfection, Chu proposed the cultivation of reverence (ching) through quiet-sitting (ching-tso 靜坐) and the permeation of the spirit of tranquillity into life, and the 'investigation of things' through assiduous study, for the sake of acquiring as much li as possible.⁶⁹ The final goal of such a dual activity, however, is less the acquisition of comprehensive knowledge and solid virtues, but the attainment of inner enlightenment in one's mind-and-heart, which occurs at the moment of the "recapturing" of the original goodness of his nature.⁷⁰ The constant maintenance of this state of mind-and-heart constitutes wisdom or sagehood. Seen in this light, the apparently "dualist" nature of the philosophy of Chu Hsi becomes manifestly unitary. There is only one Tao: one wisdom and one way of attaining it.

Nevertheless, certain problems of nuances of meanings concerning the nature of this wisdom, the "correct way" of its acquisition and the criteria of this "correctness" remain unresolved. The exchanges which took place between Chu Hsi and Lu Chiu-yüan would especially bring them to the fore.

The Controversies: Chu Hsi and Lu Chiu-yüan

Chu Hsi and Lu Chiu-yüan shared similar ideals of sagehood, and believed these to be attainable by human nature. Both had a high regard for man's hsin, the mind-and-heart, and considered self-knowledge, or knowledge of one's mind and heart, as very important in the quest for sagehood. However, they disagreed in their understanding of the meaning of T'ai-chi, of the distinction between human nature (hsing) and the human mind-and-heart (hsin), and of the best possible method for the attainment of sagehood and perfection. Chu held to Chou Tun-yi's description of T'ai-chi as also Wu-chi, explaining that the totality of li, the source and fullness of all being and goodness, the One behind the Many, is not subject to determinations of time and place, of shape and appearance:

Master Chou refers to [T'ai-chi] as Wu-chi precisely because it occupies no position, has no shape or appearance, and because he considers it to be prior to physical things, and yet has never ceased to be, after these things came to be. He considers that it is outside yin and yang and yet operates within them, that it permeates all form and is everywhere contained, and yet did not have in the beginning any sound, smell, shadow or resonance that could have been ascribed to it.⁷¹

Lu Chiu-yüan preferred to think that the term, Wu-chi represents either a later interpolation, or an earlier and immature stage in Chou's intellectual development, since his later work, T'ung-shu 通書, contains no mention of it. The issue in question, however, was much deeper than a disagreement concerning textual problems. Lu opposed Chu Hsi's explanation of T'ai-chi as also Wu-chi on account of a "dualist" approach he detected in it, of regarding the realm of the Way, to which the T'ai-chi belonged, as "above shape", and distinct from the realm of "usefulness", to which belonged yin and yang and the five agents, and of the dichotomy between the "principle of Heaven" (T'ien-li) and "selfish desire" (jen-yü 人欲), which Chu used to explain the inherent goodness in human nature and its strange tendency

toward evil. Lu claimed that this proposition divides the man's unity and bears the imprint of Taoist influence.⁷²

For Chu Hsi, what is called li (being) in things, is called hsing (nature) in man. Hsin (mind-and-heart), however, is something different. It consists of both li and ch'i (ether). It is not purely good, and prevents the full manifestation of T'ai-chi or T'ien-li--in each and every person and thing.⁷³ He thus attempted to safeguard the transcendent as well as immanent nature of T'ai-chi--the totality of li--while explaining at the same time the origin of evil. For Lu Chiu-yüan, however, hsin like hsing, is full of li,⁷⁴ and so constitutes a single, undifferentiated continuum with the whole of reality. For this reason he said, "The universe is my hsin, and my hsin is the universe."⁷⁵ In other words, while Chu envisaged an imperfect unity of Heaven and Man with the dual presence of T'ien-li and ch'i in persons and things, resulting in a certain tension between heavenly and earthly attractions, Lu Chiu-yüan conceived of Heaven and Man as belonging to a continuum, without tension, without conflict. Evil, he said, arises from "material desires" (wu-yü 無欲),⁷⁶ the origin of which he did not clearly explain.

The debate between Chu and Lu expressed itself in terms of ideology more than of truth. Lu criticised Chu for showing Taoist attachments by maintaining that T'ai-chi is also Wu-chi, while Chu attacked Lu for showing Ch'an Buddhist influence in identifying hsin and hsing. On closer examination, however, it appears that Lu was indicating to Chu the danger of dividing reality into two realms, thus making the transcendent less immanent. Chu, on the other hand, feared that Lu's identification of hsing and hsin represented a misinterpretation of "nature" in terms of its conscious activity, thus reducing that which belongs properly to the realm of li, to that of ch'i. He criticised Lu indirectly for admitting of nothing transcendent in his philosophy.

The difficulty probably lay with the different understandings of the nature and function of hsin. For Chu, it was the directive agent of both "nature" and the "emotions", but, on that account also, not entirely good. For Lu, however, it was much more. As he said, "Sages arise in the Eastern Seas; they have the same hsin, the same li. Sages arise in the Western Seas; they have the same hsin, the same li."⁷⁷ Thus, the human hsin, especially as exemplified

in the sages' hsin, becomes universalised as a norm of truth and goodness. It remains interior, but takes on objective, even absolute qualities. He did not deny the transcendent. He merely said that it is somehow immanent in men's minds-and-hearts as well as in the universe.

Following the suggestion of Lü Tsu-ch'ien, their common friend, Chu Hsi and Lu Chiu-yüan--accompanied by his brother Lu Chiu-ling 陸九齡 (1132-80)--held a famous debate in the Goose Lake Temple in 1175. It was supposed to cover the whole field of their differences in philosophy. We merely know, however, that they were unable to agree, especially on the subject of the method of cultivation. Chu insisted on the need of extensive learning, while the Lu brothers maintained developing hsin was the only thing necessary.⁷⁸ On that occasion, Lu Chiu-yüan wrote a famous poem to characterise the difference between his approach to sagehood and Chu Hsi's. It concluded with these lines:

Effort easy and simple is in the end lasting and
great;

Work involved and complicated will remain aimless
and inconclusive.⁷⁹

These verses reveal the essentially practical nature of Lu's thought. He was less interested in expounding his own teaching on hsin as such and more concerned with its moral application. For this reason, his school of philosophy is said to give greater emphasis to the "respect of one's virtuous nature" while Chu's school insisted on the necessity of "following the way of inquiry and learning".⁸⁰

Needless to say, however, Lu's verses did not please Chu. But all three parted as friends. Six years later, Chu invited Lu to the White Deer Grotto Academy in Kiangsi to speak to Chu's own students. Lu gave a discourse on the text of Analects, 4:16: "The gentleman's hsin is conversant with righteousness (yi); the mean man's hsin is conversant with profit (li 利)". Lu spoke so earnestly that he moved the audience to tears. Chu himself was most impressed, and had the text of the discourse engraved in stone to honour the occasion.⁸¹

Chu's main criticism of Buddhism regards its basic nihilism. When asked once the difference between the

"nothingness" (wu 無) spoken by the Taoists and the "emptiness" (k'ung 空) spoken by the Buddhists, he answered that the Taoists use the word wu to describe the mystery of being, and so allow room for reality, while the Buddhists consider Heaven-and-Earth and the elements as mere illusions. He claimed that even the Hua-yen school, which maintains an identity between the noumenal and phenomenal realms, describes the phenomena as having no permanence, and so implies that the noumenal realm, even the Absolute, is itself "empty" or unreal.⁸²

Lu Chiu-yüan did not refrain from criticising Buddhism either, but his criticisms were based on practical, not speculative, reasons. He used the words "righteousness" and "profit" to distinguish between Confucianism and Buddhism, attacking the latter for its negative attitude toward human life: "[The Buddhists] consider [life] to be extremely painful, and seek to escape from it Even when they strive to ferry [all beings across the sea of suffering] to a future realm, they always base themselves on the idea of withdrawal from the world".⁸³

Political Philosophy

Just as, in ethics and spiritual cultivation, man is directed to return to the source of his own being, to recover the "original goodness of his nature" or his mind and heart, so too, in the philosophy of history, inseparably allied to that of politics, a return to the moral idealism of the Golden Age of remote antiquity is advocated by the Sung philosophers. Chu Hsi described the age of remote antiquity as the age of the dominance of the "principle of Heaven", a time when men lived according to the natural virtues of humanity, righteousness, propriety and wisdom, bestowed on them by Heaven. He also attributed the "success" of the Golden Past to the moral education which flourished then, which taught all to develop the goodness inherent in their nature. This was the vision of a "moral utopia", situated in an imaginary point of time rather than of place, composed of men educated in the practice of virtue, and ruled by benevolent sage-kings and scholars, who formed a class of intellectual and moral aristocracy.⁸⁴ It implied

This was taken, not from the Four Books, but from the Book of Documents, considered to be one of the earliest Classics. Moreover, it was taken out of a chapter allegedly transmitted to posterity in the old, pre-Ch'in script: the "Counsels of Great Yü". It is interesting to note that the authenticity of this chapter was subject to doubt by Chu Hsi himself.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, he did not hesitate to adopt those lines, for which the philosophers of early Sung had shown a great fondness, as containing the "original message" of the sages.⁹⁵ All complete in sixteen Chinese characters, this cryptic formula may be translated as:

Man's mind-and-heart (jen-hsin 人心) is prone to error,

[While] the mind-and-heart of the Way (Tao-hsin 道心) is subtle⁹⁶

Remain discerning and single-minded:

Keep steadfastly to the Mean [or Equilibrium] (chung 中).⁹⁷

This formula was generally accepted by all Neo-Confucian philosophers, both of the Ch'eng-Chu, hsing-li school and of the school of hsin begun by Lu Chiu-yüan and developed later on by Wang Yang-ming.⁹⁸ An examination of these lines, however, shows us very little doctrinal content. As commonly agreed, the "central message" was essentially a warning and an exhortation, presented through the statement of a certain duality between the fallibility of the human mind-and-heart, and the subtlety and evasiveness of the "Way", for the sake of encouraging a constant discernment and the maintenance of psychic equilibrium. Represented as the sacred legacy of the earliest sages, these lines express the Confucian message as a call to unity between man's hsin and the Tao, (ultimate truth, wisdom).⁹⁹ Instead, however, of using the earlier expression, T'ien-jen ho-yi, (Unity of Heaven and Man) the Sung philosophers had preferred to speak of Wan-wu yi-t'i (Unity of All Things).¹⁰⁰ But the core of the Confucian transmission is clearly presented as the attainment of sagehood, visualised as the union of Heaven and Man, be Heaven a supreme deity, as it probably was for Confucius, or that which is immanent in the cosmos and holds it together, the fullness of being and goodness: T'ien-li. In either case,

it expresses a vision which is simple but ambiguous, which hides within itself, the depth of spiritual richness. It indicates, quite unequivocally, the goal of the entire Tao-hsüeh movement: the acquisition of ultimate truth and wisdom, through a "Way" of life recognised as correct and efficient. And this Tao, this Way of life, aims especially at the acquisition of a state of mind-and-heart, the mind-and-heart of the sages (Tao-hsin) characterised always by emotional equilibrium. Thus, "orthodox transmission" (Tao-t'ung) emerges finally as the transmission of "the sages' hsin".¹⁰¹

Conclusion

And so, with Han Yü and Li Ao as heralds, Chou, Chang, the Ch'engs and Chu Hsi as "constructors", the "School of the Way", Tao-hsüeh, became systematised during Sung, to become officially approved as state doctrine by the Mongol dynasty of Yüan (1271-1368) which succeeded it. The Commentaries of Ch'eng Yi and of Chu Hsi on the Four Books and on other classical texts became incorporated into the official examination syllabus in 1313, to remain there until 1904.¹⁰² The idea of "correctness" or "orthodoxy", inherent in the doctrine of Tao-t'ung or "orthodox transmission", and in the interpretation of the sacred formula of truth allegedly derived from the Book of Documents, became enshrined in the Sung Dynastic History which presented a novel, double classification of Sung scholars and thinkers as belonging to Ju-lin 儒林 (literati) or Tao-hsüeh.¹⁰³ It is thus an irony of history that the system of thought, which had grown up without state support and even in spite of state opposition, should eventually come to be regarded by posterity as a great product of "Sung genius", and given official sanction by an alien dynasty.

It is, besides, an additional irony that the same historical pattern which had produced the Sung hsing-li philosophy, should repeat itself in the Ming dynasty, to bring about a powerful philosophical challenge to the Sung synthesis. The early Ming government would show its approval of Chu Hsi's thought by ordering the compilation of three monumental collections: the Wu-ching ta-ch'üan 五經大全 [Great Compendium of the Five Classics], the Ssu-shu ta-ch'üan 四書大全 [Great Compendium of the Four Books], both of which incorporated the new commentaries of Sung and Yüan scholars, and the

Hsing-li ta-ch'üan 性理大全 [Great Compendium of the Hsing-li philosophy], which presented the best of the teaching of the Sung-Yüan thinkers themselves.¹⁰⁴ As works of exegesis, the classical commentaries now officially approved did not on the whole equal in quality those of the T'ang and Sung "Correct Meaning" Series.¹⁰⁵ In receiving government endorsement, however, the Neo-Confucian synthesis, based only partly on the Confucian Classics but very much more on the syncretic backgrounds of its makers, was transformed from the charisma that it had been to the orthodox tradition that it became. The inherent contradiction of Confucian orthodoxy again became manifest: as a doctrine, Confucianism had always been eclectic until officially approved and made thereby to stagnate. The price of government support, and of official promulgation in the whole country, would always be the loss of its inner vitality. Certainly, Ch'eng Yi and Chu Hsi had never desired that their opinions should become the only ones allowed circulation, to the exclusion of all others, but this was what official orthodoxy effected. It should therefore come as no surprise that the Ch'eng-Chu branch of Neo-Confucianism, after receiving the ambiguous benefit of imperial patronage, should produce no more great thinkers in the wake of such support, and become merely an ideology to which lip service was paid by countless students eager to achieve an eminent position in government service. Instead of being a stimulus to thought, the officially approved commentaries only produced scholars with good memory and accurate expression. Successive generations of time-servers, of men anxious to climb the official ladder of success and to keep their political gains were thus produced. At the same time, many persons of real scholarship and tried virtue refused to serve in a government which demanded the compromise of their convictions and characters. The tension between the "inner" or contemplative and "outer" or active pulls of Confucian teaching became more evident than ever before, and as the Chinese philosophical genius went underground again, to express itself in those students of Ch'eng-Chu orthodoxy who revolted both against these orthodox philosophers and the system of intellectual tyranny which supported them. This time, the polarisation of "orthodoxy" and of "heresy" can be

made more accurately, since we no longer deal with the conflict between Confucianism on the one side and Taoism and Buddhism on the other, but with that between official Confucianism and a dissident school. This was no other than that of Lu Chiu-yüan, revived and strengthened in the Ming dynasty by the appearance of several great thinkers, nourished and educated within the orthodox tradition, who reacted against its rigidity and stagnation. Of these, the greatest was Wang Yang-ming. It is to an analysis of his philosophy, of his understanding of the Confucian Tao, of the relevance of his position to the question of "orthodoxy" and of "orthodox transmission", that the bulk of this thesis is devoted.

Notes to Chapter I

- 1 According to Hsü Shen's 許慎 (c.30-124AD) lexicon, the literal meaning of tao is the "way" by which one walks or travels, while its extended meaning is "reason" (tao-li 道理). See Shuo-wen chieh-tzu Tuan-chu [Hsü Shen's lexicon, with the annotations of Tuan Yu-ts'ai] (Taipei: 1964), 76. In his book Universismus der Grundlage der Religion und Ethik, des Staatswesens und der Wissenschaften Chinas, (Berlin: 1918) 5-7, J.J.M. de Groot emphasised the Way (Tao) as the ideal looked for in Chinese philosophy, religion, arts and sciences, and natural organisation. He described it as the basis of the universe, the manifestation of existence and life, the ultimate ideal behind the natural, moral and social order.
- 2 See Analects (Lun-yü 論語) 1:2, 4:5, 4:15, 5:6, 6:15, 14:38, 15:28. Mencius 1B:3, 2A:2, 2B:1, 3A:4.
- 3 See J.J.M. de Groot, Sectarianism and Religious Persecution in China, (Amsterdam: 1903), v.1, pp. 8-16. This book was written by a Christian with the aim of demonstrating the intransigent position of official Confucian orthodoxy with regard to the Taoist and Buddhist religions, in particular the latter. Emphasis is especially made on the Ming and Ch'ing (1644-1912) persecutions of Buddhism.
- 4 See below, pp. 22-24.
- 5 For early Confucianism in general, see Fung Yu-lan, Chung-kuo che-hsueh shih [abbrev. as che-hsueh shih], (Shanghai: 1935) pt. 1, 66-104. Eng. tr. by Derk Bodde, A History of Chinese Philosophy, [abbrev. as History], (Princeton: 1952), v.1, 43-75; Hu Shih (1891-1962); Chung-kuo ku-tai che-hsueh shih, [History of Ancient Chinese Philosophy], (3rd ed., Taipei: 1968); 64-138, H.G. Creel, Confucius, the Man and the Myth, (New York: 1949), 109-141.
- 6 For general studies of Mencius and Hsün-tzu, see Fung, che-hsueh shih, 139-166; 349-382 [History, v.1, 106-127, 279-311]. The best book in English on Hsün-tzu is Homer Dubs' Hsüntzu, the Moulder of Ancient Confucianism, (London: 1927). For special studies of the criticisms directed against Mencius' teachings by him, see Homer Dubs, "Mencius and Sündz on Human Nature," Philosophy East and West [abbrev. as PEW] VI (1956) 213-222. Mencius regarded human nature as being originally good, Hsün-tzu as originally evil. Mencius revered Heaven as the source of moral goodness, Hsün-tzu tended to see it in naturalist terms, identifying it to the physical universe. Dubs suggests that Hsün-tzu, more than Mencius, inspired much of Chu Hsi's philosophy, especially his reliance on authority. I should like to modify this proposition, by pointing out that Chu Hsi's "authority" was very much himself and the philosophers of his choice. Certainly, the "authoritative" position he gave himself was not accepted during his lifetime by the Sung government. However, I should also like to point out that Hsün-tzu's influence on the hsing-li philosophy can be discerned in the importance given to the task of freeing hsin from pre-occupations and obscurity, which is an important

theme of the chapter on Chieh-pi 解蔽 (Dispelling obsession), in Hsün-tzu 21, SPFY ed., 15: 4a-5b, Eng.tr. by Burton Watson, Hsün-tzu, Basic Writings, (New York: 1963), 126-138. See also Tai Chen's Meng-tzu tzu-yi su-cheng, op. cit., 71-72. Tai asserted that Ch'eng Yi and Chu Hsi interpreted the Confucian classics in the spirit of Hsün-tzu, Lao-tzu, Chuang-tzu and of Buddhist philosophy.

