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The Lineage Orientation and Its Critics: Paths to Pluralism in Chinese Classicism and Politics

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THE LINEAGE ORIENTATION AND ITS CRITICS

Paths to Pluralism in Chinese Classicism and Politics

Magnus Ribbing Gren

A DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

Throughout the Late Imperial period, conflict and disunity in Chinese politics were tied to a lack of consensus in classical scholarship. As the civil examinations grew in importance, intellectual partisanship and political factionalism became inextricably intertwined.

Generations of Chinese scholars during the Song-Yuan-Ming-Qing dynasties recognized this problem and many sought a solution, while some Late Ming intellectuals resigned to individualism and relativism. Partly in reaction to such Late Ming trends, Qing dynasty scholarship developed methods and techniques that used textual evidence to forge indisputable consensus in the reading and interpretation of classical texts.

Qing evidential research in Canton was at its 19th century peak when scholars like Fang Dongshu (1772-1851) and Chen Li (1810-1882) began to question it. They declared the movement's attempt to establish intellectual consensus a failure and viewed the exclusivist values of its methodology as the cause of that failure. Chen Li traced this exclusionism back to Cheng-Zhu *daoxue* in the Song-Ming dynasties and argued that it was being perpetuated in Qing dynasty evidential research.

This dissertation systematizes these exclusivist values under the label of a "lineage orientation" in Chinese classicism and politics. It then demonstrates how 19th century Chinese scholars countered the lineage orientation with methodological innovation in the pursuit of variations on the concept of pluralism. The notion of pluralism, as a solution to disunity and partisanship, was then further developed by Gu Jiegang (1893-1980) and others in Republican China.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ..... **iii**
TABLE OF CONTENTS ..... **iv**
INTRODUCTION ..... **vi**

PART I **1**
CHAPTER 1: THE SONG DYNASTY SEARCH FOR UNITY **2**
1.1 Lineage Orientation in Song Society 3
From Communal Families to Lineages 4
The Lineage Orientation in Chan and Daoxue Thought 5
1.2 Daoxue and Court Factionalism 8
Wang Anshi and Northern Song Factionalism 12
Factionalism in the Southern Song 13
1.3 Cheng Yi on Belief 17
Sincerity, Unity, and Coherence 17
Trust, Knowledge, and Belief 20
Belief as a Building Block for Political Influence 26
Investigating Things and Realizing Coherence 28
Rejecting Alternative Viewpoints 32
Cheng-Zhu Daoxue as Political Philosophy 35
CHAPTER 2: THE PRICE OF UNITY IN THE MING DYNASTY **37**
2.1 The Political Adoption of Cheng-Zhu Orthodoxy 37
Zhu Yuanzhang and Wuzhou Daoxue 39
Fang Xiaoru and the Yongle Emperor 44
2.2 Wang Yangming on Sincerity 47
The Inheritance and Departure from Cheng Yi 48
Wang Gen and Moral Relativism 52
2.3 The Donglin Movement and Gu Xiancheng 53
Gu Xiancheng on Political Martyrdom 57
CHAPTER 3: CLASSICISM AND POLITICS IN QING CHINA **63**
3.1 Evidential Research as a Model for Unity 64
Reestablishing the Lineage Orientation 65
Literati Collaboration with the Manchu Court 67
Hui Dong on Sincerity and Ritual in Analects 3.8 70
The Qianlong Emperor and Han Learning 77
3.2 Han-Song Factionalism and Dynastic Decline in the 19th Century 88
Dai Zhen on the Common Good 89
The Jiaqing Emperor and Statecraft Thought 97
Kang Youwei and New Text Studies 102
Disunity and the Decline of the Qing Dynasty 107
3.3 The Lineage Orientation in Evidential Research 110
Daotong and Jiafa: the Sage-Author in Evidential Research 112
Authenticity in Evidential Research 115
Questioning the Authenticity of the Zuozhuan 118
Lexicological Consistency, Interpretive Coherence, and Precision 120

PART II **124**
CHAPTER 4: FANG DONGSHU **126**
4.1 Critique of Han Learning Partisanship 129
Song-Ming Factionalism and the Opium War 131

The Motivations of Qing Evidential Research Scholars 135
Interpretive Values in Evidential Research 140
4.2 Critique of Evidential Research Methodology 144
Concrete versus Abstract 144
Ritual and Principle 147
Practice and Application 150
Lexicology and Textual Interpretation 153
4.3 In Defense of the Old Text *Shangshu* and the Moral Mind 158
Authenticity and Textual Transmission of the Old Text Shangshu 159
Lineage Orientation and the Threat of Relativism 164
CHAPTER 5: CHEN LI 166
5.1 Rejecting Lineage-Oriented Narratives 172
Song Dynasty Citation Practices and the Continuity of Knowledge 174
Citation Practices in Qing Evidential Research 175
The Danger of Generalization 179
Partisanship and Personal Opinion in Han Learning 181
Relativism and New Text Studies 184
5.2 "Return to Antiquity": A Problem of Aims more than Methods 188
On the Authenticity of Sagehood 188
Original Meaning and Authorial Intention 192
Inner and Outer Commentaries 194
Subdisciplines in Classical Studies 196
5.3 The Precarious Idea of Precision 198
Incompleteness of Received Texts 198
The Meaning of Ritual 200
Figures and Numbers in Yijing Studies 201
Calendrical Studies 206
5.4 Celebrating the Success of Historical Transmission 209
The Study of Men in History 211
The Imperfection of Knowledge 215
Applied Classicism in Qian Daxin's "Lügua shuo" 218
5.5 Finding Unity in Pluralism 224
The Problematic Educational System 224
Broad Foundations for Unity 227
Asking How-Questions, Not What-Questions 229
5.6 Zhu Yixin and Han-Song Syncretism 234
CHAPTER 6: GU JIEGANG 240
Intellectual Lineages and the Background of Gushibian 241
Departmentalized Knowledge 245
Multicultural Antiquity 249
Historical Imagination 252
Conflicting Agendas in the Gushibian 258
CONCLUSION 264
APPENDIX: WHERE TO GO FROM HERE 266
Southern Learning and Regional Characteristics of Pluralist Thought 266
Religious Sects and Rebel Ideologies in Chinese Intellectual History 268
Discovered Chinese Manuscripts and Lineage-Oriented Methodology 274
BIBLIOGRAPHY 279
Secondary Sources 279
Primary Sources 300

INTRODUCTION

Over the course of the 19th and early 20th centuries, Chinese society faced foreign aggression and was bombarded with foreign cultural values. At the same time, its inhabitants were uprooted and moved around due to civil war. Deeply held assumptions and habitual ways of life were put to the test, and Chinese thinkers active during this period dealt in unprecedented depth with problems of cultural unity and intellectual consensus.

This dissertation refers to the concept of "pluralism," which in this Late Imperial Chinese context refers to a view of knowledge that recognized the existence of various, equally correct and incommensurable standards of validity.[1] While the application of such a view differed from one situation to another, all pluralist thought fundamentally rejected the exclusivism and universalizing impulse of what I call a "lineage orientation" in Late Imperial Chinese thought. At the same time, pluralism also implied a rejection of relativism.

The lineage orientation in Chinese thought was an attitude to knowledge that encouraged and actively pursued ideological uniformity. Much like the structure of Late Imperial Chinese society, knowledge was seen as a genealogical tree, with lines of transmission extending down from a single, perfectly coherent and unified origin.[2] In his pursuit of knowledge, the lineage-oriented scholar aimed to reconstruct the lineage of transmission, which had been obscured by the passage of time and due to the limited vision of his predecessors. The scholar was not supposed to find knowledge within himself, but only in the reconstructed lineage and its origin. In this genealogy, the scholar located himself as a successor to others and was expected to humbly know his own place in the lineage. Those who did not were forthwith excluded from the socio-intellectual community as adherents of heterodoxy. In this way, the lineage orientation put a lid on

[1] Cf. Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," in *Four Essays on Liberty*, ed. Berlin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 1-32.

[2] I do not posit either intellectual-cultural or social-structural aspects of the lineage orientation as the simple cause or effect of the other, but as mutually constitutive. See Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, ed. Geertz (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 87-125.

idiosyncrasy and any pluralism of thought. The lineage orientation was systematic and by nature universal in scope. Each individual thing or person had its fixed place in the *coherence* of all things past and present. This harmonious whole was the standard by which to judge and exclude, or redefine, anything that did not fit. For any given thing—an individual, a text, an idea, and so forth—to fulfill its given role in the larger genealogical system became the definition of notions such as "sincerity" (*cheng* 誠), "authenticity" (*zhen* 真), "substantiality" (*shi* 實) and of "being without pretense" (*pu* 樸). There was no room in the lineage orientation for any pluralism or "duplicity" (*wei* 偽), and conflicts always stemmed from the introduction of a "falsity" (*wei*) that disturbed the order.

This dissertation is primarily a contribution to the cultural history of textual studies and classicism in Late Imperial China, but also embeds such practice in a socio-political context of intellectual partisanship and political factionalism. The chronological focus is a period between the 1820s to the 1930s, but a broader perspective is also taken that covers the 10th through 20th centuries. The question is often asked if evidential research (*kaozheng* 考證), or its more narrowly defined component of Han Learning (*hanxue* 漢學), implied a break with past modes of thought, or if there was more of a continuity with Song-Ming philosophy. Trying to give a definitive answer to that question is quite pointless, as there are always elements of continuity in any break between historical periods constructed by historians. The discussion that follows will nevertheless be organized loosely around such a framework with the aim of investigating differences and similarities between the notion of a "transmission of the Way" (*daotong* 道統) that formed an important part of Cheng-Zhu philosophy, on the one hand, and on the other a concept of textual transmission and interpretive lineages (*jiafa* 家法) used by scholars in the Qing dynasty Han Learning movement and its various offshoots.[3]

[3] The term *jiafa* is mentioned in the *Hou Hanshu*, where it described a family or intellectual lineage structured around the transmission and interpretation of a text. Due to the scarcity and ambiguity of sources, we know little concretely about how such schools or lineages were structured and what purposes they served. For a commonly cited account, see Pi Xirui 皮錫瑞 (1850-1908), *Jingxue lishi* 經學歷史 (History of Classicism), ed. Zhou Yutong (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), 136.

Classicism in Late Imperial China was the foundation of the civil examinations, and education in the classical tradition was perhaps the most valuable service that a wealthy lineage supplied for its male members. For the same reason, different views on the evaluation of classical writing and interpretation also became the foundations for political patronage and factionalism in the bureaucracy. Methodological approaches to textual interpretation thus formed the very core of intellectual and political life in Late Imperial China, and any shift of authority within that field was bound to echo far and wide.

By introducing the notion of a lineage orientation, and pluralism as a countermeasure thereto, this dissertation addresses a number of issues in Chinese cultural history. Firstly, it uncovers the methodological assumptions of the evidential research movement and how they were conditioned by the notion of a "transmission of the Way" that originated in the Song dynasty.

Secondly, it offers new perspectives on the work of Cantonese 19th century thinkers Fang Dongshu 方東樹 (1772-1851) and Chen Li 陳澧 (1810-1882). Thinkers like Fang Dongshu and Chen Li pursued pluralist alternatives to the universalizing impulse that Song and Han Learning both shared. In making this argument, this dissertation aims to supersede portrayals of these two thinkers as making a conservative stand for Song Learning against Han Learning, in the case of Fang Dongshu, or attempting to synthesize the two, in the case of Chen Li.

Thirdly, it explores a relatively neglected aspect of Gu Jiegang's 顧頡剛 (1893-1980) early thought, which has often been understood in the larger framework of the Doubting Antiquity movement and a shift from classicism to historiography. In the early volumes of the *Symposium on Ancient Chinese History*, , Gu Jiegang's ideas often stood in sharp contrast to other contributors as he emphasized the study of historical imagination as a solution to intellectual partisanship.

The dissertation divides in two main parts. The first part in three chapters outlines the development of Chinese classicism from the 10th to the 20th centuries. Emphasis is on the development of the lineage orientation, not only in Chinese textual studies, but also in the political thought of Chinese bureaucrats, as well as in the "closed" systems of

teacher-disciple transmission among state-sponsored religious groups and in the lineage organization of literati families.

Part two explores the thought of three major thinkers—Fang Dongshu, Chen Li, Gu Jiegang—and shows how each in his own way reacted against the universalizing impulse of lineage-oriented thought. They struggled to reconcile the existence of multiple origins and value pluralism with a sufficient degree of unity (among classicists, historians, religious practitioners, political actors, and so forth) to avoid falling into relativism. In this sense, their respective intellectual contributions represented, as it were, three different paths to pluralism.

PART I

The Lineage Orientation

CHAPTER 1: THE SONG DYNASTY SEARCH FOR UNITY

The first part of this dissertation is not a general historical account of the development of thought in Late Imperial China. It argues for the existence of a phenomenon in Chinese cultural history, which I have chosen to call a lineage orientation.[4] The chapters in the second part are based on the premise of the existence of such an orientation, which was explored and criticized by a number of Chinese scholars during the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Historians of China have discussed the social construction of lineage structures and organizations as they developed over time. This chapter explores a similar phenomenon in the sphere of intellectual production. The basic tenets of what I call a lineage orientation in Chinese thought were formulated by *daoxue* 道學 (Learning of the Way) thinkers during the Northern and Southern Song. Not coincidentally, these were also thinkers who supported a stricter adherence to lineage principles in family and society.

Over the course of the Ming and Qing dynasties, the lineage orientation was adopted by the imperial government, whose authority it served to reinforce. And as Chapter 2 illustrates, lineage-oriented thought was powerful enough to influence and become a guiding assumption underlying the evidential research movement in the 18th and 19th centuries. Lineage-oriented research, moreover, did not disappear in the 20th century, but is perpetuated in both Western and East Asian sinology.

[4] The term lineage orientation was used by Hymes to describe a social phenomenon in the Song dynasty. Robert P. Hymes, "Marriage, Descent Groups, and the Localist Strategy in Sung and Yuan Fu-chou," in *Kinship Organization in Late Imperial China 1000-1940,* eds. Patricia Ebrey and James Watson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 96.

1.1 Lineage Orientation in Song Society

As a social phenomenon, what Robert Hymes first called a "lineage orientation" grew in importance over the course of the Southern Song and Yuan dynasties.[5] The notion of lineage had long played an important role in the context of imperial succession and among the Chinese aristocracy, where ancestral worship and blood lineage as a criterion of succession were deeply rooted. Some even argued that it was the Duke of Zhou who, by ceding power to his nephew King Cheng after a seven year interregnum, established the primacy of father-son succession in Chinese political culture.[6]

The "emergence" of a lineage orientation in Song society must be understood in its historical context. This was a period of decline for the aristocratic structure of social advancement (*mendi* 門第) in favor of the relative meritocracy of civil examinations. Unlike the Tang aristocratic families, the families of Northern Song scholar-officials (*shidafu* 士大夫) lacked the privilege of hereditary office, and needed new methods and arguments to not only gain political influence in the first place, but to retain their families' connection to the imperial court over generations. They achieved this by gradually reorganizing their extended families into lineage structures that served to reproduce success in the civil examinations and in the bureaucracy. At the same time, the new literati legitimated themselves intellectually as inheritors of the moral knowledge necessary for successful governance.[7] In this sense, the promotion of a lineage orientation among Northern Song elites was partly a response to the demise of aristocratic society and the threat of downward social mobility that was built into the civil examination system.

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[5] Hymes, "Marriage, Descent Groups, and the Localist Strategy," 114.

[6] Wang Guowei 王國維 (1877-1927), "Yin Zhou zhidu lun" 殷周制度論 (The Institutions of Yin and Zhou), in *Zhougong shezheng chengwang yu Zhou chu shishi lunji*, ed. Guo Weichuan (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe, 1998), 3.

[7] On the notion of "scholar-official government" (*shidafu zhi zhengzhi* 士大夫之政治), see Liu Yizheng 劉詒徵, *Zhongguo wenhua shi* 中國文化史 (Chinese Cultural History) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2001), 580. Yü Ying-shih among others subsequently expanded on the characteristics of this phenomenon, and Peter Bol discussed whether *daoxue* thinkers created a "constitutional" challenge to imperial autocracy. See Bol, *Neo-Confucianism in History* (Cambridge & London: Harvard University Asia Center & Harvard University Press, 2008), 217.

From Communal Families to Lineages

During the Tang and Song dynasties, organized groups of agnates were mostly referred to as "communal families" (*jia* 家) rather than as descent groups or lineages (*zong* 宗).[8] Communal families were large local groups organized around common property and on a loose basis of patrilineal descent. These extended families gradually developed into lineage organizations that provided financial support for young male members to focus on literary studies and prepare for the examinations. They also brought together individuals and resources to obtain influence in local society, where other groups, such as Buddhist and Daoist establishments, formed rivaling entities. Lineage organizations promoted their group interests in both local and national politics by barring members of such competing groups from participation in their own.[9]

Two Northern Song institutional developments that represented the growing importance of improved family organization were the "community compact" (*xiangyue* 鄉約) and the "charitable estate" (*yizhuang* 義莊). The community compact was established in 1077 by Lü Dajun 呂大鈞 (1031-1082), a presented scholar (*jinshi* 進士) and disciple of Zhang Zai 張載 (1020-1077). The original *xiangyue* regulations were basically exhortations to moral behavior that subsequently grew in complexity with Zhu Xi's 朱熹 (1130-1200) emendations.[10]

Fan Zhongyan 范仲淹 (989-1052) established the charitable estate system for his own extended family in 1049. Unlike the *xiangyue*, Fan Zhongyan's measures were

[8] Patricia Buckley Ebrey, "The Early Stages in the Development of Descent Group Organization," in *Kinship Organization in Late Imperial China 1000-1940*, eds. Patricia Ebrey and James Watson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 30.
[9] The relationship between lineages and the civil examinations in Song dynasty Wuzhou has been discussed in Beverly J. Bossler, *Powerful Relations: Kinship, Status & the State in Sung China* (960-1279) (Cambridge & London: Harvard University Press, 1998). For the civil examinations as a system of exclusion, see John W. Chaffee, *The thorny gates of learning in Sung China: A social history of examinations* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995 [c1985]).
[10] Monika Übelhör, "The Community Compact (*Hsiang-yüeh*) of the Sung and Its Educational Significance," in *Neo-Confucian Education: The Formative Stage*, eds. Wm. Theodore de Bary and John W. Chaffee (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 371-388.

explicitly meant to tighten and unify the clan as defined by a single shared ancestor. Core members were united by mandatory participation in ancestral rites and as a cult group shared ownership of family land and buildings. By avoiding individual ownership of such resources, the *yizhuang* bypassed Chinese inheritance laws that otherwise led to fragmentation and downward social mobility by not recognizing primogeniture.[11]

The only comparable organizational model at the time was land owned by Buddhist monastic communities. These Buddhist communities were closed groups with strictly limited membership that did not grow much in size over time. In comparison, membership in the charitable estate was less regulated and vulnerable to uncontrollable growth. This was a problem and one of the main reasons why family heads gradually adopted the more exclusivist criteria for membership that characterized the lineage as against the communal family.

In this manner, Northern Song thinkers and family heads moved away from communal family structures by emphasizing a single line of descent and giving less attention to collateral ones. These stricter and more exclusivist family lineages were adopted by elites over the Southern Song and Yuan dynasties, leading up to the Ming dynasty popularization of ancestral halls and detailed lineage genealogies.[12] The final shift to a lineage-oriented Chinese society has been traced to the publication of the 1536 edition of Zhu Xi's *Family Rituals* (*Zhuzi jiali* 朱子家禮), after the appearance of which it was memorialized that all ranks of society be permitted to establish shrines for ancestral worship.[13]

The Lineage Orientation in Chan and Daoxue Thought

As we have seen, communal families and lineage organizations differed from each other primarily regarding their criteria for inclusion. While communal families could expand

[11] Denis Twitchett, "The Fan Clan's Charitable Estate, 1050-1760," in *Confucianism in Action*, eds. David S. Nivison and Arthur F. Wright (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959), 97-133.
[12] Discussed in Ebrey, "The Early Stages," 22.
[13] Timothy Brook, *Praying for Power: Buddhism and the Formation of Gentry Society in Late-Ming China* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1993), 194.

and continually grew larger, lineage organizations used rigorous membership standards to limit their size and strengthen internal cohesion. Instead of relying on common interest in property ownership, which was always open to the influence of financial investment and friendship ties, lineage organizations relied on genealogical linkage to create stronger and more exclusive groups.[14] From this perspective, one may speak of the communal family and the lineage organization respectively as more "open" and more "closed" membership structures.

Like other elite families troubled by law-imposed division of property between sons and the downward social mobility it often entailed, Song dynasty *daoxue* thinkers were among those who wanted to reinstitute the descent-line heir system (*zong* 宗) that gave the eldest son exclusive right to officiate at ancestral rituals. Zhang Zai and Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033-1107) argued directly for primogeniture as a means to create a body of hereditary official families.[15]

It has been argued that lineage organizations in the Song dynasty represented a localist agenda, but as Hymes pointed out their institutional foundations were laid by Northern Song scholar-officials active on a national level, including Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007-1072), Su Xun 蘇洵 (1009-1066), and Fan Zhongyan.[16] These were men who vied for political influence at the very center of political power and gathered local support to achieve it. Tightly regulated lineage organizations supported young men with the potential to enter officialdom and aid the cause of their benefactors. As Yü Ying-shih demonstrated, Song dynasty *daoxue* adherents were particularly good at this game of strengthening their ranks by recommendations and denunciations of officials at lower administrative levels.[17] Their lecturing and teaching created relatively closed groups of disciples who, once they attained official position, could recommend others whom they

[14] Ebrey, "Conceptions of the Family in the Sung Dynasty," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 43.2 (1984): 219-245.
[15] Bol, *Neo-Confucianism in History*, 236-248. Also discussed in Ho Ping-di, *The Ladder of Success in Imperial China: Aspects of Social Mobility, 1368-1911* (New York: Science Editions, 1964 [c1962]), 162; Ebrey, "The Early Stages," 37-38; and Kai-wing Chow, *The Rise of Confucian Ritualism in Late Imperial China: Ethics, Classics, and Lineage Discourse* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 99-103.
[16] Hymes, "Marriage, Descent Groups, and the Localist Strategy," 128.
[17] Yü, *Zhu Xi de lishi shijie*, 473-482.

deemed sympathetic to the *daoxue* cause.[18] The lineage orientation in *daoxue* thought was found in this intersection between closed networks and a set of values that gave its members an identity and a purpose.

The distinction between open and closed groups also existed among Chinese Buddhist institutions at the time.[19] While the practice of Buddhism in China had always been pursued in different ways among lower and higher social strata, it was only during the Song dynasty that a clear demarcation was made between popular or "open" sects like the White Lotus and an imperially sanctioned Buddhist clergy that defined itself in terms of patriarchal succession. Membership in the latter was regulated by government examinations and "inheritance certificates" recognized by the civil authorities. These closed structures and genealogical tables contributed greatly to the success of Chan Buddhism during the Song dynasty.[20]

Thomas Wilson traced the origins of genealogical discourse through Buddhist anthologies back to a schism in the 8th century, when arguments for the existence of "a separate transmission outside the teachings" (*jiao wai biechuan* 教外別傳) marked the beginning of an openly sectarian and exclusivist claim to Buddhist orthodoxy.[21] A few years before Wilson's book was published, however, T. Griffith Foulk suggested that this sectarian debate, while narrated as a Tang dynasty event, should in fact be considered a Song dynasty construction.[22] He further developed this view by contextualizing it within an ideological competition for patronage between the Chan and Tiantai schools in the 11th century.[23] Albert Welter continued the argument by claiming that these ideological

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[18] Yü Ying-shih, *Zhu Xi de lishi shijie: Songdai shidafu zhengzhi wenhua de yanjiu* 朱熹的歷史世界：宋代士大夫政治文化的研究 (The Historical World of Zhu Xi: Research in the Political Culture of Song Scholar-Officials) (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2004), 129-142.
[19] For Buddhist influence on lineage organization, see Twitchett, "The Fan Clan's Charitable Estate," 103-104.
[20] T. Griffith Foulk, "Myth, Ritual, and Monastic Practice in Sung Ch'an Buddhism," in *Religion and Society in T'ang and Sung China*, eds. Patricia Ebrey and Peter Gregory (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993), 147-208.
[21] Thomas A. Wilson, *Genealogy of the Way: The Construction and Uses of the Confucian Tradition in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 132-133.
[22] Foulk, "Myth, Ritual, and Monastic Practice," 150.
[23] Foulk, "Sung Controversies Concerning the 'Separate Transmission' of Ch'an," in *Buddhism in the Sung*, eds. Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz (Conference Proceedings from "Buddhism in the Sung", University of Illinois, 1996), 284.

disputes formed part of a Chan Buddhist search for "national identity," that is, for a way to incorporate regional factions in a nationally coherent framework. It was also at this point in the history of Chinese Buddhism that the "Records of Transmitting the Flame" (*chuandeng lu* 傳燈錄) model of unilinear orthodoxy, as opposed to local heterodoxies, supplanted earlier "discrete doctrines" (*panjiao* 判教) taxonomies that had embraced diversity while combining different strands of thought in a trunk-and-branches model.[24]

Accepting Foulk's argument would mean that Chan Buddhists and early adherents of *daoxue* began to use the trope of a doctrinal lineage at more or less the same time, and that the thrust toward ideological unity in Northern Song Buddhism formed part of a larger trend in Chinese cultural history. What was "new" in Song thought was not a battle *per se* between Buddhism and Confucianism,[25] but rather the appearance in both traditions of an exclusive claim to orthodoxy based on the idea of unilinear transmission.[26]

1.2 Daoxue and Court Factionalism

The word "faction" (*pengdang* 朋黨) carried negative connotations throughout Chinese history. The *Gujin tushu jicheng* 古今圖書集成 (Synthesis of Books and Illustrations Past and Present) mentions the word *pengdang* in some five hundred instances, an analysis of which shows two common usages: firstly, when discussing local customs, an interest in "gathering together in groups" (*haojie pengdang* 好結朋黨) to oppose other groups, to gamble, and so on, was a sign that full civilization had not yet been achieved;

[24] Albert Welter, *Monks, Rulers and Literati: The Political Ascendancy of Ch'an Buddhism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 206-207.
[25] Chün-fang Yü noted that while Southern Song Chan masters knew, or knew about, *daoxue* masters like Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi, they never referred to them as a movement, nor were Buddhist attacks made on *daoxue*. This questions the idea of a widespread "debate" between Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism in the Song. Chün-fang Yü, "Ch'an Education in the Sung: Ideals and Procedures," in *Neo-Confucian Education: The Formative Stage*, eds. Wm. Theodore de Bary and John W. Chaffee (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 99.
[26] James T.C. Liu showed *daotong* to be a double borrowing from the historiographical concept of legitimate dynastic succession (*zhengtong*) and from the Buddhist practice of patriarchal transmission. Liu, *China Turning Inward: Intellectual-political changes in the Early Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1988), 136.

and secondly, when discussing governmental matters a *pengdang* was described as something that blocked the "channels of communication" (*yanlu* 言路), and thereby "put a screen" (*bi* 蔽) between the emperor and his officials. Factionalism of this variety was held to be closely related to a pursuit of "personal interest" (*si* 私) at the expense of the "common good" (*gong* 公).

Fan Zhongyan was the first Northern Song thinker to oppose this view of factionalism by proudly accepting the label when attacked publicly by his political adversary Lü Yijian 呂夷簡 (979-1044).[27] Ouyang Xiu's famous 1043 memorial *Pengdang lun* 朋黨論 (Essay on Parties) argued that moral men must come together to resist the private interests of morally inferior bureaucrats.[28] As his other writings show, Ouyang Xiu was not in favor of factions as such, but meant that a ruler must learn to distinguish between its good and bad instantiations. In another essay, Ouyang Xiu distinguished between factionalism as a phenomenon and factionalism as a rhetorical tool used for political motives. Since that essay relates closely to some of the issues raised in this dissertation, I cite it here at some length. Ouyang Xiu wrote:

> 嗚呼！始為朋黨之論，誰歟？甚乎作俑者也，真可謂不仁之人哉。[---] 當漢之亡也，先以朋黨禁錮天下賢人，君子而立其朝者，皆小人也。然後漢從而亡。及唐之亡也，亦先以朋黨盡殺朝廷之士，而其餘存者，皆庸懦不肖，傾險之人也。然後唐從而亡。夫欲傾人之國而去其君子者，必進朋黨之說。欲孤人主之勢而蔽其耳目者，必進朋黨之說。欲奪其國而與人者，必進朋黨之說。夫為君子者，固常寡過小人。欲加之罪，則有可誣者，有不可誣者，不能遍及也。至於舉天下之善，求其類而盡去之，則惟指以為朋黨耳。故其親戚，故舊謂之朋

[27] James T.C. Liu, *Ou-yang Hsiu: An Eleventh-Century Neo-Confucianist* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967), 53.

[28] Ouyang Xiu, "Pengdang lun," vol. 2 of *Ouyang Xiu quanji* 歐陽修全集 (Collected Works of Ouyang Xiu), ed. Li Yian (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), 297-298. For the historical background of Ouyang's essay, see Su Che 蘇轍 (1039-1112), "Ouyang wenzhonggong shendaobei" 歐陽文忠公神道碑 (Tomb Inscription for the Distinguished Official Ouyang), in *Su Che sanwen quanji* 蘇轍散文全集 (Collected Prose Writings of Su Che) (Beijing: Jinri zhongguo chubanshe, 1996), 307. For an English translation of the "Pengdang lun", see Wm. Theodore de Bary, et al. eds., *Sources of Chinese Tradition, vol. 1* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), 595-596.

黨，可也。交游執友，謂之朋黨，可也。官學相同，謂之朋黨，可也。門生故吏，謂之朋黨，可也。是數者，皆其類也。皆善人也。故曰欲傾人之國，而去其君子者，惟以朋黨罪之，則無免者矣。夫善善之相，樂以其類同此，自然之理也。故聞善者，必相稱譽，則謂之朋黨。得善者，必相薦引。薦引則謂之朋黨。使人聞善，不敢稱譽，則人主之耳。不得聞有善於天下矣。見善不敢薦引，則人主之目不得見善人矣。善人日遠，而小人日進，則為人主者，倀倀然誰與之圖治安之計哉。故曰：欲孤人主之勢而蔽其耳目者，必用朋黨之說也。[---]嗚呼。朋黨之說，人主可不察哉。傳曰：一言而可以喪邦者，其是之謂歟。可不鑒哉，可不鑒哉。

Alas! Who indeed invented the notion of factionalism? He who first made straw figures may be called an evil man. [---] The decline of the Han dynasty was precipitated by restrictive measures aimed at the realm's virtuous men, who were charged with factionalism. Those who served in court were all petty men, and so the Han dynasty declined. The Tang dynasty's decline, too, was precipitated by the mass slaughter of civil officials in the name of opposing factionalism. Those who survived were all weak and petty, thoroughly wicked men, and so the Tang dynasty declined.

Those who wish to bring down another's state and rid it of its great men will surely memorialize on the subject of factionalism. Those who wish to isolate the power of the ruler and screen off his ears and eyes will surely memorialize on the subject of factionalism. Those who wish to overthrow the state and give it to others will surely memorialize on the subject of factionalism.

The upright man seldom criticizes the morally inferior. If one wants to accuse someone there are things that may be criticized and things that may not. One cannot just reach for anything. Those who take aim at a good man with the intention of searching out those related to him, getting rid of them all at once, need only say that they form a faction. In such cases, it seems alright to say that his relatives and old partners form a faction with him; it seems alright to say that his acquaintances and friends form a faction with him; it seems alright to say that his classmates and colleagues form a faction with him; and it seems alright to say that his students and employees form a faction with him. They are all related to him and all are good men.

This is why I say that those who wish to topple the state and get rid of its great men need only accuse them of factionalism, in which case they have nowhere to escape.

> The official who takes the good to be good is glad to join with those who are like him; this is all natural. When he hears of a good man he surely will praise him, and this they call factionalism. When he obtains a good man he surely will recommend him, and then the recommendation is called factionalism. If he who hears of good men dares not praise them, the ears of the ruler will not hear that there are good men in the realm. If he who sees a good man dares not recommend him, the eyes of the ruler will see no good men. Good men go farther away each day, while bad men come closer each day. With whom can the confused ruler discuss safety and governance?
>
> This is why I say that those who wish to isolate the power of the ruler and screen off his ears and eyes will surely memorialize on the subject of factionalism [---] Alas! How can the ruler not investigate the notion of factionalism? The Commentary says: "One word can ruin a state." Is this not what it refers to? How can this not be reflected upon? How can this not be reflected upon?[29]

In this essay, Ouyang Xiu questioned the assumption that political factions are what cut the emperor off from his officials and, in extension, from his people. Rather than factional groups as such, he argued, it was those who accused their political opponents of factionalism that truly misled the ruler.

A well timed accusation of factionalism could be an effective political weapon in the imperial court of any Chinese dynasty. Moreover, as the history of the *daoxue* movement during the latter half of the 12th century shows, accusations of factionalism sometimes preceded the phenomenon itself, turning a group of like-minded individuals into a full-fledged political faction. Before looking at the *daoxue* movement as a faction, however, it is necessary to briefly recount the background of that movement in Wang Anshi's 王安石 (1021-1086) reform policies under the Shenzong emperor (r. 1067-1085).

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[29] I have not been able to locate this essay in his collected works, but see Ouyang Xiu, "Du Fancheng shouchan bei" 讀繁城受禪碑 (On Reading the Shouchan Stele in Fancheng), vol. 93 of *Gujin tushu jicheng, ji suoyin* 古今圖書集成及索引 (Collection of Books and Map Past and Present, with Index), comp. Chen Menglei 陳夢雷 (1650-1741) (Taipei: Wenxing shudian, 1964), 3.

Wang Anshi and Northern Song Factionalism

Already in 1058, Wang Anshi memorialized the Renzong emperor (r. 1022-1063) on how to deal with the closely intertwined military and financial difficulties facing the dynasty. But it was not until the ambitious and reform-minded Shenzong emperor ascended the throne that Wang Anshi's ideas were fully recognized and acted upon. Unhappy with the decision to employ Wang Anshi, senior adviser Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019-1086) asked that the emperor leave political matters to the professional bureaucracy. Wang Anshi, on the other hand, encouraged the emperor to take active part in governing the realm and to fill the bureaucracy with courageous and determined men for support. Such men, argued Wang Anshi, could be produced by using a strict educational curriculum that inculcated purposeful and unifying ideals.[30] Wang Anshi's own systematic interpretation of the *Zhouli* 周禮 (Rituals of Zhou), along with his *Zishuo* 字說 (On Paleography), provided a foundation for the new curriculum.

While Sima Guang encouraged a pluralist approach of letting various opinions co-exist (*jiancun* 兼存) and opposed the idea of an orthodox educational curriculum,[31] his opponent convinced the emperor that active governance was required to achieve necessary reforms, and that active governance in turn required a loyal and determined bureaucracy with unified goals and values. Having ensured imperial support, Wang Anshi started to eliminate political opponents and achieved almost total control of the bureaucracy during the years 1071-1074.[32]

While the relationship between the Shenzong emperor and Wang Anshi may be condemned as that of an emperor manipulated by an overly ambitious political adviser, Yü Ying-shih pointed out that their relationship also represented the post-aristocracy ideal of an emperor not just ruling over his officials, but ruling the state together with them. For a time, before factions formed around each of them and a power struggle

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[30] Paul Jakov Smith, "Shen-tsung's Reign and the New Policies of Wang An-shih, 1067-1085," part 1 of *The Cambridge History of China, v. 5: The Sung Dynasty and its Precursors, 907-1279*, eds. Denis Twitchett and Paul Jakov Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 347-483.
[31] Liu, *China Turning Inward*, 51.
[32] Smith, "Shen-tsung's Reign," 373.

ensued, the emperor and his minister appeared to have become one, ruling together with equal power.[33] As Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 (1610-1695) later formulated it: "Ruler and official are nominally different but actually one and the same" (*chen zhi yu jun ming yi er shi tong* 臣之與君名異而實同).[34]

A result of this sharing of power between civil officials and the emperor was the emergence of something like a constitutional policy (*guoshi* 國是), which established a given policy as correct and protected it from deviating opinions. Once established, such a policy was closed for debate to both the bureaucracy and to the emperor himself unless the other party granted its consent to review it. Factional struggles had previously been adjudged by the person of the emperor, meaning that the losing side always had a chance to influence the emperor to change his mind. But now that the emperor and his ministers reigned together, the losing side in a factional struggle was effectively made illegitimate as the winning side gained total control.[35]

Under the Shenzong emperor, Wang Anshi's reform project was fixed as such a constitutional policy, meaning that the emperor remained tied to the reform process even as his personal relationship with Wang Anshi deteriorated. As a result, it was only with the ascent of the Zhezong emperor (r. 1085-1100) that reform efforts were finally abandoned.[36] The phenomenon of constitutional policy, however, remained the center of political factionalism far into the Southern Song.

Factionalism in the Southern Song

During the Northern and Southern Song, *daoxue* scholars mirrored Wang Anshi's winning strategy in their stress on a unifying value system. The importance of establishing a coherent and unchanging administrative system had been emphasized

[33] Yü, *Zhu Xi de lishi shijie*, 238-244.
[34] Huang Zongxi, "Yuan chen" 原臣 (The Basis of Officialdom), in *Mingyi daifang lu* 明夷待訪錄 (Records while Waiting for an Audience at Dawn), vol. 1 of *Huang Zongxi quanji* (Suzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 1985), 5.
[35] Yü, *Zhu Xi de lishi shijie*, 330.
[36] Yü, *Zhu Xi de lishi shijie*, 252-260.

already by Shi Jie 石介 (1005-1045) during the Qingli reforms of 1044. In the decades that followed, scholars generally agreed that the aim of learning was to identify a single and unchanging Way. The discovery of a system that demonstrated the fundamental interconnectedness and harmony of all things, it was thought, would promote a single-minded consensus and unity of purpose among literati and civil officials.[37]

In addition to the focus on influencing policy and bringing about reform (*waiwang* 外王), Southern Song thinkers inherited from Wang Anshi the emphasis on "inner sagehood" (*neisheng* 內聖) defined as adherence to a unifying ideology.[38] While borrowing Wang Anshi's focus on unity and coherence as the proper ideological foundation for inner sagehood, *daoxue* thinkers took the opportunity to criticize his accommodation of Buddhist and Daoist ideas and identifying their own standpoint as purely Confucian. It was also for this purpose that the Cheng brothers revived the legacy of Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824), who in other respects had a relatively minor influence on their thought.[39]

After the Jingkang incident and the fall of Kaifeng in 1127, the remainder of the 12th century and the beginning of the next were marked by a tense peace and subsequent wars between the Song and Jurchen conquerors from the north. At the court of the Xiaozong emperor (r. 1162-1189) in the Southern Song capital of Hangzhou, a factional struggle ensued over the issue of how to change—quickly or slowly—the constitutional policy supporting peace (*heyi* 和議) with the Jurchen to an irredentist (*huifu* 恢復) policy aimed at recovering the north by force. Yü Ying-shih described in considerable detail how, during a militarily relatively quiet period between the years 1181-1195, *daoxue* thinkers came to form a faction against a more or less unified bureaucrat opposition. After some initial years of gradual polarization, the conflict between these two factions intensified during the period 1189-1194 and ended with the defeat of the *daoxue* faction in 1195.

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[37] Bol, "Reconceptualizing the Order of Things in Northern and Southern Sung," part 1 of *The Cambridge History of China, v. 5: The Sung Dynasty and its Precursors, 907-1279*, eds. Denis Twitchett and Paul Jakov Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 678-688.
[38] Yü, *Zhu Xi de lishi shijie*, 56.
[39] Yü, *Zhu Xi de lishi shijie*, 66.

Under the political framework of a constitutional policy, the emperor inevitably became involved in the conflict, and by attaining imperial audiences for themselves and their followers, *daoxue* scholars like Zhu Xi and Lu Jiuyuan 陸九淵 (1139-1192) aimed to win over and influence the reigning Xiaozong emperor to support their cause.[40] Initially, the *daoxue* faction were successful in appointing its adherents to important official positions in the localities as well as at court.[41] The bureaucratic faction, on the other hand, encountered serious setbacks with the death of the Xiaozong emperor's father and the demise of Chancellor Wang Huai 王淮 (1126-1189). Following this, the *daoxue* faction received support from the new chancellor Zhou Bida 周必大 (1126-1204), who was interested in promoting their political aims.

When Zhou Bida was criticized for taking sides in the factional struggle, he defended himself by arguing that those he ousted from office had been men from Wuzhou/Jinhua, who had come to power due to their geographical affiliation with Wang Huai's hometown. The men he got rid of, he pleaded, were precisely those who had received their official position due to factionalism or favoritism in the first place.[42] This tension between Zhu Xi's disciples and scholars in Wuzhou remained, as we shall see, even as the latter came to profess a version of *daoxue* learning themselves.

The Xiaozong emperor also supported the *daoxue* faction for their ideas on political reform, but never identified with their exclusivist pursuit of "inner sagehood."[43] Their initial success soon made *daoxue* adherents overly self-confident and aggressively exclusivist,[44] and the wider bureaucracy began to see them as false and opportunistic.[45] The exclusivist character of *daoxue* ideology was well exemplified by the manner in which some of its members adopted distinctive styles of dress and deportment, along with a specialist and technical vocabulary.[46]

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[40] Yü, *Zhu Xi de lishi shijie*, 446.
[41] Yü, *Zhu Xi de lishi shijie*, 462.
[42] Yü, *Zhu Xi de lishi shijie*, 640.
[43] Yü, *Zhu Xi de lishi shijie*, 526.
[44] Yü, *Zhu Xi de lishi shijie*, 502.
[45] Yü, *Zhu Xi de lishi shijie*, 502.
[46] Hoyt Cleveland Tillman, *Confucian Discourse and Chu Hsi's Ascendancy* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1992), 3.

According to Yü Ying-shih, the bureaucratic faction took shape in opposition to the strangeness and reform-mindedness of *daoxue* officials, and their political aim was to retain the status quo while securing their own positions of power.[47] In fact, the name of *daoxue* was first used by bureaucrat conservatives to identify their adversaries as a factional entity, something that only strengthened the resolve and cohesion among *daoxue* officials, who in effect received their identity from their adversaries.[48] Subsequent developments in some sense proved Ouyang Xiu's observation correct that an accusation of factionalism could work as a polarizing force and be more detrimental than actual collaboration between like-minded individuals in the political arena.

In 1182, the first in a series of attacks on *daoxue* as a faction appeared in the shape of memorials that accused its members of being hypocrites and lacking sincerity. This lack of sincerity (*cheng* 誠) became a crucial element in attacks on the *daoxue* faction and its members. By negating the sincerity of the *daoxue* movement, their opponents implied that its members were double-faced, false and inauthentic (*wei* 偽). This was precisely the reasoning behind the eventual condemnation of *daoxue* as "false learning" (*weixue*). Beginning in 1195, the "false learning" of *daoxue* was forbidden in the civil examinations, where its members had been found to "recognize each other by using strange words and phoneticizations" with the aim of promoting each other.[49] Fifty-nine names of *daoxue* faction members, representing in fact a wide variety of intellectual inclinations, were compiled into a list and became the direct objects of a campaign against false learning that continued sporadically for some years. In a final denunciation following Zhu Xi's death in 1200, Shi Kangnian described how Zhu Xi and his disciples had used to "meet at night like 'demon worshippers'."[50] By that time, such accusations had already been accepted for almost two decades as a defining characteristic of the *daoxue* group.[51]

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[47] Yü, *Zhu Xi de lishi shijie*, 670.
[48] Yü, *Zhu Xi de lishi shijie*, 629ff.
[49] Conrad Shirokauer, "Neo-Confucians Under Attack: The Condemnation of Wei-hsüeh," in *Crisis and Prosperity in Sung China*, ed. John Winthrop Haeger (Tucson, Arizona: The University of Arizona Press, 1975), 180.
[50] Shirokauer, "Neo-Confucians Under Attack," 193.
[51] Chen Liang, for example, in 1185 condemned Zhu Xi and his disciples for "establish[ing] boundaries between themselves and others like ties at the sacrificial altar of a secret society." See

1.3 Cheng Yi on Belief

One may or may not be inclined to side with *daoxue* thinkers against the accusations of their political opponents. In either case, the reasoning behind condemnations of *daoxue* as false learning should not be ignored. The two notions of "unity" (*yi* 一) and "sincerity" (*cheng*) were central to Cheng-Zhu *daoxue* and also became the main targets for their opponents. From the perspective of the bureaucratic faction it was a lack of sincerity that characterized the *daoxue* pursuit of ideological unity (*neisheng*). Their words and deeds did not correspond, because while speaking of all-embracing inclusion, *daoxue* adherents practiced discrimination and exclusion to achieve ideological uniformity on their own terms.

This section returns to the Northern Song and the thought of Cheng Yi, who born into a lineage that produced numerous successful officials came to gather a regional following based on his lecturing and philosophy. He served briefly as tutor to the child emperor before losing his position and leaving the capital due to his involvement in factional struggles. His core ideas came to form the basis of so-called Cheng-Zhu *daoxue*, which played a crucial role as state orthodoxy throughout large periods of Late Imperial China.

Sincerity, Unity, and Coherence

The exclusion of incompatible viewpoints in Song classicism was by no means a "common-sense" phenomenon or dominant approach to knowledge. Just like the social phenomenon of lineage organizations, it grew out of the historical context specific to this period. This section examines the problematic tension between ideological unity and personal sincerity in the recorded sayings of Cheng Yi.

Tillman, "The Rise of the *Tao-Hsüeh* Confucian Fellowship in Southern Sung," part 1 of *The Cambridge History of China, v. 5: The Sung Dynasty and its Precursors, 907-1279*, eds. Denis Twitchett and Paul Jakov Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 760.

"Coherence" in the sense of system-building, where each part was defined in terms of its position in a whole, had gained popularity as a measure of validity in intellectual pursuits at least since the time of Shi Jie in the early half of the 11th century. Wang Anshi used the measure of coherence to validate his own interpretations of the *Classics* and to demonstrate the interconnectedness of the *Classics* with social structures, government, and the cosmos.[52] Cheng Yi was the first, however, to turn coherence into the central tenet of a philosophical system that claimed universal validity.

The *daoxue* concept of *li* 理 has been conventionally translated as "principle," but there are compelling reasons for understanding this concept in terms of coherence.[53] The word *li* worked on various philosophical levels simultaneously: there was (1) the all-embracing and all-inclusive *li* of the cosmos, (2) the social *li* of human interaction, and (3) the particular *li* of each discrete object or phenomenon. To distinguish as far as possible between these various uses I have chosen to differentiate their translation throughout this dissertation. The first sense of all-embracing *li* will be translated as "Coherence," while I speak of the "coherence" of any particular object or phenomenon. Finally, when *li* is used primarily in reference to human interaction (as did Dai Zhen, for example) I stress the aspects of political unity and social cohesion by translating *li* as the "common good."

Cheng Yi unreservedly promoted the existence of Coherence as a thing in the world, albeit not a material one. Leaving aside for a moment questions about the actual moral content of such a Coherence, it should be noted that the mere belief in its existence as something that defied the boundaries of internal and external, functioned to eliminate any charge that the submission of an individual's mental world to external authority implied a lack of sincerity. When perceiving Coherence in external authority, Cheng Yi argued, one simultaneously became aware of that Coherence in one's own mind.[54] If the external authority in question was indeed firmly grounded in all-encompassing Coherence, what might appear to an outsider as blind and uncritical belief could be morally defended as the

[52] Bol, "Reconceptualizing the Order of Things," 682-689.
[53] The general reasons for translating *li* as coherence have been provided in Willard J. Peterson, "Another Look at *Li*," *The Bulletin of Sung-Yüan Studies* 18 (1986): 27.
[54] Angus C. Graham, *Two Chinese Philosophers: The Metaphysics of the Brothers Ch'êng* (La Salle: Open Court, 1992), 74.

result of fusing the mental world of the individual with the external world by realizing a Coherence that encompassed and ran through everything.

Based on such a worldview, Cheng Yi's philosophy did not take as the apex of sincerity an unmediated expression of the individual self. Instead, sincerity was achieved by merging and unifying the self with the world. If all men could align their respective coherence (for to be called a "thing," each object was considered an internally coherent entity) with the Coherence of the cosmos (*tianli* 天理), then all things would rest in their correct positions and affairs run as smoothly as a large river when all the little streams align themselves with its flow.[55]

Sincerity had to be understood as sincerity *towards* something, and sincerity in the individual must be based on a sense of "devotion" (*jing* 敬) to the object in question. In this sense, Cheng Yi demanded that his disciples sincerely devote themselves to the Way that his teachings represented. For while an artist could show an impressive and praiseworthy devotion to his art, Cheng Yi found it lamentable that men did not turn their devotion towards a more elevated object.[56]

Coherence as a thing that defied the boundary between internal and external could also be grasped in relation to *qi* 氣—the stuff that made up the phenomenal world. Cheng Yi did not deal thoroughly with the dualism that the two concepts of *li* and *qi* seemingly implied, and this was to become a major headache for later thinkers. Zhu Xi elaborated on the relationship between *li* and *qi* and argued that the dualism was not absolute. *Qi* never existed without *li*, and *li* could not exist independently of *qi*. Zhu Xi maintained that while the distinction between the two should not be ignored, they ultimately formed a single entity and were held apart for analytical purposes only.[57]

The mind (*xin* 心) formed an intermediary between the realms of *li* and *qi*, and the Cheng brothers consistently evaded the question which of these the mind ultimately

[55] Graham, *Two Chinese Philosophers*, 18. This is also what Cheng Yi meant by "making unity the ruler" (*zhu yi* 主一). See Graham, *Two Chinese Philosophers*, 68.
[56] Cheng Yi, *Er Cheng ji* 二程集 (The Cheng Brothers' Collected Writings), ed. Wang Xiaoyu (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), 203.
[57] Qian Mu 錢穆, *Zhuzi xin xue'an* 朱子新學案 (Zhu Xi: A New Intellectual History) (Taipei: Sanmin shuju, 1971), 238.

belonged to.[58] It was this problem of how to position the mind in relation to the *li*/*qi* dualism that led Cheng Yi to make a clearer distinction than some of his contemporaries between "the human mind" (*renxin* 人心) and "the moral mind" (*daoxin* 道心).[59] The human mind was inferior to the moral mind because it had not yet attained a firm belief in the existence of universal Coherence. It therefore remained caught up in self-imposed distinctions between the "internal" self and the "external" world.

When a man failed to entirely devote himself to the Way as represented by Cheng Yi's teachings it was due to this lingering sense of dualism, which kept him from the realization that he was part of a greater Coherence and that it was by subjecting himself to the greater whole that he could fulfil his nature-given position and be his true and sincere self.

Trust, Knowledge, and Belief

Peter Bol summarized one of the main issues in Northern Song thought as follows: "Literati learn to fulfill what is internal to them from sources external to themselves, in particular the *Classics*. But the source is not a transparent medium; to know from it they must first know it,"[60] because "[t]he true meaning of the *Classics* can be understood only by those who know the truth already."[61] Reading and learning from the classical texts was not a straightforward affair, even with the various commentaries available. While classicism served to clarify the moral values buried in ancient texts, the numerous possibilities of interpretation and the many incompatible viewpoints in favor of which the *Classics* could be applied also made them unreliable and ambiguous sources of moral knowledge.

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[58] Graham, *Two Chinese Philosophers*, 37.
[59] Graham, *Two Chinese Philosophers*, 64. In contrast, Su Shi argued that the two were in fact not separated from or opposed to each other.
[60] Bol, "Ch'eng Yi as a Literatus," in *The Power of Culture: Studies in Chinese Cultural History*, eds. Willard J. Peterson, et al. (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1994), 189.
[61] Bol, *This Culture of Ours: Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 308.

Cheng Yi was not the first Chinese scholar to grapple with the issue of how to make the classical texts speak to men with the authority they were due. To monopolize access to the emperor and carry out their policies (*de jun xing dao* 得君行道), Song dynasty thinkers had to prove the moral superiority of their arguments. Various methods had been tried and found wanting.

One concerned the idea of written expression (*wen* 文), holding that if those who had already mastered the *Classics* shared their knowledge in eloquent writing, such writings could guide students onto the correct path. This could be countered with the argument that rhetorical techniques could be mastered by men with any interest and intent. Another attempt was to use historical precedent as supportive evidence to the *Classics*. The diversity of historical facts, however, made it difficult to defend one interpretation of history against another.[62]

According to Peter Bol, Cheng Yi did something different from most Song thinkers before him when he decided "to demand explicitly that others 'believe' his teachings in order to see the truth for themselves."[63] Bol quoted the following passage from a letter presented by Cheng Yi to court in 1086:

> 臣幸得之於遺經，不自度量，以身任道。天下駭笑者雖多，而近年信從者亦眾。
> Your servant had the fortune to attain [knowledge of the sages' teachings] from the *Classics*, and without considering my limitations I charged my own person with the Way. Those under heaven who were shocked and laughed at me were many, but in the past few years those who trust and follow me have also become numerous.[64]

Cheng Yi was not a "philosopher" so much as he was a teacher and a leader. This is evident from his writings, where many passages appear as either dialogues or letters. His aim was

[62] On the Cheng brothers' teachings as a rejection of contemporary solutions to similar problems, see Bol, *This Culture of Ours,* 304.
[63] Bol, *This Culture of Ours*, 303.
[64] Cheng Yi, "Shang taihuang taihou shu" 上太皇太后書 (Letter Presented to the Emperor and His Empress), in Cheng Yi and Cheng Hao, *Er Cheng ji*, 546.

to persuade others to follow the Way that he staked out.[65] Cheng Yi's words were recorded as follows:

> 子語楊迪曰：「近所講問，設端多矣，而不失大概。夫二三子豈皆智不足以知之？由不能自立於眾說，漂煦之間耳，信不篤故也。仲尼之門人，其所見非盡能與聖人同也，惟不敢執己而惟師之信，故求而后得，夫信而加思，乃致知之方也。若紛然用疑，終亦必亡而已矣。」
> The master was talking to Yang Di, and said: You and I have discussed many things lately, but we never lost sight of the bigger picture. Is it really that my students are not intelligent enough to understand the bigger picture, and that therefore they are unable to take their own stand among multiple theories, drifting merely from one to the other? It is because their trust is not deep. The disciples of Confucius could not see everything as the sage did, but they would trust their teacher and not rely on themselves. Because of this, they pursued and only then attained knowledge. To trust and only then to think is the prescription for bringing about knowledge. If one doubts indiscriminately, in the end one will only be lost.[66]

The attainment of knowledge that Cheng Yi spoke of in this passage was very different from a simple accumulation of facts or from the open-mindedness to various perspectives that today's educational institutions ideally aim to promote.[67] The highly specific knowledge that Cheng Yi spoke of was in many ways the opposite of extensive learning and resembled more what we associate with the notion of a belief or conviction. The only way to engage conflicting theories without being swept off one's feet, Cheng Yi held, was to be as certain in one's conviction as to not be shaken even when presented with seemingly superior evidence to the opposite. This was not in any common-sense use of the word an "extension of knowledge"—as the notion of *zhizhi* 致知 has been translated since Legge—and it is more appropriate to speak of this aspect of Cheng Yi's thought in terms of exercising one's beliefs.

But what did Cheng Yi ask his students to believe in? The most important thing was also the most fundamental, involving simply a belief in the existence of a utopian state

[65] Cf. Bol, "Reconceptualizing the Order of Things," 667.
[66] Cheng Yi, *Er Cheng ji*, 1230-1231, cf. also 616-617.
[67] Graham, *Two Chinese Philosophers*, 79.

of all-encompassing Coherence, where no distinction could be made between how things are and how they ought to be. Such belief demanded that students overcome any perceived distinction between the internal realm of the mind and the external world. In a world where each individual spontaneously realized his position in the universal whole, without access to any independent standpoint from which to challenge the current state of things, the root of disagreement, pluralism and duplicity would have been eliminated. Once students believed in the existence and attainability of such a state, they could engage historical texts and current affairs with a whole new level of security and efficacy.

Belief is always internalized, but to bring about belief required external guidance, which in turn demanded trust in the guiding figure. While both may be expressed in Chinese by the word *xin* 信, there is a clear distinction between the notions of "trust" and "belief." Trust always refers to something external. I can trust or distrust my teacher, and in either case all he can do is provide evidence to convince me. Belief, on the other hand, comes from within me and is quite independent of any evidence either positive or negative. Cheng Yi wrote:

> 仁義禮智信，於性上要言此五事，須要分別出。若仁則固一，一所以為仁。惻隱則屬愛，乃情也，非性也。恕者入仁之門，而恕非仁也。因其惻隱之心，知其有仁。惟四者有端而信無端。只有不信，更無信。如東西南北已有定體，更不可言信。若以東為西，以南為北，則是有不信，如東即東，西即西，則無信。
>
> If one is to discuss the five matters of humaneness (*ren* 仁), duty (*yi* 義), ritual (*li* 禮), intelligence (*zhi* 智), and trust (*xin*) in terms of human nature, it is necessary to distinguish between them. Humaneness is simply unity, and unity is that by which we are humane. Commiseration belongs under the concept of love, which is an emotion and not human nature. Reciprocity is the gateway to humaneness, but reciprocity is not identical with humaneness. It is merely that based on a man's attitude of commiseration, we can know that he is humane.
>
> Four of the five concepts presented above have such a separate outward display, but trust has no separate outward display. While we may speak of mistrust, there is no outward display by which to tell if a man has trust in something. Take the cardinal directions of east, west, south, and north. They are already fixed and one cannot speak of them in terms of trust.

> If one were to say that east is west, or south is north, this is mistrust. But if east is just east, and west is just west, that is not "trust."[68]

This passage problematized the relationship between notions of "trust," "knowledge" and "belief." The fact that east is not west is simply a knowledge we have and it requires no trust. We could of course choose not to trust that east is east, which would be an instance of mistrust, but without such a conscious choice there is no need to say that we *trust* that east is east. We hold the belief that east is east; in other words, we simply *know* it to be so. However, not all instances are as self-evident as the above example. As I show below, Cheng Yi's philosophy served to break down the distinction between trust in external authority, knowledge based on external evidence, and a strong notion of internal belief. He wrote:

> 信一也，而有淺深。七十子聞一言於仲尼，則終身守之，而未必知道，此信於人者也。若夫自信，孰得而移之？
> Trust is one, but it may be shallow or deep. When the seventy disciples heard a single phrase from Confucius they would treasure it for life, yet they did not necessarily know the Way. This is trusting (*xin*) others. On the other hand, if you yourself believe (*xin*), then who gets to move you?[69]

Trust in external authority was a necessary step in the pursuit of ideological unity, but "trust" in its shallow sense was insufficient; men had to profoundly *believe* what they were told. True knowledge of the Way (*zhidao* 知道) was a state of deep belief, where no counterargument or contradiction could throw that knowledge in doubt. Cheng Yi used the distinction between shallow and deep when speaking both of *xin* (trust/belief) and *zhi* (knowledge/belief). He said:

> 或問：「致知力行，其功並進乎？」子曰：「人謂非理勿為，則必強勉而從之。至於言穿窬不可為，不必強勉而后能也。故知有深淺，則

[68] Cheng Yi, *Er Cheng ji*, 168, cf. also 184. On *ren* as "unity" in this context, see Bol, *This Culture of Ours*, 324.
[69] Cheng Yi, *Er Cheng ji*, 1230.

> 行有遠近，此進學之效也。循禮而至於樂，則己與理一，殆非強勉之可能也。」
>
> Someone asked: "Are the efforts of 'bringing about knowledge' and 'exerting oneself in practice' to be advanced simultaneously?" The master said: "When others say that something is not in line with Coherence and that you should not do it, then you may need to force yourself to obey. But when they say that you should not steal, you are able to abstain from it naturally. Consequently, as your knowledge may be deep or shallow, your practice of it will be more or less far-reaching. This is the model for advancement in learning. If you follow ritual propriety and reach a stage of joy, then you find yourself aligned with a larger Coherence. I am afraid this cannot be forced upon you from the outside."[70]

This passage and the previous one parallel each other in their concern with degrees of attainment (*shen qian* 深淺). The first passage distinguished between a shallow form of trust, where a sense of distance remained between the individual and external authority, and belief, where such distinctions ceased to exist. The second passage distinguished between a correct action taken as the result of consciously submitting one's will to authority, and the same action taken without any sense of submission or conflict between the internal mind and external authority.

On their respective superficial levels, the notions of "trust" and "knowledge" were alike in that they both relied on external evidence to validate a point of view. Being based on external evidence, however, they were also more or less open to criticism based on conflicting evidence. But in their "deep" sense, where no distinction was made between internal mind and external authority, *zhi* and *xin* were identical. If the precondition that such statements are based on external evidence were to be removed, to say either that "I know that east is east" or "I trust that east is east" are both equal to the simple statement that "east is east."[71] For all the above reasons I find it appropriate to speak of "belief" whenever Cheng Yi refers to the deep sense of either "knowledge" or "trust."

[70] Cheng Yi, *Er Cheng ji*, 1192, cf. also 186.
[71] Graham also pointed out that Cheng Yi did not distinguish between the truth of a proposition and the psychological fact of belief in it. Graham, *Two Chinese Philosophers*, 54-55.

Belief as a Building Block for Political Influence

Belief in Coherence was a state of spontaneity where distinctions between perception and reality ceased to exist. Cheng Yi would not say that either of the two—perception or reality—controlled or preceded the other. The only way to clarify the nature of such a state was indeed to eliminate the distinction between internal and external altogether. In the following passage, the higher state of knowing that I have suggested may be referred to as belief was also spoken of in terms of "true knowledge" (*zhenzhi* 真知):

> 問：「忠信進德之事，固可勉強，然致知甚難。」曰：「子以誠敬為可勉強，且恁地說。到底，須是知了方行得 …… 如子所言，是篤信而固守之，非固有之也。…… 未致知，便欲誠意，是躐等也。學者固當勉強，然不致知，怎生行得？勉強行者，安能持久？除非燭理明，自然樂循理。性本善，循理而行是須理事，本亦不難，但為人不知，旋安排著，便道難也。知有多少般數，煞有深淺。向親見一人，曾為虎所傷，因言及虎，神色便變。傍有數人，見它說虎，非不知虎之勐可畏，然不如它說了有畏懼之色，蓋真知虎者也。學者深知亦如此 …… 學者須是真知，才知得是，便泰然行將去也。某年二十時，解釋經義，與今無異，然思今日，覺得意味與少時自別。」
>
> Question: "Being loyal and trustworthy, improving morally and such things can be forced, but bringing about knowledge is really difficult." Answer: "You say so because you think that the practice of reverence and composure can be forced. But in the end, you have to know something before you are able to practice it . . . What you speak of is trusting in and firmly holding on to something, but not firmly possessing it . . . Desiring to have sincere intentions before having brought about knowledge is to skip a stage. Yes, students should force themselves, but if they do not bring about knowledge, how can they hope to act on it? If actions are forced, how can they be upheld? To do so one must see Coherence clearly and spontaneously take pleasure in aligning oneself with it. Human nature is originally good, and to follow Coherence is as it should be. It is not difficult, but because people do not know this and overthink it, they say that it is difficult.
>
> There are so many forms of knowledge, deep or shallow in degree. Once I met a man who had been wounded by a tiger, and therefore when he spoke of the tiger his demeanor and color all changed. There were many people standing beside him, watching him speak of the tiger, and it was not

> that they did not know its fierceness, but they did not have the same appearance of horror as him. He was one who *truly knew* the tiger. *Deep knowledge* in a student should also be like this . . . Students must have *true knowledge* to know that something is right, which will enable them to calmly go and act on it. The way I explained the *Classics* when I was twenty was no different from the way I do it today, but when I think of myself today, the taste of their significance is clearly different from when I was young."[72]

As a family head and teacher, Cheng Yi's arguments encouraged action among those who studied under him. But he also understood the enormous distance between a student hearing him speak of how one ought to act, and the point where that student would consistently put such instructions into practice. Cheng Yi's goal was to produce not students, but men of his own caliber and intentions. Therefore, he repeatedly emphasized the path of knowledge from shallow to profound, and from trust to belief, which had to be traversed by each person through their own experiences, trials and errors.

Peter Bol argued that Cheng Yi meant to "deny that text-based learning was integral to knowing and realizing values."[73] Such an observation illustrates well the contrast between Cheng Yi's and Sima Guang's historical approaches, but Cheng Yi did not dissuade his students from preparing for the civil examinations. On the contrary, he encouraged them to memorize the classical texts, evaluate their commentaries, and behave in accordance with family rituals. And when his contemporaries accused him of ignoring the textual tradition, Cheng Yi disagreed saying:

> 人多說某不教人習舉業，某何嘗不教人習舉業也？人若不習舉業而望及第，卻是責天理而不修人事。但舉業，既可以及第即已，若更去上面盡力求必得之道，是惑也。
>
> Many say that I do not prepare students for the civil examinations, but since when do I not prepare them for the examinations? For students to not prepare for the examinations and still hope to pass them would be to expect aid from universal Coherence (*tianli*) without cultivating oneself in human affairs. But having once passed the examinations one can stop preparing for

[72] Cheng Yi, *Er Cheng ji,* 187-188.
[73] Bol, *This Culture of Ours*, 305.

> them, for it would be a mistake to think that one may attain the universal Way by exerting oneself further along that path.[74]

It was in fact crucial to Cheng Yi that his students prepare for and pass the civil examinations because, as we have seen, placing disciples in influential positions was the only way to achieve his goals. But textual studies alone could not build the strength of character necessary to stay on the right course once in office, and the fundamental problem remained —that any idea, thought or action based on evidence and argument was open to challenge from conflicting evidence. Only an immovable belief in the correctness of their own judgment as shaped by Cheng Yi's teachings allowed his students to become influential men of principle and action, who would carry his legacy forward no matter what the opposition may throw at them.

Investigating Things and Realizing Coherence

The phrase "to bring about knowledge" (*zhizhi*) in Cheng Yi's reading of the *Daxue* 大學 (Greater Learning) must be understood in relation to the idea of "investigating things" (*gewu* 格物). In this phrase, "things" is taken in a broad sense, and already Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127-200) glossed it with the word "affairs" (*shi* 事). Similarly, Cheng Yi did not read the word as a reference exclusively to external objects or natural phenomena, but more often to situations where an act of moral judgment was involved. He said:

> 或問：「進修之術何先？」曰：「莫先於正心誠意。誠意在致知，致知在格物……凡一物上有一理，須是窮致其理。窮理亦多端，或讀書，講明義理，或論古今人物，別其是非，或應接事物而處其當，皆窮理也。」
> Someone asked: "Among the techniques for progression in self-cultivation, what comes first?" Answer: "Nothing precedes correcting your mind and making your intentions sincere. The method for making your intentions sincere is to bring about knowledge, and knowledge is

[74] Cheng Yi, *Er Cheng ji*, 185.

> achieved by investigating things. Each thing has its own coherence, which one must realize and thereby internalize. There are many ways of realizing coherence: some read and discuss books to clarify their meaning; some evaluate historical and contemporary figures to discern what they did right or wrong; and some respond to external affairs to deal with them in a proper manner. This is all about realizing the coherence of things."[75]

In his study of Cheng Yi, Peter Bol explained *gewu* as "fully realizing the patterns of things."[76] He used the term "realize" in its double sense as meaning both "to come to see" and "to bring about." This interpretation is partly based on Cheng Yi's own identification of *gewu* with the phrase *qiongli*. Cheng Yi said:

> 格猶窮也，物猶理也。若曰窮其理雲爾。窮理，然后足以致知。不窮，則不能致也。
> *Ge* means roughly "to realize" (*qiong*), and *wu* means roughly "coherence" (*li*). It is just like saying "realize its coherence." When coherence is realized, knowledge is achieved. If it is not yet realized, [knowledge] cannot be achieved.[77]

Bol's translation of *ge*/*qiong* as "to realize" is very proper, since it suggests not only an investigation into external phenomena, but also the act of conferring meaning onto phenomena. As a verb, it carries the potential to suggest precisely that non-distinction between internal and external that Cheng Yi wanted to express, a meaning that does not come across well in the common usage of the verb "to investigate" as a translation of *ge*. Consider the following passages:

> 「致知在格物」，非由外鑠我也，我固有之也。因物有遷，迷而不知，則天理滅矣，故聖人欲格之。
> "To bring about knowledge requires realizing the coherence of things." This does not refer to something that permeates us from without, but to something that we inherently possess. When moved by external

[75] Cheng Yi, *Er Cheng ji*, 188.
[76] Bol, *This Culture of Ours*, 317.
[77] Cheng Yi, *Er Cheng ji*, 316.

> phenomena we get lost and no longer *know*, at which point universal Coherence is lost [to us]. Therefore, the sages desire to realize it.[78]
>
> 知者吾之所固有，然不致則不能得之，而致知必有道，故曰「致知在格物」。
> Knowledge is something that I inherently possess, but if I do not bring it about then it cannot be attained. There must be a way to bring about knowledge, which is why it is said: "Bringing about knowledge lies in realizing the coherence of things."[79]

Knowledge in its deeper sense—or, belief—as referred to by Cheng Yi could not be achieved by mere investigation of external phenomena and collection of evidence. In other words, the relationship between *gewu* and *zhizhi* was not simply a sequential one of first doing one and then the other. Rather, belief could only be practiced by making judgments about external matters. The moral correctness or incorrectness of an act or a person, for example, became a fact only through the application of fixed standards afforded by one's beliefs. Cheng Yi said:

> 隨事觀理，而天下之理得矣。天下之理得，然后可以至於聖人。君子之學，將以反躬而已矣。反躬在致知，致知在格物。
> When you observe coherence in whatever you encounter, then the Coherence of everything under heaven is attained. When the Coherence in everything under heaven has been attained you can reach the sages. The learning of the superior man is all about retrieving the self. Retrieving the self lies in bringing about knowledge, and bringing about knowledge lies in realizing the coherence of things.[80]

As a teacher and family head, how could Cheng Yi produce unassailable arguments for the correctness of a certain set of ideas? Could the aesthetics of writing (*wen*) lead students onto the right path? But talented men of any persuasion could learn to write well. Or could the norms of the civil examinations give students an incentive to study the

[78] Cheng Yi, *Er Cheng ji*, 316.
[79] Cheng Yi, *Er Cheng ji*, 316.
[80] Cheng Yi, *Er Cheng ji*, 316.

Classics? But only a fraction of all candidates could pass the examinations, and mere memorization did not guarantee moral behavior. Could moral lessons be transmitted through historical example? But an argument based on historical example was always open to counter-argument based on another set of examples. Besides, anyone could appropriate an extensive canon of Buddhist arguments to flatly deny the permanence and existence of all worldly phenomena. Faced with such difficulties, Cheng Yi realized that argument was futile. Certain basic premises must be accepted without argument, and true acceptance had to come from within. He said:

> 或問：「學者多流於釋氏之說，何也？」子曰：「不致知也。知之既至，孰得而移之？知玉為寶，則人不能以石亂之矣。知醴之為甘，則人不能以糵亂之矣。知聖人為大中至正，則釋氏不能以說惑之矣。」
> Someone asked: "Many students get carried away by Buddhist theories, why is that?" The master said: "They do not bring about knowledge within themselves. Once knowledge is there, who would be able to move them? Once they know to treasure jade, others will not be able to fool them with a rock. Once they know the sweetness of wine, others will not be able to fool them with yeast. Once they *know* that the sage is great equanimity and perfect correctness, the Buddhists will not be able to confuse them with their theories."[81]

The knowledge that Cheng Yi spoke of was knowledge in its deep sense, that is, belief. Before undertaking further inquiries, students had to sincerely believe in the existence of universal Coherence as a highest good. Moreover, this belief must be rooted in the student's very nature to obliterate any doubt in its universal applicability and explanatory power. Only by achieving such deep knowledge could one think and act without the worry of having second thoughts due to the clever argumentation of others. Without belief, therefore, no matter how hard one studied nothing substantial and applicable could ever be attained.

[81] Cheng Yi, *Er Cheng ji*, 1172.

Rejecting Alternative Viewpoints

The other side of a belief in Coherence was an equally firm and unquestionable rejection of alternative viewpoints. Cheng Yi said:

> 儒者其卒必入異教，其志非願也，其勢自然如此。蓋智窮力屈，欲休來，又知得未安穩，休不得，故見人有一道理，其勢須從之。譬之行一大道，坦然無阻，則更不由徑，隻為前面逢著山，逢著水，行不得，有窒礙，則見一邪徑，欣然從之。儒者之所以必有窒礙者，何也？隻為不致知。知至至之，則自無事可奪。今夫有人處於異鄉，元無安處，則言某處安，某處不安，須就安處。若已有家，人言他人家為安，已必不肯就彼。故儒者而卒歸異教者，隻為於已道實無所得，雖曰聞道，終不曾實有之。
>
> If in the end a Confucian scholar falls into heterodoxy, it is due to unforeseen circumstances and not because he originally intended so. When his intelligence is at its limit and his strength abandons him, he desires to rest. But he does not firmly *know*, and so he finds no rest. Therefore, when he hears others say something that makes sense, he tends to agree with them. It is just like when you travel on a road: if the road is wide and unobstructed you will not go looking for shortcuts. Only when you encounter mountains ahead, or you meet with water and do not know how to cross, whenever there are obstructions and you find a shortcut on the side, you gladly follow it.
>
> Why do Confucians run into obstructions? It is only because they do not bring about knowledge within themselves. "Bring about knowledge and perfect it" and nothing can take it away from you. If there were someone staying in a foreign land without any safe place to go, and he received word of some safe haven, he would surely head for it. But if you have a home and others tell you that another man's home is safe, surely you will not agree to go to him. Therefore, whenever Confucians turn to heterodoxy it is only because they have not in fact attained any understanding of the Way. Even though they may say that they have heard of the Way, in the end they never really got it.[82]

[82] Cheng Yi, *Er Cheng ji*, 155.

Everyone in Cheng Yi's audience wanted to learn and gain knowledge, and many were truly erudite. But the mere accumulation of knowledge about external phenomena could not guarantee that a student stay faithful to any one teaching, especially when there were many competing ones that offered their own extensive fields of knowledge for exploration. As we have seen, however, the knowledge that Cheng Yi spoke of was different in that it demanded belief, and such belief demanded disbelief in all alternatives. On the notion of steadfastness in one's opinions when faced with counterarguments, he said:

> 致知則有知，有知則能擇。
> Having brought about knowledge, you *know*. And once you *know*, you will be able to choose.[83]

> 子曰：「致知則智明，智明然后能擇。」
> The master said: Having brought about knowledge your intelligence becomes clear. Only when your intelligence is clear will you be able to choose.[84]

> 潘康仲問：「學者於聖人之門，非願其有異也，惟不能知之，是以流於不同。敢問持正之道。」子曰：「知之而後可守，無所知則何所守也？故學莫先乎致知。窮理格物則知無不盡。知之既盡，則無不固。」
> Pan Kangzhong asked: "It is not that students intend to deviate from the sages that they study. They are swept into disagreement only because they are unable to *know*. May I ask for a method to hold on to correctness?" The Master said: "Only when you *know* something will you be able to hold on to it. If you do not *know*, what will there be to hold on to? In learning, therefore, nothing precedes bringing about knowledge. By realizing the coherence of things, your knowledge is perfected. Once knowledge is thus perfected, you will be steadfast in everything you think and do."[85]

[83] Cheng Yi, *Er Cheng ji*, 143.
[84] Cheng Yi, *Er Cheng ji*, 1191.
[85] Cheng Yi, *Er Cheng ji*, 1195.

Cheng Yi did not claim that facts as such would lead students to realize the correctness of his Confucian teachings. Mastering the philological obstacles of the *Classics*, the aesthetics of poetic diction, or the lessons in retribution derived from historical precedent would not automatically lead one to adopt the right values. To make correct judgments and act on the right choices required belief as a framework for managing externally derived information and understanding it "correctly." A firm belief in the existence of this one correct alternative made the mind more effective in making judgments and acting accordingly. Cheng Yi further said:

> 顏子擇中庸，得善拳拳，中庸如何擇？如博學之，又審問之，又明辨之，所以能擇中庸也。雖然，學問明辨，亦何所據，乃識中庸？此則存乎致知。致知者，此則在學者自加功也。大凡於道，擇之則在乎智，守之則在乎仁，斷之則在乎勇。人之於道，隻是患在不能守，不能斷。Master Yan chose the mean and attained sincere goodness. How does one go about choosing the mean? Extensive learning, inquiry, and discussion enables one to choose the mean. Even so, what can one rely on to verify the mean during learning, inquiry and discussion? This lies in bringing about knowledge [i.e. belief] (*zhi*). But bringing about knowledge is something that must be left to the student's own effort. Generally speaking, choosing the right Way depends on one's intelligence (*zhi*), while holding on to the right Way depends on whether or not one is humane [i.e. "all-embracing"] (*ren*), and rejecting alternatives requires courage (*yong*). The one thing to worry about is others not being able to hold on to the Way and reject alternatives.[86]

The idea of some general Coherence in the universe had been present in Zhang Zai's writings, and the notion of an organic unity comprehending everything was also evident in the thought of Cheng Hao 程灝 (1032-1085). As discussed by Henderson, a form of correlative cosmology was also revived in the 11th century, and Shao Yong's 邵雍 (1011-1077) numerical studies were exceedingly optimistic regarding the possibility of creating a coherent system that duplicated the cosmos.[87] All of this provided the necessary

[86] Cheng Yi, *Er Cheng ji,* 170.
[87] John B. Henderson, *The Development and Decline of Chinese Cosmology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 120-140.

foundation for the appearance of Cheng Yi's approach to learning and knowledge that focused on ideological unity that rejected all alternative value systems (*yiduan* 異端).

Cheng-Zhu Daoxue as Political Philosophy

Cheng Yi may or may not have intended for his ideas to support the exercise of imperial authority, but they formed a strong argument for ideological unification and uniformity. During the Ming dynasty, an extension of those arguments did, as a matter of fact, provide a rationalization for autocratic government.

While Zhu Xi later made more subtle distinctions, the conflict in Cheng Yi's thought between the autonomy of individuals—represented by desire (*yu*) and selfishness (*si*)—and conformity to the socio-political common good (*renli* 人理) was absolute. Cheng Yi said: "The sage is an embodiment of social hierarchy. Hierarchy in this sense is the common good. Once the ultimate coherence of the social realm is comprehended, there is no more improvement to be made (*shengren, renlun zhi zhi, lun, li ye, ji tong renli zhi ji, geng bu ke yi you jia* 聖人，人倫之至。倫，理也。既通人理之極，更不可以有加).[88]

Not all later *daoxue* thinkers who traced their intellectual pedigree back to the Cheng brothers emphasized the same aspects of their thought, but a focus on coherence, unity, and rejecting alternatives formed the essence of Cheng Yi's philosophy. This essence was reinforced by Zhu Xi and later adopted by the Ming-Qing imperial governments as so-called Cheng-Zhu orthodoxy. As evidenced by its late imperial destiny, the notion of Coherence provided a framework for total integration and submission of the individual to higher authorities.

Each individual had his own coherence, of course, and Zhu Xi would later emphasize that individual needs and desires carried their inherent coherence and justification. Nevertheless, within this branch of *daoxue* thought it was never morally acceptable that the coherence of an individual take precedence over the greater

[88] Cheng Yi, *Er Cheng ji*, 182.

"envelope" of coherence by which his own particularity was enclosed.[89] In this way, Cheng Yi's notion of "universal Coherence" (*tianli*) gave a philosophical foundation to the imperative that individual needs be subordinated to the common good. And while Zhu Xi introduced many changes to *daoxue* thought, his continuous defense of Zhou Dunyi's 周敦頤 (1017-1073) notion of a "non-objectifiable Supreme Ultimate" (*wu ji er tai ji* 無極而太極) demonstrated the unaltered importance of Cheng Yi's idea of a universal and all-encompassing Coherence, which the Supreme Ultimate represented.[90] Universal Coherence remained the ultimate ethical imperative, and applied to the socio-political realm this meant that unity and integration always preceded the pursuit of individual interest and the expression of individual opinion.

As Yü Ying-shih convincingly argued, *daoxue* factionalism throughout the Southern Song aimed to monopolize access to the emperor and exercise political power from the top down. It can therefore be assumed that if its adherents had not been thwarted by bureaucratic resistance, they would have presented their philosophy to the emperor and used it to justify large-scale political reform. Ideological unification would have been enforced and the philosophy of Coherence used to eliminate any attempt to rationalize dissenting views.

From this perspective, the fierce resistance that *daoxue* adherents met from the conservative bureaucracy is quite understandable. Even if their opponents did not understand the niceties of *daoxue* philosophy, they were clearly able to sense the exclusivist tendencies of that factionalist program. Because of the bureaucratic success at suppressing the *daoxue* movement in the Southern Song, it was not until the Ming dynasty that Cheng-Zhu thought was appropriated for political purposes.

As we will see in the following chapter, however, the result of that appropriation was nothing like Cheng Yi had imagined it to be. Tensions between the individualist ideal of sincerity and the autocratic power of universal Coherence exploded in a most violent manner that caused a long-lasting rift between the state and certain segments of the literati.

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[89] For the useful metaphor of envelopes of coherence, see Peterson, "Another look at *li*," 23.
[90] Qian Mu, *Zhuzi xin xue'an*, 263-282.

CHAPTER 2: THE PRICE OF UNITY IN THE MING DYNASTY

A combination of two factors went into the creation of a strong lineage orientation during the Song dynasty. One was the emphasis on ideological unity first pursued by Wang Anshi and later refined in Cheng Yi's philosophy. The other was Zhu Xi's strengthening of those ideas by introducing the concept of a transmission of the Way (*daotong*). Formulated initially by Han Yu, the notion of *daotong* was both an indigenously Chinese imitation of and an alternative to the strict lines of transmission in imperially sanctioned Chan Buddhism. Having initially been tied to issues of political legitimacy during the Southern Song and Yuan dynasties, the idea of a transmission of the Way was continually redefined as it grew in scope and importance.

2.1 The Political Adoption of Cheng-Zhu Orthodoxy

While the notion of lineage originated in the succession of aristocratic and imperial families, military control and geography were more important indicators of political legitimacy during much of Chinese history, including the Northern Song period. But as the Southern Song found itself occupying only a minor part of what had once been regarded as "China" and with little hope of regaining its northern territories, the achievements of literati culture grew in importance as arguments for legitimacy.[91]

Literati culture in this historical context was not defined in opposition to the ruler or imperial court, but rather in racial terms as against the claims to political legitimacy of the Liao, Jin, and Yuan. And if the Late Ming saw the notion of *daotong*, in the writings of Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 (1619-1692) among others, as representative of literati values against those of the state, such was not yet the case during the Southern Song. In fact,

[91] Yang Nianqun 杨念群, *Hechu shi Jiangnan? Qingchao zhengtongguan de queli yu shilin jingshen shijie de bianyi* 何处是江南？清朝正统观的确立与士林精神世界的变异 (Where is Jiangnan? Establishment of Qing Dynasty Orthodoxy and the Changing Inner World of Intellectuals) (Beijing: Shenghuo, Dushu, Xinzhi Sanlian shudian, 2010), 238-277.

daoxue philosophy and literati culture seemed to go hand in hand with the aims of political authorities.

Given the nature of Cheng-Zhu daoxue as discussed above, this was not surprising, and the notion of *daotong* was indeed swiftly incorporated with Song-Yuan-Ming state efforts to legitimize their respective claims to rulership. Throughout this period, a close relationship between state authority and the lineage-oriented thrust of *daoxue* was institutionalized by means of changes in the structure of the Confucian temple, which before the Song dynasty had not been organized specifically along genealogical lines. The enshrinement of Zhou Dunyi, Zhang Zai, Cheng Hao, Cheng Yi, and Zhu Xi by emperor Lizong in 1241 was a clear sign of *daoxue* being embraced at court. Following the 1313 introduction of questions on the *Four Books* in the first session of the civil examinations by Yuan emperor Renzong, moreover, the *daotong* trope of genealogy and lineage expanded into a broader social discourse.

Daoxue adherents favored a society based on the family lineage as an extension of state bureaucracy, and the way Cheng-Zhu thought was popularized in the civil examinations only reinforced that aspect. Following the growing presence of the lineage orientation in social and intellectual arenas during the Southern Song, a flood of genealogy prefaces in the Yuan dynasty reflected the introduction of extended kinship structures into the public domain of literary discourse.[92] Yang Weizhen's 楊維楨 (1296-1370) *Zhengtong bian* 正統辨 ("Polemic on Legitimate Succession"), for example, was among the earliest texts to explicitly connect the notion of *daotong* as philosophical orthodoxy to the historiographical and practical issue of political legitimacy (*zhengtong* or *zhitong* 治統).

The relationship between *daotong* and political legitimacy can thus be traced to the Yuan or even to the late Southern Song, but imperially sanctioned Cheng-Zhu orthodoxy did not become historically relevant until the Early Ming, when the civil examinations became the primary path to officialdom.[93] In the Early Ming, local lineages that had produced a ranked official were allowed to construct "family temples" (*jiamiao*

[92] Hymes, "Marriage, Descent Groups, and the Localist Strategy," 126.
[93] Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 41.

家廟) that elevated their status in local society. To take advantage of this regulation, many family organizations began to trace, or sometimes artificially construct, genealogies that connected them to an ancestor who had served as a civil official.[94] As Wilson has shown, genealogical ways of thinking became so dominant in the Early Ming that even negative criticism of *daoxue* and its *daotong* narrative was often conducted within that context.[95]

While regulations like these strengthened the bond between local lineages and the state, that cordial relationship was to change dramatically over the course of the Ming dynasty, and along with it the significance of Cheng-Zhu thought.

Zhu Yuanzhang and Wuzhou Daoxue

During the Yuan-Ming transition conflicts escalated between closed lineage organizations and open sectarian movements that did not ascribe to lineage ideals.[96] This tension between a lineage-oriented elite and the "open" structure of religious sects, who promoted anti-lineage ideologies, can be illustrated with an analysis of the political strategy of the Hongwu emperor, Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋 (r. 1368-1398).

Lacking unified organization, but sharing an ideological vision of millenarian prophecies, the religious sects whose disparate activities during the 14th century have been referred to as the Red Turban (*Hongjin* 紅巾) rebellions first appeared in Jiangxi and Hunan during the 1330s. Having been thrown by the hand of fate into a world of militant rebellion, Zhu Yuanzhang joined the restored Song dynasty under its nominal leader and religious sectarian Han Lin'er 韓林兒 (d. ca. 1367), who declared himself emperor in 1355. In that same year, the city of Nanjing fell to Zhu Yuanzhang's forces and soon became his administrative center.

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[94] David Faure, "The Lineage as a Cultural Invention: The Case of the Pearl River Delta," *Modern China* 15.1 (1989): 7.
[95] Wilson, *Genealogy of the Way*, 93.
[96] Barend J. ter Haar, *The White Lotus Teachings in Chinese Religious History* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 112-113.

Having eventually ascended the imperial throne himself, Zhu Yuanzhang was alert to the ideological tension between sectarian groups that had brought him to power and the hierarchical structures of imperial bureaucracy. After capturing the north, it became a top priority for Zhu Yuanzhang to regularize and control Daoist and Buddhist establishments, transforming them into imperially sanctioned institutions. In 1369 he granted official titles and court ranks to the city gods, having his magistrates offer sacrifices to them in a regularized manner. He allowed common people to sacrifice only to their own ancestors and to the spirit of the stove, as well as to the spirit of the soil. Unorthodox religious groups, such as the White Lotus and Manichean sects, were banned in the year that followed.[97]

These actions demonstrate that while the Hongwu emperor relied on religious sects and their ideology to crush the Yuan Empire along with other political opponents, when time came to rebuild the state apparatus as a force capable of dominating local society, he deliberately turned to the literate elite and to the lineage orientation that they represented.[98] For that purpose, Zhu Yuanzhang recruited highly educated men for his administration, and once he controlled the literary center of Wuzhou, later renamed Jinhua, he exerted himself to win over accomplished scholars like Song Lian 宋濂 (1310-1381) and Liu Ji 劉基 (1311-1375).[99]

Zhu Xi's commentaries on the *Four Books* (*Sishu jizhu* 四書集註) had been introduced to Wuzhou by a Jinhua native and disciple of Zhu Xi's successor Huang Gan 黃乾 (1152-1221). As in many other regions, those texts were accepted there as an authoritative statement on the Confucian canon. Nevertheless, the *daoxue* tradition in Wuzhou had developed its own distinctive characteristics over the course of the Yuan dynasty, when local scholars achieved prominence as specialist bureaucrats with a focus

[97] John D. Langlois, Jr., "The Hung-wu reign, 1368–1398", in *The Cambridge History of China, vol. 7*, eds. Frederick W. Mote and Denis Twitchett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 107-181.
[98] Edward L. Farmer, "Social Regulations of the First Ming Emperor: Orthodoxy as a Function of Authority," in *Orthodoxy in Late Imperial China*, ed. Kwang Ching Liu (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 109.
[99] Frederick W. Mote, "The Rise of the Ming Dynasty, 1330-1367," in *The Cambridge History of China, vol. 7*, eds. Frederick W. Mote and Denis Twitchett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 11-57.

on judicial matters. Already during the Southern Song, Wuzhou *daoxue* served as a geographical base for the utilitarian (*gongli* 功利) teachings of Lü Zuqian 呂祖謙 (1137-1181) and later Chen Liang 陳亮 (1143-1194).[100] Lü Zuqian was the most prominent *daoxue* teacher from the late 1160s until his death in 1181, but when Chen Liang's utilitarian ethics gained popularity in the region, Wuzhou *daoxue* came under attack from Zhu Xi. During the 1180s and 90s, Zhu Xi became increasingly protective of his own legacy and more selective with regard to who may ascribe to his teachings. He seemed determined to become the movement's sole authority and emphasized even more than before the lineage-oriented notion of *daotong* and his own writings as representative thereof.[101]

To retain some influence in the bureaucracy and local society after the fall of the Southern Song, Wuzhou literati collaborated with the Mongol conquerors. They justified this by promoting themselves as local preservers of the Way in an age without legitimate rulers. Wuzhou scholars discovered that an emphasis on law and practical statecraft could be used by scholar-officials to temper the willfulness of imperial rule,[102] and the Jinhua scholar Liu Guan 柳貫 (1270-1342) even argued that the legal precedent of the Tang code should occupy a canonical position equal to that of the *Five Classics*.[103] This was perhaps the first time that a community of literati came to regard the division between *daotong* and *zhitong* as representative of literati values as against those of the political center.

Wuzhou *daoxue* represented a form of localism in opposition to the political center, "keeping the *daotong* in Wuzhou and thus out of the hands of the court."[104] So while there were incentives for Jinhua literati and Zhu Yuanzhang to collaborate with each other, a latent tension remained in their respective views on the relationship between local elites and imperial bureaucracy. Zhu Yuanzhang's Jinhua advisers would not submissively go

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[100] John D. Langlois, Jr., "Political Thought in Chin-hua under Mongol Rule," in *China Under Mongol Rule*, ed. Langlois, Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 149-151.
[101] Tillman, "The Rise of the *Tao-Hsüeh* Confucian Fellowship."
[102] Connections between moral (*dao*) and legal (*fa* 法) aspects of governance drawn in Early Ming civil examinations were probably influenced by Jinhua *daoxue*. See Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations*, 75.
[103] Langlois, Jr., "Political Thought in Chin-hua," 172-173.
[104] Bol, "Neo-Confucianism and Local Society, Twelfth to Sixteenth Century: A Case Study," in *The Song-Yuan-Ming Transition in Chinese History*, eds. Paul Jakov Smith and Richard von Glahn (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003), 266.

about their bureaucratic duties, but actively asserted their own authority both at court and in the localities.

Zhu Yuanzhang was an active ruler and wanted personal control over a hierarchically structured bureaucracy that reached from the court all the way down to local institutions. He therefore remained wary of the classicists even as he knew their support was needed to legitimate his rule. His discontent with passages in the *Mencius* that legitimated regicide led to the publication of a censored version of the book,[105] and countless officials were executed for various crimes throughout the 1380s.[106]

There were various reasons for Zhu Yuanzhang's loss of trust in his literati advisers and his subsequent purges of the bureaucracy. The most outstanding case was that of prime minister Hu Weiyong 胡惟庸 (1315-1380), whose corruption and usurpation of imperial authority led to his execution. The repercussions of this incident not only cost the lives of tens of thousands alleged co-conspirators, but also led to the abolishment of the prime minister's post in favor of a new institution called the Grand Secretariat, which at least initially granted the emperor increased control over all aspects of the administration.

The localist agenda of elite lineages from Wuzhou/Jinhua did not fare well against the autocratic Hongwu emperor, and from 1397 there was a marked decline in the number of presented scholars with Zhejiang origins as compared to their southern competitors from Jiangxi.[107] The trend against employing Zhejiang natives continued throughout the Jianwen and Yongle reigns, and while Zhu Yuanzhang remained biased against Suzhou men ever since their support for his rival Zhang Shicheng 張士誠 (1321-1367) during the years 1365-67, even Jiangnan overtook Zhejiang in the number of presented scholars it produced during the early half of the 15th century.[108]

Considering his animosity toward the classicists, it may seem surprising that Zhu Yuanzhang insisted on adopting Cheng-Zhu *daoxue* as imperial orthodoxy. Since the

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[105] Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations*, 79-81.
[106] Langlois, Jr., "The Hung-wu reign," 163-164.
[107] Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations*, 658, table 2.9.
[108] Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations*, 91-92. For a darker and more one-sided representation of Zhu Yuanzhang's rule, partly based on Late Ming literary sources that consciously blackened Early Ming rule, see Mote, "The Growth of Chinese Despotism: A Critique of Wittfogel's theory of Oriental Despotism as applied to China," *Oriens Extremus* 8.1 (1961): 1-41.

emperor felt threatened by the local activism of Wuzhou/Jinhua *daoxue* and clearly did not shy away from suppressing literati opinion by force, why not simply ban *daoxue* along with other religious sects, as had been done during the Southern Song?

The most reasonable explanation is that Zhu Yuanzhang sincerely believed in the potential of Confucian values to support effective and successful governance.[109] As we have seen, the Cheng-Zhu branch of *daoxue* that emphasized ideological unity as the common good was highly compatible with autocracy and an activist state. This was the aspect of *daoxue*, that Cheng-Zhu thought narrowly defined, which interested the Early Ming emperors. Wuzhou/Jinhua *daoxue*, on the other hand, while promoting Zhu Xi's commentaries on the *Four Books* lacked precisely this emphasis on Coherence and uniformity of thought. Consequently, Zhu Yuanzhang's clash with his Jinhua advisers should not be understood as a conflict between imperial despotism and *daoxue* as such. Instead, it should be recognized that the Hongwu emperor and Wuzhou/Jinhua literati promoted two very different and mutually incompatible interpretations of what *daoxue* in fact represented.

Following the death of Zhu Yuanzhang, the short Jianwen reign (1399-1402) left much imperial authority in the hands of civil officials as the closest advisers of the young emperor. In attempts to realize a form of "humane rule" modeled on classical texts such as the *Zhouli*, much of the first Ming emperor's legacy was done away with. But when the emperor's oldest uncle Zhu Di 朱棣 (r. 1402-1424) reacted against attempts to abolish the fiefdoms of the imperial aristocracy by marching on the capital, burning the palace and presumably also the young emperor to the ground, the stage was set for new violent confrontations between imperial authority and literati at court. The well-known accounts of how civil officials like Lian Zining 練子寧 (d. 1402) and Fang Xiaoru 方孝孺 (1357-1402) died horrible deaths when refusing to serve Zhu Di became central representations of personal integrity among educated Chinese.[110]

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[109] Early Ming historical records support this having been the case. See Chu Hung-lam 朱鴻林, Ming taizu de Kongzi chongbai 明太祖的孔子崇拜 (The First Ming Emperor's Worship of Confucius), *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 70.2 (1999): 483-530.

[110] Elman, "Where is King Ch'eng?: Civil Examinations and Confucian Ideology during the Early Ming, 1368-1415," *T'oung Pao* 79 (1993): 23-68; Elman, "Ming Politics & Confucian Classics: The Duke of Chou Serves King Ch'eng," in *International Conference Volume on Ming Dynasty*

Fang Xiaoru and the Yongle Emperor

In the "Shishuo" 師說 (Teacher's Sayings) chapter of the *Mingru xue'an* 明儒學案 (Record of Ming Scholars), Huang Zongxi followed his teacher Liu Zongzhou 劉宗周 (1578-1645) in regarding Fang Xiaoru as the starting point of Ming dynasty intellectual history. The passage lamented that Fang Xiaoru had been criticized for allowing Zhu Di to exterminate his relatives of ten degrees, rather than compose a document acknowledging the legitimacy of the new emperor's ascendancy. It said:

> 考先生在當時，已稱程、朱復出，後之人反以一死抹過先生一生苦心，謂節義與理學是兩事，出此者入比……於是成仁取義之訓，為世大禁，而亂臣賊子，將接踵於天下矣，悲夫！
> In his lifetime, Fang Xiaoru was called a reincarnation of Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi. Yet later men pointed to his death as one that erased the efforts of a lifetime, saying that heroic virtue and the study of philosophy are two different things, and that he may have one but not the other . . . Consequently, his teachings of martyrdom have become a subject forbidden to the world, while treasonous ministers and rebellious sons multiply all under heaven. How sad![111]

While Fang Xiaoru had studied under Song Lian, he was not a Jinhua native but hailed from Jiangxi. Partly due to this geographical affiliation, Fang Xiaoru held to values in life and learning that differed markedly from Song Lian and his Jinhua disciples. In particular, Fang Xiaoru was much less bent on accepting the idea that literati culture could prosper in the localities regardless of the ruler's moral character.

Classical Studies (Sponsored by the Institute of Chinese Literature & Philosophy, Academia Sinica, Nankang, Taiwan, ROC, 1996), 93-144; Peter Ditmanson, "Death in Fidelity: Mid- and Late-Ming Reconstructions of Fang Xiaoru," *Ming Studies* 45-46 (2001): 114-43; and Ditmanson, "Venerating the Martyrs of the 1402 Usurpation: History and Memory in the Mid and Late Ming Dynasty (1368-1644)," *T'oung Pao* 91.1 (2007): 110-58.

[111] Huang Zongxi, *Mingru xue'an* 明儒學案 (Cases of Ming scholars), vol. 7 of *Huang Zongxi quanji* 黃宗羲全集 (Collected Writings of Huang Zongxi), ed. Shen Shanhong (Suzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 1992), 8. Translation follows de Bary, et al. eds., *Sources of Chinese Tradition, vol. 1*, 796-797.

Like Zhu Xi and other Southern Song *daoxue* adherents, Fang Xiaoru wanted to gain direct access to the emperor, or if this proved impossible, to educate disciples that could achieve such a goal.[112] Therefore, while Zhu Yuanzhang had purged his bureaucracy of power grabbing and disrespectful Jinhua scholars, Fang Xiaoru's death at the hands of Zhu Di represented something altogether different. In fact, Fang's refusal to serve Zhu Di stood in stark contrast to the utilitarian wing of *daoxue*, which held that the relative moral qualities of the ruler were less important than local literati activism. Fang Xiaoru's sacrifice was an expression of loyalty to the Confucian hierarchical structures that Zhu Di had so blatantly disrespected by usurping the throne.

In his essay on Fang Xiaoru, Liu Zongzhou argued against the idea that ideological unity could not be combined with the schism-provoking act of political martyrdom. On the contrary, the integrity and sincerity required for martyrdom (*jieyi* 節義) was part and parcel of a devotion to the common good. It was Zhu Di who elevated his selfish interests above the hierarchical order that constituted socio-political coherence (*renli*), and Fang Xiaoru's sacrifice had been necessary to restore the balance. With an implicit reference to Cheng Yi's writings, Liu Zongzhou explained how Fang Xiaoru had "died nine times over in order to make things right" (*yi jiu si cheng jiu yi ge shi* 以九死成就一個是).[113]

The perfect sincerity called for in Cheng-Zhu *daoxue* manifested itself as a belief in something that was more important than life itself—one's own and that of others. Therefore, Fang Xiaoru's death was not due to a sudden outburst of righteousness (*yiqi* 意氣), but the inevitable result of lifelong self-cultivation. His mind had been so in line with universal Coherence that the moral duty of martyrdom was as real and tangible to him as the material forces of the external world.

Fang Xiaoru's sacrifice was not a literati protest against imperial despotism. Throughout the Ming dynasty, his death represented in action the non-distinction between personal sincerity and socio-political unity that lay at the core of Cheng-Zhu *daoxue*.

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[112] Xu Zhao'an 徐兆安, Song Lian menren shiqi de Fang Xiaoru (1376-1383) 宋濂門人時期的方孝孺(1376-1383) (Fang Xiaoru's time as a disciple of Song Lian, 1376-1383), *Hanxue yanjiu* 27.4 (2009): 147-178.
[113] Huang, *Mingru xue'an*, vol. 7, 8. Cf. Cheng Yi, *Er Cheng ji*, 147.

Fang Xiaoru had died the death of a martyr and worse to prove that no utilitarian argument could ever justify the overstepping of one's position and usurpation of imperial power. It was as an incarnation of these ideals that he was considered to be "Cheng-Zhu reborn" (*Cheng Zhu fu chu* 程朱復出).[114]

Zhu Di lived to become a strong emperor in the Cheng-Zhu sense, promoting mastery of Cheng-Zhu orthodoxy as the path to officialdom through civil examinations and employing scholars for large-scale literary projects. The majority of literati were soon willing to grant him the elevated position of sage-ruler.[115] But under the harmonious surface, Zhu Di's usurpation and its repercussions left a scar that severely problematized the relationship between emperor and literati. Invoked for conflicting purposes by the Yongle emperor, on the one hand, and on the other by the martyrs who sacrificed themselves rather than serve him, the meaning of Cheng-Zhu *daoxue* was now forever contestable.

Men like Wu Yubi 吳與弼 (1391-1469), Hu Juren 胡居仁 (1434-1484), and Chen Xianzhang 陳獻章 (1428-1500) represented this new tension between state and literati, as they showed no interest in serving the court as officials or in embracing the state-supported orthodox version of Cheng-Zhu thought.[116] These men did not represent local interests in the sense that Wuzhou/Jinhua *daoxue* had, and they did not identify themselves in opposition to the central government as such. They simply would not serve in a court where no legitimate ruler was to be found, and as the history of the Ming dynasty unfolded, public service seemed only less and less attractive.

[114] That Fang Xiaoru was so considered in his own lifetime is supported by prefaces written for Fang's collected prose works in 1397. See Huang Zongxi, *Mingru xue'an*, vol. 7, 8; see also Xu Zhao'an, "Song Lian menren shiqi de Fang Xiaoru," 166-168.
[115] Elman, *Civil Examinations and Meritocracy in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 2013), 28-41.
[116] Elman, "Ming Politics and Confucian Classics," 19-20.

2.2 Wang Yangming on Sincerity

The fate of men like Fang Xiaoru should be kept in mind when examining the emergence and popularization of Wang Yangming's 王陽明 (1472-1529) ideas, especially since the legacy of the Jianwen martyrs first became acutely relevant in confrontations between civil officials and the eunuch Liu Jin 劉謹 (1452-1510)—events that drastically impacted the direction of Wang Yangming's life and thought.[117]

The notion of sincerity was central to Wang Yangming, who had witnessed and been victimized by court corruption. His philosophy aimed to create an opening in Cheng-Zhu thought to empower the individual and encourage bottom-up criticism of corruption, usurpation, and the wanton exercise of imperial power. However, he denounced utilitarian Wuzhou/Jinhua *daoxue* as represented by Chen Liang's teachings. Wang Yangming argued that even in cases where the policies of a hegemon—as opposed to a truly benevolent ruler—seemed supportive of the common good, they nevertheless originated from selfish motivations. Political unification was important, but by no means the only standard by which to measure a ruler's relative alignment with heavenly Coherence. Literati who accepted a hegemon on utilitarian grounds only deceived themselves and failed in their moral duty.[118] Wang Yangming said:

> 諸君要識得我立言宗旨。我如今說個心即理是如何，只為世人分心與理為二故，便有許多病痛。如五伯攘夷狄，尊周室，都是一個私心，便不當理。人卻說他做得當理，只心有未純，往往悅慕其所為，要來外面做得好看，卻與心全不相干。分心與理為二，其流至于伯道之偽而不自知。故我說個心即理，要使知心理是一個，便來心上做工夫，不去襲義於義，便是王道之真。此我立言宗旨。
>
> You gentlemen must understand the basic purpose of my founding doctrine. Why do I declare that the mind is Coherence? It is simply because people of the world divide the mind and Coherence in two, and this gives rise to many evils. For instance, the five powerful hegemons drove out the barbarians and honored the House of Zhou, all for selfish reasons, and consequently they were not aligned with Coherence.

[117] Ditmanson, "Venerating the Martyrs," 136.
[118] Bol, *Neo-Confucianism in History*, 189.

> Some say that even though their [the hegemons] minds were not pure, their actions were aligned with Coherence. Such people admire deeds and want deeds to look good, but they ignore the relationship between deeds and the mind. They divide mind and Coherence in two and unwittingly drift into the insincerity that characterizes a hegemon. Therefore I say that the mind is Coherence to remind people that mind and Coherence are one, so that they devote their efforts to the mind instead of accumulating individual acts of righteousness. This is the true Way of a ruler and the basic purpose of my founding doctrine.[119]

As the imperial court adopted Cheng-Zhu thought over the course of the Song-Yuan-Ming transition, the *daoxue* notion of universal Coherence came to represent imperial interests as the common good of the realm. In this political interpretation of Cheng-Zhu *daoxue*, the achievement of individual sincerity required complete identification with the common good as represented by the interests of those at the top of the imperial hierarchy. The human mind, with its individual needs and desires, had no moral right to assert itself in opposition to this higher order.

Based on the ideas of men who had withdrawn from the political arena after Zhu Di's usurpation, Wang Yangming's philosophy redefined the interpretation of *daoxue* by emphasizing that heavenly Coherence was rooted in the mind. A person could therefore be insincere, or double-faced (*wei*), even as his outward actions served to promote the good of the empire. Theoretically, both Cheng Yi and Wang Yangming aimed to overcome the distinction between the internal self and external authority, but in practice their respective emphases made a world of difference.

The Inheritance and Departure from Cheng Yi

While both Cheng-Zhu *daoxue* and Wang Yangming's thought rejected utilitarianism, the Cheng-Zhu view of Coherence lacked tools to deal effectively with usurpation and abuse

[119] Wang Yangming, *Chuanxi lu* 傳習錄 (Instructions for Practical Living), vol. 1 of *Wang Yangming quanji* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1992), 121. Translation based on Wing-tsit Chan, *Instructions for Practical Living and Other Neo-Confucian Writings by Wang Yang-ming* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1963), 251-252.

of the imperial voice. Even a "reincarnation of Cheng-Zhu" like Fang Xiaoru could do no more than die a martyr in the face of Zhu Di's coup d'état.

Since the Cheng-Zhu notion of Coherence promoted unity without much in terms of actual moral content, it granted moral high ground to anyone able to monopolize its definition. In practice this turned out to be those with political power, who controlled the process of selection in the civil examinations and spoke with the imperial voice. The emperor's actions were by definition aligned with Coherence as long as he convinced others that he acted for the common good. If anyone opposed him, their criticism defied Coherence and could be automatically condemned. In this way, the notion of Coherence in Ming dynasty Cheng-Zhu orthodoxy served the same purpose as the lineage orientation of limiting political participation and eliminating alternative viewpoints. Wang Yangming tried to turn this interpretation on its head.

In 1505, Zhu Houzhao 朱厚照 (1491-1521), at the young age of fourteen, ascended the imperial throne to succeed his father. The succession provided an excellent opportunity for the eunuch Liu Jin to distance the emperor from the workings of the civil bureaucracy, so that most actual power at court fell into Liu Jin's own hands. Inspired by the precedent set by the Jianwen martyrs, civil officials submitted memorials voicing their concerns over Liu Jin's growing power, and many were dismissed or imprisoned as a result.

Wang Yangming also presented a memorial that encouraged the emperor to take a more active part in state affairs. As expected, he was severely punished and sent as a minor official to the distant and uncivilized Guizhou.[120] At the core of the ideas that Wang Yangming later developed and promoted lay this life-changing choice and the question of how self-cultivation may enable a man to give up everything—including his own life and those of his loved ones, as had Fang Xiaoru and other Jianwen martyrs—in defense of what was morally right.

Wang Yangming collaborated with Zhan Ruoshui 湛若水 (1466-1560) to spread his understanding of the Confucian teachings, which they both agreed was more in line

[120] See e.g. Tu Wei-ming, *Neo-Confucian Thought in Action: Wang Yang-Ming's Youth (1472-1509)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).

with Cheng Hao's ideas than with those of Cheng Yi. The difference between the two Northern Song brothers lay precisely in Cheng Hao's emphasis on the individual and the spontaneity of moral action, whereas Cheng Yi focused on how to perfect moral leadership in society and politics.[121] Cheng Yi had of course argued that individual sincerity and socio-political unity were mutually supportive and ultimately identical values, but the 500 years of history that separated him from Wang Yangming had shown the relationship between sincerity and unity to be far more complex and problematic that Cheng Yi had imagined.

In contrast, Wang Yangming assertively shifted focus to individual sincerity and downplayed the notion of ideological unity. Where Cheng Yi had emphasized the importance of immovable belief in a doctrine of universal Coherence, Wang Yangming said:

> 子夏篤信聖人，曾子反求諸己。篤信固亦是，然不如反求之切。
> Zixia had strong faith in the Sage whereas Zengzi turned to seek the highest good in himself. It is good to have strong faith, of course, but it is not as real and concrete as seeking in oneself.[122]

This passage represented Wang Yangming's aversion to uncritical trust in external authority. No matter how correct the goal of socio-political unity, as long as it relied on the cohesive force of ideological doctrine there would be insincerity among those who submitted to it. To retain the empowering force of Cheng-Zhu *daoxue* that had inspired men like Fang Xiaoru while eliminating the dependence on doctrinal authority, Wang Yangming encouraged his disciples to pursue Coherence first and foremost within their own minds. This internal source of moral strength he called "innate knowledge" (*liangzhi* 良知).

The direct objects of innate knowledge were not external things, but the intentions (*yinian* 意念) that stood between human nature and external phenomena. External actions alone could therefore never demonstrate an individual's attainment of innate knowledge, which required principled and unselfish intentions behind those actions. Consequently,

[121] Cf. Bol, "Reconceptualizing the Order of Things," 719.
[122] Wang Yangming, *Chuanxi lu*, 5. Translation follows Chan, *Instructions*, 12.

the Coherence that students were asked to believe in could not, as Cheng Yi had argued, be achieved from initial trust in an external authority or doctrine. Innate knowledge could not be taught or transferred; only the effort to attain it for oneself could be encouraged. Wang Yangming said:

> 文蔚謂「致知之說，求之事親從兄之間，便覺有所持循」者，此段最見近來真切篤實之功。但以此自為，不妨自有得力處；以此遂為定說教人，卻未免又有因藥發病之患，亦不可不一講也。
> You said, Wen-yü, that when the doctrine of the extension of knowledge is sought in serving one's parents and obeying one's elder brother there is something concrete to grasp and to follow. This shows the result of your genuine and concrete efforts recently. However, even though you have found this effective, it cannot be taught to others as the right way to go. If you do, you'd be incurring disease due to the application of medicine. This should not be passed over without comment.[123]

Wang Yangming placed the burden of moral responsibility on the shoulders of each individual. His distrust of external authority extended to historical figures as well as to the classical tradition. In a letter to Luo Qinshun 羅欽順 (1465-1547) that defended his departure from Zhu Xi's reorganization of the *Daxue* text, Wang Yangming said:

> 夫學貴得之心。求之於心而非也，雖其言之出於孔子，不敢以為是也，而況其未及孔子者乎！求之於心而是也，雖其言之出於庸常，不敢以為非也，而況其出於孔子者乎！
> The important thing in learning is attaining it for oneself. If words are examined in the mind and found to be wrong, even though they came from the mouth of Confucius, I dare not accept them as correct. How much less those from people inferior to Confucius! If words are examined in the mind and found to be correct, even though they came from the mouths of ordinary people, I dare not regard them as wrong. How much less those of Confucius![124]

[123] Wang Yangming, *Chuanxi lu*, 84. Translation follows Chan, *Instructions*, 176.
[124] Wang Yangming, *Chuanxi lu*, 76. Translation follows Chan, *Instructions*, 159.

If even the words of Confucius were open to doubt, how much more so those of an emperor and his high ministers. The notion of innate knowledge implied a refusal to accept any single doctrine as orthodox or heterodox. Enlightenment with regard to innate knowledge could not be demonstrated by actions that simply followed a set of regulations, even if these were supported by the imperial voice. It was only in this sense that Wang Yangming's teachings went "beyond good and evil" (*wu shan wu e* 無善無惡).[125]

Wang Gen and Moral Relativism

Wang Yangming's rendition of *daoxue* provided a justification to criticize the abuse of political power, one that had been missing in Cheng-Zhu orthodoxy. But the de-emphasis of unity in favor of individual expression that this shift involved also opened the door to moral relativism. Because if actions that conformed with imperial regulations could not serve as proof of one's devotion to the common good, then who decided if a person's actions were an expression of innate knowledge, or merely selfish desires masquerading as such?

Wang Gen 王艮 (1483-1541) met Wang Yangming at the age of 38 and combined with his own ideas the latter's notion of sincerity as the spontaneous expression of innate knowledge. Wang Yangming subscribed to Cheng Yi's ideal of a non-distinction between internal mind and external world. This provided a rationalization for martyrdom and the incentive to sacrifice one's physical body for the sake of a greater Coherence, even when it conflicted with imperial interests. Wang Gen's conception of self (*shen* 身) was much more physical, and he defined sincerity in terms of acting spontaneously (*ziran*) rather than in an artificial manner (*wei*). He would never have made physical sacrifices to maintain political order in the way Fang Xiaoru and Wang Yangming did, and he refused to "prostitute" himself in service of the imperial court.

[125] Araki Kengo, "Confucianism and Buddhism in the Late Ming," in *The Unfolding of Neo-Confucianism*, ed. Wm. Theodore de Bary (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), 45.

Wang Gen soon had a sizeable following among the middle classes of literate and semi-literate men in the economically affluent Lower Yangzi valley. His teachings merged with various forms of popular religion, and local meetings were organized for lecturing, chanting, and singing. As in other religious environments during the Late Ming, Wang Gen's followers began using ledgers of merit and demerit that encouraged moral effort as a way to overcome fatalism and improve one's lot in life.[126]

The movement spread throughout the 16th century and gave the rationale for a knight-errant (*youxia* 遊俠) lifestyle that rejected bureaucratic service and to some extent defined itself in opposition to the state. In contrast to Fang Xiaoru's cultured moral strength (*jieqi*), Wang Gen's disciple He Xinyin 何心隱 (1517-1579) valued the force of self-assertion (*yiqi*) and argued for strengthening the local influence of scholarly organizations and independent schools as alternatives to the civil examinations. He also rejected the notion of family lineages as an extension of the bureaucracy in favor of a form of social bonding based on the ideals of friendship alone.[127] Reaching He Xinyin, the notion of Coherence had been all but eliminated and the lineage orientation that Cheng-Zhu *daoxue* represented was rejected in favor of moral relativism, where each individual was his own universe and his own ethical imperative.

2.3 The Donglin Movement and Gu Xiancheng

Another late Ming development equally influenced by Wang Yangming's legacy was the so-called Donglin movement. In many ways, Donglin thinkers like Gu Xiancheng explicitly distanced themselves from the populist ideas discussed in the previous section. Nevertheless, several influential studies of late Ming thought have claimed to find common denominators between the populist movements and the predominantly elitist Donglin group.[128] By doing so, the rebellious anti-state and anti-hierarchical values of the

[126] Wm. Theodore de Bary, *Learning for One's Self: Essays on the Individual in Neo-Confucian Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 155-202.
[127] De Bary, *Learning for One's Self*, 155-202.
[128] Some of the Western studies that follow such a logic will be discussed below, but the source of this argument is to be found in Mizoguchi Yūzō 溝口雄三, "Iwayuru Tōrinha jinshi no shisō" いゝ

Taizhou School and He Xinyin are imparted on the political motivations of Donglin partisans, creating the image of a wide localist front of criticism against the imperial court and the political system that supported it. Such interpretations are often colored by a liberal historical narrative of the early modern, and modernity as characterized by a development towards wider political participation and, ultimately, democracy.

Connections have been drawn and similarities established between the late Ming and the late Qing, so that the end of imperial China in 1912 could be constructed as the continuation and final victory of an indigenous late Ming political movement. Donglin thought has been placed in such a narrative context to support a specific interpretation of nineteenth- and early twentieth century developments. In the early 1980s, the relative importance of a "Western impact" as an impetus for late Qing political developments came under scrutiny. A number of new studies criticized the idea that Chinese statecraft thought emerged as a reaction to Western intrusion and influence.[129] Instead, seeds of reformist and revolutionary thought were located in literati writings predating the Opium Wars, even as far back as early Qing thinkers like Gu Yanwu, Huang Zongxi, and Wang Fuzhi.[130]

Initially, studies of "statecraft thought" (*jingshi sixiang* 經世思想) concentrated on writings in the "statecraft compilation" (*jingshi wenbian* 經世文編) genre.[131] Subsequently, it came to indicate a broader field of research that included social development, ritual studies, educational thought, government and administration, and so

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わゆる東林派人士の思想 (The Thought of Members in the So-Called Donglin School), *Tōyō Bunka Kenkyūjo kiyō* 東洋文化研究所紀要 75 (1978): 111-341.

[129] For a critical account of these developments in the Western study of China, see Elman, "Confucianism and Modernization: A Reevaluation," in *Confucianism and Modernization: A Symposium*, ed. Joseph P. L. Jiang (Taipei: Freedom Council, 1987), 1-19. See also Xie Yang 解揚, "Jin sanshi nian lai you guan Zhongguo jinshi 'jingshi sixiang' yanjiu shuping" 近三十年來有關中國近世「經世思想」研究述評 (Comments on the Study of Statecraft Thought of Late Imperial China over the Last Thirty Years), *Xin shixue* 19.4 (2008): 121-151.

[130] This approach was represented by an international conference on statecraft thought organized by the Institute of Modern History at Academia Sinica in 1983. See Liu Guangjing and Lu Baoqian, eds., *Jinshi Zhongguo jingshi sixiang yantaohui lunwenji* 近世中國經世思想研討會論文集 (Proceedings of the Conference on the Theory of Statecraft of Modern China) (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo, 1984).

[131] Wang Ermin 王爾敏, "Jingshi sixiang zhi yijie wenti" 經世思想之義界問題 (On the Problem of Defining Statecraft Thought), *Jindaishi yanjiusuo jikan* 13 (1983): 27-38.

on. James Polachek noted that in the 1830s, late Ming political participation and expression by non-officeholding literati was being reexamined,[132] and Benjamin Elman described how New Text Confucianism became a vehicle of expression for literati alliances that favored statecraft rhetoric and institutional reform.[133]

Influenced by such works was also the early 1990s debate about a public sphere/civil society in Late Imperial China. A Western definition of civil society generally depended on the existence of social associations not dominated by the state and yet capable of affecting policy. It also assumed the existence of considerable tension between governmental and private interests. Mary Rankin argued that a public sphere involving both state and society developed gradually in China from the late Ming onwards, but a recurring problem with this view was that even though the growing influence of Qing local elites could be substantiated, there appeared to be little antagonism between state and society.[134] Rankin's identification of kinship lineages as "private" in relation to the "public" state was particularly misleading. Rowe, among others, pointed out that while gentry associations based on non-kinship ties were defined as *si*, social organizations based on descent were usually perceived as *gong*.[135]

A perceived development toward wider political participation among Chinese literati also defined recent suggestions of Late Imperial Chinese "constitutionalism."[136] Following the Jiaqing emperor's ascendancy, it has been argued, a broader segment of the Han Chinese elite gained access to and could hope to influence national policy.[137] Pierre-Étienne Will suggested the existence of something analogous to constitutionalism in the Late Ming, and especially during the Wanli (1572-1620) reign. Drawing on various sources, such as the *Classics*, ancestral rules, and precedents, educated men had the

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[132] Polachek, *The Inner Opium War.*
[133] Elman, *Classicism, Politics, and Kinship.*
[134] Philip C. C. Huang, "'Public Sphere'/'Civil Society' in China?: The Third Realm between State and Society," *Modern China,* 19.2 (1993): 216-240.
[135] William T. Rowe, "Ancestral Rites and Political Authority in Late Imperial China: Chen Hongmou in Jiangxi," *Modern China* 24.4 (1998): 378-407.
[136] Rowe, "Rewriting the Qing Constitution: Bao Shichen's 'On Wealth' (*Shuochu*)," *T'oung Pao* 98 (2012): 178-216.
[137] Rowe, "Introduction: The Significance of the Qianlong-Jiaqing Transition in Qing History," *Late Imperial China* 32.2 (2011): 74-88; Matthew W. Mosca, "The Literati Rewriting of China in the Qianlong-Jiaqing Transition," *Late Imperial China* 32.2 (2011): 89-132.

possibility and, Will claims, the *right* to remonstrate and question imperial decisions.[138] Will and others saw in Late Ming factionalism something reminiscent of political parties, and suggested that this phenomenon could have developed into new forms of political organization had it not been cut short by the Manchu invasion. Along the same lines, Mosca called the almost eighty years of the Yongzheng and Qianlong reigns a centralizing "intermission" in Chinese history.[139]

While these theories suggested a gradual weakening of the imperial state structure starting from the late Ming, they all run into the problem of explaining more than a century of strong Manchu rule under the Kangxi, Yongzheng and Qianlong emperors. Moreover, as discussed in the following chapter of this dissertation, there was very little antagonism between the state and literati during these two reigns. It begs the question if there is really sufficient evidence to support the hypothesis of a late Ming localist movement that included both populist sentiments and Donglin elites and was directed at the structure of the imperial political system.

What upset literati during the Wanli reign was not imperial absolutism so much as the virtual *lack* of court decisions. Imperial authority as such was not at stake, but rather the fact that a man occupied the imperial position without acting as an emperor. While the Donglin and Fushe movements achieved a degree of formalization that distinguished them from the fragile and flexible factions that usually inhabited the Late Imperial Chinese political landscape, it is doubtful that such "strong" political factions would ever have been willing to pursue an institutionalization of political pluralism, such as would have been necessary to approximate a Western system of party politics. Whether arguing for constitutionalism or a public sphere in Late Imperial Chinese politics, it would be necessary to demonstrate the existence of pluralist values among key political actors.[140] As we have seen, however, such ideas were conspicuously absent and even actively suppressed by a lineage-oriented ideology.

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[138] Pierre-Étienne Will, "Epilogue: Virtual Constitutionalism in the Late Ming Dynasty," 261-274, in *Building Constitutionalism in China*, eds. Stéphanie Balme and Michael W. Dowdle (New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2009).
[139] Mosca, "The Literati Rewriting of China," 122.
[140] On the inclusivity of the public sphere, see Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1991), 37.

There is little to indicate that a hypothetical Donglin victory would have led to the establishment of constitutional rules or laws to ensure that opposing political groups retained the right to organize themselves and attempt a political comeback. Based on historical precedent, a more plausible outcome of such a scenario would have been the temporary establishment of factional hegemony by the Donglin group and an attempt on their part to suppress political opposition, followed either by a violent reaction from excluded parties or a rapid internal division of the Donglin group. Eventually, relative stability would have been re-established based on a balance of power between contending factions.

This highlights the core problem with arguments for either constitutionalism or a public sphere in Late Imperial China. For what is the relationship between factional politics and notions of wider political participation? We have to distinguish between an actual call for increased openness or transparency of the imperial bureaucracy and complaints about a "closed" bureaucracy voiced by factional outsiders, whose ultimate aim would be to establish their own hegemony. The former is a critique of the system as such, whereas the second is merely dissatisfaction with the current power balance. It is in the latter context that the writings of Donglin thinkers like Gu Xiancheng should be read, as a relatively consistent continuation of Wang Yangming's early ideas that still shared with Cheng-Zhu *daoxue* a lineage oriented approach, but added to it an element of political courage and martyrdom.

Gu Xiancheng on Political Martyrdom

Gu Xiancheng 顧憲成 (1550-1612) was one of many civil officials during the late Ming who was drawn into the tension and court struggles between so-called righteous circles and the Grand Secretariat. He was demoted as a result of failed efforts to use the Department of Scrutiny to rid the bureaucracy of unable and corrupt officials. In 1604, he restored the Donglin Academy in Wuxi as a space for discussion of philosophy and current affairs away from the political center.

When accused of factionalism, Donglin members used Ouyang Xiu's essay to defend themselves as like-minded men coming together to pursue the common good.

Criticizing their contemporaries for using Wang Yangming's notion of sincerity to pursue selfish interests, they re-emphasized the need for a degree of ideological uniformity.[141] Academy regulations included a condemnation of relativistic interpretations of Wang Yangming's claim that innate knowledge lay beyond good and evil, and this rejection of moral relativism was one of few philosophical convictions that all members of the movement shared.

Many members of the Donglin movement were or had been civil officials, and their discussions of moral degeneracy and the lack of public spirit in many ways mimicked those of righteous circles at court. Some scholar-officials who joined the Donglin Academy were even personally involved in current court controversies. In light of this it is problematic to posit the Donglin as representative of localism in any sort of opposition to the imperial bureaucracy. On the contrary, the Donglin group was intent on strengthening ties between gentry and the bureaucracy, and acted as an intermediary between local literati and the righteous circles at court.[142]

Many Donglin members were recalled to fill official positions in the capital following the Shenzong emperor's death in 1620, and during the period 1622-1624 the movement managed to place several members in the Hanlin Academy, from which they could advance to higher positions in the Ministry of Rites and the Grand Secretariat. Their fortune soon declined, however, after Yang Lian 楊漣 (1572-1625) and others failed to convince the emperor about the eunuch Wei Zhongxian's 魏忠賢 (1568-1627) manipulation of court decisions. Instead, Wei Zhongxian regained power at court and during 1624-25 most Donglin members were dismissed from office and their leaders imprisoned or killed. In 1626, a further list appeared with 300 names of officials supposedly related to the Donglin Academy, all of whom were demoted to commoner status. The outcome of this factional struggle led to criticism of "learned debate" (*jiangxue* 講學) as the origin of political factions and instability. The court came to regard local academies (*shuyuan* 書院) as a coherent unit of dissent, ordering many of them closed or

[141] Elman, "Imperial Politics and Confucian Societies in Late Imperial China: The Hanlin and Donglin Academies," *Modern China* 15.4 (1989): 394.
[142] Cf. Jerry Dennerline, "Fiscal Reform and Local Control: The Gentry-Bureaucratic Alliance Survives the Conquest," in *Conflict and Control in Late Imperial China*, eds. Frederic Wakeman, Jr. and Carolyn Grant (Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1975), 88.

destroyed on the charge that "they wield the power of the Court from afar, influence the provincial government and act arbitrarily in their home districts."[143]

In his writings, Gu Xiancheng praised Wang Yangming for having corrected the trend of book learning and irrelevant knowledge. "Book learning" in this context was emblematic of the civil examinations, of indoctrination, ideological streamlining, and moral hypocrisy. Wanting to avoid the two extremes of being either mindlessly dogmatic or overly reckless and falling into the trap of political withdrawal and moral relativism, Gu Xiancheng first dismissed Wang Yangming's "four sentence teaching" (*si ju jiao* 四句教) that regarded innate knowledge as beyond good and evil. He argued that while an inactive mind does not *consciously* distinguish between good and evil, since human nature was inherently good (*xing shan* 性善) the knowledge of good and evil was always there by default. An active mind, on the other hand, must consciously draw that distinction so that good actions be accompanied by enlightenment as to one's inherent goodness.[144]

Having seen Wang Yangming's formulations used for populist purposes and as excuses for moral relativism, Gu Xiancheng reemphasized the notion of goodness as a fixed and unchanging part of human nature. Acting in favor of the common good was therefore far more important than the ideal of spontaneous individual expression. He quoted an anecdotal dialogue between the two Song scholars Hu Anguo 胡安國 (1074-1138) and Fan Jimei 范濟美 (1060-1120), saying:

> 胡文定言朱子發雖修謹，皆是偽為。范濟美應云「如公輩卻是至誠。」文定遜謝云「某何敢當至誠二字。」濟美戲曰「子發是偽為善，公是至誠為惡。」戲則戲矣，卻自有可思也。
>
> Hu Anguo said that even though Zhu Zhen 朱震 (1072-1138) acted in a correct manner, his actions were all insincere. Fan Jimei responded: "As for you, you are perfectly sincere." Hu Anguo humbly rejected him, saying: "How would I dare call myself perfectly sincere . . ." Fan Jimei joked with

[143] Quoted in Heinrich Busch, "The Tung-lin Academy and its Political and Philosophical Significance," *Monumenta Serica* 14 (1949-1955): 63.
[144] Huang Zongxi, *Mingru xue'an*, vol. 8, 732-733.

him and said: "Zhu Zhen did good insincerely, but you do evil with perfect sincerity." Although this was said as a joke, it is worth thinking about.[145]

This anecdote and Gu Xiancheng's comment demonstrated his concern with the tension between sincerity and the common good. The emphasis on sincerity in Wang Yangming's writings may have functioned well as an antidote to the forces of autocracy and violence in his own time, but changed social circumstances rendered it problematic in turn. By encouraging the pursuit of Coherence first and foremost within the mind, some interpretations of Wang Yangming's *daoxue* condoned renouncing the ethical responsibility that government service implied. The moral power of the individual as such was elevated at the expense of his role as a cogwheel in the machinery of society with the ultimate purpose of working towards the common good. In contrast, Cheng-Zhu *daoxue* had always encouraged students to exert themselves in the pursuit of official position. The individual had to realize his position as a part in the greater coherence of a socio-political system and in extension of the cosmos.

In stark contrast to the popular teachings of men like Wang Gen and He Xinyin, Gu Xiancheng perpetuated Wang Yangming's encouragement of political martyrdom. Gu wrote:

> 孔、孟之言，看生死甚輕。以生死為輕，則情累不干，為能全其所以生，所以死。以生死為重，則惟規規焉軀殼之知，生為徒生，死為徒死。佛氏之謂生死事大，正不知其所以大也。
>
> From the words of Confucius and Mencius, we know that they took life and death very lightly. Because they took life and death lightly, they were not burdened by their emotions, but able to fulfill the purpose of their lives as well as the purpose of their deaths. Having too high regard for one's life and death is but the regular wisdom of the flesh. Following it, one's life will just be a life, and one's death will just be a death. The Buddhists say that life and death are important matters, but that is precisely because they do not understand what is important about them.[146]

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[145] Gu Xiancheng, "Gu duanwen gong xiaoxin zhai zhaji" 顧端文公小心齋箚記 (Notes from the Xiaoxin Studio of Gu Xiancheng) in *Gu duanwen gong yishu*, ed. Gu Zhenguan 顧貞觀 (1637-1714) (China, 1877), 2.7b.

[146] Huang, *Mingru xue'an*, 739.

According to Gu Xiancheng, man existed on two levels: the corporeal and the ethical. Buddhists and Confucians alike, he argued, rejected the absolute importance of the corporeal realm. Gu said:

> 人身之生死，有形者也；人心之生死，無形者也。眾人見有形之生死，不見無形之生死，故常以有形者為主；聖賢見無形之生死，不見有形之生死，故常以無形者為主。
>
> The life and death of the body belong to the world of forms, but the life and death of the mind are beyond the world of forms. People in general only observe life and death in the world of forms, but do not recognize life and death beyond the world of forms. Consequently, they often regard the world of forms as the most important. The sages and worthies observe life and death in the world beyond forms, and ignore life and death in the world of forms. Consequently, they often regard the world beyond forms as the most important.[147]

Life and death in the world of forms represented the fortunes or misfortunes of the physical body, while the world beyond forms was the ethical level of existence. It was desirable that men regard the fate of their physical bodies from the relativistic perspective of emptiness, but Gu Xiancheng stressed the imperative nature of preserving life in the ethical realm. He expressed this distinction, writing:

> 無聲無臭，吾儒之所謂空也；無善無惡，二氏之所謂空也，名似而實遠矣。
>
> The absence of sound and smell is what we Confucians call emptiness. The absence of good and evil are what the Buddhists and Daoists call emptiness. While the name of emptiness is similar, the substance contained therein is vastly different.[148]

[147] Huang, *Mingru xue'an*, 739.
[148] Huang, *Mingru xue'an*, 737.

Embracing a transcendental worldview that devalued the physical realm provided a certain freedom from social constraints and helped defend the individual's integrity against society's cohesive forces. In this he agreed with Wang Yangming. But Gu Xiancheng would not allow that a similar relativism be extended into the ethical realm. Moral relativism could not be condoned for any reason, and the imperative of pursuing the good always remained. He wrote:

> 人須是一個真。是非之心，人皆有之，只以不真之故，便有夾帶。是非太明，怕有通不去、合不來的時節，所以須要含糊。少間，又於是中求非，非中求是；久之且以是為非，以非為是，無所不至矣。
> Men have to be authentic. Each man has a mind that distinguishes between right and wrong, and it is only when men are inauthentic that they fool themselves with regard to it. They fear that if right and wrong were completely illuminated, they would sometimes be unable to make their own actions realize and agree with the mind. Therefore they need for such distinctions to remain unclear. Soon enough they begin to look for what is right in that which is wrong, and for what is wrong in that which is right. As time passes, they begin to regard right as wrong and wrong as right, stopping at nothing.[149]

Moral endeavor was a balancing act. It was not enough to be a law-abiding citizen or loyal subject to the emperor's will, but distancing oneself from politics would have been to discard one's moral responsibility.[150] One might argue, as Dai Zhen 戴震 (1724-1777) later did, that moral action must be based on a careful investigation of right and wrong in each situation. But that approach had problems of its own when men got too bogged down in empiricism. Attempts at logical reasoning in this type of situation often led men to criticize things that were obviously good or defend that which was obviously bad. Faced with such dilemmas, Gu Xiancheng returned once again to the task set out by Cheng Yi: the private

[149] Huang, *Mingru xue'an,* 737.
[150] For a detailed analysis of various choices facing Late Ming literati intent on leading a meaningful life, see Peterson, *Bitter Gourd: Fang I-chih and the Impetus for Intellectual Change* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979).

realm of sincerity and the public realm, where consensus was the ideal, had to somehow go hand in hand.

CHAPTER 3: CLASSICISM AND POLITICS IN QING CHINA

After the failure of Wang Anshi's reform policies, the theme of ideological unity remained central to Song dynasty thought. Cheng Yi used the idea of a universal Coherence to argue that sincere individual expression and ideological unity could, and in a natural way should, go hand in hand. Cheng-Zhu *daoxue* was attacked by Southern Song bureaucrats and criticized for its hypocrisy and factionalism, but over the course of the Song-Yuan-Ming transition its political and ideological potential became increasingly evident, and under the Hongwu emperor's rule *daoxue* was established as state orthodoxy.

By that time, elite lineage organizations and the exclusionist tendencies of lineage-oriented thought worked together to create a degree of stability and unity in Chinese society, from the emperor and the court all the way down to the localities. Violent purges under the first Ming emperor and his successor Zhu Di secured the imperial interpretation of *daoxue* as dominating in politics and education, something that many literati gladly supported. The Yongle emperor's usurpation of the throne and subsequent executions of men like Fang Xiaoru and Lian Zining, however, also created a deep rift between the state and certain segments of the literati, who avoided government service and developed their own interpretations of the Classics and the *daoxue* heritage.

Wang Yangming reacted against the violent suppression of literati opinion by placing renewed emphasis on sincere individual expression as a precondition for ideological unity. His ideas were later appropriated to defend political withdrawal among the literati, a choice that was already attractive due to the many dangers that bureaucratic service at this time entailed.

Gu Xiancheng and the Donglin academy wanted to temper this trend of withdrawal by encouraging responsible action for the common good. The violent

suppression of this political movement demonstrated just how sensitive the Chinese state apparatus of the 16th and early 17th centuries had become to any sign of ideological tension. Bereaved of the political optimism that characterized earlier generations of Donglin supporters, Huang Zongxi's stance in the *Mingshi* debate and his own writings elevated pluralist values in contrast to the exclusionism of state orthodoxy and lineage-oriented thought. Despite all this, the Manchu conquerors and Chinese literati under the Qing dynasty found a new dynamic that reasserted the lineage orientation in the interconnected realms of political rhetoric, social organization and intellectual endeavor.

3.1 Evidential Research as a Model for Unity

Following the Manchu conquest, one of the first tasks facing the imperial bureaucracy was to restore order and social stability on the local level. Tax evasion among the Han Chinese elite had been a recurring problem throughout the Ming dynasty and only grew worse following the chaos of a military conquest. Tensions between the Manchu state and land-owning elites peaked with the Jiangnan tax clearance case of 1661, when influential southern families were targeted for the first time since the Early Ming. Once the incident had blown over, however, local elites willingly helped the bureaucracy drive through necessary reforms,[151] and the new Manchu rulers achieved a degree of gentry collaboration and a broader basis of support than was ever possible under the Ming dynasty.[152]

From an Early Qing perspective, the weak response to Manchu aggression and the fall of the Ming dynasty was traced in part to the political withdrawal and moral relativism engendered by Wang Yangming's ideas, and in part to the formation of literati interest groups, such as the Donglin Academy, and their factionalist activities. The Qing dynasty response to these two problems may be analytically separated into (1) the reassertion of lineage-oriented ideals to promote social and ideological unity, and (2) the promotion of evidential research as a verifiable alternative to opinionated philosophical

[151] Dennerline, "Fiscal Reform and Local Control."
[152] Chow, *The Rise of Confucian Ritualism,* 3.

debate.[153] The Manchu court and Chinese literati found grounds for cooperation in the combined pursuit of these goals.

Reestablishing the Lineage Orientation

Lineage organizations in local society grew stronger over the first half of the Qing dynasty. This was due in part to the Donglin faction's demise and a stigmatization of horizontally organized interest groups, to which lineage organizations became a vertically aligned alternative.[154] Ritual practices associated with the lineage became so popular in the 17th and 18th centuries that they gradually transcended both regional and social boundaries.[155] When comparing Chinese local society before the 16th century with that of the 18th century, for example, David Faure saw a shifting emphasis away from religious spaces without ancestral worship as primary meeting points for Chinese literati, to ancestral halls associated with the lineage organization.[156] In Guangdong province, similarly, many corporate lineages first took shape after the Ming-Qing transition.[157]

The renewed interest in ritual studies during the Early Qing can be explained by a need to clarify kinship rituals important to lineage construction.[158] As Peterson has shown, Late Ming and Early Qing thinkers like Fang Yizhi 方以智 (1611-1671) and Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (1613-1682) stressed the need to "revitalize the moral justification and social position of the literati as the only group properly standing between the imperial government and the commoners."[159] In this way, proponents of the "new" learning that would later grow into an evidential research movement, supported the same conservative social order that the Manchu rulers promoted.[160]

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[153] The court's promotion of evidential research can arguably be traced back to 1749, when Qianlong called on officials to "collect widely the ancient meanings and various sayings" (*bozong guyi, guangyi qunyan* 博綜古義，廣挹群言).
[154] Elman, *Classicism, Politics, and Kinship: The Ch'ang-chou School of New Text Confucianism in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 34.
[155] Faure, "The Lineage as a Cultural Invention," 8.
[156] Faure, "The Lineage as a Cultural Invention," 29.
[157] Elman, *Classicism, Politics, and Kinship*, 48.
[158] Chow, *The Rise of Confucian Ritualism*, 80.
[159] Peterson, *Bitter Gourd*, 80.
[160] Peterson, *Bitter Gourd*, 80.

The same early Qing thinkers who supported a local society controlled by lineage organizations as an extension of the bureaucracy were also highly critical of the individualism and moral relativism embraced by some in the Wang Yangming tradition. A link was drawn between the social unrest that characterized the 17th century and the proliferation of popular Confucian movements that sometimes merged with "open" membership sectarian groups, as opposed to the exclusionism of elite lineages.

Anti-lineage ideas were evident in doctrinal scriptures connected to the so-called Luo teachings that grew during the Late Ming, and in the *Longhua jing* 龍華經 (Longhua Scripture), for example, marriage and familial bonds were described as the beginning of entanglement in the mundane world.[161] But during the Qing dynasty the organizational character of many religious sects changed in favor of closed transmission within families. Hereditary leadership became increasingly common,[162] and precious scrolls (*baojuan* 寶卷) were treasured as the exclusive property of sect leaders. This development formed part of a general stabilization of social roles that reached its peak in the 18th century and led to the formation of what Susan Naquin has called a "sectarian elite."[163] Cynthia Brokaw noticed the same trend in privately published ledgers of merit and demerit, which began to be categorized according to the status levels of their intended audiences. These ledgers had served among Wang Gen's followers to encourage social mobility and as tools against fatalism, but in Qing society believers were again asked to accept their allotted roles in society.[164]

Collaboration between the state and literati was strengthened under Manchu rule, and the lineage orientation was deployed to deal with dissenting voices in both social and intellectual spheres. As will be discussed in detail below, this trend of closing boundaries and exclusionism coincided with the emergence of evidential research.[165]

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[161] Hubert Seiwert, *Popular Religious Movements and Heterodox Sects in Chinese History* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2003), 373.
[162] Seiwert, *Popular Religious Movements*, 482; Susan Naquin, *Millenarian Rebellion in China: The Eight Trigrams Uprising of 1813* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1976), 116.
[163] Susan Naquin. "Connections between Rebellions: Sect Family Networks in Qing China," *Modern China* 8.3 (1982): 337-360
[164] Cynthia J. Brokaw, *The Ledgers of Merit and Demerit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).
[165] The notion of evidential research carried various denominations during the Qing, including

Literati Collaboration with the Manchu Court

The Kangxi emperor and his top officials promoted the convergence of a "transmission of the Way" (*daotong*) with "the succession of political power" (*zhitong*) to obviate tensions between the pursuit of learning and serving in office.[166] The ideal of a sage-emperor, who both unified the empire and created ideological consensus by promoting Cheng-Zhu *daoxue*, was revived for the first time since the reigns of Zhu Yuanzhang and Zhu Di. In his preface to the *Rijiang sishu jieyi* 日講四書解義 (Daily Expositions on the Meaning of the *Four Books*), the Kangxi emperor appeared as ruler and teacher (*zuo jun zuo shi* 作君作師), the legitimate successor not only to rulers like Yao and Shun, but also to scholars like Confucius and Mencius. The emperor expressed his intent to unite the realm ideologically (*yi dao tong feng zhi zhi* 一道同風之治).[167]

A strict, lineage-oriented notion of *daotong* suited both civil officials who approved the use of ideology to achieve social unity, and the Manchu rulers intent on pacifying the realm. Representative of this common cause was Lu Longqi's 陸隴其 (1630-93) essay *Daotong lun* 道統論 (On the Transmission of the Way), which reaffirmed Zhu Xi's writings as the only legitimate intellectual tradition and held that anything opposed to or incompatible with it should be prohibited.[168] Even scholars like Yan Yuan 顏元 (1635-1704), who was very critical of Song-Ming *daoxue*, seemingly had little trouble accepting imperial orthodoxy.[169]

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kaohe xue 考核學, *kaoju xue* 考據學, *kaozheng xue* 考證學, *Hanxue* 漢學, *Qingxue* 清學, and *puxue* 樸學.

[166] Willard Peterson pointed out that extensive patronage of scholarship under the Kangxi and Qianlong emperors removed any clear demarcation between serving in office and pursuing textual research. Peterson, *Bitter Gourd*, 166.

[167] Kangxi, "Preface" to Li Guangdi ed., *Rijiang sishu jieyi* 日講四書解義 (Daily Expositions on the Meaning of the *Four Books*), vol. 172 of *Wenyuange siku quanshu* (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1983).

[168] Chan, "The *Hsing-li Ching-i* and the Cheng-Chu School of the Seventeenth Century," in *The Unfolding of Neo-Confucianism*, ed. Wm. Theodore de Bary (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1975), 554, and 568.