7 Creel, Confucius the Man and the Myth, 222-242, explains how the school of Confucius attracted the interest and support of the Han rulers, especially Emperor Wu 武帝 (r.140-87BC), on account of its active outlook on life and government and because of the wide popular adherence it had already gained. The historical process is described in Han-shu [Han History], Erh-shih wu shih [Twenty-five Histories series], [abbrev. as ESWS], K'ai-ming ed., 6: 15-18 [See Homer H. Dubs, trans., A History of the Former Han Dynasty (Baltimore: 1955); v.2, "Introduction", 20-25 for an analysis of the events]. For the development of exegetical tradition, see P'i Hsi-jui, Ching-hsueh li-shih [A History of Classical Studies], annotated by Chou Yü-t'ung (Shanghai: 1929).

8 For Tung's correlation of Heaven and Man, see his Ch'un-chiu-fan-lu [Luxuriant Gems of the Spring-Autumn Annals], SPFY ed., Sect.56, 13: 1b-2a. English translation from Wing-tsit Chan's Source Book, op.cit., 280-1. For Tung, the word T'ien refers sometimes to the natural universe, and sometimes to a power possessing cognition and consciousness. See Fung, che-hsueh shih, p.503 [Eng.tr., Bodde, History, v.2, p.19].

For an understanding of Han Confucianism, see also Fung's che-hsueh shih, 497-600: [Eng.tr. by Bodde, History, v.2, 7-167], Tjan Tjoe Sam, Po Hu T'ung: the Comprehensive Discussions in the White Tiger Hall, (Leiden: 1949), v.1 Introduction, 95-99, 137-145, 166-175. Creel, Confucius the Man and the Myth; 242-253. Although Hsün-tzu is usually considered as having exerted more influence on Han Confucianism than Mencius, Fung Yu-lan points out in his A Short History of Chinese Philosophy (New York: 1948), 208-210, Tung Chung-shu's closeness to Mencius, especially in his discussion of human nature. He suggests that the "New Text" school of classical exegesis, of which Tung was the best known scholar, be considered as continuing in a certain sense the work of Mencius, by the emphasis on moral idealism, while the "Old Text" School, which rejected excessively metaphorical interpretations of classical texts, preferring a more strictly philological approach, as being closer to the spirit of Hsün-tzu. However, as Fung certainly knows, an "Old Text" scholar, Yang Hsiung 楊雄 (53BC-18AD) has always been singled out as the Han scholar who regarded himself as a special follower of Mencius. See Fung, che hsueh shih, p.587 [History, v.2, 150] Chou Yü-t'ung, Ching chin-ku wen [Old and New Text Classical Scholarship], (Shanghai, 1926), 14-22.

9 Fung, che-hsueh shih, 571-572; Eng.tr., History, v.2, 128-130. Tjan, Po Hu T'ung, v.1, Introduction, 100-128. Tjan speaks in particular about the attempt to divinise Confucius.

10 There is a comprehensive history of Buddhism during the intervening centuries: a Chinese work by T'ang Yung-t'ung, Han-Wei liang-Chin Nan-pei ch'ao fo-chiao shih [The History of Buddhism during Han, Wei and the Northern and Southern Dynasties], (Changsha: 1938). See especially 18-34, 87-120. The best general study in English is Kenneth K.S. Ch'en's Buddhism in China, (Princeton: 1964). See especially 147-151, 187-271, 610-672. The development of Taoist philosophy after Han is best presented by Fung Yu-lan. See che-hsueh shih, 602-660, Eng. tr. History, v.2, 168-175, and his A Short History of Chinese Philosophy, 217-240. [This work is not a summary of the longer History, but contains new materials. It gives an excellent discussion of the philosophy called Neo-Taoism.] As for religious Taoism, besides Fung's che-hsueh shih, 813-819, (History, v.2, 424-433), there is Henri Maspero's Les Religions chinoises: Melanges posthumes sur les religions et l'histoire de la chine: le Taoisme (Paris: 1950), 25-36, 43-57, 85-116, 179-189, and Holmes Welch's The Parting of the Way: Lao-tzu and the Taoist Movement (London: 1957) 88-97, 105-122, 141-151. On interactions between Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, see Tokiwa Daijō, Shina ni okeru Bukkyō to Jukyō Dōkyō [Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism in China], (Tokyo: 1930), 45-120; 627-664.

11 For Ch'an, see Fung's che-hsueh shih, 772-799, [Eng. tr. History, v.2, 386-406], Heinrich Dumoulin, SJ, A History of Zen Buddhism (London: 1963), 67-105, Daisetz T. Suzuki's treatment of its teachings in his Essays in Zen Buddhism, published in 3 series, (London: 1926, 1950, 1953). See also Hu Shih, "Ch'an Buddhism in China: Its History and Method", PEW, 3-24; Suzuki, "Zen: A Reply to Hu Shih" [25-46]. The debate was over the historical versus transcendent nature of Ch'an Buddhism.

12 P'i Hsi-jui, op.cit., 197-211, The Five Classics refer to the Yi-ching 易經 (Book of Changes), Shih-ching 詩經 (Odes), Shu-ching 書經 (Book of Documents), the Ch'un-ch'iu 春秋 (Spring-Autumn Annals), and the ritual texts. Since the "Correct Meaning" series included the three commentaries of the Spring-Autumn Annals (Tso-chuan 左傳 or Annals of Tso, and the Kung-yang 公羊 and Ku-liang 公羊) and three distinct ritual texts, there were really "Nine Classics". Later, these were all engraved in stone together with the Hsiao-ching 孝經 (Classic of Filial Piety), the Lun-yü (Analects of Confucius), and the Erh-ya 爾雅 an ancient glossary, to make up a total of "Twelve Classics". The commentaries incorporated included Wang Pi's 王弼 (226-249) commentary on the Book of Changes. K'ung An-kuo's 孔安國 (fl. 2nd cent. B.C.) on the Book of Documents, Tu Yu's 杜預 (222-284) on the Annals of Tso, and the older works of Cheng Hsüan 鄭玄 (127-200) on the Odes and the ritual texts. These made up the official syllabus.

13 The work was done under the supervision of K'ung Yin-ta 孔穎達 (574-648). See Chiu T'ang-shu [Tang Dynastic History, older version], K'ai-ming ed., ESWS series, 73-270.

14 Mencius had regarded Mo Ti 墨翟 (fl. 5th cent. Bc) and Yang Chu 楊朱 (440-360BC?) as teachers of "perverse doctrine". See Mencius 3B.9, Eng. tr. in James Legge, The Chinese Classics [abbrev. as Classics], (Oxford, Clarendon 1893, reprinted in Hongkong 1960), v.1, 284.

15 "Yüan-tao" 原道 (Inquiry into the Way), in Han Ch'ang-li ch'uan-chi [Complete Works of Han Yü], [abbrev. as HCLC], SPPY ed., ll: 1a-b. The English translation is adapted from Wm Theodore de Bary, et al., ed., Sources of Chinese Tradition; [abbrev. as Sources] (New York: 1964); p.376. Note that Han is making use of the concept of universal love which had been characteristic of the teaching of Mo Ti. Han's work served thus to expand the Confucian concept of jen [See Wing-tsit Chan, "The Evolution of the Confucian Concept Jen," PEW IV (1955) 295-319, which described the deepening of meaning in this keyword. Han wrote several other treatises which had bearing on later development of philosophy. These included, "Yüan-jen" 原人 (Inquiry into Man) [HCLC ll: 9a-b], which maintains that man's moral nature is what distinguishes him from the beasts, and "Yüan-hsing", 原性 (Inquiry into Human Nature), which discusses the question of good and evil in human nature, [HCLC ll: 9a-b, 5a-7b], and "Shih-shuo" 師說 (On Teachers) which advocates a new type of teachers, modelled on the ancient masters who communicated to their disciples their intimate knowledge of and faith in the Way [HCLC 12: 1b-2b]. An English translation of the last treatise can be found in de Bary, Sources, v.1, 374-5.

16 "Yüan-tao", HCLC ll: 4b-5a, Eng. tr. in de Bary ed., Sources, v.1, 379. Han attacks Buddhists and Taoists jointly here. For his vehement attack against Buddhism alone, see the memorial to the throne, in which he opposed Emperor Hsien-tsung's 憲宗 (r.805-820) proposed reception of "the finger-bone of the Buddha" with the aim of displaying a supposed Buddhist relic in the palace. See HCLC 39: 2b-4b [Eng. tr. in de Bary, ed., Sources, v.1, 372-4]. For this bold action, Han was exiled to southern China. See Chiu T'ang-shu, 160: 440-441.

17 Chiu T'ang-shu, 18A: 72.

18 See Chu Hsi's remarks on Han Yü's friendship with Buddhists in Chu-tzu yü-lei [Classified Conversations of Chu Hsi] comp. by Li Ching-te 黎靖德 (fl. 1263), (1473 ed., reprinted in Taipei, 1962), [abbrev. as CTYL] 137: 19b-21a. This reprint contains many mistakes. Care is taken to see that references cited are correct. See also Tokiwa Daijō, op.cit., 120-138.

19 "Fu-hsing shu", 復性書 [Treatise on the Restoration of Goodness in Human Nature], Li Wen-kung wen-chi [Collected Writings of Li Ao], SPTK ed., 2: 5a. Fung Yu-lan says that what Li calls hsing (nature) approaches what the Buddhists--especially Ch'an--call pen-hsin 本心 [citta], while what Li calls ch'ing (emotions) resembles what the Buddhists call yü 欲 (kleśa). See che-hsüeh shih, 805-806. [Eng.tr. History, v.2, 414].

20 "Fu-hsing shu", Li Wen-kung wen-chi, 1: 8a-9b. Li speaks of "inner fasting", of hsin "having no thought", attaining tranquillity and a state of sincerity (ch'eng) which is preparation of inner enlightenment. Such tranquillity and sincerity would also eliminate passions or evil desires. His teaching shows closeness to the Ch'an proposition, "No-thought is not to think even when one is involved in thought" (wu-nien che yü nien erh wu-nien 無念者於念而無念), Liu-tsu fa-shih fa-pao t'ian-ching TSD No. 2007, XLVIII, 338; Eng.tr. is taken from Philip B. Yampolsky, The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch, (New York: 1967); 138; see also Wing-tsit Chan, The Platform Scripture (New York: 1963), 51. The notion of "inner fasting" can also be traced to the Great Appendix of the Book of Changes: see Chou-yi cheng-yi [Correct Meaning of Yi-ching], SPPY ed., 7: 16a-b; Eng.tr., Legge, Yi-King (from SBE series, v.16), (1st pub. 1882, reprinted in Delhi, 1966), p.372, and to Chuang-tzu, 4, SPPY ed., 2:7:70a as well as to Wang Pi who said that the sage is, in a sense, "without hsin", (wu-hsin 無心) since he is empty of unruly desire, and can therefore respond to affairs without becoming entangled by them through excessive emotional involvement. I consider this an important tenet on account of its continuity in the later hsing-li tradition. See also Fung, che-hsüeh shih, 607; Eng.tr., History, v.2, 171; Tokiwa Daijō, op.cit., 128-138.

21 See Sung-shih [Sung Dynastic History] [abbrev. as SS], ESWS series, K'ai-ming ed., 6: 28 Ch'ien Mu, Kuo-shih ta-kang [Outline History of China], (Changsha: 1940), 388-391. Fumoto Yasutaka, Hokusō ni okeru jūgaku no tenkai [Introduction to the development of Confucianism in the Northern Sung Period of China], (Tokyo: 1967), p.3.

22 These scholars included Hu Yüan 胡瑗 (993-1059), a famous teacher who transmitted to thousands of students an intensely personal faith in Confucianism, thus answering Han Yü's appeal for a new type of teacher, Sun Fu 孫復 (992-1057), who undertook an independent study of the Spring-Autumn Annals without conforming to traditional methods of exegesis, and Shih Chieh 石介 (1005-1045), an independent exegete of the Book of Changes, Ch'en Hsiang 陳襄 (1017-1080), who was particularly interested in the philosophy of hsing (nature) and li (organising principle in things, moral virtue or principles). See Huang Tsung-hsi and Ch'üan Tsu-wang, Tseng-pu Sung-Yüan hsüeh-an [Philosophical Records of the Sung and Yüan Dynasties] [abbrev. as SYHA], SPPY ed., 1: 1a-2b, 2: 1a-2a, 21a-b, 5: 1a-3b.

23 For Sung Buddhism, see Ch'en, Buddhism in China, 398-399; Tokiwa Daijō, op.cit., 139-146; Dumoulin, A History of Zen Buddhism, 124-132; Galen Eugène Sargent, "Les Débats personnels de Tchou Hsi en Matière de Méthodologie", Journal Asiatique, t.243, (1955), 215-225, where Chu Hsi's anti-Buddhistic attitude was discussed in the light of the development of Buddhism during his time. See Paul Demiéville, "La pénétration du bouddhisme dans la tradition philosophique chinoise", Cahiers d'Histoire Mondiale, I (1956), 19-38, which discusses the interpenetration of Buddhist and Taoist ideas particularly with regard to the acquisition of wisdom by inner enlightenment. See also, Araki Kengo, Bukkyō to Jukyō-Chūgoku shisō no Keisei [Buddhism and Confucianism: the Formation of Chinese Thought] (Kyoto: 1963), Kamata Shigeo, Chūgoku Kegon shisōshi no kenkyū [The Study of Chinese Hua-yen Buddhist Thought], (Tokyo: 1965); 253-288. Araki's book gives especially the influence of Buddhism on the formation of Neo-Confucian thought.

24 Kusumoto Masatsugu pointed out that even in medicine, from Sung onward, the practice was to attack the disease from within. Chu Hsi would also interpret the Taoist "external pill" in terms of the "internal pill". See "Conflicts between the Thoughts of the Sung Dynasty and the Ming Dynasty," Philosophical Studies of Japan V (1964) 52-53. For Sung Taoism, see also Maspero, 43-47; Welch, 130-140; Sun K'uo-k'uan, Sung-Yuan Tao-chiao chih fa-chan. [The Development of Taoism during the Sung and Yuan Dynasties], (Taichung: 1965); v.1, 29-36, 43-116; Tokiwa Daijō, op.cit., 665-686.

See also Kamata Shigeo for the mutual influence of Hua-yen Buddhism and philosophical Taoism, [op.cit., pp.253-288,] and of that between Hua-yen Buddhism and religious Taoism, [pp.289-522]. The general amalgamation is given in Kenneth K.S. Ch'en, Buddhism in China, 398-9.

25 See Ta-ch'eng chih-kuan fa-men [Method of Concentration and Insight in the Mahāyāna], TSD No. 1924 XLVI, 642-661 [de Bary, Sources, 314-317]. The ultimate reality is here described as "Mind" (hsin), Sanskrit, citta mātra and equated to "True Thusness" (chen-ju 眞如; Sanskrit: Tathatā); "Buddha-nature" (fo-hsing 佛性; Sanskrit: Buddhata or Buddhatva) - "Tathāgata-Store" (ju-lai tsang 如來藏; Sanskrit: Tathagata-garhva). As for Taoist philosophy, the concept tao itself had always represented ultimate reality.

26 See Mokusen Miyuki, An Analysis of Buddhist Influence on the Formation of the Sung Confucian Concept of Li-ch'i, (Claremont Graduate School and University Center Thesis, 1965), Xeroxed copy, p.105.

27 SHYA 1: 17. The words t'i and yung came from Wang Pi's commentary on Lao-tzu, ch. 4. See Lao-tzu, SPPY ed., 3a. They refer to two cosmic states: the "latent" (t'i) and the "manifest" (yung). The process of moving from one to the other was conceived of as that of decay by Lao-tzu,

who advocated a "return to the origin". Wang Pi re-interpreted it as development or the passing from "original non-being" (pen-wu 本無) to the appearance of the manifold things which constitute the world.

The Buddhist monk Seng-chao (僧肇), (384-414) described the cosmos in terms of the "Mind" (hsin 心) which refers to t'i, the "Within" (nei 內) and its manifestation, yung or the "Without" (wai 外). One can unite with the "Mind" through meditative trance (samāchi) and so acquire wisdom (prajñā). See Walter Liebenthal, Chao-lun, (Peiping: 1948, reprinted in Hongkong, 1968), Introduction, 17-25. This t'i-yung pattern was further developed in T'ien-t'ai Buddhism, where the Absolute, Bhūta-tathatā (chen-ju) or Tathāgata-garbha was t'i and its manifestations and functionings were yung. See T'a-ch'eng chih-kuan fa-men. TSD No.1924, XLVI, 642, 647. Fung, che-hsueh shih, 759-762; Eng.tr. History, v.2, 361-364. For the "restorers" of the Confucian tradition, t'i-yung sometimes retains its meaning of "Within" - "Without", and sometimes takes on a less metaphysical meaning, simply as the "essential" the "basis" or the "theory" (t'i) and the "function", "application", or "practice" (yung).

28 See Wai-shu 外書 [Other Works], In Erh-Ch'eng ch'üan-shu, [Complete Works of the two Ch'engs,] [abbrev. as ECCS], SPPY ed., 12: 4a.

29 Official T'ang and Sung exegesis favoured a philological approach, closer to the New Text than to the Old Text scholars.

30 He did it in his preface to the Commentary on the Doctrine of the Mean (Chung-yung chang-chü), dated 1189.

31 See Wang Mou-hung, ed., Chu-tzu nien-p'ü [Chronological Biography of Chu Hsi], TSCC ed., 1: 13-15.

32 See Ssu-shu chi-chu [Collected Commentaries on the Four Books], [abbrev. as SSCC], SPPY ed., 1a-3a, and also referred there to the two Ch'engs as having discovered the lost Way of Confucius and Mencius. Chu established the "line" definitively especially by preparing, with the help of his friend Lü Tsu-ch'ien 呂祖謙 (1137-1181), the work which is known as Chin-ssu lu 近思錄 an anthology of quotations from Chou, the Ch'engs, and Chang. He dismissed the pre-Sung exegetes from the "line", giving as reason their failure to discover the intended meaning of the sages. See "Yü-Meng chi-yi hsü", 語孟集義序. [Preface to the Collected Commentaries of the Analects and Mencius], in Chu Wen-kung wen-chi [Collected Writings of Chu Hsi], [abbrev. as CWWC], SPTK ed., 75: 22a. He also ignored Han Yü, whom he regarded as a man of letters rather than a follower of the Way. CTYL 137: 13a-18a.

33 These were the Analects, Mencius, the Great Learning and the Doctrine of the Mean (Chung-yung 中庸), the two later books being chapters taken from the Book of Rites. See the study by Ch'en Tieh-fan, "Ssu-shu chang-chü chi-chu k'ao-yüan," [Investigation into the Origins of

the Collected Commentaries of the Four Books], in K'ung-Meng Hsueh-pao (Journal of Confucius-Mencius Society), IV (Taipei: 1962), 206-253. According to Ch'en, Chu's commentaries cited fifty-six scholars, of whom forty-one were Sung philosophers and writers, and fifteen were earlier exegetes.

34 See also Jih-chih lu chi-shih, SPPX ed., 18: 2b-3a, for Ku's appreciation of these commentaries.

35 Donald Holzman has traced the Sung and Ming philosophers' yü-lu 語錄 through the Ch'an Masters' dialogues and Liu Yi-ch'ing's 劉義慶 (403-444), Shih-shuo hsinyü 世說新語 [Contemporary Records of New Discourses], to Confucius' Analects pointing out the qualities of this genre, which is concrete, immediate and vital. He also compares this genre to Plato's dialogues, noting that the Platonic "conversations" are, unlike the Chinese counterpart, a living embodiment of the dialectic method, by which, for example in the Symposium, the philosopher directs the participants in the dialogue from the understanding of particular beauty to the contemplation of the Form of Beauty. The Chinese yü-lu, on their part, consist mostly of short question-answers linked together in an almost random fashion in which truth is perceived through communication of insight rather than dialectical arguments. See "The Conversational Tradition in Chinese Philosophy," PEW VI (1956) 223-230. To this, it may be added that Chou Tun-yi's exhortation that literature (wen 文) should only be a vehicle for the Tao certainly contributed to the Sung-Ming philosophers' distaste, not only for embellishing the written expression of their thought, but also for giving any more than the minimum of structure to it. In the Lu-Wang school, this tendency led almost to the abandonment of all writing. See Chou-tzu T'ung-shu [Penetrating the Book of Changes] [abbrev. as T'ung-shu], SPPY ed., 28: 5a. Thus, the yü-lu stand in great contrast to the coherent and organic nature of the philosophy which they seek to reveal--but only to those who look beneath the surface.

36 See Joseph Needham, Science and Civilisation in China, v.2: History of Scientific Thought (Cambridge University Press, 1956) 496-505, in which he discusses Chu Hsi's Neo-Confucianism as the "philosophy of organism", the "organic" quality of which allegedly influenced European philosophical thought through the intermediation of G.W. Leibniz (1646-1716). He claims that such an influence might have contributed much to the theoretical foundations of modern European natural science.

37 For this reason, Chu has been compared by Zenker, Forke, Franke, Bruce and others to Thomas of Aquinas. See especially, A. Forke, who judged Chu as the greatest Chinese philosopher, Geschichte der neueren chinesischen Philosophie, 198; and Olaf Graf, Tao und Jen: Sein und Sollen in Sung chinesischen Monismus, (Wiesbaden: 1970), 313-4, and to G.W. Leibniz, who might indeed have been influenced by the hsing-li philosophy which he came to know and appreciate through Jesuit writings. In Science and Civilisation,

v.2, 496-505, Needham proposes the possible influence of Chu Hsi's synthetic philosophy on the development of a more "organic" philosophy in 17th century Europe and after, which saw the triumphs of Darwin (1809-1882) Freud (1856-1939), Einstein (1879-1955) and others. See also Henri Bernard, "Chu Hsi's Philosophy and Its Interpretation by Leibniz," T'ien-hsia, V (1937) 9-17.

38 The fifth was Shao Yung 邵雍 (1011-1077), whom Chu Hsi omitted from the line of "orthodox transmission". He is included in our discussion of the Sung philosophical synthesis, because the Sung-shih later listed him too as a teacher of Tao-hsueh. See SS 427: 1098-9.

39 Science and Civilisation, v.2, 460-463. "T'ai-chi-t'u shuo", 太極圖說 [Explanation of the Diagram of T'ai-chi], SYHA 12: 1a-b; English translation in de Bary, Sources, 458-459. The notion T'ai-chi can be traced to the Great Appendix of the Book of Changes, see Chou-yi cheng-yi, 7: 17a, Legge, Yi King, 373, where it refers to the First Principle and Source of all things, and the "Ground of Being". [Legge translates it as the "Grand Terminus"]. Joseph Needham translates T'ai-chi as "Supreme Pole", a kind of "organisation-centre" for the entire universe, viewed as a single organism.

40 The term, Wu-chi, literally comes from Lao-tzu, ch.28, and connotes "that which is without limit". Chou mentioned in the same treatise that T'ai-chi is fundamentally Wu-chi.

Chou spoke of Wu-chi erh T'ai-chi 無極而太極, a sentence which occasioned much controversy in later times, including the famous debate between Chu Hsi and Lu Chiu-yüan. See also Fung, che-hsueh shih, 942-3 [Eng.tr. History, 437-8].

Needham also asserts that the identity of T'ai-chi and Wu-chi means this "organisation-centre" cannot be localised at any particular point in space or time. It is regarded as co-extensive with the organism itself. Besides, he adds that Chou's description of cosmic transformations through yin-yang forces which experience alternate periods of "motion" and "rest", express a legitimate scientific abstraction, that Nature functions in a "wave-like" manner. See Science and Civilisation, v.2, 463-467. It may be added that the cosmic process moving from T'ai-chi to the Five Elements and culminating in the emergence of man suggests a perception of progressive scientific evolution.

41 The treatise is a commentary on the "Diagram" itself, which purports to show, in a series of circles, the whole cosmic process beginning from T'ai-chi and resulting in the production of all things. See SYHA 12: 1a. The origin of this Diagram has been much discussed. It bears remarkable similarities to the T'ai-chi Hsien-T'ien-t'u 太極先天圖 [Diagram of the T'ai-chi which Antedates Heaven], which the Taoist Ch'en T'uan 陳抃 (c.906-989) allegedly transmitted to Ch'ung Fang 种放 (d.1014), who passed it on to Mu Hsiu 穆修 (979-1032) who in turn passed it to Li Chih-ts'ai 李之才 (d.1045) who transmitted it to Shao Yung. See SS 427: 1098. See also Fung, che-hsueh shih, 822-4 [Eng.tr. History, v.2, 438-442.] This is especially interesting since it refers to

a Taoist "line of transmission". See also A. Forke, Geschichte der neueren chinesischen Philosophie, (Hamburg: 1938), p.21, Chow Yi-ching, La Philosophie Morale dans le Néo-Confucianism (Tcheou Touen-yi), (Paris: 1953), 47-52.

42 The inter-relationship between the "one" and the "many" probably indicates a deeper Buddhist influence, coming from T'ien-t'ai and Hua-yen concepts which penetrated Ch'an also. See also Chow Yi-ching, op.cit., 53-54.

43 SYHA 12:1a-b; SPPY ed. ch. 22, p.5a. See also Chow Yi-ching, op.cit., 112-122.

44 T'ung-shu, ch.1, p.1a; ch.4, p.1b; ch.10, p.5a. For the "mirror image", so often used by hsing-li Thinkers, see Demiéville, "Le miroir spirituel", Sinologica 1, (1948) 112-137. Chou's description of the sage alludes again to the Great Appendix of the Book of Changes, [See Chou-yi cheng-yi, 7:14a, Legge, Yi King, 370,] and also reminds one of Wang Pi, as Chi Li Ao's. See above, note 20.

It was especially through Chou, that the more metaphysical and moral sections of the Book of Changes entered into the Sung synthesis. The other three great predecessors of Chu Hsi and he himself were all fond of these, but gave more consideration to the Four Books. See Fung, che-hsüeh shih, 824. Eng.tr., History, v.2, 444, Chow Yi-ching, op.cit., 80-111.

45 T'ung-shu, ch.10, 20; Chan, Source Book, 470,473. Tranquillity was recommended as a preparation for enlightenment. This method of cultivation had a great influence on the Ch'eng Yi-Chu Hsi synthesis. See Fung, che-hsüeh shih, 828-829. Eng.tr., History, v.2, 448, Chow Yi-ching, op.cit., 123-126. See also Tokiwa Daijō, op.cit., 202-218 for Buddhist influences on Chou's thought.

46 See "Cheng-meng", 正蒙 [Correcting the Ignorant], Chang-tzu ch'üan-shu [Complete Works of Chang Tsai], [abbrev. as CTCS], 2:1b-3b; English tr. in de Bary, Sources, 466-9.

See also T'ang Chün-yi, "Chang Tsai's Theory of Mind and Its Metaphysical Basis", PEW VI (1956) 113-136; Huang Sui-chi, "Chang Tsai's Concept of ch'i", PEW VIII (1968), 247-260. Although Chang spoke of T'ai-hsü as that which is full of ch'i, I do not conclude thereby, that he was a "materialist". For while I accept that "matter-energy" is one meaning of ch'i, I think it has other meanings also. As "ether", it suggests the Greek $\piνεύμα$ (spirit), as T'ang Chün-yi had also reminded the readers. Certainly, ch'i is present in man as a vital principle. This explains in part why Chang's description of the cosmos and of man's hsin, in terms of ch'i does not make of him a pure "materialist". To do so would be to judge the case strictly in Western philosophical categories which have been derived, in the case of spirit-matter, from Aristotelian metaphysics.

- 47 "Hsi-ming", 西銘 [Western Inscription], CTCS 1: 1a-3b. See the Eng.tr. in Wing-tsit Chan, Reflections on Things at Hand, (New York: 1967), 76-77.
- 48 "Shih-Shu" 詩書 [On the Book of Odes and the Book of Documents] CTCS 4: 7b.
- 49 In another famous passage, Chang describes the work of the sage thus: "To give heart (li-hsin 立心) to Heaven and Earth, to give life to living peoples, to continue the interrupted teaching of the former sages, and to open a new era of peace for coming generations". See "Chin-ssu-lu shih-yi", 近思錄拾遺 [Other Sayings taken from Chin-ssu lu], CTCS, 14: 3b. This had come down to us from Chu Hsi's Chin-ssu lu. See also Chiang Yung (1681-1762) ed., Chin-ssu lu chi-chu [Collected Commentaries on the Chin-ssu lu], SPPY ed., 2: 22b. Wing-tsit Chan, trans., Reflections on Things At Hand; (New York: 1967); 83. Chan relates that the explanation of Yeh Ts'ai 葉采 (fl. 1248) is that the sage "gives heart" to Heaven and Earth by participating in its creative processes, [through the practice of life-giving jen]; he "gives the Way" to the people by the maintenance of moral order; he "continues the interrupted learning" by resuming the "orthodox transmission" (tao-t'ung); "gives peace" to the coming generations because his virtue should prepare the way for a true and ideal "king" (wang 王).
- 50 "Ta-hsin p'ien" 大心篇 [On Enlarging hsin] Cheng-meng, ch.7, CTCS 21a-22b. The idea of "giving hsin" to Heaven-and-Earth is described elsewhere as the work of the sage. See above, n.49.
- 51 "Ch'eng-ming p'ien" 誠明篇 [On Sincerity and Enlightenment], Cheng-meng, ch.6, CTCS 2: 17a-b. Chang's reference to liang-chih [See Mencius 7B: 15] is important, because of its repercussions on Lu Chiu-yüan's and especially Wang Yang-ming's thought. Chang was also the first philosopher to make a clear distinction between T'ien-li ("Principle of Heaven" or perfect virtue) and jen-yü 人欲 (selfish desires) ["Ch'eng-ming p'ien", CTCS 2: 18a], a distinction which assumed so much importance in the thought of the Ch'engs and of Chu Hsi. Wang Yang-ming would also make use of this distinction, although Lu Chiu-yüan objected to the excessive dichotomy made by the Ch'engs and Chu. See Fung, che-hsüeh shih, 861-866, Eng.tr., History, v.2, 488-494, see also Tokiwa Daijō, op.cit., 219-244 for Buddhist influences on Chang Tsai.
- 52 I should like to point out that the words li-hsüeh or hsin-hsüeh are sometimes used generally also, to refer to the whole hsing-li movement, since both the Ch'eng-Chu and Lu-Wang schools speak of hsin and li.
- 53 A.C. Graham, op.cit., "General Introduction", p.xvii.
- 54 ECCS, Yi-shu, 24: 3a-b; Eng.tr. in de Bary, Sources, v.1, 504-5. Ch'eng refers in this essay to Chang Tsai's "Western Inscription", and also to Mencius 7A.15, with the

mention of liang-chih 良知 and liang-neng 良能, concepts which were to become so important in the philosophy of Wang Yang-ming.

55 ECCS, Yi-shu, 1: 7b-8a; Sources, v.1, 507-8.

56 ECCS, Yi-shu, 2A: 5b-6a. The formula itself came from the Book of Changes, "Appended Remarks". See Chou-yi cheng-yi, 1: 16a; Eng.tr. by James Legge, Yi King, Appendix IV, p.420.

57 The letter is known as "Ting-hsing shu" 定性書 (On Calming Human Nature). See Ming-tao wen-chi, [Collected Writings of Ch'eng Hao], ECCS, 3: 1a-b; Eng.tr. in de Bary, Sources, v.1, 506. Ch'eng Hao went on to say that one should forget distinctions between "inner-outer" realms which separate contemplation from action. This would have an important influence on Wang Yang-ming, who praised this letter very much. See also Tokiwa Daijō, op.cit., 274-298 for Buddhist influences on Ch'eng Hao.

58 ECCS, Yi-shu, 15: 14b-15a. For the expressions, Hsing-erh-shang and hsing-erh-hsia also come from the Great Appendix of the Book of Changes. See Chou-yi cheng-yi, 7: 18b; Eng.tr. in Legge, Yi King, 377.

Outside the Four Books, the appendices to the Book of Changes gave most inspiration to the Sung philosophers, contributing especially to Chou Tun-yi's T'ai-chi and Chang Tsai's T'ai-ho theories, the Ch'engs' idea of a life-giving jen and their method of self-cultivation.

In Science and Civilisation, v.2, 458-485, passim., Needham translates li as "principle of organisation" and ch'i as "matter-energy". He claims that Ch'eng Yi and Chu Hsi attained true insight into an organic, naturalist universe, where they detected a universal pattern interwoven by li and ch'i. He compares Chu Hsi's world view to that of Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) and of A.N. Whitehead (1861-1947) pointing out that this was reached without the Chinese thinkers having accumulated the experimental and observational knowledge of Nature and of the theoretical discoveries of Galileo (1564-1642), and Newton (1642-1727). Although I agree with him that "principle of organisation" is one meaning of li and "matter-energy" one meaning of ch'i, I should say also that li refers in Chu's ethics to moral principles or virtues, having definitely a transcendent, normative significance. As for ch'i, see above, note 46.

59 ECCS, Yi-shu, 19: 4b; Eng.tr. in de Bary, Sources, v.1, 473. Chu Hsi praised highly the Ch'engs' explanation of goodness and evil in human nature, declaring that it settled once for all the long-standing debate in the Confucian school on this subject. See CTYL 4: 12b-16b. See also Fung, che-hsueh shih, 861, Eng.tr., History, v.2,

60 ECCS, Yi-shu, 18: 5b; de Bary, Sources, v.1, 476. See also Wing-tsit Chan, "Neo-Confucian Solution of the Problem of Evil," first published in Studies Presented to Hu Shih on his Sixty-fifth Birthday (The Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, v.28, 1957),

reprinted in Neo-Confucianism etc., Essay by Wing-tsit Chan, compiled by Charles K.H. Chen, (New Haven: 1969), 99-112.