[169] Chan, "The *Hsing-li Ching-i*," 572.

The *Xingli jingyi* 性理精義 (Essentials of Human Nature and Heavenly Coherence) compiled by Li Guangdi 李光地 (1642-1718) was an official compendium on imperially sanctioned learning. With Zhou Dunyi's discussion of the Supreme Ultimate placed at the beginning, its structure and narrative closely followed the *daotong* transmission of the Way.[170] Interestingly, however, the *Xingli jingyi* deliberately excluded any explicit discussion of *daotong* in order "to avoid controversy."[171] This may be an indication that what mattered in this context was the idea of an intellectual lineage as such, not the niceties of how exactly that lineage was construed.

In 1712, the Kangxi emperor elevated Zhu Xi to the main hall of the Confucian temple. The continued relevance of the *daotong* genealogy was also confirmed by the enshrinement of Qing scholar Lu Longqi.[172] As further imperial encouragement of lineage-oriented forms of literati organization and intellectual expression, the Yongzheng emperor in 1723 bestowed the title of king on all five generations of Confucius' ancestors in the Confucian temple. This revoked emperor Shizong's 1530 decision to remove all noble titles from historical individuals who received sacrifices in the Confucian temple.[173] The hereditary and almost aristocratic vision of cultural transmission and bureaucratic service that Cheng Yi promoted in the Northern Song was now put in practice by the Qing court, who based their actions on the claim that the transmission of the Way (*daotong*) and the succession of legitimate government (*zhitong*) stemmed from a single source in highest antiquity.

The Kangxi emperor promoted Zhu Xi's interpretations of the *Four Books* as ideological dogma, but it was the Qianlong emperor who most identified with his role as sage-emperor. He presented himself as the representative of that universal Coherence to which all things were subordinated, and monopolized the right to define the moral content

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[170] Chan, "The *Hsing-li Ching-i*," 563, 568; see also On-Cho Ng, *Cheng-Zhu Confucianism in the Early Qing: Li Guangdi (1642-1718) and Qing Learning* (Albany: State University of New York, 2001).
[171] Chan, "The *Hsing-li Ching-i*," 567.
[172] Wilson, *Genealogy of the Way*, 64.
[173] Already the Hongwu emperor removed aristocratic titles from various deities, but retained them for Confucian figures. Chin-shing Huang, *Philosophy, Philology, and Politics in Eighteenth-Century China: Li Fu and the Lu-Wang school under the Ch'ing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 155.

of the Way. "When I exercise my responsibilities as ruler and teacher," he wrote, "only then does the Way has substance" (*gu jun shi zhi ze xiu er dao nai bu xu* 故君師之責修而道乃不虛).[174]

The opening essay in the Qianlong emperor's collected works, first published in 1737, paid homage to the notion of sincerity defined as the suppression of selfish desires. Sincerity demanded steadfast devotion to the common good, both publicly and in one's most private moments (*ze shan gu zhi ke ji shen du* 擇善固執克己慎獨). The Qianlong emperor echoed Zhu Xi's attack on Chen Liang's utilitarianism when he said that while Han-Tang rulers may have done their best to satisfy the immediate needs of the realm (*hui ai zhi zheng* 惠愛之政), they ultimately failed to achieve ideological unity (*jiao yang zhi shi* 教養之實).[175]

It may seem surprising that evidential research, which in so many respects undermined Cheng-Zhu interpretations of the *Classics*, received such decisive imperial patronage under the Qing, and that many of its practitioners seemed so eager to cooperate with the government. It has sometimes been assumed that the division into Han and Song Learning represented tensions between Han Chinese literati and the Manchu court, but the evidence simply does not support that conclusion.[176] What mattered to the Manchu rulers was not any specific interpretation of the classical texts, but the ideological unity that an orthodox reading achieved by excluding and suppressing pluralist attitudes to knowledge. Evidential research in the 18th century fulfilled this purpose by adopting and perpetuating the lineage orientation of *daoxue*, even as its interpretations undermined the validity of purist Cheng-Zhu philosophy as such.

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[174] Qianlong, "Xiudao zhi wei jiao lun" 修道之謂教論 (On "Cultivating the Way is Education"), in *Leshantang quanji* 樂善堂全集 (Collected Works from the Leshan Hall), vol. 1 of *Qing gaozong yuzhi shiwen quanji* 清高宗御製詩文全集 (Collected Poetry and Prose of the Qianlong Emperor) (Taipei: Guoli gugong bowuyuan, 1976), 1.9a-11a.

[175] Qianlong, *Li shen yi zhi cheng wei ben lun* 立身以至誠為本論 (On "Perfect Sincerity is the Root of Establishing the Self"), in *Leshantang quanji*, vol. 1 in *Qing gaozong yuzhi shiwen quanji* (Taipei: Guoli gugong bowuyuan, 1976), 1.1a-2b; cf. also Yang, *Hechu shi Jiangnan*, 283.

[176] The Han and Song Learning conflict did not become a real source of partisanship and division until the late 18th and early 19th centuries, predominantly among the literati themselves. See Ori Sela, "Qian Daxin (1728-1804): Knowledge, Identity, and Reception History in China, 1750-1930" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2011), 219-283.

Hui Dong on Sincerity and Ritual in Analects 3.8

The philosophical thrust of Hui Dong's 惠棟 (1697-1758) writings were in many ways aligned with the political aims of ideological unification, and reaffirmed the centrality of strict hierarchical relations as a cornerstone of social stability. This was particularly evident from his discussions of sincerity, which supported the same top-down political philosophy as Cheng-Zhu *daoxue* while at the same time undermining Zhu Xi's philological conclusions.

Hui Dong's methodological approach to textual studies was based on generations of family teachings and established the basic tasks of the so-called Han Learning movement in Chinese classicism.[177] Exegetical compilations and encyclopedic works preserved textual fragments, philological glosses, and interpretations dating back to the Eastern Han (A.D. 25-220). These fragments could be used to reconstruct lost texts, collate existent editions, or serve as evidence in interpretation.

The validity of Eastern Han readings was supported by accounts in the *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the Historian) and in particular the *Hanshu* 漢書 (History of the Western Han Dynasty) that attested to interpretive lineages and teacher-disciple transmission reaching back from the Eastern Han to pre-Qin times. Hui Dong wrote:

> 漢人通經有家法，故有五經師。訓詁之學，皆師所口授，其後乃著竹帛，所以漢經師之說立於學官，與經並行。五經出於屋壁，多古字古

[177] Chang Su-ching 張素卿, "'Jing zhi yi cun hu xun' de jieshi guannian—Hui Dong jingxue guankui"「 經之義存乎訓」的解釋觀念——惠棟經學管窺 (The Hermeneutic Principle "The Meaning of the Classic Lies in Glosses": An Examination of Hui Dong's Classicism), vol. 1 of *Qianjia xuezhe de yilixue* 乾嘉學者的義理學 (The Philosophical Studies of Qian-Jia Scholars), eds. Lin Ching-chang and Chang So-an (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan Zhongguo wen zhe yanjiusuo, 2003), 293-294 n. 32. The traditional account of Hui Dong's life and work is Qian Daxin, "Hui xiansheng Dong zhuan" 惠先生棟傳 (Biography of Hui Dong), in *Qianyantang ji* 潛研堂集 (Collected Works from the Qianyan Hall), ed. Lü Youren (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1989), 698-705. For an annotated version of essentially the same text, see Jiang Fan 江藩 and Qi Yongxiang 漆永祥, *Hanxue shichengji jianshi* 漢學師承記箋釋 (*Hanxue shicheng ji*, Annotated Edition), vol. 1 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2006), 168-214.

> 言，非經師不能辨。經之義存乎訓，識字審音乃知其義，是故古訓不可改也，經師不可廢也。
>
> Han dynasty scholars had lineages of textual transmission for comprehending the *Classics*, and so there were teachers of the *Five Classics*. The teachers transmitted orally their exegetical knowledge, which was only later written on bamboo and silk. Based on this, the learning of the Han teachers of the *Classics* was established in offices of education and transmitted along with the *Classics*. When [ancient editions of] the *Five Classics* were discovered in the wall [of Confucius' former residence], they were full of archaic characters and phrases, so that none but the teachers of the *Classics* could interpret them.
>
> The meaning of the *Classics* is contained in textual glosses, and only by identifying characters and investigating ancient pronunciations can we know their meaning. This is why the ancient glosses may not be altered, and the teachers of the *Classics* may not be ignored.[178]

These teacher-student lineages were traced back to Xunzi 荀子 (ca. 313-238 BC), but Hui Dong argued that they went even further back than so. For example, he said: "Zi You's *Liyun* and Zi Si's *Zhongyong* were based on the principles of the *Yijing*. From this we may infer the historical depth of the knowledge transmitted by erudites and family lineages. (*Zi You Liyun Zi Si Zhongyong chun shi Yi li, nai zhi shifa jiachuan yuanyuan you zi* 子游《禮運》，子思《中庸》純是《易》理，乃知師法家傳淵源有自).[179]

Hui Dong focused much of his scholarly efforts on elucidating the *Yijing*, which he regarded as the very foundation of culture and its connection to the cosmos. He held that the first half of the *Yijing* represented the Coherence of heaven and earth, while the second half dealt with coherence in the social realm, that is, the common good. When man-made traditions and rituals aligned with the Coherence of nature and the universe, they could serve as the basis for legislature and governance. Hui Dong wrote:

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[178] Hui Dong, "*Jiujing guyi* shushou" 九經古義述首 (Introduction to *Jiujing guyi*), in *Dong Wu san Hui shiwenji* 東吳三惠詩文集 (Collected Prose and Poetry of the Three Hui from Suzhou), auth. Hui Zhouti, Hui Shiqi and Hui Dong, ed. Qi Yongxiang (Taipei: Zhongguo wenzhe yanjiusuo, 2006), 300.

[179] Hui Dong, "Shang zhijun Yi Yuanchang xiansheng shu" 上制軍尹元長先生書 (Letter to Governor-General Yin Yuanchang), in *Dong Wu san Hui shiwenji*, , auth. Hui Dong, Hui Shiqi, and Hui Zhouti, ed. Qi Yongxiang (Taipei: Zhongguo wenzhe yanjiusuo, 2006), 314-315.

> 在《易》，上經天道，下經人事。上經首乾坤，故云天地者，生之始也。有天地，然後有萬物；有萬物，然後有男女，然後有夫婦；有夫婦，然後有父子；有父子，然後有君臣；有君臣，然後有上下；有上下，然後禮義有所錯。故禮義者，法之始也。下經先咸恆，故君子者，禮義之始也。是之謂大本。
>
> In the *Yijing*, the first part speaks of the heavenly Way and the second part of human affairs. The *qian* and *kun* hexagrams introduce the first part, and therefore it is said that life springs from heaven and earth. Once there is heaven and earth, there are the myriad things; having the myriad things, there are male and female, husband and wife; having husband and wife, there are father and son; having father and son, there are ruler and official; having ruler and official, there are hierarchies; having hierarchies, there is a basis to apply social rituals. Consequently, social ritual is the foundation of laws. The hexagrams *xian* and *heng* introduce the second part. This means that the superior man is the beginning of social ritual. This is called the great foundation.[180]

The centrality of the *Yijing* in the thought of both Cheng Yi and Hui Dong is noteworthy. They both relied on this text to support a stable social structure of fixed hierarchies, where success revolved around the concept of "knowing one's place." The common good was achieved by acting in accordance with a system of social hierarchies, which in turn was based on the structure of the cosmos itself.

The relative prominence of *Xunzi* quotations in Hui Dong's scholarship has been frequently noted, and his philosophical emphasis on ritual and regulations may explain

[180] Hui Dong, *Xunzi weiyan* 荀子微言 (Subtle Phrases in the *Xunzi*), vol. 932 of *Xuxiu siku quanshu* 續修四庫全書 (Sequel to the *Siku quanshu*) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1994-2002), 468. The colophon to this work reads: "Reviewed by Songya [Hui Dong] on the third day after Qingming, in the third month of the *bingzi* year" (*bing zi san yue qingming hou san ri yue Songya* 丙子三月清明後三日閱松崖). The 21st year of the Qianlong reign (1756) was the only *bingzi* year during Hui Dong's lifetime, and so the work represents a mature stage of his thought. However, it was an unpolished work and presumably not intended for publication. Another colophon (*ba* 跋) on the first page of the *Xuxiu siku quanshu* edition relates that the "yellowing manuscript" (*se mianye* 瑟面頁) was "haphazardly found in examining the small-sized drawer of a low-table" (*ou yu dizhuo xiuzhen zhong jiande* 偶于低桌袖珍中檢得).

his interest in the *Xunzi* as the foundational teachings adhered to by Han dynasty scholarly lineages.[181] In a discussion of *Analects* passage 3.8, Hui Dong wrote:

> 自子夏論詩，有禮後之說，而夫子與之。故其徒皆傳其學，五傳至荀子，其言曰：「始乎誦經，終乎讀禮。」又曰：「學至乎禮而止矣。」夫是之謂道德之極，盖先王治定制禮 。夫子訓伯魚：先詩後禮。論成人，盖脩衆才，而終文之以禮樂。是知道德仁義，非禮不成；教訓正俗，非禮不備；君臣父子兄弟，非禮不定。此子夏禮後之說為不可易也。厥後朱子觧論語「繪事後素」，廢鄭氏之義，以禮後之禮，為禮之儀文。于是荀子之所以述子夏者，後儒亦不知其義之精矣。
>
> Since Zi Xia discussed the *Odes*, there has existed a notion of ritual coming afterwards.[182] Confucius agreed with him on this. Subsequently, his teachings were transmitted by the disciples and after five generations reached Xunzi. He said: "Begin by reciting the *Classics* and end by reading the ritual texts."[183] And again: "In learning one attains ritual propriety and then stops."[184] This is called the epitome of virtue. Once the former kings had established their reign, they instituted the ritual system.[185] Confucius lectured Bo Yu: "First the *Odes*, then the rituals."[186] When perfecting one's person the various abilities are first acquired and finally patterned with ritual and music.
>
> From this we know that virtue, humanity, and a sense of duty cannot be perfected without ritual; the task of teaching and correcting customs is incomplete without ritual; the relations between ruler and official, father and son, older and younger brothers cannot be stabilized without ritual. This is why Zi Xia's teachings of ritual coming afterwards may not be altered. In later times, master Zhu [Xi] explained the *Analects* passage as "matters of coloration are subsequent to applying white." This reading ignored

[181] Qian Mu noted Hui Dong's characteristic interest in pre-Qin masters as an aid to interpreting the *Classics*. See Qian Mu, *Zhongguo jin sanbai nian xueshu shi* 中國近三百年學術史 (Chinese Intellectual History of the Past Three-Hundred Years), vol. 16 of *Qian Binsi xiansheng quanji* (Taipei: Lianjing chuban gongsi, 1994), 452. Cf. also Liu Wenqing 劉文清, "Cong Hui Dong *Jiujing guyi* lun qi 'jing zhi yi cun hu xun' de jingjie guannian" 從惠棟九經古義論其「經之義存乎訓」的經解觀念 (Discussion of Hui Dong's Hermeneutical Principle "The Meaning of the Classics Lies in the Glosses" based on the *Jiujing guyi*), in *Tai Ri xuezhe lun jingdian quanshi zhong de yuwen fenxi* 臺日學者論經典詮釋中的語文分析 (Taiwanese and Japanese Scholars on Classicist Linguistic Analysis), eds. Dennis C.H. Cheng 鄭吉雄 and Sato Rentaro 佐藤錬太郎 (Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 2010), 280-284.

[182] Cf. *Analects* 3.8.

[183] *Xunzi* 1.3.

[184] *Xunzi* 1.3.

[185] Cf. the "Yueji" 樂記 chapter of the *Liji*.

[186] Cf. *Analects* 16.13.

> Zheng [Xuan's] interpretation and took the "ritual" of "ritual coming afterwards" to refer to mere ceremonial display. Because of this, later scholars have not known the essence of Xunzi's intention in transmitting Zi Xia's words.[187]

Zhu Xi interpreted *Analects* 3.8 by taking "*hou su*" 後素 to mean that when painting, colors should be applied to a white background. This contradicted an Eastern Han gloss by Zheng Xuan, whom Hui Dong followed in taking "*hou su*" to mean that white was applied after the colors to demarcate the borders between decorative patterns. In such metaphorical terms, Zhu Xi emphasized that adherence to ceremonial display only became meaningful once a state of sincerity had been attained. Hui Dong's reading, in contrast, emphasized that no man could be regarded as sincere until he adhered to social ritual.

Mao Qiling 毛奇齡 (1623-1716), a well-known critic of Zhu Xi, had already discarded the Song scholar's exegesis by arguing that it was inappropriate to use the "Liqi" 禮器 (Ritual Vessel) chapter from the *Liji* as a parallel to *Analects* 3.8.[188] Zhu Xi used the *Liji* passage to support his two claims that a white groundwork had been laid before adding colors, and that only men of good quality should study ritual. According to Mao Qiling, since Confucius in this passage spoke of painting, the correct textual parallel was the *Kao gong ji* 考工記 (Artificer's Record) chapter of the *Zhouli*, which also discussed painting. This parallel supported Zheng Xuan's gloss and Hui Dong's reading of the passage.[189]

But while there was a tension between Hui Dong's and Zhu Xi's interpretations of the *Analects*, both in fact promoted social cohesion through adherence to ritual. While Cheng-Zhu *daoxue* required sincere belief and spontaneous performance to make Confucian ritual effective, Hui Dong emphasized ritual as an antidote to Late Ming

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[187] Hui Dong, *Xunzi weiyan*, 464.
[188] Mao Qiling, *Lunyu jiqiupian* 論語稽求篇 (Investigation of the *Analects*), vol. 210 of *Wenyuange siku quanshu* (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1983), 1.21-25a.
[189] On *Kao gong ji* in Late Ming and Qing cultural history, see Elman, "The Story of a Chapter: Changing Views of the 'Artificer's Record' (*Kaogong ji* 考工記) and the *Zhouli*," in *The Rituals of Zhou in East Asian History*, eds. Elman and Martin Kern (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010), 330-355.

excesses of individual expression. His discussion of *Analects* 3.8 in relation to the *Yijing* and ritual came from his father, Hui Shiqi 惠士奇 (1671-1741), who worked for a time as compiler in the Hanlin Academy and served under the three early Manchu emperors Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong.[190] It is unclear to what extent Hui Shiqi in turn was intellectually indebted to his father Hui Zhouti 惠周惕 (n.d.), who became a presented scholar under the Kangxi emperor in 1691, but in either case such genealogical influences explain why the ideas of an 18th century man like Hui Dong were still so closely tied to problems that had faced the first generations of Qing scholars.

While influenced by Han scholars like Zheng Xuan, the particular reading of *Analects* 3.8 discussed above seems to have been invented by the Hui family. Even though Xing Bing's 邢昺 (932-1010) subcommentary also paid heed to Zheng Xuan's gloss, as transmitted through He Yan's 何晏 (195-249) *Analects* commentary, and read "white" as a metaphor for "ritual," it only argued that even a person of good character needs to be regulated by the proper rituals.[191] Consequently, while no pre-Song commentary took "white" as a reference to the "good character" as Zhu Xi had, nor did they read the passage as a promotion of ritual to the degree that Hui Shiqi and Hui Dong did.

In his *Guwen Shangshu kao* 古文尚書攷 (Study of the Old Text *Shangshu*), Hui Dong integrated and discussed Yan Ruoqu's 閻若璩 (1638-1704) demonstration of the Old Text *Shangshu* as a 3rd or 4th century forgery.[192] Hui Dong got his hands on what was at least a partial manuscript copy of Yan Ruoqu's work in 1743, two years before the 1745 publication of an eight *juan* edition.[193] Hui Dong agreed that the transmitted *Shangshu* text

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[190] Hui Shiqi, *Lishuo* 禮說 (On the Rituals), vol. 101 of *Wenyuange siku quanshu* (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1983), 14.15b-16b.

[191] He Yan et al. eds., Xing Bing subcomm., *Lunyu zhushu* 論語注疏 (Commentary and Subcommentary to the *Analects*), vol. 195 of *Wenyuange siku quanshu* (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1983), 3.7-8a.

[192] On Yan Ruoqu's work as the result of accumulated scholarship, see Elman, "Yen Jo-chü's Debt to Sung and Ming Scholarship," *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i* 3.7 (1977): 105-113.

[193] Zhao Mingfeng 趙銘豐, "Cong Hui Dong *Guwen shangshu kao* de 'Yan jun zhi lun' tanxi Yan Ruoqu *Shangshu guwen shuzheng* chaoben de chuanbu" 從惠棟《古文尚書考》的「閻君之論」探析閻若璩《尚書古文疏證》抄本的傳布 (An Examination of the Manuscript Transmission of Yan Ruoqu's *Shangshu guwen shuzheng* based on Citations of Yan Ruoqu in Hui Dong's *Guwen shangshu kao*), *Guojia tushuguan guankan* (2008): 185-224.

was a forgery, but found too mild Yan Ruoqu's critique of the philosophically important phrase from the "Da Yu mo" 大禹謨 (The Counsels of Great Yu) chapter that read: "The precariousness of the human mind, the subtlety of the moral mind; be refined and be focused, hold fast the mean" (*renxin zhi wei, daoxin zhi wei, wei jing wei yi, yun chi jue zhong* 人心之危，道心之微，惟精惟一，允持厥中). Since the first part of this phrase also appeared in the *Xunzi*, Hui Dong insisted that it must be read in that philosophical context.[194]

According to Hui Dong, the essence of Xunzi's self-cultivation was strict adherence to ritual as a unifying force in society. In contrast, the alleged forger of the Old Text *Shangshu* got the sequence wrong when speaking of self-refinement (*jing*) before socio-political unity (*yi*). While Hui Dong's argument relied more on philosophical coherence than on philological evidence, he actually criticized the Old Text *Shangshu* more profoundly than many of his contemporaries, who accepted the philological evidence of forgery but continued to defend the authenticity of this particular passage due to its theoretical force.[195] Hui Dong explained the phrase "the precariousness of the human mind, the subtlety of the moral mind" by glossing "precarious" (*wei* 危) as "apprehensive" (*jieju* 戒懼) and "subtlety" (*wei* 微) as "refined" (*jingmiao* 精妙).[196] He then connected the whole passage to the "Zhongyong" 中庸 (The Mean) chapter of the *Liji* and its notion of sincerity, saying:

> 夫微之顯，誠也，至人也。《荀子》至人，即《中庸》至誠。
> The manifestation of refinement is sincerity, it is the perfection of mankind. The "perfect man" in the *Xunzi* is the "perfect sincerity" of the *Zhongyong*.[197]

Hui Dong's understanding of the relationship between the human mind and the moral mind differed from that of Zhu Xi, who explained "precarious" as "precarious and insecure"

[194] See also Li Kai 李开, *Hui Dong pingzhuan* 惠栋评传 (Evaluative Biography of Hui Dong) (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe, 1997), 48-51.
[195] Cf. Elman, "Philosophy (I-LI) versus Philology (K'ao-cheng): The Jen-hsin tao-hsin Debate," *T'oung Pao* 69.4/5 (1983): 212-213.
[196] Hui Dong, *Xunzi weiyan*, 471.
[197] Hui Dong, *Xunzi weiyan*, 471.

(*weidai er bu an* 危殆而不安) and "subtlety" as "subtle and difficult to see" (*weimiao er nan jian* 微妙而難見).[198] With reference to the mind as a whole, Zhu Xi said: "When realizing Coherence, it is called the moral mind; when realizing only selfish desire it is called the human mind" (*qi jue yu li zhe, daoxin ye; qi jue yu zhe, renxin ye* 其覺於理者，道心也。其覺於欲者，人心也).[199] So while Zhu Xi read the passage as a statement about the qualities of the human and moral minds, Hui Dong interpreted it as an exhortation. For Hui Dong, the human mind should be apprehensive in its single-minded effort to practice the ritual traditions. The moral mind was a result of those efforts, as one reached a more refined understanding of social rituals and practiced them effortlessly with complete sincerity.

As this example demonstrates, Hui Dong's reading of the *Classics* certainly undermined those of Song scholars, but at the same time it is not difficult to see the affinity between Cheng Yi and Hui Dong in their promotion of submission to external authority, to steadfast and single-minded loyalty, and devotion to something greater than oneself. It was in this sense that Hui Dong's teachings aligned so well with the revival of a lineage orientation under the Qing dynasty.

The Qianlong Emperor and Han Learning

Encouraged initially by the Early Qing interest in lineage rituals among state and literati alike, the reliance on a broader spectrum of textual sources gradually strengthened the doubts in and criticisms of Cheng-Zhu *daoxue*. The emphasis in research also shifted from learning how to become a sage to reconstructing the sage-author's written works. Despite such changes, *daotong* ideals were ultimately perpetuated in the *jiafa*-oriented thought of Han Learning and evidential research. Its close affinity to the socio-political function of Cheng-Zhu *daoxue* explains why Han Learning and evidential research could

[198] Zhu Xi, "Zhongyong zhangju xu" 中庸章句序 (Preface to the *Zhongyong zhangju*), vol. 6 of *Zhuzi quanshu* 朱子全書 (Complete Works of Zhu Xi), eds. Zhu Jieren, Yan Zuozhi, and Liu Yongxiang (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2002), 29.
[199] Quoted from Qian Mu, *Zhuzi xue tigang* 朱子學提綱 (Outline of Zhu Xi's Teachings) (Taipei: Lantai chubanshe, 2001), 86.

support and validate an imperial vision of unity, even as the niceties of *daoxue* philosophy were sacrificed in the process.

Zhang Binglin 章炳麟 (1869-1936) once elevated the achievements of private collation during the Qing dynasty while criticizing the officially sponsored *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書 (Complete Books of the Four Treasuries), which according to him used compilation and collation to eliminate Late Ming anti-Manchu literature.[200] Because of this, he wanted to exclude the project's main editor Ji Yun 紀昀 (1724-1805) from the biographies of evidential research scholars.[201] More recent research, however, paints a far more complex picture of the relationship between private and public collation. In fact, the *Siku Quanshu* project illustrates well the close ties between 18th century evidential research as a profession and the ideological interests of the Manchu state.

In *The Emperor's Four Treasuries*, R. Kent Guy made two arguments to show that the *Siku Quanshu* project cannot be understood simply in terms of suppression and inquisition. Firstly, since work on the *Siku quanshu* began in 1772 and the first edict on suppression of books dated from 1774, it is by no means evident that an inquisition was part of the project's original purpose. Secondly, much of the actual inquisition was fueled by educated Han Chinese and served their agendas.[202]

The institutions used for collection and censorship during the Siku quanshu project paralleled each other, but the main actors and their agendas differed considerably.[203] The process of censorship in its early phase (1774-80) followed a series of interconnected stages. Firstly, book collectors were informed of banned titles and asked to submit copies to provincial authorities, who evaluated the texts and passed selected ones on to final evaluation in the capital. It was then the work of Provincial

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[200] This distinction was perpetuated in L. C. Goodrich, *The literary inquisition of Ch'ien-lung* (Baltimore: Waverly Press, Inc., 1935).
[201] Zhang Binglin, "Zhang Taiyan xiansheng lun dingshu" 章太炎先生論訂書 (Zhang Binglin on the Arrangement of My Book), vol. 1 of *Qingdai puxue dashi liezhuan*, ed. Zhi Weicheng 支偉成 (1899-1929) (Shanghai: Taidong tushuju, 1925), 3-4.
[202] R. Kent Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries: Scholars and the state in the late Ch'ien-lung era* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1987). For an early critique of Goodrich, see also William Hung 洪煨蓮, "*Review of* The literary inquisition of Ch'ien-lung," *The Chinese Social and Political Science Review* 19.2 (1935): 268-277.
[203] Guy, *Four Treasuries*, 162-67.

Governors to seek out extant woodblocks for destruction. The campaign was meant to focus on the purchase more than the confiscation of books, with measures taken to minimize negative reactions. But due to a shift for practical purposes of responsibility from official to semi- or unofficial channels, the whole project soon began to exhibit the features of police action. In 1776 the Governor-Generals came up with an idea to let expectant officials (*houbuguan* 候補官) compete with each other in the collection of texts, with a promise of priority on the waiting lists for official employment.[204]

The gradual delegation of tasks down the chain of the Chinese bureaucracy, and even below it, gave rise to a dialectical process of influence between ideological concerns at the top and the socio-economic interests of agents on the grassroots-level. Between 1776 and 1780, local gentry contributed to the inflow of banned books to the capital while using the possession of seditious literature as a pretext for litigation in personal conflicts with wholly unrelated motives.[205] The resulting literary inquisition was therefore a joint endeavor involving expectant officials, who competed to collect anything that might be labeled seditious; local gentry, who used the campaign as a weapon in neighborly disputes; and subdistrict officials, who benefited from minor gentry lawsuits. The emperor apparently lost control of the campaign and attempted to recentralize collection processes around 1780, when censorship boards were set up to

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[204] See in particular San Bao's 三寶 1777 memorial, translated in Guy, *Four Treasuries*, 173. Expectant officials evolved as a social group during the Qianlong reign. Originally, the time in waiting between passing the examinations and official appointment was spent in an internship not exceeding three years. By the end of the 18th and especially during the 19th century, however, the number of unemployed graduates rose drastically, and waiting lists grew so long that many successful examination candidates would never be considered for appointment. A social group below the lowest ranked formal officials, and just above the local gentry, expectant officials during the 19th century took on important roles in crisis management, when they were grouped into temporary, *ad hoc* agencies or bureaus (*ju* 局). The book bureaus (*shuju* 書局) established in the late 1770s to early 1780s for the purpose of locating banned books might well have been one of the first instances where this method of mobilizing expectant officials was employed. See Philip Yuen-sang Leung, "Crisis Management and Institutional Reform: The Expectant Officials in the Late Qing," in *Dragons, Tigers, and Dogs: Qing Crisis Management and the Boundaries of State Power in Late Imperial China*, eds. Robert J. Antony and Jane Kate Leonard (New York: East Asia Program, Cornell University, 2002); and Robert J. Antony, "Subcounty Officials, the State, and Local Communities in Guangdong Province, 1644-1860," in *Dragons, Tigers, and Dogs*, 27-61.

[205] Guy, *Four Treasuries*, 179. It is noteworthy that many books submitted to the capital for censorship were sent back to their owners after no seditious passages had been found.

standardize the definition of what may be deemed seditious literature. This was followed by a marked decline in the number of submitted books.[206] For the above reasons, the destruction of banned literature cannot be exclusively or even primarily understood as Manchu suppression of Han Chinese literati opinion, or as an ideological struggle between state and society.

A revival of Confucian ritual practices in the Early Qing has been interpreted as a reassertion of local literati leadership and is thought to have influenced the rise of 18th century evidential research.[207] But these developments were also closely related to court policy, and the single most instrumental figure to encourage interest in Confucian ritual and evidential research at this time was the Qianlong emperor himself. In 1735, the first year of his reign, the emperor complained how literati no longer studied the ritual books *Yili* 儀禮 (Ceremony and Ritual) and *Zhouli* simply because these were not required reading for the civil examinations.[208] He ordered the compilation of a Confucian rituals digest that could be easily scaled and practiced throughout society. A Bureau of the Three Ritual Texts (*san li guan* 三禮館) was established with the main task of compiling the *Da Qing tongli* 大清通禮 (Comprehensive Rituals of the Great Qing). The digest was to be based on "ritual texts from all historical periods as well as on the collected statutes of the Qing dynasty" (*ying cuiji lidai lishu bing benchao huidian* 應萃集歷代禮書並本朝會典).[209] The *Da Qing tongli* emphasized Han-Tang commentaries, but its editors could by no means be called Han Learning scholars, nor did they rely predominantly on evidential research techniques.

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[206] Guy, *Four Treasuries*, 190-197.

[207] Chow, *The Rise of Confucian Ritualism*; Chang So-an 張壽安, *Yi li dai li—Ling Tingkan yu Qing zhongye ruxue sixiang zhi zhuanbian* 以礼代理：凌廷堪与清中叶儒学思想之轉變 (Substituting Ritual for Reason: Ling Tingkan and the Mid-Qing Shift in Confucian Thought) (Hebei: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2001).

[208] Qiu Peichao 邱培超, "Zhengzhi yu xueshu de hudong: zi Qianlong qianqi dui jingxue de tichang kan Qian-Jia hanxue zhi xing" 政治與學術的互動：自乾隆前期對經學的提倡看乾嘉漢學之興 (Politics and Scholarship: Early Qianlong Promotion of Classicism and the Rise of Qian-Jia Han Learning), *You feng chu ming niankan* 3 (2007): 79-90.

[209] *Qing shilu* 清實錄 (Veritable Records of the Qing dynasty), first year, sixth month, twenty-third day of the Qianlong reign, 21.507b. The *Veritable Records* are quoted from the digital edition in *Hanji quanwen ziliao ku*.

The Qianlong emperor knew that the central tenets of *daoxue* were easily recited by scholars and officials who had them memorized since childhood. He therefore demanded that high officials take turns to lecture him on the *Classics*, not only to himself appear as a sage-ruler, but also, as he said, to personally investigate the relative sincerity (*xinshu zhi zhen wei* 心術之真偽) of his bureaucrats with regard to state ideology. For this purpose, he explicitly demanded that they not only present him with tired *daoxue* platitudes, but "collect widely the ancient meanings and various sayings" (*bozong guyi, guangyi qunyan* 博綜古義，廣挹群言).[210] This was not a call to pursue Han Learning instead of Cheng-Zhu *daoxue*, but it certainly encouraged court officials to broaden their horizons to satisfy an emperor who "wished for the various officials to carefully scrutinize the books of Song scholars and return to the profundity of the *Six Classics*" (*zhen yuan zhuchen yanjing Song ru zhi shu, yi shangsu liu jing zhi kun'ao* 朕願諸臣研精宋儒之書，以上溯六經之閫奧).[211]

Qing emperors essentially accepted and implemented Late Ming calls for curricular reform that required students to study all the *Five Classics*. Such a category was introduced to the civil examinations in 1724 and between the years 1788 to 1793 a requirement that all literati must master each of the *Classics* was gradually implemented.[212] Beginning in the late 1750s, the *Five Classics* were given increased prominence as the core of session two, where the composition of eight-rhyme regulated poetry was also made a requirement. In 1787, the discourse question was moved from the first session and eventually discarded, something that further upset adherents of Song Learning. From 1793, session one was shared between questions on the *Four Books* and poetry composition, whereas session two was entirely devoted to the *Five Classics*, followed by policy questions in session three.[213] Such changes in the examination curriculum had far-reaching consequences in Chinese society, where the reproduction of officials from strong family lineages, specialized in drilling male descendants as experts of Cheng-Zhu *daoxue*, was turned on its head. A whole different set of knowledge,

[210] *Qing shilu*, the fourteenth year, first month, twenty-sixth day of the Qianlong reign, 333. 575b.
[211] *Qing shilu*, the fifth year, tenth month, twelfth day of the Qianlong reign, 128.876b.
[212] Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations*, 541-542.
[213] Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations*, 544.

methods, and library resources were required to pass questions on the *Five Classics* as compared to composing discourses on the *Four Books*.

Like most Ming and Qing rulers before him, the Qianlong emperor demanded that questions in the civil examinations give students an opportunity to demonstrate "substantial learning" (*shixue* 實學). But this term took on a new and very specific meaning during the Qianlong reign. Under Shunzhi and Kangxi, the term "substantial learning" described a combination of "having the knowledge of a true scholar and being able to use it as an able administrator" (*mingti ze wei zhenru, dayong ze wei liangli* 明體則為真儒。達用則為良吏).[214] The knowledge referred to in this context was Cheng-Zhu *daoxue* (*xingli shixue* 性理實學).[215] Under the Yongzheng reign, substantial learning was increasingly connected with applicable knowledge (*yongshi zhi shixue* 用世之實學), with an emphasis on practice.[216] The Yongzheng emperor stressed the importance of policy questions, which he thought had been neglected by candidates and examiners who focused most their effort on the first session with Cheng-Zhu teachings. The policy questions, he argued, were particularly useful for testing candidates' knowledge of statecraft (*jingji shixue* 經濟實學).[217]

The Qianlong emperor emphasized classicism (*jingxue*) as the foundation of statecraft, going to great lengths to make the *Classics* and related works available to students in every province.[218] An imperial announcement from 1740 shows Han Learning already on the rise at court, where the potential of Cheng-Zhu teachings to reflect the true character and ability of literati officials had been thrown in doubt. The Qianlong emperor said:

> 今之議經者。間或援引漢唐箋疏之說。夫典章制度。漢唐諸儒。有所傳述考據。固 不可廢。而經術之精微。必得宋儒參考而闡發之。然

[214] *Qing shilu*, the twelfth year, third month, twenty-seventh day of the Shunzhi reign, 90.712b.
[215] *Qing shilu*, the fifty-second year, ninth month, twenty-sixth day of the Kangxi reign, 256.532b.
[216] *Qing shilu*, the second year, second month, second day of the Yongzheng reign, 16.268a.
[217] *Qing shilu*, the eleventh year, first month, twenty-fourth day of the Yongzheng reign, 127.668a.
[218] *Qing shilu*, the third year, tenth month, twenty-second day of the Qianlong reign, 79.243b-244a.

> 後聖人之微言大義。如揭日月而行也。惟是講學之人。有誠有偽。誠者不可多得。 而偽者託於道德性命之說、欺世盜名。漸啟 標榜門戶之害。此朕所深知。亦朕所深惡。然 不可以偽託者獲罪於名教。遂置理學於不事。
>
> Among those today who discuss the *Classics*, some use explanations from Han-Tang subcommentaries. It cannot be ignored that Han-Tang scholars studied and transmitted knowledge of institutions and policies, but the essence of classical learning was clarified only with the expositions of Song scholars. Nevertheless, among those who discuss learning some are sincere and others are false. The sincere are hard to come by, while the false veil themselves in talk of morality and human nature. For fame they cheat those around them and invite the disasters of partisanship and factionalism. This is something that We truly understand and We deeply despise it. However, the study of Coherence cannot be discarded only because of these false ones, who use it to hide their real selves.[219]

The authority of Cheng-Zhu *daoxue* was already considerably weaker than under the Kangxi reign, and the Yongzheng emperor had been more interested in Buddhism. Therefore, the Qianlong emperor was under some pressure to show what type of learning he wished to support. He almost decided in 1744 to eliminate eight-legged essays (*baguwen* 八股文) from the civil examinations, something that might have proved fatal for Cheng-Zhu thought, but the initiative was abandoned due to a lack of valid alternatives. In 1749, the emperor deplored the lack of men versed in classical exegesis (*jiu jingxun zhi kun'ao zhe* 究經訓之閫奧者) and called for recommendations of such men for office, regardless of current status. From this time to the end of his reign, the Qianlong emperor showed nothing but support for Han Learning as an orthodox alternative to Cheng-Zhu *daoxue*.[220] Provincial examiners all over the empire responded to the imperial hint by gradually starting to test students on Han Learning, especially in the policy questions.[221]

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[219] *Qing shilu*, the fifth year, tenth month, twelfth day of the Qianlong reign, 128.876a-b.
[220] See Wang Damin 王達敏, "Cong zun Song dao chong Han: lun Yao Nai jianli Tongcheng pai shi Qing ting xueshu chongshang de qianyi" 從尊宋到崇漢：論姚鼐建立桐城派時清廷學術宗尚的潛移 (From Praising Song to Worshipping Han: The Silent Shift in Scholarly Patronage of the Qing Court When Yao Nai Established the Tongcheng School), *Zhongguo wenhua* 19-20 (2002): 281-287.
[221] Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations*, 503-520.

Nevertheless, it was not until the 1795 publication of the *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* 四庫全書總目提要 (Abstracts and Index for the *Complete Books of the Four Treasuries*) that an imperially sanctioned and widely circulated work explicitly encouraged evidential research.[222] In the "General Principles" (*fanli* 凡例) to this work, the main compiler Ji Yun heeded Qianlong's call for "substantial learning" by relating it directly to the practice of evidential research. He wrote:

> 說經主於明義理，然不得其文字之訓詁，則義理何自而推？論史主於示褒貶，然不得其事跡之本末，則褒貶何據而定？……今所錄者，率以考證精核、論辯明確為主，庶幾可謝彼虛談，敦茲實學。
> Discussing the *Classics* is mainly about clarifying their meaning, but if one does not know the right gloss to a word, from what can one infer its meaning? Discussing the *Histories* is mainly about demonstrating the principles of retribution, but if one does not know the beginnings and ends of events, what is there to rely on in determining the principles of retribution? . . . By focusing directly on the careful scrutiny of evidence and clear argumentation, it is possible to avoid empty talk and sincerely pursue substantial learning.[223]

Philological techniques and empirical evidence were thus promoted in opposition to the "empty talk" of Cheng-Zhu *daoxue* and its derivatives. Ji Yun also established a principle that learning ought to be "useful in the human realm" (*qie ren shi* 切人事). This was directed at speculation about metaphysical principles such as *yin-yang* or the Supreme Ultimate, but also at Gu Yanwu's impractical dream of a national revival of ancient Chinese pronunciations.[224]

In another section of the "General Principles," Ji Yun wrote:

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[222] The connection between the Qianlong emperor and the *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* (henceforth the *Abstracts*) has been discussed in Hsia Chang-Pwu 夏長樸, "*Siku quanshu zongmu* yu Han-Song zhi xue de guanxi" 《四庫全書總目》與漢宋之學的關係 (The Relationship of the *Siku quanshu zongmu* to Han-Song Learning), *Gugong xueshu jikan* 23.2 (2005): 83-128. For the publication date of the *Abstracts*, see Xia, "*Siku quanshu zongmu*," 104 n. 78.
[223] Ji Yun, "Fanli," vol. 1 in *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao*, ed. Ji Yun (Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin chubanshe, 2000), 45-46.
[224] Ji Yun, "Fanli," 46.

> 漢唐儒者，謹守師說而已。自南宋至明，凡說經、講學、論文，皆各立門戶，大抵數名人為之主，而依草附木者囂然助之。朋黨一分，千秋吳越，漸流漸遠，並其本師之宗旨亦失其傳，而讎隙相尋，操戈不已，名為爭是非，而實則爭勝負也。人心世道之害，莫甚於斯。
> Scholars of the Han and Tang dynasties simply guarded the sayings of their teachers. From the Southern Song to the Ming dynasty, however, those who discussed the *Classics*, lectured, or theorized about literary expression each established their separate schools. A few famous people guided their followers, who complacently supported them while having no achievements of their own. From the day such factions were first formed, they opposed each other like the states of Wu and Yue, their views becoming more extreme with the passage of time. Eventually, they even lost sight of and forgot their respective patriarchs' original teachings. Personal conflicts followed one upon another in endless battles. Nominally, they fought over right and wrong, but in fact they fought over nothing other than victory and defeat. Nothing has been more harmful than this for human morality and the fate of the realm.[225]

A cursory reading of this passage might lead one to believe that Ji Yun merely criticized the relative disregard for commentarial traditions after the Han-Tang dynasties. But this was not the point. Why did he not mention the idiosyncratic readings of the *Classics* by Northern Song scholars like Ouyang Xiu or Cheng Yi, dating instead the beginnings of cultural decline to the Southern Song? Ji Yun's real intent with this passage was to reiterate and revive attacks on Cheng-Zhu *daoxue* as a political faction that had been initiated by the bureaucratic opposition to that movement during the Southern Song. He thereby tied the whole *daoxue* tradition, and not only Wang Yangming's teachings, directly to Late Ming factionalism, the Donglin movement, and the fall of the Ming dynasty.

Ji Yun's accusations of factionalism also extended to poetry associations (*shishe* 詩社) and local gazetteer projects (*dizhi* 地志) that promoted specific groups at the expense of the "impartiality" (*gong*) symbolized by the imperial center.[226] As Hsia Chang-Pwu has shown, Ji Yun's criticism of Song-Ming scholars was carefully

[225] Ji Yun, "Fanli," 46-47.
[226] Ji Yun, "Fanli," 47.

formulated to have the strongest possible impact at court. By explaining how *daoxue* throughout history had exceeded their scholarly jurisdiction to form political factions, Ji Yun played on the emperor's deepest fear of losing control over his bureaucracy by failing to unite it under a common ideology.

Taken together, changes to the examinations curriculum, the compilation of the *Siku quanshu* and the creation of the *Abstracts* all favored a general shift from *daoxue* to evidential research and Han Learning. The same trend is seen in the Qianlong emperor's poetry and prose compositions from the years 1773-1795, where he criticized the works of Zhu Xi and other Song scholars while elevating the importance of Han dynasty scholars like Zheng Xuan. In the last decade of his reign, the Qianlong emperor even personally engaged in evidential research exercises.[227]

By this time, he was convinced that it was Han Learning and the methods of evidential research, not Cheng-Zhu *daoxue*, which best served his imperial interests in achieving ideological unity among literati and in the bureaucracy. The emperor wrote:

> 陶淵明讀書不求甚解，嘗不韙其言。蓋彼以隱居放言之人則可，稽古考經之人已不可，而況作君師、司政治者乎！故於勑幾熙績，必不肯置疑似兩可其間，而於考經稽古，益必求其至當。
> Tao Yuanming did not pursue detailed explanations when he was reading books, but I could never agree with his attitude. Perhaps a hermit in his abode can speak such words, but men who investigate the past and the *Classics* cannot subscribe to this, and how much less so a sage-ruler concerned with the running of government! When it comes to evaluating achievements, an emperor cannot allow himself to bring about doubt by hovering between possibilities, and even more importantly, when investigating the *Classics* and past events he must pursue the one correct meaning.[228]

For Qianlong, the "correct meaning" of the *Classics* no longer referred to Zhu Xi's interpretations, nor even to pre-Qin masters such as Mencius. Just as the first Ming

[227] Hsia, "*Siku quanshu zongmu*," 120.
[228] Qianlong, "Jing qing Wei zhuo ji shi" 涇清渭濁紀實 (Note on the Clearness of River Jing and Muddiness of River Wei), in *Yuzhi wen san ji* 御製文三集 (Third Volume of Imperial Prose), vol. 1 of *Qing Gaozong yuzhi shiwen quanji*, 14.3b-4a.

emperor before him, Qianlong in his later years was disturbed by the Mencian justification of regicide. The emperor made his monopoly on defining the truth clear in 1789 by harshly criticizing both Mencius and his commentator Zhu Xi for condoning the occasional necessity of popular revolt.[229]

The success of evidential research as an imperially sanctioned alternative to *daoxue* is well illustrated by an anecdote from the *Qingbai leichao* 清稗類鈔 (Classified Notes from Unofficial Writings of the Qing Dynasty), which said:

> 乾、嘉之際，漢學大行，能以《緯書》及《汲冢書》、《穆天子傳》等書入文，輒獲上選。黠者因偽撰典故，以愚試官，試官欲避空疏之誚，不敢問也。江左某生素滑稽，值彭文勤按臨歲試，某生亦赴試，場期前一日，偶與同院生出游，道旁有兩槐濃蔭蔽日，中一井，井畔有石，喜其清潤，因坐石傾談。其生忽有悟，曰：「此本地風光，即吾明日場中文料也。」同院生猶哂之。次日入試，榜發，果冠軍。索試卷觀之，小講起語即曰：「且自兩槐夾井以來」云云。以下皆杜撰語，而評語則極賞其典奧焉。
>
> During the Qian-Jia reigns, Han Learning spread widely. Anyone who could incorporate the apocrypha, the *Book from Jizhong*,[230] or the *Biography of King Mu*,[231] and other such texts in their examination answers were singled out for excellence. Cunning students falsified classical allusions to fool their examiners, who did not dare to ask anyone about the quotations for fear of being ridiculed.
>
> There was a cunning student from south of the river who participated in the yearly examinations overseen by Peng Wenqin. The day before the examination he went on a trip with his classmates, and on the roadside came across two pagoda trees with foliage thick enough to block out the sunlight. Between the trees was a well, and beside the well some rocks. The friends enjoyed the smoothness of the rocks and sat down to chat. Suddenly, the student had an idea and said: "The landscape right here is going to be material for my examination answer tomorrow." His

[229] See also Hsia, "*Siku quanshu zongmu*", 125.
[230] I.e. *Zhushu jinian* 竹書紀年 (Annals on Bamboo Strips), cf. David S. Nivison, "*Chu shu chi nien*," in *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide*, ed. Michael Loewe (Berkeley: The Society for the Study of Early China and the Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1993), 39-47.
[231] See Rémi Mathieu, "*My t'ien tzu chuan*," in *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide*, ed. Michael Loewe (Berkeley: The Society for the Study of Early China and the Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1993), 342-346.

> classmates laughed at him. But the next day, when the results were presented, he was on top of the list. When they searched out his answer and read it, it really opened with the words: "Ever since the time of two pagoda trees embracing a well . . ." Everything that followed was also made up from nothing, and yet the examiner commended the answer for its profound use of classical allusions.[232]

This anecdote demonstrated the final success of evidential research in the civil examinations, but it also suggested that the practice of Han Learning or evidential research, once it entered the civil examinations, was by no means more conducive to literati "sincerity" than Cheng-Zhu *daoxue* had been, nor did evidential research by any intrinsic quality require a higher degree of effort than examinations based on *daoxue* philosophy.

3.2 Han-Song Factionalism and Dynastic Decline in the 19th Century

With decisive imperial support, Han Learning and evidential research flourished under the Qianlong emperor's rule. But there were also those among the literati who stood to lose from that success story, and while imperially sanctioned works spoke of how extensive philological inquiry and Cheng-Zhu *daoxue* reinforced each other, that was not always how things played out in either scholarship or the examination halls.

The various interpretive approaches adopted by family lineages who vied for examination success and imperial patronage under the Qianlong emperor turned into more and more outspoken political factions throughout the 19th century, as the political center weakened and actors in the localities became increasingly more autonomous due to foreign aggression and civil unrest. Ultimately, the lack of social unity and a weakened central command became arguably crucial factors contributing to the decline and fall of the dynasty.

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[232] Xu Ke 徐珂 (1869-1928), "Sui kao wen duzhuan gudian" 歲考文杜撰古典, in *Qingbai leichao* 清稗類鈔 (Classified Notes from Unofficial Writings of the Qing Dynasty), ed. Xu Ke (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984), 617.

Dai Zhen on the Common Good

Dai Zhen 戴震 (1724-1777) lived and wrote in the heyday of Qianlong's prosperous reign, and his work is often justifiably read in light of the growing imperial patronage of evidential research and Han Learning. But his work also came to play a crucial part in the destructive factional struggles of the 19th century, where it represented the irreconcilable division between Han Learning and Song Learning. Therefore, the following discussion of the *Mengzi ziyi shuzheng* 孟子字義疏證 (Evidential Exposition of the Meaning of Characters in the *Mengzi*) has been contextualized as the beginning of factional battles that took shape predominantly in the 19th century, after the Qianlong emperor's death.

Dai Zhen wrote the *Mengzi ziyi shuzheng* late in his life as a criticism of Cheng-Zhu *daoxue*. It dealt with most aspects of *daoxue* thought, from the metaphysical to the social realm. The main contribution of Dai Zhen's treatise, however, lay in his sociological critique of problems in his own time.[233]

Qing dynasty conceptions of Cheng-Zhu *daoxue* often described Coherence as a metaphysical phenomenon as opposed to human desires grounded in physical reality. Becoming a moral individual consisted in eliminating individual needs so as not to interfere with a greater good. Already Wang Yangming had seen how this aspect of Cheng-Zhu *daoxue* in practice encouraged a submissive attitude to authority, and it was this ideology that interested Dai Zhen more than its metaphysical rationalizations.

When it appears in Dai Zhen's *Mengzi ziyi shuzheng*, therefore, the *daoxue* notion of Coherence is often best understood in its sociological context as referring to the "common good." In fact, Dai Zhen explicitly equated the term "heavenly Coherence" (*tianli*) with a notion of the "common good" (*gongyi* 公義) in the following passage. Dai Zhen wrote:

> 今既截然分理欲為二，治己以不出於欲為理，治人亦必不出於欲為理，舉凡民之飢寒愁怨、飲食男女、常情隱曲之感，咸視為人欲之甚

[233] Zhang Binglin, "Shi Dai" 釋戴 (On Dai Zhen), in *Taiyan wenlu chubian* 太炎文錄初編 (Zhang Binglin's Prose Writings, First Volume), vol. 4 of *Zhang Taiyan quanji* 章太炎全集 (Complete Works of Zhang Binglin) (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1985), 122-124.

> 輕者矣。輕其所輕，乃「吾重天理也，公義也」，言雖美，而用之治人，則禍其人。
>
> Now that human desire and the common good (*li*) have been split in two and pitted against each other, men are governed by a formula saying that as long as something is not based on human desire, it must be in line with the common good. They make the same assumption when governing others. As for the hunger, cold and suffering of the people; problems of food, drink, and love; daily emotions and private pains, they all regard as utterly unimportant matters of human desire. They show no interest in what they deem to be unimportant, and say: "I care about heavenly Coherence (*tianli*), that is, the common good (*gongyi*)." While such words may sound good, they bring disaster when used to govern others.[234]

While Hui Dong and others had been critical of Zhu Xi's philological expositions, Dai Zhen went much farther in attacking the core of Cheng-Zhu *daoxue* as political philosophy. The *Mengzi ziyi shuzheng* was an insult to the imperially sanctioned notion that an impartial examination of textual evidence would ultimately support and strengthen the conclusions of Song dynasty scholars whose works made up the foundation of imperial orthodoxy. If taken to extremes, Dai Zhen's criticism of the *li*/*yu* distinction could even be read as an attack on imperial power, for Qianlong was by no means the first Qing emperor who equaled Coherence with his own will. His predecessor on the throne, the Yongzheng emperor, had also equated the common good (*da gong* 大公) with imperial interest in his denunciations of literati factionalism.[235]

The Yongzheng emperor held that policy advice from the bureaucracy must be based in a sincere devotion to the common good, and the best way to demonstrate devotion was for losing parties to accept the court's decision and exert themselves in the execution of imperial policy. Literati interest groups that lobbied for ideas even as the emperor disagreed were therefore denounced for pursuing selfish interests and working in opposition to the common good. This attitude was perpetuated and strengthened by the

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[234] Dai Zhen, *Mengzi ziyi shuzheng* 孟子字義疏證 (Evidential Exposition of the Meaning of Characters in the *Mengzi*), vol. 6 of *Dai Zhen quanshu* 戴震全書 (Complete Works of Dai Zhen), ed. Zhang Dainian (Anhui: Huangshan shushe, 1995), 217.
[235] Donald J. Munro, "The Concept of 'Interest' in Chinese Thought," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 41.2 (1980): 184-185.

Qianlong emperor, who was harsh on those unwilling to subordinate themselves to the imperial will.

We do not have to read Dai Zhen's work as an attack on imperial autocracy, even though this has also been done.[236] The bureaucratic system of Late Imperial China was strictly hierarchical, and superior bureaucratic rank implied that any official could represent the imperial will to those below him. Consequently, the emperor often served as the ultimate justification for any exercise of authority.

Dai Zhen held that a moral philosophy that distinguished between individual needs and the common good was problematic, because a lack of selfish desire did not guarantee action that contributed to the common good. Besides, who had the power to define what the common good consisted in? Even those who ostensibly put aside their individual needs to serve what they considered to be the common good, Dai Zhen noted, often did not even see the suffering they caused, or discovered it much too late.[237]

Wang Yangming wanted to encourage responsible and courageous individuals, who would not bend to external pressure. To that end, he argued that if cut off from the mind, our sensory organs were nothing but dead flesh. If this was accepted, he would proceed to make the point that anything we experience as external to ourselves, in fact exists only as perceptions in the mind. And if the world could only be accessed through the mind, then the pursuit of Coherence also must begin from within each individual.

Dai Zhen fundamentally disagreed with this line of argumentation, and held that our sensory organs actually retain their functions regardless of the mind.[238] Unlike what Wang Yangming had maintained, Dai Zhen argued that external objects have their own existence independently of how they are perceived. Consequently, the search for Coherence and the common good should begin with the investigation of phenomena.

The mind, Dai Zhen argued, was just another sensory organ, similar to the mouth, ears, and eyes. Just as the mouth enjoyed good flavor, the ears harmonious music, and the

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[236] Zhang Binglin, "Shi Dai." See also Hu Chusheng 胡楚生, "Zhang Taiyan 'Shi Dai pian' shenlun" 章太炎「釋震篇」申論 (Discussion of Zhang Taiyan's "Shi Dai" Essay), in *Qingdai xueshu shi yanjiu* 清代學術史研究 (Research in Qing Intellectual History), ed. Hu Chusheng, (Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1988), 151-170.
[237] Dai Zhen, *Mengzi ziyi shuzheng*, 154, see also 161.
[238] Dai Zhen, *Mengzi ziyi shuzheng*, 157.

eyes beautiful color, so the mind found satisfaction in realizing the common good.[239] He maintained that Coherence should be considered an integral quality of *qi*, the stuff from which the universe was made. The mind, similarly, should be thought of as an integral quality of the physical body. Consequently, since the function and purpose of *qi* was to produce new life through constant transformations, and the mind was subordinated to the body, the natural impulse of the mind was likewise to produce and nurture life.

The definition of *qi* as a will to regeneration and to promote new life (*sheng sheng* 生生) was also found in *daoxue* thought and derived ultimately from the *Yijing* tradition. By accepting the subordination of Coherence to *qi*, an idea that already had a long history, Dai Zhen defined Coherence and gave it concrete moral meaning, seemingly without reliance on external authority. In this way, he retained the part of Wang Yangming's ideas that empowered the individual, while avoiding the trap of moral relativism. Dai Zhen wrote:

> 理也者，情之不爽失也；未有情不得而理得者也。凡有所施於人，反躬而靜思之：「人以此施於我，我受之乎？」凡有所責於人，反躬而靜思之：「人以此責於我，能盡之乎？」以我絜之人，則理明。
> The common good is where emotions are in balance. Whenever emotions are imbalanced, the common good cannot be achieved. When doing something to others, one must reflect: "If someone did this to me, could I take it?" When demanding something of others, one must reflect: "If someone demanded this of me, could I accomplish it?" When thus measuring others in terms of ourselves, the common good is evident.[240]

The will to let others live, Dai Zhen argued, must be grounded in one's own desire for life. The Buddhists, who according to Dai Zhen eliminated their own desire to live, inevitably remained cold and distant in relation to the suffering of others.[241] Only by understanding their own desires would men be able to understand the needs of others, and only when understanding the needs of men in general could one be impartially devoted to realizing the common good.

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[239] Dai Zhen, *Mengzi ziyi shuzheng*, 155, 158.
[240] Dai Zhen, *Mengzi ziyi shuzheng*, 152.
[241] Dai Zhen, *Mengzi ziyi shuzheng*, 159-160.

Since coherence was an integral part of every man's *qi*, everyone had the potential to distinguish between right and wrong actions. The fact that people nevertheless committed wrongdoings was due to stupidity and ignorance.[242] Consequently, the difference between those who lived a moral life and those who harmed others for profit lay not in degrees of selfish desire, but in depths of understanding how those desires were best satisfied.

Dai Zhen problematized the relationship between knowledge and action. In his historical context, Wang Yangming had to emphasize that good actions not necessarily implied good motivations. In contrast, Dai Zhen stressed that even the most unselfish of motivations could result in terribly destructive actions. No matter how devoted men in power were to the common good, they had to establish a secure and verifiable basis of knowledge before making decisions or taking action.[243] They had to feed their minds with knowledge, just as they fed the mouth and stomach with food. By adding nutrition the body grew stronger, and through learning the mind was broadened.[244] The moral effort, consequently, should not consist in a denial of human desires, but in the pursuit of knowledge and a broadening of the mind. Dai Zhen wrote:

> 有是身，故有聲色嗅味之欲；有是身，而君臣、父子、夫婦、昆弟、朋友之倫具，故有喜怒哀樂之情。惟有欲有情而又有知，然後欲得遂也，情得達也。天下之事，使欲之得遂，情之得達，斯已矣。
> Having this body, we desire sound, color, smell, and taste. Having this body, we also desire to maintain moral human relations between ruler and servant, father and son, man and wife, older and younger brother, and between friends. Based on these desires we have emotions of joy, anger, sorrow and happiness. It is only when we have these desires and emotions, and add knowledge thereto, that desires can be satisfied and emotions given proper expression. If desires were satisfied and emotions had proper expression, there would be nothing more to achieve in this world.[245]

[242] Dai Zhen, *Mengzi ziyi shuzheng*, 186.
[243] Dai Zhen, *Mengzi ziyi shuzheng*, 171.
[244] Dai Zhen, *Mengzi ziyi shuzheng*, 159.
[245] Dai Zhen, *Mengzi ziyi shuzheng*, 197.

Men naturally desired sound, color, smell and flavor, but also relationships with those around them. Emotions of happiness, anger, and sorrow stirred depending on how well those desires were satisfied. By making use of their intelligence, Dai Zhen argued, men could find the best way to satisfy all desires, and as a part thereof to extend their efforts and help others, in turn, to satisfy their desires.

Unfortunately, there was no universal rule to proscribe how the moral imperative of nurturing and producing new life could best be achieved. Since all beings were partial representations of *qi*, they inevitably differed from each other. This was true not only of the differences between species, but also among individuals belonging to a single species.[246] Experience taught us that beings born on land died in water, and beings born in water died when leaving it. Those born in the south adapted to a warm climate and could not stand cold, whereas those born in the north adapted to a cold climate and succumbed to heat. Since all things were different, that which brought life to one may well bring death to another.[247] Even though all beings shared an impulse to survive and create new life, how that was best achieved depended on the situation. Dai Zhen wrote:

> 氣化生人生物，據其限於所分而言謂之命，據其為人物之本始而言謂之性，據其體質而言謂之才。由成性各殊，故才質亦殊。才質者，性之所呈也；舍才質安睹所謂性哉！
> The transformations of *qi* give life to men and things. The limits imposed on things by virtue of their partiality is called fate, while the fact that they nevertheless stem from one origin is called nature. Their respective bodily substances are called their characteristics. Since the way each being realizes its nature is different, their characteristics also differ from each other. The characteristics are that by which their nature finds expression. How, then, would it be possible to see the nature of a thing other than through its characteristics?[248]

Recognizing the great variety of men and things, along with the pluralism of needs and desires this implied, Dai Zhen reacted against the dogmatic impulse of Cheng-Zhu

[246] Dai Zhen, *Mengzi ziyi shuzheng*, 179-180.
[247] Dai Zhen, *Mengzi ziyi shuzheng*, 200.
[248] Dai Zhen, *Mengzi ziyi shuzheng*, 195.

daoxue. Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi, he pointed out, defined sincerity (*cheng*) as uniformity (*yi*) and the resulting imperative of submitting oneself to something external meant that people stuck rigidly with dogmatically defined principles, regardless of the situation at hand or the individual characteristics of things they were dealing with. Those who approached the world in such a manner, Dai Zhen wrote,

> 於是辨乎理欲之分，謂「不出於理則出於欲，不出於欲則出於理」，雖視人之饑寒號呼，男女哀怨，以至垂死冀生，無非人欲，空指一絕情欲之感者為天理之本然，存之於心。
> . . . distinguish between the common good and human desire, saying "that which does not come from [consideration of] the common good derives from human desire, and that which does not derive from human desire comes from [consideration of] the common good." When they see men screaming from hunger and cold, see the sorrow and resentment of men and women, or the desire to live in one who is about to die, they note that these all derive from human desire. They sustain the empty vision of eliminating emotions and desires as the substance of universal Coherence.[249]

In practice, Dai Zhen further explained, as a direct consequence of the distinction between human desire and the common good,

> 於是未有不以意見為理之君子，且自信不出於欲，則曰「心無愧怍」。夫古人所謂不愧不怍者，豈此之謂乎！不寤意見多偏之不可以理名，而持之必堅；意見所非，則謂其人自絕於理。此理欲之辨，適成忍而殘殺之具，為禍又如是也。
> . . . the self-righteous regard their own opinion as the common good, and believe that it does not originate in selfish desire. Therefore they say: "There is no guilt in my heart." But is this truly what the ancients meant by having no guilt? It is just because they do not understand that their own opinion cannot be called the common good that they steadfastly cling to it. And when their opinions come under criticism, they say that he who criticizes them rejects the common good. Consequently, the distinction between the common good and human desire has become a tool of cruelty and torture, bringing misfortune to the world.[250]

[249] Dai Zhen, *Mengzi ziyi shuzheng*, 211.
[250] Dai Zhen, *Mengzi ziyi shuzheng*, 216.

Dai Zhen believed in the power of evidential methods to draw impartial conclusions that could serve as a basis for unity and consensus, not only in the classicist sphere, but also in society and politics. An impartial understanding of the world would render obsolete the opinionated laws and regulations driven through by individuals who mistook their own opinion for the common good. Employing geometrical metaphors, he wrote:

> 夫天地之大，人物之蕃，事為之委曲條分，苟得其理矣，如直者之中懸，平者之中水，圓者之中規，方者之中矩，然後推諸天下萬世而準。
>
> Consider the vastness of heaven and earth, the multitudes of people and things, and the divergent processes of affairs and actions. If the coherence of each discrete phenomenon were to be grasped, it would be like the straightness of a hanging thread, like the plainness of the ocean's surface, like the roundness of a compass, and the squareness of a carpenter's square. Such knowledge could be applied for eternity and never fail.[251]

During the 19th century, New Text thinkers discovered a combination of Confucianism and imperial legalism in writings from the Western Han, including the *Gongyang* commentary to the *Annals*. Bringing juridical theory to bear on *daoxue*, they realized the importance of "knowing how to weigh circumstances" (*zhi quan* 知權).[252] Dai Zhen's stress on the individual characteristics of phenomena anticipated that movement, and so it was no coincidence that Ruan Yuan, who greatly admired Dai Zhen, developed an interest in *Gongyang* studies and got along quite well with New Text representative Liu Fenglu.[253]

Dai Zhen's work brought negative reactions from those with a vested interest or sincere belief in Cheng-Zhu *daoxue*. More surprisingly, perhaps, it also received an

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[251] Dai Zhen, *Mengzi ziyi shuzheng*, 164.
[252] Elman, *Classicism, Politics, and Kinship*, 270. On the connection between "weighing circumstances" and the Gongyang tradition, see Elman, "Ming Politics & Confucian Classics," 2-6.
[253] Elman, *Classicism, Politics, and Kinship*, 220.

initially cold and muted reception from evidential research scholars. This can only be understood by taking into account the political climate at the time.

The Han Learning faction had achieved a dominant position at court and received support from the Qianlong emperor. Even so, official policy remained devoted to the notion that evidential research and *daoxue* ultimately reinforced each other. Consequently, Han Learning adherents lacked political incentive to push for a complete elimination of their Song Learning rivals, especially as further escalation of factional struggle might result in a backlash for the currently dominating party. In such an historical context, the *Mengzi ziyi shuzheng* may have been an intellectual *tour de force*, but it was a poorly conceived political move.

The Jiaqing Emperor and Statecraft Thought

In arguing that even the best of intentions can have disastrous consequences when acted upon without knowledge of particular circumstance, Dai Zhen demanded that statesmen rely on the aid of technicians and local specialists. Efficient statecraft required specialized, technical, and local knowledge.

If the early 19th century was characterized by local extra-bureaucratic groups trying to influence state policy, one might have expected a warm reception among them of Dai Zhen's philosophy. Instead, Dai Zhen's personal morality was condemned by the statecraft thinker Wei Yuan, who accused Dai Zhen of plagiarizing Zhao Yiqing's 趙一清 (1709-1764) study of the *Shuijing zhu*, of using his rather exclusive access to the *Yongle dadian* to falsify evidence, and of denying his teacher Jiang Yong's influence on his own work.[254] Dai Zhen's ideas could well have been adopted in favor of a utilitarian (*gongli*) agenda.[255] Why were they not?

[254] Wei Yuan, "Shu Zhao jiao *Shuijing zhu* hou" 書趙校水經注後 (On Reading Zhao Yiqing's Redaction of the *Shuijing zhu*), vol. 1 of *Wei Yuan ji* 魏源集 (Collected Works of Wei Yuan) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1976), 224-226.
[255] Cf. Tillman, *Ch'en Liang on Public Interest and the Law* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994).

The answer to this question is found in the political factionalism that divided the Chinese literati both in and out of office. Many statecraft thinkers rejected Dai Zhen based on his affiliation with the Han Learning movement, something that makes sense only after positioning statecraft thought within the growing divides of intellectual partisanship in the early 19th century.

A eunuch's growing influence at court in the final years of the Qianlong reign temporarily brought factional groups together in opposition, but the Jiaqing reign provided new opportunities for factional politics to diversify and redistribute power in the bureaucracy. Therefore, the renewed emphasis on statecraft thought during this period should also be analyzed from the perspective of factional politics.

The moderate Xianyu Reforms (*xianyu weixin* 咸與維新) of 1799-1805 have been described as the Jiaqing emperor's attempt to avoid an outbreak of literati factionalism after the fall of Heshen 和珅 (1750-1799).[256] A softer stance in the imperial attitude to literati outspokenness and activism arguably precipitated the 19th century rise of a statecraft movement that involved calls for wider political participation.

In the aftermath of the Heshen era and the Qianlong-Jiaqing transition, the work of Wei Yuan 魏源 (1794-1857) and others combined New Text *Gongyang* studies with statecraft thought to focus more on present day problems of political reform than on reconstructions of the past.[257] As a result, New Text studies gradually merged with trends of literati activism that have been described as a revival of Donglin ideals.[258]

This revival flourished among the many poetry associations that appeared during the Jiaqing reign.[259] Representative of these were the Xuannan Poetry Club and its successor, the Spring Purification Circle, which have been studied by James Polachek. Members of the Spring Purification Circle rejected the scholastic attitude of 18th century

[256] Daniel McMahon, "Dynastic Decline, Heshen, and the Ideology of the Xianyu Reforms," *Qinghua xuebao* 38.2 (2008): 231-255.
[257] Elman, *Classicism, Politics, and Kinship*, 273; and Elman, "The Relevance of Sung Learning in the Late Ch'ing: Wei Yuan and the Huang-ch'ao ching'shih wen-pien," *Late Imperial China* 9.2 (1988): 56-85.
[258] Elman, *Classicism, Politics, and Kinship*, 276.
[259] James M. Polachek, *The Inner Opium War* (Cambridge, Mass: Council on East Asian Studies, 1992), 39-40.

evidential research and encouraged literati to become "men of heroic intensity."[260] They discarded the idol of Zheng Xuan, perceived as the arch-philologist, and praised the creative energy of Ouyang Xiu.[261] It was also in the 1840s that Gu Yanwu began to be emulated as a proponent of institutional reform, decentralization, and localism.[262] Such a view of the 17th century master conflicted with the praise of his philological contributions by the *Siku quanshu* editors and in Ruan Yuan's *Huang Qing jingjie* 皇清經解 (High Qing Explications of the Canon).

Like most of their Donglin predecessors, but unlike Huang Zongxi, these 19th century interest groups did not encourage ideological pluralism. They made forceful statements and established dogmatic and exclusivist positions that they wanted recognized as ideological orthodoxy.[263] Sincerity came to be defined as opposition to the impotence of bureaucracy and the apolitical scholasticism of 18th century evidential research.[264]

Taking into account that the bureaucracy had been dominated by the Han Learning faction throughout much of the 18th and early 19th centuries, these interest groups and their statecraft agenda are best understood as forming a political faction to vie for imperial patronage in the relative power vacuum of the post-Heshen era.

Seething discontent was clearly visible in complaints and memorials about the civil examinations during the Jiaqing reign, and the problem of Han Learning influence over evaluative standards was so prevalent that it reached the court. In 1800, Wang Zhongjian 王鍾健 (n.d.) presented a memorial to show that examination candidates were granted degrees based on their answers to policy questions, rather than on their knowledge of the *Four Books*. He further requested that the emperor forbid the use in examination answers of rare characters from the Han dynasty dictionary *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 (Dictionary of Expressions and Characters).