- 61 ECCS, Yi-shu, 18: 8b-9a; de Bary, Sources, v.1, 477.
See Tokiwa Daijō, op.cit., 298-320 for Buddhist influences on Ch'eng Yi.
- 62 "Cheng-meng", CTCS 2.22b; 26a 3: 22a-b; Eng.tr. in Wing-tsit Chan, Source Book, 516-7. Tokiwa Daijō, op.cit., 146-180 for Buddhist influences on the Neo-Confucian thinkers, and 180-182 for Chang Tsai's criticisms of Buddhism.
- 63 ECCS, Yi-shu, 14: 1b-2a; Chan, Source Book, 542; Tokiwa Daijō, op.cit., 182-184.
- 64 ECCS, Yi-shu, 15: 5b; 7b; 18: 10b; de Bary, Sources, 477-8; Tokiwa Daijō, op.cit., 184-187.
- 65 The Chin-ssu lu is the basic text for the study of Sung philosophy. It is a forerunner of the Hsing-li ta-ch'üan [The Great Compendium of the hsing-li Philosophy], compiled by Hu Kuang 胡廣 (1370-1418) and others under imperial command during early Ming, which gives an expanded form of Chu's anthology. See Chi Yun et al., Ssu-k'ü ch'üan-shu tsung-mu t'i-yao [Essentials of the Four Libraries], [abbrev. as SKTY], (Shanghai: 1933 ed.), 18:29-30.
The Chin-ssu lu has had many editions, including those of Chiang Yung, Yeh Ts'ai and Chang Po-hsing. Besides the English translation by Wing-tsit Chan, Reflections on Things at Hand, there is a German translation by Olaf Graf, Djin-si lu; (Tokyo: 1953), a 3 volume, mimeographed version, based on Yeh Ts'ai's edition.
- 66 see CTYL 1: 1a-b, 94: 4a-6b, 12a, 20b, 35a-b.
Chu Hsi interpreted Chou's T'ai-chi in terms of his other book, T'ung-shu, emphasising thereby the ethical dimensions of this "Ultimate". He said that it was present entirely in every person and thing, as well as in the whole human and physical universe. He identified it to T'ien-li, the fullness of goodness, the inner principle in man, the full realisation of which is sagehood. He therefore gave more immanence to the transcendent First Principle, making it something which resembles Plato's idea of the Good, which, in Republic, Book VII, was described as that which is source of light, responsible for all that is good and right, the contemplation of which is an innate ability of the mind.
I therefore quite disagree with the interpretation of Stanislas le Gall, see Tchou Hi, sa Doctrine, son Influence, (Shanghai: 1925), [Preface, 1, also pp. 32-36], who adhered to the opinion of so many Jesuits since the time of Matteo Ricci, in understanding T'ai-chi as a materialist principle.
I realise that this position, even earlier, was only one of many, that J.P. Bruce, for example, interpreted T'ai-chi in a strongly theistic sense, [see Chu Hsi and His Masters (London: 1923) p. 281] while Father Olaf Graf has spoken of li [the fullness of which is T'ai-chi] as the heavenly Tao, the realisation of which within the self is sagehood.

[Tao und Jen: Sein und Sollen im sungchinesischen Monismus, 26-27]. It was in this sense that Chu also identified T'ai-chi to "nature" (hsing).

67 CTYL 4: 8a-19b.

68 SSCC, Meng-tzu chi-chu, [Collected Commentary on Mencius], 3: 1a-b; 2: 11a-12a; 6: 4b-5b; 7: 1a-2a.

69 SSCC, Ta-hsüeh chang-chü, 4b-5a. This represents Chu's effort to supply a "missing chapter" to the text of the Great Learning. See CTYL 15: 1a-14b. See also William E. Hocking, "Chu Hsi's Theory of Knowledge", Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies [abbrev. as HJAS] I (1936) 109-127.

70 Chu speaks about restoring the brightness of man's nature, bestowed by Heaven, and originally full of goodness, but later obscured by passions. See "Ta-hsüeh chang-chü", SSCC, 1a-b; CTYL 4: 10a-15b. See also his first letter to friends in Hunan, written in 1169, on the subject of chung-ho 中和 (equilibrium and harmony) of the Doctrine of the Mean in CWWC, SPPY ed., 64: 30b-31b, [Chan, Source Book, 600-602]. This was considered by Liu Tsung-chou 劉宗周 (1578-1645) as the embodiment of Chu's final doctrine on moral cultivation. See his comment in SYHA 48: 8b-9b. It emphasises the importance of keeping peace in one's mind and heart. This can be achieved through the practice of quiet-sitting, as recommended in CTYL 12: 15a-18b. See also G.E. Sargent, "Les Débats personnels de Tchou Hi", op.cit., 222; P.C. Hsu, Ethical Realism in Neo-Confucian Thought, (Ph.D. Thesis, Columbia University, 1933, microfilm copy of 1969 typescript), 136-8; Araki Kengö, Bukkyō to Jukyō, op.cit., 359-367.

71 See Chu's letter to Lu in CWWC 36: 10a-b.

72 See Lu's first letter to Chu, as well as his answer to Chu's letter cited above in Hsiang-shan ch'üan-chi [Complete Works of Lu Chü-yuan], SPPY ed., 2: 5b-11b. This work will be abbreviated as HSCC.

73 This was really a teaching of Ch'eng Yi's. See Yi-shu, 22A:11a. Chu made frequent references to it. See CTYL 65: 9b. Chu objects to Ch'eng Yi's explanation of Kao-tzu's contention that "what is born is called nature" [Mencius 6A:3], saying that it is not clear enough and does not explain why nature is totally good.

74 See Lu's letter to Tseng Chai-chih 曾宅之, in HSCC 1:3b.

75 See Lu's "Nien-p'u", [Chronological Biography] in HSCC 36:3b. Lu said this at the age of twelve. Like Chu Hsi, he manifested very early an interest in philosophy. The saying is also given in HSCC 22:5a.

76 HSCC 32:4a. See also Huang Siu-chi, Lu Hsiang-shan, A Twelfth Century Chinese Idealist Philosopher, (New Haven: 1944), 51-74. Unlike the Ch'engs and Chu Hsi, Lu lacks an interest in the metaphysical concept of ch'i, by which they had explained the rise of evil.

77 See Lu's "Nien-p'u", HSCC 36:3b, and HSCC 22:5a. See also Fung, che-hsueh shih, 939-941; Eng.tr., History, v.2, 585-589. While both Chu and Lu started out speaking of the "mind-and-heart", Lu finished by giving it an absolute quality, seeing in it something greater than itself. Chu failed to agree. His view-point was better expressed by his disciple Ch'en Ch'un 陳淳 [Ch'en Pei-hsi 陳北溪 1153-1217], in Pei-hsi tzu-yi, a lexicon of some thirty words and expressions which form the core of Hsing-li philosophical vocabulary. Appearing at the time of continuing conflict between the two schools of Chu and Lu, as did the lexicon of Hsü Shen at the time of the New Text-Old Text controversy, this work, of a much smaller scale and quite polemic in character, clarified to a certain extent the meanings of the words used by Chu's school. It referred to the Chu-Lu debate without mentioning their names, but compared Lu's notion of hsin to the Buddhist idea of consciousness. See Pei-hsi tzu-yi, TSCC ed., 1: 9-10. In Hsüeh-pu t'ung pien, Ch'en Chien also discussed at length the Buddhist influence displayed by Lu's philosophy. See 4: 1a-6-14b. He also quoted from Chen Ch'un in his criticism of Yang-ming. See 7: 10a-b.

78 HSCC 34:24b. This was their first meeting. Lu made the remark: "Before the time of Yao and Shun, were there any books that people must study?" to emphasise that the development of hsin alone is sufficient for the attainment of sagehood. See his "Nien-p'u", HSCC 36:9b.

79 HSCC 34:24b.

80 Doctrine of the Mean, ch.27; Legge, Classics, v.1, 422. See also Lu's admission of this difference between himself and Chu, in HSCC 34: 4b-5a. For more discussion of Lu's method of cultivation, see Huang Siu-chi, Lu Hsiang-shan, A Twelfth Century Chinese Idealist Philosopher, 59-67.

81 See Lu's "Nien-p'u", in HSCC 36:10b. The text of the discourse is given in HSCC 23: 1a-2a. This appeared to be the two men's second meeting.

82 CTYL 126: 5b-17a. See Tokiwa Daijō, op.cit., 185-189, 367-384. Chu's chief concern was that the Buddhist teaching made nature (hsing) empty, whereas he considered it to be "full" of li. His criticism of Hua-yen philosophy shows that Buddhist influence on his thought is more superficial than real.

83 See Lu's two letters to a friend, HSCC 2: 1b-4b; Fung, che-hsueh shih, 932-933; Eng.tr., History, v.2, 577-8. In his second letter, Lu attacks Buddhism for not subscribing to the Confucian teaching that Heaven and Earth and Man

form "Three Ultimates", in other words, that Buddhism is not a humanism. However, the monk Tsung-mi 宗密 (d.841) had spoken explicitly of the "Three Ultimates". Lu was probably aware of this. He could mean either that Tsung-mi's teaching was not thorough-going enough, or that he was an exception. [See his "Yüan-jen lun" 原人論, or "Inquiry into Man", Preface, TSD No.1886, XLV, 707]. Besides, it appears to me that in criticising Buddhism, hsing-li philosophers usually attacked those aspects of it which were most uncongenial to the positive, "Confucian" mind, whether the issue concerned was speculative, as regarding an "illusory" view of the world, or practical, as regarding their tendency to minimise the importance of social responsibility. See also Tokiwa Daijō, op.cit., 385-397.

84 See Chu's preface to Ta-hsueh chang-chü, in SSCC, la-2b.

85 The famous chapter on the "Evolution of Rites" (Li-yün 禮運) in the Book of Rites, describes the two ages of "Great Unity" (ta-t'ung) and "Lesser Tranquillity" (hsiao-k'ang). See Li-chi cheng-yi [Correct Meaning of the Book of Rites] SPPY ed., 21: la-4b. See also English translation in de Bary, Sources, v.1, 175-6.

86 CWWC 36:22b. The Three Dynasties refer to Hsia, Shang (c.1751-1112BC) and Chou (1111-249BC).

87 Ibid.

88 Chu Hsi had learnt from his father Chu Sung 朱松 (1097-1143) a strong aversion to the policy of appeasing the Jurchens. See Chu Sung's "Hsing-chuang," 行狀 [Biography] written by Chu Hsi himself, in CWWC 97: 18b-28b.

For Ch'en Liang and his ideas, see SYHA 56: la-2b; Lung-ch'uan wen-chi [Collected Writings of Ch'en Liang], SPPY ed., 20:6b; Carsun Chang, The Development of Neo-Confucian Thought, (New Haven: 1957), v.1, 309-331; Hellmut Wilhelm, "The Heresies of Ch'en Liang (1143-1194)", Asiatische Studien XI, 3/4 (1958), 102-111.

89 Chu's debate with Ch'en was carried out in a series of letters. For Chu's answer to Ch'en, see especially CWWC 36: 22b, 24b-28b.

90 CWWC 36:22b. According to Chu, the sovereign's hsin or mind-and-heart was the "foundation of the state". Hence the emperor had the strict duty of making sure that his hsin was upright. However, Chu did not neglect practical statecraft. His memorials contained also practical proposals related to the reform of taxation, the employment of civil personnel and other such issues.

91 See Mencius 1B.9; 2B.2; 5B.9; Legge, Classics, v.1, 167, 210-215, 392-393, for the sage's independent manners toward the ruler, and his teachings regarding regicide and the right of rebellion.

92 See Ssu-ma Kuang's criticisms of Mencius for disrespect to authority, in Weng-kuo wen-cheng Ssu-ma Kung wen-chi [Collected Writings of Ssu-ma Kuang], SPTK ed., 73: 10b-11a, 12a-b, and Lin-ch'uan chi [Collected Writings of Wang An-shih] SPTK ed., 67: 6a-7a.

93 Wang Mou-hung, ed., Chu-tzu nien-p'u, 164; Li Hsin--ch'uan 李心傳 (1126-1243), "Hui-an hsien-sheng fei su-yin" [Master Chu was not a Recluse], in Chien-yen yi-lai ch'ao-yeh tsa-chi [Miscellaneous Accounts of Court and Country since 1127], TSCC ed., pt.2, pp.445 f. and Conrad M. Shirokauer, "Chu Hsi's Political Career: A Study in Ambivalence," in Arthur F. Wright and Denis Twitchett, ed., Confucian Personalities, (Stanford: 1962), pp. 162-188. Chu Hsi offended the government by his direct criticisms and by his preference for a life of semi-retirement, chosen as a protest against policies of which he did not approve.

94 CTYL 78: 2a-3a. In the early Ch'ing dynasty (1644-1912), the scholar Hsien Jo-chü (1636-1704) definitively proved that this chapter, together with twenty-four others, "preserved" in the old text or script, were all forgeries. See Hsien's Ku-wen Shang-shu su-cheng [Documented Commentary on the Old Text version of the Book of Documents] in Huang-ch'ing ching-chieh hsu-p'ien [Supplement to the Collection of Classical Commentaries of the Ch'ing Dynasty] comp. by Wang Hsien-ch'ien (1842-1918), contracted lithograph ed., Preface 1889, 13: 1a, 10a-b.

95 Book of Documents, "Ta-Yü mu". See Legge, Classics, v.3, p.61. The first three sentences from this chapter come from Hsün-tzu, 21, where the philosopher cites a lost classic Hsün-tzu, Basic Writings, 131. "Chieh-p'i", SPPY ed., 15:7a (English translation: Watson, and the last from Analects 20.1 which cites a counsel given allegedly by Yao to Shun. See P'i Hsi-hui, Ching-hsüeh t'ung-lun, 51a-52a. P'i points out the contradiction displayed by Sung thinkers who cited from a forged book to find support for their teachings, while suspecting it to be forged.

96 "The mind-and-heart of the Way" refers to the "heart" of the Confucian, moral Way, which, as we shall see later, refers also to the sages' hsin, or their "state of mind". See below, n. 98.

97 The "Mean" (chung 中) refers to the state of equilibrium which characterises the mind-and-heart before it is aroused by feelings or emotions. See Doctrine of the Mean, ch.1; Legge, Classics, v.1, 384 and CTYL 62: 1b-2b.

98 HSCC 34:1b. Lu Chiu-yüan challenged Ch'eng Yi's explanation of jen-hsin and Tao-hsin in terms of jen-yü (passions, selfish desires) and T'ien-li ("principle of Heaven" or perfect virtue), saying that such an interpretation, separates Man from Heaven, and is basically Taoist in its inspiration.

Chu Hsi explained that jen-hsin is man's mind-and-heart (hsin), considered as consciousness of instinctive needs,

while Tao-hsin is the same mind-and-heart, considered as awareness of moral principles. He thus modified Ch'eng Yi's explanation of jen-hsin as that which is affected by jen-yü (passions, selfish desires) and Tao-hsin as that which is full of T'ien-li. See CTYL 78: 26b-34a.

99 Tao is called Shang-ti 上帝 (Emperor-on-High) or T'ien (Heaven) in other parts of the Book of Documents, as for example in "Tang-shih" 湯誓 [Speech of King T'ang], where both words are used. See Legge, Classics, v.3, 174-5.

100 This teaching permeates Chang Tsai's "Western Inscription" and Ch'eng Hao's essay "On Understanding jen", and Lu Chiu-yüan's insistence on the identity of hsin and li. Chu Hsi referred to it frequently, especially in his "Shuo-jen" 說仁 [Treatise on jen] CWWC 67: 21b-23a, Eng.tr., Chan, Source Book, 593-596.

101 Admittedly, this vision comes out more clearly in Lu Chiu-yüan's explanation than in Ch'eng Yi's or Chu Hsi's. I wish to add here, that the notion that hsin can be transmitted from one Master to another was especially prominent in Ch'an Buddhism, with its scorn for the written word and its emphasis of direct intuition into the mind-and-heart and human nature. This idea underlies the entire Platform Sutra of Hui-neng as well as the Transmission of the Lamp, the title of which connotes itself the notion of the transmission of an "inner light". See Ching-te ch'uan-teng-lu, Preface by Yang Yi 楊億 (974-1030), TSD No.2076, LI, 196; also 3:219; 9:273-274. The last reference is from Hsi-yüan's Ch'uan-hsin fa-yao [Transmission of the Mind].-- However, in defence of the adoption by Sung Confucian thinkers of this Buddhist idea, it may be said that the earlier Confucian exegetes also had similar ideas of "transmission"-- if only of techniques of exegesis and of methods of interpretations-- although they did not speak of hsin. Besides, here as well as elsewhere, the Confucians actually made use of Buddhist ideas to combat what they considered to be the "fundamental errors" of Buddhist teachings, those considered to be most dangerous to Confucian morality. Thus, a Confucian line of "orthodox transmission" of hsin was established as an alternative to the Buddhist transmission, with explanation of the difference between the Confucian sages' hsin and what the Buddhist considered to be hsin. In general, the Buddhist hsin was often described in negative terms, as the "Un-differentiated emptiness (śūnyatā)", while the Ch'eng-Chu school preferred to speak of hsin in association with hsing (nature), and in terms of ethical goodness. Wang Yang-ming would be strongly criticised for his "Four Maxims" on account of his teaching that hsin-in-itself is beyond ethical categories. See Chapter VI, 221-225, where I discuss the problem especially from the vantage-point of its practical implications regarding "enlightenment" and "cultivation".

102 Yüan-shih [Yüan Dynastic History], ESWS series, 81:206.

103 see SS 427:1096.

104 Ming-shih [Ming Dynastic History], ESWS series, [abbrev. as MS], 70:155.

105 Jih-chih lu chi-shih 18:10b-11b.

Chapter II

WANG YANG-MING (1472-1529): THE MAN AND THE PHILOSOPHER

In Analects 13:21, we find this passage:

The Master said: 'Since I cannot get men who act according to the Mean, to whom may my teaching be transmitted? I must look for the "ardent" (k'uang 狂) and the cautious (chüan 狷). The ardent will advance to lay hold of [the truth]. The cautious will desist from doing wrong.¹

Three classes of men are mentioned here: those who act according to the Mean, the ardent or eccentric, and the very cautious. Elsewhere, in the Analects a fourth class is mentioned: the hsiang-yüan 鄉愿 --"village respectable" or "Pharisaic."² Confucius considers the first kind unobtainable and declares himself content to have the second and third kind among his disciples. The fourth kind, the "respectable" man of the village, who seeks to please every one, and has no firm principles of his own, he despises.

Referring to this passage, Mencius had described the k'uang as men who spoke eloquently and extravagantly of the ancients--whom they purported to imitate--but whose actions did not correspond to their words. He had also given, as examples of k'uang, Tseng Tien 曾點, Ch'in-chang 琴張 and Mu-p'i 牧皮.³ Chu Hsi followed this interpretation in his textual commentary on the passage in question. He added, according to the recorded conversations, that Confucius desired to "restrain" the k'uang, and help them to become "men who act according to the Mean." In so doing, he was already making reference to still another passage of the Analects, also cited by Mencius. Here, Confucius, during his sojourn in the state of Ch'en, expresses his desire to return to his disciples in his native state of Lu 魯:

"Let me return! Let me return! The little children of my school are k'uang [translated by Legge here as 'ambitious'] and chien [translated here as 'hasty'].

Although quite accomplished, they do not know how to restrict themselves."⁴

Chu Hsi defines the meaning of k'uang-chien as "having great ambitions while being careless of one's actions."⁵ He presents Confucius as having first desired to exercise his "Way" in the world, but had, by the time of his sojourn in Ch'en, realised that it was impossible for him to find a ruler who would make use of his talents. He decided therefore to concentrate his attention on training disciples who would transmit his teaching to later generations. Not finding, however, the most desirable kind of disciples--men who acted always according to the Mean--he turned to the k'uang, to these highly ambitious men who were capable of promoting the true Way, but might also "fall into heresy" by their excesses. He wished, therefore, to return home to teach them restraint.⁶

When applied to human conduct, the Chinese word k'uang, contains unmistakable overtones of "madness" and "eccentricity." The Analects itself distinguished between the "k'uang of the ancients," who paid scant attention to little things, and the "k'uang of the moderns," who fell easily into licentiousness.⁷ It also gave the example of the "madman of Ch'u 楚," Chieh-yü 接輿, who sang and mocked Confucius for his "vain pursuit," presumably of looking for a ruler who would use him.⁸ Throughout Chinese history, scholars who preferred a life of retirement to one of government service, and manifested a certain disdain of social conventions, were described as k'uang. These included the "Seven Masters of the Bamboo Grove" of the Wei-Chin period, (220-420), known for their poetry as well as their shocking eccentricity,⁹ and the later "Immortal Poet" (shih-hsien 詩仙), Li Po 李白 (c. 701-762) of the T'ang dynasty, who did not restrain himself from excessive drinking at Court, but offended the powerful eunuch, Kao Li-shih 高力士, by once obliging him to do in public the menial task of removing Li's shoes for him. In one of his poems, Li even compared himself to the madman of Ch'u.¹⁰

Neo-Confucian philosophers were not interested in literary genius, and sometimes considered it an obstacle to the

pursuit of sagehood. But their disdain of conventional mediocrity, as well as their conception of the high goals of sagehood, led them back to the Confucian notion of k'uang, as explained especially by Mencius, and giving it an additional meaning of the experience of harmony between man and the universe. But the connotation of madness and eccentricity remained, as we have seen, in the interpretations of Chu Hsi. It is therefore significant that this word, representing both the quality of the disciple Confucius wished to choose as transmitter of his teaching, and the tendency to excess and heresy which Chu Hsi underlined, should have been used by Wang Yang-ming himself, as well as by his opponents, in describing his personality. It was also the word which the later critics of the popular T'ai-chou 泰州 branch of the Yang-ming school used to condemn the movement. They called its adherents the K'uang-Ch'an 狂禪 --mad Ch'an Buddhists.¹¹

A Life of "Ardour"

Wang Yang-ming is the name by which Wang Shou-jen is popularly known. Born on October 31, 1472, in Yüeh-ch'eng 越城, near Yü-yao 餘姚, of the modern Chekiang province, the eldest child of a distinguished literati family, Yang-ming's entire life was to become an expression of mad ardour. His was the daring of a magnanimous man, driven by a restless energy, to fulfil limitless ambitions, not for worldly success, but for the attainment of absolute values. The quality appeared in him from a very early age, as when he doubted the words of his preceptor, that "the greatest thing to do in life" was to "study and pass examinations," and offered his own alternative, "to learn how to become a sage."¹² Richly endowed with a quick nature and a remarkable versatility, he was interested in everything: reading, poetry, horsemanship, archery, as well as religion and philosophy, and he was ready to pursue, and capable of developing, all these interests to a high degree of achievement. Fascinated with the profound meaning of life, he sought to probe its mystery. He believed in responding fully to the challenges of greatness, and would not

stop at half-measures. His multi-dimensional achievements in life, as a writer, statesman, soldier, philosopher and teacher, provided material for both the conventional annalist and the historical novelist. There is a story which tells us how the young boy handled his callous step-mother after the early death of his own mother. Although difficult to confirm, the account describes for us the early manifestation of an unconstrained character, which fits in well with the brief lines of his conventional biographers.¹³ According to this story, the boy of twelve placed an owl in his step-mother's bed. She was frightened to discover it there, especially as the bird was, to the Chinese, an unlucky omen, and made strange noises. The boy offered to search for a sorceress, a woman who performed exorcisms and prayed for blessings on the house. He fetched home an accomplice. She pretended to have received a communication from Yang-ming's deceased mother, complaining of the step-mother's ill treatment of her son, and threatening dire consequences unless this was stopped. The trick proved quite effective.¹⁴

In Ming China, the ambition that all gentry families entertained for their scions was naturally the attainment of high office through success in civil examinations designed mainly to judge literary skill. Yang-ming's father, Wang Hua 王華 (1446-1523) had distinguished himself as optimus at the examinations of 1481, and had taken great care to provide an orthodox Confucian education for his sons.¹⁵ But books alone could not occupy the entire attention of the boy Yang-ming. At the age of fourteen, he learned to ride a horse, to use a bow and arrow, and to acquaint himself with military strategy. All his life, he was to show himself contemptuous of scholars who were skilled in verbal dialectic, but quite powerless in a time of military crisis. At the age of fifteen, Yang-ming spent a month at the strategic Chü-yung 居庸 Passes of the Great Wall in the company of his father. He observed the movements of the Tartar horsemen, as well as the physical features of these frontier regions. This experience left a deep impression on him. After his return to Peking, he was said to have offered his

services to the emperor for the suppression of bandits, and was only stopped by his father who told him that he was crazy (k'uang).¹⁶

In 1488, at the age of sixteen, Yang-ming travelled from Peking to Nanchang 南昌, Kiangsi, to fetch his bride, the daughter of the Assistant Administration Commissioner. On the day of his wedding, the absent-minded bridegroom walked into a Taoist monastery, met an interesting priest, and spent the night in the monastery, in an absorbed conversation on the art of cultivating life, and in the practice of Taoist meditation. The bride's family did not find him until the next day.¹⁷ During the rest of his sojourn with his in-laws, he also showed an absorbing interest in practising calligraphy, using up the paper stored in his father-in-law's official residence for his exercises.¹⁸ The next year, he took his wife back to his home town, Yü-yao, stopping at Kuang-hsin 廣信, Kiangsi, to visit the philosopher Lou Liang 婁諒 (1422-91), and discussed with him the theory of "investigation of things."¹⁹ His father also returned soon to Yü-yao, to mourn the death of his grand-father. Yang-ming was ordered to study the Classics in the company of four relatives. He threw himself into this work, often reading till late at night. In dealing with others, however, he remained casual and amiable.²⁰

Also following upon the passing visit to Lou Liang, Yang-ming's ardour for the investigation of things led him to search for all the extant writings of Chu Hsi, which he read. It was this ardour, rather than a real understanding of the intended meaning of Chu Hsi, that made him put into application Chu's advice about a thorough "investigation of things," of every plant and every blade of grass, as a means towards attaining their inherent principle, and with the view of acquiring final enlightenment concerning man's life in the universe. Yang-ming tells his own story as follows:

People merely say that in the 'investigation of things' we must follow Chu Hsi, but when have they carried it out in practice? I have attempted this

earnestly. In earlier years [at the age of twenty] I discussed the question of becoming a sage with my friend Ch'ien, wondering how a person can have such tremendous energy to investigate all things under Heaven. So I pointed to the bamboos in front of the pavilion, and asked him to investigate these. Ch'ien spent three days trying to investigate thoroughly the meaning of bamboos, working hard day and night and using up his mental energy, until he fell ill... . So I myself proceeded to this investigation, working day and night without reaching the principle, until I also fell ill through mental exhaustion on the seventh day. So we lamented together that sagehood is unattainable.²¹

A series of minor official appointments followed his success in the chin-shih examinations of 1499 first in the Ministry of Public Works, and then in that of Justice. Yang-ming did his work conscientiously, and also took time to visit Buddhist and Taoist monasteries in Chiu-hua 九華 Mountain, Anwei, seeking out and speaking with Taoist recluses. Experiencing a strong desire to retire from active life, Yang-ming pleaded ill health and was granted permission to return to his home town to rest.²²

Disagreement exists concerning where Yang-ming resided during his convalescence. The older accounts speak of his living in the so-called "Yang-ming Cave" (Yang-ming tung 陽明洞) from which he got his name.²³ While the exact location of this hermitage is not clearly known²⁴ it is usually accepted that he spent his time there practising Taoist methods of the cultivation of self. Supposedly, he acquired para-psychic powers, knowing in advance an unexpected visit from certain friends, as well as circumstances surrounding their journey. This knowledge astonished the friends, but caused disillusionment to Yang-ming himself, becoming for him the occasion for an inner query which ended with a decision to return to society and active life,²⁵ a decision made also on the basis of his attachment to his father and grand-mother, which, he thought, was something so deeply rooted in his human nature that to expunge it

would involve cutting himself from his very humanity.²⁶ He returned to his official career, demonstrated his "conversion" to the school of sages by open criticisms of Buddhism and Taoism, and also began to teach students interested in Confucianism.

Just when Yang-ming was settling down intellectually and spiritually, however, a change of fortune occurred, leading him into exile in Kweichow. This crisis was provoked by his own decision to intervene in favour of several officials imprisoned unjustly by the eunuch Liu Chin 劉瑾 (d.1510) the power behind the throne.²⁷ The memorial which he wrote in 1506 probably never reached Emperor Wu-tsung 武宗 (1505-1521) but led to the imprisonment, public flogging till loss of consciousness, and banishment to the frontier region of Lung-ch'ang 龍場 Kweichow, to live among the Miaos 苗aborigines.²⁸ A period of great trials began, during which Heaven was to prepare him for even greater trials, as well as for the maturation of his personality and his philosophical ideas.

After an arduous journey by a devious route, during which he pretended to have committed suicide by drowning in the river, to divert the attention of the agents of Liu Chin sent to follow and assassinate him, Yang-ming finally reached his destination in exile.²⁹ He found himself in the midst of the "bush". The place was infested with serpents and insects. The climate was quite different from that of Peking or Yü-yao. In the beginning, he had to live in a cave. The Miaos did not speak Chinese, and he did not know their dialects. The few Chinese living there were rough men, often outlaws fleeing from justice. Some of them worked as couriers and coolies, despatching messages and official documents, and transporting supplies for the region. Yang-ming's responsibility was to care for the horses which they used.³⁰

There were other trials too, and worries and anxiety. Yang-ming knew that Liu Chin's anger had not yet abated. What would Liu do, once he found that the bold, young

scholar had not perished on the way, but had arrived in Kweichow? Would he not send further assassins, to pursue and put him to death? Yang-ming had been able to remain above considerations of honour or disgrace, success or failure. But he was still very much preoccupied with the question of life or death. He knew that he was not yet a sage. But then, what would a sage, a truly great man, do in such circumstances?

He knew that it was essential for him to rise above all earthly concerns. He made a coffin for himself out of stone and spent much time, day and night, in front of it, sitting in silent meditation and seeking for spiritual liberation. This brought him a certain interior peace and joy. When his servants fell sick with fever, Yang-ming personally attended to their needs, gathering fuel and water and doing their cooking. He even entertained them with songs and prosody and, when these failed to please them, told them amusing tales to help them forget their misery.³¹ It was in these circumstances that he suddenly received enlightenment one night. Probably, he was deep in meditation. But it seemed as though someone was talking to him. All of a sudden, the meaning of "investigation of things" and "extension of knowledge" was revealed to him. Almost mad with joy, he leapt up from place, awaking all those with him. He could only say to them: "I have finally understood that my human nature is quite adequate for the task of achieving sagehood. My mistake in the past was seeking principle in events and things [external to my nature]."³² He was then thirty-six years old.

In 1510 Yang-ming completed the term of his exile, and was promoted to be Magistrate of Lu-ling 廬陵 in Kiangsi. After seven months of remarkable service, he was summoned to Peking, had an audience with the Emperor, and was transferred to serve in various minor posts in Nanking and in Peking.³³ His fame as a teacher of philosophy was rapidly spreading. Through the recommendation of the Minister of War, Wang Ch'ung 王瓊 (1459-1532), he was promoted in

1517 to be Senior Censor and Governor of the border regions of Kiangsi, Kwangtung and Fukien, with the task of pacifying the bandits there.³⁴ His military career had finally begun.

Yang-ming distinguished himself as an able administrator and a good soldier. In seven months, he completed victoriously his campaigns against those rebels who had troubled the Kiangsi region for years, and put into effect many measures of rehabilitation, erecting new counties, establishing village schools, and reforming taxation.³⁵ And then, in 1519, while on his way to suppress a rebellion in Fukien, he received news of the revolt of the imperial prince Ch'en-hao 宸豪, in Kiangsi. The prince had a large army and intended to capture Nanking and declare himself emperor. Yang-ming turned his attention swiftly to Kiangsi, and was able to capture the prince. But his success also initiated the worst trial of his life.³⁶

The reason for this was the jealousy of the Emperor. Wu-tsung had been delighted at the news of Ch'en-hao's rebellion, which, he thought, provided him with an occasion for going south at the head of an expedition which would bring him military glory. Yang-ming was urged to release Prince Ch'en-hao and his men in the P'ao-yang 鄆陽 Lake, so that the Emperor might himself "defeat" his forces.³⁷ Yang-ming found himself in a terrible predicament. Either he had to violate his conscience for the sake of pleasing the emperor, in which case there would also be needless bloodshed, or he must resist pressure and run the risk of becoming the object of intrigue. He chose the latter course of action. His enemies, the Emperor's favourites, did their best to injure his reputation, accusing him even of having been the rebel Prince's accomplice. To this end, they imprisoned one of his students who had earlier visited the Prince. Although no evidence was ever produced of the involvement of either Yang-ming or the student, the latter was to die in prison.³⁸

The following poem, written about that time, expresses well the sentiment of frustration and of disgust with

political life that he surely experienced:

Not the least contribution have I made in the
 service of the august Dynasty,
 As I watch in vain, the growth of [white] hair
 on my temples,
 Han Hsin³⁹ was surely never a true credit to his
 country,
 While Shao Yung⁴⁰ certainly was a hero among men.

The times are difficult, and offer no security,
 No longer able to improve the state of affairs,
 I wish to keep my knife intact.⁴¹
 I go to seek my former place of retirement east of
 the Yüeh waters,
 In a thatched hut, high above the mountains, in
 the company of clouds.⁴²

The death of Emperor Wu-tsung, and the accession of his cousin, Emperor Shih-tsung, brought Yang-ming a certain change of fortune. His military merits were finally recognised, and he was awarded the title of Earl of Hsin-chien 新建.⁴³ The death of his father in 1522, however, obliged him to spend the next three years in mourning in his home town. He was there during the so-called "Rites" controversy, concerning the awarding of posthumous titles to Emperor Shih-tsung's deceased father. He expressed no opinion in public on this issue, although the general trend of his teaching, as well as conversations he had with disciples, seem to indicate his approval in principle of the Emperor's filial desires.⁴⁴ In 1524, when the period of his mourning was over, Yang-ming's talents were recommended to the Emperor by the Minister of Rites, Hsi Shu 席書 (1461-1527). But the jealousy of high officials at Court, including that of Yang Yi-ch'ing 楊一清 [Yang Sui-an 楊邃庵 1454-1530], who was made Grand Secretary, prevented him from being summoned to serve at the highest level of government.⁴⁵ He continued to live in virtual retirement until 1527. Most of his important letters were

written during this time when he finally developed the doctrine of "extending liang-chih." Ironically, his philosophy was officially regarded as a "heterodox teaching," and as the reason why he should be banned from high office.⁴⁶

In 1527, after nearly six years of life in retirement, Yang-ming was called upon to undertake another military campaign against rebels, this time in Kwangsi.⁴⁷ On his way, he passed by Nan-chang, in Kiangsi, where he was formerly stationed.

The village elders, soldiers and common people all came to welcome him, holding incense in their hands, and lining the streets. They filled the roads and the streets, so that it became impossible for him to move. The elders, therefore, held up [Yang-ming's] sedan, passed it along over the heads of the crowds until they reached his quarters in the city. Yang-ming invited the elders, soldiers and the common people to come in to see him. They came in through the east gate and came out through the west gate. Some could not bear to leave him...It went on from seven in the morning until four in the afternoon.⁴⁸

Surely this was a sign of sincere gratitude on the part of those people for whom he had toiled and suffered in the past. It was also a very timely expression. For this was to be Yang-ming's last visit in life to Nan-chang. He was, indeed, on his last military expedition. For he was already sick when he began the journey. He managed to pacify Ssu-en 思恩 and T'ien-chou 田州 by early 1528, after which he ordered the erection of village schools and put into effect other measures of rehabilitating the people.⁴⁹ As his health steadily deteriorated, he begged for leave, and started, eventually, on his homeward journey, without having received official permission. He died on his way, on January 9, 1529, near Nan-an 南安 in Kiangsi. He was then

fifty-seven years old. His last words were: "My heart is full of brightness; what more can I say?"⁵⁰

The trials and opposition that had constantly beset Yang-ming's life did not leave him even at death. His bitter enemy, Kuei 〇 桂 夢 (fl. 1510) then Minister of Rites, accused him of having left his post without permission, and of teaching heretical doctrines.⁵¹ In spite of the protests of his friends, Yang-ming's infant son was prevented from inheriting his father's title. The bereaved family, indeed, was reduced to dire straits, and had to seek the protection of his friend Huang Wan, then in Nan-king.⁵² It was not until 1567, thirty-eight years after Yang-ming's death, and after the accession of a new emperor, Mu-tsung 穆 宗 (1567-72), that his case was finally vindicated. Yang-ming's son was given the title of Marquis of Hsin-chien. He himself received another posthumous dedication, that of Wên-ch'eng 文 成 (Accomplished Culture).⁵³ Seventeen years later, in 1584, Yang-ming was given sacrifice in the Temple of Confucius.⁵⁴ It was the highest honour any scholar could expect. It was also a sign that his teaching was regarded officially as part of Confucian "orthodoxy." His name was finally associated, with the names of all the other distinguished philosophers of the Neo-Confucian movement of both the Sung and the Ming dynasties.