The Jiaqing emperor's response adamantly supported Han Learning. The use of characters from the *Shuowen*, he held, demonstrated the candidate's sincere devotion to

[260] Polachek, *The Inner Opium War*, 73.
[261] Polachek, *The Inner Opium War*, 84.
[262] R. Kent Guy, "The Development of the Evidential Research Movement: Ku Yen-wu and the Ssu-K'u Ch'üan-shu," *Tsing-Hua Journal of Chinese Studies* 16.1-2 (1984): 97-119.
[263] Polachek, *The Inner Opium War*, 88.
[264] Polachek, *The Inner Opium War*, 224-225.

textual exegesis and evidential research, hindering lazy and selfish students from being selected by merely reciting empty phrases. At this point, the Jiaqing emperor still repeated Qianlong's definition of substantial learning in terms of evidential research.[265]

The same year, censor Xin Congyi 辛從益 (n.d.) received an imperial warning for criticizing the policy essays of graduates in the Shuntian provincial examinations. His criticism was directed at discussions of ancient forms of currency allegedly used by Shen Nong and the Yellow Emperor, discussions that Xin Congyi considered groundless and absurd. The Jiaqing emperor scolded him and pointed out that these were quotations from the *Xiqing gujian* 西清古鑒 (Ancient Mirror of the Southern Studio), a work by previous Grand Secretary Liang Shizheng 梁詩正 (1697-1763).[266]

This, however, was not entirely correct. The quotations came from Liang Shizheng's appendix to that work—the *Qianlu* 錢錄 (Record of Coins)—which quoted profusely from, among other sources, the Song dynasty work *Lushi* 路史 (Great History) that discussed prehistorical China based largely on apocrypha and Daoist writings. It therefore seems plausible that the imperial denunciation of Xin Congyi originated from Han Learning proponents at court. The emperor accused Xin Congyi of factionalism and suggested that his criticism of the policy essays was a lowly revenge for the fact that only one man from Xin's home province Jiangxi had been successful in that year's Shuntian examinations.

Again in 1808, the censor Huang Renwan 黃任萬 submitted a memorial to complain of examination candidates who quoted obscure works, such as the *Zhushu jinian* 竹書紀年 (Bamboo Annals) and the *Lushi*, rather than spend their time reading the *Classics* and *Dynastic Histories*.[267]

Despite such persistent criticism, the Jiaqing emperor continued to support Han Learning in the civil examinations during the first two decades of his reign. In 1814, however, his tone changed. When the same Xin Congyi who had been reprimanded

[265] *Qing shilu*, the fifth year, fifth month, twenty-second day of the Jiaqing reign, 68.902.3-903.1.
[266] *Qing shilu*, the fifth year, ninth month, twenty-second day of the Jiaqing reign, 74.991.1.
[267] *Qing shilu*, the thirteenth year, eleventh month, sixteenth day of the Jiaqing reign, 203.709.2-710.1.

fourteen years earlier once again memorialized the throne regarding the use of obscure characters in examination essays, the emperor gave him his unconditional support, saying:

> 六經皆載道之文。其中並無奇文僻字。凡天地民物之理。包括靡遺。近日士子罔知潛心正學。獵取詭異之詞。撏撦飣餖。以艱深文其淺陋。敝習相沿。大乖文體。况言為心聲。尤足覘人器識。士子進身之初。先由詭遇。及試以政事。其於是非邪正之辨。治亂得失之原。皆懵然不解於心。欲望其通達政體。以聖賢之學坐言起行。豈可得乎。嗣後鄉會試考官、校士衡文。務各平心持鑒。別裁偽體。簡拔真材。如有將支離怪誕之文、目為新奇、妄行錄取者。經磨勘官摘參。必將原考官嚴加懲處。
>
> The *Six Classics* are carriers of the Way. They have no strange phrases or obscure characters. The coherence of all things are contained therein. Lately, literati do not know to focus on the orthodox teachings, but spend their time searching for bizarre words and copying out meaningless phrases, using what is difficult to understand in order to hide their ignorance. These harmful habits have spread among them but run counter to the correct format.
>
> Words, furthermore, are the expression of the mind, and may be consulted to determine a man's character. If literati use trickery to present themselves in the first place, and when tested in statecraft cannot discriminate between right and wrong, good and evil, or know the origins of order and chaos, success and failure, how can one hope that they will understand our directing policies and be able to practice the teachings of the sages?
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> From this day, when examiners in the provincial and metropolitan examinations evaluate literati and their writings, their duty is to compare them impartially, to value that which has a connection to real life, and to select men of real ability. If any examiner were to regard strange phrases as original and mistakenly accept such a candidate, it will be noted by those who correct the essays and the examiner shall be harshly punished.[268]

The Jiaqing emperor's public condemnation of Han Learning cliques in the imperial bureaucracy signaled a lasting change in the dynasty's cultural policy, and presumably

[268] *Qing shilu*, the nineteenth year, second intercalary month, tenth day of the Jiaqing reign, 286.910.2.

also in patterns of patronage. It has been suggested that the emperor's sudden shift was conditioned by the Tianli Sect uprising, which preceded the above pronouncement by only a few months and had seen religious sectarians storm the Forbidden City.[269]

Xin Congyi was promoted in 1815, and from this time on the meaning of the phrase "substantial learning," as it appears in the *Veritable Records*, was also redefined to indicate not textual studies or evidential research, but applicable knowledge that was useful to administrators. The Jiaqing emperor's pronouncements also focused more and more on what his officials did to promote proper customs and ameliorate the public discontent that many traced to poor administration since the final years of the Qianlong reign.

Just as the rise of Han Learning had been closely related to the Qianlong emperor's personal inclinations and the influence of high officials in the Hanlin Academy, so the beginnings of its decline can be traced to factionalist struggles at the Jiaqing court and in the civil examinations, and to the Jiaqing emperor himself.

Kang Youwei and New Text Studies

Despite evidential research efforts to concretize the aims and methods of learning, intellectual partisanship only increased in the 19th century. New Text studies became both intertwined and eventually thrown into conflict with the aims of Han Learning adherents. Kang Youwei believed that New Text studies had the capacity to disprove and overcome both Han and Song Learning, and to establish a new ideological consensus.

The *jiafa* system that supposedly existed in the Han dynasty also came to serve as a model for Qing dynasty "schools of learning" (*jiaxue* 家學). These "schools" were closely tied to family organizations and formed an integral part of the Qing intellectual scene. They demonstrated how the lineage orientation permeated both social structures

[269] Zhang Ruilong 張瑞龍, "Tianlijiao shijian yu Qing zhongye wenhua zhengce de zhuanbian: yi Jiaqing chao wei zhongxin de kaocha" 天理教事件與清中葉文化政策的轉變：以嘉慶朝為中心的考察 (The Tianli Sect Incident and the Transformation of Cultural Policy in the Mid-Qing: Research Concentrating on the Jiaqing Period), *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jindaishi yanjiu jikan* 71 (2011): 51-87.

and intellectual endeavor, and how these two aspects of the lineage orientation reinforced each other.[270] Han Learning did not remain a unified movement for long, but was soon divided into regional variants that were not always mutually compatible.

Elman described how Zhuang Cunyu 莊存與 (1719-1788) became the progenitor of Changzhou New Text studies in order to address problems caused by the Heshen affair at the Qianlong court.[271] The late Qianlong reign was weakened not only due to corruption around Heshen himself, but also because it was nearly impossible for literati officials to speak up against Heshen and accuse him of monopolizing access to the emperor. The reason for literati inaction was that factionalism had become a taboo topic during the 18th century, and to accuse the emperor of being controlled by factionalist enterprises in his own court would have amounted to an unforgivable attack on imperial authority.[272]

If any critique were to be voiced against Heshen's faction, it would have to be veiled in cultural clothing. Zhuang Cunyu found that Han Learning and evidential research lacked the potential to make a strong moral stand.[273] Interestingly, however, he did not search for moral support in Cheng-Zhu *daoxue*, but turned instead to philosophically potent New Text sources dating from the Western Han dynasty. He used the chronological precedence of New Text studies as an argument against the morally barren philology of Qing dynasty Han Learning. Zhuang Cunyu chose to rely on these Western Han sources despite knowing that they would not support the textual interpretations and moral values of Cheng-Zhu orthodoxy.[274]

Zhuang Cunyu's choice, while noteworthy, should not come as a complete surprise. The Qianlong emperor's demand for substantial learning, defined as a broader vision of the classical heritage, made it difficult for court scholars to rely exclusively on

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[270] Elman, *Classicism, Politics, and Kinship*, 6, 15.
[271] Elman, *Classicism, Politics, and Kinship*, 114.
[272] David S. Nivison, "Ho-shen and His Accusers: Ideology and Political Behavior in the Eighteenth Century," in *Confucianism in Action*, eds. David S. Nivison and Arthur F. Wright, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959), 232-233.
[273] That evidential research scholars nevertheless did write veiled criticism of the situation at the Qianlong court is evidenced by Qian Daxin's essay "Explaining the *Lü* hexagram" (*Lügua shuo* 履卦說)," discussed in chapter 5 of this dissertation.
[274] Elman, *Classicism, Politics, and Kinship*, 118.

Cheng-Zhu *daoxue* without the risk of appearing superficial and insincere. Having been a *Siku quanshu* compiler since 1773, moreover, Zhuang Cunyu was well acquainted with the ideological trends that guided the selection and editing process of this literary collection.[275] By drawing on Western Han sources, he gained access to a morally potent discourse, while at the same time showing himself to be a sincere man of learning.

Zhuang Cunyu's New Text teachings became an integral part of the Zhuang family's lineage education. His grandson, Zhuang Shoujia 莊綬甲 (1774-1828), traced New Text and Old Text versions of the *Shangshu* to separate intellectual lineages in the Western and Eastern Han respectively.[276] Song Xiangfeng 宋翔鳳 (1777-1860), the son of Zhuang Cunyu's niece, also worked to reconstruct Western Han *jiafa* traditions.[277] The assumption of a closed transmission that was available only to those who possessed the required technical expertise saturated New Text studies as much as it did the lineage-oriented research of Han Learning in general.

Relying heavily on the work of Liu Fenglu, Kang Youwei's 康有為 (1858-1927) *Xinxue weijing kao* 新學偽經考 (Forged Classics of Wang Mang's Interregnum) aimed to overcome the partisan struggle between Han and Song Learning by denying the truth claims of both.[278]

The so-called burning of the books during the Qin dynasty, Kang argued following Zhu Xi, had been limited to books circulating among the public, whereas all written works in the imperial library were preserved intact.[279] For personal profit and to support Wang Mang's usurpation, imperial librarian Liu Xin used his influential position as sole editor of the literary heritage to forge a whole literary tradition, thenceforth referred to as Old Text Learning, which claimed chronological precedence over the orally

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[275] Xu Liwang 徐立望, *Jia-Dao zhi ji Yangzhou Changzhou quyu wenhua bijiao yanjiu* 嘉道之際揚州常州區域文化比較研究 (Comparative Study of Yangzhou and Changzhou Culture During the Jiaqing-Daoguang Reigns) (Hangzhou: Zhejiang daxue chubanshe, 2007), 181.
[276] Elman, *Classicism, Politics, and Kinship*, 202.
[277] Elman, *Classicism, Politics, and Kinship*, 203.
[278] Kang Youwei 康有為 (1858-1927), *Xinxue weijing kao* 新學偽經考 (Forged Classics of Wang Mang's Interregnum), in *Xinxue weijing kao, Zheyunlei zhai congshu* 蟄雲雷齋叢書 (Collectanea from the Zheyunlei Studio), ed. Liu Shanhan [?] 劉善涵 (1867-1920) (Hunan[?]: 1897[?]), 1:3b.
[279] Kang Youwei, *Xinxue weijing kao*, 1.5a-6b.

transmitted teachings of the New Text tradition.[280] During the Eastern Han, Liu Xin's alleged forgeries were accepted as authentic pre-Qin teachings and received their final shape in the syncretic works of Zheng Xuan.[281]

To unravel this two thousand year old fraud, Kang Youwei formulated an interpretive principle that crystallized the lineage-oriented approach to knowledge and echoed the language used by Cheng Yi in the Northern Song. Kang Youwei's principle read: "Only when scholars know what is real can they distinguish what is false" (*xuezhe zhi qi zhen zhe, nai neng bian qi wei zhe* 學者知其真者，乃能辨其偽者).[282]

If accepted, the theory of Liu Xin's forgeries invalidated or put into question every conclusion that Qing evidential research scholars had reached based on Eastern Han sources.[283] Kang Youwei found additional ammunition in the negative assessments of evidential research methodology that came out of 19th century Han-Song Learning debates. These probably derived partly from Kang's readings of Cantonese scholars like Chen Li 陳澧 (1810-1882), whom he cited with some frequency for support even though Chen Li had been critical of New Text representatives like Liu Fenglu.[284]

One of the criticisms that Kang Youwei borrowed from his Cantonese predecessor was to say that Han Learning elevated the concrete over the abstract to an unnatural degree. When explaining Liu Xin's forgery of the *Zuozhuan*, for example, Kang Youwei wrote: "[Liu Xin thought] that since the *Gongyang* and *Guliang* [commentaries to the *Annals*] largely consisted of abstract claims, it would be possible to overshadow them with reference to concrete events, since men are more inclined to listen to concrete events than to abstract claims" (*yi Gong Gu duo xuyan ke yi shishi duo zhi, ren bi ting shishi er bu ting xuyan ye* 以公、穀多虛言可以實事奪之，人必聽實事而不聽虛言也).[285] Along the same lines, he ridiculed the evidential research slogan of

[280] Kang Youwei, *Xinxue weijing kao*, 1.3a-4a.
[281] Kang Youwei, *Xinxue weijing kao*, 1.1b.
[282] Kang Youwei, *Xinxue weijing kao*, 2.16a.
[283] Kang Youwei, *Xinxue weijing kao*, 2.1a.
[284] E. g. Kang Youwei, *Xinxue weijing kao,* 3a.54b; 3a.56b; 3a.57b; 5.8b.
[285] Kang Youwei, *Xinxue weijing kao*, 3a.48b.

"searching for truth in actual facts" (*shishi qiushi* 實事求是) as another product of Liu Xin's forgeries.[286]

Kang Youwei correctly traced the beginnings of Han Learning partisanship to the *Siku quanshu* project and its main editor Ji Yun, whom he compared directly to Liu Xin for the ways in which he employed the *Abstracts* to disparage Song Learning. In the same context, Kang also accused Dai Zhen of withholding information for the purpose of plagiarizing mathematical techniques.[287] In the eyes of Kang Youwei, men like Ji Yun and Dai Zhen relied on evidential research to usurp imperial orthodoxy, just as Liu Xin relied on his forged glossary *Erya* to canonize his Old Text forgeries. Liu Xin, Kang argued, had "forged this book [the *Erya*] so that he could rely on philological glosses to substitute orthodoxy" (*gu wei ci shu yu yi xungu dai zhengtong* 故偽此書欲以訓詁代正統).[288] From that day onwards, he lamented, Chinese classicism had been monopolized by the philologists.[289]

Kang Youwei argued that "classicism" was inherently political and that the pre-Qin notion of "classicists" (*ru* 儒) never referred to philologists, but had been closer in meaning to the names of dynasties (*guohao* 國號) in later history. He wrote:

> 凡所云儒者，皆與異教對舉而言。蓋孔子改制後，從其學者皆謂之儒。故儒者譬孔子之國號，如高祖之改國號為漢，太宗有天下之號為唐，藝祖有天下之號為宋，皆與異國人言之。至於臣民自言，則云皇朝、聖朝、本朝、國朝，人自明之，不待稱國號也。
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> The so-called classicist (*ru*) was always a mark of distinction as against other teachings. After Confucius' political reforms, his followers were all called classicists. In this sense, *Ru* may be considered Confucius' reign

[286] Kang Youwei, *Xinxue weijing kao*, 4.5b.
[287] Kang Youwei, *Xinxue weijing kao*, 3a.3b. For several other, generally inconclusive, debates surrounding Dai Zhen and plagiarism, see Hu Shi 胡適, "A Note on Ch'üan Tsu-Wang, Chao I-Ch'ing and Tai Chên: A Study of Independent Convergence in Research as Illustrated in Their Works on the *Shui-ching Zhu*," in *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period (1644-1912)*, ed. Arthur W. Hummel (Taipei: Ch'eng Wen Publishing Company, 1970), 970-982; John Allen Tucker, "Dai Zhen and the Japanese School of Ancient Learning," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 18 (1991): 411-440; Ori Sela, "Through the Prism of a Plagiarism Debate: Eighteenth through Twentieth-Century Sino-Japanese Intellectual Relations," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 74.4 (2013): 577-597.
[288] Kang Youwei, *Xinxue weijing kao*, 3b.7a.
[289] Kang Youwei, *Xinxue weijing kao*, 3b.8b.

> title, just as Liu Bang established the Han dynasty, Li Shimin established the Tang, and Zhao Kuangyin established the Song. These dynastic names were all used mainly when speaking to foreigners. As for its own officials and commoners, they spoke rather of "Our August Dynasty," "Our Sagely Dynasty," "Our Dynasty," "Our Land's Dynasty." Because people understood what was meant, there was no need to mention the dynastic name.[290]

Kang Youwei proceeded to describe a socio-political order before Liu Xin, when the Han recognized only Confucius' classicism as state ideology. "Education proceeded from one orthodoxy," he wrote, "so that there were no diverging opinions, no alternative doctrines, and all interpretations, textual versions, and written documents were unified in accordance thereto" (*jiao chu yu yi, ji wu yilun yi wu yixue, fan yili wenzi shuce mo bu tong yan* 教出於一，既無異論亦無異學，凡義理、文字、書冊莫不統焉).[291]

In compiling the *Qilüe* bibliography, however, Liu Xin had taken a pluralist approach by including the classicists as but one category among the various masters (*zhuzi* 諸子). To Kang this was equivalent to the national histories elevating foreign rulers to the level of a legitimate Chinese dynasty. The *Siku quanshu* editors, Kang noted, followed Liu Xin's lack of patriotism in classifying the classicist writings as only one alternative among many, and placed the category of philology (*xiaoxue* 小學) in direct relation to the *Classics*. Hidden behind a mask of impartiality, philology in both cases represented the partisan teachings of the editors themselves.[292]

Disunity and the Decline of the Qing Dynasty

Evidential research contributed to the development of modern technology and science in China, knowledge that was also part of the discourse on statecraft in the 19th century.[293]

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[290] Kang Youwei, *Xinxue weijing kao*, 3b.30b.
[291] Kang Youwei, *Xinxue weijing kao*, 3b.32a.
[292] Kang Youwei, *Xinxue weijing kao*, 3a.31a-35b.
[293] Elman, "From Pre-Modern Chinese Natural Studies 格致學 to Modern Science 科學 in China," in *Mapping Meanings: The Field of New Learning in Late Qing China*, eds. Michael Lackner and Natascha Vittinghoff, 25-74 (Leiden: Brill, 2004); Elman, *On Their Own Terms: Science in China, 1550-1900* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2005); and Elman, *A*

Given these continuous advances in technological fields, attempts to position Late Imperial China in global history must ask: if China and Europe were in many ways each other's equal in the 18th century, why did they seem so unequal during the 19th century conflicts?[294] By integrating intellectual partisanship and political factionalism with existent research on statecraft and technological development we can begin to answer such questions.

Philip Kuhn's study of local militarization during the Taiping Rebellion revealed the process by which local literati became involved in formally overseeing regional administration. Cantonese officialdom had already encouraged gentry-sponsored militias in the Guangzhou area, such as that involved in the 1841 *Sanyuanli* incident where gentry-led militia trapped a small British force just as a truce was being arranged.[295] In 1848, Xu Guangjin 徐廣縉 (1797-1869) was sent to re-assert state superiority over the Cantonese gentry, while at the same time dissuading a British attack. As social dislocation and banditry spread in the Guangzhou hinterland, however, local militia initiatives only grew more common.[296]

The *baojia* system was a case in point. In spite of a long-standing injunction against local gentry leading *baojia* organizations, when state officials attempted to use existing lineage structures by incorporating kinship groups with the *baojia* system, special posts called lineage headman (*zuzheng*) were established.[297] These developments eventually led to the *baojia* system being taken over by elite lineages, who consolidated their local governing powers.

The First and Second Opium Wars, and to an even greater extent the Taiping rebellion, made southern literati increasingly aware of internal and external military threats. Fujianese official Shen Baozhen 沈葆楨 (1820-1879), for example, considered

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Cultural History of Modern Science in China (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2006).

[294] Cf. Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

[295] Philip A. Kuhn, *Rebellion and Its Enemies in Late Imperial China: Militarization and Social Structure, 1796-1864* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1970), 54-57.

[296] Kuhn, *Rebellion and Its Enemies*, 57.

[297] Kuhn, "Local Self-Government Under the Republic: Problems of Control, Autonomy, and Mobilization," in *Conflict and Control in Late Imperial China*, eds. Frederic Wakeman, Jr. and Carolyn Grant (Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1975), 260.

the division between civil and military authority at prefectural and district levels to be one of the main weaknesses of Qing administration, and insisted that as long as civil officials had the responsibility to defend their cities, they ought to be given the means to do so. As Governor of Jiangxi province in the 1860s, Shen got into a heated conflict with then Governor-General of Liang-Jiang Zeng Guofan 曾國藩 (1811-1872) over the allocation of military funds to either support Zeng's army or to be used for the defense of Jiangxi, two needs that could not both be met financially.[298] While there was no question that both men were loyal to the imperial court, their clash represented a growing tension between the localities and the political center.

The Taiping rebellion turned this from a regional to an empire-wide concern, and when the court after 1860 allowed military leaders fighting the Taiping forces to undertake an initial adoption of western weaponry, the Manchu military elite grew wary of the edge in fighting technique acquired by regional forces as against the capital region's banner soldiers.[299]

During and following the Taiping rebellion, the delegation of power to individual officials, or even to men outside the bureaucracy, worked to speed up Chinese modernization and militarization. The inertia of the Manchu court empowered regional officials, who cooperated more closely with a broader segment of the educated elite. Once the Taiping rebels were pacified, regional leaders used their newfound power to initiate a technological modernization of China's military, and of its navy in particular. The relative technological success of the Self-Strengthening Movement suggests that the fall of China and the rise of Japan, which began in the 1890s, cannot be fully explained by any scientific backwardness on the part of China.[300]

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[298] David Pong, *Shen Pao-chen and China's Modernization in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
[299] Polachek, *The Inner Opium War*, 274-276.
[300] Meng Yue, "Hybrid Science *versus* Modernity: The Practice of the Jiangnan Arsenal, 1864-1897," *East Asian Science, Technology, and Medicine* 16 (1999): 13-52; Elman, "Naval Warfare and the Refraction of China's Self-Strengthening Reforms into Scientific and Technological Failure, 1865-1895," *Modern Asian Studies* 38.2 (2004): 283-326; and Elman, "The 'Rise' of Japan and the 'Fall' of China after 1895,", in *The Chinese Chameleon Revisited: From the Jesuits to Zhang Yimou*, ed. Zheng Yangwen (Newcaste, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), 143-171.

But while the delegation of power to military specialists and regional commanders aided China's technological modernization by mobilizing regional forces and speeding up production, the court's weakness and growing factionalism around prominent individuals turned into a decisive disadvantage in the Sino-French and Sino-Japanese wars, when the Qing court failed to control its bureaucracy and military by imposing top-down a unified command.

Rather than technological backwardness, therefore, the determining factor in China's decline appears to have been the rampant factionalism that followed a weakening of imperial authority. But how come then that a relative balance-of-power in Chinese politics had been maintained for long stretches of time during the Ming and Qing dynasties? The answer to this question, as we have seen, was the function of an emperor who remained aloof from factional struggle while steering contending parties in the same direction by upholding a broadly defined political consensus. Whenever the emperor withdrew from the political arena, as happened both in the Late Ming and in the 19th century, this balanced political system fell apart into violently contending factions.

Nearing the fall of imperial China, by 1900 any remnants of political and ideological unity gave way to interest parties and warlords, each aiming to appropriate political power for themselves and to enforce, by violence if need be, their own vision of the common good. In subsequent historiography, this period has not seldom been praised as one of liberation from imperial despotism, but viewed from a Late Qing perspective, such a violent crushing of the state by rivaling warlords and foreign intruders was an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe. From the perspective of most educated men at the time, rebellion and revolution represented the ultimate failure not only of the state, but also of the literati.

3.3 The Lineage Orientation in Evidential Research

The lineage orientation in Chinese intellectual history demanded that the validity of an idea be anchored in the past. This criterion had caused tension between Cheng-Zhu *daoxue* and its utilitarian Wuzhou/Jinhua branch, and was criticized by Wang Yangming

and later Wang Gen. Based on the Mencian claim that human nature is inherently good, Late Ming thinkers argued that knowledge of good and evil had to come from within each individual and could not be formulated in dogmatic terms. Wang Gen, in particular, preached that sagely wisdom ought to be open and accessible to everyone.

In Wang Yangming's thought, a lack of external moral standards coupled with the difficulty to prove if innate knowledge had been attained (*zhi liang zhi* 致良知) paved the way for attitudes of moral relativism. This lack of reliable methods for validating knowledge was one of many causes for the appearance during the Qing dynasty of a renewed emphasis on the *Classics* as vessels for the sage-authors' original intentions. While the *Classics* had always been important in Song dynasty *daoxue*, and to a lesser extent even for Wang Yangming, it was not until the Ming-Qing transition and especially during the 18th century, that texts and their authors became the single most important scholarly problem.[301]

The moral endeavor of transmitting the Way was transferred from *daoxue* philosophy into the practice of evidential research.[302] Differences aside, debates among evidential research scholars over the authenticity of parts of the classical canon retained a structure of thought and validation strongly reminiscent of that used by their *daoxue* predecessors. The lineage-oriented notion of a transmission of the Way (*daotong*) was transformed and transferred into the pursuit of an original text, lost but recoverable by tracing lineages of textual transmission (*jiafa* 家法) that had been interrupted once during the Qin dynasty and again over the course of the Song and Ming.[303]

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[301] The tension between textually centered and non-textually centered learning has been discussed in Yü Ying-shih, "Some Preliminary Observations on the Rise of Ch'ing Confucian Intellectualism," *Tsing-hua Journal of Chinese Studies, New Series* 11.1-2 (1975): 105-144.
[302] Peterson, *Bitter Gourd*, 154.
[303] Qian Mu, "Hanxue yu Songxue" 漢學與宋學 (Han Learning and Song Learning), *Zhongguo xueshu sixiang shi luncong (ba)* 中國學術思想史論叢（八） (Essays on Chinese Intellectual History, Eight), vol. 22 of *Qian Binsi xiansheng quanji*, 571-580 (Taipei: Lianjing chuban gongsi, 1998).

Daotong and Jiafa: the Sage-Author in Evidential Research

The lineage orientation during the Song-Ming dynasties influenced not only social institutions, but was also a phenomenon in Chinese intellectual history. In both contexts it served to simultaneously promote unity among those associated with the lineage and systematically exclude outsiders. In Cheng-Zhu *daoxue*, this was expressed in the promotion of a uniform value system (*yi daode* 一道德*; ding yu yi* 定於一) that mimicked the intended function of Wang Anshi's failed reform policies. In this sense, the notion of unilinear transmission that characterized the lineage orientation was both a historical fact and a structure of thought and argument.[304]

The last chapter of the *Jinsi lu* 近思錄 (Reflections on Things at Hand) read as a genealogy of sages and effected doctrinal exclusion. From the 13th century onwards it became the model for other *daoxue* anthologies that reproduced its lineage-oriented logic. In this manner, the Confucian past was construed as a patrilinear descent line (*zong*) of sages and worthies who transmitted (*chuan* 傳) the Way.[305] These *daoxue* genealogies both created a problem and provided its solution: they argued that the sages' wisdom had been lost due to a rupture (*jue* 絕) in transmission, creating the problem of how to recover its remote origin. The solution was to employ genealogical methods to separate the main lineage from collateral lines, elevating the former as sole bearer of the true transmission of the Way.

The lineage orientation in *daoxue* thus began from a notion of rupture.[306] It emerged from the seminal idea of a broken line of transmission that had to be reconstructed. The aim of intellectual endeavor was to recover an authentic origin—a way of life, an idea, interpretation, or text—often referred to by Song thinkers as

[304] Yü Ying-shih has similarly referred to *daotong* as an "ideological structure" (*yili xingtai* 義理形態). See Yü, "Qian Mu yu xin rujia" 錢穆與新儒家 (Qian Mu and New Confucianism), *Zhongguo wenhua* 6 (1992): 16.
[305] Wilson, *Genealogy of the Way*, 43-44.
[306] Cf. Bol, "Neo-Confucianism and Local Society," 246.

"original meaning" (*benyi* 本義). In Qing evidential research, a similar notion of authentic origin was referred to as the "ancient meaning" (*guyi* 古義).

These two concepts of authenticity shared a set of defining characteristics. Firstly, they represented something universally valid and constant (*chang* 常). Secondly, they originated (*ben* 本) in the past and were transmitted (*chuan*) to the present. Thirdly, the notion of a rupture (*jue*) worked in each to enhance their ideological and exclusivist character. Once lost, the repossession of the sages' wisdom required mastery of a highly specialized methodology, and those who wished to know it had to prove themselves worthy to the few who acted as its guardians.

The notions of "original meaning" and "ancient meaning" in Cheng-Zhu *daoxue* and Qing dynasty Han Learning respectively may be compared to a building designed by the ancient sage in the role of architect. The received *Classics* were its timeworn ruins, from which the task of reconstruction began. Cheng-Zhu *daoxue* aimed to tap into the constant flow of universal Coherence, thereby aligning their minds with that of the sage-as-architect. Staring intensely and single-mindedly at the ruins, they hoped to divine the appearance of the original structure.

In contrast, evidential research scholars seldom spoke of attaining sagehood, but imagined themselves as construction workers—framers, roofers, and carpenters. Their task was to unearth and pile up the fallen building blocks (textual compilation, *jiyi* 輯佚), examining the crevices and fitting blocks together. This was no longer the task of one man, but of many hands working together. Consequently, while imagining oneself as the architect involved learning to think like a sage, the task of the workers was quite different and required a wholly different skillset.

This shift from *daotong* to *jiafa* was a philological turn that involved myriad changes in the way learning was pursued, many of which have been thoroughly discussed by cultural and intellectual historians.[307] While the notion of *daotong* claimed direct access to the mind of the sage, the *jiafa* approach in evidential research claimed only indirect access to authorial intention via transmitted texts and commentarial lineages. To

[307] Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology: Intellectual and Social Aspects of Change in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge, Mass: Council on East Asian Studies, 1984). See also the discussion of a "philological revolution" in Ori Sela, "Qian Daxin (1728-1804)."

capture the weight and meaning of the concept of author in this Qing dynasty context, I refer to it in the following as the "sage-author."[308]

The sage-author in Chinese classical studies was seldom conceived of as an "individual," and different sage-authors were largely substitutable for each other. This explains why the individual characteristics of the sage-authors as historical personages were seldom discussed. For example, the question by what evidence we know that King Wen had been "humane" (*ren*) was never asked by evidential research scholars.[309] The importance of King Wen as an historical individual was subordinated to his role as sage-author.

The sage-author defined the limits within which the classical texts could be understood, but he was also in turn defined by pre-established interpretations of those texts. In other words, the function of commentarial lineages was to narrow the scope of what the sage-authors could represent.[310] Keeping in mind this narrow definition of authorship, textual research was justifiable insofar as it contributed to the recovery of the sage-author's intention. This was the basis for arguments that any significance (*yili* 義理) that the *Classics* may hold for the present had to be based on the correct exegesis (*xungu* 訓詁) of the text.

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[308] My usage of "sage-authors" may be fruitfully compared with Lin Ching-chang's "fellowship of sages" (*shengren jituan* 聖人集團). Members of this "fellowship" included sages like Fuxi 伏羲, Yao 堯, Shun 舜, Yu 禹, Tang 湯, Wen Wang 文王, Wu Wang 武王, Zhou Gong 周公, and Kongzi 孔子. It also extended to relatives and acquaintances of the sages, such Zuoqiu Ming 左丘明, Kongji 孔伋, Zi Xia 子夏, Zi Gong 子貢, Gongsun Nizi 公孫尼子, etc. The main criterion for inclusion in this fellowship was attributed authorship of one or several pre-Qin *Classics*. See Lin Ching-chang, "Dui Yang, Liu liang xiansheng wenping de huiying" 對楊、劉兩先生文評的回應 (Reply to the Criticism of Mr. Yang and Mr. Liu), *Zhongguo wenzhe yanjiu tongxun* 16.3 (2006): 157.

[309] Cf. Hu Shi, "Gushi taolun de duhougan" 古史討論的讀後感 (Thoughts on Reading the Discussion on Ancient History), vol. 1 of *Gushibian* 古史辨 (Debates on Ancient History), ed. Gu Jiegang (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1982), 195.

[310] The sage-author was thus very different from the tyrannical author pronounced dead by Barthes, for it was the intellectual lineage, rather than the author as such, that worked as the "principle of thrift" in the text. Cf. Roland Barthes, "Authors and Writers," in *A Barthes Reader*, ed. Susan Sontag (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 185-193; and Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?" in *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism*, ed. Josué V. Harari (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1979), 159.

Authenticity in Evidential Research

Just as the notion of the author in Chinese classicism differed from its modern Western counterpart, the means for determining authenticity differed from those that developed in modern European society.[311] This was true with regard to a European notion of authenticity as defined by the author's relative sincerity in expressing his individuality, but also as compared to the standards used by European sinologists, who focused primarily on establishing the exact dating of written works.

A critical attitude to the authenticity of ancient texts existed in China since the Han dynasty and came in fashion during the Song, but it was not until around the Ming-Qing transition that philological methods were formulated and applied in a systematic manner.[312] Yao Jiheng's 姚際恆 (ca. 1647-1715) *Gujin weishu kao* 古今僞書考 (Examination of Spurious Books Past and Present), for example, dealt exclusively with issues of authenticity in ancient Chinese texts,[313] and the methodology of Chinese authenticity studies throughout the Qing and Republican periods did not significantly depart from the principles of verification in Yao Jiheng's work.[314] In a 1929 article, the Swedish sinologist Bernhard Karlgren (1889-1978) critically summarized nine Chinese criteria of authenticity as sifted from Chinese scholarly writings of the Tang dynasty and onwards, as follows:

1. By historical data in the text is fixed a terminus ante quem non.

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[311] Cf. On-Cho Ng, "The Epochal Concept of 'Early Modernity' and the Intellectual History of Late Imperial China," *Journal of World History* 14.1 (2003): 37-61.

[312] Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873-1929), *Zhongguo jin sanbai nian xueshu shi* 中國近三百年學術史(Chinese Intellectual History of the Past 300 Years), in *Liang Qichao lun qingxueshi erzhong* 梁启超论清学史二种 (Liang Qichao on the History of Qing Learning), ed. Zhu Weizheng 朱维铮 (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 1985), 385.

[313] Yao Jiheng, *Gujin weishu kao* 古今僞書考(Examination of Spurious Works Past and Present), vol. 1 of *Guji kaobian congkan* 古籍考辨叢刊 (Collection of Works Discussing the Authenticity of Ancient Texts), ed. Gu Jiegang (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1955), 265-314.

[314] The *Gujin weishu kao* did not provide generalized principles as later studies did, but actual methodological differences are negligible. Cf. Liang Qichao, "*Gushu zhenwei ji qi niandai*" 古書真僞及其年代 (The Veracity and Dating of Old Texts), vol. 24 of *Yinbingshi heji* 飲冰室合集 (Collected Works from the Yinbing Studio) (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1936).

2. Quotations in ancient books [...] are not to be found in the modern version of this Chou [Zhou] text; then the latter is spurious.
3. The contents of the work are 淺陋 *ts'ien lou* "shallow and vulgar"; hence the work must be a forgery.
4. The literary style of the work does not give the impression of its being ancient; therefore the work is spurious.
5. The data given by later editors or commentators about *the author* of the work can be shown to be false; hence *the work* is a fraud!
6. The data about the handing down of the text, pieced together from various sources, shows such gaps that one must suspect a late forgery.
7. The number of sections (*p'ien* 篇) or books (*küan* 卷) is not the same in the various old sources, especially catalogues; therefore the work has been tampered with, added to or even concocted.
8. The text under examination quotes a text that is proved and known to be spurious; hence it is spurious itself.
9. The text contains various passages that are to be found in other ancient works; therefore it is a later production, made up of those passages with addition of spurious matter.[315]

Karlgren was highly critical of the methodology that Chinese scholars used to establish authenticity, but upon closer examination it is clear that the differences in method stemmed from a much more profound disagreement regarding the meaning of "authenticity" and the aims of philological inquiry. While Qing dynasty scholars used various supportive principles for verification based on textual evidence, the relative authenticity (*zhenwei* 真偽) of a written work was ultimately settled by showing whether it had a direct connection to the sage-authors.[316] Therefore, Yao Jiheng stated that a work

[315] Bernhard Karlgren, "The Authenticity of Ancient Chinese Texts," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 1 (1929): 165-183.
[316] Maspero argued that Western sinologists define matters of authenticity by means of dating the text itself, whereas Chinese scholars focus on determining authorship. This is confirmed by modern scholars. See respectively Henri Maspero, "[Review of] Bernhard Karlgren, 'The Authenticity of Ancient Chinese Texts'," *Journal Asiatique* 222 (1933): 38; and Zheng Liangshu

attributed to the wrong author "even if not a spurious work, is actually the same as its being so" (*sui fei weishu er shi tong yu weishu ye* 雖非偽書而實同於偽書也).[317]

This author-focused approach to textual authenticity that Karlgren found so absurd (see number 5 above) made sense in evidential research because misattribution meant that the text lost all value as evidence in the pursuit of authorial intention.[318] Because authorial intention was so central in the search for authenticity, furthermore, textual content introduced by factors external to the narrowly defined figure of the sage-author—other individuals or impersonal forces of culture or chance—were never considered authentic parts of the original text.[319] In this regard, Qing scholars went further than Zhu Xi ever had in purging the *Classics* of any influence from the commentarial tradition.[320]

Qing evidential research scholars agreed with each other that the sage-author's intention could be recovered only if the original texts of the *Classics* were first reconstructed. This assumption led to the fruitful application of lineage-oriented methodology on various textual levels. For example, conflicting versions of what otherwise appeared to be the same narrative were reduced to a single edited version, predominantly by means of exclusion rather than synthesis, and auxiliary evidence was adduced to disprove the authenticity of one version in favor of another. Similarly, on a more detailed textual level, the theory of loan characters was applied to graphical variants to determine once and for all the original, correct character (*zhengzi* 正字).

Because authenticity was determined with reference to a flawless sage-author, no inconsistencies or plurality of meaning could exist in the *Classics*. When such characteristics were identified they turned into evidence of inauthenticity, forgery, or

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鄭良樹, *Guji bianwei xue* 古籍辨偽學 (Study of Authenticity in Ancient Texts) (Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1986), 11.

[317] Yao, *Gujin weishu kao*, 277.

[318] Lin Ching-chang, "Zhongguo jingxueshi shang de huigui yuandian yundong" 中國經學史上的回歸原典運動 (The Return to Sources Movement in Chinese Classicism), *Zhongguo wenhua* 30 (2009): 2.

[319] In contrast to modern approaches, see Raji C. Steineck and Christian Schwermann, "Introduction" to *That Wonderful Composite Called Author: Authorship in East Asian Literatures from the Beginnings to the Seventeenth Century*, eds. Schwermann and Steineck (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 1-29.

[320] Qian Mu, *Zhuzi xin xue'an*, 187.

interpolation. In this sense, too, the use of "authenticity" (*zhen*) by evidential research scholars perpetuated Cheng-Zhu notions of authenticity (*zhen*) and sincerity (*cheng*) as single-minded intention in opposition to duplicity, inconsistency, and falsity (*wei*). The case of the *Zuozhuan* exemplifies well this Qing dynasty approach to authenticity studies and how it differed from the expectations of Western sinologists.

Questioning the Authenticity of the Zuozhuan

Much like the Old Text *Shangshu* debate during the 18th century, the authenticity of the *Zuozhuan* 左傳 (Zuo's Commentary to the *Annals*) was hotly disputed in the 19th century. According to the *Siku quanshu* editors, doubt in the identity of *Zuozhuan*'s author began with Zhao Kuang 趙匡 (8th c.) in the Tang dynasty, who argued that the structure and style of the *Zuozhuan* was so different from the *Guoyu* 國語 (Discourses of the States) that the two works could not possibly have been written by the same author. And since the *Shiji* stated that Zuo Qiuming 左丘明 wrote the *Guoyu*, Liu Xiang could not be right in also attributing the *Zuozhuan* to him.[321] Subsequently, Huang Zhen 黃震 (1213-1280) noticed numerous discrepancies between the *Annals* and the *Zuozhuan*, and Luo Bi 羅璧 (13th c.) argued that *Zuozhuan* and the *Annals* had originally been isolated works and only later combined by Liu Xin 劉歆 (ca. 53 B.C.-A.D. 23) as a *Classic* with its commentary.[322]

Changzhou scholar Liu Fenglu's 劉逢祿 (1776-1829) *Zuoshi Chunqiu kaozheng* 左氏春秋考證 (Evidential Analysis of the *Zuoshi Chunqiu*) marked a turn in *Zuozhuan* studies.[323] Following Luo Bi, Liu Fenglu held that the *Annals* was not primarily a

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[321] Ji Yun et al. eds., *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* 四庫全書總目提要 (An Annotated Catalogue to the Imperial Library) (Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1933), 515. For Zhao's argument, see e.g. Zhang Xincheng 張心澂, *Weishu tongkao* 僞書通考 (A Comprehensive Examination of Spurious Books), vol. 1 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1957), 419-21.
[322] Zhang, *Weishu tongkao*, 423.
[323] Liu Fenglu 劉逢祿, *Zuoshi Chunqiu kaozheng* 左氏春秋考證 (Evidential Analysis of the *Zuoshi Chunqiu*), vol. 1 of *Guji kaobian congkan*, ed. Gu Jiegang (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1955), 557-604.

historical work and therefore the event-focused *Zuozhuan* could not be a commentary to it.[324] Moreover, the dating and interpretation of historical events in the *Zuozhuan* was "wrong" when compared to the *Annals* or the *Shiji*. Because Sima Qian allegedly consulted the *Zuozhuan* when composing the *Shiji*, discrepancies between the two works must mean that the original *Zuozhuan* seen by Sima Qian had later been revised, and the blame for these revisions landed on Liu Xin, who was suspected of extensive interpolations.[325] According to the *Zuoshi chunqiu kaozheng*, Liu Xin's political motive for interpolating the *Zuozhuan* was tied to the usurpation and interregnum of Wang Mang 王莽 (45 B.C.-A.D. 23).[326]

Inconsistencies in the formal features of the text was interpreted as careless interpolation. For example, when the *Zuozhuan* narrated two events that occurred during autumn of the same year and mentioned twice, once for each event, that it was autumn, Liu Fenglu took the breach of textual economy as evidence of cut-and-paste work.[327] Other examples were incorrect usage of taboo characters, anachronistic methods of noting time, references to later events, quotations from later texts, and misused terms of address. Liu Fenglu also identified a term, "enlightened ruler" (*mingzhu* 明主), that he thought was not yet coined by the *Zuozhuan*'s time of writing.[328]

Looking back at Liu Fenglu's work from a 20th century sinological perspective, Henri Maspero criticized the *Zuoshi chunqiu kaozheng* for establishing a "cercle vicieux" to automatically reject any evidence contradicting the initial hypothesis.[329] Bernhard Karlgren also wrote two articles on the authenticity of the *Zuozhuan*, one of them appearing before and one roughly simultaneously with Maspero's. In his first article, Karlgren avoided Liu Fenglu's arguments by relegating the question of authorship to a secondary position, focusing instead on determining whether the text was a pre-Qin

[324] Liu, *Zuoshi Chunqiu kaozheng*, 598.
[325] Liu, *Zuoshi Chunqiu kaozheng*, 565-66. On Liu Fenglu's study of the *Zuozhuan*, see also Elman, *Classicism, Politics, and Kinship*, 246-250.
[326] Liu, *Zuoshi Chunqiu kaozheng*, 597.
[327] Liu, *Zuoshi Chunqiu kaozheng*, 569.
[328] Liu, *Zuoshi Chunqiu kaozheng*, 583.
[329] Maspero, "La composition et la date du Tso tchouan," *Mélanges Chinois et Bouddhiques* 1 (1931-32): 142.

work.[330] He performed a linguistic examination of the text that stressed the use of certain grammatical particles, and compared the results to those of similar investigations of more securely dated texts.[331] Karlgren further argued that this method could be used to determine whether the *Zuozhuan* originated from the same dialectal area as Confucius' school, which might help determine its connection to the *Annals*.[332] His conclusion was that the *Zuozhuan* maintained a pre-Qin usage of grammatical particles that differed from all texts that had been subject to a 3rd century standardization of the literary language. It was inconceivable, Karlgren held, that a forger should have applied a consistent use of language that differed from all contemporaneous texts. In his second article on the topic, Karlgren proved the same conclusions by way of philological, as opposed to linguistic, evidence.[333]

As Maspero noted, however, it was primarily a difference in research questions and aims that made Liu Fenglu's methodology for determining authenticity unconvincing in the eyes of 20th century sinologists.[334] Comparing his work to those of Maspero and Karlgren, therefore, places in relief the characteristic focus on sage-authors and their intentions in Qing authenticity studies.

Lexicological Consistency, Interpretive Coherence, and Precision

The requirement of intra- and intertextual consistency (*tong* 通) with regard to the interpretation of words and sentences in pre-Qin *Classics* was a methodological pillar of Qing evidential research. The difficulties its practitioners encountered when employing

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[330] Karlgren, *On the Authenticity and Nature of the Tso Chuan* (Göteborg: Elanders boktryckeri, 1926), 4.
[331] Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (1613-1682) in an entry of his *Rizhilu* 日知錄 (Record of Learning Gained Day by Day) similarly noted differences in the usage of grammatical particles, *si* 斯 and *ci* 此 in the sense of 'this', between the *Analects* and the *Liji*, reaching the same general conclusion as Karlgren. See Gu Yanwu auth., Huang Rucheng 黃汝成 ed., *Rizhilu jishi* 日知錄集釋 (Collected Commentaries on the *Rizhilu*) (Beijing: Huashan wenyi chubanshe, 1990), 274-75.
[332] The theory of dialectal variations in pre-Qin texts was criticized in Maspero, "[Review]," 45-48.
[333] Bernhard Karlgren, "The Early History of the Chou Li [Zhou Li] and Tso Chuan [Zuozhuan] Texts," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 3 (1931): 1-59.
[334] Henri Maspero, "[Review]," 38.

this assumption became an impetus for the development of interpretive techniques that would today be associated with the scientific discipline of historical linguistics.[335]

In many ways, the evidential research focus on consistency paralleled the emphasis on coherence in Cheng-Zhu *daoxue*. In *daoxue* thought, the cosmos was made up of layers upon layers of coherent "envelopes," where each "thing" in the world had its own particular coherence, yet found itself enclosed, ultimately, by an all-encompassing heavenly Coherence (*tianli*). Similarly, while characters, words, and phrases in evidential research all carried their separate meanings, the significance of the particular was always determined in relation to a larger whole of authorial intention.[336]

The difficulties of achieving strict lexicological consistency led to the development of a theory about so-called loan characters. This theory posited that, at some point in time, two different characters had carried identical pronunciations and that they may therefore have substituted for each other in the composition of written texts. This assumption provided a methodological justification for editing received texts within given limits, and enabled researchers to eliminate certain characters that refused to fit into a given system of lexicological coherence. Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764-1849) wrote:

> 言由音聯，音在字前，聯音以為言，造字以赴音，音簡而字繁，得其簡者以通之，此聲韻文字訓詁之要也。
> Speech is a series of sounds, and sounds precede written characters in time. Men string together sounds to form speech, and create written characters as vehicles for sounds. Because sounds are few and simple, while characters are many and complex, it is the very essence of philology to grasp the few and simple, so as to make the reading coherent.[337]

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[335] On the notion of *tong* in Qing evidential research, see Dennis C.H. Cheng, "Inter-Explanation of the Classics: Qing Scholars' Methods for Interpreting the Five Classics," in *Interpretation and Intellectual Change: Chinese Hermeneutics in Historical Perspective*, ed. Ching-I Tu (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2005), 191-204.

[336] Dai Zhen summarized the principle, holding that "In order to be sure about one character's meaning, its interpretation has to fit throughout all the *Classics* and be based on paleographic principles" (*zhi yi zi zhi yi, dang guan qunjing, ranhou wei ding* 知一字之義，當貫群經、本六書，然後為定). Quoted from Yü Ying-shih, *Lun Dai Zhen yu Zhang Xuecheng* 論戴震與章學誠 (On Dai Zhen and Zhang Xuecheng) (Beijing: Shenghuo, Dushu, Xinzhi Sanlian shudian, 2000), 98.

[337] Ruan Yuan, *Yanjingshi ji* 揅經室集 (Collected Works from the Yanjing Studio) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1993), 124-125.

This was a concise description of loan character theory, including a statement of its ultimate aim in the practice of textual interpretation. In evidential research, the task of establishing interpretive coherence usually took precedence over the investigation of individual words and characters. And while the notion of loan characters is still used in the study of ancient Chinese texts today, its wide application as a kind of Rosetta stone in Qing evidential research has been rightly criticized. It was with reference to a specialized methodology and technically intricate theories like these that evidential research scholars claimed to transcend their own inclinations, rid themselves of values and assumptions, and produce flawlessly coherent interpretations that supported a single and seemingly inevitable meaning of each character with an accumulation of "auxiliary evidence" (*zuozheng* 左證).

Precision as the antipode of ambiguity became another standard of verification in evidential research. Since the intention of its sage-author was the basis for a text's meaning, and the sage could not be self-contradictory, it was assumed that there must have existed a precise and stable original of the classical text, despite the many versions and adaptations of it that were available to the researcher. Exactitude became a requirement for textual reconstruction to qualify as an expression of authorial intent, and the scholar's task was to reconstitute the original text with as high a degree of precision as possible. In his work on the *Shangshu*, for example, Jiang Sheng 江聲 (1721-1799) went so far as to imitate the calligraphy of pre-Qin writing.[338]

Therefore, the ideals of precision and consistency lay at the core of evidential research methodology. As a great patron of evidential research, the Qianlong emperor laid down the final judgment on this issue when he said: "When investigating the *Classics* and antiquity one must pursue correctness" (*yu kaojing jigu yi bi qiu qi zhidang* 於考經稽古，益必求其至當).[339] This was not only an exhortation to take care when

[338] Jiang Sheng, *Shangshu jizhu yinshu* 尚書集注音疏 (The *Shangshu* with commentaries, pronunciations, and subcommentary), vol. 44 of *Xuxiu siku quanshu* 續修四庫全書 (Sequel to the *Siku quanshu*) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1994-2002).
[339] Qianlong, "Jing qing Wei zhuo ji shi," in *Yuzhi wen san ji*, vol. 1 of *Qing Gaozong yuzhi shiwen quanji*, 14.3b-4a.

interpreting history, but also an imperial affirmation of evidential research and its aim to achieve complete consensus and unity by overcoming all ambiguity in textual interpretation.

PART II

The Critics

The characteristics of evidential research methodology discussed in the previous chapter—authorship, authenticity, and precision—were products of a philological turn within the framework of a lineage orientation. The following chapters discuss three well-known scholars in the 19th and early 20th centuries, who criticized the underlying assumptions of Qing evidential research. These scholars did not form a "school" in any sense of the word, and while they read each other's work, there is no reason to make an argument for influence between them. Nevertheless, by reading them side by side it becomes evident how they all reacted to the phenomenon that I have called a lineage orientation in Chinese cultural history.

For all its faults, the lineage orientation filled an important function of promoting unity and consensus in the Chinese intellectual arena. Consequently, the criticism and abandonment of lineage-oriented assumptions and a concomitant endorsement of pluralism in education, scholarship, and politics engendered the problem of how to establish necessary degrees of consensus and unity without recourse to universalizing arguments. Chinese thinkers unwilling or unable to accept the methodological framework of a lineage orientation sought new ways to establish unity, while simultaneously recognizing and embracing the realities of a pluralist world.

CHAPTER 4: FANG DONGSHU

Fang Dongshu 方東樹 (1772-1851) was a native of Tongcheng county in Anhui province. In his early twenties, he studied for some time under Yao Nai 姚鼐 (1731-1815) at the Zhongshan Academy (*Zhongshan shuyuan* 鍾山書院) in Nanjing, Jiangsu. He participated ten times in the civil examinations, but even with his last attempt in 1828 never attained higher degrees or official position. At an age of 48 *sui*, from 1819 he worked for several years as a teacher in Guangdong and was supervised by Ruan Yuan while contributing to the compilation of the *Comprehensive Gazetteer of Guangdong* (*Guangdong tongzhi* 廣東通志). But Fang Dongshu did not adapt well to his new geographical surroundings, being especially pestered by the climate in Guangdong and mosquitoes that left him restless through the nights. The problem was so serious that he wrote a short essay on the topic of how to slap a mosquito.[340]

At this time, Fang Dongshu felt himself to be at the end of his tether. In a letter to Yao Ying 姚瑩 (1785-1853) that he probably wrote in 1819 around the time when the latter first took up an official post on Taiwan, Fang looked back on his own life and saw nothing but years of illness and poverty, having achieved no fame or success of any kind. As a youth in Tongcheng he had been trained in archaic prose (*guwen* 古文) and was a part of that literary circle. He chose to give up literary pursuits after discovering the profundity of the *Classics* and the *Four Books*, feeling that he could relate more closely to the intimate writings of *daoxue* thinkers like Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming. But with evidential research quickly on the rise, his devotion to didacticism brought him little attention.[341] He wrote:

> 其後十八九時讀孟子書，憮然悟吾學之更有大者切者，遂屏文章不為，性喜莊老及程朱陸王諸賢書，讀之若其言皆如吾心之所發者，以觀近時人文字輒見其踳駁謬盭，為不當意。既嗜好不侔，棄俗自尚，故久困不能自伸，家貧無以供菽水給衣食之奉，奔走求所入為養，二十餘

[340] Fang Dongshu, *Yiweixuan wenji* 儀衛軒文集 (Collected Works from the Yiwei Studio) (1868 ed.), 2.9a-b.
[341] Fang, "Da Yao Shifu shu" 答姚石甫書 (Letter in Response to Yao Ying), in *Yiweixuan wenji*, 7.12b-17a.

年顛沛失蕩，所至輒窮憂患疾病，日與死迫，羈旅異地，每遇良辰會節，瞻望家園，凶祥莫卜，中夜推枕起歎，戚然不知涕之流落也。

Then at eighteen or nineteen I read the *Mencius*. Regretting my past activities, I realized there were greater and more intimate things to learn. Consequently, I stopped writing literary compositions. I had a natural predilection for the *Zhuangzi* and the *Laozi*, along with the writings of worthies like Cheng-Zhu and Lu-Wang, so that when reading them it felt like their words came from my own heart. From such a vantage point, the writings of my contemporaries seemed confused and mistaken, and left me disappointed.

Since my interests differed from theirs, I arrogantly left the world behind, and for that reason my career remained unsuccessful. My family was so poor that I could not provide even the necessities of food, drink, and clothing. Constantly on the road and in search for someplace that could provide for me, I spent twenty years lost in hardships. Wherever I went, I was troubled by worries and sickness, each day on the brink of death. Travelling in distant regions, on each auspicious day and celebration I longed for home. Never knowing how things would work out, I would push away my pillow in the middle of the night, rise and heave a deep sigh. In my anguish, I did not even notice I was shedding tears.[342]

In the mid-1820s, Fang Dongshu authored his subsequently famous work on the defects of evidential research and Han Learning—the *Hanxue shangdui* 漢學商兌 (Critique of Han Learning). The preface to this work was composed in 1826, but the book had probably been finished or nearly finished a few years earlier.[343] Fang Dongshu wrote a letter to Ruan Yuan where he conceded that the practice of evidential research had led to incomparable achievements in specialized fields.[344] But with its extreme popularity and the

[342] Fang, *Yiweixuan wenji*, 7.14a-b.

[343] Qian Mu, *Zhongguo jin sanbai nian xueshu shi*, 670; Chen Xiaohong 陳曉紅, "Fang Dongshu zhushu kaolue" 方東樹著述考略 (Works by Fang Dongshu), *Guji zhengli yanjiu xuekan* 3 (2010): 21-22.

[344] Fang, "Shang Ruan Yuntai gongbao shu"上阮芸台宮保書 (Letter to Ruan Yuan), in *Yiweixuan wenji*, 7.1b. For Fang's positive evaluation of such achievements in specialized learning, see also Fang, "Fu Luo Yuechuan taishou shu" 復羅月川太守書 (Letter in Response to District Magistrate Luo Hanzhang), in *Yiweixuan wenji*, 7.5a-5b. Among scholars famous in evidential research circles, Fang particularly elevated Wang Yinglin 王應麟 (1223-1296) and Gu Yanwu. See Fang, "Qianqiu zhaji shu hou" 潛邱箚記書後 (Upon Reading Yan Ruoqu's *Qianqiu zhaji*), in *Yiweixuan wenji*, 6.2a.

sheer quantity of results that the movement produced, he argued, there were inevitably many errors and weaknesses that waited to be exposed. Fang Dongshu turned to Ruan Yuan because he thought the latter capable of taking a balanced stand to correct the excesses of evidential research before its flaws turned into an inevitable trend with repercussions in academic and social spheres.[345]

In this manner, Fang Dongshu consciously and actively sought a highly positioned supporter of his ideas. Ruan Yuan, however, was apparently not interested in supporting his cause. In a letter to Luo Hanzhang 羅含章 (1763-1832), founder of the Yangcheng Academy, Fang wrote:

> 東樹不揣固陋，嘗欲立說以辨其妄，而材卑學落，地賤言輕，思得一二大人君子在上位者為人望所屬，庶幾足以震蕩海內，開闔風氣，使偏宕卓犖之士悉轉移而歸之正學。乃求之當塗居盛位者，或以刑政簿書為急而無暇文教也。幸而有之，則又專主於向所謂漢學者。
> Not taking into account my own ignorance, I once wrote to expose the mistakes [of Han Learning]. But my abilities and learning are limited, and speaking from a lowly place my words weigh lightly. Therefore, I wish to convince one or two great gentlemen in high position, whom people look up to and who would be able to stir up the realm and change the trends. Then one could make all those who are misled yet brilliant turn around to orthodoxy. I have searched for such men among those in high office that I come across, but most of them are busy with allegations or official documents and have no time for cultural matters. When I have nevertheless been fortunate enough to find one, they only busy themselves with so-called Han Learning.[346]

The final part of this passage was an unmistakable reference to Ruan Yuan. The movement of Han Learning, Fang told Luo Hanzhang, gained popularity after Hui Dong and Dai Zhen when being promoted by men in high official position, such as Zhu Yun 朱筠 (1729-1781), Zhu Gui 朱珪 (1731-1806), Ji Yun, Shao Jinhan 邵晉涵 (1743-1796), Qian Daxin, Wang Niansun 王念孫 (1744-1832), Wang Chang 王昶 (1724-1806), and Lu Wenchao 盧文弨 (1717-1796). These men were all exceptional talents, but once popularized on a larger scale

[345] Fang Dongshu, *Yiweixuan wenji*, 7.1a-2a.
[346] Fang, *Yiweixuan wenji*, 7.6b-7a.

the evidential research movement went off track as students, especially in Yangzhou, began to regard obscure glosses to the *Classics* in the same manner as a merchant would a pearl.[347] Having lost sight of the larger aims, evidential research lost all significance except as a way for students to garner fame and profit. Seeing as Han Learning began as a top-down trend, Fang Dongshu figured that whatever type of scholarship would supplant it also required the support of high officials to succeed.

Fang Dongshu also wrote another work on the topic, entitled *Shulin yangzhi* 書林揚觶 (Raising a Goblet to the Forest of Books), in agitated response to Ruan Yuan's 1825 call on new students at the Xuehaitang Academy to reflect on what type of books they wished to write.[348] Authorship, Fang held, was not something to be taken lightly. But in an environment like that of the Xuehaitang, students were pressed to write books even if they had nothing to say.[349] Consequently, those who wrote on the *Four Books* simply took aim at criticizing Zhu Xi's commentaries, whereas those who wrote on the *Classics* merely hoped to find a new piece of evidence to support some random interpretation.[350] Fang Dongshu thought that books should only be written when necessary to address problems of the times, and this was precisely how he defended his own book-length critique of Han Learning.[351] Ruan Yuan's appointment as Governor-General of Guangdong and Guangxi ended in 1826, and Fang Dongshu also left Guangzhou.

4.1 Critique of Han Learning Partisanship

Another scholar invited by Ruan Yuan to work on the *Comprehensive Gazetteer of Guangdong* was Suzhou native Jiang Fan 江藩 (1761-1831).[352] In his youth, Jiang Fan studied under Yu Xiaoke 余蕭客 (1732-1788) and Jiang Sheng, both disciples of Hui Dong.

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[347] Fang, *Yiweixuan wenji*, 7.5b-6a.
[348] Fang Dongshu, *Shulin yangzhi* ([n.p.]: Wangsanyi zhai qin ban 望三益齋鋟板, 1871), 1.1a.
[349] Fang, *Shulin yangzhi*, 1.16a; 1.26a.
[350] Fang, *Shulin yangzhi*, 1.15a-b.
[351] Fang, *Shulin yangzhi*, 1.6a; 1.45b.
[352] For Jiang Fan's birthplace, see Qi Yongxiang 漆永祥, *Jiang Fan yu Hanxue shicheng ji yanjiu* 江藩與漢學師承記研究 (Research on Jiang Fan and the *Hanxue shicheng ji*) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2006), 27.

When arriving in Guangzhou in 1818, Jiang Fan had already known Ruan Yuan for over a decade, and the latter sent his son Ruan Fu 阮福 to study under Jiang Fan's supervision. In the same year, Jiang Fan received Ruan Yuan's support to print his work on Qing intellectual history, which he polemically called the *Hanxue shicheng ji* 漢學師承記 (Record of the Transmission of Han Learning).[353] His subsequent compilation of a *Songxue yuanyuan ji* 宋學淵源記 (Record of the Origins of Song Learning) reflected a critical attitude to the combination of *Rulin* and *Daoxue* biographies by Wan Sitong 萬斯同 (1638-1702) and Huang Zongxi in the *Ming History*.[354]

Jiang Fan may have intended his work as a contribution to the imperially sponsored collection of Qing scholarly biographies, for which Ruan Yuan served as the main editor during the years 1810-1812. In his draft preface to this collection, Ruan Yuan provided an historical narrative of similar style as Jiang Fan's introduction to the *Hanxue shicheng ji*. To divide credit equally between Han and Song Learning, as would befit an official history, Ruan Yuan posited an inherent division in Chinese intellectual history. He quoted the *Zhouli* to show that when the ritual system was first established, there had been teachers (*shi* 師) who taught practices of moral cultivation (*dexing* 德行) and scholars (*ru* 儒) who taught technical and textual subjects (*liu yi* 六藝). Only through Confucius' subtle editorship had the official records of the Zhou kings been transformed into guides for moral cultivation, and this made him the rare combination of moral teacher and textual scholar that was Ruan Yuan's implied ideal.

In Ruan Yuan's rhetoric, Han and Song Learning could complement each other by retaining a "respect for the philosophical thought of Song Learning, while substantiating it with the textual interpretations of Han Learning" (*chong Songxue zhi xingdao er yi Hanru jingyi shi zhi* 崇宋學之性道，而以漢儒經義實之).[355] This attitude was consistent with imperial policy as established during the Qianlong reign, but Ruan Yuan's seemingly unbiased approach could also be seen as a subtle attack on Song Learning, since turning *daoxue* scholars into teachers of "moral cultivation" made it possible to define classicist

[353] Qi Yongxiang, *Jiang Fan yu Hanxue shicheng ji yanjiu*.
[354] See Lee Chi-hsiang 李紀祥, "Qingdai xueshu zhi 'kaiduan'" 清代學術之「開端」(The Beginning of Qing Scholarship), *Hanxue yanjiu* 27.3 (2009): 283-316.
[355] Ruan, *Yanjingshi ji*, 36-38.

Ru learning as pure textual studies and reserve the scholarly biographies for Han Learning adherents.[356]

The same division into philological and philosophical levels was used in compiling, under Ruan Yuan's supervision, the *Huang Qing jingjie*. This work copied selectively from thinkers like Gu Yanwu and retained only parts of his writings that could be narrowly defined as evidential research. This was also in line with official precedent, as the evaluation of Gu Yanwu's work in the *Abstracts* focused mainly on his phonological and epigraphical contributions.[357]

Song-Ming Factionalism and the Opium War

Fang Dongshu noted how Ji Yun in the *Abstracts* had emphasized the vicious partisanship of Zhu Xi's attacks on Su Shi and Lü Zuqian. While he may have overemphasized Zhu Xi's innocence in turn, Fang argued that Zhu Xi frequently and positively cited Su Shi's work and that Ji Yun's criticism was a misrepresentation of facts.[358] Under a reign so vehemently condemnatory of literati factionalism, Ji Yun's negative depiction of Zhu Xi's partisanship in an imperially sanctioned work laid the groundwork for increasingly fierce attacks on Cheng-Zhu *daoxue*.

Fang Dongshu exposed the Han Learning strategy of blaming the fall of the Southern Song on *daoxue* partisanship, and the fall of the Ming on the Donglin movement as a continuation thereof. "Despicable scholars of our generation," he lamented, "denigrate *daoxue*, spare no effort in attacking Cheng-Zhu, and even blame the fall of the Ming on the continued interest in Cheng-Zhu thought" (*shi zhi bi Ru nai you tongdi daoxue, ligong Cheng-Zhu, shenqie yi Ming zhi wang guijiu yu jiang Cheng-Zhu zhi xue* 世之鄙儒乃猶痛詆道學，力攻程朱，甚且以明之亡歸咎於講程朱之學).[359]

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[356] Cf. Qi Xuemin 戚学民, " Rulin liezhuan yu Hanxue shicheng: *Hanxue shicheng ji* de xiuzhuan ji Han-Song zhi zheng" 儒林列传与汉学师承：《汉学师承记》的修撰及汉宋之争 (The *Rulin* Biographies and the Transmission of Han Learning), *Qinghua daxue xuebao* 1 (2007): 91-103.
[357] Guy, "The Development of the Evidential Research Movement."
[358] Fang, *Shulin yangzhi*, 1.41b-43b.
[359] Fang, *Yiweixuan wenji*, 5.8b.

He also composed an extensive critique of how Qian Daxin's historical research represented these events. Qian Daxin emphasized the disastrous decision in 1234 of sending armies to recapture from the Mongols the three Northern Song capitals of Kaifeng, Yingtian, and Luoyang. The expedition had been ill prepared and carried out despite weak support in the capital. As troops were sent into a war-ridden and barren area with insufficient provisions, it turned into a major failure for the Southern Song court. Qian Daxin related this event to the irredentist cause among Imperial University (*Taixue*) students, and to the recall of *daoxue* adherents Zhen Dexiu 真德秀 (1178-1235) and Wei Liaoweng 魏了翁 (1178-1237) to official position under Zheng Qingzhi 鄭清之 (1176-1251) after the death of Shi Miyuan 史彌遠 (1164-1233).[360]

Fang Dongshu noted that while the apparent rehabilitation of *daoxue* coincided with the failed attempt at recovering the north, and even though *daoxue* adherents indeed opposed a pacifist stance toward the Mongols, there was no evidence to support the claim that *daoxue* officials had anything to do with the decision of sending troops to recover the three former capitals. The so-called rehabilitation of *daoxue* under the Lizong emperor, moreover, had in many ways been a show put on to calm the upset student body in the capital, and had very little impact on foreign policy decisions at court.[361]

There was an implicit connection between Fang Dongshu's view on the Southern Song decline and the current crisis between the Qing court and the British. In both cases, Fang argued that it was inefficient to pursue peace from a disadvantageous position by conceding to the enemy. Doing so only granted the opponent incentive to escalate their demands, making defense all the more difficult. When finding oneself at a disadvantage it was better to prepare for war, so that if ultimate defeat was what fate had in store one could go with a bang, not a whimper. If men like Qian Daxin had their way, Fang argued, one would rather back down in shameful submission than stand up and fight for one's country.[362] He concluded:

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[360] Fang Dongshu, "Shu Qian Xinmei *Yangxinlu* hou" 書錢辛楣養新錄後 (Notes on Reading Qian Daxin's *Yangxinlu*), in *Yiweixuan wenji*, 6.4b-11b. Cf. Richard L. Davis, "The Reign of Li-tsung (1224-1264)," vol. 5 of *The Cambridge History of China*, eds. Denis Twitchett and Paul Jakov Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 860.
[361] Fang, *Yiweixuan wenji*, 6.6b-7a.
[362] Fang, *Yiweixuan wenji*, 6.10b.

> 錢氏乃以南宋立國不應主收復，為道學迂闊不知理勢以速亡，況本無其事也。然則其所作廿一史考異亦何用也？不過搜覓細碎，眩博以邀名而已，於資治致用無當也。
>
> Qian Daxin thus argued that the Southern Song should not have taken an irredentist stance, which he thought represented the impractical ideals of *daoxue* adherents who misjudged the situation and thereby quickened the dynastic fall. Since this was not the case, what use are his *Examinations of Variances in the Twenty-One* [*sic*] *Histories*? They amount to nothing but a collection of fragments, disorienting the reader with random citations aimed only at garnering fame for the author. They provide no proper evaluations that aid in governing the realm.[363]

Fang Dongshu also disagreed with a long-standing argument that the Ming collapse was due to Donglin factionalism. He elevated the moral qualities of Ming scholar-officials above not only those of the Qing, but also above those of the Han-Tang periods.[364] The "pure criticism" voiced by Donglin adherents had not appeared out of the blue, but reflected abuses of power and a malfunctioning state. When the inner court usurped imperial authority and the emperor engaged in factionalism with his eunuch or other advisers, was it right to blame governmental failure on critical voices from below? Was it right to blame men outside court for problems caused by the incompetence of those in power?[365] Fang's argument in defense of literati interest groups was reminiscent of Ouyang Xiu's, as it put the blame for factionalism on men like Wei Zhongxian and his associates, who used the Donglin label to purge their political opponents all at once.[366] Blaming the Ming decline on the Donglin faction only served those who wished to persuade the emperor into quelling competing voices.[367]

During the period 1837-1840, Fang Dongshu again spent a few years in Guangdong, where he wrote an errata and an addition to the *Hanxue shangdui* and the *Shulin yangzhi*.[368]

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[363] Fang, *Yiweixuan wenji*, 6.11a.
[364] Fang, *Yiweixuan wenji*, 7.6b.
[365] Fang, *Yiweixuan wenji*, 7.8b.
[366] Fang, *Yiweixuan wenji*, 7.7b; 7.10a.
[367] Fang, *Yiweixuan wenji*, 7.8b.
[368] Zheng Fuzhao 鄭福照, *Fang Zhizhi xiansheng nianpu* 方植之先生年譜 (Chronological Biography of Fang Dongshu) (1889 ed.).