The best eulogy of Wang Yang-ming that was ever delivered was probably that of his friend and disciple Huang Wan, who describes him in these words:

By nature, he was endowed with an extraordinary intelligence, and could retain by memory whatever he had once read. In youth, he was fond of knightly ventures; in adulthood, of prose and prosody, and of Taoism and Buddhism. After taking upon himself the mission of [restoring] the true Way [of Confucius], and with the belief that sagehood is attainable, he changed his ways and corrected his faults. He responded courageously to the difficulties and challenges of the times, assisting, with his learn-

ing, the sovereign above, and serving the people below. Earnest and untiring, he counselled others to the practice of good, desiring, by jên, to save all living beings under Heaven. He showed no ill will towards those who hated him. Even when he was in a position of wealth and honour, he frequently manifested a desire to leave all things and retire into the mountains. Money was to him as mud and grass. He regarded with the same equanimity, the amenities and comforts accompanying high rank, such as rare food, silk robes and a spacious dwelling, and the inconveniences of poverty and lowliness, such as coarse soup, hemp garments and a thatched roof. He was truly a born hero, and stands high above all others of the world. There has not been anyone like him in recent ages.⁵⁵

The "Five Falls" and the "Three Changes"

Wang Yang-ming's intellectual and spiritual evolution has been described in terms of "Five Falls" and "Three Changes." The "Falls" refer to his unorthodox interest in knightly ventures, sporting and war-like skills, letters, pursuit of physical immortality and Buddhist religion, which preceded his final conversion to the Confucian Way of sagehood. Strictly speaking, they did not represent consecutive events, but rather, simultaneous and frequently recurrent interests. The "Changes" refer, not to ruptures with the past, or even evolution in the direction of his life, but to the different shifts of emphases which occurred in his teaching, or, more precisely, in his practical direction of his disciples. All these occurred after his definitive return to Confucianism, and marked the stages of the development of his own philosophy, which was, essentially, a practical doctrine.

Yang-ming's friend, Chan Jo-shui 湛若水 [Chan Kan-ch'uan 湛甘泉 1466-1560] has described for us the "Five Falls":

His first fall was an absorbing interest in knightly ventures; his second was in the skills of horsemanship and archery. His third fall was an absorbing interest in letters; his fourth was in the art of pursuing immortality, and his fifth was Buddhism. Only in the year 1506, did he return to the orthodox teaching of the sages.⁵⁶

Yang-ming has compared the "ardent" man to a phoenix, flying above, at a height of 10,000 feet.⁵⁷ His own inner evolution is an illustration of this truth. His dynamic vitality did not allow him to stop anywhere, but led him from one interest to another, from one spiritual adventure to another.

He was a precocious child, and as such, tended to be difficult. His biographer relates how, at the age of eleven, he was given a preceptor to supervise his studies, but manifested a greater fondness for roaming in the streets of Peking. Once he tried to obtain a bird from a seller without paying for it. The ensuing dispute attracted the attention of a physiognomist in the crowd, who paid for the bird, encouraged the boy to study, and left him with some cryptic words about his future greatness. Such adventures could hardly have been pleasing to his father, a compiler in the Hanlin Academy, who "frequently worried about him."⁵⁸ The "knightly ventures" probably started to fascinate him in the streets of Peking, where he led other boys in battle games. The four Chinese words used to describe his character, as it first unfolded in these days of his carefree youth, are hao-man pu-chi 豪邁不羈.⁵⁹ They mean: "he was bold, fearless, and totally uncontrollable."

A hero of Yang-ming's youth was Ma Yuan 馬援 (14BC-49AD), the conqueror of Cochin. At the age of fourteen, Yang-ming visited in dream the temple dedicated to Ma's memory, and composed a poem for that occasion. Over forty years later, shortly before his death, Yang-ming had the occasion to visit the real temple, during a military campaign which he conducted in Kwangtung and Kwangsi.⁶⁰

As we have already said, Yang-ming was early introduced to the art of horsemanship and archery. After his return from the sojourn at the Chü-yung Passes, he kept up this interest in military affairs, and had to be desisted by his father from submitting a memorial to advise the emperor on this subject and to offer his services. At twenty-five, he studied military science more seriously, even playing war-games at table while entertaining guests, using fruit kernels as soldiers. He regretted that the military examinations held by the state required only knowledge of horsemanship and archery, and not military strategy. He continued to study military science even during his period of repose in 1502, while living in his hermitage, with the help of Hsü Chang 許璋 a scholar conversant with astronomy, geography, and the art of war, who preferred a life of retirement to official service.⁶¹

That Yang-ming was an excellent archer was demonstrated at a public contest held between him and the two favourites of Emperor Wu-tsung, the eunuch Chang Chung 張忠 and the general Hsü T'ai 許泰. This was in 1519, soon after his capture of Ch'en-hao. The two men had imagined it an easy task to win such a contest with a scholar. They were astonished and frightened to watch Yang-ming hit the target everytime.⁶²

The art of letters also began to fascinate him at an early age. At ten, he had surprised his father's friends with his impromptu verses. He did so again at twenty, when he associated himself with several others in a poetry club (shih-she 詩社) which included the elder scholar, Wei Han 魏瀚. His other friends included the "Four Talents" (ssu-chieh 四傑) of his times: Li Meng-yang 李夢陽 (1472-1529), Ho Ching-ming 何景明 (1483-1521), Hsü Chen-ch'ing 徐禎卿 (1479-1511) and Pien Kung 邊貢 (1476-1532). Advocates of the movement calling for a return to a classical style in Ming prose and poetry, these men were to consider Yang-ming's development of other interests stronger than that of literary writing a real loss to their cause.⁶³ For a time, however, Yang-ming devoted himself to

modelling poems and essays on pre-Sung and earlier pieces. He has left us examples of fu-sao 賦騷 and of imitations of T'ang poetry. His prose has been much acclaimed, especially for the independent style which he developed later. His "Yi-lü wen" 瘞旅文 [Burying the Dead Travellers], written at Lung-ch'ang, concludes with a song of lament, and is a moving essay. His letter to Yang Sui-an [Yang Yi-ch'ing], dated 1523, is another expression of a simple and dignified style.

Until the age of thirty, literary writing was one of his principal occupations. He read avidly the pre-Ch'in and Han writings, staying up till late at night until his health was seriously damaged. He also kept up his exercises in calligraphy. He was finally obliged to practise more moderation when he started vomiting blood. Said he in the end: "How can I waste my finite energy in the writing of useless and empty compositions?"⁶⁴

Yang-ming had been in contact with Taoism and Taoists since his early years--according to himself, since the age of seven.⁶⁵ At the age of eleven, he met a physiognomist in the streets of Peking. The words of the physiognomist, describing his future greatness, are full of Taoist allusions:

When the beard brushes the collar, you will enter
sagehood,
When the beard reaches the upper cinnabar field,
you will form a sage-embryo.
When the beard reaches the lower cinnabar field,
your sagehood will be perfect.⁶⁶

In Taoist terminology, "cinnabar field" refers generally to the part of the body below the navel. Pao-p'u tzu 抱朴子 refers to the "three cinnabar fields": the lower one below the navel, the middle one below the heart, and the upper one between the eye-brows.⁶⁷ In these lines quoted above, only two, upper and lower, are mentioned. Since they are mentioned especially in relation to the length of the beard,

it is safe to suppose that they indicate the parts below the heart and the navel. Those special terms are usually associated with the Taoist practice of breath control and breath regulation, considered as one of the means conducive to the prolongation of life, or even to the attainment of physical immortality. The "formation of a sage-embryo," is also a Taoist expression referring to a certain degree of progress made, for example, through practice of breath control, leading to the growth within oneself of the "inner pill."⁶⁸

Yang-ming's feeble health might have been one reason for his interest in popular Taoism. Mention has already been made of his excursion to a Taoist temple on the night of his wedding. He persisted in seeking out unusual Taoist priests, asking them questions about the art of cultivating life. It is, besides, perfectly consonant with his restless, insatiable nature to desire to "steal the secret springs [of the creative operations] of Heaven and Earth."⁶⁹ After all, did not Chu Hsi himself make textual studies of those Taoist classics which describe such "theft": the Yin-fu Canon and the Ts'an-t'ung Ch'i?⁷⁰

At the age of thirty, Yang-ming retired to a little hermitage near his home-town. We have already spoken of his practice of assiduous cultivation, and of his acquisition of a kind of "prescience." If he finally decided against a life in retirement, it certainly goes to show that he had frequently entertained the desire to be a "mountain man", and indeed, he delighted in calling himself Yang-ming Shan-jen 陽明山人 (the Mountain Man of Yang-ming).⁷¹ Whether his hermitage of 1504 was situated in a cave is not so important. But he definitely manifested, all through life, a fondness for caves. He named his cave-dwelling in Lung-ch'ang, the "Little Yang-ming Cave," and wrote several poems on it. In 1518, during one of his campaigns, he visited a double cave south of Lung-ch'uan 龍川, in Kwangtung, and fell in love with it. He gave it the name "Another Yang-ming Cave," and again wrote a series of poems to commemorate the occasion.⁷² Connected with his

love of caves, of course, is his passion for nature itself. Habitually, he instructed his disciples while roaming about in the mountains or near the lakes.

Yang-ming's frequent travels and visits to famous mountains brought him to many Buddhist as well as Taoist monasteries. The Japanese author, Kusumoto Fumio, has made a careful study of Yang-ming's peregrinations, noting a total of forty Buddhist monasteries with given names, which Yang-ming had visited. They were spread out in eight different provinces. He claims that there were another forty or more monasteries which Yang-ming also visited, the names of which are unknown to us. These visits occurred not only in his early life, but also after his conversion to the Confucian quest for sagehood. At the age of thirty-one, Yang-ming spent eight months in a Buddhist monastery--the longest sojourn recorded. At the age of forty-nine, he made thirteen visits to Buddhist monasteries, spending one or two weeks there every time.⁷³ Certainly, Yang-ming regularly met and taught his disciples in such monasteries. While these contacts do not necessarily indicate heavy influence, and Yang-ming's biographers have said much less of his Buddhist than of his Taoist practices, we should recall firstly, that the two religions, Taoism and Buddhism, experienced a "merging" process during the Yuan and Ming dynasties, and secondly, that Yang-ming himself admitted to "thirty years of interest" in Taoism and Buddhism.⁷⁴

True, starting from 1504, when he set questions for the Shantung provincial examinations, Yang-ming expressed his repudiation both of Taoism and Buddhism.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, his conversion to Confucianism did not seem definite until his meeting with Chan Jo-shui in 1505, or according to Chan in 1506.⁷⁶ And then, as we shall see, he was to develop his own "Confucian" doctrine, a response to the Taoist-Buddhist challenges, which shows that he has not been able to throw away the formative influences on his early life and thought. Indeed, as we must have discerned, the "Five Falls" were not consecutive but represented sometimes simultaneous and frequently recurrent interests. Among

them, certainly, Taoism and Buddhism lasted longer, and left deeper imprints.

Not only do the "Five Falls" refer to recurrent temptations, but they had also competed all along for Yang-ming's attention with a sixth attraction: Confucian learning. His father was known as a scholar who refused to have anything to do with Taoism and Buddhism, and had given him an "orthodox" education in the Confucian Classics. Yang-ming never seemed to have questioned the value of the Confucian goal of sagehood. He had only objected to making compromises, to regarding success at examinations and in an official career as the ultimate goal. Even when practising calligraphy, he recalled to mind the words of Ch'eng Hao: "I write with great reverence, not for the sake of writing beautiful words, but in order to learn [virtue]." ⁷⁷ He also explained: "When I started to learn calligraphy, I used to copy from model writings, and could only imitate the shapes of the characters. Later on, I no longer used the writing brush so flippantly. I first concentrated my attention and meditated upon the characters in my heart (or mind)..... . Once the heart knows, the characters will naturally be well written." ⁷⁸ This contains already the whole of his philosophy in embryo form. It explains why Yang-ming's philosophy became an inspiration for the Ming literati painters. ⁷⁹

The philosophy of Yang-ming cannot strictly be traced through a direct line of teachers, as can that of Chu Hsi, or even that of Chan Jo-shui. Much, however, has been said of Yang-ming's meeting with Lou Liang, the disciple of Wu Yü-pi 吳與弼 (1392-1469). Certainly, Lou's remark that "Sagehood is possible of attainment through learning," ⁸⁰ is extremely significant. Yang-ming was undoubtedly aware of the intellectual controversy that raged in the Chin dynasty concerning whether sages have feelings and whether "sagehood is attainable by one's own means." ⁸¹ It must certainly have been his own problem too. He is described as having searched everywhere for the extant writings of Chu Hsi in order to read them. His zeal for putting into practice the words of Ch'eng Yi and

Chu Hsi led to his "investigating" the bamboos. He did so until over-taken by sickness. He also sought to follow Chu's counsel to "study systematically, in order to become excellent in learning", and once again, he fell sick. It was therefore his supposition that only a "select" few can become sages and so was tempted to abandon the Confucian quest, and leave the world in order to practise the cultivation of life.⁸² In other words, he was ready to give up Confucian ideals of sagehood only because he did not regard himself as being capable, physically and otherwise, of attaining them.

The Taoist must have disconcerted him since they treated him as a Confucian scholar, destined to an official career, rather than as one of themselves. Determined to search for a more profound meaning in life, he then retired to his hermitage for nearly a year. However, he was to find the result of Taoist cultivation also disappointing in itself. Without having discovered a solution to the problem of "whether sagehood is possible of attainment," he decided to return to worldly society and an official career, armed now with a crusading zeal to persuade others also to "remain true to their human nature," by adherence to Confucian social morality.⁸³

Friendship with Chan Jo-shui was an important factor in Yang-ming's inner evolution. He had longed and looked, but without much success, for teachers and friends, for men who were his own intellectual equals, who had the same kind of boundless desires as he. In 1505 or 1506 the two men met for the first time in Peking. Yang-ming was then thirty-three, and Jo-shui thirty-nine. Of this meeting, he was to say: "I have lived in official circles for thirty years, without having met such a man." Chan, in his turn, also said, "I have travelled widely and seen much, but without having met such a man."⁸⁴ Together, they discussed the learning of sages, in particular the teaching of Ch'eng Hao, that "the man of jen forms one body with Heaven and Earth and all things."⁸⁵ On Yang-ming's exile to Kweichow, Chan presented him with nine poems, including the following:

We form one body with Heaven and Earth,
 One family with the Universe,
 Since our minds are already at one,
 Why should we complain of separation?
 The floating cloud cannot stay fixed;
 The traveller on the route must make his turn.
 Let us honour brilliant virtue,
 And explore the boundless vastness.⁸⁶

In reply, Yang-ming also presented Chan with several poems, including these lines, which express succinctly his desires for greatness as well as the assistance and encouragement he had received from Chan's friendship:

The waters of Chu 洙 and Ssu 泗⁸⁷ flow over a
 small area,
 The waters of Yi 伊 and Lo 洛⁸⁸ appear to be only
 a thin line.
 As to the three or four later philosophers,
 Their qualities cannot adequately make up for
 their defects.
 Alas, that I should refrain from measuring my own
 weakness,
 Limping in my walk, yet I desire to go so far.
 Repeatedly, I fall down and I rise up again,
 Breathing heavily, often near the point of breaking.

On the way I met a man with the same ambition,
 Together, we dare to proclaim the greatness of
 moral character,
 We fight for the important differences which exist
 between nuances,
 And encourage each other to go forward ten thousand
 li,
 The winds and waves are rising; we suddenly lose
 sight of each other,
 As I utter these words, my tears are vainly
 falling.⁸⁹

At that time, there was no doubt that, of the two men, Chan was the "senior" philosopher, older and more mature. He had already spent the past nine years of his life in the study of Neo-Confucianism. Yang-ming, on the other hand, was only beginning to settle down intellectually. Friendship with Chan certainly contributed to the firmness of his determination to seek for Confucian ideals, until, during his exile, he was once more faced with the same question: how could one, in those circumstances, become a sage? He would discover the answer for himself, and it was to change, not only his life, but also that of many others.

In his Preface to Yang-ming's Collected Writings (Wen-lu 文錄), Ch'ien Te-hung proposed two "triple changes" in Yang-ming's life, first as a student, and then as a teacher. As a student, Yang-ming first went through a phase of fondness for letters, then passed on to an absorbing interest in Buddhism and Taoism, and finally, during the hardships of his exile, understood the meaning of the Confucian Way.⁹⁰ All this we have already treated in our description of the "Five Falls", while noting that, given the shifts in emphasis in the general direction of his life, these "changes" or "falls" represent, to a large extent, recurrent rather than consecutive interests. The three changes in his life as a teacher, however, refer to something different. Although closely related to his own inner development, and to the refinement of his teaching, they have particular reference to the spiritual direction which he gave to his disciples, and so arose as much from his experience of their needs and responses as from that of his own. On the basis of Ch'ien's theories of the double "triple changes," and also on that of his own observations, Huang Tsung-hsi has presented his own version of a double set of "triple changes," which occurred before and after Yang-ming's development of his own teaching.⁹¹ Since the two versions do not differ very much from each other, and for the sake of convenience, we shall adopt the earlier, or Ch'ien's version. According to him, Yang-ming first taught at Kweiyang the doctrine of unity between

knowledge and action, then in 1513, after his arrival in Ch'u-yang 滁陽, Anhwei, he gave special emphasis to quiet meditation. Lastly, after 1521, having experienced all the trials that accompanied his victory over Ch'en-hao, he began to teach the doctrine of the extension of liang-chih, going right to the heart of the matter, in order to bring insight to his hearers.