James Polachek suggested that Fang Dongshu's return may have indicated changing patterns of official patronage in Guangzhou after Ruan Yuan's plans for the legalization of opium were rejected in 1836.[369]

Fang Dongshu held that the apparent inefficacy of opium illegalization lay in the way it was directed at providers rather than consumers. The root of the problem, he argued, was a demand for opium among the Chinese population. If demand could be controlled, providers would naturally disappear. Punishment should focus on opium-users among the wealthy, and literati who engaged in this illegal activity should be shamed into submission by losing all official positions and being barred from the civil or martial examinations. For guilty commoners a specific type of clothing should be ordained that excluded them from participation in ritual celebrations. Bans may be lifted after a period of twelve years for those who stopped engaging in illegal activities. Fang Dongshu argued that this approach would be better than large-scale executions, which always carried the danger of engendering revolts. Moreover, most people did not believe in threats of execution and local officials also hesitated to become involved in such legal cases.[370]

Writing in 1842, Fang Dongshu disagreed with those who argued that Huang Juezi's 黃爵滋 (1793-1853) memorial of 1838 or Lin Zexu's actions in Guangdong were the cause of military confrontations with the British. That conflict had been brewing for decades. What was to be feared more than British cannon were the Chinese collaborators, who were so numerous that eliminating them was already out of the question. Instead, Fang hoped that the state would give collaborators a chance to switch sides, promising an imperial pardon and rewards for anyone who could exploit their present position to damage British interests.[371]

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[369] Polachek, *The Inner Opium War*, 147.
[370] Fang, "Huamin zhengsu dui" 化民正俗對 (On Transforming the People and Correcting Customs), in *Yiweixuan wenji*, 4.1a-6b.
[371] Fang, "Bingta zuiyan" 病榻罪言 (A Memorial From the Sickbed), in *Yiweixuan wenji*, 4.6b-20a

The Motivations of Qing Evidential Research Scholars

Dai Zhen had not only criticized the "empty speculation" of Song scholars, but also the Han-Tang transmission of the *Classics*, their characters and pronunciations. "From the Han dynasty onwards," Dai Zhen argued, "scholars no longer knew ancient glosses or the pronunciation of characters, and therefore the transmission of the *Classics* was fraught with so many substitutions and mistakes that they seemed impossible to restore" (*zi Han yilai, bu ming guxun, yinsheng zhi yuan, yizhi guji chuanxie di'e, hunyao mo bian* 自漢以來，不明故訓、音聲之原，以致古籍傳寫遞譌，混淆莫辨).[372] Even the interpretive mistakes of Song scholars could be attributed to these imperfect source texts, and the fact that they never dealt with this problem demonstrated their lack of basic knowledge with regard to the archaic language in which the *Classics* were written. How, then, could they hope to understand the teachings contained in those texts?[373]

According to Fang Dongshu, the origin of Dai Zhen's argument could be traced to a preface in one of Zang Lin's 臧琳 (1650-1713) works, which was attributed with some doubt to Yan Ruoqu. The preface read:

> 秦、漢大儒，專精讎校、訓詁、聲音。魏、晉以來，頗改師法。《易》有王弼、《書》有偽孔、杜預之《春秋》、范寧之《穀梁》、《論語》何晏解，《爾雅》郭璞注，皆昧於聲音、訓詁，疏於校讐者也。疏於校讐，則多訛文脫字，而失聖人之本經；昧於音聲、訓詁，則不識古人語言文字，而失聖人之真意。若是則學者之大患也。隋、唐以來，如劉焯、劉炫、陸德明、孔穎達等，皆好尚後儒，不知古學。於是為《義疏》，為《釋文》，皆不能全用漢人章句，而經學有不明矣。宋儒出，而以心得為貴，漢、唐之說，視之蔑。如宋、元以來，言北海則為俗學，言新安則為聖學，習尚久矣。
>
> Great scholars of the Qin and Han dynasties specialized in textual redaction, glosses, and phonology. But starting from the Wei-Jin period methods changed drastically. Wang Bi's 王弼 (226-249) commentary to

[372]Fang Dongshu, *Hanxue shangdui*, in *Hanxue shicheng ji wai er zhong* 漢學師承記外二種 (Record of Han Learning Masters in the Qing Dynasty, with Two Supplements), edited by Xu Hongxing (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian, 1998), 324, and 260.
[373]Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 280.

> the *Yijing*, the pseudo-Kong Anguo commentary to the *Shangshu*, Du Yu's work on the commentary to the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, Fan Ning's writings on the *Guliang* commentary, He Yan's reading of the *Analects*, Guo Pu's commentary on the *Erya*, all showed little understanding of phonology or glosses and were poorly redacted. Due to poor redaction, they contained many erroneous characters and lost the original text of the sage-authors. Because they did not understand phonology or glosses, they did not know the language and characters of the ancients, and thereby they lost the original intention of the sage-authors. This was a great malady for learning.
>
> Scholars of the Sui-Tang dynasties, the likes of Liu Zhuo, Liu Xuan, Lu Deming and Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (574-648), all looked up to their most recent predecessors and knew nothing of ancient learning. They were unable to rely exclusively on Han commentaries when composing the *Subcommentaries* and the *Textual Explanations*, and so classical learning fell into obscurity. Song scholars valued only their own realizations and despised the explanations of their Han-Tang predecessors. From the Song and Yuan dynasties on, it has already long been the trend that Zheng Xuan's teachings are called vulgar learning, while Zhu Xi's teachings are called sagely learning.[374]

In this manner, Qing evidential research scholars elevated the importance of their specialized practice for reviving the transmission of the *Classics*. According to Fang Dongshu, however, their underlying motivation was to replace *daoxue* practitioners as the rightful transmitters of the Way. Beginning with Dai Zhen, Qing scholars in the Jiangnan region not only criticized the Cheng-Zhu vision of *daotong*, but actively worked to establish their own version of a similar idea. Fang Dongshu wrote:

> 蓋人情好異喜新，矜奇愛博，而閻、惠起而恩之以豆區釜鍾之施，使人心悅從，而漸移其畔宋即漢之心。後來戴氏等，日益寢熾，其聰明博辨，既足以自恣，而聲華氣燄，又足以聳動一世。於是，遂欲移程、朱而代其統矣。
>
> The human heart enjoys what is new and strange, we exalt the weird and love the far-reaching. Yan Ruoqu and Hui Dong provided such things in great quantity, and people who were willing to believe them gradually

[374] Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 361.

> turned their backs on Song scholarship for that of the Han. Subsequently, the scholarship of Dai Zhen and those around him flourished, their intelligence and critical ability enabling them to let go of all restraint, stirring up a generation with their strong words and blazing temper. Following that success, they developed a desire to overthrow the teaching of Cheng-Zhu and replace it with their own.[375]

Dai Zhen's pursuit of authorial intention in the *Classics* was only a masquerade, Fang Dongshu argued, a cover for the political and cultural power-struggle. The only goal of evidential research, it seemed, was "to denigrate Cheng-Zhu and usurp their position as a unifying ideology" (*chu Cheng-Zhu er dai qi tong* 黜程朱而代其統) and to "surpass the transmission of the Way with their own" (*chao jie daotong* 超接道統).[376] They claimed to reject the dogmatism of Cheng-Zhu *daoxue*, but already plotted to introduce their own version of orthodoxy.

While scholarship in the Han and Song dynasties had emphasized different things, Fang Dongshu held that no real distinction could be made in terms of their relative achievements (*you jing cu er wu xuanzhi* 有精粗而無軒輊).[377] Han scholarship provided the foundation for Song philosophers to draw their conclusions, but now evidential research scholars merely excavated anything in Han sources that could be tweaked into conflict with Cheng-Zhu thought.[378] Evidential research gave itself away though, because unlike Song thinkers, Han dynasty scholars never claimed to transmit the original teachings of the Duke of Zhou or Confucius. This lineage-oriented attitude to the past could not have been picked up from Han sources, so when Dai Zhen and others used it in their work, they merely imitated Zhu Xi's *daotong* narrative as laid out in his preface to the *Zhongyong zhangju*. Fang Dongshu wrote:

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[375]Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 400.
[376]Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 314, and 334. Fang also criticized Hui Dong for encouraging criticism of famous precedents, see Fang, *Shulin yangzhi*, 2.7a.
[377] Fang, "*Hanxue shangdui* chongxu" 漢學商兌重序 (Second Preface to *Hanxue shangdui*), in *Yiweixuan wenji*, 5.5a.
[378] Fang, *Yiweixuan wenji*, 5.5b.

> 竊以漢儒訓詁名物以傳經，抱殘守闕，厥功至大，然初未嘗自以接周、孔真傳。為是言者，今漢學家之言也。吾嘗推求其故，蓋因朱子嘗言，秦漢以來，儒者惟知章句訓詁之為事，而不知潛心反己，復求聖人之意，以明性命道德之歸。程夫子兄弟出，始因子思《中庸》，得孔孟不傳之緒云云。朱子此論，奪之於漢儒久興之後。
> Han scholars relied on glosses and names to transmit the *Classics*. They protected surviving textual fragments, which was a great achievement. But they never claimed to represent the transmission of the Duke of Zhou's and Confucius' original intentions. Such claims derive from today's Han Learning scholars. I have traced their origin back to Zhu Xi, who once said that scholars from the Qin-Han onwards knew only textual explanations and glosses, but neglected the inner reflection necessary to recapture the intentions of the sage-authors and their moral teachings. It was the Cheng brothers, Zhu Xi claimed, who first used Zisi's *Zhongyong* to recover the ruptured transmission of Confucius and Mencius. But this theory of Zhu Xi's appeared long after the flourishing of Han dynasty scholarship.[379]

Evidential research scholars constructed a false antinomy between themselves and their Song dynasty predecessors, and may be criticized for failing to practice the impartiality they preached. Their interpretive choices were not based on a set of general laws or principles, but made for the polemical and partisan purpose of overthrowing their enemies.[380] Fang Dongshu wrote:

> 夫說經不衷諸義理，辨偽得真，以求聖人之意，徒以門戶之私，與宋儒為難，非徒不為公論，抑豈能求真得是？君子一言以為智，一言以為不智，於宋儒何傷乎？然此猶不過欲以漢學考證，破宋儒空言窮理，謂病其空疏耳。其後，臧氏、段氏、江氏等，於六朝南北傳注經本，音字異同，又力詆魏、晉、蔽罪唐儒，極口詆詈陸、孔是豈不可以已乎？
> When interpreting the *Classics* they do not worry about the moral implications of their readings, or about finding the sage-authors' true intentions. All they do is engage in partisanship to deride Song scholars. Not only is this not impartial, but how could anyone who uses such

[379] Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 387.
[380] For a very similar argument, see Levenson, "The Abortiveness of Empiricism in Early Ch'ing Thought," *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 13.2 (1954): 155-165.

> methods be said to pursue authenticity or truth? Some may agree with a statement and others may not, what damage could conflicting opinions do to Song scholars? But now they just use the evidential methods of Han Learning to invalidate the reflective investigations of Song scholars, saying that such empty speculations are a disease. Scholars like Zang Lin, Duan Yucai, and Jiang Fan even proceeded to scorn scholars of the Six Dynasties for the variety of pronunciations and characters in their copies of the *Classics*. They also derided scholars of the Wei-Jin period and of the Tang dynasty, criticizing the works of Lu Deming and Kong Yingda. Is there to be no end to it?[381]

For example, Hui Dong's argument for attributing the *Erya* to the Duke of Zhou was not simply an instance of choosing Han commentaries before later ones. While he differed from Zhu Xi, who read the *Erya* as a compilation of glosses to the *Classics*, that view in fact originated with Eastern Han scholar Zheng Xuan, who stated that Confucius' disciples wrote the *Erya* as an aid to reading "the texts of the *Six Classics*" (*liu yi zhi wen* 六藝之文). Even the *Jingdian shiwen* 經典釋文 (Textual Explanations of the *Classics*) contained the view that the *Erya* had been written as an aid to reading the *Classics*. It therefore seemed that in his eagerness to differ from Zhu Xi, Hui Dong had been willing to go against his own interpretive principles.[382] The conclusion that Fang Dongshu drew from such examples was that Han Learning scholars merely employed the "return to antiquity" argument as a rhetorical tool to expunge the Song dynasty and Zhu Xi from the educational curriculum. He wrote:

> 舉凡前人所有成說定論，盡翻窠臼，蕩然一改，悉還漢唐舊規，祧宋而去之，使永遠萬世，有宋不得為代，程朱不得為人，然後快足於心。大抵以復古為名，而宇內學者，耳目心思之一變。
> They take all generally accepted theories of the past and overturn them. In one disrespectful shift they take everything back to the Tang dynasty, replacing the Song and erasing it. It will be as if the Song dynasty never happened, and as if the Cheng brothers and Zhu Xi never existed. Only then will they be satisfied. It is probably because they hypocritically employ the notion of a "return to antiquity" that scholars everywhere

[381] Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 260.
[382] Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 317-318.

> accept their claims and change their old ways of thinking and perceiving.[383]

Just like Hui Dong, many evidential research scholars were more eager to attack Zhu Xi than they were to engage in an impartial analysis of the *Classics* and their commentaries.[384] The scholar's personal desire for the fame that came with "discovery" was dressed in a thin veil of knowledge-for-its-own-sake and public-mindedness (*qi lun si gong, qi shi nai chu yu si* 其論似公，其實乃出於私).[385] When this was their motivation, even if they happened to get one or two things right, their work was bound to have a negative impact in educational, social, and political spheres. Fang wrote:

> 若用心浮淺，又挾以門戶之私見，叫囂呵斥，惟以能詆訾前哲，為爭名自矜之計，則無論其言未是，即是亦不成氣象矣。
> If their intentions are superficial, adding to that their partisan opinions, loudly berating others, slandering their predecessors, all the while pursuing fame and singing their own praise, then no matter if they are right or wrong it is still no good.[386]

When scholarship was used merely as a tool to attack others and elevate oneself, correct results were already secondary in importance to the negative influence on the minds and attitudes (*xinshu* 心術) of students.[387]

Interpretive Values in Evidential Research

Evidential research practitioners held that interpretations should be grounded in an evidentially supported understanding of the individual words that constituted a text. Fang Dongshu realized that this statement was an extreme simplification of a highly complex problem, an effective punch line without much substance. Its very simplicity made it

[383] Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 385.
[384] Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 254.
[385] Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 255.
[386] Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 380.
[387] Fang, *Shulin yangzhi*, 1.28b.

almost impossible to deny without longwinded digressions, but the formula symbolized an approach to knowledge that Fang Dongshu felt compelled to reject.

Duan Yucai had praised Dai Zhen for his new insight into philosophical problems (*xing yu tiandao* 性與天道) based solely on his "evidential investigations" (*kaohe* 考覈). Fang Dongshu, however, thought this to be a complete misrepresentation of the methods Dai Zhen used to reach his conclusions. Not even Han scholars, Fang claimed, made the absurd argument that meaning could be attained in a value-free manner from textual "evidence" alone.[388]

Evidence for a certain reading of a word usually came in the form of a "gloss" (*xungu* 訓詁) attributable to some historical authority. But it was evident to anyone even cursorily acquainted with the primary sources that, already in Han times, a given word or character could be explained by a multitude of glosses that were sometimes mutually exclusive. No matter how committed to substantiating his claims with textual evidence, the interpreter always made choices that necessarily involved values (*yili* 義理).[389] Since interpretation could not proceed from facts to meaning without the application of values, the quality of a given reading had to be judged based on the guiding principles underlying it. If those values or principles were based on the simple desire to differ from predecessors, Fang held, it hardly justified whatever choices had been made between the multiple possibilities afforded by potential evidence.

This was the problem faced by evidential research students and scholars. Academic trends forced them to produce knowledge that differed from their predecessors, and to meet such expectations students often resorted to plagiarism or misrepresentation to highlight the uniqueness of their own ideas. Consequently, the problem with evidential research lay not only in the type of knowledge it produced; more seriously, it became a negative influence on the moral mindset (*xinshu*) of those educated within its framework.[390]

While a student paper or scholarly essay on some minor topic may appear innocuous, the moral debasement of the educated classes on an empire-wide scale was

[388] Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 360-361.
[389] Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 311, and 320-321.
[390] Fang, *Shulin yangzhi*, 1.28b.

not an issue to take lightly.[391] As for those Qing scholars who actually followed through with the critical attitude and impartiality demanded by evidential research rhetoric, Fang Dongshu saw them become incapable of making any decisions whatsoever, being rendered utterly useless not only as scholars, but also as social actors or government officials. For all their talk of pursuing only knowledge that could be substantiated (*shi* 實), these men had truly become "empty" (*xu* 虛).[392]

As with their shared claim to inherit the "transmission of the Way," Dai Zhen and Zhu Xi both sought support for their respective views in the classical texts. They did not even differ in any of their basic assumptions about the *Classics* or their relevance to the present, but only in some of the specific techniques that made up their hermeneutics. Fang Dongshu wrote:

> 戴氏震曰：「以『理』為學，以『道』為統，以『心』為宗，探之茫茫，索之冥冥，不如反而求之六經。」按：此論乍觀之，頗似篤正。徐而詳之，實謬悠邪說。昔程子受學於周茂叔，亦曰反而求之六經。則程朱固未嘗舍六經而為學也。且所謂求於六經者，何也？非謂求其「道」，求其「理」，求其「心」邪？戴氏宗旨，力禁言「理」。而所以反求之六經者，僅在於形聲、訓詁、名物、制度之末。譬如良農舂穀，盡取精鑿以去，貧子不知，方持穅覈以傲之。何以異於是？朱子曰：「近年以來，乃有假佛釋之似，以亂孔、孟之真者。其法首以讀書窮理為大禁，嘗欲注心於茫昧不可知之地，以僥倖一旦恍然獨見，然後為得」云云。據此，則凡漢學家所持以謗程朱者，皆竊朱子之緒論，而反以誣之。初不尋其立言本旨，徒取影響近似，巧以施之，以欺末學無聞者耳。
>
> Dai Zhen said: "For them 'Coherence' is [the goal of] learning, 'the Way' is a unifying lineage, and the 'mind' its principal ancestor. But rather than search blindly like this, we should return to pursue the knowledge of the *Six Classics*." I [Fang Dongshu] note: This argument seems valid at first sight, but thinking it through slowly and carefully it is nothing but unfounded heterodoxy. When Master Cheng received instruction from Zhou Dunyi, he also held that scholars must return to pursue the

[391] Fang, *Shulin yangzhi*, 1.31a-b.
[392] Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 276.

> knowledge of the *Six Classics*. The Cheng brothers and Zhu Xi in fact never discussed learning without reference to the *Classics*.
>
> What is it to pursue the knowledge of the *Classics*, anyway? Is it not to learn of the "Way", of "Coherence," and the "mind" discussed therein? It was Dai Zhen's guiding value not to speak of "Coherence." Therefore, all he searched for in the *Classics* were the details of shapes and sounds, textual glosses, and names of things and regulations. When a good farmer pounds his grain, he takes only the kernel and leaves the rest. But the poor man who does not know this just proudly lifts up the husks. Is Dai Zhen's study of the *Classics* any different from this?
>
> Zhu Xi said: "Lately, there are those who use Buddhist ideas similar to those of Confucius and Mencius to confuse the latters' teachings. First of all, they make a sin out of reading books and encourage people to let their minds roam blindly in order to suddenly, by some stroke of luck, reach enlightenment," and so on. As can be seen from this, when Han Learning scholars today criticize Zhu Xi, they actually use his very own arguments against him. Instead of trying to understand why Zhu Xi said what he did, they echo him and come up with tricky arguments to fool those who do not know any better.[393]

Dai Zhen and other evidential research scholars' criticism of the so-called emptiness of speculative reasoning created a dichotomy of the substantial and the insubstantial that was to become one of many value-laden assumptions guiding evidential research. Fang Dongshu noticed this tendency and turned it on its head. The essence of the *Classics*, he held, was nothing but everyday knowledge.[394] While formulating himself in abstract terms, Zhu Xi drew from the *Classics* very concrete knowledge that was applicable in life, society, and politics. In contrast, while every word of Han Learning and evidential research scholars was based in some or other textual source, the knowledge they accumulated seemed quite meaningless outside their specialized fields, and was from a didactic perspective insubstantial.[395]

[393] Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 274-275.
[394] Fang, *Shulin yangzhi*, 1.16b.
[395] Fang, *Shulin yangzhi*, 1.25b.

4.2 Critique of Evidential Research Methodology

Evidential research scholars never presented a strict set of principles for drawing objective conclusions based on amassed evidence. They invented a great many techniques, but produced no generalized laws governing how those techniques were to be employed in practice. As a result, their work was guided by unspoken values, some of which Fang Dongshu was among the first to isolate and expose.

Concrete versus Abstract

To value the substantial over the insubstantial was one of the assumptions guiding evidential research scholars in their interpretive choices. For example, Dai Zhen referred to glosses in the *Shuowen* and *Zhuangzi* that explained *li* as the pattern or texture of jade and meat respectively.

Fang Dongshu was dissatisfied with the philological assumptions underlying Dai Zhen's argument. When pursuing the original meaning of the word *li*, was there any reason to assume that its "concrete" meaning necessarily preceded its "abstract" meaning in time? Could Dai Zhen use this definition to explain the term "heavenly Coherence" (*tianli*) as it appeared in Han and pre-Han texts? Long before Dai Zhen it had been noted that the term *li* in the *Classics* could be understood as something like a "pattern" or "system" (*tiaoli* 條理), but that reading still lacked the physical concreteness that Dai Zhen needed to establish a clear dichotomy with Zhu Xi's interpretation.[396]

Both Dai Zhen and Qian Daxin reinterpreted the *Classics* and pre-Qin thought to suit their own philologically grounded agenda. Assuming that the study of texts was a more substantial and worthwhile activity than speculative reasoning, they also took the pre-Qin notion of "correcting names" (*zhengming* 正名) to mean "correcting the characters in texts."[397] The "past" as referred to in passages like "investigating the past" (*jigu* 稽古) from the *Shangshu*, and "showing preference for the past" (*haogu* 好古) from

[396] Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 245.
[397] Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 313.

the *Analects* was similarly understood in terms of textual transmission and "glosses" (*gu* 詁).[398] Qian Daxin even read the phrase *guxun shi shi* 古訓是式 from the *Shijing* as an injunction to follow the textual glosses of a commentarial tradition.[399]

These were all examples of giving preference to more substantial, or verifiable, readings of terms that could also be understood in a more abstract sense. Fang Dongshu found these readings unjustified and held that they exemplified the tendency among evidential research scholars to let anti-Cheng-Zhu values influence their interpretive choices. While Dai Zhen spoke of knowledge without values, his research was far too value-laden with anti-Cheng-Zhu sentiment to be considered in any way "impartial" (*pingxin* 平心).

Ruan Yuan formulated the assumption to give concrete meanings precedence over abstract ones when he wrote that "the words of the sages from the Zhou dynasty and earlier were always concrete, without any abstract intentions" (*Zhou yiqian shengxian zhi yan jie zhishi, wu gaomiao zhi zhi* 周以前聖賢之言，皆質實，無高妙之旨).[400] Ruan Yuan himself employed this assumption in an etymological argument to show that in high antiquity, the "heart-and-mind" (*xin* 心) had not denoted something internal, but rather something as concrete as the outwardly protruding, visible and touchable, thorns of plants.[401]

He also argued that the *Yijing* "figures" (*xiang* 象) chronologically preceded the trigrams and hexagrams (*gua* 卦). The trigrams and hexagrams as transmitters of concrete figures, he argued, gave rise to intentions (*yi* 意) in the minds of those who observed and manipulated them. Those intentions were then transmitted to others via speech, words and phrases.[402] Setting up the *xiang*-figures as the ultimate origin and core of *Yijing* studies became a common interpretive practice among evidential research scholars at the Xuehaitang Academy, and always carried with it the assumption that concrete phenomena necessarily precede abstract ones in time and importance.

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[398] Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 314.
[399] Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 316.
[400] Ruan, *Yanjingshi ji*, 214.
[401] Ruan, *Yanjingshi ji*, 5-6.
[402] Ruan, *Yanjingshi ji*, 1.

Ruan Yuan also deconstructed the notion of a Supreme Ultimate (*taiji*) and employed his knowledge of historical geography to concretize that concept. The notion of a Supreme Ultimate, he argued, originally referred to the North Pole (*beiji* 北極) or the pole star (*beichen* 北辰). The two polarities of *yin* and *yang* (*liang yi* 兩儀) referred to heaven and earth, and the "four figures" (*si xiang* 四象) to either the four directions or the four seasons. The eight trigrams of the *Yijing* derived from such a worldview, Ruan Yuan argued, and each trigram represented a direction (*yin si fang er ding ba gua zhi wei* 因四方而定八卦之位). But why, in ancient texts, did the two trigrams of extreme polarity—Qian 乾 and Kun 坤—not represent north and south, but north-west and south-west respectively? Ruan Yuan explained this in terms of historical geography. The ancient Chinese considered the place where the great rivers originate, and from which they flow eastward or westward, to be the "backbone" of the world. And since this place would have been located west of the capital Luoyang, it would have seemed evident that the North Pole was located to the northwest of the capital, and the South Pole therefore to the southwest.[403]

The concrete was preferable to evidential research scholars also because it lent itself to precise expression, encouraging the application of technical expertise in fields such as mathematics and astronomy. Fang Dongshu criticized this ideal of precision in the context of calendrical techniques being employed to solve philological problems. He wrote:

> 夫漢晉唐以來，儒者以術算推求古經傳年月，其術不為不工，其說不為不祥，究之紛紜百端，迄無一合。吾嘗斷此曰，日月至朔置閏章蔀皆可推，而古帝王所歷年數及干支所當不可求，非不可求，傳說失實，遺文簡脫，傳聞異辭，不可考也。故吾嘗以為歷家之說皆由後為數以合古，非得乎古以順合乎今之數也。為數以合古而不合，則摭拾傳記繁稱異說以穿鑿之，是故歷家之說，止可推天，而不可考古，古不可考則並其所為天者，壹誣而亂之，是以其說愈多而愈可疑也。
> From the Han-Jin-Tang dynasties on, scholars used mathematical techniques to infer dates in the *Classics* and their commentaries. It is not that their techniques are imprecise or that their explanations lack in detail,

[403] Ruan, *Yanjingshi ji*, 38-40.

> but ultimately their results are all different and none match the others. I have determined the cause for this by arguing that while it is possible to infer days, months, solstices, lunations, intercalations, along with the *zhang* and *bu* resonances of the lunar and solar calendars, in contrast, the specific years for reigns of ancient emperors and the correct demarcations of these years according to the sexagenary cycle cannot be pursued. It is not that they cannot be pursued, but there is no way to investigate such matters when the commentarial explanations are mistaken, texts have been lost completely or partially, and the various editions differ from each other.
>
> Therefore, it is my view that the calendrical experts make their calculations based on modern day standards and then fit them to the ancient standards, rather than rely on ancient standards to see how they relate to modern calendrical practices. When they fail to make their calculations fit the ancient sources, they manipulate the results by excavating alternative readings from textual sources. This is why the calendrical experts are only able to calculate phenomena in the sky, but cannot examine the past. And when they are unable to examine the past, they get confused even with regard to that which they call the sky. Consequently, the more they explain, the less convincing it gets.[404]

The two qualities of precision and concreteness were intimately linked in evidential research methodology, as both potentially offered more convincing evidence than abstract ideas and arguments. As was the case with the precise determination of textual variants, however, those values often forced scholars to tweak their evidence by applying philological or mathematical techniques. The pursuit of precision, moreover, hindered scholars from accepting the limitations of their source materials.

Ritual and Principle

When pursued as an alternative to *daoxue* Coherence, evidential investigations of ancient ritual (*li* 禮) were also based on the assumption that concrete objects and practices were more "real" than ideas. Fang Dongshu, however, argued that abstract ideas in fact always formed the foundation of ritual practice. He wrote:

[404] Fang, *Yiweixuan wenji*, 7.34b-35a.

> 江氏藩曰：「濂、洛、關、閩之學，不究禮、樂之源，獨標性、命之旨。」按：性、命之旨，即禮、樂之源。故孔子曰：「言而履之，禮也；行而樂之，樂也。」自漢、晉以來，惟獨宋儒周、程諸子，能知其本源合一處。今反以此譏之。
>
> Jiang Fan said: "Song scholars did not investigate the origins of ritual and music, but only focused on philosophical concepts like 'nature' and 'fate'." I [Fang Dongshu] note: Philosophical concepts are the very origin of ritual and music. Therefore Confucius said: "To speak, and to act accordingly, is to follow ritual; to act, and to take pleasure in acting, is the meaning of music." From the Han and Jin dynasties onwards, only Song scholars like Zhou Dunyi and the Cheng brothers understood that ritual and Coherence have the same origin. Now Jiang Fan, ironically, uses this very point to slander them.[405]

While classicist jargon with concepts like "ritual" and "music," "nature" and "fate" made such arguments seem specific and specialized, it all boiled down to the polemical battle between the "substantial" (*shi*) values of evidential research and what they referred to as the "insubstantial" (*xu*) arguments of their rivals.

Jiang Fan held that concrete phenomena such as ritual practices necessarily predated the many abstract meanings attached to them. But it might as well be argued that it was ideas that engendered concrete practice. In that case, how could ideas be empty or meaningless? Fang Dongshu further argued that since "all worldly phenomena have their own coherence, one cannot say that 'realizing Coherence' is mere empty speculation. 'Coherence' belongs to the category of what is known, while 'ritual' belongs to the category of what is practiced." (*fan tianxia shiwu mo fei shili, he yun kongyan qiongli ye, li shu zhi bian, li shu xing bian* 凡天下事物，莫非實理，何云空言「窮理」也？「理」屬知邊，禮屬行邊).[406]

Ruan Yuan's ritual studies also emphasized its "concrete" character in contrast to the abstract notion of *daoxue* Coherence, which he thought was always open to multiple interpretations (*ke bi ke ci* 可彼可此). Concrete laws and regulations supported and

[405] Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 277.
[406] Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 295.

enforced by the state, however, were not to be argued with.[407] Ruan Yuan presented a subtle argument in favor of ritual studies by initially acknowledging that the concrete practices of men originated as abstract ideas aimed at solving various problems. However, he did not take this to mean that scholars should aim to identify the underlying reasoning behind social traditions and their development over time. Instead, ritual should be regarded as the concrete manifestation of the common good. Therefore, it was more important to describe what ritualized behavior had looked like through the ages, and quite off the point to speculate about the reasons for them being this way. Fang Dongshu was not convinced, and while he agreed with Ruan Yuan that ritual was a manifestation of the common good, he emphasized that ritual alone could not encompass the notion of universal Coherence. He wrote:

> 言理不盡于禮，禮外尚有眾理也。即如今人讀書作文，學百藝，以及天文算數兵謀訟獄河防地利，一切庶務，謂曰須明其理，則人心皆喻；謂曰此皆是禮之意，則雖學士，亦惶惑矣。
>
> Ritual does not exhaust the concept of Coherence, for apart from ritual there are still many other kinds of coherence. For example, today's men read, write, and study various skills like astronomy, mathematics, military strategy, legislation, waterways and topography. When one talks of "understanding the coherence" of such things, everybody know what that means. But if one says that "it is all in accord with the intended meaning of ritual," then even the scholar-bureaucrat gets confused.[408]

While the study of ritual shed some light on ancient notions of the common good (that is, coherence in the social world), universal Coherence was a concept far more inclusive than ritual. It was therefore impossible to turn the relationship between the two around without cutting away a large and important part of what the study of Coherence implied. Fang Dongshu thus reacted with a series of polemical arguments against conservative views of social ritual as a substitute for *daoxue* Coherence that had been forwarded by Ling Tingkan 凌廷堪 (1755-1809) and others.[409]

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[407] See also Chang, *Yi li dai li*.
[408] Fang Dongshu, *Hanxue shangdui*, 294.
[409] On Fang Dongshu's criticism of Ling Tingkan, see Chang, *Yi li dai li*, 138-143.

The notion of coherence also differed from ritual in terms of its connection to the experience of each individual. In a preface to his *Jinxiu pulu* 進修譜錄 (Treatise on Self-Cultivation) written in 1831, Fang Dongshu wrote:

> 夫四子六經諸史小學進思錄皆人譜也。吾曷為復作之？此吾所私具也。義理天下之公，曷為有私？吾所謂私者，如人皆冠履，視之則同，然而吾所自具者合吾首、適吾足，必不同於人之所有也。
> The *Four Books* and *Six Classics*, along with the dynastic histories, the texts of lesser learning, and the *Reflections on Things at Hand* are all instructions on how to live one's life. Why do I need to write yet another one? I do, because these experiences are my personal belongings. One may ask: If Coherence envelops all under heaven, how can you speak of personal belongings? What I mean by personal belongings is just the same as with hats and shoes. At first sight, they seem identical to those of others, but my personal hat fits my head, and my personal shoes fit my feet. Surely they are different from the hats and shoes of others.[410]

This passage suggests that Fang Dongshu's view of Coherence was a rather balanced one. When he spoke of respecting the *daoxue* tradition it was not a conservative call to reinstate the dogmatism of Cheng-Zhu orthodoxy. While Coherence was always in some sense all-inclusive, it was also experienced and practiced differently by each individual, who in that sense owned his own particular coherence. Evidential research scholars threatened to replace this with conservative ritual regulations that suppressed individual expression.

Practice and Application

Ruan Yuan may have been forced to agree that ritual could not encompass the notion of universal Coherence, but his interest in ritual was only a subset to the broader claim that interpretations of the *Classics* should be guided by a stress on practice. As we have seen, the Jiaqing reign after 1814 brought a backlash against Han Learning in favor of dealing

[410] Zheng, *Fang Zhizhi xiansheng nianpu*, 10b.

with present day administrative issues (*lizhi*). Ruan Yuan's theories on practice and application should be read as his adaptive response to this shift in cultural policy.[411]

Encouraging men to improve social mores, Ruan Yuan argued, was the original intention of the sage-authors when they composed and edited the *Classics*. For example, where Zhu Xi and other Song scholars interpreted the phrase *yiguan* 一貫 in the *Analects* as a reference to the Coherence that penetrates all particular things (*tongguan* 通貫), Ruan Yuan insisted that the proper understanding of the term was to engage in practical affairs (*xing shi* 行事).

Fang Dongshu noted the connection between ritual and practice in Ruan Yuan's thought and offered a combined criticism of the two concepts. He pointed to a distinction between the kind of ritual that is actually practiced, like that promoted by Gu Yanwu as an antidote to Late Ming individualism, and the kind that Ruan Yuan found in the commentarial tradition (*zhushu zhi li* 注疏之禮). Fang wrote:

> 阮氏元曰：「朱子中年講『理』，晚年講禮，誠有見於『理』必出於禮也。如殷尚白、周尚赤，禮也。使居周而有尚白者，以非禮折之，則人不能爭；以非『理』折之，則不能無爭矣。故『理』必附於禮以行，空言『理』，則可彼可此之邪說起矣。然則，三《禮》注疏，學者何可不讀。」按：顧亭林在關中論學曰：「諸君，關學之餘也。橫渠、藍田之教，以禮為先。孔子教顏子博文約禮，而劉康公亦云：『民受天地之中以生，所謂命也。是以有動作威儀之則以定命。』然則君子為學，舍禮何由！」又曰某年過五十，始知不學禮，無以立。然顧論主率履之禮，此主注疏、訓詁、名物之禮；顧以孔門執禮約禮，斥明儒心學縱恣之失，此以注疏、名物、制度，破宋儒格物窮理之學。宗旨各有在也。
>
> Ruan Yuan said: "In his middle age, Zhu Xi spoke of Coherence, but when he got older he discussed ritual. This was because he truly came to understand that the common good [i.e., social cohesion] originates in ritual. The choice of white to represent the Shang dynasty and red to represent the Zhou dynasty were both examples of ritual. If someone during the Zhou dynasty used white as a symbol he would be judged for deviating from ritual, and therefore it was impossible to dispute the

[411] See my account of the Jiaqing reign in chapter 3 of this dissertation.

> verdict. But if instead he were judged for opposing the common good, he would surely have disputed that verdict. It is evident from this that the common good must be enforced with ritual. Empty talk about the common good will only give rise to relativism and heterodoxy. So how can scholars afford not to read the ritual classics and their commentaries?"
>
> I [Fang Dongshu] note: When Gu Yanwu lectured in Shanxi, he said: "Dear gentlemen, you have all inherited the learning of this area in Shanxi. Your predecessors Zhang Zai 張載 (1020-1077) and Lü Dalin 呂大臨 (1044-1091) realized the primacy of ritual. Confucius also told Yan Hui to read broadly and restrain himself with ritual. Liu Jizi 劉季子 (592-544 BC) also said: 'The people receive the balance of Heaven and Earth in order to live, and this is called fate. Consequently, there are regulations of the actions and manners that decide the fates of men.' Apart from ritual, what else is there for scholars to rely on?"
>
> Gu Yanwu also said that it was only after turning fifty that he understood that without studying ritual, he would have had nothing to rely on. However, Gu Yanwu spoke primarily of rituals that are actually practiced. Ruan Yuan, in contrast, speaks rather of records of ritual in commentaries and textual glosses. Gu Yanwu relied on the Confucian precepts of ritual practice and ritual restraint to criticize the lack of discipline among Ming dynasty *xinxue* scholars. But Ruan Yuan just uses commentaries and textual glosses to attack Song scholars' teachings of investigating phenomena and their coherence. Gu Yanwu's and Ruan Yuan's guiding values are thus quite different from each other.[412]

Gu Yanwu's travels in northern China and his acquaintance with Zhang Erqi 張爾岐 (1612-1677) in particular made ritual a central theme in his thought after 1663.[413] Social cohesion was contingent on the proper conduct of members in society, and the aim to reduce conflict and improve social mores on the community level necessitated an institution capable of transcending distinctions in wealth, vocation, and status. Gu Yanwu had argued that the lineage organization was ideal for these purposes. Ruan Yuan also claimed that ritual as a social practice would contribute to increased cohesion and a sense of unity in Chinese society. But while Fang Dongshu may have agreed with this, he

[412] Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 293.
[413] Chow, *The Rise of Confucian Ritualism*, 83.

pointed out that what Ruan Yuan referred to as ritual differed from what Gu Yanwu had spoken of.

When Ruan Yuan read the phrase *yi guan* in the *Analects* as an encouragement to engage in practical affairs, Fang Dongshu again saw him perform a textual acrobatics that turned Confucius' teachings into something that fit his own agenda. Instead of encouraging the practice of rituals well adapted to the present day, Ruan Yuan promoted an aggressive enforcement of conservative ritual regulations.[414] Moreover, since Ruan Yuan's notion of ritual referred exclusively to records of ancient regulations as found through the application of evidential methods, the practices he wanted enforced were always those presented by his Han Learning peers as the result of "impartial" investigations. Just like Dai Zhen, therefore, Ruan Yuan wanted to substitute Cheng-Zhu orthodoxy with ideas of his own and of those who worked under his direction.

Lexicology and Textual Interpretation

In its predominantly lexicological approach, Fang Dongshu argued, evidential research overemphasized intertextual consistency in the interpretation of isolated words. He wrote:

> 竊謂古今相傳，里巷話言，官牘文書，亦孰不由訓詁而能通其義者？豈況說經不可廢也，此不待張皇。若夫古今先師相傳，音有楚、夏，文有脫誤，出有先後，傳本各有專祖。不明乎此，而強執異本、異文，以訓詁齊之，其可乎？又古人一字異訓，言各有當，漢學家說經，不顧當處上下文義，第執一以通之，乖違悖戾，而曰義理本於訓詁，其可信乎？
>
> I would ask [the evidential research scholars]: Is there any kind of written language transmitted from the past to the present—including the vulgar speech of villages and alleys, or the letters and prose writings of officials and literati—that does *not* require textual glosses to be understood? The obvious claim that we cannot do without glosses in textual studies is hardly something to get excited over.
>
> However, texts that have been transmitted by scholars from past to present may have been written and copied in different dialects, and the

[414] Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 299.

> texts are fraught with omissions and errors. Each of the editions appeared at a different point in time, and every transmitted version has its own origin. Can one really ignore this and equalize all the versions by force with reference to textual glosses?
>
> In the past, moreover, a single character could carry several meanings, and mean different things in different contexts. The classicism of Han Learning takes no account of the context in which a certain word appears, but stubbornly holds onto one single and fixed meaning for any given character and interprets its appearance in all texts according to that. To make this work, they engage in all sorts of textual acrobatics. Is it really convincing, then, when they say that a text's meaning and significance can only be attained through textual glosses?[415]

Textual interpretation could not be reduced to lexicological research. As in many other areas, evidential research scholars pursued precision and coherence to exclude nuances of meaning and eliminate all possibility of alternative readings. The specific techniques they developed to achieve such interpretive aims were numerous. Fang Dongshu wrote:

> 今以小學說經者，既多執一訓以通之……又假借、轉注以通之，又以偏旁從某得聲通之，又以古今音緩、音急之異通之……又推廣鄭氏三例通之……又以古音同部通之……又以隸變通之，又以師師相傳舊解通之……又以後人妄增刪改致誤通之……顛倒減省，離析合併，展轉百變，任意穿鑿，支離轇轕，不顧義理之安，於是舉凡古今滯難不可通之義，而無不可通之。就其合處所得，誠亦有功，但求之太鑿，其傅會僻違，岐惑學者，失亦不少。
>
> Those today who use philological techniques to discuss the *Classics* often hold on to a single lexicological meaning of a word and try to make it work in all contexts . . . To achieve such consistency, they employ the theories of notative (*zhuanzhu*) and phonetic (*jiajie*) loan characters, or use the idea that radicals with the same ancient pronunciation may substitute for one another (*pianpang cong mou de sheng*). They can further achieve consistency by reference to the idea that a single character may have been pronounced slowly, so as to be written down as two characters (*huan yin*), or that two characters may have been pronounced rapidly, so as to be written down as one character (*ji yin*) . . .

[415] Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 312.

> Consistency can also be achieved by extending Zheng Xuan's three concepts of *du ru*, *du wei*, and *dang wei* . . . or else they can substitute for each other two characters that in ancient rhyme books belonged to the same rhyme category . . . If this is still not enough, they achieve consistency with reference to the development of clerical script, or to the old explanations transmitted from teacher to teacher . . . They can also say that the text contains errors brought about by later generations of scholars, who made unnecessary omissions or additions . . .
>
> They invert and simplify, separate and combine, going through a hundred twists and turns. They willfully make farfetched interpretations that are fragmented and winding far off the point. Since they do not care about the actual meaning of the text, they pick up scholastic and impossible interpretations from all ages, and all of a sudden the whole text seems to be perfectly consistent. Naturally, evidential research scholars have also made some contributions, but there are many flaws in how they try too hard to make things fit together, connect that which should not be connected, and bring about disunity and confusion among their fellow scholars.[416]

Fang Dongshu did not necessarily intend to question the internal consistency and validity of these largely phonological techniques. Qing scholars undoubtedly contributed to the historical understanding of how language developed over time, and how the process of transmission influenced a written text. But when such techniques were indiscriminately applied to streamline the interpretive process and validate pre-existent assumptions, important factors such as semantic nuance and linguistic innovation were often overlooked. While there was a natural connection between the lexicological level of a text and the values for which it served as a vessel, Fang Dongshu emphasized that for analytical purposes these two levels must be kept separated and function as checks on each other.

This methodological argument positioned Fang Dongshu in direct opposition to Dai Zhen, who had been one of the more explicit proponents for abandoning the division between philology (*xungu*) and philosophy (*yili*). Many evidential research scholars held that the philosophical meaning of the *Classics* could be found only by a methodological

[416] Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 337-338.

sequence that began by establishing the meaning of each word, proceeded to the meaning of sentences, and thus gradually revealed the philosophical ideas that the text as a whole expressed.

Fang Dongshu, on the other hand, argued that whenever evidential research was not secretly guided by the partisan aim of rejecting their rivals, the relative neglect of value-based modes of interpretation led them into a conundrum of unverifiability. He asked: "If values are not taken as a yardstick, then how do they check that their lexicology is not mistaken?" (*Ruo bu yi yili wei zhi zhu, ze bi suo wei xungu zhe, an ke shi yi wu chamiu ye* 若不以義理為之主，則彼所謂訓詁者，安可恃以無差謬也).[417] Because of the many incompatible glosses along with other types of evidence and exegetical techniques that could be used to play around with received texts, it was sometimes necessary to look beyond the level of words and written characters when interpreting a text.

Evidential research practitioners often composed long essays on the meaning of a single character. Qian Daxin, for example, built an argument about the philosophy of the *Xunzi* around his own reinterpretation of the character *wei* 偽.[418] Ruan Yuan, similarly, wrote a couple of long essays on the meaning of *ren* 仁, which he interpreted using Zheng Xuan's gloss "people mutually concerned for each other" (*xiang ren ou* 相人偶).[419]

Fang Dongshu repeatedly stressed that words do not have a precisely fixed meaning in and of themselves, but are always defined by their context (*yan ge you dang* 言各有當).[420] There was more to the problem of "meaning" than what could be revealed by a dictionary definition. And when evidential research scholars had to resort to an array of interpretive techniques for resolving contradictions on the sentence level, the notion

[417] Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 320-321.
[418] Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 282.
[419] Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 304-305. On Qing dynasty interpretations of *ren*, see Elman, "Criticism as Philosophy: Conceptual Change in Ch'ing Dynasty Evidential Research," *Qinghua xuebao* 17.2 (1985): 164-198.
[420] Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 282, 337, and 405.

that characters carried more or less stable definitions that could be consistently applied throughout the classical corpus seemed even more questionable.[421]

Their assumption that a word had one original meaning that, once identified, could be mechanically (*zhi yi* 執一) applied to every occurrence of that word in the *Classics*, also counter-intuitively played a role in the problems evidential research scholars encountered when trying to reach interpretive consensus.[422] Various glosses could be found in the commentarial tradition for any of the more important words that appeared in the *Classics*. If the evidential research scholar was unwilling to accept a plurality of meanings for these words, then the *Classics* ended up with as many incompatible interpretations as there were glosses. Consequently, coupled with the aim to retrieve a single original meaning, the lack of a pronounced set of principles and values for choosing between conflicting options formed an internal tension in evidential research that was not easily resolved.

In lieu of other guiding values, Fang Dongshu argued, many of his contemporaries had no choice but to uncritically resort to a partisan (*menhu* 門戶) preference for certain historical exegetes and their works. In particular, many chose to accept the authority of definitions in the *Shuowen* dictionary.[423] The *Shuowen*, however, was an Eastern Han product, and those who relied on it must explain their choice not to follow earlier readings from the Western Han.[424]

Sun Xingyan's 孫星衍 (1753-1818) study of the *Shangshu*, for example, argued that even though the authentic Old Text *Shangshu* chapters were discovered in the Western Han, no one had been able to read them until the *Shuowen jiezi* appeared. In contrast, Fang Dongshu pointed to Xu Shen's 許慎 (58-147) *Shuowen* preface, which stated in no ambiguous terms that by the Eastern Han "the meaning of the *Classics* was already clear."[425] The *Shuowen* had used existent readings of the *Classics* to illuminate the meanings of characters, not the other way around.[426] Moreover, the *Shuowen* also

[421] Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 337.
[422] Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 336.
[423] Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 321.
[424] Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 333.
[425] Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 344.
[426] Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 335-336.

quoted variants of the same classical passage. Had Xu Shen intended to create a definitive tool for unifying interpretations of the *Classics*, why was he not even willing or able to decide between variants of the text?[427]

The *Shuowen* was a secondary source in a double sense. Firstly, because it explained characters based on their appearance in canonized texts, it did not constitute an independent source with which the *Classics* may be fruitfully compared. Secondly, because Xu Shen specifically mentioned the commentarial traditions that he followed, it could be assumed that he relied on existent explanations rather than on his own reading of the *Classics*. To substantiate this point, the *Hanxue shangdui* pointed out that Eastern Han scholars only occasionally agreed with explanations provided by the *Shuowen jiezi*, which apparently had not at all been seen as an authoritative source for textual interpretation.[428]

4.3 In Defense of the Old Text *Shangshu* and the Moral Mind

Authenticity debates surrounding the Old Text *Shangshu* have been connected to the advances of evidential research from Wu Cheng 吳澄 (1249-1333) and Mei Zhuo 梅鷟 (fl. 1513), whose work on the *Shangshu* was published only in the 1780s, to Yan Ruoqu's *Shangshu guwen shuzheng* 尚書古文疏證 (Evidential Analysis of the Old Text *Shangshu*) and Hui Dong's *Guwen Shangshu kao*. These works have also been regarded as predecessors to a strictly historical study of ancient texts undertaken by Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛 (1893-1980) and others in the early half of the 20th century.[429] In reaction to these Qing works, however, new arguments were also forwarded that questioned their lineage-oriented measures of validation.

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[427] Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 338.
[428] Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 336.
[429] Benjamin A. Elman, "Philosophy (I-LI) versus Philology (K'ao-cheng): The Jen-hsin tao-hsin Debate," *T'oung Pao* 69.4-5 (1983): 175-222; see also Liu Qiyu 劉起釪, *Shangshuxue shi* 尚書學史 (History of *Shangshu* Studies) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1989), 361-370; and Jiang Shanguo 蔣善國, *Shangshu zongshu* 尚書綜述 (General Account of the *Shangshu*) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1988), 300.

Authenticity and Textual Transmission of the Old Text Shangshu

As we have seen, Fang Dongshu found the pursuit of an original text and meaning of the *Classics* (*benjing benyi* 本經本義) preposterous, pointing out that not even Han dynasty scholars dared claim this kind of understanding.[430] Pre-Han and Han commentaries on the *Classics* made little effort to stay true to an original, as could be seen from the frequent paraphrases or adaptations of earlier texts in the *Mencius* and the *Shiji* in particular. The recovery of an original meaning had not been considered the main aim of learning in those historical periods. Fang Dongshu wrote:

> 必若前聖所未言，後聖不許增一辭，則後來安得有六經？前書所未及，後書所有不可信，則此《論語》之言，亦今文《堯典》所未有。（古人引書，多易原文為訓詁之辭。《孟子》、《史記》尤可見。世之俗士，執字句異同以疑古書，陋矣！）
> If later sages could not add a single phrase to what earlier sages had said, then how would the *Six Classics* have been written? If we cannot believe anything written in later books that was not already to be found in earlier books, then how to explain the fact that the *Analects* contains plenty of material not included in the New Text *Yaodian*? (When the ancients cited earlier works, they often substituted the original text with glosses that were more readily understood. This is especially evident in the *Mencius* and in the *Shiji*. Today's vulgar literati often suspect forgery of ancient books based on differences in characters and phrases used. This is so superficial!).[431]

No Chinese scholar through the ages had ever shown the kind of concern for preserving an original text and its authorial intention that Qing evidential research scholars allegedly did. "It has to be emphasized," Fang Dongshu said, "that when previous works were cited, people could not be bothered to stick closely to the original intention of those

[430] Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 362.
[431] Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 266.

works. On the occasion, they rather used everyday words to express themselves. There are countless examples of this throughout history." (*yao zhi houren yinshu, buxia shen wei benyi, gu qu kou er xiang xi yu cheng ci, gujin ruo ci, bu ke mei ju* 要知後人引書，不暇深惟本義，姑取口耳相習語成辭，古今若此，不可枚舉).[432]

Fang Dongshu was not the first critic of evidential research who used this argument against a strictly literal approach to the transmission of pre-Qin ideas. The argument can be traced back at least to the reappearance of Old Text *Shangshu* authenticity debates in the Early Qing,[433] and it is hardly a coincidence that it appeared in the writings of Fang Dongshu's ancestor and founder of the Tongcheng school, Fang Bao 方苞 (1668-1749). In the early half of the 18th century, Fang Bao wrote a short essay defending the Old Text *Shangshu*.[434] While Yan Ruoqu's *Shangshu guwen shuzheng* was not published until 1745, it is possible that Fang Bao had read Yan Ruoqu's work in manuscript form before that.[435] Fang Bao wrote:

> 先儒以《古文尚書》辭氣不類今文，而疑其偽者多矣 [. . .] 然則其辭氣不類今文何也？嘗觀《史記》所采《尚書》，於「肆覲東后」，則易之曰「遂見東方君長」[. . .] 如此類，不可毛舉。因是疑古文易曉，必秦、漢間儒者得其書，苦其奧澀，而稍以顯易之辭更之，其大體則固經之本文也 [. . .] 遷傳儒林曰：「孔氏有古文尚書，而安國以今文讀之，遂以起其家逸書。」而安國自序其書，謂「科斗書廢已久，時人無能知者。以所聞伏生之書，考論文義，定其可知者，增多二十五篇」。夫古文既不可知，僅就伏生之書以證而得之，則其本文缺漫及字體為伏生之書所不具者，不得不稍為增損，以足其辭，暢其指意。此增多二十五篇所以獨為易曉，而與伏生之書異與？然則遷所云「以今文讀之」者，即余所謂以顯易之辭通其奧澀，而非謂以隸書傳之也

[432] Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 307, and 359.
[433] Benjamin A. Elman, "Philosophy (I-LI) versus Philology (K'ao-cheng)."
[434] Fang Bao, "Du guwen *Shangshu*" 讀古文尚書 (Reading the Old Text *Shangshu*), vol. 1 of *Fang Bao ji* 方苞集 (Fang Bao's collected writings), ed. Liu Jigao (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1993), 1-2.
[435] I have not found Fang Bao's essay mentioned in his chronological biography, but some of the essays on the *Shangshu* that in the *Fang Bao ji* are grouped together with it are assumed to have been written no earlier than 1718. See Su Dunyuan 蘇惇元 (19th c.), *Qing Fang Wangxi xiansheng Bao nianpu* 清方望溪先生苞年譜 (Chronological biography of Fang Bao) (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1982), 28.

> Many scholars have already doubted the Old Text *Shangshu* on the grounds that its diction differs from the New Text version . . . But why does its diction differ from the New Text version? I have contemplated the fact that the *Shiji*, when quoting the *Shangshu*, alters "it was thus that he gave an audience to the eastern feudal lords" to read "then he met with the leaders from the east" . . . Such examples are too numerous to list one by one. I therefore suspect that the Old Text version is easy to understand because when scholars of the Qin and Han dynasties got their hands on these texts, they disliked their abstruseness and altered them slightly using simpler diction. In general, however, it was still the original text of the *Classic*. [---]
>
> [Sima] Qian wrote the biographies of scholars, and said: "The Kong family had an Old Text version of the *Shangshu*, and [Kong] Anguo deciphered it using modern script, thereby restoring his family's fragmented text."[436] [Kong] Anguo in the preface to his book said: "The tadpole script has long been in disuse, and among my contemporaries none know [how to decipher] it. I have used master Fu's transmitted text to determine its meaning and settle what can be known, thereby adding twenty-five *pian* [to the New Text version]."
>
> It was because the Old Text version could no longer be understood that he could only rely on master Fu's text for confirmation. Therefore, when there were missing or faint characters in his original text, or when certain paleographic variants differed from master Fu's text, he could but make slight additions or deletions to complete the phrases and elucidate their meaning. This is why only the additional twenty-five *pian* are easy to understand. But are they any different from master Fu's text? It can be seen that what [Sima] Qian meant by "[Kong] Anguo read it using modern script" was what I call penetrating the abstruse by using simple diction, not that it was transmitted in the clerical script.

Fang Bao did not deal thoroughly here with the textual evidence concerning the transmission of the Old Text *Shangshu*.[437] He disregarded the differing accounts in the

[436] *Shiji* 121.16. Variant readings of this passage are discussed in Michael Nylan, "The Ku Wen Documents in Han Times," *T'oung Pao* 81.1/3 (1995): 29.

[437] I will not evaluate Fang Bao's essay as an argument in the still living debate regarding the authenticity of the transmitted Old Text *Shangshu.* For a summary of the modern revival of doubt in the conclusion reached by Qing philologists, see Ding Ding 丁鼎, "Wei guwen *Shangshu* an pingyi" 偽古文尚書案平議 (Balanced Evaluation of the Forged Old Script *Shangshu* Case), *Guji zhengli yanjiu xuekan* 2 (2010): 1-8.

Hanshu and the *Lunheng* 論衡 (Discourses Balanced) that, although later than the *Shiji*, certainly predated the pseudo Kong Anguo preface that he did quote. The interesting part of Fang Bao's argument, however, was a suggestion that the division between "canon" (*jing* 經) and "commentary" (*zhuan* 傳) may not have been as obvious in the Western Han as Qing scholars commonly assumed.

Fang Bao's reading of the *Shiji* passage was influenced by his own "archaic prose" theory of literary expression.[438] The unification of form (*fa* 法) and content (*yi* 義) that he promoted was relevant here because it problematized the distinction between classical or historical authority (*jingshi* 經史) and creative individual expression (*wen* 文).[439] While Hui Dong viewed the oral transmission of a text like the New Text *Shangshu*, for example, as more or less equal to the character-by-character transmission of later commentarial traditions, Fang Bao imagined it rather as a loose transmission of ideas. When Fang Dongshu picked up this notion in the 19th century, it raised the question whether a text was always controllable against, and thus controlled by, a written predecessor, or if transmission (*shu* 述 or *chuan* 傳) may contain an element of innovation.[440]

Written in 1839, Fang Dongshu's *Zhaomei zhanyan* 昭昧詹言 (Ramblings on the Clear and the Obscure) evaluated past literature from this theoretical standpoint. While Fang spoke of the relative authenticity of literary works, he did not define authenticity in lineage-oriented terms of origin and transmission, and did not pass judgment based on how closely a work followed a given tradition or genre. Instead, authenticity was measured by

[438] For an interesting account that combines Qing literary and intellectual history, see Theodore Huters, "Writing to Literature: The Development of Late Qing Theories of Prose," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 47.1 (1987): 51-96.

[439] Duan Xizhong 段熙仲 (1897-1987) demonstrated that Fang Bao's ideas on the relationship between form and content, primarily in relation to *Chunqiu*-studies and historiography, only by later generations was transformed into the narrow conception of aesthetic theory that came to be known as the Tongcheng school (*Tongcheng pai* 桐城派). See Duan Xizhong, "Lun Tongcheng pai de yifa shuo jiqi shizhi" 論桐城派的義法說及其實質 (On the Actual Implications of the Tongcheng School Form-and-Content Theory), in *Tongcheng pai yanjiu lunwen ji* 桐城派研究論文集 (Collected Research Papers on the Tongcheng School) (Anhui: Anhui renmin chubanshe, 1963), 93-108.

[440] Cf. Kern, "Methodological Reflections on the Analysis of Textual Variants and the Modes of Manuscript Production in Early China," *Journal of East Asian Archaeology* 4.1-4 (2002): 167.

the author's sincerity in the creative act.[441] The same standard applied to the literary critic, who should not allow himself to get bogged down in an overzealous search for the original text or its meaning. The pursuit of authorial intention, Fang Dongshu argued, was doomed to failure. While some scholars argued this and some argued that, the author himself was dead and would never reappear to settle the matter. Therefore, the study of literature must proceed from the reader, and the goal of textual studies must be to create something useful for contemporaries and future generations.[442]

Fang Dongshu developed his Tongcheng predecessor's ideas into an argument for validity that was not based on a text's particular provenance or intellectual pedigree. This approach was also used to defend the authenticity, by his own definition, of certain sections in the Old Text *Shangshu*.[443] Fang Dongshu wrote:

> 愚嘗反覆究思之，無論偽古文足信與否，《荀子》所引足重與否，只此二語，即出於巷說里諺，亦當平心審諦，斷然信其精粹無疵，不詭於道，足以質古聖而無疑，而無庸代為周防也。何基有言，治經當謹守精玩，不必多起疑論，有欲為後學言者，謹之又謹，可也。此足為黃氏、顧氏藥石矣。
>
> I have turned this issue over and over in my mind, and it does not matter whether the Old Text [*Shangshu*] can be trusted or not, nor whether [the book that] *Xunzi* cited can be taken seriously. Even if these two phrases [i.e., the human mind is precarious; the moral mind is subtle] arose from street rumors and village gossip, one should still evaluate them with an even mind and will surely find them trustworthy in their flawless purity. They do not betray the Way and without doubt substantiate the teachings of the ancient sages.[444]

According to Fang Dongshu, it was unnecessary to ask whether the *Classics* were indeed

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[441] Liu Zhiqing 劉芝慶, "'Wenzhang yao you benling': Fang Dongshu lun Han-Song zhi zheng" 「文章要有本領」：方東樹論漢宋之爭 ("Writings must have an essence": Fang Dongshu on the Han-Song debate), *Zhanghua shida guowen xuezhi* 28 (2014): 135-160.
[442] Fang, "Da Ye Pu qiu lun guwen shu" 答葉溥求論古文書 (Letter in Response to Ye Pu's Request to Discuss Archaic Prose), in *Yiweixuan wenji*, 7.22a-b.
[443] Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 266.
[444] Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 266. Translation adapted from Elman, "Philosophy versus Philology," 218.

the works of sage-authors.[445] What mattered were not origins *per se*, but the ability to recognize the problems that men had faced under different historical circumstances, and to apply those historical lessons in the present.[446]

Lineage Orientation and the Threat of Relativism

Fang Dongshu held that the Way should be defined in positive terms, not by means of exclusion. For example, one was not a Confucian just by virtue of opposing Buddhism. Good and evil were not to be ideologically defined, but were rooted in individuals regardless of what belief they professed to. Competing ideologies were just like the kingdoms of the Warring States period, each with their own natural resources, languages, and customs. Fang hoped that Confucianism would envelop alternative ideologies just as Qin eventually enveloped the various states, putting an end to the in-fighting. But even so, just as regional particularities may continue their existence under a unified rule, various belief systems should also be allowed to coexist.[447]

Instead of attacking alternative belief systems, Fang Dongshu argued, educated men should focus on identifying contemporary problems and solving them. None would argue that all bad men were Buddhists, or that all Confucians were loyal and filial, and yet some believed that problems could be solved by denigrating alternative ideologies. Mencius criticized the Mohists because they were the crucial problem in his day, and Han Yu criticized Buddhism because it was a major issue in the Tang, but the problems of the 19th century, Fang argued, were different.

In his contemporary society, Fang Dongshu found exclusionism and the pursuit of personal fame to be among the most pressing problems, far more damaging than the continued existence of Buddhism or other belief systems.[448] But even as he exposed the hollowness of Han Learning and evidential research, Fang Dongshu feared that a backlash against that movement would redirect students and researchers to the other extreme of Lu-

[445] Fang, *Hanxue shangdui*, 289.
[446] Fang, *Yiweixuan wenji*, 1.3a.
[447] Fang, "Bian dao lun" 辨道論 (On Discriminating the Way), in *Yiweixuan wenji*, 1.5b-6b.
[448] Fang, *Yiweixuan wenji*, 1.7a-7b.

Wang individualism.[449] "As long as men's minds drown in the pursuit of power and profit," Fang said with reference to the Han Learning scholars of his day, "they can be convinced to turn around, but once their minds drown in their own opinions, there will be no turning back" (*renxin niyu shili zhe ke hui, er niyu yijian zhe bu ke hui ye* 人心溺於勢利者可回，而溺於意見者不可回也).[450]

As the *Hanxue shangdui* demonstrated, evidential research failed to produce moral consensus, giving rise only to a mass of incompatible positions and scholastic debate. Having nothing to depend on, students held stubbornly to their own opinions and forced the evidence to support them. As a result, the evidential research slogan of "impartiality" was lost to a form of evidentially supported relativism.

Fang Dongshu never formulated a solution to this problem. Having exposed the lineage-oriented partisanship of Han Learning, and even noted how such an approach derived from Cheng-Zhu *daoxue*, he never criticized the latter. As a result of this blindspot and despite his critique of intellectual exclusionism, Fang Dongshu never formulated a pluralistic conception of cultural unity, and found no independent position from which to voice his objections. Such a position was later found by Chen Li, Fang's younger contemporary in Guangdong, who further developed many of the ideas that have been discussed in this chapter.

[449] Fang, *Yiweixuan wenji*, 1.7b-8a; see also Tien Fu-Mei 田富美, *Fang Dongshu ruxue sixiang de yi ge cemian: bian Lu-Wang yi gui Cheng-Zhu* 方東樹儒學思想的一個側面：辨陸王以歸程朱 (An Aspect of Fang Dongshu's Confucian Thought: Criticize Lu-Wang to return to Cheng-Zhu), *Chengda zhongwen xuebao* 40 (2013): 169-206.
[450] Fang, *Yiweixuan wenji*, 1.8a.

CHAPTER 5: CHEN LI

Chen Li 陳澧 (1810-1882) became a "raised scholar" (*juren* 舉人) at 23 *sui* as the result of a provincial examination in 1832, but he never attained the status of presented scholar.[451] He was one of many in the Qing dynasty for whom the civil examinations became a psychological nightmare.[452] By the time of his seventh attempt in 1852, Chen Li felt disillusioned. In a letter sent from the capital to his nephew, he expressed his feelings after writing the examination:

> 我自問今年必不中，所以仍來此者，以吾姪尚未舉於鄉故也。我此後絕不再來會試，吾姪當努力，蓋今人之重科名，亦古人重門第之遺意，是以科名未可輕也。然我年過四十，又筋力漸不如前，頗覺場中辛苦難受，此後斷不踏棘闈矣。三場策題問小學、音韻、及禹貢水道，我十年來所學在此，各條對千餘言，可見讀古書於舉業未必無用，其獲雋與否有命存焉，可不計也。
>
> I am prepared to fail this year. The reason I still came here was that you, my nephew, have not yet passed the provincial examination. After this, I will not take the metropolitan examinations again; so you, my nephew, should exert yourself.
>
> I suppose one could say that the importance today's men attach to examination success is a leftover from the importance the ancients attached to their family pedigree. For this reason, success in the examinations is not to be taken lightly. But I have already passed 40 *sui* and my strength is not what it used to be, so that the examination hall to me is exhausting and unpleasant. I will not set my foot in an examination room ever again.
>
> The third session policy questions were on philology, phonology, and waterways in the "Yugong" chapter. These are precisely what I have spent the last decade researching, so for each question my answer was over a thousand words long. From this it is clear that reading the ancient texts is

[451]Wang Zongyan 汪宗衍, "Chen Dongshu xiansheng nianpu" 陳東塾先生年譜 (Chronological Biography of Chen Li), *Lingnan xuebao* 4.1 (1935): 55-118.

[452] Benjamin Elman has described the growing gap in importance between *juren* and *jinshi* degrees over the course of the Qing dynasty. See Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations*, 366; and Elman, "The Social Roles of Literati in Early to mid-Ch'ing," vol. 9 of *The Cambridge History of China*, ed. Willard J. Peterson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 386.

> not useless for examination purposes after all. Whether I succeed or not depends on fate and is of little concern.[453]

Later that year, having failed once again, Chen Li wrote: "It really was not that I did not want to serve as an official, but I failed the examinations once again. It was at that point I first decided not to serve at all." (*Li fei bu yu chu zhe, er you bu zhong, zhi shi er shi you bu chu zhi yi ye* 澧真非不欲出者，而又不中，至是而始有不出之意也).[454] At the age of 43 *sui*, Chen Li had to search for other paths and purposes that might lend meaning to a life spent reading books.

Chen Li had been a principal (*xuezhang* 學長) at the Xuehaitang Academy since the age of 31 *sui*. He had written various works primarily on historical phonology, and at 40 *sui* impressed New Text scholar and statecraft thinker Wei Yuan with his knowledge of waterways, to the extent that the latter allegedly revised his *Haiguo tuzhi* 海國圖志 (Illustrated Handbook of Maritime Countries) based on Chen Li's corrections.[455]

As early as 1844, however, at an age of 35 *sui* Chen Li's attitude to scholarship had taken a turn away from both evidential research and the civil examinations. That year he failed the metropolitan examinations a fifth time, and on his way back to Guangzhou from the capital he visited the aging Ruan Yuan in Yangzhou. Around the same time, he began to read the collected writings of Zhu Xi and decided to distance himself from the "contemporary learning" (*jinshi zhi xue* 近時之學) that he had devoted his efforts to at the Xuehaitang Academy.[456]

In 1854, countryside rebels raided nearby cities as part of the Red Turban uprising, and laid siege to Guangzhou itself. In the third month of the same year, Chen Li's perhaps closest friend Gui Wenyao 桂文燿 (d. 1854) passed away, an event that had a deep

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[453] Quoted from Wang, "Chen Dongshu xiansheng nianpu," 78.
[454] Chen Li, "Yu Huang Liya shu" 與黃理厓書, in *Dongshu xuji* 東塾續集 (Collected Writings from Dongshu, continued) (Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1972), 256.
[455] See Wang, "Chen Dongshu xiansheng nianpu," 75. It is unclear, however, if Wei Yuan really took Chen Li's suggestions into account when revising the *Haiguo tuzhi*. See Wang Huirong 王惠荣, "Wei Yuan ju Chen Li shu xiugai *Haiguo tuzhi* shuo zhiyi" 魏源據陳澧書修改海國圖志說質疑 (Doubts Regarding Wei Yuan Amending the *Haiguo tuzhi* According to Chen Li's Letter), *Anhui shixue* 4 (2006).
[456] Wang, "Chen Dongshu xiansheng nianpu," 69.

psychological impact on Chen Li.[457] In the summer that same year he fled with his family from Chen Xianliang's 陳顯良 (n.d.) army that occupied Guangzhou.[458] While the rebellion was struck down the following year, in 1856 the Second Opium War broke out. French and British troops occupied the area of the Xuehaitang Academy in the winter of 1856-57, during which several writings by Cantonese scholars were lost in flames along with a large portion of the original *Huang Qing jingjie* woodblocks.[459]

Fearing that his own manuscripts would also be lost in the turmoil, Chen Li authored a preface for his *Han Ru tongyi* 漢儒通義 (Comprehensive Meanings of Han Classicists), which was published and circulated in a not entirely finished 1858 edition.[460] With this compilation he hoped to bring out the philosophical content of Han thought.[461] A letter that his biographer Wang Zongyan dates to the same year suggests that Chen Li had already begun to compose what would be his next major work—the *Xuesi lu* 學思錄 (Record of Study and Reflection). Chen Li remarked on his intentions, saying:

> 僕之為此書也，以擬《日知錄》，足下所素知也。《日知錄》上帙經學、中帙治法、下帙博聞,僕之書但論學術而已。僕之才萬不及亭林，且明人學問寡陋，故亭林振之以博聞。近儒則博聞者固已多矣。至於治法亦不敢妄談，非無意於天下事也，以為政治由於人才，人才由於學術。吾之書專明學術，幸而傳於世，庶幾讀書明理之人多，其出而從政者，必有濟於天下。此其効在數十年之後者也。
>
> As you already know, I write this book in imitation of the *Rizhilu* 日知錄 (Record of Daily Study). The first volume of the *Rizhilu* concerned classical studies, the second volume statecraft, and the third volume broad knowledge. But my book discusses only scholarship. My talent is a far cry from that of Gu Yanwu; moreover, the learning of Ming scholars was narrow and poor, which was why Gu Yanwu tried to inspire them with broad knowledge. But among modern scholars there are many already with broad knowledge.

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[457] Chen Li's repeated lamentations of Gui Wenyao's death and his own solitude are much different from the language of formalized obituaries. See Chen Li, *Chen Lanfu xiansheng Li yigao* 陳蘭甫先生澧遺稿 (Chen Li's Posthumous Manuscripts), *Lingnan xuebao* 2.2 (1931): 151-153.
[458] Wang, "Chen Dongshu xiansheng nianpu," 80.
[459] See the account in Stephen B. Miles, *The Sea of Learning: Mobility and Identity in Nineteenth-Century Guangzhou* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 2006), 171-175.
[460] See Wang, "Chen Dongshu xiansheng nianpu," 85.
[461] Wang, "Chen Dongshu xiansheng nianpu," 83.

> As for statecraft, I dare not amateurishly discuss it. It is not that my thoughts are not on the affairs of the realm, but I believe that government depends on talented men, and talented men depend on scholarship. My book specializes in elucidating scholarship, and if with good fortune it were to be circulated among a generation, those who read books and understand how things hang together will be many. Those among them who enter officialdom and serve in government will surely aid the realm. This is why it will have effect only after several decades.[462]

Chen Li had a strong sense of social and political responsibility, but having lived through the chaotic upheavals of the mid-1850s he dared no longer discuss a political world that he had little experience of and no power to influence directly.

The outcomes of Guangzhou literati debates that preceded the First Opium War (1839-42), regarding whether to legalize or forbid opium, had left Chen Li suspicious of collaboration between the worlds of scholarship and politics. He wrote:

> 余所以不敢為經濟之說者，吾能言之而無權位，不能施用之。他人取吾言而施用，或有過差以亂天下，是可懼也。如溫伊初著論禁鴉片，黃樹齊奏之，林少穆行之，遂亂天下矣，不可不戒也。
>
> The reason why I dare not discuss policy is that even though I may speak of it, I am not in a position of power and cannot put it into action. If others were to use my words and act on them, they may commit mistakes and conversely bring chaos to the realm. This is to be dreaded. For example, Wen Xun 溫訓 (1787-1857) first wrote about forbidding opium and Huang Juezi presented this idea in a memorial [in 1838]. Lin Zexu 林則徐 (1785-1850) then put it into action and brought chaos to the realm. One cannot but be admonished.[463]

It was largely the factionalist efforts of the Spring Purification Circle and Lin Zexu that in 1840 pressured the Qing government into a diplomatic and military confrontation with the

[462] Chen Li, "Yu Hu Boji shu" 與胡伯薊書, in *Dongshu ji* 東塾集 (Collected Writings from Dongshu) (Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1970), 274-275.
[463] Chen Li, " Chen Lanfu xiansheng Li yigao" (1931): 160. For a discussion of the issue, see Huang Jianmin 黃健敏, "Yapian zhanzheng qian Guangdong Xuehaitang xuezhang guanyu yapian wenti de taolun" 鴉片戰爭前廣東學海堂學長關於鴉片問題的討論 (Discussions on Opium Among Xuehaitang Principals Before the First Opium War), *Guangdong shizhi* (2003).

British over the opium question.[464] As Polachek demonstrated, that decision derived from literati activism more than from the imperial bureaucracy, and this aggressive policy toward the British stood in stark contrast to the legalization of opium that Ruan Yuan promoted from within bureaucratic channels.[465] This latter attitude was also representative of the Xuehaitang Academy in general, from whose members Ruan Yuan received support.

Although Huang Juezi was not the originator of the idea to forbid opium, he had been the first to present a memorial on the subject and became a central figure around which many Cantonese literati mobilized.[466] The core of this group was located in the Yuehua Academy, where Lin Zexu resided and held a special examination in 1839, from which students at the Xuehaitang Academy found themselves excluded.[467] Wen Xun, upon whose ideas Huang Juezi based his memorial, had been one of Chen Li's fellow students at the Xuehaitang Academy, and they both graduated from the 1832 provincial examination under Cheng En'ze 程恩澤 (1785-1837). It was therefore a strange turn of events when a policy suggestion originating from the Xuehaitang Academy was carried out by a political faction that expressly opposed and excluded Xuehaitang members.

From Chen Li's perspective, the outbreak of the First Opium War could not be blamed entirely on any one individual, nor on the central government as opposed to the localities. Rather, it was the unfortunate result of an entanglement of interests between academic partisanship and policy-making. His personal experience and convictions turned Chen Li into a proponent of educational departmentalization to cut the ties between scholarship and political factionalism. With regard to his own life and work, Chen Li wrote:

> 仁以為己任，不亦重乎，死而後已，不亦遠乎。著書以示後之學者，亦仁術也。澧近年最有得於任字，嘗為星垣言之。人各有任，我輩窮而在下，又已明此學，雖欲不任，不可得也。
> To take humaneness (*ren* 仁) as one's own responsibility (*ren* 任), is that not a heavy burden? To die and only then to stop, does that not seem distant? To write books and instruct future students is also a matter of humaneness.

[464] Polachek, *The Inner Opium War,* 102.
[465] Polachek, *The Inner Opium War,* 113.
[466] Polachek, *The Inner Opium War,* 119.
[467] Polachek, *The Inner Opium War,* 147-148.

> Over the past few years, my greatest insights have been regarding the word "responsibility," and I once told Gui Wenyao about it. Each man has his responsibility. We, the men of our generation, are at our limits and in low position, but we already understand what this learning is about. Although we may not desire to shoulder this responsibility, we cannot avoid it.[468]

Chen Li spent over two decades working on the *Record of Study and Reflection*, but did not complete it before his death. Instead, he published part of the work in 1880 under the title *Dongshu dushu ji* 東塾讀書記 (Reading Notes from Dongshu).[469] He said that like Sima Qian, he wanted to "compose a philosophical (*zi* 子) work that comprehensively discussed the strengths and weaknesses of classical studies throughout the ages, and its relation to the prosperity and decline of worldly affairs" (*zhu yi zi shu, tonglun gujin Ruxue deshi, guan hu shishi shengshuai* 著一子書，通論古今儒學得失，關乎世事盛衰).[470] In this work, more than in any other, he systematized and provided meticulously collected evidence for his philosophy of pluralism and the departmentalization of knowledge.

An examination of the *Dongshu dushu ji* and Chen Li's posthumously published manuscripts illuminates this philosophy as it reached mature shape in the 1860s and 1870s. It also sheds light on the state of Chinese evidential research in the 19th century and the problems that confronted Chinese thinkers of that period, problems that sometimes, but certainly not always or even primarily, concerned the influx of Western values and ideas.

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[468] See his third letter to Xu Ziyuan in Chen Li, "Yu Xu Ziyuan shu ershiyi shou" 與徐子遠書二十一首 (Twenty-One Letters to Xu Ziyuan), in *Dongshu xuji*, 177.

[469] Wang, "Chen Dongshu xiansheng nianpu," 85. On the relationship between the *Xue si lu* and the *Dongshu dushu ji*, see Chao Mei-shiou 曹美秀, "Chen Li de weixue yu zhushu licheng" 陳澧的為學與著書歷程 (The Development of Chen Li's Research and Writings), *Donghua renwen xuebao* 15 (2009): 151-157.

[470] Chen Li, *Dongshu ji*, 255. Wang Zongyan dates this letter to 1862. On taking Sima Qian as a model, see Chen Li, *Chen Lanfu xiansheng Li yigao*, in *Lingnan xuebao* 2.3 (1932): 180.

5.1 Rejecting Lineage-Oriented Narratives

Chen Li was an avid admirer of Han Yu's writings, and many of his core values derived in part from readings of this Tang dynasty scholar and writer. Despite this, there was one aspect of Han Yu's thought that Chen Li expressly opposed. In his famous essay on the "Origins of the Way" (*Yuan dao*), Han Yu stated that the ancient values he wished to see revived had been transmitted from the sage-kings of antiquity to the early Zhou rulers, and subsequently to Confucius, but lost after the death of Mencius.

This theme was picked up again in the Northern Song by Cheng Yi, who claimed that his brother Cheng Hao retrieved the sage's lost teachings from remnants preserved in the *Classics*.[471] Zhu Xi reinforced the claim in his preface to the *Zhongyong zhangju*, arguing that the Cheng brothers had revived the teachings lost after Mencius' death. By making the *Analects* and the *Mencius* central to his philosophy and discrediting other pre-Qin masters, Zhu Xi had considered himself an heir to this intellectual lineage. After the death of Mencius, he claimed, ancient values had been mixed up with Daoist and Buddhist thought until almost unrecognizable. This set of ideas, as we have seen, formed the basis of an exclusivist lineage orientation in Cheng-Zhu *daoxue*.

Chen Li thought that such exclusive reliance on the *Classics*, the *Analects*, and the *Mencius* placed unnecessary canonical constraints on historical inquiry and the illumination of moral ideals.[472] What was the basis for claiming that the transmission of the teachings had died with Mencius? The many great men and moral exemplars in the miscellaneous writings and dynastic histories of any historical period, from the Qin to the present, bore witness not to a constant decline in moral ideals and practice, but to their uninterrupted transmission. In the *Reading Notes from Dongshu*, Chen Li wrote:

> 程伊川為《明道先生墓表》云「孟軻死，聖人之學不傳」，「千載無

[471] Cheng Yi, "Mingdao xiansheng mubiao" 明道先生墓表 (Epitaph to Master Mingdao), in *Er Cheng ji*, 639-640.

[472] Chen Li, *Xuesi ziji* 學思自記 (Personal Notes of Study and Reflection), vol. 2 of *Chen Li ji* 陳澧集 (Chen Li's Collected Works), ed. Huang Guosheng (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2008), 759:15; 766:34; see also Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu lunxue zhaji* 東塾讀書論學札記 (Notes of Reading and Lecturing at Dongshu), vol. 2 of *Chen Li ji*, 398:214; and Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji* 東塾讀書記 (Reading Notes from Dongshu), vol. 2 of *Chen Li ji*, 64.

真儒」。「人欲肆而天理滅。先生生於千四百年之後，得不傳之學於遺經」。魏鶴山云：「千數百年間，何可謂無人？往往孤立寡儔，倡焉而莫之和也，絕焉而莫之續也。」……。王順渠《文錄》云孟子後，「千載無真儒。宋儒有是言，余每讀之戚然。姑就漢一代言之，董、賈兼文學、政事之科，蕭、曹、丙、魏，皆有政事之才，至於孔明，則兼四科而有之矣。黃叔度不言而化，如愚之流輩也。管幼安龍德而隱，陳太丘、郭有道、徐孺子，皆德行科人。至晉及唐，代不乏人。今一舉而空之曰「無真儒」。嗚呼！悠悠千載，向誰晤語？」…… 澧謂漢唐人且可不論，而先無以處濂溪也。

In his "Epitaph to Master Mingdao," Cheng Yi said: "After the death of Mencius, the learning of the sages was no longer transmitted," and "for a thousand years there had not been a true Confucian." "Heavenly Coherence succumbed to unbridled human desire. Master [Mingdao] was born 1400 years later, and recovered the lost teachings from the fragmented texts of the *Classics*."

Wei Liaoweng (1178-1237) said: "How can one say that in a thousand years and a few centuries there was not a single person with achievement in this regard? Often they have stood alone without companions, sung without anyone to pick up the tune, and died without a successor." . . . Wang Dao's (mid-16th c.) *Record of Prose Writings* also held that "The saying among Song Confucians that 'after Mencius, for a thousand years there had not been a true Confucian' pains my heart each time I read it. For the moment to just speak of the Han dynasty, Dong Zhongshu (179-104) and Jia Yi (200-168) excelled in both the fields of book learning and politics. Xiao He (257-193), Cao Can (d. 190 BC), Bing Ji (d. 55 BC), and Wei Xiang (d. 59 BC) were all talented in politics. As for Zhuge Kongming (181-234), he attained excellence in all four fields ["moral conduct" (*dexing* 德行), "rhetoric" (*yanyu* 言語), "politics" (*zhengshi* 政事), "book learning" (*wenxue* 文學)]. Huang Shudu (Eastern Han), the like of the simple-minded [Yan Hui], transformed men without speech. (Guan You'an 158-241) had a dragon's virtue but retired. Chen Taiqiu (104-187), Guo Youdao (128-169), and Xu Ruzi (97-168) all excelled in the field of moral conduct. Reaching the Jin and Tang, no generation lacked its men. But now they are all turned into empty names by saying that 'there were no real Confucians.' Alas, who then is there to talk to over more than a thousand years?" . . .

In my opinion, even if we, for the moment, do not speak of men between the Han and Tang dynasties, [*the daotong* narrative] cannot even

account for Zhou Dunyi.[473]

Quoting representative Song and Ming dynasty critics of Cheng Yi's unrestrained elevation of his brother's spiritual accomplishment and concomitant denial of alternative knowledge, Chen Li rejected the exclusivist rhetoric of a ruptured transmission of values.

Song Dynasty Citation Practices and the Continuity of Knowledge

Chen Li demonstrated that Zhu Xi's commentaries with particular frequency followed the glosses and interpretations of his Han dynasty predecessors, even as he had not explicitly recognized his debts to them.[474] Compiled and partly completed under Zhu Xi's supervision, the *Yili jingzhuan tongjie* 儀禮經傳通解 (Comprehensive Analysis of the Classic and Commentary of the Ceremonies and Rituals) was based almost completely on Han-Tang commentaries.[475] It did not, however, provide clear references to its sources.

One could argue that a lack of reference to sources was the convention of a specific format; after all, Song scholars should not be evaluated against the academic standards of Qing scholarship. But while citation practices could be understood (and the lack of them therefore pardoned) from a developmental perspective, such formal qualities also betrayed a certain attitude to the past. A passage in the *Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類 (Classified Sayings of Zhu Xi), which claimed that no reliable sources existed for the study of ancient ritual, also indicated that Zhu Xi's lack of attribution could not be fully explained by the immaturity of academic communities and scientific practices in his time. This type of statement coupled with the lack of clear quotation practices suggested the continued influence on Song scholars by Han Yu's narrative of a significant break in the transmission of Chinese cultural values.

The unacknowledged debt of Song scholarship to its Han-Tang predecessors, Chen Li showed, was not limited to the use of philological glosses. Through careful

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[473] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 64.
[474] Chen Li, *Xuesi lu xumu* 學思錄序目 (On the Structure of the *Xuesi lu*), vol. 2 of *Chen Li ji*, 773:3; and Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 38-39.
[475] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 151.

comparison he demonstrated that much of the philosophical content in Zhu Xi's and other Song scholars' work had already been discussed, albeit less systematically, in imperially sanctioned commentaries from the Tang dynasty.[476] The abundant material on Han philosophy that Chen Li collected in the *Hanru tongyi*, moreover, lent evidential support to the conclusion that no cultural interruption of the sort claimed by Han Yu or Zhu Xi had ever occurred.[477]

Was it then possible to argue that Song scholars had built a bridge over the allegedly corrupt interpretations of Han-Tang scholars, and returned to the origins of Confucius' and Mencius' thought? Their ideas did not emerge from thin air, but were in fact deeply rooted in the trajectory of Han-Tang classicism. The claim to exclusivity among Song dynasty *daoxue* scholars, as Chen Li understood it, had been largely ideological and representative of a lineage-oriented approach to knowledge.

Citation Practices in Qing Evidential Research

The importance of textual evidence to support interpretive claims in Qing evidential research made its practitioners' writings look very different from those of their Song dynasty predecessors. The precise quotation of sources has justifiably been considered characteristic of Qing scholarship. It has also been seen as a marker of scientific consciousness, and it has been argued that transformations in citation practices throughout Chinese history was a linear evolution towards a modern academic milieu, where it supposedly functions as a safeguard against plagiarism.

The detailed study of citation and attribution in scholarly work can also serve to unveil the attitudes of individual thinkers to tradition and how they envisioned and positioned themselves in relation to it. During the Qing dynasty a rather detailed set of quotation practices eventually became a formal requirement in presenting research results, and enabled a community of scholars to critically scrutinize evidence in its original context.

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[476] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 179-180.
[477] On this work, see Chao Mei-shiou, "Chen Li *Hanru tongyi* xilun" 陳澧《漢儒通義》析論 (Analysis of Cheng Li's *Hanru tongyi*), *Zhongguo wenzhe yanjiu jikan* 30 (2007): 267-306.

The primary function of evidential research, Chen Li held, was to identify precedents and authorities in support of an argument. In this sense, Qing practices paralleled the Han dynasty emphasis on intellectual lineages and the continuity of teacher-disciple transmission. Even in Warring States texts like the *Mencius*, Chen Li pointed out, one could see this method employed, when quotations from the *Classics* were used to support an argument. In some of the masters texts a kind of "citation pattern" was even visible that framed an argument between an initial "the Master said" (*zi yue*) and a final classical quotation.[478]

At first glance, therefore, it looked as though evidential research scholars in the Qing dynasty differed from their Song dynasty predecessors by affirming the successful transmission of knowledge through history. If such were the case, evidential research methodology would seem quite incompatible with the narrative of broken transmission that Han Yu, Cheng Yi, and Zhu Xi had all, for various purposes, embraced.

But Chen Li also argued that while both Song *daoxue* and Qing evidential research relied on transmitted knowledge to build their arguments, they also shared the same weakness of failing to explicitly recognize their indebtedness to the past. Chen Li's reading of Tang commentaries, for example, suggested that long before Yan Ruoqu and Hui Dong, the Tang compilers of the *Correct Meanings of the Shangshu* were already aware that the received Old Text *Documents* was not the original pre-Qin text. He wrote:

> 偽古文襲用諸經傳之語，閻百詩、惠定宇皆臚舉之，然孔疏已有指出者矣。《旅獒》「為山九仞，功虧一簣」，孔疏云：「《論語》云：『譬如為山，未成一簣』，猶不為山，故曰為山功虧一簣。」「犬馬非其土性不畜」，孔疏云：「僖十五年《左傳》言晉侯乘鄭馬，及戰，陷於濘。是非此土所生，不習其用也。犬不習用，傳記無文。」「所寶惟賢」，孔疏云：「《楚語》王孫圉對趙簡子曰：楚之所寶者，觀射父及左史倚相。此楚國之寶也，是謂寶賢也。」《微子之命》「曰篤不忘」，孔疏云：「僖十二年《左傳》王命管仲之辭曰：『謂督不忘。』」澧案：如此之類，孔疏於偽古文剿襲古經傳之迹，已指出之矣。

[478] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 54. Cf. Martin Kern, "Quotation and the Confucian Canon in Early Chinese Manuscripts: The Case of 'Zi Yi' (Black Robes)," *Asiatische Studien* 59.1 (2005): 293-332.

> Yan Ruoqu and Hui Dong enumerated all instances where the forged Old Text [*Shangshu*] copied sections from the various *Classics* and their commentaries. However, already Kong Yingda's (574-648) subcommentary pointed out such cases. The "Hounds of Lü" (*Lü'ao*) chapter of the *Shangshu* contains the passage: "[It is like] failing to add the last basketful of dirt when building a mountain of nine *ren*." Kong Yingda's subcommentary said: "The *Analects* contains the passage 'like building a mountain and failing to add a basketful of dirt.'" This is the same as not building the mountain at all, and therefore it says 'failing to add a basketful of dirt.' [The "Hounds of Lü" also contains the passage] "Dogs and horses are not to be raised in natural environments that do not suit them." Kong Yingda's commentary says: "Under the 15th year of Duke Xi, the *Zuo Commentary* speaks of a lord from Jin who rode a horse from Zheng, and how when it came to battle he fell into the mud. This was because [the horse] was not born in that land, and thus not used to it. There is no record in the commentary about dogs not being used to the land."
>
> [There is also the passage]: "He treasures only the worthy." Kong Yingda's subcommentary said: "In the 'Discourses of Chu' [chapter of the *Guoyu*], Wang Sunyu said to Zhao Jianzi that what the state of Chu treasured was Guan Yifu and Zuoshi Yixiang. They were the treasures of Chu, and this is what was meant by treasuring the worthy." The "Charge to Weizi" (*Weizi zhi ming*) chapter of the *Shangshu* contains the passage: "It will truly not be forgotten." Kong Yingda's subcommentary said: "In the *Zuo Commentary*, under the 12th year of Duke Xi, the king charges Guan Zhong with the words 'it will truly not be forgotten'."
>
> I [Chen Li] comment: From cases like these we can see that already Kong Yingda's subcommentary noted how the forged Old Text *Shangshu* copied passages from the *Classics* and their commentaries.[479]

Chen Li recognized the value of Yan Ruoqu's and Hui Dong's contributions to the authenticity debate. They had been the first to write an extensive and systematic account of the evidence against the authenticity of the Old Text *Shangshu*. But Chen Li stressed that their text-critical attitude was not revolutionary or unprecedented, and that the failure of Yan Ruoqu and Hui Dong to recognize such predecessors either demonstrated their ignorance of the commentarial tradition, or represented deliberate plagiarism. Both

[479] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 98.

possibilities showed how selective Qing scholars were in choosing what parts of tradition to embrace or distance themselves from.

As anyone looking close enough could see, the philological research of Qing scholars by no means invalidated the work of Tang-Song or even Ming writers and commentators. Acknowledged or not, their scholarship built on this continuous historical tradition. An attitude of invalidating predecessors, Chen Li thought, only led to a decline in terms of respect for and knowledge of the past.

Another example, similar to that of the Old Text *Shangshu* debate, was Jiang Sheng's *Shangshu jizhu yinshu*, which almost never cited the *Shangshu* commentary by Cai Shen that was used for the civil examinations, while in fact frequently following the innovations of that Song dynasty work and its departures from the pseudo-Kong Anguo commentary.[480] Consequently, while Qing evidential research scholars pretended to build a bridge back to the Han dynasty over a long period of "empty speculation" during the Song-Ming dynasties, this often just amounted to ignoring and burying the contributions of Song scholarship that they consciously or not relied on.

Chen Li acknowledged the advances made by Qing evidential research, especially in the fields of historical phonology and geography, but they represented no "epistemological revolution" or significant methodological break. In contrast, the written record of classical commentary illustrated the unbroken transmission of knowledge, and any apparent differences between scholarship of various historical periods had been overemphasized at the expense of similarities in both methodology and conclusions. Having been overshadowed by a mixture of ignorance and polemics, however, those similarities were evident as soon as one actually engaged in *reading* books, rather than merely memorizing their latest evaluations and thus reading with preconceptions and biased assumptions.[481]

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[480] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 99-100. Qian Mu also mentioned the example of Cai Shen's commentary in pointing out the weakness of Qing scholars' citation practices. It is highly plausible that Qian Mu got this and many other ideas from Chen Li. Cf. Qian Mu, *Zhuzi xin xue'an*, 187.

[481] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 152, and 76-77.

The Danger of Generalization

It was generally accepted at the time that Song dynasty *daoxue* thinkers had de-emphasized their reliance on the commentarial tradition in a manner that contrasted with Qing scholars' approaches to the textual tradition. As we have seen, Chen Li denied the existence of such a difference, which he argued filled mainly an expository and rhetorical function. He wrote:

> 漢儒之書有微言大義，而世人不知也。唐疏亦頗有之，世人更不知也。真所謂「微言絕，大義乖」矣。宋儒所說皆近於微言大義，而又或無所考據，但自謂得不傳之學，未得不傳，即無考據耳，無師承耳。本朝國初儒者救明儒之病，中葉以來拾漢儒之遺，於微言大義未有明之者也。故余作《學思錄》，求微言大義於漢儒宋儒，必有考據，庶幾可示後世耳。[note:] 漢儒得傳，宋儒得不傳，皆未可盡信。
> People of our generation do not know that there are subtle words and great meaning in the works of Han scholars. That there are plenty also in the Tang dynasty subcommentaries is an even less recognized fact. This may truly be called "the end of subtle words, and a permutation of the great meaning."
>
> What Song scholars spoke of lay close to the realm of subtle words and great meaning, but they lacked an evidential basis. They told themselves that they revived knowledge that had been lost in transmission. But in fact it had never been lost, and their perception of it having done so was only due to a lack of evidential basis, as well as a lack of sensitivity to teacher-disciple relationships.
>
> In the beginning of our current [Qing] dynasty, scholars corrected the mistakes of their Ming dynasty predecessors, and from then on they have collected the remnants of Han dynasty writings. But they did not understand their subtle words and great meaning. This is why I wrote the *Record of Study and Thought*, where I pursued the subtle words and great meaning of scholars from both the Han and Song dynasties, and took care to provide an evidential basis to my research. This work may be handed down to coming generations.

> [Note:] One cannot really believe those who say that Han scholars received the transmitted teachings, while Song scholars attained the teachings that had not been transmitted.[482]

There was little or no substance to claims that a heavy reliance on transmitted knowledge in Han scholarship differed from Song scholarship in the sense that the latter relied on an epistemological attitude of "empty speculation." This comparison of the Han and Song dynasties also served as a roundabout way of criticizing the historical attitudes of Qing scholars.

If the textual evidence was analyzed without bias or preconceptions, Chen Li argued, Han dynasty scholars clearly received transmitted knowledge and reflected upon it from their own historical vantage point. In just the same manner, Song scholars received the knowledge transmitted from the Han-Tang period and added to it their own ideas. Exactly the same went for Qing scholars, who inherited the work of Song-Ming predecessors and made their own contribution to a continuous and complex tradition. Therefore, it was only misleading to create generalizing labels and classify historical periods according to such imagined epistemological attitudes.

In fact, those labels and assumptions were far from harmless, and would not disappear of their own accord. Rhetoric and "common knowledge" in the intellectual world mattered a great deal, and not every scholar or consumer of scholarly production had the time or ability to judge whether sweeping statements and biased classifications were reliable or not. Consequently, the polemically structured narratives promoted by various parties and factions—Han Learning, Song Learning, New Text studies, and so on—often convinced students educated in one system that "his" tradition was the only correct one, while others were impostors not worth reading in the first place, or read only for the purpose of negative criticism and scorn. When such attitudes were brought into the world of civil examinations and factional politics, a constant life-or-death struggle ensued to dominate the apparatus of social mobility.

Because of this, Chen Li held, the intellectual realm must be restructured from the bottom up. To better represent history and create a healthier socio-political climate, a

[482] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu lunxue zhaji*, 360-361:23.

convincing methodological framework had to be construed that accommodated a degree of intellectual pluralism.

Partisanship and Personal Opinion in Han Learning

Evidential research was stuck between the Scylla and Charybdis of its own methodology. On the one hand, stubborn adherence to a predecessor or teacher, coupled with an unwillingness to trust their own judgment, led students to adopt partisan opinions (*menhu zhi jian* 門戶之見). On the other hand, ignoring or devaluing predecessors made their work represent nothing but a personal opinion (*yijian* 意見).

Hui Dong's "pursuit of antiquity" (*qiu gu* 求古) represented the first of these approaches.[483] The second one, which ultimately glorified personal opinion, was traced by Chen Li to the philosophical writings of Dai Zhen. This would seem ironic, since the *Mengzi ziyi shuzheng* attacked Song Learning precisely for its elevation of personal opinion as representative of the common good. In what sense, according to Chen Li, could Dai Zhen's notion of a reliance on technical expertise and concrete evidence in policy-making be criticized as personal opinion?

While Fang Dongshu attacked Dai Zhen's philosophy on its own conditions, Chen Li looked beyond the philosophical argument to identify the underlying motivations of Dai Zhen's work. From Chen Li's point of view, "the attitude of Dai [Zhen] was selfish, his one intention having been to avail himself of [Zhu Xi's] position" (*Dai shi zhi xin si, you duo xi zhi yi er* 戴氏之心私，有奪席之意耳).[484] In this sense, Dai Zhen's attitude could be likened to that of Wang Su, of whom Chen Li wrote:

> 王肅難鄭之說甚多。澧今但考其大者，小失則不發其短也。凡鄭君之說，未必盡是；肅之所難，未必盡非。惟銳意於奪而易之，故其說多輕率，復多矛盾也。夫前儒之說有誤，後儒固當駁正，即朝廷典制有

[483] For discussions of Hui Dong's scholarship, see Chen Li, *Dongshu zazu* 東塾雜俎 (Miscellaneous Notes from Dongshu), vol. 2 of *Chen Li ji*, 649; and Chen Li, "Chen Lanfu xiansheng Li yigao" (1931), 166.
[484] Chen Li, *Dongshu zazu*, 675, see also 650, and 657.

> 誤，亦當論駁。肅之病，在有意奪易，此其心術不端，雖有學問，徒足以濟其奸耳。
> There are many instances in which Wang Su criticized Zheng Xuan. Here I have only investigated the more important ones, and not bothered with smaller mistakes. Clearly, not all of Zheng Xuan's arguments are correct, nor were all of Wang Su's criticisms invalid. But because he was so determined to take the place of Zheng Xuan, Wang Su had not completely thought his arguments through and often contradicted himself.
>
> When our predecessors are wrong, we should of course correct them. Even when imperial decrees and regulations are wrong, we should point this out. The fault of Wang Su was that he wished to replace his predecessor. His attitude to learning was improper, and thus even though erudite, his erudition could only aid him in his own mischief.[485]

Just as Wang Su in his commentaries deliberately departed from Zheng Xuan's readings, so Dai Zhen's writings on the *Mencius* targeted the popular commentaries of Zhu Xi. What devalued their scholarship in the eyes of Chen Li was not that Wang Su and Dai Zhen failed to make a contribution, for both of them provided new insights, but their lack of a proper attitude to learning (*xinshu*). In trying to overcome and replace their predecessors, rather than build on and extend their work, scholars like Wang Su and Dai Zhen were poor examples for later generations to follow.

Partisanship and personal opinion—or, the "disinterestedness" of unfailing loyalty to authority versus the scholar's desire for fame—were separated from each other by a fine line. That line began to blur as soon as philological argument became a professional technique, and the ability to adduce evidence and overthrow accepted opinions became a road to recognition and a shortcut to fame. Chen Li said:

> 彼徒以講經學為名士，則其所作經解，不過名士之招牌而已。即使解說可取，而其心並不在聖賢之經書，此不得謂之讀經書之人也。
> [Most evidential research scholars today] discuss classical learning only to make a reputation. Consequently, their explanations of the *Classics* are nothing but a facade for celebrity. Even when their explanations are

[485] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 287; see also Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu lunxue zhaji*, 369:66.

> acceptable, their mind-and-heart is not at all on the *Classics* of the sages. These cannot be called people who read the *Classics*.[486]

Han Learning and evidential research overemphasized the production of "new" knowledge in the sense of rejecting alternative viewpoints. From this observation, Chen Li arrived at the same conclusion as had Fang Dongshu before him: the imperative in evidential research to attain a single correct answer to every problem, coupled with the practical impossibility to reach consensus when social mobility depended on original contributions, set the scholarly world on a path to relativism. Evidential research methods came to serve as justification for an individualist and relativist ethic due to the failure of critical scholarship to produce an evidential foundation for received values. Chen Li argued that 19th century intellectual currents were pulling Chinese society towards a repetition of the Late Ming debacle. He wrote:

> 《亭林文集》：「百人之中尚有一二讀書，而又皆躁競之徒，欲速成以名於世。語之以五經則不願學，語之以白沙、陽明之語錄則欣然矣，以其襲而取之易也。（《與友人論門人書》）」余嘗謂漢學已衰，異時必講宋儒之學，然必不講程、朱，講陸、王而已。故必宜及此防其萌蘖也。今之講漢學者亦多歸躁競，語之以孔、賈義疏，則不願讀，語之以王氏《述聞》，則欣然矣。以其襲而取之之易也。
>
> In the *Collected Works of Gu Yanwu* we find the following passage: "Today there are still one or two among a hundred who read books, but even these few are competitive people, who aim for easy achievement and fame. They show no interest in learning when one talks to them about the *Five Classics*, but they happily speak of Chen Xianzhang and Wang Yangming, since these writers are easy to assimilate" (see "Yu youren lun menren shu").
>
> I have often claimed that [Qing dynasty] Han Learning is already on the decline, and that following such a decline, scholars inevitably will begin to discuss the learning of Song scholars. However, they will not discuss the writings of the Cheng brothers or Zhu Xi, but only those of Lu Xiangshan and Wang Yangming. This is why such trends must be nipped in the bud. Most students of Han Learning are also just competitive people, unwilling to read the subcommentaries of Kong Yingda and Jia

[486] Chen Li, "Chen Lanfu xiansheng Li yigao" (1932), 184.

> Gongyan, but happy to discuss Wang Yinzhi's *Jingyi shuwen*. This is because it is so easy to assimilate.[487]

While the books discussed in the 19th century were different ones, the deplorable situation of scholarship was similar to that criticized by Gu Yanwu and others during the Ming-Qing transition. It mattered little that the philological work of Qing scholars like Wang Yinzhi 王引之 (1766-1834) was based on evidential research, when just like Wang Yangming's writings it was read simply for its citeability to impress others and win arguments. Competitive argumentation as an academic and socio-political problem was not based in any one philosophical outlook, be it empirical or speculative. Rather, it was a problem based in the lineage-oriented attitude to knowledge that the educational system inculcated in students of each generation.

Evidential research scholars studied Han dynasty commentaries primarily as a means to reach a more distant "origin." Their purported aim was to analyze received texts to recover the sage authors' original texts and intentions, which had been lost due to imperfect transmission. But even if one accepted the premised existence of an "authorial intention of the sage" and an "original text," what remained once a modern researcher went beyond received knowledge? Were not the "origins" they discovered and supported with a collage of classical quotations simply their own thoughts projected back onto a fuzzy notion of antiquity?

Relativism and New Text Studies

Among the works that Chen Li singled out for criticism was Liu Fenglu's *Zuozhuan chunqiu kaozheng* 左傳春秋考證 (Evidential Analysis of the *Zuozhuan*), published in 1805, which relied heavily on the *Gongyang* commentary and the New Text interpretations of Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (179-104) and He Xiu 何休 (129-182). Liu Fenglu's work eventually became a foundation for theories concerning Liu Xin's forgery

[487] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu lunxue zhaji*, 409-410:267.

of Old Text versions of the *Classics*, influencing scholars like Liao Ping 廖平 (1852-1932) and Kang Youwei.[488] It was not that Chen Li rejected the possibility of interpolations in the *Zuozhuan*, but he was skeptical about the claim of Liu Xin's involvement.[489]

Kong Guangsen 孔廣森 (1752-1786) had characterized the *Gongyang* commentary by saying that it focused on meaning and not on events. Chen Li was unhappy with this formulation, since meaning or morally significant truths could never exist independently of representational events. "If one wants to know the meaning," he said, "one has to know the event, there can be no questioning this." (*yu zhi qi yi, bi zhi qi shi, duan duan ran ye* 欲知其義，必知其事，斷斷然也).[490] It was precisely the weakness of the *Gongyang* commentary that it demonstrated too little knowledge of the people and events it discussed.[491] And He Xiu's commentary was even worse in its insistence on differing from the *Zuozhuan* and bending the facts to its own preconceptions.[492]

But what were those preconceptions? He Xiu relied on Dong Zhongshu's *Chunqiu fanlu* 春秋繁露 (Luxurious Dew of the *Annals*), which identified what has been called "voluntaristic interpretations of change and reform" in the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. Confucius was portrayed by Dong Zhongshu as the "uncrowned king" of the state of Lu and a prophet of the coming Han dynasty as a utopia of "great unification" (*da yi tong* 大一統). These views were propagated again in the Qing dynasty by Song Xiangfeng and Liu Fenglu.[493] Chen Li showed no sympathy for this New Text position and criticized Liu Fenglu for having gone further in this direction than even He Xiu had.[494]

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[488] Elman, *Classicism, Politics, and Kinship*, 248.
[489] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 187.
[490] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 195.
[491] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 195.
[492] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 196.
[493] Elman, *Classicism, Politics, and Kinship*, 230-231.
[494] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 199.

Chen Li obviously opposed the conflation of scholarship and politics, as we have seen, but his criticism of Liu Fenglu's work was also methodological. He quoted Kong Guangsen as having expressed the problem well, writing:

> 孔巽軒云：「七十子沒而微言絕，三傳作而大義睽，《春秋》之不幸耳。幸其猶有相通者。而三家之師，必故各異之，使其愈久而愈岐。何氏屢蹈斯失。」……巽軒之於何邵公，可謂好而知其惡者矣。
> Kong Guangsen said: "After the death of the seventy disciples, the subtle words [of Confucius] were lost. With the appearance of the three commentaries [to the *Annals*], its great meaning was divided. This was unfortunate for the *Annals*, but there were still ways in which the commentaries could be reconnected.
>
> Unfortunately, the teachers of the three families clung stubbornly to their differences and only grew further apart. He Xiu repeatedly made this mistake." [Chen Li said:] One could say that while Kong Guangsen sympathized with He Xiu, he was aware of the latter's weakness.[495]

He Xiu's classicism was too stubbornly tied to his interpretive tradition (*jiafa*). It discarded without further consideration all alternative viewpoints and added fuel to the fires of partisanship. The same accusation was naturally directed against the New Text studies of Liu Fenglu. If Qing dynasty New Text studies worked to overturn the focus on Eastern Han *jiafa* among adherents of Han Learning in Hui Dong's tradition, the work of Liu Fenglu and others only perpetuated and deepened the divisive and exclusionist tendencies of the lineage orientation in Qing intellectual history. Chen Li voiced deep concern for future developments along those lines, and on the topic of the *Annals* and its commentaries, he wrote:

> 三傳分門角立，詬爭已久。啖、趙、陸欲其歸於一，遂盡抉其藩籬。此亦勢所必至也。 劉原父之書，即啖、趙、陸之法，刪改三傳而合為一傳，然所刪改多不當……最荒謬者，孫明復之《尊王發微》……意以為古事可以隨意而造者……歐陽永叔為其墓志，云「先生治經，不惑傳注」，此為其所欺也。……不信三傳，始於唐人……蓋經學風

[495] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 204.

> 氣，自唐而變。而遠溯其源，則《春秋繁露》已有「無傳而著」之語矣。
>
> The partisan divisions and subsequent verbal struggle between proponents of the three commentaries [to the *Annals*] already has a long history. Dan Zhu (724-770), Zhao Kuang (fl. 766-779), and Lu Chun (d. 805) wanted to unite them, and in attempting to do so completely broke with tradition. This was an inevitable outcome of the trend preceding them. Liu Chang's (1019-1068) book followed the example set by Dan, Zhao, and Lu of editing the three commentaries and synthesizing them into one. His editorial work, however, was not good [. . .]
>
> The most absurd of them all was Sun Fu's (992-1057) *Exposition of Subtleties in Honor of the Ruler* [. . .] He seemed to think that past events could be constructed as one wished [. . .] Ouyang Xiu wrote a tomb inscription for him, which said: "In his studies of the *Classics*, this gentleman was not misled by the transmitted commentaries." This goes to show how Ouyang Xiu was made a fool by him. [. . .]
>
> Distrust in the three commentaries began in the Tang [. . .] This indicates a change in classical studies from the Tang dynasty onwards. But if we trace its source way back in history, already the *Chunqiu fanlu* contained the words: "To have no transmitted knowledge and yet to write."[496]

We return again to Chen Li's concern for a growing individualism, which he feared would arise from the ashes of *jiafa* methodology among Han Learning scholars and their partisan debates. The partisanship engendered by a lineage orientation fueled continuous attempts to outdo opponents by the discovery of new sources, and this was precisely what happened as Changzhou New Text studies positioned itself in opposition to an Old Text camp, whose identity was largely generated by the appearance of New Text learning in the first place. When the goal was always to move further back in time, subsequent commentarial traditions were often made to seem irrelevant; the researcher and his opinions was front and center, while history itself became quite unimportant.

[496] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 211-213.

5.2 “Return to Antiquity”: A Problem of Aims more than Methods

Chen Li was well acquainted with evidential research methodology and a specialist on phonology and historical geography. He did not reject these techniques and methods as such, but was concerned over the aims to which they were being applied, and the validity of the research questions posed. The notion of authenticity was perhaps the most important research aim in evidential research, and Chen Li spent much effort reflecting on the definition of this term and its host of related concepts. The result of his thoughts on this issue formed the core of a new approach to education and learning that Chen Li promoted after leaving the Xuehaitang Academy.

On the Authenticity of Sagehood

The opposing pair of authenticity and artifice (*zhenwei* 真偽) carried great significance in Qing evidential research, just as it had in Cheng-Zhu *daoxue*. The success of Qing scholars in exposing forged texts and passages to be expunged from the classical canon was represented by the famous debate surrounding the Old Text chapters of the *Shangshu*. While many prominent scholars accepted the philological evidence proving that these chapters could not have been composed anywhere close to the time of the historical events they purportedly depicted, opinions diverged regarding what this implied and to what extent it undermined the Old Text chapters’ importance or their status in the civil examinations.

Chen Li did not defend the authenticity of the Old Text *Shangshu*, nor did he take a strong position regarding whether they should remain a part of the classical canon. Instead, he reconsidered the very notion of “authenticity” and what it meant to students of history or the classical heritage. In Chen Li’s writings, the problem of authenticity was discussed much less in terms of forgery than in opposition to the practice of imitation. A word or passage could never be repeated and still remain the same, he argued, since it always lacked the authenticity of a first utterance.

Evidential research emphasized textual imperfections. But while all texts have flaws, Chen Li held, an exclusive focus on correcting them overlooked what mattered most. Because the best parts of a work were quickly popularized and imitated, they soon became commonplace and no longer seemed extraordinary. By failing to see the extraordinary in what had become commonplace, students and researchers were trapped in the trends and circumstances of their contemporary society and missed their chance to engage in truly historical thinking. The more rewarding method of learning for both individual and society, Chen Li thought, was to grasp the creative genius behind ideas and texts subsequently popularized and turned into common knowledge. He wrote:

> 古人著書，辛苦創闢，往往盡美而未能盡善。蓋辛苦成書，既竭其才，後人讀之，坐享其成，忘其辛苦，而但見其未盡善，遂有不滿之意，甚者欲著書以加乎古人之上矣。或問曰：何以忘其辛苦也？曰：其精善處，得人心之所同然，故不覺其奇特，而與之相忘也；而不知此正其至精至善處也。
>
> When writing their books, the ancients struggled with the creative endeavor, but while the result was often a thing of true beauty, it was never perfect. In this struggle, they used up all of their ingenuity. But when later generations read their works, they just sit back and enjoy the finished product. They forget the struggle behind it and only notice its imperfections. Consequently, they feel dissatisfied, and some even wish to write their own books to supersede those of the ancients.
>
> Someone may ask why readers forget about the struggle of creation. This is because the essential truths in these books are readily accepted by the human mind-and-heart. Because of that, readers do not notice what is special about them, and forget about it. They do not understand that therein lays the essence and perfection of such books.[497]

For example, the word "sincerity" (*cheng* 誠) carried a lot more potency in a Tang dynasty work than it did after the Song, when it was popularized through the spread of *daoxue*. Chen Li quoted the work of Lu Zhi 陸贄 (754-805) to make this point:

[497] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 168.

> 陸宣公《均節賦稅恤百姓第五條》：「此堯湯所以見稱於千古也。願陛下遵之慕之，繼之齊之，苟能存誠，蔑有不至。」陸宣公多說誠字，此等語如出於宋儒，則是習氣，是時趨，在唐時則惟陸宣公能說耳。
>
> Lu Zhi's "Fifth suggestion on regulating the taxes and caring for the people" contained the passage: "This is what the Yao and Tang emperors were praised for over thousands of years. I hope that your majesty will follow their example and look up to them, continue their legacy and become their equal. If your majesty can do so with sincerity, your majesty can accomplish anything."
>
> Lu Zhi often used the word "sincerity." If such a word were used in the Song dynasty, it would simply have been part of a trend and nothing special, but during the Tang dynasty, only Lu Zhi and no one else could have uttered it.[498]

It was not that the notion of sincerity became any less important after the Song dynasty, the opposite was true, but the action of employing the word in a written or spoken statement became less of a creative act, and more one of repetition. With the passage of time, Chinese thinkers who used this and similar words resorted to imitation when trying to stay true to Song dynasty models. With each such imitation, however, the word lost some of its creative potency. Chen Li wrote:

> 詩文、書法皆有氣能薰蒸人，故於所熟習之人，則詩文、書法亦似之。至時代相隔漸遠，則必誦讀摹倣而後相似，蓋其氣漸遠漸微矣。
>
> The practice of poetry and calligraphy can both influence men. Therefore, those who know each other intimately will also be alike in their composition of poetry and calligraphy. When there is a large distance in time, however, one has to recite and imitate in order to be similar to ones predecessors. This shows how the influential power of poetry and calligraphy diminishes over time.[499]

While the examples chosen by Chen Li were poetry and calligraphy, a statement such as this stood in stark contrast to the conservative idea of a "return to antiquity" that uncritically elevated all things ancient as a model for later generations. Chen Li realized

[498] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu lunxue zhaji*, 370:72.
[499] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu lunxue zhaji*, 386:162.

that the transmission of a cultural tradition cannot be upheld through mere preservation and imitation, but must be reinvigorated through creative acts. Even if a perfect reconstruction of the *Classics* were possible, the similarity would only be superficial and not a sufficient measure of authenticity.

For Chen Li, authenticity was not determined by the correlation between a textual narrative and the historical facts it purported to describe, but by the degree of creativity that went into its composition. Therefore, the notion of sagehood should not be applied exclusively to remote antiquity, but to anyone who significantly contributed to the transmission and reinvigoration of culture. Each area of knowledge had its own sages, and Chen Li pointed to a couple for lexicology and phonology, writing:

> 古人創始之功，後人日用而不知，如許氏之《說文》、孫炎之反語是也。《說文》不作，則但有《急就》之屬，無部居之分別，則無《玉篇》以下諸書，而識字難矣。反語不作，有「讀若」之音，無雙聲疊韻之區域，則無《切韻》以下諸書，而知音難矣。自魏晉至今，人能識字，皆許氏之教；人能知音，皆孫氏之教也。作者之謂聖，許氏作《說文》，雖謂之文字之聖可也。孫氏作反語，雖謂之音韻之聖可也。近儒皆尊許氏矣，孫氏之功，澧竊欲表章之。
>
> Later generations without self-awareness make daily use of the ancients' creative achievements, such as Xu Shen's *Shuowen jiezi* and Sun Yan's *fanyu* spellings. If the *Shuowen* had not been written, there would only be works like the *Jijiu*, without any divisions according to radicals. If so, nor would there be the *Yupian* and the books that followed its model, and learning characters would be difficult. If the *fanyu* spellings had not been created, there would have been only the *duruo* sound imitations, without the fields of alliteration and rhyme. If so, nor would there be the *Qieyun* or the books that followed its model, and knowing sounds would be difficult.
>
> That men from the Wei-Jin period until today can know characters is all thanks to the teachings of Xu Shen, and that men can know their correct pronunciations is all thanks to the teachings of Sun Yan. He who creates something new may be called a sage. Since Xu Shen created the *Shuowen*, he may be called the sage of written characters. Since Sun Yan created the *fanyu* spellings, he may be called the sage of rhymes. Scholars

> nowadays know to respect Xu Shen. I would personally like to promote the achievements of Sun Yan.[500]

This notion of sages as culture heroes did not consider such men or their works the apex of perfection, to be followed with blind devotion. It did not encourage "returning to antiquity" as a golden age. Instead, the sages were transformed in Chen Li's writings into models for creative endeavor. The same words carried radically different significance and meaning depending on who uttered them and under what circumstances. Therefore, it was important to distinguish between those who merely knew to recite empty phrases—such as "elevating the ruler and lowering the officials" (*zun jun bei chen* 尊君卑臣), "valuing kingliness and denigrating hegemony" (*gui wang jian ba* 貴王賤霸), or "worship the Zhou court and subjugate the feudal lords" (*chong Zhou shi yi zhuhou* 崇周室，抑諸侯)—and those who demonstrated the sincerity and ability to apply such knowledge in both historical criticism and real life situations.[501]

Original Meaning and Authorial Intention

A "return to antiquity" (*fu gu*) was often invoked as the goal and justification of Qing classicism. But this notion also served as a methodological assumption in evidential research. Like the *daoxue* notion of "original meaning" (*ben yi*), the return to antiquity assumed that the *Classics* in their pristine condition contained the intentions of their sage-authors. This sage-author, in turn, functioned as both origin and destination in the pursuit of textual meaning, and as a criterion of authenticity.

In the case of the *Yijing*, for example, scholars debated without end the question whether King Wen had written the line verbalizations. Hui Dong defended that attribution by saying that the characters Jizi 箕子 in the verbalization to the *Mingyi* 明夷 hexagram, which coincided with the name of Shang dynasty King Zhou's uncle, should be altered to read "his son" (*qizi* 其子). The reason was that the death of Jizi as a martyr

[500] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu lunxue zhaji*, 407:257.
[501] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 214.

occurred after the death of King Wen, so that if the line verbalizations contained a reference to the former event, they could not have been written by King Wen. Chen Li demonstrated that Hui Dong did not have a single previous redaction or commentary to support this graphic substitution, and that this celebrated progenitor of Han Learning used argumentative techniques characteristic of Qing evidential research to deceive his readers into accepting an emendation invented by himself.

Rather than counter Hui Dong with another philological argument, Chen Li held that it did not matter whether King Wen was the author of the text. Instead, he turned his attention to the commentarial tradition attached to the *Yijing*, that is, the "Ten Wings" attributed to Confucius. Chen Li did not think that Hui Dong contributed to a better understanding even of Han dynasty scholarship, and in response to the charge that Wang Bi's *Yijing* commentary led to Han interpretive traditions being forgotten, Chen Li simply remarked that now, when "for a century Hui Dong's learning has thrived, even the teachings of Wang Bi have also been lost" (*bai nian yi lai, Hui shi zhi xue xing, you wu Fusi zhi xue yi* 百年以來，惠氏之學行，又無輔嗣之學矣).[502]

There were also those who doubted the authenticity of the *Zhouli* as a work authored by the Duke of Zhou. While such doubt was surely warranted, Chen Li held, it was of little importance. All available sources should be used when studying the institutions of a given historical period, so how could anyone ignore a work like the *Zhouli*, even given its many imperfections? That Zheng Xuan used the *Zhouli* as a source for his readings of the classical texts was no reason for later scholars to criticize him. Instead, noting the critical care with which Zheng Xuan had relied on that work only demonstrated his superior historical sense.[503]

[502] Several passages at the end of chapter 4, including the one quoted here, in the *Dongshu dushu ji* are missing from the Shanghai guji chubanshe edition of Chen Li's collected work. For these passages, see instead Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji* (Hong Kong: San lian shudian, 1998), 71.
[503] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 126.

Inner and Outer Commentaries

The relative importance of thinkers throughout history should not be determined based on how well their exegetical work conformed to modern day understandings of the authorial intention behind the *Classics*. The practice of commentary, Chen Li argued, did not necessarily aspire to recover the original meaning of a text. With reference to the Han dynasty commentarial tradition of the *Shijing*, he pointed to an old division between "inner commentaries" (*neizhuan* 內傳) that elucidated the text on a literal level, and "outer commentaries" (*waizhuan* 外傳) that deliberately ignored issues of original meaning while applying the text to problems and events, historical or contemporary, that were quite unrelated to any assumed author's original intentions. In *Reading Notes from* Dongshu, Chen Li wrote:

> 《漢書 藝文志》云：齊、韓《詩》，「或取《春秋》，采雜說，咸非其本義」。（采雜說，非本義，蓋專指《外傳》而言。）今本《韓詩外傳》，有元至正十五年錢惟善序云：「斷章取義，有合於孔門商賜言《詩》之旨。」澧案：孟子云「憂心悄悄，慍于群小，孔子也」，亦《外傳》之體。《禮記 坊記》、《中庸》、《表記》、《緇衣》、《大學》，引《詩》者尤多似《外傳》，蓋孔門學《詩》者皆如此。其於《詩》義，洽熟於心，凡讀古書，論古人古事，皆與《詩》義相觸發，非後儒所能及。
>
> The *Hanshu* bibliographic treatise says that the *Shijing* commentaries promoted by the Qi and Han schools "sometimes used the *Spring and Autumn Annals* or employed miscellaneous sayings that had nothing to do with the original meaning of the odes." (This "use the *Spring and Autumn Annals* or employ miscellaneous sayings" probably refers exclusively to the *Outer Commentary*).
>
> The redaction of the *Outer Commentary to the Han school Shijing* that we have today contains a preface from the fifteenth year of the Zhizheng reign in the Yuan dynasty (1355) by Qian Weishan (?-1369). It says: "Taking citations out of context is in accord with the usage of the odes by Confucius' disciple Zixia."
>
> I [Chen Li] note: When the *Mencius* quotes the *Shijing* to describe Confucius, saying that he was "worried sick, and drew the anger of lesser people," this is also in the form of an outer commentary. The "Fangji"

> chapter of the *Liji*, as well as the "Zhongyong," the "Biaoji," the "Ziyi" and the "Daxue" are all similar to the *Outer Commentary* in their quotation of the odes.
>
> This was probably how all Confucius' disciples studied the odes. They harbored the meaning of the odes in the mind-and-heart, and whenever they read ancient books or talked about ancient men and events, they always related them to the odes. This is not something that later scholars have been able to emulate.[504]

He also wrote:

> 凡治經者當以內傳為先，而又不可無外傳之學。內傳者，解經之學也。外傳者，通經致用之學也。若不為外傳之學，何以誦《詩》三百則能達於授政而專對於四方乎！為禮學者當知禮意，為詩學者當知詩意，即外傳之學是也。
>
> When dealing with the *Classics* one should begin from the inner commentary. However, the outer commentary cannot be neglected. The inner commentary is the explication of the classical text. The outer commentary is the application of the text. If one does not engage in outer commentary, how is it that reciting the three hundred odes could aid a man in governmental or diplomatic endeavors? Those who study the rituals must understand the significance of ritual, and those who study the odes must understand the significance of the odes, this is all part of the outer commentary.[505]

The connection between inner and outer commentary, between explication and application had nothing to do with the division into exegesis (*xungu*) and meaning (*yili*) that Dai Zhen and other Han Learning scholars spoke of. No cause-and-effect relationship existed between the work of explication and that of application. A scholar could study a given text from a historical perspective, and consider what it might have meant at the time it was first written. But this did not mean that the text should be understood exclusively as the single intention of a presumed author.

The semantic range of a text was of course limited, but it was not singular. Its significance changed with contextual circumstance, and therefore later commentators

[504] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 108-109.
[505] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu lunxue zhaji*, 368:64.

could reach a plurality of equally valid interpretations. Consequently, the *Classics* carried different meanings as understood from the historical context of its first appearance, from a historically sensitive study of its commentarial tradition, or from an engagement with its significance in the contemporary world. This attitude of interpretive pluralism had to be protected from the exclusionist forces of lineage-oriented scholarship, which was being promoted by the current educational establishments.

Subdisciplines in Classical Studies

Textual scholarship could be pursued in many ways and for different purposes. The recovery of original meaning was only one of the classicist's many tasks. Just as it was important to identify the separate functions of inner and outer commentaries, so it became necessary to point out as disciplines separate from "classical studies" (*jingxue*) other forms of textual learning, such as the study of "commentaries" (*zhuxue* 注學), "subcommentaries" (*shuxue* 疏學) and "scattered interpretations" (*suiyi zhi xue* 碎義之學). Chen Li wrote:

> 余嘗謂有經學，有注學，有碎義之學，注疏及碎義之學不可皆謂之經學也，乃經學之類耳。
> I have often said that there are classical studies, commentary studies, and the study of miscellaneous explications. The study of commentaries, subcommentaries, and miscellaneous explications cannot all be referred to by the single term classical studies. They each form a separate discipline, subordinated to the larger field of classical studies.[506]

It was important to separate the various branches of learning and identify the concerns and functions of each. Without such a classification, conflicts constantly arose over the proper definition of classical studies. Those who pursued the original text and its meaning through philological inquiry looked down on those who engaged in more speculative or reflective endeavors, but who nevertheless claimed to be classicists. These power

[506] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu lunxue zhaji*, 378:111.

struggles and quarrels over definitions were not only pointless, but positively harmful to the moral character of students. Degeneration in the educational system, moreover, would extend to society at large when those same students reached political positions of power and influence.

A prominent example of commentary studies that did not concern itself with the original meaning of the *Classic* as such was Wang Mingsheng's *Shangshu hou'an* 尚書後案 (Final Record of the *Shangshu*). Wang's preface stated his intention to reconstruct as much as possible of Zheng Xuan's commentary to the *Shangshu*, even though he did not regard this as a significant contribution to the interpretation of the classical text of the *Shangshu* itself.[507]

Another example was Chen Li's own interest in Huang Kan's *Analects* subcommentary, which had been recovered from Japan. While he did not think that this commentary reflected a pre-Qin reading of the *Analects*, he took an interest in it for the insights it provided to the historical circumstances of the Six Dynasties period and the historical background of its author.[508] Similarly, Zheng Xuan's subcommentary to the *Shijing* sometimes reflected Eastern Han society and the attitudes of its author to that society.[509] Chen Li stressed that while Zheng Xuan was not conventionally considered a "sage," he had been much more than an exegete and it was as a man of principle and action that he should be admired and emulated by later students.[510]

Chen Li's critique of the sage-author's original intention as a methodological principle in Chinese classicism, be it Song *daoxue* or Qing evidential research, served to encourage the serious study of men and their ideas from all historical periods. As part of this aim, Chen Li elevated the importance of the commentarial tradition by securing its study as an independent discipline, separate from the study of the *Classics* as such. By introducing a pluralism of aims in the study of texts and history, he hoped that partisan struggle over claims to absolute authority in the field of classicist interpretation would subside, without for that sake deteriorating into free-for-all relativism.

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[507] Wang Mingsheng, *Shangshu hou'an*, vol. 45 of *Xuxiu siku quanshu* 續修四庫全書 (Sequel to the *Siku quanshu*) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1994-2002), 1.2b.
[508] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 32-34.
[509] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 109-110, 278, and 283.
[510] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 265.

5.3 The Precarious Idea of Precision

Like Fang Dongshu, Chen Li recognized and discussed the precariousness of assuming that "original meaning" and "precision" were compatible ideals in textual studies. As we have seen, that assumption had been embraced by the Qianlong emperor himself under influence of the Han Learning faction. By criticizing these notions, Chen Li directly questioned core methodological assumptions underlying the practice of evidential research.

Incompleteness of Received Texts

According to Chen Li's manuscript notes, his unfinished *Record of Study and Reflection* promoted a methodology with the aim "to study the *Classics* through their commentaries and the commentaries through their subcommentaries."[511] The work would therefore not try to provide definitive answers or arbitrate between conflicting positions in interpretation or evaluation. In 1861, Chen Li argued with regard to textual hermeneutics that the starting point of understanding was to recognize what one did not understand. He wrote:

> 讀書有通曉處，愈覺惶愧，此通曉處，乃前此所不通曉者也。然則我之不通處，正無涯也。我今真自知不通，自認不通，而又恨今人無自知不通者也。
> There is a point of interpretive enlightenment when reading a text: The rising anxiety one feels in the face of confusion is a form of understanding that one previously had not yet achieved. The passages I do not understand are innumerable. Today, I really know that I do not understand them, and I accept that I do not understand them. I only lament that there is no one else in today's world who knows that he does not understand.[512]

[511] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu lunxue zhaji*, 361:26.
[512] Chen Li, *Xuesi ziji*, 763:20.

This statement questioned the very notion that the *Classics* could ever be recovered in their entirety or with any degree of precision, a standpoint with very concrete implications for hermeneutical practice. The basic method in evidential research of using evidence from one text to criticize statements made elsewhere only appeared conclusive given the assumption that the modern researcher had before him all, or nearly all, of the sources that the author he criticized had been able to access. But the critical scholarship of evidential research itself emphasized the imperfections of textual transmission and the massive loss of textual material over time. Was it really methodologically convincing, then, to rely on the remaining pieces of a largely lost world of knowledge to criticize the claims of scholars who had written while that tradition was still alive? Chen Li wrote:

> 《左傳 文十二年傳》，「先君蚡冒所以服陘隰也。」杜云：「蚡冒，楚武王父。」正義曰：「劉炫云：『案《楚世家》蚡冒卒，弟熊達殺蚡冒子而代立，是為楚武王。則蚡冒是兄，不得為父。』今知不然者，以《世家》之文，多有紕繆，與經、傳異者，非是一條。杜氏非不見其文，但見而不用耳。劉以《世家》而規杜，非也。」執古書以駁古人，往往有此失。古人豈不見古書，未可以今所見之古書駁之也。
>
> Under the twelfth year of King Wen, the *Zuozhuan* contains the following passage: "This was what the former lord Fenmao relied on to conquer Jingxi." Du Yu's commentary says: "Fenmao was the father of King Wu of Chu." The *Correct Meaning* subcommentary says: "Liu Xuan (546-613) said: 'I have noted that in the "Chu shijia" chapter of the *Shiji* it says that when Fenmao died, his younger brother Xiongda killed Fenmao's son and reigned in his stead. He was to become King Wu of Chu. Thus Fenmao was the older brother of the king, and could not have been his father.'
>
> Today we know this to be incorrect. The text of the 'shijia' chapter contains many errors and frequently differs from the *Classics* and their commentaries. It was not that Du Yu had not seen this text, he just decided not to use it. Consequently, it was Liu Xuan's mistake to rely on the 'shijia' chapter to correct Du Yu."
>
> Such mistakes often happen when students rely too much on ancient texts to correct ancient thinkers. Can we really assume that these ancient thinkers had not consulted the texts that we cite? Surely we have

> no right to rely on the few received texts that we do have in order to criticize their interpretive choices.[513]

By this example, Chen Li criticized the tendency among his contemporaries to underestimate the analytical ability of their predecessors. Apart from listing explicit citations, we cannot decisively determine what sources were available to an early classical commentator, which sources he rejected or on what grounds. The foregone methodological assumption that we have access to all material necessary to produce a detailed and precise interpretation of a classical text, and that the only difference between ourselves and earlier commentators was one of analytical ability, often led students to discard the commentarial tradition based on facile arguments and inconclusive evidence.

The Meaning of Ritual

The study of ancient ritual was often assumed to require precision and concrete details. Nevertheless, Chen Li stressed that the study of ritual texts should be about grasping the general principles (*li* 例) underlying their design. Much of the ritual tradition had been irretrievably lost and no project of data mining or compilation could ever hope to reconstruct it entirely. It was therefore hardly possible to be both precise and coherent when studying how it had once been practiced. Instead, the aim should be to recreate a sense of the underlying coherence behind ritual designs, and from this perspective the study of ritual (*lixue* 禮學) was simply the study of coherence (*lixue* 理學). Chen Li wrote:

> 《學記》、《中庸》、《大學》、《別錄》，皆屬通論，《中庸》、《大學》，後世所謂理學。古人則入於《禮記》者。《仲尼燕居》云：「子曰：『禮也者，理也。』」《樂記》云：「禮者，理之不可易者也。」故理學即禮學也。
> The texts of the *Xueji, Zhongyong, Daxue,* and *Bielu* are all general discussions. The *Zhongyong* and the *Daxue* belong in the genre of what later generations have called the study of Coherence. But the ancients

[513] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu lunxue zhaji*, 373:86.

> included them as chapters in the *Records of Ritual*. The *Zhongni yanju* says: "The master said: 'Ritual is Coherence.'" The *Yueji* says: "Ritual may be defined as unchanging Coherence." Thus the study of Coherence may encompass the study of ritual.[514]

By the same logic, those who pursued the study of Coherence must not neglect the study of ritual. "Those who pursue the study of the Way," Chen Li said, "must also pursue the study of ritual, or else they will get nowhere. This point concerns the learning of all times." (*jiang daoxue zhe, bi jiang lixue, bu ran ze bu cheng yi, ci you you guan yu qiangu xueshu ye* 講道學者，必講禮學；不然，則不成矣。此尤有關於千古學術也).[515] This line of thought explains why Chen Li's discussion of *daoxue* in the *Reading Notes from Dongshu* fell predominantly within his chapter on the *Liji*. What was important about ritual was not the precise reconstruction of formal features, but a general understanding of the cultural significance they carried.[516]

Figures and Numbers in Yijing Studies

In *Reading Notes from Dongshu*, the following *Yijing* texts and scholars received detailed treatment: Wang Bi's *Zhouyi zhu* 周易注 (Commentary to the *Zhouyi*), Kong Yingda's et al. *Zhouyi zhengyi* 周易正義 (Correct Meaning of the *Zhouyi*), Li Dingzuo's 李鼎祚 (Tang dyn.) *Zhouyi jijie* 周易集解 (Collected Explications of the *Zhouyi*), Zhu Xi's *Zhouyi benyi* 周易本義 (The Original Meaning of the *Zhouyi*), Wang Yinglin 王應麟 (1223-1296), Huang Chuwang's 黃楚望 (14th c.) *Yixue lanshang* 易學濫觴 (The Source of *Yi* Learning), Hui Dong, Zhang Huiyan 張惠言 (1761-1802), and Qian Daxin 錢大昕 (1728-1804).

Chen Li identified with Wang Bi's approach to discard the calendrical methods of Eastern Han scholars and return to those of Fei Zhi 费直 (W. Han), who interpreted the

[514] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 171.
[515] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 160.
[516] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 164.

Yijing by cross-referencing it with the Ten Wing commentaries. Wang Bi's weakness had been to make unfounded interpretations. Therefore, when Wang Yinglin many centuries later imitated Wang Bi's style his words did not seem to be explicating the original text. Chen Li wrote that "when Wang Yinglin imitated Wang Bi he did not thereby gloss the canonical text, but created a work of his own. This fits perfectly in the genre of philosophical (*zi*) works" (*Houzhai moni Fusi, fei yi zhu jing, dan ru yu zizhu zhi shu, ze zheng he zishu zhi ti er* 厚齋摹擬輔嗣，非以注經，但入於自著之書，則正合子書之體耳).[517]

As for Kong Yingda's *Zhouyi zhengyi*, its contribution in Chen Li's view had been to expunge Buddhist influence from interpretations of the *Yijing*, yet it failed to escape Daoist influence. Li Dingzuo's compilation of pre-Tang commentaries was praiseworthy in its intention to bring together separate traditions for a more complete understanding of the *Yijing*. Unfortunately, it showed poor judgment of selection and failed to preserve the essence of each tradition.

Zhu Xi identified the *Yijing*-related "figures" as the source of proliferating interpretations of the *Classic* in the Han dynasty. Commentators had tried just about everything to achieve a coherent understanding of the figures, "but that which could not be made consistent," Chen Li stated, "in the end would never be consistent" (*ran qi bu tong zhe, zhong bu ke tong* 然其不可通者，終不可通).[518] Thus Zhu Xi's contribution had been to realize the importance of Wang Bi's principle that in interpreting the *Yijing* one may not "reproach the hexagram for not agreeing with the verbalization" (*an wen ze gua* 案文責卦).[519]

Chen Li found misguided the pursuit of a coherent and consistent interpretation of the *Yijing* based on the "figures". He referred both to Wang Bi's approach of "forgetting the figures once the intention is grasped" (*de yi wang xiang* 得意忘象) and Zhu Xi's

[517] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 80.
[518] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 73.
[519] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 73.

view, as expressed in his "Yi xiang shuo" 易象說 (On the Figures of the *Yijing*), that the transmitted figures were only remnants of a long lost system now irretrievable.[520]

Chen Li identified Huang Chuwang as the one scholar to spend a lifetime researching the *Yijing* figures. But even Huang Chuwang was unable to turn the study of the figures into a coherent interpretive framework.[521] Chen Li wrote:

> 澧謂若言象，則惟有仍從漢儒之說，而去其繁瑣支離誕漫者。若真欲明之，則恐終古無斯人也。
> I would say that, speaking of the figures, one can but follow the Han scholars' explanations while discarding that which is excessive, fragmented, or absurd. If one truly wishes to understand them, there seems to never have been a single person who could do so.[522]

Chen Li agreed with the historical interpretation that the *Yijing* before Confucius had been a prognosticator's manual, and that the figures originally formed part of such a practice. Reaching Confucius and the composition of the Ten Wings, the *Yijing* was no longer merely a prognostication tool and the figures fell into disuse. Chen Li wrote:

> 此為占事知來之用，所謂「遂知來物」，非為解經而作，故求之於經多無之；且未必孔子所作，乃自古相傳有此術。
> These [figures] are for use in prognostication, what is called "knowing things that are to come." They were not created to explicate textual meaning, and on account of this we often do not find them in the canonical text. They were not necessarily created by Confucius, but are rather [part of] a technique handed down from antiquity.[523]

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[520] Wang Bi, "Ming xiang" 明象 (Clarifying the Figures), in *Zhouyi Wang Han zhu* 周易王韓注 (The Wang Bi and Han Kangbo Commentaries to the *Zhouyi*) (Taipei: Da'an chubanshe, 1999), 262; Zhu Xi, "Yi xiang shuo," in *Hui'an xiansheng Zhu wengong wenji* 晦庵先生朱文公文集 (Collected Prose of Zhu Xi), (Liu'an Tu shi Qiuwozhai 六安涂氏求我齋, 1873), 67.1a-2a.
[521] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 79-83.
[522] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 76.
[523] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 83.

In the early part of the 18th century, Hui Dong's method of staying faithful to a single line of Han dynasty *jiafa* transmission "amazed a generation" (*qingdong yi shi* 傾動一世).[524] As a consequence, while the authority of Zhu Xi's commentary had brought some degree of interpretive stability to the *Yijing* text, the 18th century retrieval and compilation of Han glosses and interpretive frameworks upset that stability.

By the early 19th century, Zhang Huiyan and others largely completed the compilation and reconstruction of Han dynasty *Yijing* traditions. Zhang Huiyan employed the Han Learning notion of teacher-disciple transmission (*shifa* 師法) to establish Yu Fan's *Yijing* interpretations as a direct continuation of Confucius' teachings. When dealing with the *Yijing*, teachers and students at the Xuehaitang Academy were concerned primarily with discussing these achievements of textual reconstruction.

The *Yijing* interpretive frameworks employed by Han Learning and evidential research scholars were often technical, and the notion of figures played an important part. Scholars who worked on the *Yijing* in such a framework mainly relied on figures contained in the *Shuogua* 說卦, one of the Ten Wings commentaries. In their search for increasingly precise readings of the *Classics*, some were unhappy with the limited set of figures provided there and also turned to other texts containing so-called lost figures (*yixiang* 逸象).

Ruan Yuan, among others, espoused such an approach to the *Yijing* as a method for reaching a more precise and unambiguous interpretation. Unlike the works of poets, he argued, the text of the *Classic* could not be allowed to remain open to a plurality of readings. To ensure its value as a morally and politically charged document, the classical text required a fixed meaning. Ruan Yuan wrote:

> 是必有一定不易之辭與字存其中焉……使易之經文語語有因，字字有據……蓋深明乎九數之正負比例，六書之假借轉注，而後使聖人執筆著書之本義，豁然大明於數千年後。
> There must be a definite and unquestioningly correct reading of phrases and characters in a classical text like the *Yijing* . . . If discovered, this

[524] Missing from Chen Li's collected works, see instead Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji* 東塾讀書記 (Hong Kong: San lian shudian, 1998), 80.

> reading would account for every single word in the *Classic* and there would be evidence to support every single character as the correct one . . . Born thousands of years later, scholars like you and me require profound knowledge of classical mathematical techniques and philological principles, such as notative and phonetic loan characters, before we can try to understand the sage-author's original intention as he raised his brush to compose the classical text.[525]

Ruan Yuan's statement represented the lineage-oriented approach to the *Classics* and their interpretation, and rhymed well with the Qianlong emperor's opinions as discussed above. The precise disciplines of mathematics and philology would provide an exact, unambiguous, and unquestionably correct reading of the *Yijing*, detailed and coherent enough to make deviation impossible. Such control over classical interpretation was of course intimately related to dominance in civil examinations and ultimately to political influence.

Also representative of *Yijing* studies at the Xuehaitang Academy was an essay by Zeng Zhao 曾釗 (d. 1854) included in the *Xuehaitang er ji* 學海堂二集 (Collected Writings from the Xuehaitang, Second Volume), which was published in 1838.[526] The essay illuminated the reasoning behind Xu Shen's *Shuowen* explanation of the character *yi* 易 that read: "The sun and moon make *yi*: they are the figures of *yin* and *yang*" (*ri yue wei yi, xiang yin yang ye* 日月為易，象陰陽也). Zeng Zhao referred to Han commentators who connected the *Yijing* to the calendar. The seasonal changes of the tropical year, according to Zeng Zhao, represented the movement of *yin* and *yang* forces. It was possible to keep track of the tropical year by observing changes in climate (*qi* 氣), but as the climate in turn was difficult to track with exactitude, a division of the year into roughly twelve lunations was devised. By keeping track of the physical "figures" of the sun and the moon, changes in climate were calculated and the seasons fixed in a calendrical system. A lunation was defined as thirty days, and a day as the apparent passage of the sun and moon over the sky. Therefore, the *Yijing* had one pair of

[525] Ruan, *Yanjingshi ji*, 122.
[526] Rong Zhaozu 容肇祖, "Xuehaitang kao 學海堂考 (Xuehaitang Research)," *Lingnan xuebao* 3.4 (1934): 141.

hexagrams represent a single (24-hour) day.[527] While this only accounted for sixty hexagrams, the remaining four could be explained in various ways.

Zeng Zhao anchored his reading of Han commentators in the "common knowledge" that Meng Xi 孟喜 (W. Han), the progenitor of Han dynasty *Yijing* traditions, had used the "twelve lunation hexagrams" (*shi'er yuegua* 十二月卦) as an interpretive tool. The only evidence for Meng Xi having used this method, however, was a short passage in the 11th century *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書 (History of the Tang Dynasty).

Chen Li expressed his disapproval of connecting the *Yijing* to the calendar by quoting Jiao Xun 焦循 (1763-1820), who held that "to speak of the calendar in terms of the *Yijing*, and to speak of the *Yijing* in terms of the calendar, are the same kind of strained analogy" (*yi Yi shuo li, yu yi li shuo Yi, tong yi qianfu* 以《易》說歷，與以歷說《易》，同一牽附).[528]

Calendrical Studies

The pursuit of precision was not only a waste of time and effort, but also carried far-reaching political implications. Therefore, Chen Li's criticism of this trend did not only relate to philology and philosophy, but also to legal studies and foreign affairs. He wrote:

> 故經學太密，則講疏繁矣；理學太密，則語錄贅矣；政令太密，則例案多而官聽於吏矣；曆法太密，則西法勝而中國絀於外國矣，愈求密而其為害愈大也。
> When classical learning is too detailed, the expositions become overly complicated; when the study of Coherence is too detailed, the recorded sayings contain superfluous words; when state statutes are too detailed, precedents are many and officials take orders from clerks; when the calendar is too detailed, the Western systems win out and China cannot

[527] Zeng Zhao, "Ri yue wei yi jie" 日月為易解 (*Yi* is the Sun and Moon), in *Xuehaitang er ji* 學海堂二集 (Collected Writings From the Xuehaitang, Second Volume), vol. 13 of *Zhongguo lidai shuyuan zhi* 中國曆代書院志, eds. Zhao Suosheng 趙所生 and Xue Zhengxing 薛正興 (Nanjing: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe, 1995), 308 (2.1a-2b).
[528] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 71.