From the above description of Ch'ien Te-hung, we can see how Yang-ming's teaching represented essentially a practical method rather than a metaphysical system. He had primarily sought to provide the answer to the burning question: how to become a sage? Chu Hsi's suggestion was: by cultivating an attitude of reverence in one's life and by the "investigation of things" which is achieved through an extensive knowledge. His belief, and that of Ch'eng Yi, was that such a diligent pursuit of learning--primarily moral learning--would bring with it eventually a kind of sudden enlightenment, powerful enough to give meaning to the whole of life: "There is li in everything, and one must investigate it to the utmost... . One must investigate one item today and another item tomorrow. When one has accumulated much knowledge, he will naturally achieve a thorough understanding all of a sudden."⁹²

Earlier in his life, Yang-ming had attempted to follow this advice to the letter, and had found it wanting. Instead of bringing him closer to the goal of sagehood, the exhaustive investigation of "li" discouraged him and even affected his health. Moral principles, after all, are inexhaustible, just as life itself is unfathomable. If their knowledge was necessary for virtue, then very few men would be competent to the task of pursuing virtue. This, however, would not be in accordance with the writings of the sages, especially of Mencius. It is characteristic of Yang-ming's mentality, and of the nature of the Chinese language, that he would have sought to solve this problem, not by denying the value of knowledge, but by giving it a new meaning. By proposing the doctrine of the unity or identity between knowledge and action, he placed emphasis

on a very special kind of experience: that of practising virtue. One can become a sage only by acting in a sagely way, and this action, itself, is knowledge.⁹³

That this insight should have come to him during his exile was no coincidence. Mencius had said that every man can be a Yao 堯 or a Shun 舜,⁹⁴ but Chu Hsi had specified that the road to becoming Yao and Shun lies in moral asceticism and the intellectual pursuit of moral knowledge. Yang-ming, however, found himself in the midst of people who had never heard of Yao and Shun. Have they, and their ancestors, been banned from reaching sagehood? Should they be instructed in the intricacies of investigation of principles? The Confucian had always been aware of his civilising mission towards the barbarians. Yang-ming could not help asking himself how a sage would act in these circumstances.

The unity of knowledge and action was, in a sense, the only rationalisation one could make in order to justify Mencius' teachings. He began to teach it, first to the few humble Chinese living there and then to the even humbler and less civilised Miaos. The response was gratifying:

When I spoke to [the Chinese] of the theory of knowledge and action, they were all very much pleased to hear it. After a while even the barbarians became interested and reacted in the same way. But when I came out of my exile and spoke of it to scholars and officials, they raised diverse opinions, often refusing to accept what I said. And why is it so? Because they [have been biased] by having heard other opinions.⁹⁵

The unity of knowledge and action provides a necessary foundation for the proposition that sagehood is attainable by all, but gives no instruction regarding what is virtuous action. If this need not be learned from books, then there must be another way of learning. Life, of course, is the

best teacher, but it is also an ambiguous one. The human subject, especially, cannot always remain intent, waiting to hear the instructions that life might unfold to him. A certain "formal" learning is necessary, which is not the perusal of Classics. Yang-ming suggested the method which he himself had found fruitful: that of "quiet sitting". During this exercise, one seeks not thought nor understanding, but the recovery of one's original nature--the nature that is perfectly good. In the light of its discovery, the principles of sagehood and virtue would naturally reveal themselves.

The great Sung philosophers--Chou Tun-yi, Chang Tsai, the two Ch'engs, Chu Hsi and Lu Chiu-yüan--as well as Yang-ming himself, all had a general knowledge of the principles of "meditation," common to Taoism and Buddhism.⁹⁶ These include the "remote" preparation for this exercise, which is a morally upright life, and a more "immediate" preparation, the control and regulation of one's emotions. An erect, sitting posture, whether on the chair, or, for the Buddhist, on the rush-mat, and in a lotus position, is always recommended. Attention is also given, both by the Taoists and Buddhists, to the control and regulation of breathing during the exercise of meditation. Chu Hsi himself had written a famous instruction on breath control, for which he recommends "watching the white on the nose," a Taoist practice. Control should also be exercised over one's sensations, with a view of keeping external stimuli away from the senses. The mind should be concentrated upon itself, to the exclusion of all distracting thought, and for the sake of attaining unity and harmony between consciousness and the object of consciousness, which is one's innermost self.⁹⁷

Yang-ming practised such meditation himself, and also recommended its exercise to his disciples. Soon after his exile, in 1509, while on his way to Lu-lin in Kiangsi, he had met several of them in Ch'en-chou 辰州 and had sat with them in meditation in a temple. Afterwards, he wrote to explain to them the purpose of such an exercise:

What I have said earlier in the temple about sitting in meditation was not meant for the sake of attaining Ch'an impassivity.⁹⁸ Rather, since people like us are usually distracted by our many occupations, and do not know how to recollect ourselves, I wish to recommend such a remedy to our lack of study by the recollection of the mind.⁹⁹

But Yang-ming found that meditation can also be a temptation, that one may be inclined to meditate, for the sake of resting in the tranquillity which gives, rather than for the purpose of recovering one's innate principle of moral activity. If knowledge is action, meditation surely should not be an end in itself. Besides, for the "initiated," meditation becomes much less necessary. If one is habitually conscious of the demands of liang-chih 良知 (knowledge of the good), one needs to do nothing more than living up to them in depth and fullness.

This "extension of liang-chih" represents the culmination of Yang-ming's teaching. According to Ch'ien Te-hung, he began developing this theory around 1521, after his experience of the great trials which followed the victory he had won over the rebel, Prince Ch'en-hao. It was to be his guiding principle for the rest of his life. It was also the guiding principle he gave to his disciples.

Extension of knowledge is not what later scholars understand as enriching and widening knowledge. It means simply extending my knowledge of the good to the utmost. This knowledge of the good is what Mencius meant when he said: "The [moral] sense of right and wrong is common to all men." This sense of right and wrong requires no deliberation to know, and does not depend on learning to function. This is why it is called liang-chih.¹⁰⁰

The development of this doctrine, however, did not entail a repudiation of his earlier teaching regarding the

unity of knowledge and action, or of the important role of quiet sitting, in one's understanding of self and perception of this knowledge of the good. It was rather the result of a fusion of these two, and of their simplification in practice. Since extension implies action, the extension of liang-chih necessarily presupposes the recognition that true moral knowledge lies only in action. Moreover, it includes also the meaning of acting always as one would in meditation without losing sight of one's virtuous nature, or rather, of permeating one's life and action with the spirit of quiet contemplation. For this reason, Yang-ming admitted that, in principle, ever since his exile of Lung-ch'ang, he had not taught anything but this "knowledge of the good."¹⁰¹

Since the time of Confucius, and even more since the time of Chu Hsi, the "School of Sages" had become identified with Confucian "scholasticism". Yang-ming desired to lead his students back to the sources--beyond Chu Hsi, beyond Confucius and the Classics, beyond even the first sages, who had attained sagehood without first studying the Classics. He desired to lead them back to the deepest faculty within themselves, to the principle of their originally good human nature, to liang-chih. And, after having done so, he knew that they would be able to live, as did Confucius, Yao and Shun, by practising the simplest human virtues, which make a man human, which make him also, a son, a brother, and a member of the human society in association with other men. This is the meaning of the "extension of liang-chih."

Beyond "Ardour"

The "Five Falls" describe Yang-ming's mad ardour, which led him, during his early life, from one interest to another, without resolving the problem of his fundamental restless search for absolute values. The "Three Changes", on the other hand, present to us the gradual evolution of the substance and method of his teaching, after his definitive return to the Way of Confucianism. He remained, even then, madly ardent, but his ardour was now tempered with peace and serenity. He had become totally independent of the vicissitudes of life and the judgement of others.

His development of a new philosophy, interpreting the investigation of things as the rectification of the mind or heart, brought him criticisms, including the charge of preaching heresy. In 1523, students sitting for civil examinations in Peking were questioned about the "philosophy of the mind"--in an attempt by the authorities to discredit Yang-ming's teachings. Among the candidates, one disciple of Yang-ming, angered by the move, walked out of the examination hall. Others, too, were very much provoked. Yang-ming's reaction, however, was very different. "The learning of the sages will, from now on, be well known," he said, "because, ...if my teachings are held [everywhere] to be false, there must be people in the world who will do their best to find out the truth."¹⁰²

He went on to explain that, before, during his sojourn in Nanking (1515-1516), he had yet something of the "Pharisaic" in him. But by this time he only believed in liang-chih:

Where truths and falsehood are concerned, I no longer need to hide or be on the defensive. This is how I can be "ardent." Even if the whole world says that my actions do not measure up to my words, I would still act according to liang-chih.¹⁰³

When questioned further concerning the distinction between the "Pharisaic" and the "ardent," Yang-ming explained:

The "Pharisaic" seeks approval of the gentleman (chün-tzu 君子) by being faithful and incorrupt. He also seeks not to offend the mediocre men (hsiao-jen 小人), by doing what they do His mind is therefore corrupt, and he cannot enter the way of Yao and Shun. The "ardent" aims at emulating the ancients. No turmoil or worldliness is sufficient to disturb his mind. He is like a phoenix flying above at a height of 10,000 feet. With one more motion, he can become a sage.¹⁰⁴

We should not be surprised, therefore, to find Yang-ming praising that man of strange ambitions, Tseng Tien, without reservation. Using the words of the Doctrine of the Mean, he remarked that Tseng was a man who "can find no situation in which he is not at ease with himself."

If he is in the midst of barbarous tribes, he does what is appropriate to being in the midst of barbarous tribes. If he is in danger and difficulty, he does what is appropriate to this situation of danger and difficulty.¹⁰⁵

Besides, he added: "The other three disciples may be described as ch'i ^天_天. Tseng Tien showed that he was no ch'i."¹⁰⁶ Neither, of course, was Yang-ming.

A man who admired Yang-ming's accomplishments as a writer, statesman, soldier and man of virtue, but disapproved of his philosophy, once remarked: "Men of old became famous, sometimes for their literary writings, sometimes for their political achievements, sometimes for their high virtue, and sometimes for their military victories. But you possess all these titles to fame. If you would only abandon your work of teaching, you would be a perfect man." With a smile, Yang-ming replied: "I would prefer to give up the other four titles to fame, and only teach [philosophy]. I believe that this would not make me less perfect."¹⁰⁷

In the autumn of 1524, during Yang-ming's period of retirement from public office, he prepared a banquet for his students on the night of the Mid-Autumn Festival. The tables were set outdoors, at the Pi-hsia ^{碧霞} Pond near the T'ien-ch'üan ^{天泉} Bridge. Over 100 persons were present. Wine was served, after which the guests enjoyed themselves by singing, pitching arrows, beating drums, or boating. Pleased and a little gay himself, Yang-ming composed a poem to honour the occasion. Its first verse concludes with these lines:

Old as I am, I sing wild (k'uang) songs tonight,
 To be transformed into heavenly music, filling up
 the Great Purity.¹⁰⁸

The second verse goes on to say:

Everywhere brightly shines the mid-autumn moon,
 Where else can you find another assembly of such
 talents?

Alas, that learning should already have been
 interrupted for 1000 years!

Waste not your one life, men born to greatness!
 Whether our influence will outreach Chu Hsi's is
 a matter of doubt,

Yet in no wise shall we imitate Cheng Hsüan's¹⁰⁹
 quest for details and fragments.

Setting aside the lute while the notes are still
 vibrating in the spring breeze,

Tseng Tien, the ardent and eccentric (k'uang),
 understands my mind best.¹¹⁰

However, the next day, when his disciples came to thank him for the feast, he said some very remarkable words, which show that while he approved of "mad ardour", he aimed at something even higher. Referring to the passage of Mencius in which the philosopher explained to one of his disciples why Confucius, during his sojourn in the state of Ch'en, expressed his desire to return to his "ardent" (k'uang) students of Lu,¹¹¹ Yang-ming offered his own reflections. He said that while scholars of the world, shackled by considerations of wealth, honour and profit, might be able to liberate themselves from these vanities when they heard the teaching of Confucius, yet they still ran the risk of giving only notional assent to the sage's words without really putting them into practice:

And so they might gradually suffer from the defect of despising worldly affairs, and of paying scant attention to questions of social morality. Although they might be different from the commonplace and

mediocre people of the world, they also have not attained the Way. That was why Confucius wanted to return [to Lu] from Ch'en in order to instruct them, and lead them on to the Way. When you, my friends, discuss learning, you should also fear not having understood this message. Now that you have seen it, must make assiduous efforts to reach the Way. Do not be satisfied with some small insight, and stop at being "ardent" (k'uang).¹¹²

If Yang-ming valued the quality of "ardour", it was for the sake of a higher goal. He was to reach beyond ardour, on to sagehood.

And this was also the verdict of his favourite disciple, Hsü Ai, who was to die eleven years before the Master. In his introduction to the first part of Ch'uan-hsi lu, Hsü had this to say about the person of Yang-ming:

The master is naturally intelligent and perceptive. But he is also serene, joyful, straightforward and easy-going. He pays no attention to his appearance. People who knew how impatient of restraints and conventions he had been as a young man, and how he was once absorbed with the writing of artful prose and poetry, and with the teachings of Buddhism and Taoism, regarded his new theories as novel doctrines, unworthy of careful study. They did not realise that his three years of exile among barbarians, and his efforts to keep [his mind] at peace while in the midst of difficulties, had brought him a degree of discernment and of single-mindedness that indicates his penetration into the state of sagehood, and his attainment of supreme harmony and truth.¹¹³

Notes to Chapter II

- 1 Analects 13:21. Adapted from Legge, Classics, v.1, 272.
- 2 Analects 17:13, Legge, Classics, v.1, 324. Confucius even calls the hsiang-yüan or Pharisaic the "thief of virtue".
- 3 Mencius 7B:37. See Legge, v.2, 499-500. Tseng Tien, father of Tseng Shen 曾參, was characterised as k'uang by Ch'eng Hao and Chu Hsi for his carefree reply to Confucius regarding his ambition in life [Analects 11:25; Legge, Classics, v.1, 246-9] See Yi-shu 12:1b; CTYL 40:2b. Ch'in-chang is often identified with Tzu-chang, a disciple of Confucius, and how he played and sang on the lute in the presence of a dead friend of his. See Chuang-tzu, "Ta Tsung-shih" 大宗師 [Great and Venerable Teacher], SPPY ed., 3:10a. See also Burton Watson, Eng.tr., op.cit. p.86. Nothing is known of Mu-p'i.
- 4 Analects, V, 21. Adapted from Legge, Eng.tr., op.cit., v.1, p.181. Mou Jun-sun, in his article, "Shih Lun-yü 'k'uang-chien' chang," [An interpretation of 'k'uang-chien' of the Analects] Hsin-ya hsüeh-pao (New Asia Journal), II, (1957), pp. 79-86, explains that this passage of the Analects should not be interpreted as referring to conduct, but that the two words here refer to writing. He therefore objects to Mencius' interpretation of the words, as well as to Chu Hsi's comments.
- 5 SSCC, Lun-yü chi-chu [Collected Commentary on the Analects], 3:6b, 7:24b.
- 6 CTYL, op.cit., 29: 11a-13b.
- 7 Analects 17:16. Legge, Classics, v.1, 325.
- 8 Analects 18:5. See Legge, Classics, v.1, 332-333. Chien-yü, of course, was only feigning madness to mock Confucius.
- 9 These seven men included Hsi K'ang 嵇康 (223-262), Juan Chi 阮籍 (210-263), Shan T'ao 山濤 (205-283), Hsiang Hsiu 向秀 (c.221-c.300), Wang Jung 王戎 (234-305), Liu Lin 劉伶 (c.221-c.300) and Juan Chi's son Juan Hsien 阮咸. See Donald Holzman, "Les Sept Sages de Forêt des Bambous", T'oung-Pao LXIV, (1967) pp. 317-346.
- 10 This poem is entitled "Lu-shan yao" 廬山謠, [The Lu-shan Song]. For the life of Li Po, see Hsüeh Chung-yung's 薛仲邕 "Nien-pu" [Chronological Biography of Li Po] in Li T'ai-po chi [The Collected Poems of Li Po] (Shanghai:1930) 35: 54-56. See also 14:35 for the poem.