> match the foreigners. The more one engages in the pursuit of detail, the greater the damage.[529]

Chen Li held that the ultimate purpose of tracking planetary movements was to provide a calendar so that agricultural and bureaucratic activities could be properly organized. Scientific knowledge was valuable first and foremost in terms of its applicability, and while Han dynasty calendars could not compare in exactitude to those of later dynasties, they had nevertheless fulfilled their primary purpose.

During the Late Ming, Western missionaries relied on superior astronomical techniques to gain a foothold at the Chinese court, and Chen Li questioned whether the technical improvements they brought had been significant enough, from the perspective of applicability, to justify the cultural and political concessions made to acquire them.[530]

Willard J. Peterson argued that Chinese scholars in the Late Ming lacked an interest in "mathematically elegant models of the cosmos," and that it was rather the notion of applicability (in predicting solar eclipses, for example) that guided the initial acceptance of Western learning in China.[531] That the Ming imperial calendar began to fail in precision was realized already by 1525, but no comprehensive reforms were deemed necessary until initiated in 1629 by Xu Guangqi 徐光啟 (1562-1633), who worked closely with Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) and whose calendar reform was based largely on Western methods. As Elman noted, the technical precision and accuracy employed for these purposes in the astronomical bureau was subsequently extended to cannon making, surveying, and mapmaking.[532]

Chinese literati and scholar-officials were not blind to the missionaries' motivations, or to the concessions made by the imperial court in exchange for their services. Already in 1616 a memorial was submitted to the Ming court that denounced Western missionaries for corrupting Chinese traditions with novel astronomical

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[529] Chen Li, *Dongshu zazu*, 681.
[530] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 90.
[531] Willard J. Peterson, "Western Natural Philosophy Published in Late Ming China," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 117.4 (1973): 300.
[532] Elman, *On Their Own Terms*, 190.

teachings.[533] Once formally appointed with the task to reform the imperial calendar, moreover, Jesuit missionaries expressed and circulated their religious teachings more freely in local society.[534] In reaction to this, the Kangxi emperor in 1706 required missionaries to obtain licenses if they wished to remain in China, and the Yongzheng emperor subsequently accepted a memorial to proscribe the religious sect of Christianity (*tianzhu jiao* 天主教) and order the expulsion of its missionaries.[535]

The Manchu court also sponsored Chinese natural studies to counter the relative monopoly of Jesuit missionaries on technical expertise, without relinquishing the useful aspects of such knowledge. The continued study of scientific disciplines and tools was encouraged by the imperial support of Mei Wending's 梅文鼎 (1633-1721) notion concerning the "Chinese origins of Western learning" (*xi xue zhong yuan* 西學中源).

Chen Li noted that 19th century evidential research seemed to have already forgotten these lessons from recent history. They no longer pursued technical subjects for their applicability, and their uninhibited fascination with description and precision for its own sake was a recipe for disaster as it ceded political leverage to technical experts, regardless of their geographical origins or loyalties. In his book on Western and Chinese medical notions of the pulse or *mo* 脈, Shigehisa Kuriyama quoted a complaint made in a European medical journal in 1832 that "minute distinctions of the several pulses exist chiefly in the imagination of the makers, or at least have little place in the knowledge and cure of diseases."[536] The problem was similar to that perceived by Chen Li, as a fascination with precision severed the connection between research and its real-life applications.

Kuriyama argued that Chinese doctors seldom discussed definitions, which were integral to the history of medicine in Europe. The difference, he argued, was that while Western medicine asked *what* the pulse was—emphasizing a divide between a world of perceptions and one of facts—its Chinese counterpart asked *how* the *mo* was experienced

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[533] Liam Matthew Brockey, *Journey to the East: The Jesuit Mission to China, 1579-1724* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 68.
[534] Brockey, *Journey to the East*, 58.
[535] Brockey, *Journey to the East*, 199.
[536] Quoted in Shigehisa Kuriyama, *The Expressiveness of the Body and the Divergence of Greek and Chinese Medicine* (New York: Zone Books, 1999), 78.

and what it was *like*.[537] But Chen Li's criticism of his contemporary Chinese society was precisely that scholars overemphasized the *what* of things and forgot the *how* of their application.

This distinction between reality and perception, or between "what" and "how," had figured prominently already in Late Ming and Early Qing critiques of correlative cosmology. Wang Fuzhi, for example, pointed to a basic disjunction between the cosmos as perceived and interpreted by man (*ren zhi tian* 人之天) and the cosmos as it is in itself (*tian zhi wei tian* 天之為天).[538] The parallel epistemological attitude in the lineage-oriented study of texts was to formulate research questions in terms of *what* the original text and the sage-author's original intention had been. For Chen Li, the *what* of a text or its interpretation mattered much less than the *how* of its historically contextualized instantiations.

5.4 Celebrating the Success of Historical Transmission

One of the philologist's main tasks was to connect the past to the present by adapting and extending the classical text and its commentarial tradition to cover new historical circumstances. In this sense, Chen Li argued, the writing of classical commentary paralleled the translation of texts from foreign languages. While the former forged connections between the temporal points of past and present, the latter created a means of communication and understanding between the spatial polarities of near and far. He wrote:

> 蓋時有古今，猶地有東西，有南北，相隔遠，則言語不通矣。地遠則有翻譯，時遠則有訓詁。有翻譯則能使別國如鄉鄰……有訓詁，則能使古今如旦暮，所謂通之也，訓詁之功大矣哉！
> That in terms of time there is past and present, is like in terms of space there is east and west, south and north. Since they are far separated from each other, their languages do not correspond. When distant in terms of

[537] Kuriyama, "The Expressiveness of Words," in *The Expressiveness of the Body*, 61-111.
[538] Henderson, *The Development and Decline of Chinese Cosmology*, 179.

> space there is translation, and when distant in terms of time there is exegesis. By means of translation, another country can be made to seem like a village neighbor . . . by means of exegesis, past and present can be made to seem like dawn and dusk. This is what is meant by making the two correspond. The achievements of exegesis are great indeed![539]

By letting oneself be inspired to new acts of creative transmission through the careful study of creative acts in the past, one avoided the methodological assumptions of a lineage orientation that aimed to reconstruct a single origin in comparison to which received texts and commentaries were merely imperfect derivatives. An exegetical act that did not involve an element of innovation, Chen Li held, could never bring out the creative achievement of the texts and authors that were the objects of its investigation.

Chen Li's notion of transmission differed fundamentally from that of his contemporaries. Rather than focus on the imperfections of textual transmission, Chen Li celebrated its success. The changes over time in diction and methods that bothered some Qing scholars were seen here as crucial elements of a living culture. In contrast, transmission without change inevitably led to a loss of meaning as the words of previous generations failed to apply to new objects and realities.

In place of identifying textual imperfections or returning to an original source, Chen Li promoted the methodological approach of Zheng Xuan, who used Han dynasty institutions to explain those described in the ritual classics.[540] To obtain any useful understanding through classical learning, Qing students of the *Zhouli* had to be versed in the institutions of their own time.[541] The hermeneutical principle of "clarifying the past in terms of the present" (*ju jin yi xiao gu* 舉今以曉古) held true for language as much as it did for objects, institutions, and historical geography. Chen Li wrote:

> 賈所謂「舉今以曉古」者，即訓詁之法也。古語則以後世之語通之，古官古事則以後世之官後世之事況之，其義一也。古地理亦以今地名釋之，即是此法。此乃注經一定不易之法也。

[539] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 215.
[540] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 133.
[541] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 136.

> What Jia Gongyan 賈公彥 (Tang dyn.) meant by "clarifying the past in terms of the present" is the method of exegesis. The language of the past is understood through the language of later generations. Official positions and events of the past are also interpreted through the official positions and events of later generations. They signify the same phenomenon. The same method is applied to the geographical knowledge of the past, which is also explained through modern day place names. This is one method of textual exegesis that will never change.[542]

By realizing that different names could point to the same phenomenon, it became possible to accept that the successful transmission of texts and knowledge from the past did not necessarily exclude difference and change. Characters, words, and formulations changed, but "they signified the same thing" (*qi yi yi ye* 其義一也).[543]

The Study of Men in History

While Chen Li deeply respected Ruan Yuan, his thoughts on translation and classical commentary lay closer to those of Fang Bao and Fang Dongshu. Ruan Yuan rejected the notion of a creative element in translation and held that such a translator neglected his duty of uncontaminated transmission. Consequently, Ruan Yuan blamed the translators of Buddhist scriptures in the Northern and Southern Dynasties for borrowing elements from "mysterious learning" (*xuanxue* 玄學) to explicate their source texts. This, he argued, created the contaminated version of Buddhism that developed into Chinese Chan. By extension, this failed act of transmission was also to blame for the appearance of thinkers like Lu Xiangshan, Chen Xianzhang, and Wang Yangming.[544]

As we have seen, Chen Li rejected this lineage-oriented understanding of cultural transmission in favor of one that necessarily involved a creative act. It was for the same reason that he abandoned the pursuit of the sage-author's "original intention," in the sense of a stable and universal meaning of the text, as advocated by Ruan Yuan and other evidential research scholars. As an alternative, Chen Li advocated the less idealized study

[542] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 134.
[543] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 134.
[544] Ruan, *Yanjingshi ji*, 203.

of "the learning of past men" (*guren zhi xue* 古人之學). As he said: "The Way of Confucius and Mencius resides in men."[545] He further wrote:

> 讀聖人書而求聖人之道，澧不敢言也。讀古人之書而求古人之學，零碎抄錄，以俟其貫通，此《學思錄》之意也。
> To read the books of sages and pursue the Way of the sage is something that I dare not speak of. It is rather my intention in the *Record of Study and Reflection* to read the books of past men and pursue their learning, to scribble down reading notes and await the moment when it all makes sense.[546]

This was no longer a pursuit of golden antiquity or the philosophical vision of sage-authors, subsequently lost through imperfect transmission. A man's learning could only be grasped by taking into consideration his actions and personality against the proper historical background. To study individuals in this way was to search for a model and teacher whose attitude to life could be emulated and applied to present day circumstances. It was the well-known classical meaning of "learning" (*xue*) to "emulate" (*xiao* 效).[547]

What particular historical individual one chose to emulate depended on personal inclination, for while no man was perfect, each had his strengths. Therefore, Chen Li would only say that "each dynasty has its own form of learning. There was the classicism of the Han, the subcommentaries of the Northern and Southern dynasties and of Tang scholars, the *daoxue* of the Song, the righteousness of the Ming, and there is the classicism of the present Qing dynasty. The works of great scholars past and present each have their own strengths" (*yi chao you yi chao xueshu, Han jingxue, Nan-Bei chao Tang ren yishu, Song daoxue, Ming zhongyi, benchao jingxue, gu jin daru, yi ren you yi ren xueshu zhi shan* 一朝有一朝學術，漢經學、南北朝唐人義疏、宋道學、明忠義、本朝經學。古今大儒，一人有一人學術之善).[548]

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[545] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu lunxue zhaji*, 398:214.
[546] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu lunxue zhaji*, 764:22.
[547] Chen Li, *Xuesi ziji*, 764-65:27; *Dongshu dushu lunxue zhaji*, 358:12; *Dongshu dushu ji*, 18.
[548] Chen Li, *Xuesilu xumu*, 772:21.

This aspect of Chen Li's thought speaks against a reading suggested by Zhang Xun that Chen Li's so-called Han-Song syncretism dealt exclusively with the internal tensions of Han Learning. Zhang Xun argued that Chen Li shared the same goal as Dai Zhen and Ruan Yuan to synthesize (*he er wei yi* 合而為一) the results of evidential research and moral philosophy, creating a reliable and evidence-based form of state orthodoxy. Zhang Xun further explained his understanding of Chen Li's position, saying:

> 真正的經學都是考據與義理合一的，而鄭玄和朱熹都是懂得真正經學的大儒，那麼他們的經學就不能不都是考據義理無所偏頗而彼此符同的。這是陳澧的漢宋調和自身必然推導出來的結果。
> True classicism is always a synthesis of evidential research and moral philosophy, and Zheng Xuan and Zhu Xi were both great scholars who understood what true classicism was all about. Consequently, the classical studies of those two scholars necessarily had to be a perfect balance between evidential research and moral philosophy, and therefore they also had to be perfectly compatible with each other. This idea is the inevitable result of Chen Li's notion of Han-Song syncretism.[549]

The first part of this statement is unproblematic, but the conclusion that Zheng Xuan's and Zhu Xi's ideas had to be compatible (*futong* 符同) is not found in Chen Li's writings. As we have seen above, Chen Li was not disturbed by the thought that "each dynasty had its own form of learning." Chen Li emphasized the strength of Zhu Xi's evidential research and Zheng Xuan's moral philosophy only to restore focus on the historical individual as a human being, rather than as a figurehead for one partisan position or other. This approach was precisely the opposite of that employed by Ruan Yuan and his evidential research colleagues, for example, when they fitted the writings of Gu Yanwu into the *Huang Qing jingjie* by rejecting everything not straightforwardly compatible with the assumptions and methods of evidential research.

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[549] Zhang Xun 張循, *Hanxue neibu de Han-Song zhi zheng—cong Chen Li de Han-Song tiaohe kan Qingdai sixiangshi shang Han-Song zhi zheng de shenceng hanyi* 漢學內部的「漢宋之爭」—從陳澧的「漢宋調和」看清代思想史上「漢宋之爭」的深層涵義 (The Han-Song Conflict in Han Learning: The Underlying Meaning of the Han-Song Conflict in Chinese Intellectual History from the Perspective of Chen Li's Han-Song Synthesis), *Hanxue yanjiu* 27.4, (2009): 309.

According to Chen Li, so-called Han Learning should not be limited to the study of glosses and philology, but must emulate the approach to life and learning of Han scholars like Zheng Xuan.[550] Chen Li was convinced that an unbiased reading of the sources would show that Han dynasty scholars drew no distinction between philosophy and philology. He said:

> 能尋經文，則學行漸合為一矣，經學理學不相遠矣。人能通一經而詳味之，此真漢學也。《學思錄》當大提倡此學。
> If one is able to reflect on the text of the *Classic*, one's learning and one's actions soon become one, and then classicism and the study of Coherence will no longer be far apart. If students are able to intimately know one of the *Classics*, it is real Han Learning. My *Record of Study and Reflection* must vigorously promote this type of learning.[551]

The study of commentaries and commentators according to Chen Li was no longer just a tool to get at the original meaning of the *Classic*, but rather a moral endeavor in its own right.[552] Previous and contemporary scholarship alike could be evaluated in terms of how it grasped the significance of the commentarial tradition and extended it to the present.[553]

If study was pursued with this goal in mind it would help shape general principles in the mind and body of the student, who could then apply them flexibly in his own life and work. According to Chen Li's interpretation, this was the meaning of "stringing it together" (*yi guan* 一貫). Rather than being a secret teaching transmitted by Confucius to a few select disciples, it was the most basic of educational principles that could be known and practiced by all.

The *Analects* did not contain any passage where the master spoke to his disciple Yan Hui about the concept of "stringing it together," but commentators of all ages regarded Yan Hui as one of Confucius' most accomplished followers. Chen Li read the passage where Yan Hui said that "the master widened my perspective through literature and restrained me with ritual" (*fuzi bo wo yi wen, yue wo yi li* 夫子博我以文，約我以

[550] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 11.
[551] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu lunxue zhaji*, 375:99.
[552] Cf. Peterson, *Bitter Gourd*, 154.
[553] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 70-71.

禮) as a description of Confucius transmitting this teaching to Yan Hui. "However," Chen Li pointed out, "the teaching of broad reading and ritual restraint that Yan Hui received was heard by all the disciples, so how could one say that it was secretly transmitted to him alone?" (*Yanzi suo shou bowen yueli zhi dao, zhu dizi suo gongwen, qi danchuan mishou zai* 顏子所受博文約禮之道，諸弟子所共聞，豈單傳密授哉).[554] This reading was yet another rejection of the combined notions of rupture, secret transmission, and specialized learning that made up the lineage orientation in *daotong* and *jiafa* attitudes to knowledge.

The Imperfection of Knowledge

The study of men in history was not a pursuit of perfection. While some promoted a "return to the original *Classics*" by abandoning the commentarial tradition, Chen Li held that even without their complex history of transmission, the *Classics* were, and always had been, incomplete. Their so-called sage-authors were also mortal men, whose teachings required constant elaboration and application to remain relevant under new historical circumstances. He wrote:

> 昔人為信經不信傳之說者，其意以為經不必有傳。如經必賴傳而明，假如無為傳者，則經為無用，此真不通之論也。經必賴傳而明者也，聖人為經，而以為傳俟之後人，假令聖人復能自為傳，則聖人為之矣。聖人亦人也，人之精力有限，歲月亦有限，為經而復為傳，雖聖人無此精力也，尤無此歲月也。後人修一史、選一集，尚不能復為之注，而況聖人刪述六經乎？彼不信傳而自為說以說經，其所說即傳也。而謂經可無傳乎？而代聖人慮後人無為傳者乎？二百年來，儒者尊信傳注，如此邪說已久息矣。將來風尚或變，慎毋再為此邪說也。
> Those in the past who believed in the *Classics* but not in the commentaries argued that a *Classic* does not require commentary. They said that if the *Classic* must depend on commentary to be intelligible, then if there were none who wrote commentaries, the *Classic* would be useless. This argument makes no sense at all.

[554] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 22.

> The *Classic* must rely on commentaries to be intelligible. When the sage-authors created the *Classics*, they expected later generations to write commentaries. If they could have written the commentaries themselves, they would have done so. But the sage-authors were also men, and the strength of men is limited, just as their lifespans are limited. Not even the sage-authors had the strength to write both the classical text and its commentary, nor could they have done so in one lifetime.
>
> Later generations of scholars who compiled historical records or selected works for inclusion in a literary collection did not have the strength to also write a commentary to their work, how much more so the sage-authors who selected materials for transmission through the *Classics*? Those who do not believe in the commentaries, and yet themselves come up with interpretations of the *Classics*, are also creating commentaries through the very process of interpretation. How can they say that the *Classic* can do without commentaries? How can they worry, on behalf of the sage-authors, that there will be none to write commentaries?
>
> During the last two hundred years, scholars have respected the various commentaries, and this type of wayward argument has long since ceased. In the future trends will change, and we should take care not to let them reappear.[555]

The "return to antiquity" argument that negated the long history of thought and transmission rested on a foundation of mistaken assumptions. The easiest way to demonstrate this was to point out the self-contradiction of those who followed the shared *daotong* and *jiafa* argument of a perfect *Classic* and its ruptured transmission. Did not the claim that the original *Classics* had been complete and perfect fall flat when voiced by men who themselves produced new interpretations and commentaries based on their own discoveries and insights? In the *Dongshu dushu ji*, Chen Li wrote:

> 方靈皋《春秋直解》序云：「聖人作經，豈豫知後之必有傳哉？使去傳，而經之義遂不可求，則作經之志荒矣。」此說似足以惑人，而實不通也。伏羲、文王作《易》，豈豫知後世有孔子《十翼》哉？如方氏之言，則《十翼》亦可去矣。且後儒去傳解經者，彼其所著之書，亦傳之類也，非經也。使古之三傳可去，何不並去其自著之書乎？夫聖人之作經，所以必待傳而著者，聖人雖異人者，神明而朽沒之期亦等。（此皇侃《論語義疏》序語）。

[555] Chen Li, *Xuesi lunxue xumu*, 774:4.

> In the preface to his *Direct Explanations of the Spring and Autumn Annals*, Fang Bao wrote: "When the sages created the *Classics*, how could they have known there would be commentaries written for them? If the meaning of the *Classics* cannot be pursued without the commentaries, the intention behind creating the *Classics* in the first place would have been in vain."
>
> Such arguments may mislead some people, but actually make no sense. When Fu Xi and King Wen created the *Yijing*, how could they have known that Confucius would write the Ten Wings commentaries? According to Fang Bao, then, even the Ten Wings could be discarded. Moreover, when later scholars in their explanations of the *Classics* discard previous commentaries, their own books are also a type of commentary, because they certainly are not *Classics*.
>
> If [Fang Bao thought that] the three old commentaries [to the *Annals*] could be discarded, then why did he not also discard his own book? The reason why the sage-authors in creating the *Classics* had to count on others to write commentaries was that, even though the sages are different from ordinary people, the time given them of life and death was similar to that of others. (These words are from the preface to Huang Kan's *Lunyu yishu*).[556]

Rather than blame deficiencies in the received *Classics* on imperfect transmission, Chen Li held that imprecision with regard to detail had been an integral part of the original text.[557] The study of the *Classics* was similar to the study of law, because while application of the law was based on precedent, it could not be conceived as the mechanical workings of a perfect set of principles unambiguously covering any set of circumstances.

The study of texts was the study of men, and men invariably make mistakes. Therefore, Chen Li argued, in the pursuit of knowledge "there can be no ultimate right or wrong" (*xuewen duan bu neng you zhen shi fei* 學問斷不能有真是非).[558] Making such a statement, Chen Li broke away from the lineage orientation that saturated both the

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[556] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 213-214. Cf. Elman, "One Classic and Two Classical Traditions: The Recovery and Transmission of a Lost Edition of the *Analects*," *Monumenta Nipponica* 64.1 (2009): 53-82.
[557] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 159.
[558] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu lunxue zhaji*, 357:4.

daoxue notion of a transmission of the Way and the *jiafa* approach in Qing dynasty Han Learning and evidential research.

Even as students chose to emulate an historical teacher, there was little to gain from doing so uncritically or stubbornly defending one's idol from external criticism.[559] A careful student of the *Analects*, for example, would find mistakes in all previous commentaries to that work, including but not limited to those of He Yan, Huang Kan, Xing Bing, and Zhu Xi.[560] But just as men carry an inborn potential for goodness (*xing shan* 性善), so each written text should be read with an eye to its contributions and not to its defects. Therefore, students should find a predecessor that they largely agreed with and then search widely for ways to clarify and improve his work.[561] This method had been used by Zheng Xuan in his subcommentary to the Mao recension of the *Shijing*. While on the whole following the Mao commentary, he also departed from it when necessary (*you zong zhu yi you bu tong* 有宗主亦有不同).[562]

Applied Classicism in Qian Daxin's "Lügua shuo"

Chen Li's was an accumulative approach to learning because it built on the work of predecessors, but since it abandoned the pursuit of single origins there was no longer a strong notion of progress toward a final destination. Learning was therefore an individual process that must be repeated anew by each student. By studying how an earlier scholar emulated past knowledge and transformed it into something relevant for his own time, the modern student in turn created something useful to address contemporary problems.

A concrete example of this was Qian Daxin's essay on "Explaining the *Lü* hexagram" (*Lügua shuo* 履卦說).[563] The essay amassed the combined strength of the classical canon to mount a fierce attack on Heshen's abuse of power and undue influence

[559] Chen Li, *Xuesilu xumu*, 774:5.
[560] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 40.
[561] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 110, 129, and 254.
[562] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 211, and 265.
[563] The whole section is missing from Chen Li's collected writings, see instead Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji* (Hong Kong: San lian shudian, 1998), 82-83.

over the Qianlong emperor.[564] Below is an annotated translation of Qian Daxin's essay, as quoted by Chen Li for emulation by advanced students of the *Yijing* in the chaotic times of the Late Qing. He wrote:

> 錢辛楣〈履卦說〉云：「《履》象上天下澤。天極其尊，澤較地而逾卑；上下各安其位，而無覬覦之心。此守成極盛之象也。五居尊位，四陽輔之，剛中正，履帝位而不疚，具《大有》為之資，無自暇逸之志，宜乎利有攸往矣，而夬履之厲，聖人惕然戒之，何哉？陽健於上，陰說乎下，有將順而無匡救。孔子所謂「予無樂乎為君，唯其言而莫予違也。」若是者，雖正亦危，況未必皆正乎！《兌》之義，主乎說，以一陰加二陽之上，二陽不能說君，而六三一陰獨專之。上下相說，說且不解，上不知其眇且跛也，而委以視履之柄；下亦忘其眇且跛也，而矜其視履之能。力少任重，窮大失居，非干覆餗之刑，即致負乘之寇，不特自詒伊慼，抑且禍及國家矣。故於《彖》有『不咥人』之戒，而於六三著『咥人』之凶。」澧謂錢氏可謂善言《易》矣。錢氏《養新錄》於爻辰兩象易之類詳考之，而其自為說則如此。乃知《易》義切於人事。治此經者，勿徒騖於古奧也。
>
> Qian Xinmei [Daxin] in "Explaining the *Lü* hexagram" said:[565] "The hexagram *Lü* figures heaven high and marshes low. Heaven is dignified in the extreme and the marshes are baser even than the earth. High and low each rest in their positions without covetous minds. This is the figure of one safeguarding his achievements to maximize prosperity.[566] The line in the

[564] The political implications of this essay and Chen Li's awareness thereof are noted in Zhang Tao 張濤 and Deng Shengguo 鄧聲國, *Qian Daxin pingzhuan* 錢大昕評傳 (Evaluative Biography of Qian Daxin) (Nanjing: nanjing daxue chubanshe, 2006), 199-200. In contrast, it is surprising that Mou Runsun 牟潤孫 (1908-1988), who was clearly sensitive to the relationship between scholarship and politics in the Qing dynasty, still considers Chen Li's scholarship to have had little connection to current affairs. See Mou Runsun, "Gong Ding'an yu Chen Lanfu" 龔定庵與陳蘭甫 (Gong Zizhen and Chen Li), vol. 5 of *Zhongguo zhexue sixiang lunji* 中國哲學思想論集 (Essays on Chinese Philosophy), eds. Xiang Weixin 項維新 and Liu Fuzeng 劉福增 (Taipei: Shuiniu chubanshe, 1986-88), 293-299.

[565] See Qian Daxin, "Lügua shuo," in *Qian yan tang ji*, 41.

[566] On one level, this is a classical allusion to the Mao "minor preface" (*xiaoxu* 小序) of the "Greater Elegantiae" (*Daya* 大雅) ode no. 248. The preface reads: "The 'Fuyi' ode means to safeguard achievements. The noble man of Great Peace excels in consolidation and in safeguarding achievements. With him the wondrously dignified ancestors are joyfully at ease." 鳧鷖，守成也。大平之君子能持盈守成，神祇祖考安樂之也. However, it was also a clear reference to the Qianlong emperor, who during the middle years of his reign adopted an official policy of "consolidation and safeguarding the peace " (*chiying baotai* 持盈保泰), shifting his emphasis from

fifth position occupies the dignified position and four *yang* lines support him. 'He is unyielding, central, and correct, without remorse poised in the imperial position.'[567] If *Dayou* 大有 is there to provide support,[568] with no intent on leisure or amusement, it will be advantageous to move forward.

Why, then, did the sage fearfully warn against the danger of insistent movement?[569] *Yang* is strong above and *yin* rejoice below. There will be accord, but none to rescue him from danger.[570] This is what Confucius meant by: 'I take no joy in being the ruler, because when I speak there are none who oppose me.'[571] If this were the situation, even though he is correct

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military to cultural concerns. See Gao Xiang 高翔, "Cong 'chiying baotai' dao gaoya tongzhi: lun Qianlong zhongqi zhengzhi zhuanbian" 从"持盈保泰"到高压统治：论乾隆中期政治转变 (From "Consolidating and Safeguarding the Peace" to Coercive Government: The Political Turn of the mid-Qianlong Period), *Qingshi yanjiu* 3 (1991): 8-13.

[567] A quotation from the *Tuan* 彖 commentary to the Lü hexagram. On the level of the hexagram, a nine in the fifth position is "unyielding" because it is a *yang* line, it is centrally positioned in the upper trigram, and being a *yang* line in an odd-numbered position it is "correct." The "dignified position" and the "imperial position" both refer to the fifth position of the hexagram.

[568] See Wang Bi's interpretation for a nine in the third position of the *Dayou* hexagram: "Placed in a time of Great Inclusiveness, residing at the extreme end of the lower trigram, riding on top of the unyielding and strong, moving (*lü*) into its due position, and sharing its achievements with the nine in the fifth position: as for the fullness of majestic power, nothing exceeds such circumstances. If an able man holds this position he can proceed along the emperor's path. A petty man would be unable and disaster could be expected" 處大有之時，居下體之極，乘剛健之上，而履得其位，與五同功，威權之盛，莫此過焉。公用斯位，乃得通乎天子之道也。小人不克，害可待也. Kong Yingda et al., *Zhouyi zhengyi* 周易正義 (Correct Meaning of the *Zhouyi*) (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2000), 92.

[569] An allusion to Zhu Xi's reading of the line verbalization to a nine in the fifth position of the *Lü* hexagram. The line verbalization reads: "insistent movement, correctness, danger" 夬履，貞，厲. Zhu Xi commented as follows: "A nine in the fifth position being unyielding, central and correct steps onto the imperial position, and the below being *Dui* respond to him with joy. In general, affairs will be carried out without doubt or obstruction. On account of this, the figure [of this line] is that of its movement being insistent. Although it may be correct, this way is still dangerous. On account of this, its prognostication is: correct and yet dangerous. This is a profound warning" 九五以剛中正履帝位，而下以兌說應之，凡事必行，無所疑礙，故其象為夬決其履。雖使得正，亦危道也，故其占為雖正而危，為戒深矣.

[570] An allusion to *Xiaojing* 1.17: "[The official to his ruler] makes it easy to carry out that which is good and remonstrates to amend that which is bad. When on these terms, high and low may be like family to each other" 將順其美，匡救其惡，故上下能相親也.

[571] An allusion to *Lunyu* 13.15, where Zhu Xi's interpretation read: "If his words are good and none oppose, is this not good? If his words are not good and none oppose, does this not come close to ruining the state with a single word? Fan Chuyi 范處義 (12th c.) said: 'If his words are not good but none oppose, then admonitions will not reach his ear. The ruler becomes more arrogant and the ministers more ingratiating by the day. There is no situation in which this does not ruin the state.' Xie Liangzuo 謝良佐 (1050-1103) said: 'Knowing the difficulties of being a ruler, he will be respectful and meticulous in holding on to his position. But when he [enjoys to] speak with none

there is still danger, and how much more so if he is not completely correct![572]

The meaning of the *Dui* 兌 trigram is mainly to admonish. Having one *yin* line on top of two *yang* lines, the two *yang* lines are unable to admonish the ruler, since the six in the third position as a single *yin* monopolizes him. High and low may be admonishing each other, but their admonishments are not mutually understood.[573] The one above does not know the lower ones' inability to observe affairs, and thus discards them due to the power of the one who does observe. Those below similarly forget their own blindness and lameness, and take pride in their abilities of observing affairs.

opposing him, then flatterers and sycophants arrive. It is not that the state will suddenly be ruined, but the origins of ruin lie in this. However, apart from the noble man with an understanding of the subtle, who else knows that this is so?'" 如其善而莫之違也，不亦善乎？如不善而莫之違也，不幾乎一言而喪邦乎？」范氏曰：「言不善而莫之違，則忠言不至於耳。君日驕而臣日諂，未有不喪邦者也。」謝氏曰：「知為君之難，則必敬謹以持之。惟其言而莫予違，則讒諂面諛之人至矣。邦未必遽興喪也，而興喪之源分於此。然此非識微之君子，何足以知之？」.

[572] Since on the level of the hexagram a nine in the fifth position is by definition "correct," this sentence necessitates a metaphorical reading.

[573] That is, the nine in the fifth position and the two *yang* lines in the lower trigram attempt to communicate with each other, but their words cannot escape the beclouding influence of the six in the third position.

His strength is failing and the burden is heavy.[574] An exhausted great one loses his residence. Even if he does not receive due punishment for overturning the stew,[575] he will bring about bandits who ride along.[576]

These are not merely the regretful words of an official;[577] on the contrary, it is a disaster about to befall the empire. On account of this, the *Tuan* commentary admonishes: 'Do not bite others.' The six in the third line makes evident the danger of 'biting others.'"

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[574] An allusion to the lower section of the *Xici zhuan* 繫辭傳 (Commentary of Attached Verbalizations): "Confucius said: 'Among those whose virtue is thin but whose position is dignified; whose knowledge is small but whose ambitions are great; whose strength is minor but whose burden is heavy, few do not reach their limit. The *Yi* says: "The leg of the cauldron breaks and the ruler's stew is overturned. He will be punished and executed in a private room. Inauspicious." This speaks of one unable to bear the burden of his duties.'" 子曰：「德薄而位尊，知小而謀大，力小而任重，鮮不及矣，易曰：『鼎折足，覆公餗，其形渥，凶。』言不勝其任也」.

[575] On the "punishment for overturning the stew," see above. This sentence is also a veiled allusion to the *Yinzheng* 胤征 chapter of the forged Old Text *Shangshu*, which includes the sentence ". . . on account of this made themselves liable to the punishment of the former kings" 以干先王之誅. The account reads in part: "It was [the officials] Xi and He who overturned the ruler's virtue, they drowned themselves in wine, turned their backs on the charge of their official positions and transgressed their place in the hierarchy. It was they who first upset the heavenly order and neglected their official duties. Then on the first day of the last month of autumn, the *chen* did not gather in *fang*, the blind men beat on their drums, the minor officials galloped, and the common people fled. Xi and He went about their office like *shi* attendants, not hearing or knowing anything about it. Being unaware of the heavenly signs they made themselves liable to the punishment of the former kings." 惟時羲和顛覆厥德，沈亂于酒，畔官離次，俶擾天紀，遐棄厥司，乃季秋月朔，辰弗集于房，瞽奏鼓，嗇夫馳，庶人走，羲和尸厥官罔聞知，昏迷于天象，以干先王之誅.

[576] An allusion to the *Zhengyi* commentary on the six in top position of the *Jie* 解 hexagram. The commentary reads: "The *zhui* is a cruel and greedy bird of the sparrow species. *Yong* means wall. The six in the third position loses its place and rides along. Its not responding to those above makes it a source of crimes, which is why it is a metaphor of 'flocking together'. Here the flying bird is borrowed as a metaphor. Residing at the top of the lower trigram, it is like a bird resting on a high wall. The *zhui* as a bird is suited to the mountains and forests, so that when they flock together on the high wall of someone's home they will certainly be shot down. This implies that as the six in the third position rests in high position, others certainly must punish it. The six in the top position resides on the top of 'action' and is the extreme of 'emancipation' (*jie* 解). He will be the one to bring emancipation from these absurdities and weed out the decadent and disorderly. On this account, he will be the one to shoot them down." 隼者，貪殘之鳥，鸇鷂之屬。牆，牆也。六三失位負乘，不應於上，卽是罪釁之人，故以譬於集。此借飛鳥爲喻，而居下體之上，其猶隼處高塘。隼之爲鳥，宜在山林，集於人家高牆必爲人所繳射，以譬六三處於高位，必當被人所誅討。上六居動之上，爲解之極，將解之荒悖而除穢亂，故用射之也.

[577] An allusion to a line in the *Daya* ode "Minor brightness" (*xiaoming* 小明) The *Zhengyi* commentary to this ode reads: "The ode "Xiaoming" was composed by a district official who regretted having chosen to serve in chaotic times. This is to say that as an official serving in chaotic times he was sent to far off regions, he was exhausted by bitter work and therefore bore regret." 小明詩者，牧伯大夫所作，自悔仕於亂世。謂大夫仕於亂世，使於遠方，令己勞苦，故悔也.

> [I Chen] Li remark: Qian [Daxin] excelled in discussing the *Yijing*. Qian's *Record of Nourishing the New* (*Yangxin lu* 養新錄) makes detailed examinations of *yaochen* 爻辰 and *liang xiang Yi* 兩象易, and so on. Yet his own explanations look like this. From this we know that the meaning of the *Yijing* is intimately related to human affairs. As for you who specialize in this *Classic*, do not merely chase for the archaic and the abstruse!

By stripping away its classicist clothing, Qian Daxin's essay can be paraphrased to show what his criticism might have sounded like if expressed directly. He emphasized that these were not the grumblings of a disillusioned official, but a sincere warning of a disaster about to befall the empire. Like greedy vultures, Heshen and his accomplices "flocked together" at court, forming a faction bent on furthering their own selfish interests. Using the old imagery of factions as a screen between the ruler and the people, Qian Daxin explained how the civil officials below, because of the Heshen faction, were unable to observe the workings of the state, let alone reach the emperor's ear in order to influence policy. He expressed his sympathies for the emperor, who observed the passivity of his civil officials without understanding why they had to act that way. As for his own literati colleagues, Qian Daxin condemned them for resting in false illusions of their own ability to influence government, when in fact they had already been paralyzed by Heshen's faction.

The Qianlong emperor, Qian Daxin argued, had achieved a prosperous reign that he needed only to preserve. On the surface, the emperor succeeded in doing so, for the civil officials all appeared to be united and in perfect agreement with him. But while the civil officials unproblematically carried out that which was good about the emperor's policies, none dared criticize that which was bad. Qian Daxin quite explicitly stated how the emperor was about to be outmaneuvered by Heshen's faction, and the consequences would be disastrous. Even if the emperor escaped execution due to a military coup, he would only allow for more selfish men to grab their piece of imperial prerogative and resources. The only solution was to shoot down the birds; that is, to execute Heshen and his men.

Chen Li included Qian Daxin's essay, not because he considered it a correct account of the original intentions of any sage-authors behind the *Yijing*, but as an example of how the classical tradition could be creatively adapted to a new historical

situation. Simultaneously, it represented Chen Li's conviction that classical studies ought to be conceived of as the study of men in history. The giant in Qianlong era evidential research, Qian Daxin, could here be seen and understood as a real human being of high moral standard and with a sincere concern for the society and politics of his time.

5.5 Finding Unity in Pluralism

If the lineage orientation failed to achieve consensus due to invalid assumptions regarding the nature of historical truth, the question remained how to embrace pluralism while still attaining a necessary degree of unity. Chen Li proposed a number of solutions to this problem.

The Problematic Educational System

The Qing educational system left little room for a pluralism of individual specializations. When the civil examinations were adapted to suit either the Song or Han Learning agendas, every classically literate man in the empire was forced to pursue a high degree of specialization in a tightly regulated methodological framework. This was quite regardless of his personal aptitude or career ambitions. Those who were not fortunate enough to pass the examinations at a relatively early age often ended up spending the greater and most productive part of their lives immersed in such narrow pursuits.

The hair-splitting philology of evidential research, just as the abstruse philosophical discussions of *daoxue*, depended on narrow specialization and required mastery of a highly professionalized vocabulary and set of techniques. They were ill suited to serve as an educational foundation that could be shared also by students whose primary aim was not to pursue an academic career.

The Qing educational system not only wasted precious talent by forcing students into scholarly disciplines that may not suit them, but professional researchers also failed to reach any consensus on basic issues. Despite the assurances of its theoreticians that evidential research provided the tools necessary to reconstruct the original meaning of the

Classics, its widespread practice testified only to the proliferation of incompatible intellectual positions. The sheer amount of conceivable answers on the basis of evidential reasoning obstructed the promotion of unifying values and suggested, rather, an historical justification for relativism.

Just like Fang Dongshu, Chen Li was critical of works like Wang Yinzhi's *Jingyi shuwen*, because even if its results were based on real erudition, students who imitated its format ended up quite ignorant of previous scholarship, which they could criticize but not understand. It turned study into mere evaluation, not learning.[578] Many who praised the *Jingyi shuwen* seemed not to understand its contribution, but praised it only because it represented the "latest" in Qing scholarship. Had they been able to grasp its significance, Chen Li argued, they should have been equally excited over a good explanation found in the Mao-Zheng commentaries to the *Shijing*.[579]

By 1861, Chen Li rejected book learning for its own sake. Evidential research scholars spent their lives reading books, he noted, but accomplished nothing of benefit either for themselves or for others. Chen Li wrote:

> 今人只講訓詁考據而不求其義理，遂至於終年讀許多書而做人辦事全無長進，此真與不讀書等耳。此風氣急宜挽回也。
> Today's scholars only speak of glosses and evidential research, giving no thought to the greater significance of the *Classics*. Therefore, even though throughout their lives they read plenty of books, they show no progress whatsoever in terms of personal development or in their ability to deal with affairs. This is no different from not reading at all. This trend has to be turned around immediately.[580]

With a good amount of sarcasm, he also wrote:

> 近儒專講訓詁，試問朝廷若使通經之士為官，能以訓詁治百姓乎？
> Scholars of today speak only of textual glosses. I would like to ask them, if the court now let those with a thorough classical education become officials, would they be able to govern the people with their glosses?[581]

[578] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu lunxue zhaji*, 365:46.
[579] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu lunxue zhaji*, 364:39.
[580] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu lunxue zhaji*, 358:10.
[581] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu lunxue zhaji*, 359:17.

The civil examinations was the main route to official position, but they were based on a type of learning that had nothing to do with governing the realm. This was demonstrated by the polemical discussions among intellectuals in Guangzhou preceding the First Opium War over how to deal with the opium problem, discussions that had left Chen Li so concerned over the relationship between scholarship and politics. Having witnessed the failure of a student body and specialized scholars to act decisively and competently when confronted with statecraft problems, Chen Li was not surprised to see that many of his contemporaries now looked to more direct and instantaneous ways of dealing with the socio-political situation of the 1860s and 70s. He cautioned, however, against the dangers of turning to *ad hoc* statecraft measures unless supported by a thorough reform of the educational system. Chen Li wrote:

> 天下之亂由於做官者不知讀書，讀書者不知做官。讀書做官本非兩途，無如做官者專為苟且之政，而與事理相背；讀書者專為無用之學而與官事不相通，此天下所以亂也。做官者與讀書者當分任其咎。做官者不知讀書，則無以仁義與王言者矣。
> The chaos of the realm stems from the fact that those in official position are uneducated, while those who are educated do not know how to act in official capacity. A classical education and official position should not be two separate paths. Today, however, those in official position only govern in an *ad hoc* manner, without the guidance of valid principles. Conversely, those who pursue a classical education only engage in pointless research and know nothing about governing people. This is the reason why the realm is in chaos. The officials and the scholars are both to be blamed. If the officials do not have a classical education, they will be unable to take a moral stand in front of the ruler.[582]

The lack of perspective among Qing officials and administrators led to what Chen Li characterized as the practice of a latter day Mohism, that is, an exclusive pursuit of "enriching the state and strengthening the military" (*fuguo qiangbing* 富國強兵).[583] He further linked the emphasis on current affairs (*wu shi* 務時) to Shang Yang's 商鞅 (390-

[582] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu lunxue zhaji*, 363:35.
[583] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 238, and 240.

338 B.C.) legalist policies, which held that as long as statecraft methods can strengthen the state it does not matter where they come from, and as long as they benefit the people it does not matter if they go against tradition.[584] Such an attitude to statecraft, Chen Li thought, could only produce *ad hoc* measures in a time where change was necessary in a systematic manner, starting from the individual as the very foundation of society.

Broad Foundations for Unity

Education was not only meant to produce professional scholars, but also to give prospective politicians and administrators shared values and attitudes that would help them collaborate in the pursuit of common goals.[585] In fact, the education of professional scholars and that of bureaucratic officials required very different types of knowledge, which Chen Li referred to in terms of erudite learning (*boshi zhi xue* 博士之學) and literati learning (*shidaifu zhi xue* 士大夫之學) respectively. Even so, it was important that they both share an educational foundation.[586]

Chen Li saw reform of the educational system as one the most pressing needs for Chinese society. A basic classical training should teach what was already known, whereas critical thinking to correct others' mistakes or add to the pool of knowledge was only a secondary goal. Chen Li wrote:

> 讀書先求知古人所已知，勿先求知古人所未知也。於古人所已知者，讀之思之，排比鉤稽之，而見有古人所未知者焉，然後從而補正之。
> Education should mainly be about learning what previous generations already knew. It cannot primarily be about learning what previous generations did not know. Students should read and reflect on what previous generations already knew, and if in the process of comparing and restoring that knowledge, they find something that previous generations did not know, only then may they correct them.[587]

[584] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 247.
[585] Chen Li, *Xuesilu xumu,* 775:8.
[586] Chen Li, *Dongshu zazu*, 693.
[587] Chen Li, *Xuesilu xumu*, 775:10.

This basic education did not aim to create new knowledge or produce professional scholars, but consisted in the reading of books for widening the student's personal experience of the world. To clarify this point, Chen Li quoted Zhu Xi, saying:

> 朱子《答黃直卿書》云：「天下事一一身親歷過，更就其中屢省而深察之，方是真實窮理。」朱子此說，乃「格物」、「致知」之確解也。身親歷過者，「格物」也；屢省深察者，「致知」也。（格物致知，猶言實事求是。實事者，格物也；求是者，致知也。）
> Zhu Xi in his "Response to Huang Zhiqing's letter" wrote: "To personally experience each and every thing in the world, and further to repeatedly and profoundly reflect upon those experiences, this is indeed to realize coherence."
>
> This saying by Zhu Xi provides the right explanation of the phrases "investigating things" and "bringing about knowledge." To personally experience is what is meant by investigating things, and to repeatedly and profoundly reflect upon them is what is meant by bringing about knowledge. (Investigating things and bringing about knowledge is the same as "searching for truth in actual facts." "Actual facts" is the same as investigating things; searching for truth is the same as bringing about knowledge).[588]

According to Chen Li's view of a basic education, the meaning of a *daoxue* term like "investigating things and bringing about knowledge" (*gewu zhizhi*) or the Han Learning injunction to "search for truth in actual facts" (*shishi qiushi*), were not about the production of new knowledge or the correction of unfounded beliefs. Rather, students should immerse themselves in what Zhu Xi called "efforts that engage the self" (*qie ji gongfu* 切己工夫).[589]

Chen Li thought that students could achieve this by specializing in a single *Classic* of their choice, as long as their primary goal was to alter and improve their own character.[590] Only by making this the explicit aim of a shared educational program would classicism make a positive contribution to society.[591] The question was no longer to

[588] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 172.
[589] Chen Li, *Xuesi ziji*, 764:26.
[590] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu lunxue zhaji*, 374:91.
[591] Chen Li, *Xuesilu xumu*, 776:15.

determine *what* the *Classics* were about, but rather *how* one may go about learning from them. And while this was not the only method of learning, it was one that anyone could pursue. This made it a suitable foundation for academic scholars and bureaucratic officials alike.[592]

Asking How-Questions, Not What-Questions

In contrast to lineage-oriented classicism, Chen Li rejected the notion that any significance the *Classics* carried lay in their precise wording. The "what" of the *Classics*, to the extent that such questions still had to be asked, consisted in a far less precise sense of their general meaning (*da yi* 大義). Chen Li wrote:

> 經學所以治天下，無經則不可以治天下矣。前明之經學最陋，何以能治天下乎？然則經學之治天下，乃其大義耳，名物訓詁之小者，與治天下無所關係也。前明經學雖陋而大義未嘗失也，故仍可以治天下。近百年來，名物訓詁雖精而無補於天下之亂也。觀此可以知經學之所重在彼不在此矣。
>
> Regarding the ways in which classicism aids in governance, it may be said that without the *Classics*, the realm cannot be governed. In the Early Ming, classicism was at its low-point, so how come the realm could still be governed?
>
> When classicism is used for governance, only the general meaning is of any importance. The small details, such as names of things and textual glosses, have nothing to do with governing the realm. While the classicism of Early Ming scholars was indeed poor, they never lost sight of the texts' general meaning, and therefore still managed to govern the realm.
>
> Over the past hundred years, great philological advances have done nothing to bring order to the social chaos. By making this observation, we know where the importance of classicism lays, and where it lays not.[593]

[592] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu lunxue zhaji*, 375:97.
[593] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu lunxue zhaji*, 360:22.

Since Chen Li reaffirmed the importance of the *Classics* in the educational curriculum, it would seem natural to ask: if the *Classics* are so important, what exactly are they about? What are the values contained therein, and what guidance can they give us in the present? Such questions miss the point of Chen Li's ideas.

In *Reading Notes from Dongshu*, Chen Li referred to a passage in the *Zhuzi yulei* where one of Zhu Xi's disciples asked about the words "knowing Heaven's mandate" as they appeared in the *Analects*. Zhu Xi initially refused to answer the question, and when pressed further angrily told the student that if he had not reached the point of knowing Heaven's mandate, how could he expect somebody else to explain it for him?[594] This anecdote may serve to illustrate Chen Li's view that the significance of the *Classics* could not be summed up in a list of moral principles, nor used directly as policy guidelines in the present. The same point was made in a passage that Chen Li quoted from Huang Chuwang. He wrote:

> 黃楚望云：「凡《左傳》於義理時有錯謬，而其事皆實；若據其事實，而虛心以求義理至當之歸，則經旨自明。澤之所得，實在於此。然則學《春秋》者，姑置虛辭，存而勿論，而推校《左傳》之事，以求聖經。此最為切實，庶幾可得聖人之旨矣。」（趙東山《春秋師說》卷中）。又云：「所謂虛辭者，謂如尊君卑臣，貴王賤霸，崇周室、抑諸侯。若此之類，其義雖正，然人人所知。今有人能誦此說，似乎通曉；及至以一部《春秋》付與之，使之著筆，則莫知所措矣。」（同上）。黃氏之說，最為醇正。且以尊君卑臣之類，人人所知者，皆為虛辭，使不考事實而好為大言者，無所置其喙，尤為卓識也。
>
> Huang Chuwang said: "While the *Zuozhuan* is sometimes mistaken in its interpretation of events, the events as such all have substance. If one were to pursue the interpretation of those events with an open mind, the significance of the *Classic* would be self-evident. Herein lies its beneficial influence. Therefore, students of the *Annals* may temporarily put away all empty phrases and not discuss them, but instead inquire into and examine the events in the *Zuozhuan*, so as to understand the *Annals*. This is the earnest way to go about it, and comes close to attaining the intentions of the sage-author." (Zhao Dongshan, *Chunqiu shishuo*, *juan* 2).

[594] Quoted in Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 28.

> He further said: "So-called empty phrases refer to ones like 'honoring the ruler and lowering his officials, respecting a king and despising a despot, uplifting the royal house of Zhou and suppressing the fiefdoms.' All such phrases are correct, but everyone has heard them. Nowadays, there are men who can recite those phrases and appear knowledgeable, but once you give them a volume of the *Annals* and ask them to write something about it, they do not know what to do." (As above).
>
> Huang Chuwang's words are most correct. It is especially brilliant when he further points out "honoring the ruler and lowering officials" and such words that everyone have heard as empty phrases, thereby stopping those who speak grandly without knowledge of events from opening their beaks.[595]

Criticism of the memorization and recitation of "empty phrases" had been the main argument of 18th century evidential research scholars who convinced the Qianlong emperor to promote their version of classicism. Likewise, the difficulty to determine the sincerity of an official who repeated such well-known phrases was one reason why the Qianlong emperor accepted the suggestions of his Han Learning advisers.

Asking not *what* a text like the *Annals* was about, but rather *how* one could go about learning from it, enabled students to read the *Classic* and its commentaries with an open mind. By putting aside the pursuit of original meaning, different genres of writing from different epochs could be read and understood as the products of men in history. This required no specialized training apart from a working knowledge of the classical language, and it encouraged students to develop their personal traits and talents through an engagement with history.

"The reason why basic knowledge is so important," Chen Li stated, "is because it is used to educate young beginners, and there is no man who has not once been young." (*xiaoxue zhi gong suoyi da zhe, wei tianxia jiao chuxue tongzi, fan ren wu bu zi tongzi lai zhe ye* 小學之功所以大者，為天下教初學童子，凡人無不自童子來者也).[596] The goal of training students in the historical disciplines was to produce independently

[595] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 214.
[596] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu lunxue zhaji*, 395:193.

thinking men, who could remain aloof from the trends of their time (*kuang juan bu tong liusu* 狂狷不同流俗).[597]

Chen Li wanted to give students a shared educational groundwork before they moved in different social directions.[598] From there, they would specialize in the discipline that suited them best. He envisioned the four main disciplines (*si ke* 四科) of moral philosophy, literature, statecraft, and philology. Each of these was then divided into several subdisciplines.[599] He hoped that a basic education would prepare students to pursue specialized learning without excluding or deriding other forms of knowledge. This was different from the current situation, where students trained in one area ridiculed and distanced themselves from other disciplines, leading to partisanship and a polemical atmosphere.[600]

Chen Li noted the lack of introductory works for beginning students. Experienced scholars, he thought, should take it upon themselves to summarize and synthesize historical texts and provide easily accessible methodological instructions. Already in 1854 he said that: "Huge volumes of profound and meticulous research do not contribute as much as introductory books. It is deplorable that for a century now, none have written books of this kind" (*gu jingshen haobo zhi shu, fan bu ru qimeng zhi shu wei gong jiao da, er du hen bai nian yilai, weiyou zhu ci deng shu ye* 故精深浩博之書，反不如啟蒙之書為功較大，而獨恨百年以來，未有著此等書也).[601]

Reaching the final decades of the 19th century, Chen Li's call for introductory textbooks was echoed from several quarters. Liao Ping suggested that "in classical studies there are a number of main principles . . . now someone should imitate [Yu Yue's 俞樾 (1821-1907)] *Gushu yiyi juli* 古書疑義舉例 (Examples of Difficult Passages in Ancient Books) and write a book to clarify them" (*zhi jing you shu da li . . . jin dang fang*

[597] Chen Li, *Xuesi ziji*, 759:15; *Dongshu dushu lunxue zhaji*, 358:8.
[598] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu lunxue zhaji*, 384:143.
[599] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu lunxue zhaji*, 377:103.
[600] Chen Li, *Dongshu dushu ji*, 23.
[601] See the fifth letter to Xu Ziyuan in Chen Li, *Dongshu ji*, 178-179.

Gushu yiyi juli *zuowei yi shu yi ming zhi* 治經有數大例……今當仿《古書疑義舉例》，作為一書以明之).[602]

Likewise, in the forged preface to a book falsely attributed to Jiang Fan, the *Jingjie rumen* 經解入門 (Introduction to Classical Interpretation), the purported author Ruan Yuan spoke of "writing a book that may function as a path to classical studies and philology"（*zuowei yi shu, yiwei jingxun zhi chentu* 作為一書，以為經訓之陳塗).[603] The *Jingjie rumen*, which should probably be dated to the late 1880s, was neatly structured according to common topics in classical studies, providing historical overviews and a general introduction to mainstream knowledge in each field. As had been called for by Liao Ping, one section of the book included something of a "grammar" of the classical language in the style of Yu Yue's *Gushu yiyi juli*, which had been published in 1871. The *Jingjie rumen* became highly popular in the last decade of the 19th century and was also quickly introduced to Japan.

Liu Shipei's 劉師培 (1884-1919) *Jingxue jiaoke shu* 經學教科書 (Textbook in Classicism) was written in the first decade of the 20th century. In line with Chen Li's suggestions, it looked to integrate classicism with a new disciplinary curriculum. But due to the rise of Western specialized education, the use of historical knowledge as a unifying force was not generally recognized, and Liu Shipei felt compelled to defend it by arguing that while the *Classics* did not fit well into any one academic discipline (*bu he yu jiaoke* 不合于教科), they offered valuable, general knowledge for all students.[604]

Chen Li's philosophy of knowledge and education was also transmitted in a less piecemeal fashion. A Japanese observer, Tatemori Kō 館森鴻 (1863-1942), who travelled along China's southeast coast around the turn of the century, said: "I travelled all the way from Fujian to Jiangsu, and every acquaintance I made regarded Chen [Li] as

[602] Liao Ping, *Jinghua jiabian* 經話甲編 (On Classicism, First Volume), vol. 1 of *Liao Ping xuan ji* 廖平選集 (Liao Ping Selected Writings), ed. Li Yaoxian (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 1998), 406.17.
[603] Jiang Fan, *Jingjie rumen* 經解入門 (An Introduction to Classical Exegesis) (Shanghai: Huadong shifan daxue chubanshe, 2010), 1.
[604] Liu Shipei, "Xuli" 序例 (Preface), *Jingxue jiaoke shu* (Ningwu Nan shi, n.d.), 1b.

Mount Tai or the Pole Star" (*yu xiang zi Min-Yue di Jiang-Zhe jiaoyou jie yang Chen shi ru Taishan Beidou* 余向自閩越抵江浙交游皆仰陳氏如泰山北斗).[605]

The Hunanese scholar Hu Yuantan 胡元倓 (1872－1940), who founded the Mingde Academy in Changsha after his return from Japan in 1903, was also deeply influenced by Chen Li's writings through his lineage education. He was later quoted saying that all his ideas and methods ultimately derived from Chen Li's scholarship.[606] For Hu Yuantan, the search for unity that Chen Li initiated took the form of a search for the "spirit of our people" (*minzu jingshen* 民族精神).[607] And as late as the 1920s and 30s, Chinese and Japanese observers of Beijing's intellectual scene noted the lingering influence there of Southern Learning and scholars who regarded themselves as adherents of a Chen Li school.[608]

5.6 Zhu Yixin and Han-Song Syncretism

Zhu Yixin's scholarship has often been read in conjunction with Chen Li's work as representing an attempt to overcome the 18th and 19th century trend of dividing Han and Song Learning. More recently, it has also been argued that they promoted a similar trend by different methods in Zhejiang and Guangdong respectively.[609] My reading of their respective writings tends to support the latter argument, but while Chen Li and Zhu Yixin

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[605] Tatemori Kō, *Du Dongshu dushu ji* 讀東塾讀書記 (On Reading the *Dongshu dushu ji*), *Yadong shibao* 21 (1900): 26.

[606] Xi Qijiong 席啟駉, "Dongshu xueshu" 東塾學術 (The Scholarship of Chen Li), *Mingde xunkan* 4.1 (1931): 3-4; and Xi Qijiong, Chen Lanfu xiansheng ji Hu Boji xiansheng lunxue shu 陳蘭甫先生及胡伯薊先生論學書 (Letter on Chen Li's and Hu Boji's Scholarly Discussions), *Mingde xunkan* 6.7 (1932): 119.

[607] Hu Yuantan (*zi* Zijing), "*He wei gewu*?" 何謂格物 (What is *Gewu*?) , *Mingde xunkan*, 6-7 (1935): 1-2; reprinted in *Guoguang zazhi*, 16 (1936): 83-85.

[608] Sang Bing 桑兵, *Wan Qing Min'guo de guoxue yanjiu* 晚清民国的国学研究 (A Study of National Learning in Late Qing and Republican China) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2001), 28-33.

[609] Yu Meifang 於梅舫, "Zhe Yue xueren yu Han Song jiancai: Zhu Yixin *Wuxietang dawen* lunxue zhiqu jiexi" 浙粵學人與漢宋兼采：朱一新《無邪堂答問》論學旨趣解析 (Han-Song Synthesis among Scholars from Zhejiang and Guangdong: An Analysis of the Discussions in Zhu Yixin's *Wuxietang dawen*), *Jindaishi yanjiu* (2010.4): 4-15.

both argued against a partisan division between Han and Song Learning, they showed completely different attitudes to the lineage orientation in Chinese intellectual history.

Zhu Yixin came from Yiwu County in Zhejiang and studied under Yu Yue at the Gujing Jingshe Academy in Hangzhou. He became a presented scholar in 1876 and worked for a time as compiler in the Hanlin Academy. Having been invited by Zhang Zhidong 張之洞 (1837-1909), Zhu Yixin went to Guangdong in 1887 to teach at the Duanxi Academy, and in 1889 he became director of the Guangya Academy in Guangzhou. His *Wuxietang dawen* 無邪堂答問 (Questions and Answers from Wuxietang) was presented as Zhu Yixin's answers to questions posed by students at the Guangya Academy. In this work, he cited Chen Li a number of times in support of various points, but did not explicitly discuss the latter's general accomplishments.[610] It is plausible that references to Chen Li would have been noticed and welcomed by Zhu Yixin's Cantonese students.

Zhu Yixin, like Chen Li, traced the origins of Han Learning to Hui Dong, and he had little positive to say about the 18th century scholar.[611] He was also largely critical of Dai Zhen's attempt to present a new philosophical vision in contrast to Cheng-Zhu orthodoxy.[612] To a higher degree than Chen Li, Zhu Yixin identified the adverse effects of Han Learning as something resembling scientific objectivity. He wrote:

> 雖然王學末流之弊，不知治心而尚知有心。若如近儒之言，則目自能視，耳自能聽，手自能持，足自能行，而吾心漠然，一無所與……苟有稍及此心者，必訶以為釋氏之說。古人惟恐心之不靈而時時省察以養之，近人惟恐心之或靈而事事窒塞以仇之。務使如頑石然，一無知覺而後已。
>
> While the offshoots of Wang Yangming's teachings were faulty in not knowing to control the mind-and-heart, at least they still knew there *was* a mind-and-heart. According to the words of recent scholars, it would follow that the eyes can see by themselves, the ears can hear by themselves, the hands can grasp by themselves, the feet can walk by themselves, whereas the mind-and-heart is inactive and takes no part in anything [. . .] If someone

[610] See Zhu Yixin, *Wuxietang dawen* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2000), 39, and 86.
[611] Zhu Yixin, *Wuxietang dawen*, 3.
[612] Zhu Yixin, *Wuxietang dawen*, 3, and 29.

so much as mentions the mind-and-heart, this will inevitably be berated as Buddhist theories.

The ancients only worried that the mind-and-heart would not function effectively, and from time to time engaged in self-reflection to cultivate it. Men in recent times are only worried that the mind-and-heart is functioning effectively, and so in everything obstruct it as an enemy. They make it their duty to become hard like rocks, not stopping until they have no thoughts or impressions whatsoever.[613]

Zhu Yixin's reference to human physicality took aim at Dai Zhen's philosophy, which represented exclusive focus on concrete facts at the cost of introspection. Evidential research had failed to create consensus and unity in the intellectual world, and Zhu Yixin noted that this pursuit of "actual facts" (*shishi* 實事) not necessarily implied a "search for truth" (*qiushi* 求是).[614] He said: "If one betrays the Way in order to speak of the text as such, then philology becomes a tool for misleading others" (*pan dao yi yan wen, ze xungu nai wuren zhi ju* 畔道以言文，則訓詁乃誤人之具).[615] Instead of ameliorating the lack of consensus that characterized the Late Ming intellectual scene, Zhu Yixin argued, evidential research only fostered constant criticism and deviation (*qi zhi you qi* 歧之又歧).[616]

The pursuit of facts for its own sake seemed to lack theoretical justification as to its usefulness. Where Chen Li disputed the importance of precise calendrical computations, Zhu Yixin was ready to accept the superstition of popular religion as long as it proved useful in harmonizing the relationship between state and society. He wrote:

天之蒼蒼，神祇何在？災祥何在？在乎人之心耳。心以為有則有，心以為無則無，合千萬人之心，而以為有是物則真有是物矣。楚人鬼，越人禨，其理皆作如是觀。聖王明知其言之近誕也，而人情如是，則因其機而利導之，使人由是生敬畏心，以潛消其邪慝。故曰：「神道社教而天下服。」愚夫之崇飾土木，術士之妄言休咎，變本加厲耳。然其弊小，至外夷之說行，則天變不足畏矣，可乎哉？謹案：康熙三

[613] Zhu Yixin, *Wuxietang dawen*, 125.
[614] Zhu Yixin, *Wuxietang dawen*, 83.
[615] Zhu Yixin, *Wuxietang dawen*, 14.
[616] Zhu Yixin, *Wuxietang dawen*, 83.

十六年二月朔，諭曰：「日食雖人可預算，然自古帝王皆因此而戒懼。蓋所以敬天變，修人事也。」大哉，王言洵足垂範百世矣。

In the vastness of the sky, where are the spirits of heaven and earth? Where are the omens? They are simply in the mind-and-heart of man. If the mind-and-heart thinks that they exist, they exist. If the mind-and-heart thinks they do not exist, they do not. Bringing together the minds-and-hearts of a myriad men, if they think that something exists, then it truly does.

The people of Chu believed in ghosts and the people of Yue believed in omens.[617] This principle should be thus understood. The sage kings obviously knew that such words were quite absurd, but since the people's emotions were like that, they took the opportunity to guide them. This way the people's attitude was made reverent, and heterodoxy quietly eliminated. Therefore it is said: "Lay out instructions in this spirit-like way and the realm will submit."[618]

As for foolish men making intricate constructions, and diviners' delusional talk of auguries and omens, they are merely exaggerations. But their faults are minor, whereas if the theories of the foreign barbarians are accepted, heavenly aberrations will no longer be revered. Can this be accepted?

I cautiously note: In the 36th year of the Kangxi reign (1697), at the time of the new moon, an edict was issued that said: "Even though eclipses can be predicted by men, rulers from ancient times have taken them for admonishment. This is the way to be reverent toward heavenly aberrations and administer human affairs." Great indeed! The ruler's words are truly worthy of being handed down as a model for a hundred generations.[619]

As had Chen Li, Zhu Yixin noted how the pursuit of precise calendrical and astronomical computations was closely related to the teachings of Western missionaries. But despite these similarities, Zhu Yixin differed from Chen Li by arguing for a strong reassertion of orthodoxy and the lineage orientation.

Zhu Yixin argued that the roots of Christianity were to be found in Buddhism, which explained their similarities in genealogical terms.[620] Both religions located final

[617] See the Shuofu 說符 chapter of the Liezi. Yang Bojun 楊伯峻 (1909-1992), *Liezi jishi* 列子集釋 (Collected Commentaries on the Liezi) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979), 260.
[618] See the *tuanzhuan* 彖傳 commentary to the *guan* 觀 hexagram of the *Yijing*.
[619] Zhu Yixin, *Wuxietang dawen*, 77-78.
[620] Zhu Yixin, *Wuxietang dawen*, 65.

authority in the mind-and-heart of the individual, renouncing inherited knowledge and kinship ties.[621] He wrote:

> 凡異端之學，無不本心者。信心太堅，則凡先王之典章制度，不難一切掃滅之。
> All heterodox teachings are rooted in the mind-and-heart. When trust in the mind-and-heart is overly strong, it is not difficult to get rid in one sweep of all the institutions of the former kings.[622]

Western civilization was understood to incorporate all social relations under the category of "friendship" (*pengyou* 朋友).[623] The types of social and political organization embraced by foreigners were horizontal associations based on shared beliefs and personal interest. Even more frequently than the Buddhist comparison, their ideology was spoken of in terms of "universal love" (*jian ai* 兼愛) and Mohism.[624] But also in this case, where Chen Li had noted similarities, Zhu Yixin saw genealogical relationships and argued that "the compassion of the Buddhists and the messianic teachings of Jesus, both originated in Mohism" (*Shi shi cibei, ze Yesu jiushi zhi shuo, qi yuan chu yu Mo shi* 釋氏慈悲，耶穌救世之說，其源出於墨氏).[625]

In Zhu Yixin's attempt to differentiate his preferred discourse based on kinship ties and lineage organization from various alternatives──effectively presented as a monolithic opposing discourse combining the pursuit of selfish interests with egalitarian ideals──the notion of humaneness (*ren*) became a contested one. Did not this concept represent a thoroughly Confucian acceptance of something similar to Mohist universal love?

As we have seen, Ruan Yuan had used evidential research to formulate his own definition of humaneness based on Zheng Xuan's gloss of *ren* as "people mutually

[621] Zhu Yixin, *Wuxietang dawen*, 66.
[622] Zhu Yixin, *Wuxietang dawen*, 70.
[623] Zhu Yixin, *Wuxietang dawen*, 72.
[624] Zhu Yixin, *Wuxietang dawen*, 28, 32, 38, 47, 66-67, 69, 74-75, 107, 129, and 169.
[625] Zhu Yixin, *Wuxietang dawen*, 67.

concerned for each other" (*xiang ren ou* 相人偶).[626] Zhu Yixin criticized Ruan Yuan's exposition, which seemingly endorsed a view of humaneness that could only be exercised in non-hierarchical interaction.[627] To resolve this problem, Zhu Yixin referred to the *daoxue* notion that "there is only one Coherence, but it is differentiated" (*li yi fen shu* 理一分殊). He argued that even though the idea of universal love was not wrong, the common good was best realized by recognizing social hierarchies and the centrality of kinship.[628] Therefore, he concluded, if "each treats his kin as kin, and each treats his elders as elders, this is the most private thing in the world, and by the same token the most public thing in the world" (*ge qin qi qin, ge zhang qi zhang, tianxia zhi zhisi, ji tianxia zhi zhigong ye* 各親其親，各長其長，天下之至私，即天下之至公也).[629]

The 19th century saw a proliferation of debates regarding the "public" (*gong*) and the "selfish/private" (*si*). These were old notions tied primarily to the idea of political factions. While *gong* was generally a positive notion of supporting state interests, *si* was a negative one denoting horizontally organized groups pursuing personal interests. In the 19th century, however, these discussions took place on a scale pertaining to society at large, and were no longer restricted to the political setting. The respective merits of lineage-based and horizontally organized associations were also debated in these terms. Zhu Yixin defended the "public" character of a lineage-oriented society and the hereditary principle by arguing that kinship ties were only superficially private or selfish. He wrote:

> 三代聖王雖公天下，而其所以為子孫計者，未嘗不私。觀詩、書所言，皆赫赫業業，祈天永命，為子孫計久長之事。蓋能私其子孫，乃能安

[626] Elman, "Criticism as Philosophy," 164-198.
[627] Zhu Yixin, *Wuxietang dawen*, 31-33. Ruan Yuan's discussions of *ren* are represented by his "*Lunyu* lun ren lun" 論語論仁論 (Discussion of the Concept *Ren* in the *Lunyu*) and "*Mengzi* lun ren lun" 孟子論仁論 (Discussion of the Concept *Ren* in the *Mengzi*), in Ruan, *Yanjingshi ji*, 176-210.
[628] Zhu Yixin, *Wuxietang dawen*, 107-109 and 129. The "Western Inscription" forms part of the "Qiancheng pian" 乾稱篇 of Zhang Zai's *Zheng meng* 正蒙 (Correcting Youth). See Zhang Zai, *Zhang Zai ji* 張載集 (Collected Writings of Zhang Zai), ed. Zhang Xichen (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1978), 62-63.
[629] Zhu Yixin, *Wuxietang dawen*, 129.

> 其百姓，未有百姓不安，而子孫獨能安者。此古今無異理，聖凡無異情，雖私而實公也。
>
> Although the sage kings of the three dynasties made the realm public, that by which they planned for their sons and grandsons was nevertheless private. Considering what the *Classics* are about, it is all greatly and majestically praying to heaven for the everlasting mandate and planning far ahead for sons and grandsons.
>
> Once they could treat their descendants as private, they could put the hundred surnames at ease. Never when the hundred surnames were not at ease could the descendants alone be at ease. This principle is the same in antiquity and today, and this emotion is shared between the sages and common people. While private, it is in fact public.[630]

Zhu Yixin's argument was that since the extended family unit was the most natural form of social organization, it was a system that everyone could participate in.

While Chen Li and Zhu Yixin shared some common observations and opinions, the latter's strong focus on reasserting the lineage orientation in both socio-political and intellectual areas makes it impossible to view the two as part of one movement. This comparison is only one case to show why it would be misleading to group together 19th century scholars that promoted a reevaluation of the Han-Song distinction and call this a "school" or "movement" of Han-Song syncretism.

The concept of Han-Song syncretism is more properly understood as an umbrella term for various approaches to the much more deep-going problem of factionalism and partisanship in 19th century China. This was a problem that carried over into Republican China and continued to influence Chinese thinkers in their choice of topics, methodology, and conclusions.

CHAPTER 6: GU JIEGANG

The *Gushibian* 古史辨 (Debates on Ancient History) series has often been taken to represent the thought of its main editor Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛 (1893-1980). But the agendas

[630] Zhu Yixin, *Wuxietang dawen*, 105.

forwarded by contributors to the series were varied and sometimes incompatible. One of the most conspicuous and significant tensions in the *Gushibian*, and particularly in the first two volumes, was that between a pluralist view of history promoted by Gu Jiegang and the lineage-oriented agendas pursued by some of the other contributors. This brief chapter highlights the conflict between these two approaches to historical knowledge in the first two volumes of the *Gushibian*.

Intellectual Lineages and the Background of Gushibian

Intellectual lineages (*xuepai* 學派) were a fact of 20th century Chinese scholarship, at least as much as had been the case during the Qing dynasty. Even if students did not necessarily receive their education from relatives in the shape of a family tradition, the historical disciplines still demanded that students choose intellectual positions at an early stage. In his long autobiographical introduction to the first volume of the *Gushibian*, Gu Jiegang related how his fellow students and colleagues, when confronted about their participation in academic partisanship, compared their position-taking to the use of hypotheses in research. Gu Jiegang wrote:

> 我的心目中沒有一個偶像，由得我用了活潑的理性作公平的裁斷，這是使我極高興的。我固然有許多佩服的人，但我所以佩服他們，原為他們有許多長處，我的理性指導我去效法；並不是願把我的靈魂給他們，隨他們去擺佈。對今人如此，對古人亦然。惟其沒有偶像，所以也不會用了勢利的眼光去看不占勢力的人物。我在學問上不肯加入任何一家派，不肯用了習慣上的毀譽去壓抑許多良心話的分子，就是為此。固然有人說，一個人的思想總是偏的，不偏於甲派便偏於乙派，但我覺得要保持客觀的態度，用平等的眼光去觀察種種不同的派別，也不是不可能的事。即使不能完全不偏，總可以勉力使它少偏一點。也有人說，為學不能不投入家派，正如不能不施用假設，有了假設才有入手的路，所以家派是終該選定的，盡不妨礙將來深入之後而棄去。這種話在以前是可以說的，因為那時各種學問都不發達，學問的基礎既不建築於事實上，研究學問又苦於沒有好方法，除了投入家派

之外得不到一點引路的微光，為尋求一個下手處計，也有選擇家派的需要。

I have no idols. This is because I use my rationality flexibly to make fair evaluations, something that makes me very happy. Of course, there are many men whom I admire, but I do so because they have many admirable qualities that my reason tells me to emulate. I do not give my soul to them, or allow them to manipulate me. In this, I have the same attitude towards my contemporaries as I do to men of the past.

It is only because I have no idols that I can avoid using a snobbish attitude to those who have not received a favorable judgment by others. In my scholarship, I refuse to join any one intellectual lineage, and I do not use mainstream evaluations to judge and discriminate against the many who have honestly spoken their minds. Of course, there are those who tell me that a man's thought is inevitably partisan, and that if he distances himself from one intellectual lineage, he naturally draws closer to another one. However, I think that it is possible to maintain an objective attitude and fairly investigate the various intellectual lineages. Even if one cannot maintain perfect impartiality, one can at least try hard to be a little less partisan.

There are also those who say that it is necessary to join an intellectual lineage, just as one must make use of hypotheses, for only with a hypothesis does one have a starting point. Therefore, they say, sooner or later one must choose an intellectual lineage to join, even though it is always possible to abandon it after more profound research.

Such arguments made sense in the past, when the various forms of learning were not yet fully developed. Back then, the foundation of scholarship was not built on reality, and there was a lack of proper methods, so that a scholar without an intellectual lineage did not have the slightest idea where to begin. Therefore, there used to be a need for intellectual lineages to create a starting point for beginning scholars.[631]

Since Gu Jiegang himself became the figurehead of an intellectual movement, it seems ironic that the rejection of academic partisanship formed such a central theme in his autobiography. But the problem of partisanship, as we have seen, was already a longstanding debate in Chinese intellectual history. Gu Jiegang certainly went too far in his depiction of an impartial attitude to learning as something revolutionary new, but he

[631] Gu Jiegang, "Zi xu" 自序 (Editor's Preface) to vol. 1 of *Gushibian* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1982), 81-82.

was right on spot identifying the intellectual lineage as a prime cause for disunity and lack of consensus.

The problem with lineages and partisanship was not necessarily that beginning students undertook their research with unverified assumptions. Like Gu Jiegang said, he willingly learned from and assimilated his predecessors. The problem lay in the unwillingness of students and mature researchers to transgress and revitalize the knowledge of their predecessors. The notion of a "guiding principle" (*zongzhi* 宗旨) that Huang Zongxi had used to discuss Ming philosophy went from referring to the condensed verbalization of a philosophical system, to become an entry point into the narrow tradition of a specific intellectual lineage. And this starting point (*rumen* 入門) in many cases also became the endpoint (*zhijing* 止境) of knowledge.[632]

Gu Jiegang argued to turn intellectual lineages into *objects* of study under a new disciplinary structure. He held that "to understand the historical position of different intellectual lineages, we must of course carefully investigate them. But this means researching them, not to blindly follow them" (*zhiyu women weile yao liaojie ge jiapai zai lishi shang de diwei, bumian yao duiyu jiapai you suo xunyi, dan zhe shi yanjiu, bu shi fucong* 至於我們為了要瞭解各家派在歷史上的地位，不免要對於家派有所尋繹，但這是研究，不是服從).[633]

Gu Jiegang wanted to free the study of Chinese history and thought from the constraints imposed by lineage-oriented and exclusivist assumptions, which were represented by the related concepts of Song *daotong*, Qing *jiafa*, and Republican *xuepai*. He wrote:

> 我們知道：我們的功力不但遠遜於清代學者，亦且遠遜於宋代學者。不過我們所處的時代太好，它給予我們以自由批評的勇氣，許我們比

[632] Qian Mu identified this as a more widespread problem of Chinese thought during the Song-Ming dynasties, among what he referred to as *biechu zhi ru* 別出之儒 —including both *daoxue* thinkers like Cheng Yi and *xinxue* thinkers like Lu Xiangshan or Wang Yangming. Qian Mu, "Zhongguo ruxue yu wenhua chuantong" 中國儒學與文化傳統 (Chinese Confucianism and the Cultural Tradition), in *Zhongguo xueshu tongyi* 中國學術通義 (Comprehensive Meaning of Chinese Scholarship), vol. 25 of *Qian Binsi xiansheng quanji*, 91.
[633] Gu Jiegang, "Zi xu," v.1, 82.

> 宋代學者作進一步的探索——解除了道統的束縛，也許我們比清代學者作進一步的探索——解除了學派的束縛。
> We know that our achievements are far below those of Qing scholars, and even far below those of Song scholars. Yet we live in such great times! The times have given us the courage to engage in critical thinking. It has allowed us to go a step further than Song scholars and rid ourselves of the restraints imposed by the concept of a transmission of the Way (*daotong*). It has also allowed us to go a step further than Qing scholars and rid ourselves of the restraints imposed by the concept of family lineages (*jiapai*).[634]

These two concepts—*daotong* and *jiafa*, or *jiapai*—formed a continuous thread in Chinese intellectual history due to their lineage-oriented approach to knowledge. Gu Jiegang pointed out that an unintended result of Qing scholars' reconstruction of Han dynasty intellectual lineages had been to undermine the notion of a single and unified orthodox Confucianism. The New Text debate during the Late Qing then finally dissolved all remaining belief in narratives of a revived transmission that stayed true to a single, original version of texts and ideas originating from the sage-authors. Now, this narrative stood unveiled as an ideological construct by Han scholars to support their own claims to intellectual and political orthodoxy. Gu Jiegang wrote:

> 清代的學風和以前各時代不同的地方，就是：以前必要把學問歸結于政治的應用，而清代學者則敢於脫離應用的束縛；以前總好規定崇奉的一尊，而清代學者為要恢復古代的各種家派，無意中把一尊的束縛也解除了。清末的古文家依然照了舊日的途徑而進行；今文家因時勢的激蕩而獨標新義，提出了孔子托古改制的問題作自己的托古改制的護符。這兩派衝突時，各各盡力揭破對方的弱點，使得觀戰的人消歇了信從家派的迷夢。
> Before the Qing dynasty, all scholarship was applied in the field of political practice. What was different about Qing scholars was that they dared to liberate themselves from the restraints of applicability. Previously, one had to decide on one orthodox interpretation. But in their

[634] Gu Jiegang, "Zi xu" 自序 (Editor's Preface), vol. 3 of *Gushibian*, ed. Gu Jiegang (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1982), 1.

> efforts to revive the old intellectual lineages, Qing scholars unconsciously freed themselves from the restraint of orthodoxy.
>
> During the Late Qing, Old Text scholars continued along the same old track, while New Text scholars reacted to the surge of the times and presented their own interpretations of the literary heritage. They defended their political reform agenda by reference to ancient institutions, and raised the question whether Confucius had resorted to similar measures with reform in mind. The clash between these two movements saw scholars on both sides do all they could to expose the other's weaknesses. This, in turn, led to the bystanders' loss of faith in the idea of intellectual lineages.[635]

This dissertation has argued that while Qing evidential research undermined the orthodox Cheng-Zhu interpretations of the *Classics*, they retained the mission to recover a perfect origin in antiquity. It was because evidential research upheld the basic tenets of a lineage orientation that the Manchu government tolerated their criticism of Cheng-Zhu readings, instead of regarding them as a challenge to their political legitimacy.

But the Han Learning movement did not stay united for long. The question of which interpretive lineage was correct led to partisanship and competitiveness among evidential research scholars. The stakes were high, since students of the dominant lineage interpretations would gain a distinct advantage in the civil examinations. This struggle—at times passive-aggressive, at times outright aggressive—ultimately produced very few conclusive results in terms of textual interpretation. It seemed that ultimately, as Gu Jiegang suggested, the study of commentarial traditions did not support the hypothesized existence of a single *Urtext* at the beginning of Chinese intellectual history.

Departmentalized Knowledge

Unsatisfied with the lineage-oriented approach to history and classicism, Gu Jiegang sought an alternative "starting point" for the examination and evaluation of past events, thinkers, and ideas. He argued for a new structure of "departmentalized knowledge"

[635] Gu Jiegang, "Zi xu," vol. 1 of *Gushibian*, 77.

(*kexue* 科學) that was partly inspired by Western notions of science, and partly by indigenous tradition. The English term "departmentalized knowledge" to describe Gu Jiegang's notion of *kexue* first appeared in an article by Arthur W. Hummel, included in the second volume of *Gushibian*. Intellectual lineages were often divided along traditional lines into those who focused on *Classics* (*jing*), history (*shi*), and literature (*cizhang*) respectively.

Gu Jiegang's call for a new departmentalization of knowledge involved the creation of independent fields, such as paleography and ancient grammars. This did not only imply an increased specialization of knowledge, and the primary aim was rather to pursue an interdisciplinary—in relation to old divisions and lineages—form of learning.[636]

As we have seen, Chen Li had already theorized the division of knowledge into disciplines, outlining the four general subjects of moral philosophy, literature, statecraft, and philology—each of which could then be subdivided further. But his more significant contribution was to emphasize that, regardless of how the disciplines were structured, practitioners of each must always bear in mind the incomplete nature of his field. The difference between departmentalized knowledge and knowledge as perceived from within the framework of intellectual lineages was that, in the former, no subfield claimed comprehensive knowledge or ridiculed practitioners of other subfields for engaging in lesser or misdirected forms of learning.

Specialized knowledge was only safe to pursue as long as its partiality was recognized. This was fundamentally different from research done in the framework of a lineage orientation, where teachers and students were thrown into constant competition with each other over the claim to complete and comprehensive knowledge. While Gu Jiegang's particular disciplinary divisions may have been borrowed from the Western scientific tradition, the purpose and reasoning behind his ideas was like Chen Li's to end partisan struggle. Gu Jiegang wrote:

[636] Gu Jiegang, "Zi xu," vol. 1 of *Gushibian*, 31-32, and 92.

> 處在現在時代，研究學問除了分工之外再沒有別的辦法：分工的職業是無貴賤之別的，超人的奢望是不可能的。
>
> In our time, there is no way to pursue scholarship other than through the division of labor. Within this division of labor, no distinction is to be made between lesser and higher forms of learning, and we cannot put our hope in the appearance of a superhuman individual.[637]

In a letter included in the second volume of *Gushibian*, Fu Sinian 傅斯年 (1896-1950) discussed the object of historical inquiry. He criticized research that focused on the thought of sage-authors as historical individuals, such as Sun Xingyan's reconstruction of Confucius based on a collection and synthesis of all received materials attributed to the master.[638] It would be impossible, Fu Sinian argued, to distinguish historically reliable material from mere legend or false attributions. And as long as the object of study was identified in terms of sage-authors, no consensus would ever be reached in the field of pre-Han intellectual history.

Would it be any more effective, Fu Sinian asked rhetorically, to focus on the written work as a unit? With reference to the long tradition of Chinese authenticity studies, Fu Sinian held that the demonstrably composite nature of early Chinese texts made the received "work" just as impractical a unit of inquiry as the sage-author.[639] Fu Sinian's formulation of the *Gushibian*'s aim was very precise: to remove focus from sage-authors and their books by creating new units of research (*yanjiu danwei* 研究單位).

This was precisely the purpose of departmentalized knowledge as envisioned by Chen Li and Gu Jiegang. Abandoning the lineage orientation and its methodology first of all required formulating entirely new research questions. With reference to the *Yijing*, Gu Jiegang wrote:

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[637] Gu Jiegang, "Zi xu," vol. 3 of *Gushibian*, 7.
[638] Fu Sinian, "Ping 'Chunqiu shi de Kongzi he Handai de Kongzi'" 評「春秋時的孔子和漢代的孔子」(Evaluation of "Confucius in the Spring-and-Autumn Period and Confucius in the Han dynasty"), vol. 2 of *Gushibian*, ed. Gu Jiegang (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1982), 141.
[639] Fu Sinian, "Ping 'Chunqiu shi de Kongzi he Handai de Kongzi'," 141.

> 這至少可以說明，在作彖傳的時候，周易的本子上已寫作「箕子」解作箕子了。這是很早的一個本子，我們如果沒有文王作爻辭的成見橫梗在心頭，想替它辯護的，我們就應當承認這個較早的本子中的文字。
>
> At least we know that when the Tuan commentary was composed, the text of the *Zhouyi* contained the characters Jizi 箕子, which were understood as a reference to the uncle of King Zhou of Shang. This is very early testimony. If we are not obstructed by the assumption that King Wen wrote the line verbalizations to the hexagrams, directing all our arguments to defend that attribution, then we may accept the text of this rather early testimony.[640]

Hui Dong, as we have seen, held that these two character could not be a reference to the person Jizi, since the latter's death as a martyr occurred after the death of King Wen. Chen Li later dismissed the whole issue of authorship as unimportant, and here Gu Jiegang also chose to ignore the attribution and the requirements of coherence that such an assumption implied in Qing evidential research. "We do not need to do what classical scholars did in the past," he stated, "and come up with a coherent reading of the whole book" (*women haishi bu yao xiang congqian de jingshi yiban, ba yi bu gushu man jiang tong le ba* 我們還是不要像從前的經師一般，把一部古書滿講通了罷).[641]

However, rejecting the notion of a sage-author was relatively easy compared to moving beyond research questions that assumed the internal coherence of each *Classic*. An attempt at doing so were Li Jingchi's 李鏡池 (1902-1975) writings on the *Yijing*, which are included in the third volume of the *Gushibian*. Li Jingchi started out with a refusal to support one or the other traditional approach to the *Yijing*, as represented by the mutually incompatible interpretations of Yu Fan and Wang Bi. Those scholars, Li Jingchi argued, formulated their research questions on the invalid assumption that a meaningful coherence was to be identified between the hexagrams and the words of the classical text.

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[640] Gu Jiegang, "Zhou Yi guayaoci zhong de gushi" 周易卦爻辭中的故事 (Stories in the Line and Hexagram Verbalizations of the *Yijing*), vol. 3 of *Gushibian*, 16.
[641] Gu Jiegang, "Zhou Yi guayaoci zhong de gushi," 23.

That is, they were stuck in "*Yijing* studies," and as innumerable scholars after them posed their interpretive questions to the *Yijing* as a "book."[642]

In contrast, Li Jingchi showed that a small part of the *Yijing* could be read as poetry similar to that found in the *Shijing*. His claim was soon challenged with the argument that his observation was valid only in a very limited number of cases, and that the *Yijing* as a whole hardly could be understood by reference to the *Shijing*. In response, Li Jingchi emphasized that he had never meant to read the *Yijing* as a coherent whole.[643] He did not intend to provide yet another key (*li* 例) to the reading and explanation of the *Yijing* as a book, and therefore his observation of one or two instances where the *Yijing* used language similar to that of the *Shijing* remained valid.[644]

The result of Li Jingchi's research in this case was less important than the radical intellectual statement it represented. It represented an attempt to avoid the lineage orientation with its concomitant assumptions of sage-authors, coherent texts, and precise reconstructions. Alternative questions could be posed that did not reiterate old assumptions or delineate old factional divisions.

Multicultural Antiquity

Tze-ki Hon noted how Gu Jiegang—more so than Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873-1929)—emphasized a view of the Chinese nation and its historical beginnings as "ethnically and geographically diverse."[645] There was a tension between Gu Jiegang's focus on "multiplicity and complexity" in historical representation and the pursuit of "one absolute truth" among many of his colleagues.[646] While Hon related Gu Jiegang's thought primarily to the political context in the 1930s, it should also be contextualized as part of the Qing-Republican debate over intellectual lineages.

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[642] Li Jingchi, "Zhou Yi shici kao" 周易筮辭考 (Analysis of Prognostication Texts in the *Yijing*), vol. 3 of *Gushibian*, 213-214.
[643] Li Jingchi, "Zhou Yi shici kao," 223.
[644] Li Jingchi, "Zhou Yi shici kao," 223.
[645] Tze-ki Hon, "Ethnic and Cultural Pluralism: Gu Jiegang's Vision of a New China in His Studies of Ancient History," *Modern China* 22.3 (1996): 320.
[646] Hon, "Ethnic and Cultural Pluralism," 326.

Gu Jiegang's four-fold agenda set out to overturn the following notions: (1) that the Chinese people derived from a single ethnical origin, (2) that China had always been a geographical unity, (3) that supernatural accounts of the past were always subordinated in time to concretely human narratives, and (4) that the ancient past had been a golden age in Chinese history.[647]

In terms of ethnical origins, he pointed out that no arguments appeared between the Western Zhou and the early Spring-and-Autumn period that were in favor of establishing a common ancestor for the various peoples of the realm.[648] There had not even been a notion of political unity (*tong yi* 統一) before the Warring States period.[649] This state of pluralism and multiculturalism had changed only gradually, and stagnated ultimately with the imperial claims of the Han dynasty and the subsequent establishment of Confucian orthodoxy. Gu Jiegang wrote:

> 戰國時，我國的文化固然為了許多民族的新結合而非常壯健，但到了漢以後便因君主的專制和儒教的壟斷，把它弄得死氣沉沉了。
> During the Warring States period, Chinese culture grew strong thanks to the new amalgamation of various peoples. But reaching the Han dynasty, due to imperial autocracy and the monopoly of Confucian orthodoxy, our culture turned stiff as a corpse.[650]

Cultural streamlining and unification went hand in hand with claims to monopoly over the transmitted *Classics* and the intentions of their sage-authors. In both textual scholarship and political propaganda, Gu Jiegang argued, a varied and pluralist past had been reduced to a lineage-oriented narrative of single origins. This dissertation has argued that a strong lineage orientation did not appear until the Southern Song, and that tracing it to the Han dynasty may be the result of later projections back in time. Be that as it may, Gu Jiegang expressed in unambiguous terms the view that a cultural force, such

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[647] Gu Jiegang, "Da Liu Hu liang xiansheng shu" 答劉胡兩先生書 (Responding to the Letters of Mr. Liu and Mr. Hu), vol. 1 of *Gushibian*, 99-101.
[648] Gu Jiegang, "Yu Qian Xuantong xiansheng lun gushi shu" 與錢玄同先生論古史書 (Letter to Mr. Qian Xuantong Discussing Ancient History), vol. 1 of *Gushibian*, 61.
[649] Gu Jiegang, "Taolun gushi da Liu Hu er xiansheng" 討論古史答劉胡二先生 (Response to Mr. Liu and Mr. Hu Regarding the Ancient History Discussion), vol. 1 of *Gushibian*, 142.
[650] Gu Jiegang, "Zi xu," vol. 1 of *Gushibian*, 89.

as that of the lineage orientation, distorted our perspective of an ancient past that itself in no way supported lineage-oriented ideals.

In the third volume of *Gushibian*, Zheng Zhenduo 鄭振鐸 (1898-1958) pointed to the Eastern Han as a time when influential families in pursuit of official recognition appealed to the notion of an unbroken, though exclusive and secret, transmission of sagely texts and ideas within their respective family lineages. Zheng Zhenduo wrote:

> 漢人傳經，其說本靠不住：一方面抱殘守缺，死守師說，而不肯看看經文；一方面又希望立於學官，堅學者之信仰，不得不多方假託，多方引證，以明自己的淵源有自。
>
> The idea that Han scholars transmitted the original *Classics* does not hold up to scrutiny. Firstly, these scholars stubbornly held on to fragmentary commentaries and the interpretations of their teachers, being quite unwilling to even look at the classical text itself. Secondly, they desired to be established as academicians and to strengthen other scholars' belief in their own interpretations. To prove that their knowledge derived from antiquity, they engaged in false attributions and accumulated evidence from a plethora of sources to support them.[651]

The Mao school prefaces to the *Shijing* were built around attributions of individual odes to historical figures and events. Taking these as representative of Han dynasty classicism, Zheng Zhenduo argued that they were a product of political struggle and factionalist motives.

Gu Jiegang and other *Gushibian* contributors argued against the historical narrative of Confucius' teachings having been divided into various lineages after the master's death. Even if there were some divisions, Gu Jiegang argued, those were not necessarily due to opposing interpretations. Instead, new generations and changed historical circumstances or different regional characteristics may simply have prompted varying adaptations of his ideas. "When it comes to such divisions," Gu Jiegang argued, "it does not necessarily imply that they adopted different guiding principles, but could simply be due to differences in geographical and other actual circumstances" (*zhiyu*

[651] Zheng Zhenduo, "Du Maoshi xu" 讀毛詩序 (Reading the Prefaces to the *Maoshi*), vol. 3 of *Gushibian*, 400.

xuepai de fenqi, huo yinyu diyu, huo yinyu shishi, gu bu bi jin guanyu zongzhi 至於學派的分歧，或因於地域，或因於事實，固不必盡關於宗旨).[652] For example, Gu Jiegang rejected the notion of Mencius and Xunzi as two separate interpretive lineages that traced their roots to Confucius. The ideas that those two names represented should rather be evaluated independently as responses to spatial and historical circumstances.[653]

Historical Imagination

Given the realization that received historiography was guided by politics and factional interest, what was history if not fiction? Gu Jiegang claimed that the study of Chinese history as fiction began with Kang Youwei, who went beyond previous authenticity debates by elucidating the socio-political context that such fictions arose from. Hu Shi 胡適 (1891-1962) refined the approach by studying the transformation of historical fictions over time, and Gu Jiegang viewed his own work in the first volume of the *Gushibian* as continuing along this track.[654]

Gu Jiegang saw no straightforward way in which historical narratives may be relied on to determine what actually happened in the past.[655] Most of the time, he noted, an historical narrative was created to explain a phenomenon in the present, not to accurately describe the past. "These narratives," he said, "were all retrospective rationalizations and explanations of a pre-existing phenomenon" (*zhexie chuanshuo, dou shi xian you le yi jian shishi, ranhou zai ti ta xiangchu liyou lai jieshi de* 這些傳說，都是先有了一件事實，然後再替它想出理由來解釋的).[656]

Instead of trying to establish the actual facts of events as they occurred in the past, Gu Jiegang argued that the proper aim of historical research should be to separate different historical narratives from each other, and see each on its own terms. The

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[652] Gu Jiegang, "Da shu" 答書 (Letter Response), vol. 2 of *Gushibian,* 255.
[653] Gu Jiegang, "Da shu," 256.
[654] Gu Jiegang, "Zi xu," vol. 1 of *Gushibian,* 78.
[655] Gu Jiegang, "Yu Qian Xuantong xiansheng lun gushi shu," 60.
[656] Gu jiegang, "Du Li Cui er xiansheng wen shu hou" 讀李崔二先生文書後 (Written on Reading the Articles of Mr. Li and Mr. Cui), v.2, in Gu Jiegang ed., *Gushibian,* 106.

difficulties of such a task were well described by Yao Mingda 姚名達 (1905-1942) in the second *Gushibian* volume:

> 我們要知道從戰國以前并沒有著述之事。除了王公大臣的事實，有人給他記下些短簡殘篇以外，一切古事，一切同時代的事，都是口耳相傳，一傳十，十傳百，由一個地方傳往各地方，由一時代傳下一時代，互相滲透，互相交換，互相傳遞。
> We need to realize that before the Warring States period, there was no such thing as authorship. Apart from some miscellaneous records regarding the doings of kings and nobles, all past and present events were orally transmitted. One transmitted them to ten, and ten to a hundred; from one geographical region they were transmitted to other regions. From one historical period they were transmitted to the next, and all along [these narratives] influenced each other, switched places with each other, and disseminated each other.[657]

All historical records—pre- or post-Han, novels or classical texts—could only be legitimately read as orally disseminated rumors and stories.[658] Not only did this notion of oral transmission mean that the modern scholar lacked reliable methods to get at past events on the basis of received texts, it also meant that it was impossible to identify the earliest instantiation of an historical fiction. Therefore, Gu Jiegang rejected both historical events (*shishi* 事實) and the origins of historical narratives (*gushi de benlai mianmu* 故事的本來面目) as objects of research. We could only study the plurality of historical narratives in history. He wrote:

> 這種事情，簡單說來，只是"亂"和"妄"。在我的中學時代，一定不屑齒及，不願一顧的。但在這時正是心愛著戲劇，不忍把它拒絕，翻要替它深思。深思的結果，忽然認識了故事的格局，知道故事是會得變遷的，從史書到小說已不知改動了多少……從小說到戲劇又不知改動了多少，甲種戲與乙種戲同樣寫一件故事也不知道有多少點的不同。

[657] Yao Mingda, "*Shiji* Tian Jingzhong shijia zhong Zou Ji de san duan hua" 史記田敬仲世家中鄒忌的三段話 (Three Passages on Zou Ji in the 'Tian Jingzhong shijia' Chapter of the *Shiji*), vol. 2 of *Gushibian,* 123.
[658] Yao Mingda, "*Shiji* Tian Jingzhong shijia zhong Zou Ji de san duan hua," 125.

一件故事的本來面目如何，或者當時有沒有這件事實，我們已不能知道了；我們只能知道在後人想像中的這件故事是如此的紛歧地。推原編戲的人所以要把古人的事實遷就于他們的想像的緣故，只因作者要求情感上的滿足，使得這件故事可以和自己的情感所豫期的步驟和結果相符合。

On a superficial level, these things [inexactitude in the adaptation of narratives for the stage] may be described simply as "chaotic" or "absurd." During my time in secondary school, I thought it unworthy to even mention [such inexactitudes] and did not take a second look at them. By this time, however, I had fallen in love with the opera and could not ignore the issue, but instead felt compelled to carefully reflect upon it. As a result of my reflections, I learned something about narrative structure, and I understood that stories develop over time.

When historical records were adapted into a novel, we already cannot know what transformations a story went through [. . .] and when it went from being a novel into becoming an opera, we also do not know how much it may have changed. Comparing two operas that relate the same story, we also do not know how much they may differ from each other.

We already cannot know what the original version of a story looked like, or whether it ever had a basis in reality. All we know is how much variation the story appears with in the imagination of subsequent generations. As for the reason why any compiler of operas should alter the story according to their imagination, we can only think that he did so in pursuit of emotional satisfaction, making the story adhere to his emotional expectations of its development and conclusion.[659]

This particular passage spoke of fictional narratives, such as the operatic plot, and not explicitly about historical research. But Gu Jiegang was indeed determined to eliminate the methodological and disciplinary division between historiography and the study of fictional narrative. In response to criticism he received from scholars who promoted archaeology as the only viable option for the study of ancient history, he wrote:

十年前，我極喜觀劇，從戲劇裏得到許多故事轉變的方式，使我對於故事的研究甚有興味。後來讀到適之先生的〈井田辨〉與〈水滸傳考

[659] Gu Jiegang, "Zi xu," vol. 1 of *Gushibian*, 22.

> 證〉，性質上雖有古史與故事的不同，方法都是一個，使我知道研究古史儘可應用研究故事的方法。
> Ten years ago I was very into opera, and from there I came to know the many ways in which an operatic plot could vary. This sparked my interest in narratology. Later on, I read Hu Shi's articles "On the Well-Field System" and "Investigation of *Shuihuzhuan*." While our research formally differed, as ancient history and fictional narrative respectively, the methodology we used was the same. I then realized that in the study of ancient history we can employ the methods of narratology without further ado.[660]

By giving up the pursuit of origins, Gu Jiegang at least in theory achieved a radical synthesis of literature and history. Because there was no temporally distant "core" to pursue, the researcher was free to study any part of history on its own terms, and there was no longer a need to blame writers for the manipulation and distortion of historical records.

In many ways, this coincided with Chen Li's approach to the study of men in history. The main object of historical research was to examine how different writers, in different times, creatively adapted the narrative tradition to explore and express their own existence under particular historical circumstances. Consequently, Gu Jiegang declared his disinterest in the relative authenticity of historical narratives, and his intention to instead focus on describing their transformations (*bu li yi zhen, wei qiong liubian* 不立一真，惟窮流變).[661] He wrote:

> 我對於古史的主要觀點，不在牠的真相而在牠的變化。我以為一件故事的真相究竟如何，當世的人也未必能知道真確，何況我們這些晚輩；但是我們要看牠的變化的情狀，把所有的材料依著時代的次序分了先後，按步就班地看牠在第一時期如何，在第二時期如何……這是做得到的，而且容易近真的。
> My main argument when it comes to ancient history has nothing to do with authenticity, but emphasizes the concept of change. When it comes to

[660] Gu Jiegang, "Da Li Xuanbo xiansheng" 答李玄伯先生 (Reply to Mr. Li Xuanbo), vol. 1 of *Gushibian*, 272.
[661] Gu Jiegang, "Da Li Xuanbo xiansheng," 273.

> the authenticity of a story, I think that not even people who lived at the time knew it with any certainty. How much more so us later generations?
>
> Our task is to examine how the story changed over time, to organize all received materials according to their relative time of appearance, and to observe in good order what it looked like during the first period, and then what it was like during the second period, and so on. This can be done, and we can hope to attain some degree of truth.[662]

The study of transformation seemed to be the only way for historians to avoid making an exclusivist—albeit limited in scope—claim to orthodoxy (*yi zun* 一尊). Such exclusivist arguments, as we have seen, had been the driving force behind authenticity debates during the Qing dynasty. Gu Jiegang wrote:

> 從前人因為沒有這種的眼光，所以一定要在許多傳說之中『別黑白而定一尊』：或者定最早的一個為真，斥種種後起的為偽；或者定最通行的一個為真，斥種種偶見的為偽；或者定人性最充足的為真，斥含有神話意味的為偽。這樣做去，徒然弄得左右支吾。結果，這件故事割裂了，而所執定的一個卻未必是真。
>
> Previous scholars did not have this perspective on historical studies, which was why they felt compelled, in dealing with multiple versions of the same story, to "differentiate between black and white, and to elevate one of them as true." Some took the earliest [narrative] to be the authentic one, rejecting all later ones as forgeries; some took the most popular one as authentic, rejecting all the less common ones as forgeries; some took the most human ones as authentic, rejecting all mythologies as forgeries. Proceeding like this, only discord was achieved, with the result that many narratives were cut off and excluded, while the one promoted was not necessarily authentic at all.[663]

Gu Jiegang also rejected the notion of syncretic historiography that reiterated the exclusivist lineage orientation in an attempt to create a new and smoother historical narrative. Synthesizing historians during the Qing worked to reconcile divergent narratives by subsuming them under a new explanatory framework. They pursued a more

[662] Gu Jiegang, "Da Li Xuanbo xiansheng," 273.
[663] Gu Jiegang, "Da Li Xuanbo xiansheng," 273.

comprehensive view of history than was achieved by Han Learning scholars that reconstructed a specific intellectual lineage. But the conflation of historical narratives only made it more difficult to elucidate the plurality of historical imagination (*gushi* 故事). The task of separating and contextualizing the great variety of historical narratives was the direct opposite of synthesis. Gu Jiegang wrote:

> 他們所以如此，都因為要把許多不同的紀載整齊成為一種相同的紀載。他們看著同是敘述一件事情，這本這樣說，那本那樣說，覺得聽牠參差是不大好的，所以要在參差之中修飾得一律，使得我的解釋在這本和那本上都講得通。他們不知道傳說原是不同的。
> They do this because they wish to take various separate records and synthesize them into a single, unified record. Seeing that different sources discuss the same event in various ways, they dislike the disparity, and therefore attempt to organize the commentaries so that no matter which version, they all can be accommodated within their own interpretive framework. They do not understand that these narratives differed from each other from the very beginning.[664]

In Gu Jiegang's approach to historical imagination each narrative was to be accorded the same value (*pingdeng* 平等) as all other narratives.[665] He wrote:

> 偽史的出現，即是真史的反映……一般人以為偽的材料便可不要，這是未免缺乏了歷史的觀念。
> The appearance of forged historiography is a reflection of actual history . . . people commonly think that we can just get rid of forged materials, but this simply betrays a lack of historical consciousness.[666]

While Gu Jiegang was of course indebted to the authenticity debates of preceding centuries, he transformed the pursuit of authenticity into a process of categorization of historical narratives. By doing so, he effectively eliminated the value-laden distinction

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[664] Gu Jiegang, "Jinteng pian jinyi" 金滕篇今譯 (Modern Translation of "Jinteng"), vol. 2 of *Gushibian,* 67.
[665] Gu Jiegang, "Jinteng pian jinyi," 68.
[666] Gu Jiegang, "Zi xu," vol. 3 of *Gushibian,* 8.

between authenticity (*zhen* 真) and forgery (*wei* 偽) that guided evidential research and other attitudes to knowledge operating within the framework of a lineage orientation.

Conflicting Agendas in the Gushibian

Gu Jiegang's methodological approach to textual studies as set out in the first volume of *Gushibian* went through a subtle but important transformation between volumes two and three of the series. This change may have been partly conditioned by the harsh criticism that he received from scholars who took a less textual or even anti-textual approach to history, often heavily influenced by the discipline of archaeology. Zhou Yutong 周予同 (1898-1981), in particular, was very critical of Gu Jiegang's methodological statements.

The view of Gu Jiegang's methodology as a linear development and radicalization of Qing evidential research and authenticity studies is a misrepresentation. This is nevertheless a popular interpretation, probably due to the fact that it was first conceived by scholars who declared their support for Gu Jiegang's agenda. Toward the end of the second *Gushibian* volume, for example, Lu Maode 陸懋德 (1885-1961) described his own understanding of Gu Jiegang's methods—that is, the approach that supposedly guided the *Gushibian* project— as a "skin-peeling" methodology. Lu Maode wrote:

> 司馬氏之剝皮，僅剝去諸子百家而止於六經、國語、家語；崔氏之剝皮，又剝去國語、家語而止於六經。顧君之剝皮，是於剝至經書之後又剝進一層……
>
> Sima Qian only peeled away the various masters while retaining the *Six Classics*, the *Guoyu* and the *Jiayu*; Cui Shu further peeled away the *Guoyu* and the *Jiayu* while retaining the *Six Classics*. Now Gu Jiegang peels his way to the *Six Classics* and then peels off yet another layer.[667]

This characterization of Gu Jiegang's agenda looked very different from what he presented and pursued in the first two volumes of the *Gushibian* series. What Lu Maode described was a simple process of stripping the *Classics* and their interpretations of

[667] Lu Maode, "Ping Gu Jiegang *Gushibian*" 評顧頡剛古史辨 (Evaluation of Gu Jiegang's *Gushibian*), vol. 2 of *Gushibian*, 370.

anything that did not seem to accurately describe historical events. Hu Shi, similarly, misrepresented Gu Jiegang's argument in the first volume of the *Gushibian* when he wrote:

> 我們在這上即不能知道某一件事的真確的狀況，也可以知道某一件事在傳說中的最早狀況……顧先生的這個見解，我想叫他做『剝皮主義』。譬如剝笋，剝進去方才有笋可吃。這個見解起於崔述。
> According to this, while we cannot know how a given event actually occurred, at least we can know what it originally looked like in narrative format. This realization of Gu Jiegang's, I would like to call a "skin-peeling attitude." It's just like peeling a bamboo shoot: only when you get to the core you find something edible. This realization began with Cui Shu.[668]

Even Gu Jiegang's supporters found it difficult to grasp or accept his methodological break with the authenticity studies of Qing evidential research. In his English language summary of the debate, Arthur Hummel also argued that Gu Jiegang continued the work of Kang Youwei, whom Hummel described as the first scholar to revive the Qianlong scholars' critical attitude after a 19th century period of intellectual decay.[669] The so-called skin-peeling methodology argued that while Han Learning built a bridge back to the Eastern Han, the New Text thought of Kang Youwei moved further back in time to engage with Western Han thought. Republican scholarship, according to that narrative, went even further by leaving Han scholarship behind to look directly at Warring States and Spring-and-Autumn texts. Chinese archaeologists, of course, were perfectly positioned in such a debate as practicing the kind of research that came closest to "actual" ancient history.

The importance of Kang Youwei to Gu Jiegang's intellectual development is undeniable, and Gu Jiegang's own discussion of the history of authenticity studies led straight up to Kang Youwei's *Kongzi gaizhi kao* 孔子改制考 (Investigation of

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[668] Hu Shi, "Gu shi taolun de duhou gan" 古史討論的讀後感 (On Reading the Discussions on Ancient History), vol. 1 of *Gushibian,* 192.
[669] Arthur W. Hummel, "What Chinese Historians Are Doing in Their Own History," vol. 2 of *Gushibian,* 422.

Confucius' Institutional Reform).[670] But what exactly was the significance of Kang Youwei's work, and what did it represent to Gu Jiegang?

Zhou Yutong gave a more nuanced picture of Gu Jiegang's intellectual pedigree, holding that the New Text thought of Kang Youwei represented something entirely different from either Song Learning or Qing dynasty Han Learning. According to Zhou Yutong's argument, Gu Jiegang picked up Kang Youwei's idea that Confucius used historiography as a rhetorical tool to achieve his political goals (*tuo gu gai zhi* 托古改制). The *Gushibian*, then, was related to New Text studies because it aimed to overthrow the historical narratives in the *Classics* and their commentaries by proving them to be the inauthentic rhetorical constructs of politically motivated forgers.[671]

Zhou Yutong's argument was only partly correct. It agreed with Gu Jiegang's view that Chinese history was closer to fiction than it was to a neutral record of actual events, but the conclusions that Zhou Yutong and Gu Jiegang drew from this realization were very different. Nowhere is this more evident than in Zhou Yutong's criticism of Gu Jiegang toward the end of the second *Gushibian* volume, where he expressed dissatisfaction with Gu Jiegang's announcement that the separation and categorization of historical narratives would form his primary contribution to scholarship. The only thing that the comparison with fictional narratives could offer the historian, Zhou Yutong said, were the general principles of stratification and development shared by all forms of narration. If the historian got caught up in studying historical narratives for their own sake, without bothering with their relative truth-value, all connection to the fundamental task of understanding the actualities of ancient history would be lost. Zhou Yutong wrote:

> 我很曉得研究孟姜女與研究禹，牠的價值是一樣的；研究城隍廟及賽會，與研究明堂及封禪也是一樣的，或者反較為有價值。但是這些究竟是研究文學或研究民俗學及比較宗教史的人的職責，治古史的人只有拿牠來應用，似乎不應當『舍己之田而耘人之田』。自然，我不能限止頡剛，說你只配研究古史，不能研究別的，但他既然大書特書的

[670] Gu Jiegang, "Lun weishi ji bianwei congkan shu" 論偽史及辨偽叢刊書 (Letter Discussing Forged History and the *Authenticity Debates Collectanea*), vol. 1 of *Gushibian,* 20.
[671] Zhou Yutong, "Jing jin gu wen xue" 經今古文學 (Studies in the New and Old Text *Classics*), vol. 2 of *Gushibian,* 310.

以治古史自任，則究竟本根與枝葉當有分別。不然，恐怕像騎野馬跑荒郊，得不到一個歸宿；而我所熱切祈望早日出世的層累地造成的古史一書恐也不能及身目睹了。況且治古史者對于故事，只要利用牠轉變的原則；現在自徐文長的故事，孟姜女的故事，以及狸貓換太子的故事諸文發表以後，故事轉變的原則大致已經明瞭，治古史者如果不急速回轉自己的陣地，而貪多務博去解決許多個以至無窮個個別的故事，則不僅頡剛說六十歲有點不夠，就是加倍活到百二十歲也恐怕不夠。

I understand very well that studying Lady Meng Jiang is as valuable as studying Yu, and similarly that studying the city god temple or folk festivals is as valuable as studying the Hall of Light or the *fengshan* sacrifices, or even more so. But after all, such research is the responsibility of those who study literature, folklore, or comparative religion. We who study ancient history can make use of their results, but should not "give up our own field to till that of another."

Naturally, I cannot restrict Gu Jiegang to study only ancient history, but since he has explicitly taken it upon himself to do so, he should know to differentiate the trunk from the branches and the leaves. Otherwise, he runs the risk of ending up without a resting place, like a man who rides a wild horse into the wilderness. In that case, the much-awaited book on stratification in the construction of ancient history may not appear in my lifetime.

When it comes to narratives, moreover, the historian of ancient China should only use the principles of their development. Now that articles have been published about the stories of Xu Wenchang, Lady Meng Jiang, and "switching a raccoon for the crown prince," the general principles of narrative development have already been clarified. If the historian of ancient China does not return to his own station without further delay, but greedily continues the extensive task of resolving the many, not to say innumerable, individual narratives, then not only will the sixty years that Gu Jiegang spoke of be too little, but even if one were granted the double, one hundred and twenty years, it would still not be enough.[672]

[672] Zhou Yutong, "Gu zhu *Gushibian* de dushou gan" 顧著古史辨的讀後感 (On Reading Gu Jiegang's *Gushibian*), vol. 2 of *Gushibian*, 328-329.

Unlike Lu Maode and Hu Shi in the passages quoted above, Zhou Yutong understood Gu Jiegang's argument. He simply did not agree with it. The principles of narratology could not only be employed for the "study of men in history" or the development of stories over time. They could also be adopted by lineage-oriented authenticity studies that focused on unveiling textual manipulation and political intrigue in its search for the truth as stable origin or "real" history. It was only from this perspective that Gu Jiegang's work could be thought of as a direct development of Kang Youwei's New Text studies.

Zhou Yutong stressed the "doubting spirit" (*huaiyi jingshen* 懷疑精神) of New Text studies and its importance to the task of pursuing authentic history (*qiuzhen* 求真). But that pursuit was not what Gu Jiegang envisioned. His decision to regard narratives from different historical periods and genres as equal in value already implicitly discarded any distinction between the authentic and the inauthentic.

The misrepresentations of Gu Jiegang's methodological innovations as a continuation of lineage-oriented skin-peeling methods demonstrate how the lineage orientation survived even a rejection of the *Classics* and their sage-authors as objects of research. Even though a focus on authorship was symptomatic of lineage-oriented research, it was never essential to its existence. Consequently, deemphasizing authorial intention did not necessarily involve a rejection of the lineage orientation.

Lin Ching-chang's theory of successive movements of returning to sources (*huigui yuandian yundong*) in the history of Chinese classicism takes this into account, and is the closest match I have found to my notion of a lineage orientation. Yang Jinlong, among others, argued that the rejection of sage-authors and their intentions by *Gushibian* contributors ought to exclude the "doubting antiquity" movement from Lin Ching-chang's definition of a "return to sources."[673] But Lin Ching-chang insisted on its inclusion under that framework. As we have seen, Gu Jiegang's early and most radical methodological reflections were a frequently misrepresented exception to the broader notion of a doubting antiquity movement. Since most of the *Gushibian* contributors still worked under the paradigm of a lineage orientation, it must be concluded with Lin

[673] Cf. Yang Jinlong, "'Zhongguo jingxueshi shang de huigui yuandian yundong' jianping" 中國經學史上的回歸原典運動簡評 (Evaluation of the Return to Sources Movement in Chinese History), *Zhongguo wenzhe yanjiu tongxun* 16.3 (2006): 145-151.

Ching-chang that the rejection of sage-authors only implied a partial departure from traditional classicism.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has argued that 19th and early 20th century Chinese thinkers made important contributions to the theoretical debate on pluralism. These contributions have been overlooked due to a long-standing representation of two intellectual trends—the empiricism of Han Learning and the speculative philosophy of Song Learning—as fundamentally opposed approaches to knowledge, and a concomitant failure to recognize the impulse toward universalism and anti-pluralism that they both shared.

The restructuring of the civil examinations after the An Lushan Rebellion (755-763) was followed by the practical annihilation of the Tang aristocracy during the Huang Chao Rebellion (874-884). This led to the emergence of a new bureaucratic elite in the late 9th century. The Tang aristocracy had been bound to the imperial court either by blood, marriage, or through generations of loyal service. The large-scale appointment to official position of men who lacked such ties to the court opened the question of how to evaluate talent and, more importantly, how to ascertain their loyalty. How could the emperor ensure the reliability of his new administration? How could a degree of predictability be achieved equal to that provided by hereditary officialdom?

The Song *daoxue* movement offered a metaphysical foundation and a comprehensive system of ethics that answered precisely these questions. It emphasized an ideology of "sincerity" (*cheng*) and methods for its expression that ensured single-minded loyalty and subordination of individual desires to the larger coherence of state and cosmos. The emperor was the ultimate spokesman of that universal order. As Yü Ying-shih has shown, the movement's political character was evident from the violent reactions of other bureaucratic groups as *daoxue* by the late 12th century began to influence the civil examinations. The legitimacy of *daoxue* adherents was upheld by a quasi-historical narrative of transmission and intellectual lineage that in many ways mimicked the descent-based standards of validation employed by the Tang aristocracy. This narrative formed part of what I have referred to in the title of my dissertation as a "lineage orientation" in Chinese intellectual history.

The Ming dynasty witnessed increased tensions between court and literati, especially with the Yongle emperor's (r. 1402-1424) usurpation of the throne. Wang Yangming's (1472-1529) philosophy was an attempt to make room in *daoxue* ethics for the expression of emotions (of indignation, justice, etc.) and acts of self-sacrifice in the face of authority. But as the aims for which *daoxue* had been conceived were altered in this way, its metaphysical foundation could no longer be sustained, and without such a foundation its moral philosophy also crumbled. Partly as a result of the paradoxical character of Wang Yangming's philosophy, coupled with weak leadership at court and unchecked factional struggle, Late Ming literati embraced individualism and various forms of moral relativism.

After the Manchu conquest in 1644, the problem of establishing trust and reliability between court and officials again came to the fore. Rooted in a different culture, the Yongzheng (r. 1722-1735) and Qianlong (r. 1735-1796) emperors were particularly on guard against being manipulated by their literati officials. The Han Learning movement offered an alternative to the partly discredited ideology of Cheng-Zhu *daoxue*. Its adherents developed technical expertise in an ambitious project of philological reconstruction that emphasized the weeding out of falsifications and establishing "authenticity," a notion that carried political functions reminiscent of those previously fulfilled by *daoxue* sincerity. The narrative of transmission and lineage, now couched in philological terminology, was thus equally present in Han Learning as it was in Cheng-Zhu *daoxue*.

The second part of this dissertation explored the thought of Fang Dongshu, Chen Li, and Gu Jiegang as three independent reactions to problems engendered by the lineage orientation. As such they may be considered three separate paths to pluralism in Chinese cultural and intellectual history. These three representatives of pluralism, however, are not to be regarded as a coherent school or movement. Nor were they the first or only pluralist thinkers in Late Imperial and Republican China. I have made no claim to comprehensiveness with regard either to describing the lineage orientation or its opponents, quite the contrary, I hope that the necessarily limited scope of my investigations will inspire further discoveries along the same theoretical lines.

APPENDIX: WHERE TO GO FROM HERE

This section contains draft suggestions for further research. The first of these concerns the possibility of a quantitative and comparative study to determine whether any regional characteristics may be identified with regard to lineage-oriented and pluralist thought respectively. The second proposal suggests the possibility of using the notion of a lineage orientation to transgress traditional categories in Chinese intellectual and cultural history—such as Confucianism, Neo-Confucianism, Buddhism, Daoism, and so on—and pursue interdisciplinary historical research that applies a common theoretical framework to issues in the history of Chinese religion, philosophy, classicism, and politics. The third and final proposal indicates how recently discovered early Chinese manuscripts may provide support for a pluralist approach to textual history and how a pluralist methodology may enrich our study of early Chinese texts.

Southern Learning and Regional Characteristics of Pluralist Thought

Qing dynasty intellectual history has often been structured around the concept of "schools of thought," defined largely in terms of geographical location and the educational background of individual scholars. Exactly how these regionally defined "schools" are to be constructed—who belongs where and what they represent—may be contested. Nevertheless, regardless of what scholars nowadays make of the schools concept as an explanatory tool, it is an undeniable fact that geography mattered greatly in Qing and Republican Era intellectual history.[674]

In this dissertation, I have not identified the lineage orientation in Qing evidential research, or the criticism directed against it, in terms of regional characteristics. But it proves useful to keep geography in mind when reflecting on these developments. It is not coincidental or unimportant that the works of Fang Dongshu and Chen Li were composed and published in the academic environment of 19th century Guangzhou. It is likewise

[674] On Qing dynasty schools of scholarship, see Elman, "Ch'ing Dynasty 'Schools' of Scholarship," *Late Imperial China* 4.6 (1981): 1-44.

noteworthy that many of the antagonists that made an appearance as promoters of lineage-oriented evidential research in the work of Fang Dongshu, in particular, belonged to a broad geographical notion of Jiangnan scholarship.[675]

In the first half of the 19th century, it was scholar-officials like Ruan Yuan who introduced scholarly trends from the Jiangnan cultural center to what by many was regarded as the periphery of culture in the southern city of Guangzhou. As men looking for job opportunities and recognition followed influential officials like Ruan Yuan to new regions, scholars of the Yangzhou and to some extent the Changzhou intellectual traditions eventually converged with Cantonese scholars in Guangzhou. The traditions imported from the Lower Yangzi academic community had a real and evident impact on the climate of scholarship in 19th century Guangzhou, and the introduction of ideas from these traditions caused the rise of so-called Southern Learning (*nanxue* 南學).

A more inclusive study of Cantonese scholars active during this period may suggest how the convergence of geographical identities and intellectual approaches in Guangzhou encouraged deeper reflection on the assumptions built into extant methodological frameworks. One thing that Miles' work has established beyond a doubt is that the adoption of Jiangnan trends did not erase a sense of Cantonese regional identity, but if anything appears to have made it stronger.[676]

The mid-19th century civil wars eventually destroyed the institutional basis of the Lower Yangzi academic community, encouraging the rise of new regional groups to academic prominence, gentry status, and bureaucratic position.[677] Following the fall of the old Jiangnan lineages and institutions, innovative ideas first voiced by scholars active in the Guangdong region became an important part of intellectual debates in Late Qing and Republican China.

While this dissertation has not offered sufficient quantitative evidence to support a conclusion that critical reactions against the lineage orientation of Jiangnan evidential

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[675] Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology*.
[676] Miles, "Rewriting the Southern Han (917-971): The Production of Local Culture in Nineteenth-Century Guangzhou," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 62.1 (2002): 39-75; and Miles, "Celebrating the Yu Fan Shrine: Literati Networks and Local Identity in Early Nineteenth-Century Guangzhou," *Late Imperial China* 25.2 (2004): 33-73.
[677] Chang Chung-li, *The Chinese Gentry: Studies on Their Role in Nineteenth-Century Chinese Society* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1955), 214-215.

research originally arose in southern China or the city of Guangzhou, I want to suggest that possibility. More extensive research may also identify other cultural and social causes of that development. It is interesting to note, for example, that southern China in the 19th century also became the breeding ground for social unrest based on discontent with the lineage orientation of Han Chinese kinship organizations.

There is much to indicate that the competition between so-called Southern Learning and Jiangnan scholarship for prominence in the Chinese intellectual arena intensified in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. As Sang Bing discussed at some length, Chinese and Japanese observers of Beijing's intellectual scene in the 1920s and 30s noted a lingering influence of Southern Learning and scholars who regarded themselves as adherents of a Chen Li school.[678]

In a letter from Chen Yinke 陳寅恪 (1890-1969) to Chen Yuan 陳垣 (1880-1971), the former stated that: "It seems that from now on, China will only have Southern Learning. The Jiang-Huai region is not worth mentioning anymore, and how much more so the Yellow River region" (*Zhongguo jianglai kong zhi you nanxue, Jiang-Huai yi wu zu yan, geng bu lun Huanghe liu yu yi* 中國將來恐只有南學，江淮已無足言，更不論黃河流域矣).[679] Sang Bing described how new educational institutions in Republican China eventually came to be administratively dominated by Jiangnan scholars, who reasserted themselves on the intellectual scene of the capital. Such conflicts must form the starting point for an analysis of why 20th century intellectual historians of the Qing period have focused almost exclusively on Han Learning and evidential research, to the neglect of other approaches to learning pursued by thinkers outside the Lower Yangzi academic community.

Religious Sects and Rebel Ideologies in Chinese Intellectual History

Popular religion was an important source of inspiration for Gu Jiegang's pluralist historiography. The study of popular religion demonstrated the many regional variations

[678] Sang Bing, *Wan Qing Min'guo de guoxue yanjiu*, 28-33.
[679] Chen Yuan, *Chen Yuan laiwang shuxin ji* 陈垣来往书信集 (Chen Yuan's Collected Letters), ed. Chen Zhichao 陈智超 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1990), 377.

of practices that could not necessarily be neatly divided into Buddhism or Daoism. What would generally be referred to as Daoism and Daoist temples in Beijing and Suzhou respectively, for example, looked completely different and even worshipped different spirits. The Daoist pantheon changed repeatedly, sometimes as a result of its competition with Buddhism, and the Chinese Buddhist pantheon in part derived from its Daoist counterpart through the process of translation.[680]

Gu Jiegang's interest in popular religion may have derived partly from Hu Shi, who corresponded on the topic with Cantonese scholar Chen Yuan.[681] The importance of popular religion to Gu Jiegang's thought was evident, moreover, in the restrained sympathy he expressed for movements like the Red Spears and the Yihetuan. This, he thought, was where Chinese culture was still alive and open to further development, in stark contrast to the inflexible elite culture of the Han Chinese.[682]

The discussion of lineage-oriented thought can be extended to include Chinese sectarian religion, which throughout the late imperial period often found ways to oppose it. The brief discussion that follows makes no claim to being exhaustive or based on in-depth study of primary sources, but is only a suggestion for more specialized and extensive research.

The White Lotus and White Cloud traditions originated in the Song dynasty from an orthodox Buddhist environment. At the time, lay Buddhist groups called "People of the Way" (*daomin* 道民) engaged in merit-collecting activities like recitation, printing, as well as the construction of bridges and roads. They had their own institutions and sometimes collaborated with the official clergy.[683]

To secure official patronage, Buddhist and Daoist clergy were gradually compelled to accentuate the distinction between themselves and such popular sects.[684] While lay religious groups in the Song were not doctrinally separate from state-sponsored Buddhism and generally well received, memorials nevertheless appeared condemning them of heterodoxy. It was pointed out that such groups acted outside ordinary family

[680] Gu Jiegang, "Zi xu," vol. 1 of *Gushibian*, 86-88.
[681] Chen Yuan, *Chen Yuan laiwang shuxin*, 173-195.
[682] Gu Jiegang, "Zi xu," vol. 1 of *Gushibian*, 90.
[683] Ter Haar, *The White Lotus Teachings*.
[684] Seiwert, *Popular Religious Movements*, 13.

structures and had the ability to mobilize large numbers of people. With the promulgation of an imperial ban in 1308, the White Lotus was officially condemned as heterodox.

Both membership and leadership in lay religious groups was open more or less to anyone, and not governed by the strict teacher-disciple relations and literary qualifications that characterized the clerical profession. As we have seen, the relative localism—including the need for a local basis to achieve influence in national politics—of Southern Song elites led to a renewed focus on genealogical lineage. According to Barend ter Haar, the White Lotus movement to some degree conflicted with such lineage-centered ideals, even as its practitioners may not have been entirely conscious thereof.[685] By the 15th century, the lineage orientation among the Chinese elite had grown strong due to its close connection with the civil examinations, and roughly around the same time conflicts intensified between sectarian movements and family lineages.

The appearance of "precious scrolls" (*baojuan* 寶卷) as a genre, and in particular the 1509 printing of Luo Qing's 羅清 (var. 靜, 因, 英) *Wubu liuce* 五部六冊 (Five Books in Six Volumes), represented a wave of new religious movements during the second half of the Ming dynasty.[686] Their audiences were often literate, with printing projects being supported by the lower elites and sometimes even by officials. One reason that Zhu Yuanzhang's laws against heterodoxy were less strictly enforced during this period may have been the large-scale selling of certificates by the state for financial reasons, which undermined the exclusivist nature of lineage-oriented teacher-disciple transmission among the imperially sanctioned clergy.[687]

By the Late Ming there were numerous scriptural traditions and sects, and popular religious groups formed distinct alternatives to clerical Buddhism. They even explicitly posited a degree of antagonism toward the doctrines and practices of state-backed orthodoxy. Anti-lineage ideas were evident in doctrinal scriptures, such as the *Longhua jing*, where marriage and familial bonds were described as the beginning of entanglement in the mundane world.

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[685] Ter Haar, *The White Lotus Teachings*, 112-113.
[686] Seiwert, *Popular Religious Movements*, 209.
[687] Seiwert. *Popular Religious Movements*, 211-212.

Seiwert argued that the doctrinal and organizational innovations of Late Ming sects were significant enough to change China's religious landscape and produce "a fourth distinct religious tradition."[688] Overmyer, following C. K. Yang, forwarded a similar view.[689] Seiwert thought of this "fourth religion" in terms of a Foucauldian discourse that separated itself from what he called a Confucian discourse by pronouncing certain ideas not pronounceable in the latter.

While one may argue over the existence or precise definition of this "fourth religion," it is a powerful idea in that it enables us to override differences and incoherencies among individual belief systems and focus on the more profound assumptions that they shared. It encourages us to move beyond the often rhetorically motivated labels attached to certain "schools" or "traditions" of thought, and to identify new explanatory models that open our eyes to hitherto unexplored phenomena. By showing that popular—that is, not imperially sanctioned—sectarian movements practicing "open" forms of membership may be understood as a coherent ideological unit, it becomes possible also to regard imperially sanctioned and "closed"—in the sense of requiring certificates or other qualifications for membership—forms of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism as a loose ideological unit with shared themes and taboos.

The importance of family lineages for examination success had caused stricter boundaries to be drawn between elite society and sectarian groups throughout the Song-Yuan transition and into the Early Ming. Similarly, divisions between sectarian religion and the social elite sharpened from the Ming-Qing transition onwards, mainly due to the increased prominence and importance of a lineage-oriented life-style that excluded alternative identities. Even as sectarian elites continued to profit from their activities, their lifestyle and social positions drew closer to that of imperially sanctioned groups. This process is well illustrated by Susan Naquin's juxtaposition of two Wang lineages co-

[688] Seiwert. *Popular Religious Movements*, 440.
[689] Daniel L. Overmyer, *Folk Buddhist Religion: Dissenting Sects in Late Traditional China* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1976), 51.

existing in the same Northern Chinese prefecture, one specializing in sectarian activity and the other attempting to advance along regular examination and bureaucratic routes.[690]

Reaching the end of the 18th century, genealogical lineage again seems to have become less important for the identities of sectarian groups. This period also saw the parallel rise in violent uprisings and government persecution of groups referred to as the White Lotus.[691] These were independent and distinct from the "sectarian elite" lineages that had taken shape over the preceding century.[692]

As a result of downward social mobility among educated men, it has been argued, the "Confucian character" of some sectarian milieus grew stronger in the 19th century.[693] Popular sects and spirit-writing groups offered alternatives to an official career. Seiwert described this as a form of influence over sectarian groups, making them more Confucian-minded, but we may also consider to what extent this phenomenon introduced sectarian ideas into established elite communities. Did some of the general ideas and themes that characterized the "fourth religion" of sectarianism become an impetus for change in the intellectual history of 19th century China?[694]

If so, it is hardly surprising that the non-hierarchical ideology of Protestantism when it entered China in the 19th century resonated with displaced and uprooted elements of Chinese society, and became part of a social movement that eventually grew into the Taiping rebellion.

This would also help to explain why the iconoclastic and anti-lineage Taiping movement was first conceptualized in southeastern China. Maurice Freedman meticulously described the destructive power of lineage feuds in this geographical region,

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[690] Naquin, "Two Descent Groups in North China: The Wangs of Yung-p'ing Prefecture, 1500-1800" in *Kinship Organization in Late Imperial China, 1000-1940*, eds. Patricial Buckley Ebrey and James L. Watson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 210-244.
[691] Ter Haar, *The White Lotus Teachings.*
[692] Naquin. "Connections between Rebellions: Sect Family Networks in Qing China."
[693] Seiwert. *Popular Religious Movements*, 428.
[694] Vincent Shih raised the issue of connections between the Great Harmony (*Datong* 大同) ideals of Kang Youwei and Sun Yat-sen, both from Guangdong, and what he called the Taiping ideology of Hong Xiuquan. Hong Xiuquan's increasing antipathy toward the lineage orientation of Chinese society was subtly expressed in his emendation of the word *daotong* 道統 'transmission of the Way' into *zhendao* 真道 'the true Way' in later editions of his writings. See Vincent Y. C. Shih, *The Taiping Ideology: Its Sources, Interpretations, and Influences* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1967), 128, and 494.

and it is not difficult to read Hong Xiuquan's 洪秀全 (1814-1864) *Yuandao xingshi xun* 原道醒世訓 (Proclamation on the Origin of Principles for the Enlightenment of the Age) in that context. Hong Xiuquan said:

> 世道乖漓，人心澆薄，所愛所憎，一出於私，故以此國而憎彼國，以彼國而憎此國者有之，甚至同國以此省此府此縣而憎彼省彼府彼縣，以彼省彼府彼縣而憎此省此府此縣者有之，更甚至同省府縣以此鄉此里此姓而憎彼鄉彼里彼姓，以彼鄉彼里彼姓而憎此鄉此里此姓者有之。世道人心至此，安得不相陵相奪相鬬相殺而淪胥以亡乎？
> The ways of the world are perverse and shallow, while the minds of men are intolerant and narrow, their loves and hates being all derived from selfishness.
>
> Hence, there are cases where this country hates that country, and that country hates this country. There are even cases within one country where this province, this prefecture, or this district hates that province, that prefecture, or that district; and that province, that prefecture, or that district hates this province, this prefecture, or this district. There are even cases within one province, prefecture, or district where this village, this hamlet, or this surname hates that village, that hamlet, or that surname; and that village, that hamlet, or that surname hates this village, this hamlet, or this surname.
>
> The ways of the world and the minds of men having come to this, how can they do otherwise than to oppress one another, to seize one another, to fight one another, to kill one another, and thus altogether perish.[695]

The work of Freedman suggests there was little hyperbole in this passage.[696] Lineage organizations served different purposes in Cantonese society as compared to that of East China, with widespread inter-lineage feuding being characteristic of southeastern China in particular. While lineages in Guangdong were more socially intrusive in their pursuit of

[695] Translation roughly follows Vincent Shih, *The Taiping Ideology*, 281-282.
[696] Compare Hong Xiuquan's statement with Maurice Freedman, *Chinese Lineage and Society: Fukien and Kwangtung* (London: The Athlone Press, 1966), 158-159.

local influence and power, those in the Jiangnan area emphasized the production of successful examination candidates and officials.[697]

Alienated from the imperial bureaucracy by a dysfunctional examination system, parts of the literate elite in southeastern China reacted to the oppressive and exclusionist forces of a lineage orientation in Chinese thought and society. Not everyone would join, or even sympathize with, popular rebellion, but they all shared a dissatisfaction with the narrowmindedness, selfishness, competitiveness, and factionalism encouraged and perpetuated by established mentalities and institutions.

Discovered Chinese Manuscripts and Lineage-Oriented Methodology

The idea that archaeological discoveries of textual materials may serve to expand or revise our knowledge of the past is no recent phenomenon in Chinese history. Not considering much earlier accounts of discovered bronzes and their inscriptions, the initial discovery of Shang dynasty oracle bones in 1899 eventually led to the validation of certain doubted parts of Chinese historiography—among others the existence of the Shang dynasty as such. The interest such finds sparked also led to a flood of forgeries during the early 20th century. During the same period, the Dunhuang manuscripts from between the 5th and 10th centuries were also discovered. Later, once restrictions of the Cultural Revolution began to loosen in the late 70s, additional discoveries of manuscript materials dating from the Warring States and Han dynasties were first made public.[698]

Since then, several publications of such manuscripts have been made or announced by prestigious institutions in mainland China. The 1993 Guodian finds were published in 1998, and following that was the publication the Shanghai Museum manuscripts, bought on the Hong Kong black market in 1993. Subsequently, top universities such as Tsinghua and Peking University bought their own manuscript

[697] Patricia Ebrey, "Types of Lineages in Ch'ing China: A Re-examination of the Chang Lineage of T'ung-Ch'eng," *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i* 4.9 (1983): 1-20.
[698] Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy, "Introduction" to *The Cambridge History of Ancient China: From the Origins of Civilization to 221 BC*, eds. Loewe and Shaughnessy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 1-36.

materials. The ownership and publication of manuscripts has become a matter of prestige and politics at mainland China's many competing institutions, something that can also be seen from a material comparison of the publications, constantly outdoing each other in terms of quality, looks, and price.[699]

The discovery of early Chinese manuscripts gave rise to various methodological reflections. In a highly influential symposium speech later adapted and published in *Chinese Culture* in 1992, Li Xueqin suggested that the in-depth study of early manuscripts might lead to a reconsideration of the highly skeptical attitude with which the transmission of texts and ideas throughout Chinese history has been regarded from at least the Qing dynasty, and particularly after the popularization in academic circles of the so-called "doubting antiquity school" (*yigupai* 疑古派) from the 1930s onward. Li Xueqin's article focused especially on the problem of partisanship in the textually centered study of Chinese history. Li Xueqin also noted the parallel between academic partisanship and the rise of authenticity studies (*bianwei* 辨偽) as an attempt to weed out the false and heterodox, something he regarded as characteristic of Song *daoxue* and Qing evidential research alike.[700]

Unfortunately, Li Xueqin's catchy phrase of "walking out of the doubting antiquity era" has been understood by many as the programmatic statement of a movement, and as a partisan call to arms in its own right. Consequently, we now see the existence of a "school" of thought whose members take it upon themselves to promote an uncritical "belief in antiquity" (*xingu* 信古). While mainly promoted for political and patriotic purposes in China, this division between doubters and believers is not something that the Western sinological world has been quite able to remain aloof from.

New source materials will not necessarily yield new visions of history. Large finds of early Chinese manuscripts provide an amazing opportunity for modern researchers to "build a bridge" over millennia of textual transmission (or its failure). But

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[699] This was pointed out and demonstrated to me by Martin Kern during a 2012 graduate seminar at the East Asian Studies Department of Princeton University.

[700] Li Xueqin, "Walking Out of the 'Doubting of Antiquity Era'," *Contemporary Chinese Thought* 34.2 (2002-3): 26-49. For the original article, see Li Xueqin, "Zouchu 'yigu shidai'" 走出疑古時代, *Zhongguo wenhua* 7 (1992): 1-7.

when doing so they risk committing the same mistakes as previous movements of "returning to the sources" (*huigui yuandian*) throughout the history of Chinese scholarship—Song *daotong*, Qing *jiafa*, Republican Era *yigu*—and end up with the same problems of non-verifiability and partisan division. The "return to antiquity" is as complex and dubious a notion today as it was for the philologists of Late Imperial China.

Looking at discovered early Chinese manuscripts, we may consider to what extent these materials encourage us to ask the same questions as Qing evidential research scholars asked, questions such as: What exactly did the original text look like? Who was its author? What was his intention in writing the text? Such questions along with assumptions discussed in this dissertation—precision, concreteness, consistency, and so on—perpetuate the lineage-oriented approach to knowledge that men like Fang Dongshu, Chen Li, and Gu Jiegang argued against. However, early Chinese manuscripts provide excellent textual material for trying out alternatives to lineage-oriented research, and for posing an entirely new set of questions and problems to solve.

In the case of manuscript texts that bear some significant resemblance with a received text, we naturally cannot assume an original-copy relationship to exist between them. But to go a step further, considering that both manuscript and received texts may derive from oral exposition and a mixed oral-written transmission, it is unjustified to even treat them as versions of an original written text—sharing a single author and carrying the same authorial intention—no matter how "identical" they may appear to be.[701]

The fluidity of textual structure, textual units, and the surprising extent of orthographical variation in excavated manuscripts all speak against an assumption that there ever existed a written "original" version of early Chinese texts. And it certainly does not support a notion of transmission based on scribal copying from written precedents. In other words, it does not seem that textual transmission was always controllable against a written predecessor.

Following this realization, the *stemma codicum* model of textual analysis now

[701] In this vein, William Boltz has demonstrated the danger of "contaminating" manuscript evidence with received variants in his criticism of D.C. Lau's treatment of the Mawangdui *Laozi* manuscripts. See the review by Boltz, "Textual Criticism and the Ma Wang tui Lao tzu," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 44.1 (1984): 185-224.

appears less and less attractive to sinologists working on early Chinese manuscripts. This model assumed the existence of a single *Urtext* and a continuous process of scribal copying that produced new instances of a text, each further removed from the written original. Reference to scribal errors in the Chinese philological tradition, along with the reconstructive ideal of precision, were based on similar assumptions. But the nature of excavated manuscripts from the pre-Han period undermines the fundamental assumptions of the *stemma codicum* model and makes necessary the creation of new models for understanding how the transmission of texts worked in that historical period.

From the insight that textual creation and transmission in pre-Han times was not primarily written, but at least involved moments of oral performance, follows the breakdown of lineage-oriented methodological assumptions made in evidential research.

The notion of a written original and subsequent deterioration through acts of rupture and imperfect transmission has proved especially long-lived. As Matthias Richter noted, "[t]he general assumption is always that changes to the text are caused accidentally and amount to damage of the text, which later redactions aimed to repair."[702] The nature of early Chinese manuscripts suggests that we may not be methodologically justified to assume that pre-Han texts ever had a single, stable, and original written version. In fact, it cannot even be assumed that pre-Han texts ever had an author in the sense of an historical individual sitting down to express his own ideas and intentions in writing. If the creation of texts was often an oral endeavor, only indirectly transferred to writing—perhaps through the hands of professional scribes, or "mere" technicians—then a lineage-oriented methodology can no longer be justified.

The difficulty to even establish stable versions of early Chinese texts has been noted by others.[703] But this is deplorable only if we proceed from a lineage-oriented approach to textual studies, which posits reading and understanding as a process of proceeding from definitions of individual words and gradually moving upwards to the meaning of the whole text. As researchers we do not need to be paralyzed by the impossibility of establishing a stable and "original" text. The work of reading and

[702] Richter, *The Embodied Text: Establishing Textual Identity in Early Chinese Manuscripts* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 97.
[703] Martin Kern, "Excavated Manuscripts and Their Socratic Pleasures: Newly Discovered Challenges in Reading the 'Airs of the States'," *Asiatische Studien* 61.3 (2007): 775-793.

understanding can continue with equal, if not increased, vigor as long as we learn to ask new questions and investigate new problems.

By discarding the lineage orientation and its host of assumptions and research questions, we do not give up the pursuit of any knowledge that may be gained from the study of early Chinese manuscripts. There are innumerable other questions that may be asked of such source materials, and while I leave their precise formulation to experts in the field, it seems a reasonable and sufficiently open suggestion that we turn away from *what*-questions, like those mentioned above, and focus instead on asking more *how*-questions.

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