- 11 Huang Tsung-hsi, MJHA, 32: 1a-4b, gives an account of the T'ai-chou branch of Yang-ming school and its unique development.
- 12 Ch'ien Te-hung 錢德洪 (1496-1574) "Nien-p'u" [Chronological Biography of Wang Yang-ming], in WWKC 32: 904a-b.
- 13 This story comes from the novel by Feng Meng-lung 馮夢龍 (d.1645), who wrote under the pseudonym Mo Han-ch'ai 墨憨齋. The novel is called Wang Yang-ming ch'u-sheng ching-nan lu [Wang Yang-ming's life and Pacification Campaigns]. It has been reprinted in Taipei, in 1968. See pp. 7-8. This incident has been quoted by many responsible writers on Yang-ming. See, for example, Shimada Kenji, Shu-shi gaku to Yōmei-gaku [The Chu Hsi School and the Yang-ming School], (Tokyo: 1967), p.123.
- 14 See above, n.13.
- 15 See Yang Yi-ch'ing, "Hai-jih hsien-sheng mu-chih ming," 海日先生墓誌銘 [Epitaph on Wang Hua], in WWKC 37: 1042b. For the Ming educational and examination system, see Tilemann Grimm, Erziehung und Politik im Konfuzianischen China der Ming-Zeit: 1368-1644, (Hamburg: 1960).
- 16 Ch'ien, "Nien-p'u", op.cit., WWKC 32:904b. During Yang-ming's time, the Ming dynasty had seen its best days, and was declining gradually. The despotic nature of the imperial government made political dissent difficult, while a series of Oirat and Tartar raids on the northern frontiers harassed the dynasty. See MS 327: 837-840; 328: 841-842; Tilemann Grimm, "War das China der Ming-Zeit totalitär?" Nachrichten der Gesellschaft für Natur und Völkerkunde LXXIX/LXXX (1956), 30-36.
- 17 WWKC 32: 904b-905a.
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 For Lou Liang's life and teaching, see MJHA, 2: 8a-9a.
- 20 Ch'ien, "Nien-p'u", WWKC 32:905b.
- 21 Ibid. See also "Ch'uan-hsi lu", WWKC 3:153a. Adapted from Wing-tsit Chan, Instructions, p.249.
- 22 Ch'ien, "Nien-p'u", WWKC 32: 905b-906b.
- 23 Ibid., 32: 907a-b. See also MS 195:463; Yü Hsien, Huang Ming chin-shih teng-k'o k'ao [Record of the Successful Candidates of the chin-shih degree in the Ming Dynasty], (Preface 1548), in Ch'ü Wan-li's Ming-tai shih-chi hui-k'uan [A Collected Depository of the Historical Records of the Ming Dynasty], (Taipei reprint, 1969) 9:37b.

- 24 See Mao Ch'i-ling, Wang Wen-ch'eng chuan-pen [Draft Biography of Wang Yang-ming], in Hsi-ho ho-chi [Collected Writings of Mao Ch'i-ling], (Preface dated 1685), v.1, pp. 1b-2a. Feng Meng-lung's novel suggests that the "Cave" was situated south of the Ssu-ming 四明 Mountain from which the name Yang-ming derived. See pt. 1, 12a.
- 25 Ch'ien, "Nien-p'u", op.cit., WWKC 32: 907b.
- 26 Tu Wei-ming gives much importance to this change of mind. See The Quest for Self-realisation: A Study of Wang Yang-ming's Formative Years, 1472-1509, (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Harvard University, 1968), microfilm copy, p.55.
- 27 For Ming eunuch power, see Chao Yi ., Erh-shih-erh shih cha-chi [Study Notes on the Twenty-two Histories]. SPFY ed., 36, and [Yeh] Ting-yi, Ming-tai te t'e-wu cheng-chih [The Secret Police Politics of the Ming Dynasty] (Peking: 1950) 8-9; 15-34; Robert B. Crawford, "Eunuch Power in the Ming Dynasty." T'oung-Pao XLIX, (1962), 115-148.
- 28 For Yang-ming's memorial, see WWKC 9: 276-7.
- 29 The traditional accounts speak of Yang-ming going south to Ch'ien-t'ang 錢塘 River where he pretended to have committed suicide. He then took a boat which was blown by typhoon to Fukien. After a stay in a Taoist monastery in the Wu-yi 武夷 Mountain, he went to Kuang-hsin, crossed the P'o-yang 鄱陽 Lake to visit his father in Nanking, went south again to sail up the Ch'ien-t'ang River to Nanchang, and from there he travelled by boat along the Yuan 沅 and Hsiang 湘 Rivers to reach his final destination. See "Nien-p'u", WWKC 22:908b; "Hsing-chuang," WWKC 37:1057. Wing-tsit Chan has questioned these accounts [see Instructions, "Introduction", xxiv]. Possibly, Yang-ming's poems, singing of adventures of crossing the sea and the mountains, had provided cues for those who accept the "devious route" [See WWKC 19:576a]. Chan Jo-shui, however, dismissed the historical value of these verses, claiming that they represented Yang-ming's attempt to feign madness and avoid the suspicions of his enemies. See "Mu-chih ming", WWKC 37: 1053b.
- 30 "Nien-p'u", op.cit., WWKC 32: 909a-b. MS 195:463. See also Yamane Sachio, Mingdai yōeki no tenkai [The Development of the corvée system in the Ming Dynasty] (Tokyo: 1966) p.73f. He alleges that Yang-ming probably learnt how to handle rough men during his exile.
- 31 Ch'ien, "Nien-p'u", op.cit., WWKC 32:909b.
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 Ibid., 32: 911a-b.

- 34 Ch'ien, "Nien-p'u", WWKC 32:917b. MS 195:463. Wang Ch'ung was to show unwavering trust in, and support of Yang-ming, also after his defeat of the rebel Prince Ch'en-hao.
- 35 MS 195:463. See also Fei Hung's 費宏 (1468-1535), "Yang-ming hsien-sheng p'ing Li-t'ou chi" 陽明先生平 利頭記 [Account of Yang-ming's Pacification of Li-t'ou] in WWKC 38: 1109-1111, and "Nien-p'u", WWKC 32: 917b-925b. For Yang-ming's military exploits and political achievements, see also an article by Chang Yü-ch'uan, "Wang Shou- jen as a Statesman", in Chinese Social and Political Science Review [abbrev. as CSPSR], XXIII (1939-40), pp. 230-5. Yang-ming did not like war; he wept for having had to give orders to kill. See WWKC 32:924a.
- 36 "Nien-p'u", WWKC 33: 933-943. MS 195:463.
- 37 "Nien-p'u", WWKC 33:944. MS 16:31 Mao Ch'i-ling. Ming Wu-tsung wai-chi, (Taipei reprint: 1964); 11-29. Many officials had suffered death or imprisonment for counselling the emperor not to go south. See also Wolfgang Seuberlich, "Kaisertreue oder Auflehnung? Eine Episode aus der Ming-Zeit", Deutsche Morganländische Gesellschaft Zeitschrift 102, (1952), 304-313.
- 38 "Nien-p'u", WWKC 33: 945-952, passim.
- 39 Han Hsin 韓信 (d.196BC) had helped to found the Han dynasty but was later killed by the Empress Lü 呂 with connivance of Emperor Kao-tsu. See Shih-chi, ESWS series, K'ai-ming ed., 92: 221-3.
- 40 Shao Yung, the Sung philosopher, spent most of his life in virtual retirement. See SS 427: 1098-9.
- 41 Keeping the knife intact refers to cultivation of life. See Chuang-tzu "Yang-sheng chu" 養生主 [Caring for life], SPFY ed., 2: 1b-2a. Burton Watson's trans., op.cit., 50-51.
- 42 This poem is taken from WWKC 20:611b.
- 43 Ch'ien, "Nien-p'u", WWKC 33:954b. Shih-tsung 世宗 reigned 1522-66.
- 44 "Nien-p'u", WWKC 34:962, MS 17: 31-32; Hsia Hsieh 夏燾 (fl.1850), Ming T'ung-chien [Comprehensive Mirror of the Ming Dynasty] (Peking: 1959), 50: 1851-6; 51: 1895-1932 passim. Yang-ming seemed to have expressed his opinions on this subject through certain poems he wrote at the time. See WWKC 20:627. See also article by Amada Takeo "Tairei no gi to Ōyōmei," [The great Ceremonial dispute and Wang Yang-ming], in Chūgoku Tetsugaku, I (February 1961), pp.1-9. See also Nakayama Hachirō, "Futatabi 'Kasei' chō tairei mondai no hotan ni tsuite," [Twice concerning 'The Origin of the Ceremonial Affairs in the Chia-ching Era'], in Mindai shi ronsō [Studies on the Ming Period] ed., by the Shimizu Hakase Tsuitō Kinen Mindaiishi Ronsō Hensaiinkai [Editorial Committee of the Studies on the Ming Period, in honour of the memory of Dr. Shimizu] (Tokyo: 1962), pp. 61-78.

- 45 See Huang Wan's "Hsing-chuang" [Biography of Wang Yang-ming], WWKC 37: 1071a-b Yang's jealousy is also hinted at in "Nien-p'u, WWKC 33: 943a during the time following Wang's victory over Ch'en-hao.
- 46 Huang Wan, "Hsing-chuang", op.cit., WWKC 37: 1071b.
- 47 "Nien-p'u", WWKC 34: 973b-981a MS 195: 464.
- 48 "Nien-p'u", WWKC 34: 976b.
- 49 Ibid., WWKC 37: 976-981a.
- 50 Ibid., WWKC 34: 990a-991b.
- 51 Huang Wan, "Hsing-chuang," WWKC 37: 1074a-b.
- 52 See MS 195: 464.
- 53 "Nien-p'u", WWKC 35: 1017a.
- 54 Ibid.,
- 55 "Hsing-chuang", WWKC 37: 1074b.
- 56 Chan Jo-shui, "Mu-chih ming", op.cit., WWKC 37: 1052b-1053a. See also Wang Chi's 王畿 [Wang Lung-hsi 王龍溪 1498-1583] "K'io Yang-ming hsien-sheng nien-p'u hsi". 刻陽明先生年譜序 [Preface to Nien-p'u] WWKC 36: 1021b-1022a. As for Chan Jo-shui, the disciple of Ch'en Hsien-chang 陳獻章 [Ch'en Po-sha 陳白沙 1428-1500], see MJHA 37: 2a-b.
- 57 WWKC 34: 958b.
- 58 Ch'ien, "Nien-p'u", WWKC 32: 904a.
- 59 Ibid.
- 60 Ibid., 32: 904b. The real visit to the temple is described in WWKC 34: 988b.
- 61 Ibid., 32: 906a-907b. Mao Ch'i-ling, Wang Wen-ch'eng chuan-pen, 1, p. 6. Yu Ch'ung-yao, Yang-ming hsien-sheng chuan-tsuan [Collated Biography of Wang Yang-ming] (Shanghai: 1923), p. 5. For the life of Hsü Chang, see MJHA 10: 4b.
- 62 Ch'ien "Nien-p'u", WWKC 32: 943b.
- 63 Huang Wan, "Hsing-chuang", WWKC 37: 1057a. See also Sung P'ei-wei, Ming wen-hsueh shih [History of Ming Literature] (Shanghai: 1934), pp. 89-106.
- 64 "Nien-p'u", WWKC 32: 907a.

- 65 See Yang-ming's letter to a friend who asked him about how to attain physical immortality. WWKC 21: 638a-b.
- 66 Ch'ien, Nien-p'u", op.cit., WWKC 32: 904a.
- 67 See Pao-p'u Tzu, [The Philosopher Who embraced Simplicity], SPPY ed. "Nei-p'ien", 內篇 [Inner Chapters], 18: 1a.
- 68 Liu Ts'un-yan, "Taoist Self-cultivation in Ming Thought", in Wm. Theodore de Bary, ed., Self and Society in Ming Thought pp. 293-296. See also T'ai-hsi ching-su [Commentary on Embryo Breath Canon] by Wang Wen-lu, in Po-tzu ch'üan-shu [Complete Works of a Hundred Philosophers] (Shanghai: 1927), part 1, 1a-3a.
- 69 Liu Ts'un-yan, "Taoist Self-cultivation", op. cit., p. 301. See Yin-fu 陰符 Canon in Po-tzu ch'üan-shu, op.cit., pt. 1, 1a-3a.
- 70 The Ts'an-t'ung ch'i 參同契 is attributed to Wei Po-yang 魏伯陽 (fl. 147-167). In one of his letters, Yang-ming accused Chu Hsi of having wasted his time writing these books. See WWKC 21: 640. According to Chi Yün et al., comp., SKTY 28: 37-8 and 28: 55, Chu's studies resemble commentaries, but are called textual studies because the books concerned were not Confucian classics, but Taoist texts.
- 71 WWKC 20: 609. See article by Suzuki Tadashi, "Mindai sanjin ko," in Mindaishi ronsō, op. cit., pp. 357-388. Yang-ming is not among them, but certainly shared their love of solitude. However, it must be pointed out that the term "Shan-jen" was frequently used by both scholars and pseudo-scholars in the Ming dynasty in "literary names" which they gave themselves. See SKTY 36: 45.
- 72 WWKC 20: 609a.
- 73 Kusumoto Fumio, Ōyōmei no zen no shisō no kenkyū, [A Study of Zen Buddhist Elements in Yang-ming's Thought], (Nagoya: 1958), pp. 65-82, passim. In his article "How Buddhist is Wang Yang-ming?" PEW XII (1962), 203-216, Prof. Wing-tsit Chang argues that Buddhist influence on Yang-ming was less than what is usually believed. It is my judgement, to be further developed in Ch. VII and Ch. VIII that Yang-ming's openness of mind made irrelevant the "orthodox-heretic" debate with its concern for discerning in his thought Buddhist or Taoist influences.
- 74 See his poem "Tseng Yang-po", 贈陽伯 [To Yang-po] WWKC 19: 570b. He mentions thirty years explicitly with regard to Taoism.
- 75 WWKC 31B, 876a - 902a.

- 76 See below, n.83.
- 77 ECCS, Yi-shu, 3:2a.
- 78 Ch'ien, "Nien-p'u", WWKC 32:905a.
- 79 See Nelson I. Wu, "Tung Ch'i-ch'ang, 1555-1636: Apathy in Government and Fervour in Art," in A.F. Wright and D. Twitchett, ed., Confucian Personalities, 277.
- 80 "Nien-p'u", WWKC 32: 905a-b.
- 81 See T'ang Yung-t'ung, Wei-Chin hsüan-hsüeh lun-kao [A Preliminary Discussion of the Metaphysical Learning of the Wei-Chin Period], (Peking: 1957), 72-83. See also an older book by Jung Chao-tsu, Wei-Chin te tzu-jan chu-yi [The Naturalism of the Wei-Chin Dynasties], (Peking: 1934), 24-25.
- 82 "Nien-p'u", WWKC 32:906a-b.
- 83 Ibid., 32:907b.
- 84 See Chan Jo-shui, "Mu-chih ming", op.cit., WWKC 37: 1053, which gives the year as 1506. In his article on "Tan Kan-sen to Ō Yōmei," [Chan Jo-shui and Wang Yang-ming] Tetsugaku nenpō XXVII (1968), p.301, n.2, Araki Kengo mentioned this discrepancy and also gives the same date as the "Nien-p'u", as being probably the more accurate.
- 85 ECCS, Yi-shu, 2A:3a.
- 86 See Chan Jo-shui, "Mu-chih ming", WWKC 37:1053a.
- 87 These two rivers flow through Shantung, the region which belonged to the former state of Lu, where Confucius was born. Hence the two rivers represent the culture of Lu and the teaching of Confucius.
- 88 These two rivers flow through Honan, and represent the teachings of the two Ch'eng brothers, who were natives of Loyang 洛陽. Ch'eng Yi lived near the River Yi 伊 and called himself by the name Yi-ch'uan.
- 89 This poem can be found in WWKC 19: 572b.
- 90 Ch'ien Te-hung, "K'o wen-lu hsü-shuo" 刻文錄銘說 [Some Words on the Printing of Yang-ming's Collected Writings], WWKC, Prefaces, p.13. See also Yamashita Ryuji, "Ō Yōmei no shisō no henshen," [The Evolution of Wang Yang-ming's Thought], in Nippon Chugoku gakkaihō X, (1958), 119-133.
- 91 MJHA 10:3b-4a.
- 92 ECCS, Yi-shu, 18:5b. See Wing-tsit Chan, Source Book, 561. See also CTYL 15:4b-5a.

- 93 "Nien-p'u", WWKC 32: 909a-901b "Ch'uan-hsi lu", WWKC 1: 58a-b. See Chan, Instructions, 11.
- 94 Mencius 4B: 32. Legge, Classics. v.2, p. 340.
- 95 Ch'ien Te-hung, "K'o wen-lu hsü-shuo," op. cit., WWKC, Prefaces, p. 13a-b.
- 96 See above, Ch. I.
- 97 See Okada Takehiko, Zazen to seiza [Ch'an meditation and quiet sitting], (Nagasaki: 1965), pp. 19-20.
- 98 The Chinese word ting 定 can also refer to the Sanskrit samādhi.
- 99 WWKC 4: 170.
- 100 See Yang-ming's "Ta-hsüeh wen" 大學問, [Inquiry into the Great Learning] WWKC 26: 739a. Wing-tsit Chan, Instructions, p. 278. Yang-ming is making reference here to Mencius 7A: 15.
- 101 Ch'ien, "K'o wen-lu hsü-shuo," WWKC, Prefaces, 13b.
- 102 Ch'ien, "Nien-p'u", WWKC 34: 958.
- 103 Ch'ien, "Nien-p'u", WWKC 34: 958b.
- 104 Ibid., 34: 958b-959a.
- 105 Doctrine of the Mean, ch. 14. See Legge, Classics, v.1, 395.
- 106 "Ch'uan-hsi lu", part 1, WWKC 1: 66b. See Wing-tsit Chan, Instructions, p. 31. See also WWKC 3: 140a and Chan, p. 215. The reference is to Analects 2: 12, where Confucius said that a gentleman is not a "utensil". See Legge, Classics, v.1, p. 150.
- 107 Tsou Shou-yi 鄒守益 [Tsou Ch'ien-chih 鄒謙之 1591-1562], "Yang-ming hsien-sheng wen-lu hsü", 陽明先生文錄序 [Preface to the Collected Writings of Yang-ming], WWKC Preface, p.8b.
- 108 "Great Purity" (T'ai-ch'ing 太清) refers to the sky. See WWKC 20: 627b for the poem.
- 109 Cheng Hsüan wrote commentaries on all the classics. See Hou-Han-shu [History of the Latter Han Dynasty] ESWS series, K'ai-ming ed., 65: 132-3.
- 110 WWKC 20: 627b.
- 111 Analects 5: 21. Legge, Classics, v.1, 181.
- 112 Ch'ien, "Nien-p'u", WWKC 34: 961a-b.
- 113 "Ch'uan-hsi lu", pt. 1, op. cit., WWKC 1: 55b, translated by Wing-tsit Chan, Instructions, 4.